

Beginning Reading

Material taken from *Learning to Achieve, Module 4*

Students need to be grounded in the 5 components of reading:

1. Phonemic awareness: ability to detect individual sounds within words.
2. Decoding: the ability to recognize words in print using letter-sound correspondences.
3. Fluency: the ability to read smoothly and at a reasonable rate, phrasing, and expression, with little effort.
4. Vocabulary: the understanding that the words in a passage and the ability to connect those words with what we already know
5. Reading comprehension: the understanding of what we are reading, and rereading when it is not clear.

Vocabulary Associated With Reading

Phonological processing: the ability to “sound out” words based on the smallest speech sounds, or phonemes.

Word analysis: the ability to recognize letter combinations and the sounds they represent.

Naming speed: measure the time it takes to name an object, which is the ability to retrieve the spoken word for a visual stimulus.

Verbal memory: the ability to remember and repeat a list of words, phrases or numbers.

On the Job Experience

Skills that I have found to be necessary for success in moving along the continuum to intermediate reading skills.

Reading and writing go "hand in hand". One does not occur independently by itself. Reading and writing do not occur in a vacuum. Even though a student says that they want to learn to read, they also need to learn to write. The spoken, written, and read forms of words are all integral in learning to read.

Vocabulary

Oral vocabulary: a person's language that they can speak and understand

Reading vocabulary: a person's language set that they understand when reading

Typically, a beginning reader's oral vocabulary surpasses their reading vocabulary. They are much better able to understand words that are spoken to them as compared to words in which the need to read for themselves.

Challenge students to do writing with the vocabulary that they possess. Work as a scribe for the student so they can see that their writing is exceptional and that they do have much to say.

Utilize their prior knowledge to make connections.

Find out what the student's interests are and use them in reading.

Questions that I ask to help beginning readers

- Do they know the alphabet?
- Do they know the letters that make up the alphabet?
- Do they know the sounds that the letters make individually?
- Do they know the sounds that the letters make up when paired up?
- What types of materials do you want to learn how to read?
- What is the purpose in learning to read?
- How often per day, do you read?
- What types of materials do you read during the day?
- Where do you read?
- Do you have children at home that you can read to?
- Do you speak, read, and write English during the day?
- Are you required to read at your job?
- How motivated are you to learn to read?
- Are you excited about the opportunity to learn to read?
- Are you ready to ask me questions when you don't understand?
- Do you have any vision or hearing problems that I should be aware of?
- Would large print materials help you read easier?
- How is the lighting in the room?

Activities that I use to help beginning readers

- I have them write the alphabet and then keep it in a binder.
- I have them put letters in alphabetical order.
- I have them find letters in the newspaper.
- I play Letter bingo.
- I teach them the rules of phonics.
- We work on one rule of phonics at a time.
- We use sentence strips to manipulate letters to make different words.
- I stay clear of nonsense words.
- Try rhyming with basic word, for example, "cat", "rat", "bat" and so on. Have them write out the words so they can see them as well. One activity that I read about somewhere, I can't give credit to the creator of this idea since I don't remember where I read it, has the students write on building blocks with washable markers. As the "tower" that they are building gets higher, they see that they are making so many words out of a basic unit of letters. I have not personally tried this yet since I do not have beginning readers anymore, but it might work.
- I have them do spelling of words when we have begun to see automaticity.
- I have them divide, or "scoop" the syllables in the words that we are working on.
- I have used "poker chips" to help reinforce sound/symbol relationships. For example, consonants are blue and vowels are white. They need to put one poker chip down in order for each sound that they hear. For example, /cat/. They would place a blue, white, and blue poker chip.
- I use an integrated approach to reading. I do a combination of phonics and whole language. I work with the students in small groups in both of these areas.
- Model reading for the students so they can see and hear what good readers sound like.
- I create self-made games using the rules that we are working on.
- Use multi-syllabic words so students can see that they can "read" 'big words'.
- When reading "rich literature", ask students to listen to your reading, and then have them answer comprehension questions.

