



THE CENTER 
for Literacy & Learning

www.mycll.org



Small Group Instruction: The How and Why

LDOE Virtual Webinar
February 28th, 2023

The Center for Literacy & Learning

Our Vision

Everyone is empowered through literacy.

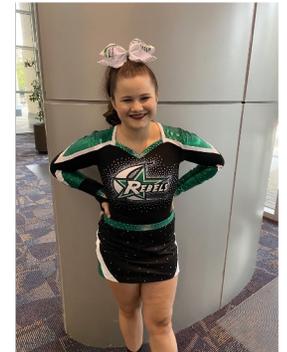
Our Mission

We advance learning and literacy through evidence-based practices in the classroom, home, and community.

Your Presenter



Jennifer Armond
Client Success Specialist



Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand what small group instructions means and how to apply it to their classrooms.
- Develop an understanding of using data to drive small group instruction in support of Tier 1 curriculum.
- Apply knowledge of the way students need support to read using small group instruction.

The Science of Reading is...

“...a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.

This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.”

<https://www.thereadingleague.org/what-is-the-science-of-reading/>

The Science of Reading

The Science of Reading is NOT...

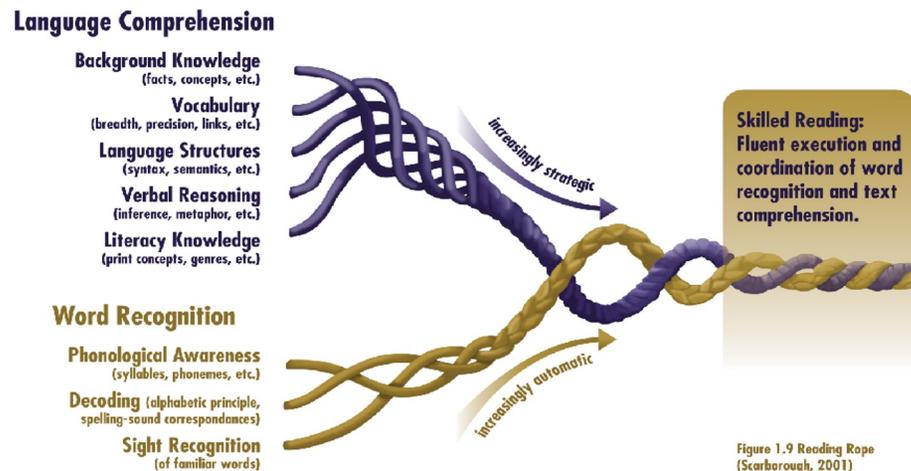
- An ideology or philosophy
- A fad, trend, new idea or pendulum swing
- A political agenda
- A one-size fits all approach
- A program of instruction
- A single specific component of instruction such as phonics



Image Source: @Monkey Business - stock.adobe.com

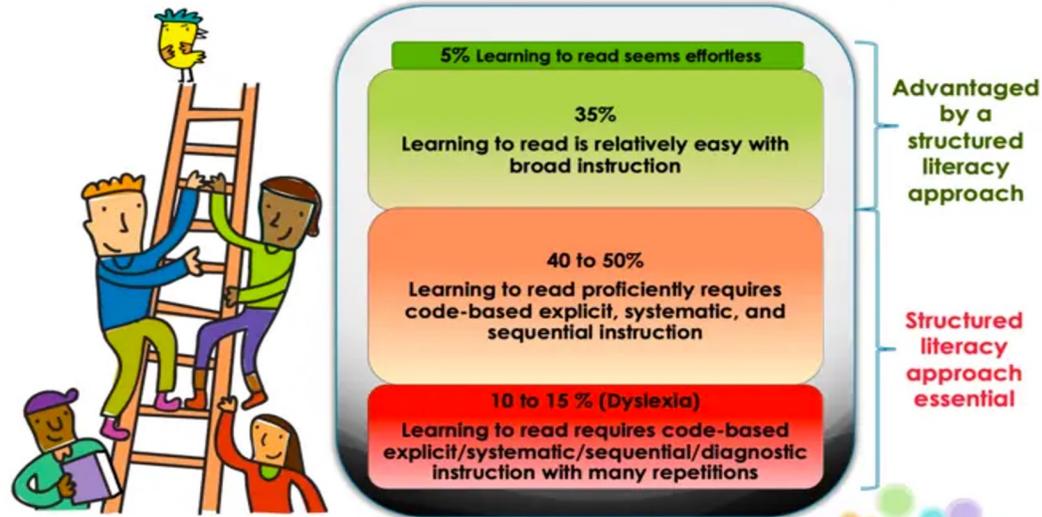
Scarborough's Reading Rope

Scarborough's Reading Rope



The Ladder of Reading

The Ladder of Reading



© N. Young, 2012 (Updated 2020)
Artwork by Dean Stanton
(Lyon, 1998; NRP, 2000; IDA, 2015; Hempenstall, 2016)

www.nancyyoung.ca

Nancy Young
B.A., M.Ed.
Reading
Spelling
Writing

© 2022 The Center for Literacy & Learning. All Rights Reserved

What is Small Group Instruction?



Image Source: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Barbara Wasik defines small group instruction as, **“any instruction where a teacher is working with 5 students or fewer. It usually follows whole-group instruction.”**

Why Small Group Instruction?

