



Reading Counts



The Importance of Phonemic Awareness in Pre-Reading Skills

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Learning to read begins well before the first day of school. Parents often read nursery rhymes to their children starting when they are infants. Most parents and caregivers do not realize what basic skill they are helping their child learn. Nursery rhymes expose the child to similarities and differences in the sounds of words. This is also referred to as phonemic awareness.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to segment and manipulate the sounds of speech. It is important to know that this is not the same as phonics (phonics involves knowing how specific letters relate to specific spoken sounds). More specifically a phoneme is the smallest functional unit of sound. The English language contains 44 phonemes. For example the word "cat" contains three distinctly different sounds, /c/ /a/ /t/. The child's awareness of sounds in spoken words is the best prediction of his or her success in reading.

There are several stages of teaching phonemic awareness:

1. Recognizing and Supplying Rhymes
2. Phoneme Identity
3. Phoneme Isolation
4. Phoneme Segmentation and Counting
5. Phoneme Blending

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Michelle Yapjoco tutoring in Livonia

Strategies for Automaticity and Fluency in Reading

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The reading process involves two separate but interrelated domains: word identification and comprehension. As educators, it is important to focus on these two areas when dealing with students who are struggling with becoming fast and efficient readers. For instance, although many students excel at word identification, this strategy leads students to focus on the word itself without paying any attention to what the word actually means. As a result, the student reduces the speed of reading and may be forced to reread the sentence in order to comprehend what is being read. Therefore, it is essential to develop automaticity and fluency in order to help students with reading comprehension and become efficient readers.

According to Hook and Jones (2002), automaticity is defined as fast and accurate word identification at the single word level and is possibly the best indicator of reading comprehension. Fluency, which occurs at the phrase, sentence, and text level, is more complex. This involves both automatic word identification and the application of appropriate rhythm, intonation, and phrasing. Once a student has developed and mastered these skills, he or she has the ability to read for understanding.

There are a variety of strategies that are used to help young students reach the levels of automaticity and fluency. One way to facilitate automaticity is by having the student

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FUN ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

Fun Activities to Promote Literacy

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There are so many great ways to get students involved in reading, and tutoring provides endless opportunities to come up with a variety of great hands-on activities that focus on your students' interests, strengths, areas of improvement, and learning styles. By creating a reading activity that is challenging, motivating, and FUN, it will really help your students to learn to love reading and get the most out of their literacy experiences. Here is a list of some fun ideas and activities to promote literacy with your students!

1. TICK-TACK-TOE READING:

This activity takes the fun game of tick-tack-toe and adds a challenging twist to it. It can be played with just you and your tutee and is even ideal for small and large groups. After you have finished a chapter or reading session with your tutee, have preplanned questions prepared to involve prediction, analysis, explicit responses, and implicit thinking. If the question is answered correctly, they get to pick which square they want. *For a possible follow up activity: Have students create their own questions for others to answer on the reading.

2. HAMBURGER CHART: http://www.learn-a-lot.com/links_4_teachers.htm

This activity provides a visual way for organizing ideas for a persuasive letter. Students use a picture of a hamburger to write their topic sentence in the top bun, three details in the lettuce, tomato, and hamburger section, and their conclusion in the bottom bun. After they are finished, they can cut out each section and trade hamburgers to have other students write up their ideas in the actual letter. Other forms of graphic organizers are available on this website in order to help students organize the information from the reading.

3. ESL ACTIVITIES: <http://bogglesworld.com>

This great website provides a variety of activities that you can use with your ESL students. Some ideas include writing a Thanksgiving advertisement from the point of view of the turkey, word searches, bingo, concentration, role plays, and fun creative writing ideas.

<http://www.1-language.com/eslactivityzone/index.htm>

This is my favorite website for great activities for ESL, students with special needs, and regular education students as well!! It offers a ton of ideas that make reading and writing fun and interactive.

Here are some of my favorites from this website:

A) CALL MY BLUFF: Each student gets a hard vocabulary word and must write the real definition and two pretend definitions. Other students must guess which definition is correct.