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- When beginning to read “rich literature”, pick out words beforehand that students may not know. Have them try to read them, and then discuss the meaning of the words. It has been my experience that the students cannot read the words, but they can tell you what they mean.
- When using rich literature, have them find the “rules of phonics” within the passage, such as short and long vowels.
- Try to get materials that are high interest that students may be able to read parts of the passage.
- Use sentence scrambles. Take a sentence from a passage that has been read in class, and cut it up. The degree to which you cut it up will depend on the skills of the students in the class. Have the students rearrange the text so that it makes sense. This activity can extrapolate out to the degree of the student, meaning you can go to paragraphs as they develop their skills.
- Work on homonyms and homophones. The student’s skill level may not be one in which they can read the words, but they need to start to learn that some words sound the same, but are spelled differently, and have different meanings.
- Students must practice, practice, and practice!
- Students must be given corrective feedback.
- Students must be given time to practice the skills being learned independently.
- Expect students to take a long time to learn a skill.
- Be prepared to review the skill being learned over and over again.
- Combine book learning with authentic learning, meaning have students brought in reading materials that are important to them, like notes from school, bills, and job related reading materials.
- Do hands-on learning if possible. For example, have students find short vowel sounds in the newspaper and circle them.
- Cut words out of the newspaper that coincides with rules that you are learning, and put them in alphabetical order.
- Have them keep a notebook of words that could not be read and review periodically.
- Work with Dolch sight words. Print them out so they can manipulate them in sentences, individually, and in writing.

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Reading Glossary

Information taken from a handout received at the Pelham Public Library

Alphabet: a set of letters. Basic written symbol or graphemes

Author: person who wrote the story

Comprehension: what a person understands

Cover: the front cover, the back cover, and spine are all parts of a book

Dyslexia: a brain-based type of learning disability that specifically impairs a person's ability to read

Grapheme: a letter of an alphabet. All of the letters and letter combinations that represent a phoneme, such as, "f", "ph", and "gh" for the letter /f/.

Letter: a part of the alphabet

Page: one side of a leaf of paper of printed or written

Phoneme: the smallest unit of sound

Sentence: a grammatical unit of words, which start with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark

Title: the distinguishing name of a book, poem, picture, piece of music, or the like.

Word: one or more morphemes that function as a carrier of meaning

Alphabetic Principle

- Reads left to right in English
- Reads from top to bottom
- Letter comes in two forms, upper and lower case

Reading Readiness Skills

- How to hold the book correctly
- Understand and interpret illustrations
- Grasps the Alphabetic Principle
- Know common punctuation marks

Skills of Reading

Fluency: a person's ability to read with speed, accuracy and expression

Phonemic Awareness: the ability to distinguish and manipulate sound

Reading comprehension: the understanding of a passage of text by the reader

Sight words or Dolch words: 220 words that cannot be "sounded out"; must be learned "by sight"

Vocabulary: a person's set of words, which they are familiar with language

Consonants Introduction

Consonants produce sounds that are more consistent and easier to identify than vowels. Therefore, they make a good starting point for learning to read.

Initially, work should be done on identifying beginning consonant sounds (ex: t-t-t tulip).

After that, activities can focus on identifying final consonant sounds (ex: cat ends with the t-t-t sound)

When students learn to recognize the sounds of consonants at the beginning and end positions of words, they gain the ability to look at a word and make a reasonable guess as to what it might be. Viewing the word in the context of a picture will help reinforce this skill.

(For example, a picture of a dog with the word DOG underneath. The ability to sound out the D and G letters will help the child identify that the word is DOG, not puppy or dalmation)

<http://www.kidzone.ws/kindergarten/consonants-intro.htm>

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Consonant Concepts

The ideas and activities presented in this section will help students develop the following skills:

- identifying beginning consonant sounds
- distinguishing between two or more beginning consonant sounds
- identifying ending consonant sounds
- distinguishing between two or more ending consonants
- choosing words that have a particular beginning or ending consonant

<http://www.kidzone.ws/kindergarten/consonants-intro.htm>

Consonants

Order of Presentation:

The order in which one presents consonants to students is often a matter of personal preference -- there are many different studies available that suggest one method is superior to another. Just keep in mind that you do not have to present the letters in alphabetical order.

