Unlocking Literacy: Phonological Foundations for Diverse Learners

Charting the Cs Conference 2025:

To Literacy and Beyond

Cooperation
Communication
Collaboration

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Raina Askin

- 3 Time Dragon Graduate
  - BS in Elementary Education
  - Master's in Educational Leadership
  - Ed Specialist Degree (Prek-12)
- Former MTSS Mentor
- Former Prek-12 Principal
- LETRS Facilitator, PBIS Trainer, Lindamood Bell, CAREIALL, PLC, and Trauma Informed Trained
- Current COMPASS Literacy Coach for LCSC

Nicole Perman

- SLP with 15+ years of experience
- BS in Speech Language Hearing Sciences
- MS in Speech Language Pathology
- Certificate of Clinical Competence ASHA
- Passion for literacy
  - Trained in Lindamood Bell LIPS
  - Certified LETRS Facilitator
- Current SLP in the Lake Park Audubon School District (Active member of the MTSS teams, PBIS team leader, TCIT coach)

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:
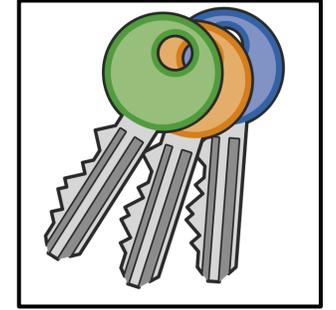
- Define phonological skills

- State the importance of phonemic awareness as a predictor of reading success

- Apply and differentiate phonological instruction, strategies and experiences across ages, and needs to support phonological development

- Understand the significance of assessment of phonological skill levels

Building Blocks of Literacy

Phonics – rules between phonemes and graphemes (letters)

Phonemic/Phonological Awareness - ability to perceive and discriminate individual sounds, rhyming, blending, segmenting, and manipulating speech sounds

Oral Language – spoken words to express one's knowledge and ideas.

Image: Mrs. Wordsmith Website

READING COMPREHENSION

VOCABULARY

FLUENCY

PHONICS

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Building Blocks of Literacy, cont.

Text Comprehension - ability to process text, understand meaning, & to analyze using the reader's bkgd knowledge relies on syntax, semantics, & linguistic skills, relational reasoning.

Vocabulary (semantics) – the words in a language and their meaning

Reading Fluency - ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression

Building Blocks of Literacy, cont. 2

Plus Speech Sound Acquisition – students with speech sound disorders often show difficulties in phonology and morphology

Plus Morphology – supports reading fluency, phonological awareness, syntax, and vocabulary acquisition

READING COMPREHENSION
VOCABULARY
FLUENCY
PHONICS
PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Differences Between Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

Phonological Awareness

The ability to hear and manipulate larger units of sound.

- syllable segmentation
- onset rime
- alliteration
- rhyming

Phonemic Awareness

The ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.

- phoneme blending
- phoneme segmenting

Segmenting & Blending proficiency is a major predictor of future reading problems. (Scarborough & Brady, 2002)

Speech to Print

- The two best indicators of reading success are **phonemic awareness** and **alphabet knowledge**.
- The more we provide the **oral language foundation**, the **faster the sound-letter correspondence** begins to take shape.(Moats, 2000 and Moats, 2005)

Image credit: https://learningbydesign.com/why-spell-links/
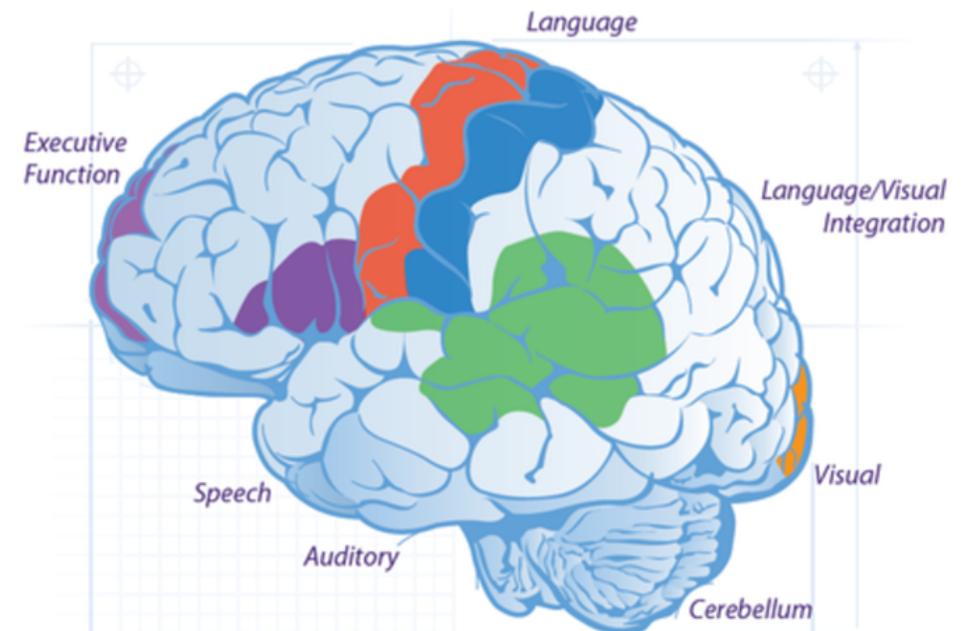
Definition of Literacy

- Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyze, and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas, and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school (Ewing, 2016).