Research shows **students are 66% more likely to participate in a small group setting, rather than whole group.**



Image Source: https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTka_lcgvU1tW WUh-bKhg3xFa-1Zq3s4zhUr4OA-15nH_1uAH9-&s

Benefits of Small Groups

- **Clear misunderstandings**
- **Gather accurate data**
- **Improve the overall quality and accessibility of instruction**
- **Increases student participation**
- **Provide immediate feedback**



Image Source: <https://ebip.vkcsites.org/sg/>

Strategy for Small Group Instruction

1. Teach your routine
2. Keep instruction short
3. Target a single skill
4. Collect data often
5. Evaluate and adapt



Image Source: Smekens Education

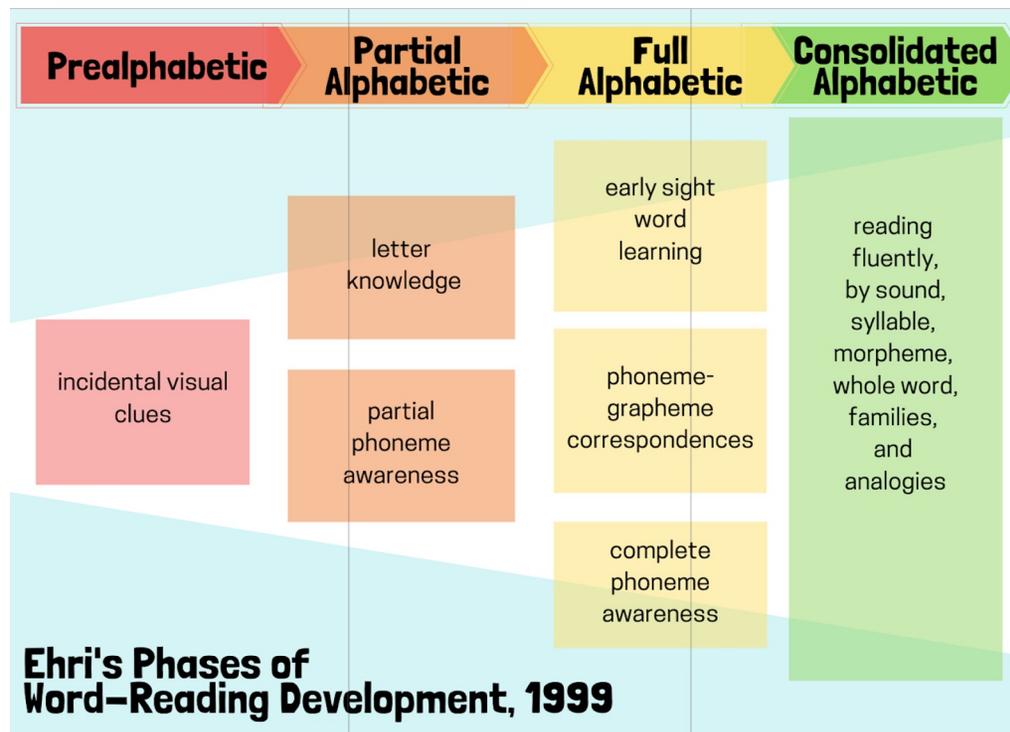
Teach the Routine:

- the time frame for instruction
- what you expect from the time
- the acceptable noise level
- how students can move about
- when it's acceptable to interrupt the small group
- how to interrupt the small group

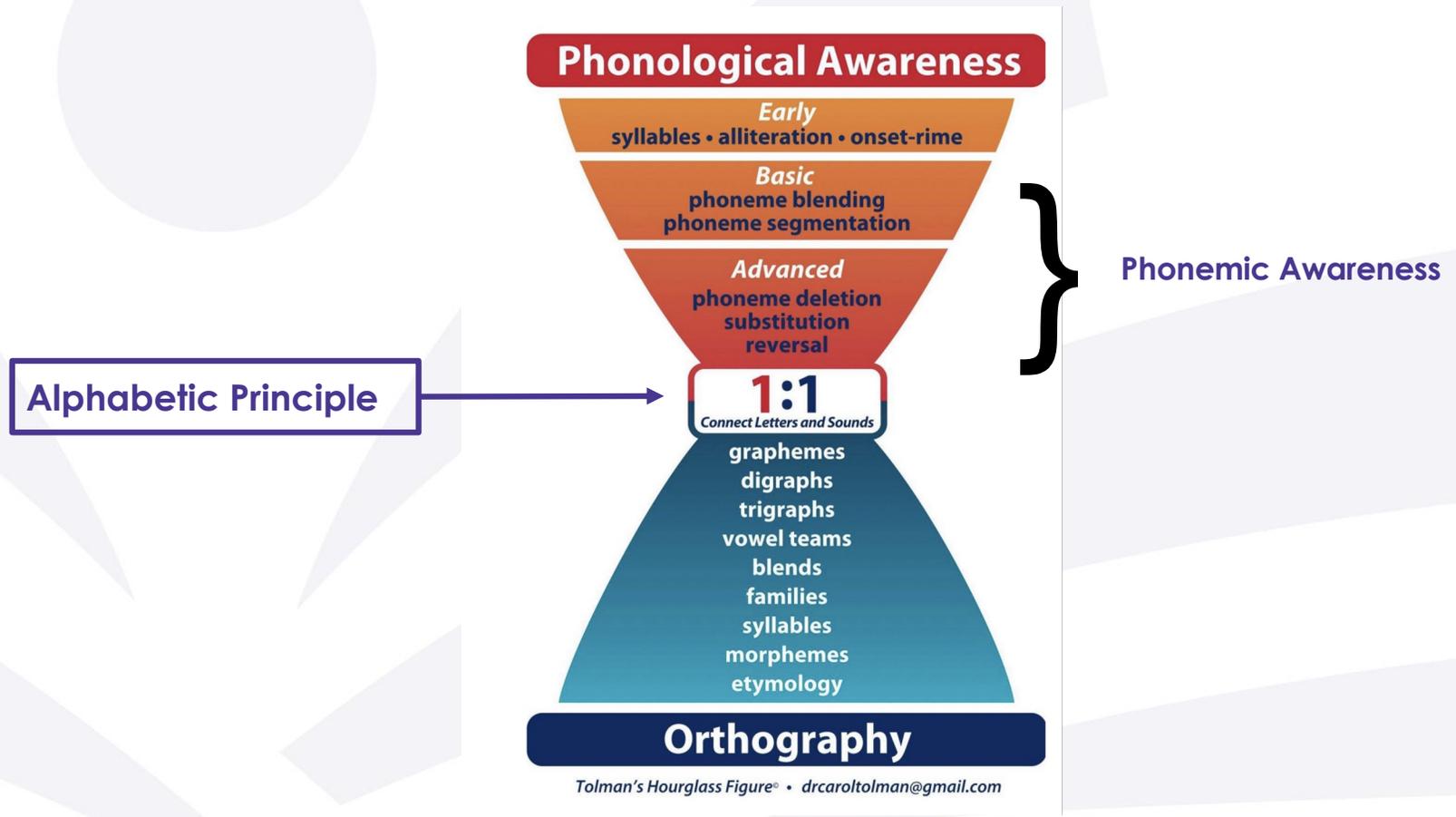
How to teach students to work independently?