Every student is an individual -- what works perfectly for 85% of the learners out there, may not be the correct approach for your student. If he is having a tough time with the approach being used, try a different one.

APPROACH 1: RELIABILITY

Some teachers like to deal with the letters based on their reliability (in other words, how many different sounds might that letter make... for example, although "s" is a common letter in the English language, it is not as **reliable** as the letter "v").

This is because in a word like "shark" the s does not make the same sound as in a word like "sat" and makes yet another sound in a word like "does" --

the letter V (though less frequently used when spelling words) always makes the same sound.

This makes "v" a much easier letter to teach than "s". However, "v" isn't as useful in reading as it is rarely found in words (to illustrate that point, compare the number of v's used in words in this sentence to the number of s's).

See below for a reliability chart.

Consonant Reliability Chart:

Extremely Reliable:	Reliable:	Generally Reliable:	Unreliable:	Very Unreliable:
m --> man	b --> bat	d --> doll	c*	s --> sat
r --> run	h --> he	f --> far	g --> goat	t --> tan
q*	k --> kid	j --> jam	w --> we	x*
v --> van	l --> let	n --> not	y --> yes	
	p --> pan	z --> zoo		

* these letters are "unnecessary" or redundant. They do not make a unique sound.

- q --> kw
- c --> k or s
- x --> ks, gs or z

APPROACH 2: FREQUENCY

Another method some use is to introduce the most common sounds first (s, t and r). This allows the student to quickly begin forming words. Using this approach and ignoring consonants vs vowels: o, s, t, a, r, e appear in 50% of the words in the English language. Adding the next six letters: n, i, l, u, c, p -- gives 80% of the letters. When working on letter sounds, these

can be presented "in concert" -- so, for example, one would present "at" as in rat, hat, cat, mat.

Word Families:

single letter sounds	multi-consonant families	consonant/vowel families
s, t r, n c, l m, p b, f d, g h, v k, j z, w y, q, x	ch, th sh, wh sp, sl sc, sm st, sk sn, sq sw, tw br, tr gr, fr dr, cr pr, wr cl, bl fl, pl str, scr	ap, an, at en, are, all ub, ate, ail ay, ain, aw ake, ave eat, ear, eep ide, ice, ine, ike ow, oke, old ook, oop, ore ack, ash, ank ent, ell, est, edge ip, in, it ick, ill, ing ot, op, ock uck, ump, ush um, ug

Consonant Digraphs

- ch - chair
- sh - ship
- th - thumb (voiceless phoneme - th) **
- th - the (voiced phoneme) **
- wh - why
- zh - pleasure
- ng - sing

** voiced vs voiceless: put your fingers on your vocal cords... now say "the" out loud. Notice the vibration you can feel with your fingers when you make the "th" sound? Now say, "thumb" out loud. This time there is no vibration. Letters that cause a vibration in your vocal cords are called voiced. Letters that do not are called voiceless.

Pay attention to the way your mouth makes the sound of the letter "D" and the letter "T"; the letter "B" and the letter "P"; the letter "G" and the letter "C"

D is voiced, T is voiceless -- your mouth moves the same for both

B is voiced, P is voiceless -- your mouth moves the same for both

G is voiced, C is voiceless -- your mouth moves the same for both.

If your students are having difficulty distinguishing these sounds, have them use the finger on the vocal cords trick ... it may help them out a bit.

Consonant Blends

bl - black
cl - clown
fl - flying
dr and ft - draft
sk - desk
fr - fry
spr - spray
spl - splash
tr - tree
tw - twin
gr - great
sl - slow
pr - pretty
gr - grasp
sp - grasp
st - rest
str - straits
ngth - strength
nd - bland
thr - thread

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