- The word literacy is defined as the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world.

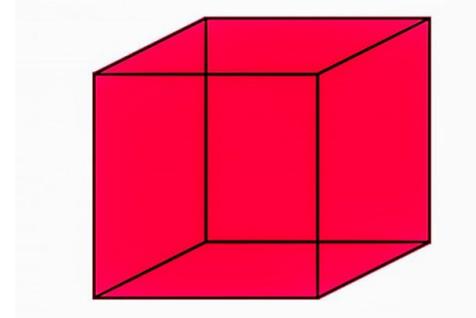 (National Literacy Trust: literacytrust.org.uk/)

Scarborough's Reading Rope

Scarborough's Reading Rope (view larger image)

Figure 1.9 Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001)
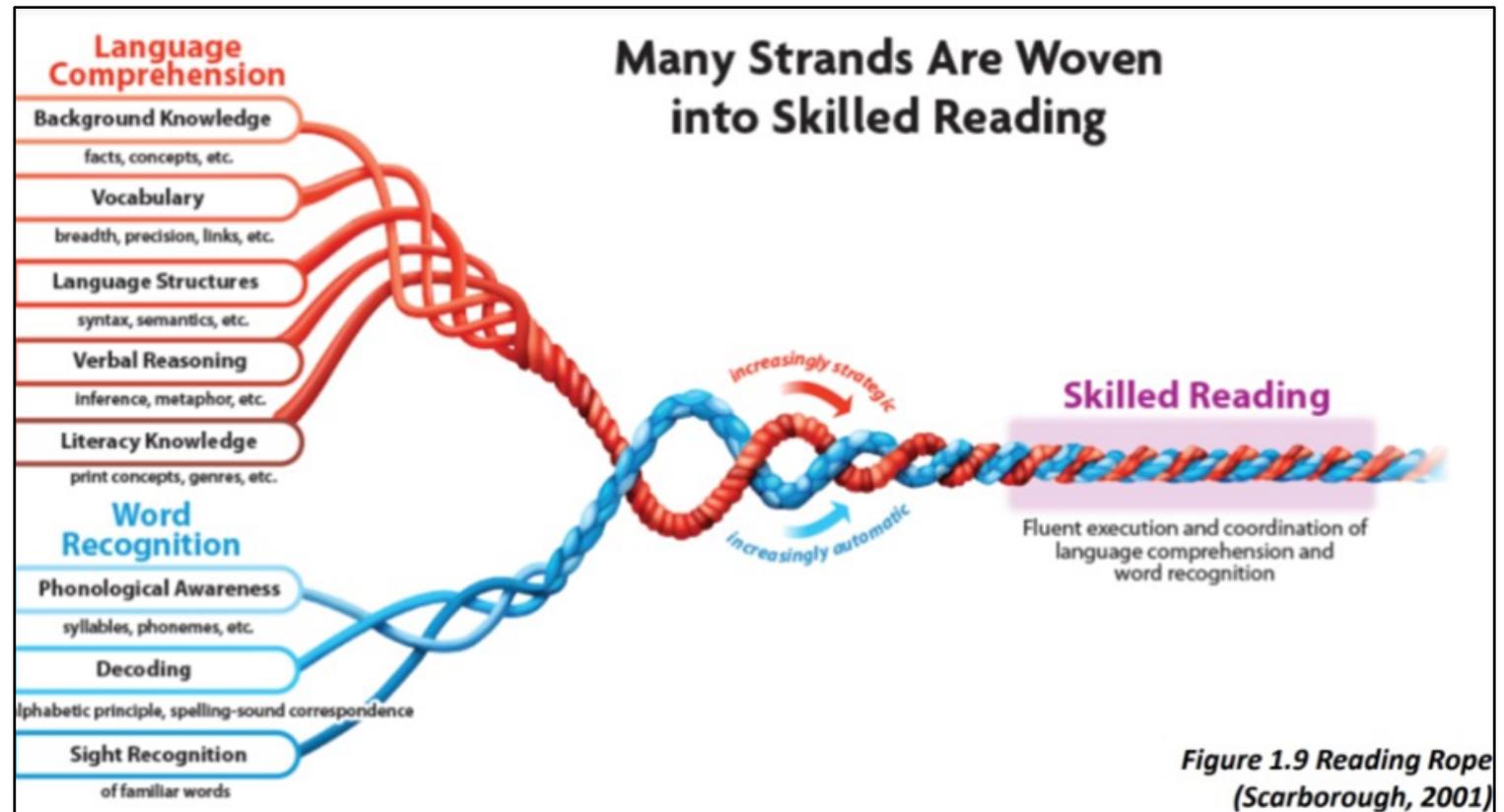
Reflection on Brain Science and Learning Theory

What is something that squares with your thinking?