- write out the goals on chart paper or under a document camera and keep them visible during the lesson
- show examples and nonexamples of end products if applicable
- give options/choice
- what to do next posted in room

Ehri's Phases



Tolman's Hourglass Figure



How do I group for Small Group Instruction?

TIER 1

- (NRP, 2000) Recommends providing differentiated reading instruction for ALL students based on assessments of their current reading levels.

TIER 2

- (NRP, 2000) Recommends student be placed into small homogenous groups ranging from three to four students using curricula that address the major components of reading instruction (comprehension, fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary).



Image Source: https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRg-y1uyVwliwB0H6AwHXS_9nO02avnt-nASbUaDbE7E8DIZiBX&s

Small Group Instruction Planning Tool

Use a small group instruction planning tool to ensure you are grouping students according to their specific area of need

Keep in mind: If you place a student in a group for an instructional purpose, you must have a sound reason behind this action



Date(s) of lesson delivery	
Lesson title(s)	
Key standards addressed	
Essential skills needed for mastery of lesson objectives	

Student name	Observed/documentated areas of struggle	Small group planning notes

Small Group Planning Checklist

Use a checklist to determine if your classroom is ready and equipped to begin implementing flexible small group instruction

This checklist should establish:

- What your students need to effectively carry out established routines
- What student participation in literacy-rich small group activities should include
- What teachers should be doing to strategically group students

Small Group Planning Checklist

Use the following checklist to evaluate your current small group instructional practices. Check each box if the element is present in your classroom.

Establishing Procedures/Expectations

- Have small group procedures been introduced and reinforced?
- Are procedures posted in the classroom and are they visible to all students?
- Did the teacher assign a role to each group member?
- Do students know the instructions and objectives for all activities they will be completing?
- Do students know what to do instead of requesting assistance from the teacher?
- Do students have access to a timer to assist them in seamlessly transitioning into the next activity?
- Do students know what to do if they finish early?
- Do students know the guidelines for using electronic devices during small group time?

Student Participation

- Are students participating in their groups?
- Are students completing phonemic awareness activities?
- Are students engaged in phonics activities?
- Are students working with vocabulary?
- Are students practicing their fluency and prosody?
- Are students engaged in reading comprehension activities?
- Are students reading and writing?
- Are students working collaboratively with one another?

Data Collection/Analysis

- Am I using data to determine how I group students during small group instruction time?
- Am I documenting the progress of the students I am meeting with in small groups?
- Am I assessing the progress of the students not working in the small group?
- Am I assessing the progress of all groups on a regular basis?

Progress Monitoring



THE CENTER
for Literacy & Learning

Progress Monitoring Form

Date:									
Skill:									

- Use student progress data from small group instruction to determine the next steps
- Teachers need to be able to determine whether or not students were able to fill the determined gap(s) within small group instruction time
- If progress was not made, the skill may have to be revisited the following day so these gaps do not continue to widen

Learning Stations and Independent Work

Students who are not involved in a small group with the teacher should be engaged in meaningful work related to literacy.

Variety of differentiated learning stations that are aligned to standards and objectives.

Examples of work students can do independently while their classmates are in small group:

- Writing workshops
- Book studies
- Skills practice
- Computer/iPad based learning activities
- Instructional games

All learning stations and independent work must align with current standards and objectives for that grade level to ensure that further learning gaps are not created.

Learning Stations and Independent Work

When planning for your learning stations and independent work,
keep the Five (5) Components of Reading Instruction in mind!