What is still circling in your head?

Dyslexia & Specific Learning Disabilities

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is **neurobiological** in origin. It is characterized by **difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition** and by **poor spelling and decoding** abilities. These difficulties typically **result from a deficit in the phonological component of language** that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

(Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003, p. 1); https://dyslexiaida.org/definition-of-dyslexia/

Categories of Developmental Reading Difficulties
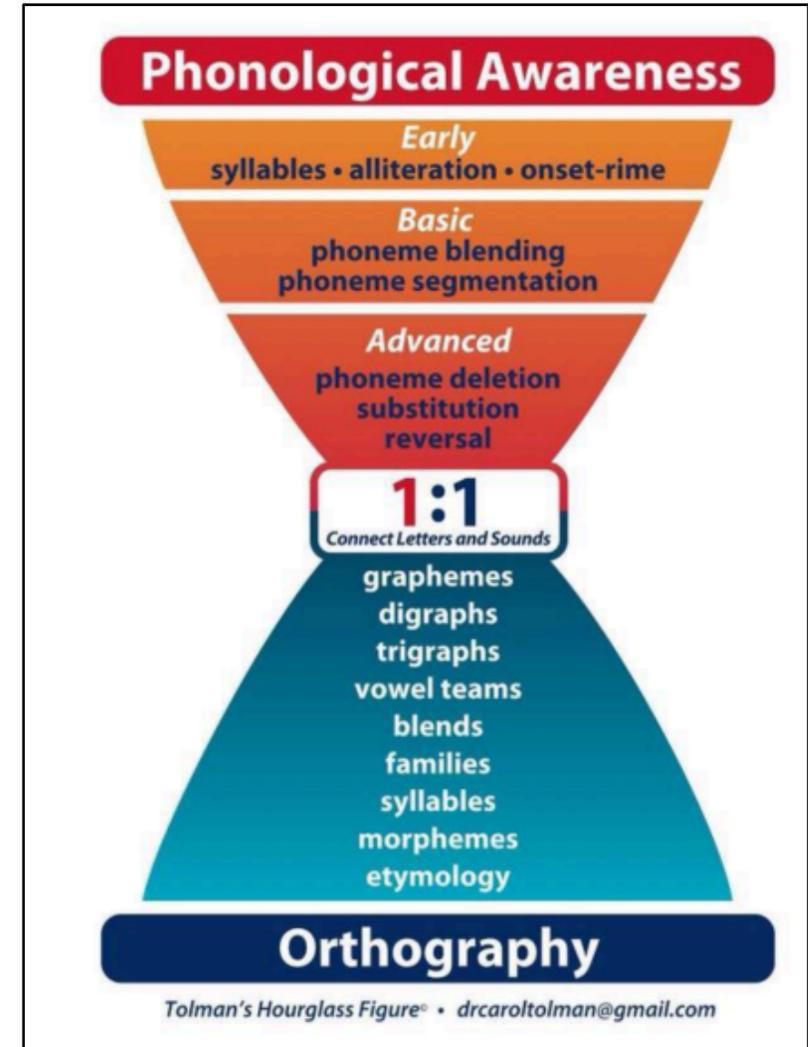
- Phonological
- Orthographic
- Comprehension

Carol Tolman's Hourglass

Carol Tolman's Hourglass (view larger image)

Keys

★ Phonological Awareness

★ Phonemic Awareness at Increasingly
Complex Levels.

★ 1:1 Correspondence Shifts Strategies Used

★ Vocabulary & Context Throughout
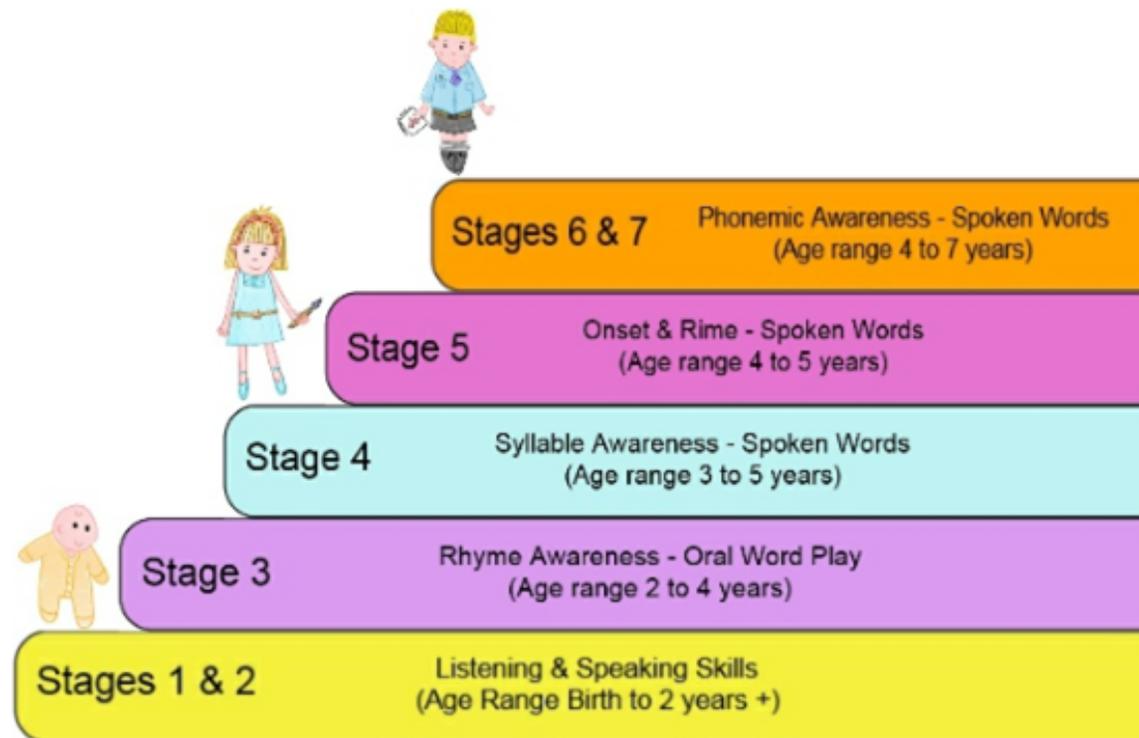
Typical Progression (Source: "Keys to Literacy")

[Typical Progression (view larger image)](#)

Word-Reading Development		
Grade	Phonological Skill	Word-Reading
PreK-K	**Early phonological awareness**: rhyming, alliteration, first sounds	**Letters & Sounds**: requires simple phonology to learn sounds that correspond to letters
K-1	**Basic phonemic awareness**: blending, segmenting	**Phonic Decoding**: requires letter sound knowledge and blending; a gateway to orthographic mapping
2-3+	**Advanced phonemic awareness**: phonemic proficiency including phoneme manipulation	**Orthographic Mapping**: requires letter-sound skills and advanced phonemic awareness

Phonological Instructional Tools and Techniques

1. Early Oral Language Skills
   o Listening & Speaking
2. Basic
   o Rhyming & Syllable Detection
   o Phoneme Isolation, Blending and Segmenting
3. Advanced
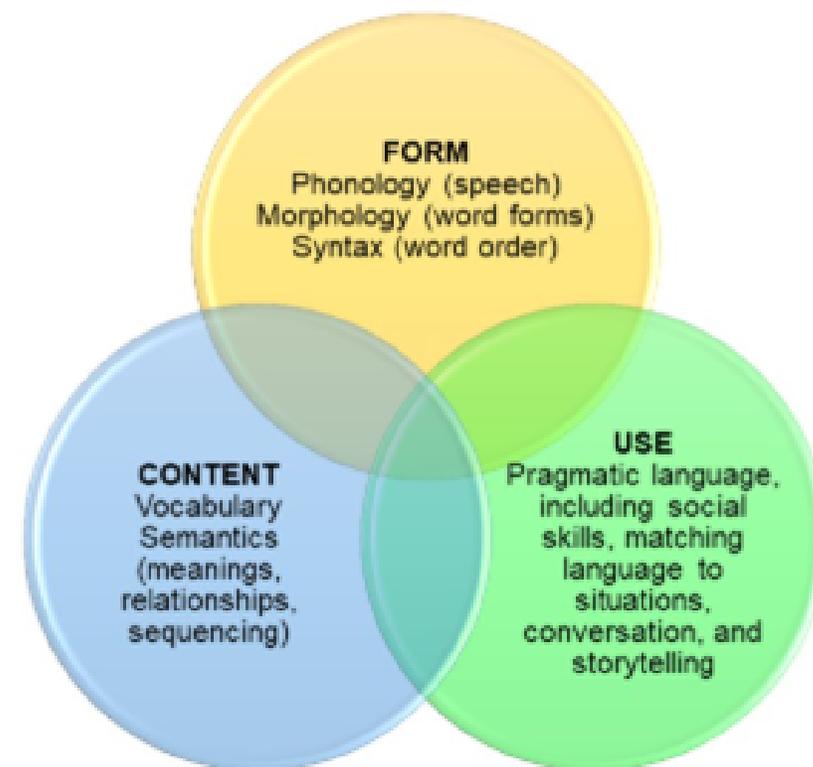   o Manipulation, Deletion, and Substitution

www.teachphonics.co.uk

Stages 6 & 7 — Phonemic Awareness - Spoken Words (Age range 4 to 7 years)