Phonics **Vocabulary**
Comprehension **Fluency**
Phonemic Awareness

Text Reading During Small Group

Schedule Option A

5 minutes per day
25 minutes per week

900 minutes per year/

15 hours per year



Schedule Option B

15 minutes per day
75 minutes per week

2,700 minutes per year/

45 hours per year

Adapted and used with permission from Wiley Blevins Presentation at WSRA Milwaukee, WI, February 2020
image-from-rawpixel-id-50800-original.pdf

What are the others doing?

- **Writing**- Write the room, sentence building, picture prompts, sequence writing
- **Reading**- buddy reading, listening to audio, EPIC, decodables
- **Technology**- APPS galore, SPIRE, LEXIA- Power Up

WRITE THE ROOM  Name: _____

1	_____	7	_____
2	_____	8	_____
3	_____	9	_____
4	_____	10	_____
5	_____	11	_____
6	_____	12	_____



Progress Monitoring

- Students who are not working directly with their teacher during small group instruction time should produce a product that shows if they are/are not showing progress
- This data should be collected and analyzed in order to determine future small group decisions



Image Source: NY Times

Procedures and Expectations

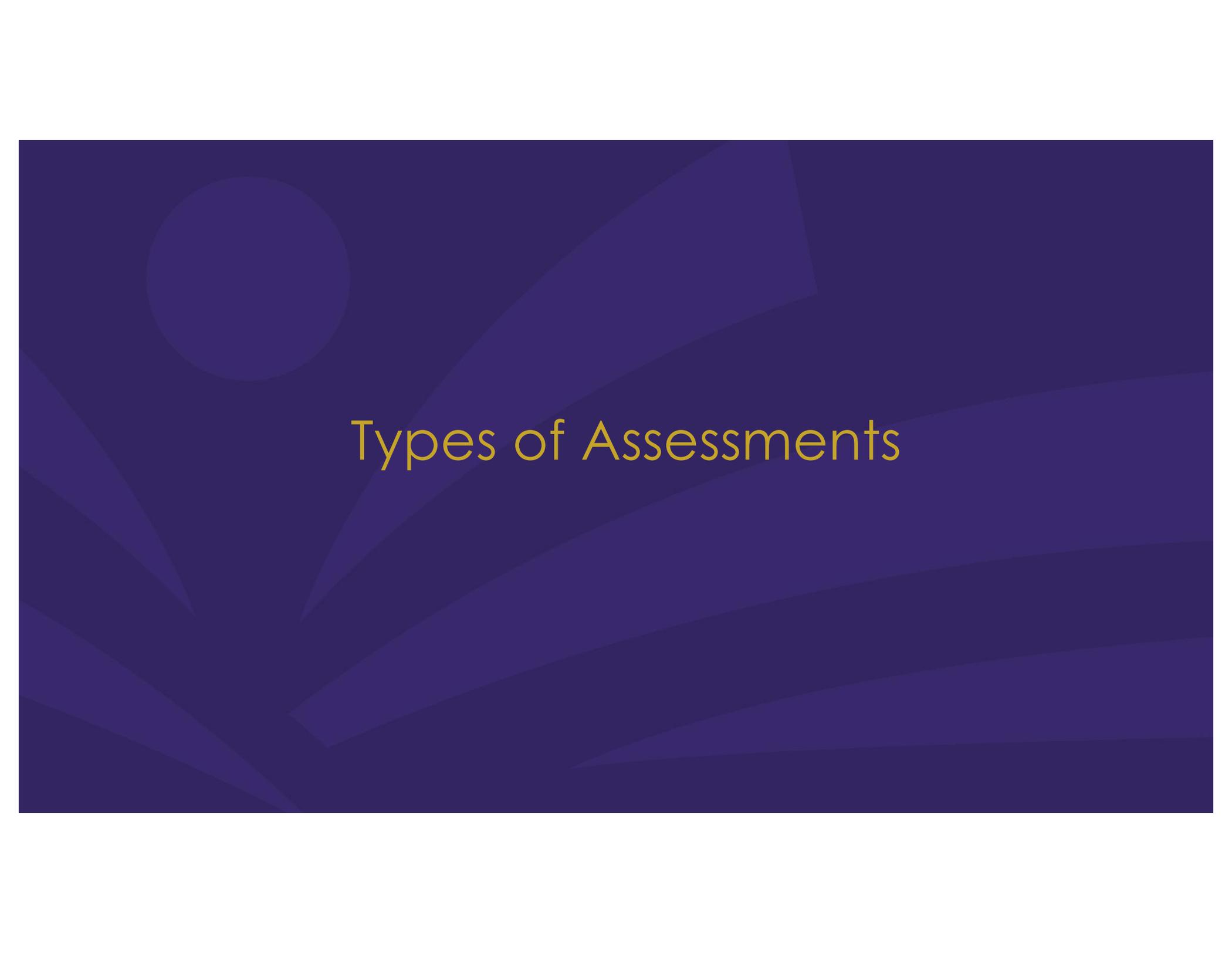
“

Small-group classroom instruction could lead to great learning success or...a total classroom disaster.

Luiza Mureseanu

Education Week

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kg38A1ggYIE&t=13s>

The background is a dark blue gradient with several abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in a slightly lighter shade of blue. These shapes include a circle in the upper left, a large triangle in the upper right, and several elongated, curved shapes that resemble stylized rays or abstract forms. The overall composition is modern and minimalist.