Stage 5 — Onset & Rime - Spoken Words (Age range 4 to 5 years)

Stage 4 — Syllable Awareness - Spoken Words (Age range 3 to 5 years)

Stage 3 — Rhyme Awareness - Oral Word Play (Age range 2 to 4 years)

Stages 1 & 2 — Listening & Speaking Skills (Age Range Birth to 2 years +)

Expressive (Speaking) Oral Language

Expressive & Receptive (Listening) Keys

Samples of Expressive Oral Language

Audio link to 8 Year Old (going into 3rd grade) - Dash

Audio link to 9 Year Old (going into 4th grade) - Averi

FORM
Phonology (speech)
Morphology (word forms)
Syntax (word order)

CONTENT
Vocabulary
Semantics
(meanings,
relationships,
sequencing)

USE
Pragmatic language,
including social
skills, matching
language to
situations,
conversation, and
storytelling

Bloom & Lahey, 1978.

Oral Language Development Tools

Turn & Talk

What is **expressive language**?

Application tools:

- **Modeling & Expanding** (grammar, vocabulary, syntax, context)
- Imitate (grammar, vocabulary, sound production)
- Conversational Turns
- Engage in open-ended conversations (tell me…)
- Expand/teach vocabulary
- Encourage imaginative play
- Provide **commentary** throughout the day

Early Listening Skills and Rhyming

Early Listening Skills (view larger image)

Create a Phonological Rich Environment

- Songs and Singing
- Nursery Rhymes, Rhyming Sorts, Sentence Completion, I Spy Rhyme
  - **3 things:**name 3 things rhyme
- Read Alouds
  - Choose books that emphasize rhyme, rhythm, and repetition
- Practice Following 1-2 Step Oral Directions

ONE WORLD INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

5 Strategies to Improve Your Child's Listening Skills

1. **Narrate a story** that is interactive and engaging

2. **Hold a conversation** and show them the power of active listening

3. **Engage them with interesting hands-on activities** that need instructions. When they are interested, they will be eager to listen to the instructions.

4. **Model good listening behaviour,** make eye contact and ask thoughtful questions when having a conversation

5. **Provide them opportunities to make decisions** that help them feel like they have a voice and choice in what they do

Early Listening Skills and Rhyming, cont.

Create a Phonological Rich Environment

- Poetry
- Listen for the Sound
- Alliteration Games
- Instrument play (ID sounds)
- Understand Basic Concepts
- Identification of body parts, parts of room, etc.

ONE WORLD INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

5 Strategies to Improve Your Child's Listening Skills

① **Narrate a story**
that is interactive and engaging

② **Hold a conversation**
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④ **Model good listening behaviour,**
make eye contact and ask thoughtful questions when having a conversation

⑤ **Provide them opportunities to make decisions**
that help them feel like they have a voice and choice in what they do

Syllable Detection

- Clap, Stomp, Hop, Tap Syllables
- Use Instruments to tap out syllables
- Chin Drop Test
- Syllable Sorting (Ex. Pocket Chart Sort)
- Syllable Bingo
- Building Words with Blocks
- Syllable Frames
- Multisensory (Play-Doh, Treasure Hunt)

WHAT IS A SYLLABLE?

- An uninterrupted segment of sound which is formed by the opening and closing the mouth to form vowels
- Every syllable must have a vowel! Some syllables have 2 vowels that make 1 sound (ex. *ea* in *meat*).
- You count syllables by listening to how many vowel sounds you hear.

👏
that
1 syllable

👏 👏
nap/kin
2 syllables

thriveedservices.com

Understanding Phonemes

[Understanding Phonemes
(view larger image)](#)

Phoneme Isolation

- Teach isolated speech sounds using **articulatory features**
- continuant/stop, noisy/quiet, front/back
  - Continuant= s, f, sh, z, v, th
  - Stop= t, d, b, p, k, g
  - Noisy (voiced)= b, d, g, v, z, vowels
  - Quiet (unvoiced)= p, t, k, f, s, sh
  - Front = p, b, d, t, s, z, f
  - Back = k, g, h

Source: Pro-Ed Lips Mouth Cards

Understanding Phonemes, cont.

How familiar are you with
the categories of phonemes
that we just practiced?
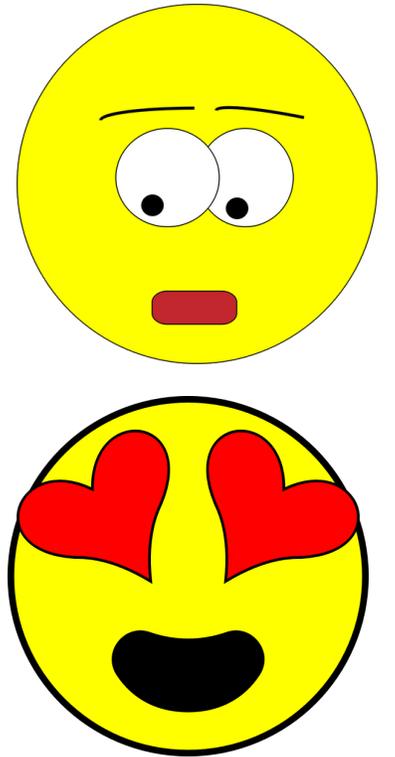
Understanding Consonant Production

Manner	Bilabial		Labiodental		Dental		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+
Stop	/p/	/b/					/t/	/d/			/k/	/g/		
Fricative			/f/	/v/	/th/	/th/	/s/	/z/	/sh/	/zh/			/h/	
Affricate									/ch/	/j/				
Nasal	/m/						/n/				/ng/			
Liquid							/l/		/r/					
Glide	/wh/	/w/							/y/					

Understanding Vowel Formation

Chin Placement

Mouth Formation

Let's Practice together!

Source:
Flipping Pages Book Club Blogspot

The Vowel Circle

ee, ea
i
e
ae, ai, ay
a
u

Sliders
ie
ue
ou, ow
oi, oy

oo
ŏŏ
oa, oe

o   aw, au

Crazy R's

Vowel +R
er ir ur
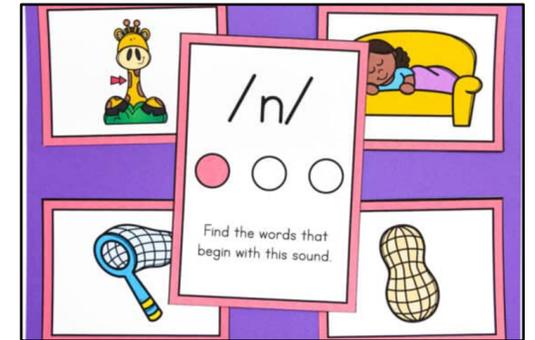ar
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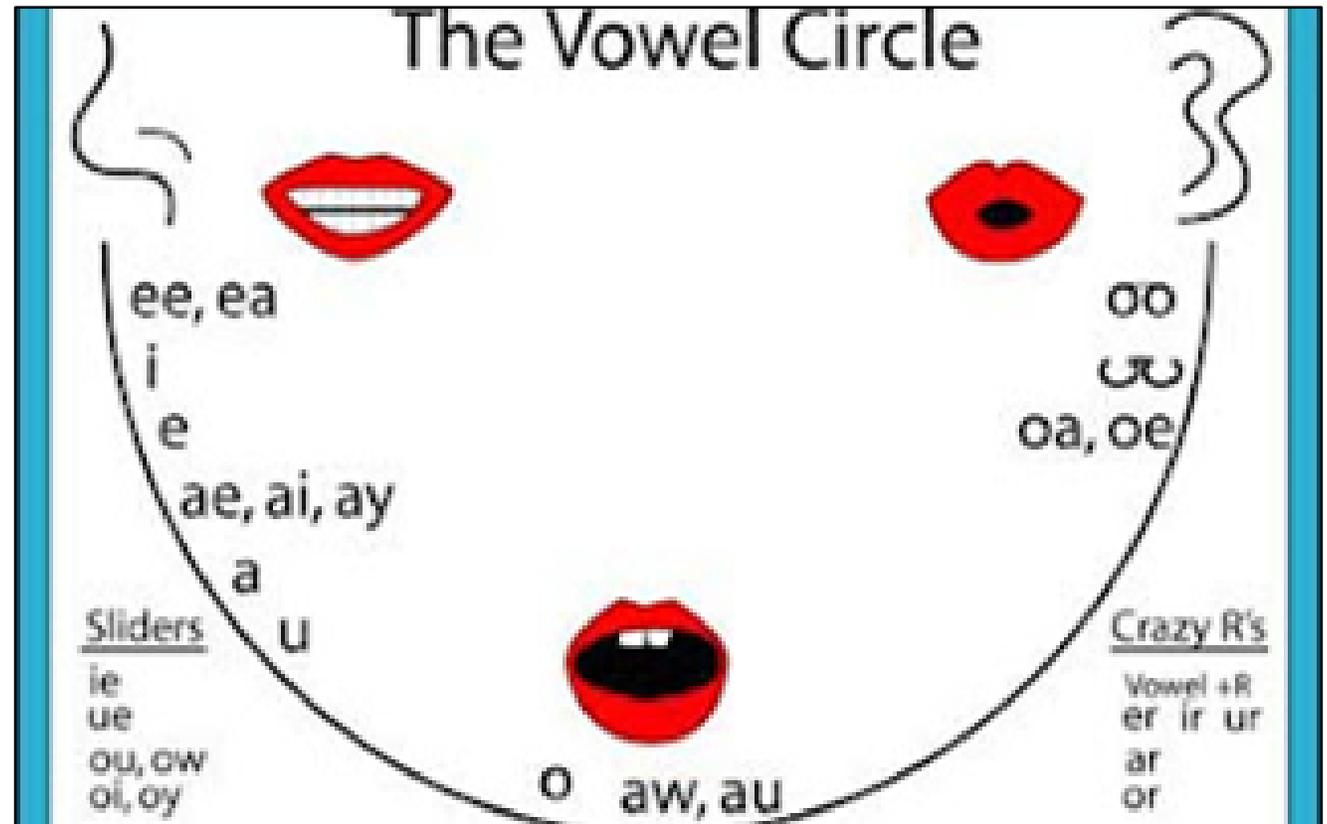
Phoneme Isolation Activities