Types of Assessments

Universal Screeners

“Temperature Check”

- Determine “health” of the student and level of risk
- Administered to all students (3x per year)
- Brief, reliable, valid
- Target norms/benchmarks for comparison
 - 50th percentile is the target for ‘on grade level’
- Identify who needs further diagnostic assessment
- Examples:
 - Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
 - Nonsense Word Fluency
 - ORF

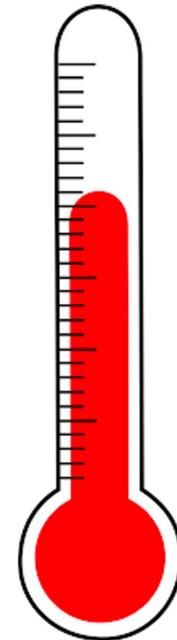


Image Source: Shutterstock

Diagnostic Assessments

“Deep Dive”

- Identify specific skill gaps
- Assess mastery of specific skills
- Use data to plan targeted, prescriptive and systematic intervention instruction

**PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
SCREENING TEST (PAST) FORM A**
David A. Kilpatrick, Ph.D. © 2003, 2010, 2019
Adapted from the levels used in McGinnis (1990) & Kover (1975)

Name: _____ Date: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____
Teacher: _____ D.O.B.: _____ Evaluator: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: See *Essentials for Reading Success* Chapter 11: “Assessment of Phonological Awareness” for how to administer the PAST.

RESULTS:

	Correct	Automatic	Highest Correct Level:
Basic Syllable	___/12	___/12	(Levels not passed below the highest correct level)
Onset-Rime	___/10	___/10	
Basic Phoneme	___/10	___/10	
Advanced Phoneme	___/20	___/20	Highest Automatic Level:
Test Total	___/52	___/52	(Non-automatic levels below highest automatic level)

Approximate Grade Level: Pre/KK K Late Kindergarten 1st Late 1st/Early 2nd 2nd Late 2nd to adult

Note: The grade levels listed throughout the PAST are estimates based on various research studies and clinical experience. They are not formalized norms.

I. SYLLABLE LEVELS

Basic Syllable Levels (D, E2 - preschool to mid kindergarten; E3 - mid to late kindergarten)

LEVEL D Say bookcase. Now say bookcase but don't say book.
 FEEDBACK: "If you say bookcase without saying book, you got D." _____
 D1 (book)case _____ (sun)bet _____ (space)ship _____
 D2 (sil)ver _____ (mar)ket _____ (gen)tle _____
 _____/3 A: ___/3
 _____/3 A: ___/3

LEVEL E Say umbrella. Now say umbrella but don't say um.
 FEEDBACK: "If you say umbrella without saying um, you got E2." _____
 E2 (um)brella _____ (fan)taastic _____ (Oc)tober _____
 E3 (al)phabets _____ (Sat)urday _____ (tr)icycle _____
 _____/3 A: ___/3
 _____/3 A: ___/3

Basic Syllable Total: ___/12 A: ___/12

II. ONSET-RIME LEVELS

Onset-Rime Levels (kindergarten to mid first grade)

LEVEL F Say feet. Now say feet but don't say ff.
 FEEDBACK: "If you say feet without the ff, you got egg. Bet call!" _____

DIAGNOSTIC DECODING SURVEYS
Form A

Begin Adv

Words and Sentences to Read

see one they you are
rag lid dot ham bet
rich shop tack quit moth
dust step trip pond brag

The cat hid in a box.
The fresh fish is still on the wet grass.
Six flat shells were in my bath.

vop yud zin keb
shap thid chat week

Progress Monitoring

“GPS System”

- Brief, valid, reliable
- Measures progress to goal
- Evaluates if the instructional plan or intervention working
- Assessment should closely match what is being taught in intervention
- Examples: Nonsense Word Fluency, ORF, MAZE



Image Source: PNGitem

Assessing to Inform Instruction

Think about your current or past structures for collecting and analyzing student data.

Are you collecting and using data in a way that aligns to the intended use of the assessment?
If not, what can be improved?

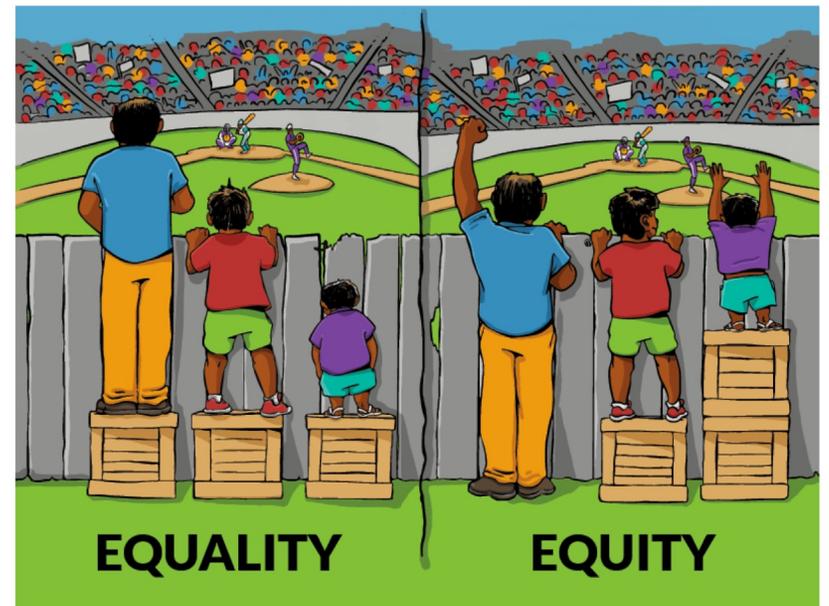


Image: Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

The background is a solid dark purple color. It features several abstract, semi-transparent geometric shapes in a slightly lighter shade of purple. These shapes include a circle in the upper left quadrant, a large curved shape resembling a stylized 'S' or a wave in the center, and several elongated, pointed shapes scattered across the lower half of the image. The overall effect is a modern, layered design.