- **I spy** something that begins with 'ffff'
- **Treasure hunt**– find me something that begins with mmmmm
- **10 things**— name 10 things that start with 'b'
- Identifying the sound heard in beginning, middle, end of CVC words
- Fill in the missing phoneme
- Visual Phonics

Source: Libby Klinner Teaching & Make, Take, and Teach Blog

Segmenting and Blending

Blending is the ability to combine individual sounds, phonemes, to make a word. An example of blending is saying the individual sounds /c/ /r/ /a/ /b/ followed by the ability to say those sounds together as a whole word, **crab**.

Segmenting is the ability to hear a whole word and isolate each sound, phoneme, individually. An example of segmenting is saying the word sledge and then isolating each sound /s/ /l/ /e/ /j/.

Phoneme Blending and Segmenting

Word Chain Practice!

Skill Progression

- CV/VC (at/be)

- CVC (cat)

- CCV/VCC (ble/aft)

- CCVC/CVCC (snip/best)

- CCVCC (troops)

Games/Strategies

Blending (individual phonemes)

- Robot Talk, Songs & Cheers
- Mystery Word
- Blending Slide
- Spider Web (yarn w/letters)
- Tap/Map/Zap

Segmenting (Whole to individual)

- Build a word (identify phonemes)
- Picture Cards

# **More Phoneme Blending & Segmenting Activities**

- Use of colored squares, chips, tiles, mouth pictures and eventually letters to blend and segment sounds

  - Sound Train: use toys or cards to represent sounds.
  - Say the sounds slowly and move the car across
  - Stretch and Slide: stretch out the sounds using hand motions, then slide hands together to blend

- Elkonin Boxes: Use boxes to represent sounds

  - Slide counters or tokens into each box as you blend sounds to form a word.

Source: maketeach.com

Advanced: Manipulation, Deletion, Substitution

- Use of colored squares, chips, tiles, mouth pictures and eventually letters to blend and segment sounds

- Kilpatrick Word Drills Examples:

  - "Say tub, now say tub but change the /t/ to a /l/, Lub"

  - "Say ran, now say ran but change the /a/ to an /u/, Run"

  - "Say crash, now say crash without the /r/, Cash"
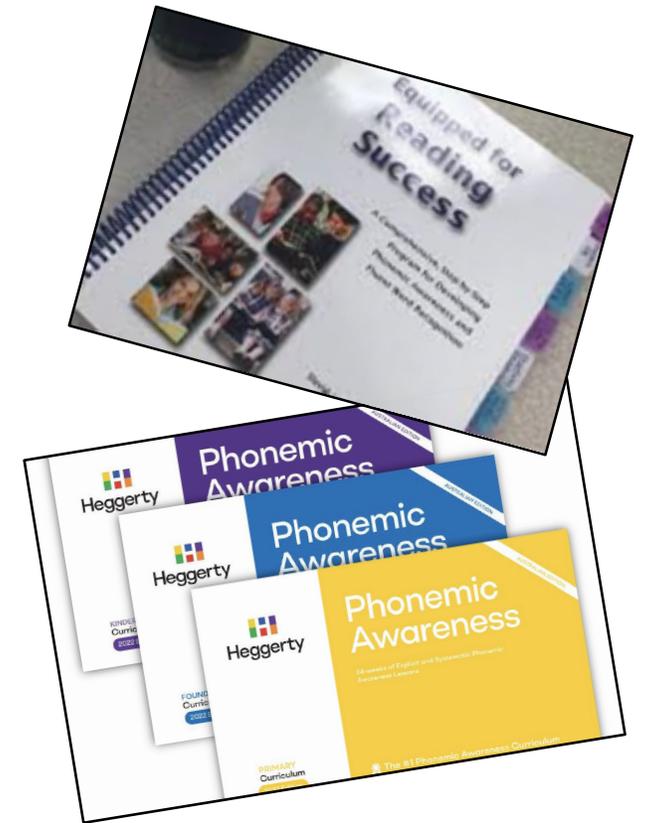
Multi-Tiered Systems of Supportive Inclusive of All