Literacy-Focused Small Group Instruction Scenarios

Scenario #1: Grades K-2



Students are not articulating a particular phoneme correctly and they are not ready to move on to the next day's lesson.

Scenario #2: Grades 1-2

Students are struggling to read grade-level texts with the correct rate, accuracy, and/or prosody.



Scenario #3: Grades 4-8



Students are struggling to integrate academic vocabulary and/or high-leverage vocabulary words into their written responses.

Scenario #4: Grades 4-8

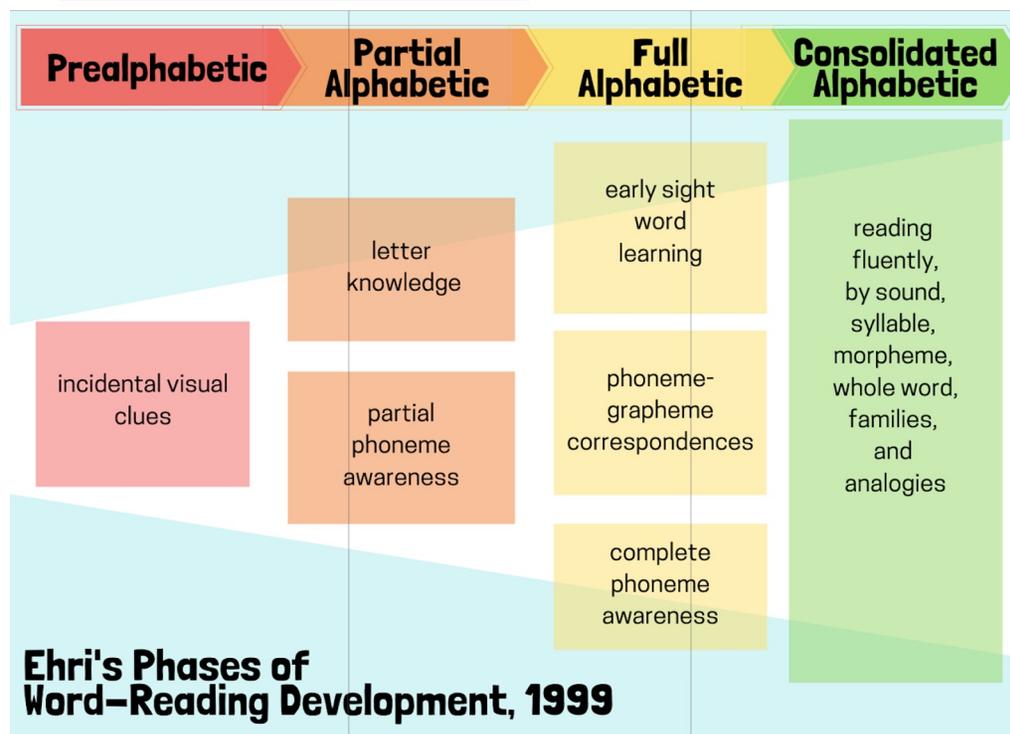
Students are struggling to read and comprehend a text that is essential in order to successfully complete future culminating assignments.



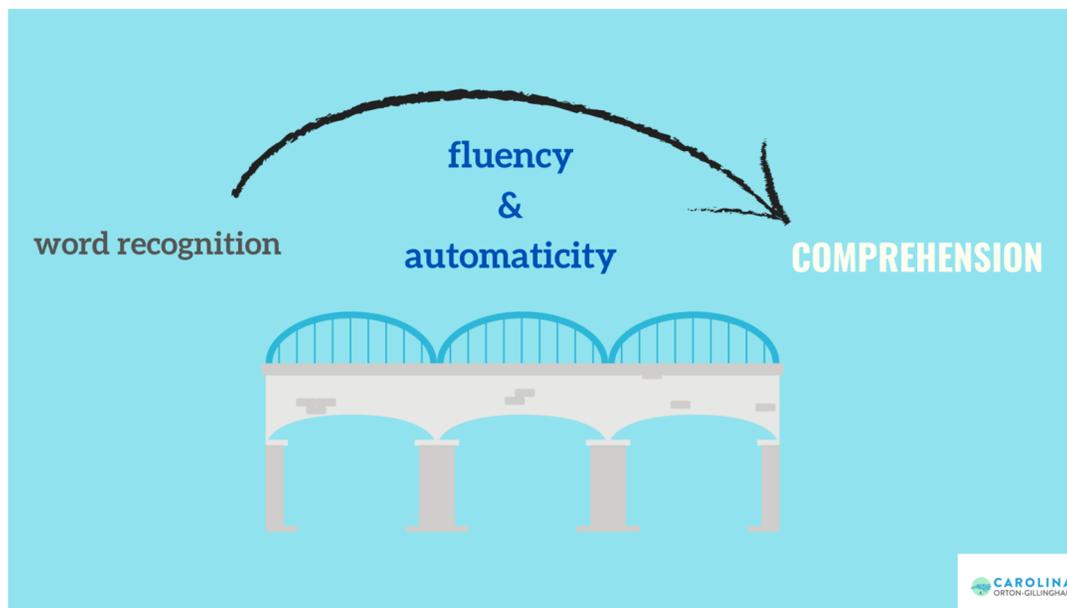
Small Group Teacher Table

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wU03n0Cs>

How to Group for Small Group Instruction:



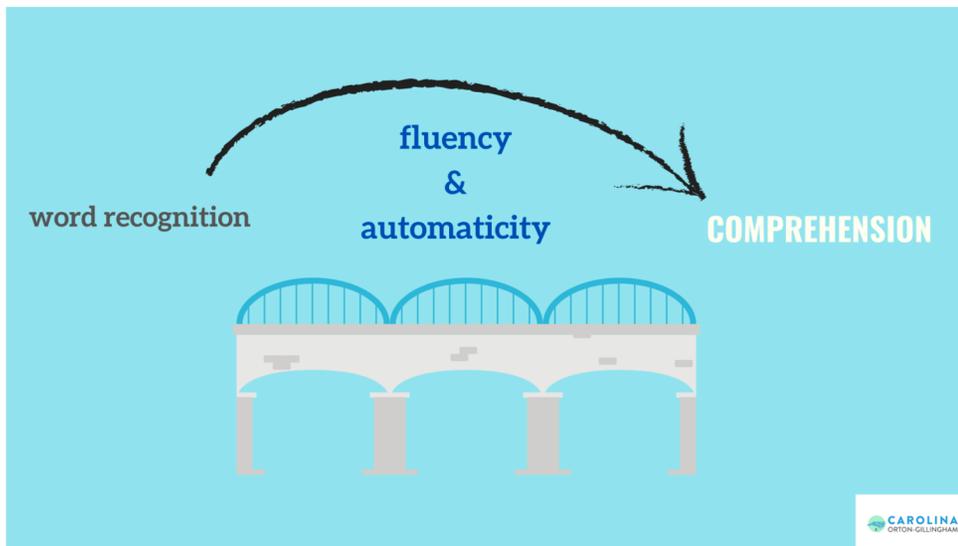
Fluency



“**Fluency** is defined as the ability to read with **speed, accuracy, and proper expression.**” - Reading Rockets

- Accurate reader = 95%+
- ORF norms - determine words correct per minute benchmark scores for 1st-8th grade
- Not just a ‘race’ - expression and prosody matter!

Fluency



[Image Source](#)

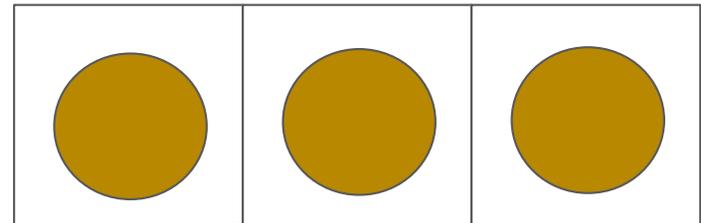
Instructional Implications & Tips

- Daily fluency practice is essential (5-10 minutes total)
- Text should be at independent reading level: 90%-95% accuracy
- Use decodable fluency passages when learning a new sound-spelling pattern
- Incorporate student data tracking - increases motivation
- Share data with families

Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping

(sound-letter)

1. Say the word.
1. Segment word into phonemes.
1. Move a chip/cube/penny into box from left to right while saying each phoneme.
1. Write the grapheme(s)(letter) that represents each phoneme (sound).
1. Read the whole word.



Discussion: How does this practice support students with developing orthographic mapping and sight word recognition?

The background is a solid dark purple color. It features several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in a slightly lighter shade of purple. These shapes include a circle in the upper left quadrant, a large curved shape resembling a stylized leaf or a swoosh that spans across the middle, and several other angular and curved shapes that create a layered, abstract effect. The text "Literacy Centers" is centered horizontally and vertically in a yellow, sans-serif font.

Literacy Centers

What are the others doing?

- **Writing**- Write the room, sentence building, picture prompts, sequence writing
- **Reading**- buddy reading, listening to audio, EPIC, decodables
- **Technology**- APPS galore, SPIRE, LEXIA- Power Up

WRITE THE ROOM  Name: _____

1	_____	7	_____
2	_____	8	_____
3	_____	9	_____
4	_____	10	_____
5	_____	11	_____
6	_____	12	_____



Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

Phonological Awareness (big units)

All sound based and oral, students can listen and respond. Some examples include:

Syllables: /ta/ /ble/

Alliteration: Sally sells seashells by the seashore.

Onset-Rime: /c/ /at/ or /ch/ /ase/

Deleting Syllables: /cupcake/ = ~~cup~~/cake/

Substituting Onset: /lap/ = Replace /l/ with /c/ = /cap/

Counting the number of words in a sentence: The students ran to the slide. = student replies 6

Phonemic Awareness (individual phonemes)

Part of phonological awareness - being able to hear and manipulate individual phonemes. Some examples include:

Phoneme Blending: /c/ /a/ /t/ = /cat/

Phoneme Segmenting: /shack/ = /sh/ /a/ /ck/

Deleting Phonemes: /send/ = ~~s~~ = /end/

Substituting Medial Vowel: say /cat/, have student substitute /a/ for /o/ = student replies /cot/

Phonics

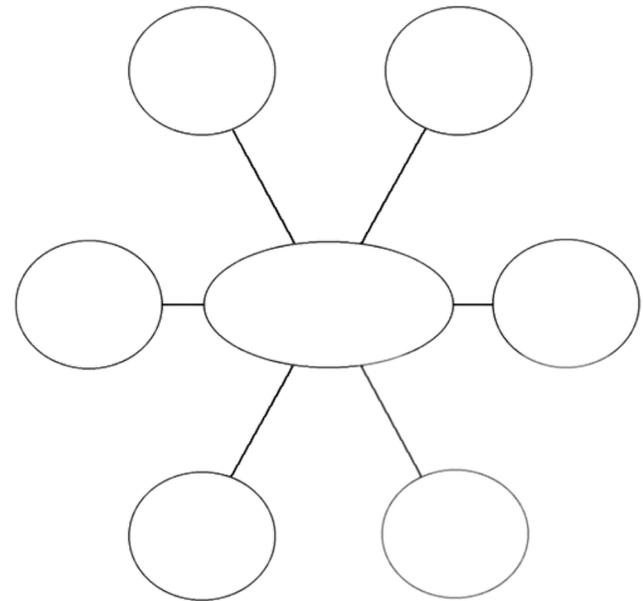
Matching phonemes (sounds) to graphemes (letters that represent a sound).

- Use your spelling/phonics pattern for the week
- Letter Tiles
- Word parts- create new words
- Blending focus
- Word Awareness



Vocabulary

- Build Background Knowledge - video clips - create digital images
- Vocabulary Cards - Graphic Organizers
- Talk with partner about the words
- Sorting words by category



Fluency/Comprehension

Decodables

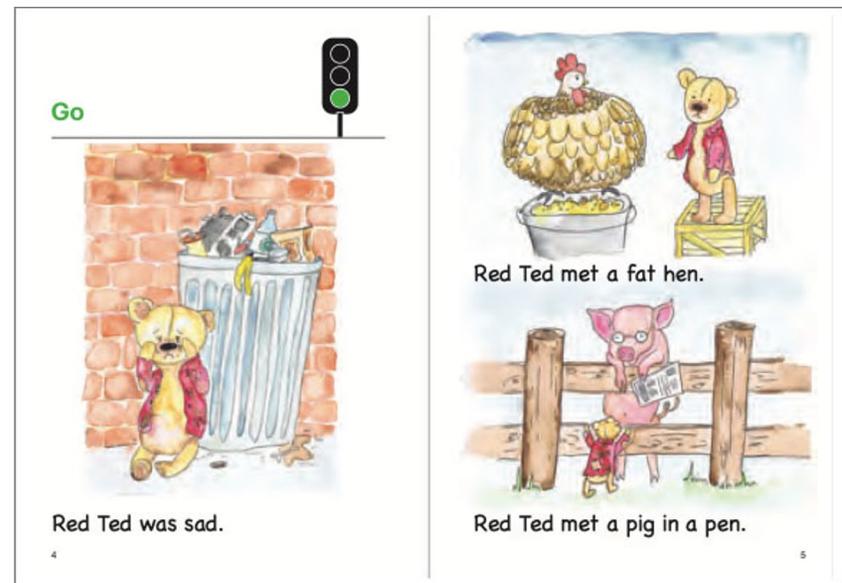
Decodables

Decodables

Repetition

Repetition

Repetition



A sample page from Red Ted from the [InitialLit](#) readers series.

“Differentiation is simply a teacher attending to the learning needs of a particular student or small groups of students, rather than teaching a class as though all individuals in it were basically alike.”

Carol Ann Tomlinson

www.mycll.org

© 2022 The Center for Literacy & Learning. All Rights Reserved

Let's Review

- Small group instruction, as any instruction where a teacher is working with 5 students, are fewer. It usually follows whole-group instruction.
- Assessments should DRIVE our groupings- Screen then Diagnose
- Ehri's Stages of Reading Development- Pre, Partial, Full, and Consolidated
- Repetition is KEY!
- Practice makes perfect!

References

- Scarborough, H. S. (2001). *Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice*. In S. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook for research in early literacy*, (pp. 971-10). Guilford.
- Beech, John. (2005). Ehri's model of phases of learning to read: A brief critique. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 28, 50 - 58. 10.1111/j.1467-9817.2005.00252.x.
- Structured Literacy*. (2022). Arizona Department of Education. Retrieved May 23, 2022 from <https://www.azed.gov/scienceofreading/structured-literacy>
- The Reading League. (2022). *Science of Reading: Defining Guide*. <https://www.thereadingleague.org/what-is-the-science-of-reading/>
- Typical vs. Structured Literacy*. (2022). *Breaking the Code: Phonics & Reading*. Retrieved May 23, 2022 from <https://www.breakingthecode.com/printables/>
- Tolman, C. (n.d.). *Introduction to the Tolman Hourglass Figure* [video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uGm7r3JdyY>
- 95% Group. (2017). 10 Success Factors for Literacy Intervention. Retrieved from <https://www.95percentgroup.com/special-topics/10-success-factors-for-literacy-intervention>
- Gersten, R., Compton, D., Connor, C.M., Dimino, J., Santoro, L., Linan-Thompson, S., and Tilly, W.D. (2008). *Assisting students struggling with reading: Response to Intervention and multi-tier intervention for reading in the primary grades. A practice guide*. (NCEE 2009-4045).



Everyone is empowered through literacy.

www.mycll.org

© 2022 The Center for Literacy & Learning. All Rights Reserved