[Multi-Tiered Systems of Supportive Inclusive of All (view larger image)](#)
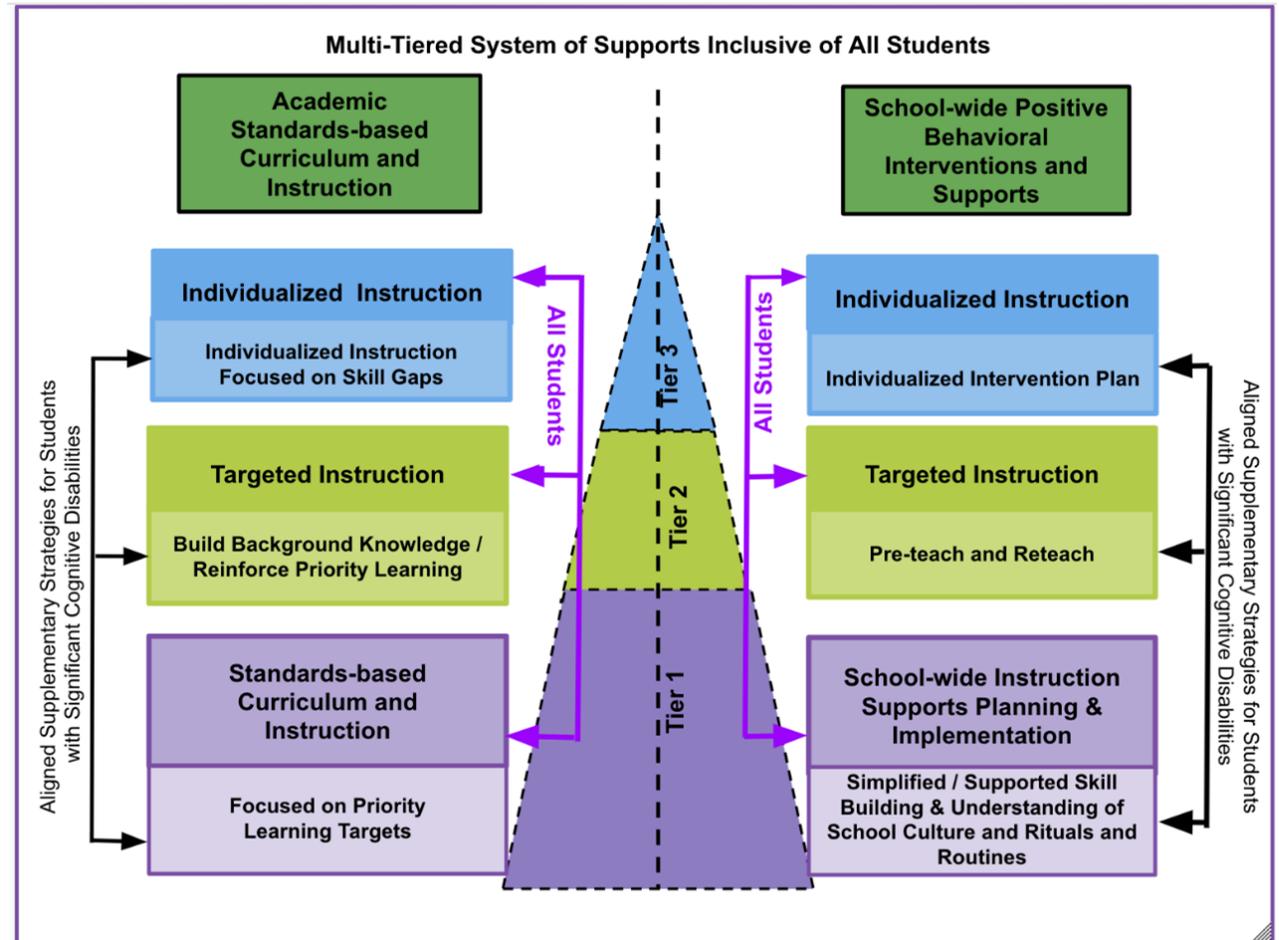
MTSS Identification and Response 'Cycle' (Illuminate Education)

[MTSS Identification and Response 'Cycle' (view larger image)](#)

Evaluation and Assessment

Standardized & Normed Evaluation Examples (Compares student performance)

- Phonological Awareness Test (PAT-2)
- Test of Phonological Awareness (TOPA)
- Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization Test (LAC-3)*

Formative Assessment Examples (Gather Evidence of Student Learning)

- Kilpatrick's PAST (Diagnostic)
- Heggerty Assessment (Curriculum Based Measure)
- FASTBridge and Acadience Reading (Screening & Progress Monitoring)

Lingering Questions and Thoughts?

Thank you for the opportunity to learn together!

Resources

Pillars of Reading: Dr. David Kilpatrick on Phonemic Awareness (Video)

Tools4Reading at 95percentgroup.com/tools-4-reading/

    Dr. Mary Dahlgren "Sound Walls and Phonemes" Video

Reading Rockets at readingrockets.org

Reading Universe at readinguniverse.org

dese: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Thank you!

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