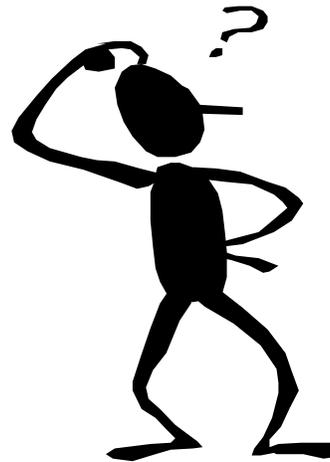
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Math Tutors: Looking For Available Resources???

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There is one vital resource located in the America Reads/Counts Office (Blake A 104) that many of you may not know about. This resource includes a lesson plan book, *Mathematical Discoveries for Young Children* by Alison Abrohms, and a box full of manipulatives! This book has many detailed lessons on sorting and classifying, patterns, comparing and ordering, counting, graphing, shapes and space, early number concepts, and measuring. Each lesson is specifically laid out with learning goals, new words learned, the activity, checking for understanding, and other resources (some including literature activities to accompany your math lesson). The book also includes cutouts of puppets, numbers, money, and an assessment checklist. However, these "real" manipulatives are also available for you to borrow and use. All lessons follow the NCTM's *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics*, as well as encourages the connection of manipulatives with math concepts and representations. These lessons are primarily geared toward preschoolers through second graders; however, many lessons can be easily adapted. You can even just borrow the manipulatives, which include: Relational Attribute Blocks, Pattern Blocks, Link 'N' Learn Links®, MathLink™ Cubes, Jumbo Sorting Beads, Color Counting Cubes, Vehicle Counters, Tactile Number Cards, Giant Soft Cubes- Dots and Numerals, Beginner's Balance, Step-By-Step Number Line, Coin Set, Basic Geometric Solids, The Learning Clock, and the Three Bear Family® Counters, to use in any desired lesson. I encourage all of you to become familiar with the resources we are privileged to have in the office. They may greatly help in your tutoring sessions.



Workshop Overview: Classroom Management, presented by Dr. Jeff Liles

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Dr. Liles began this seminar, which took place on, November 3, 2003, with a question. He asked, “Is it right to make decisions about children’s behavior *for* them?”. After discussing the fact that we are not in control of our students’ behavior, Dr. Liles went on to state “all behavior is intentional”. As teachers (or tutors) we can influence our students’ choice with direct and indirect praise. He then proposed several suggestions in achieving behavioral success with students.

To have an effective student/teacher relationship, one must:

- Build a solid rapport with each student.
- Provide engaging and age-appropriate materials and methods.
- Use non-verbal cueing and direct/indirect praise to communicate your expectations to your students.
- If necessary, use problem-solving sessions to discuss the dilemma with the student, and work out a possible solution.

Dr. Liles also suggested that rewards be used sparingly, so that children do not become conditioned to work for a prize and nothing else. The tips given at this seminar were both informative and helpful, and I recommend that everyone try them in their classrooms!

Phonemic Awareness, con’t from p.1

6. Phoneme Deletion

7. Phoneme substitution

(Visit www.literacyvolunteers.org for more details)

Phonological Awareness Activities

This example is based on the theme Thanksgiving, but you can modify the activities to go along with any season or holiday. Collect pictures from magazines, newspapers, old Thanksgiving cards or other items to complete these activities:

- Sort Thanksgiving pictures/objects according to first or final sounds
- Concentration, Go Fish, etc. (pairs are objects beginning/ending with the same sound)
- Scavenger Hunt – locate Thanksgiving objects with particular sounds
- Play “I Spy” with Thanksgiving items

For younger children (pre-school age), read nursery rhymes together. You can also ask the child if they can think of another word that “sounds like” (rhymes) with one of the words in the nursery rhyme. This may be difficult because children often do not learn the concept of rhyming until kindergarten. But it is never too early to expose them to pre-reading skills. Phonemic awareness has become very popular and is widely used throughout schools today.

Strategies, con’t from p. 1

highlight or underline the orthographic patterns of a word. These patterns include the vowels which make a short sound, such as in the word “**not**” or the vowel that makes a long sound, such as in the word “**no**.” Other patterns appear in words that end in vowel consonant e, which makes the vowel say its long sound, like in the word, “**like**.” There are also vowel combinations (ex. **nail**) and r-controlled vowels, where the vowel sound is changed (ex. **bird**). Once a student has mastered this skill of visualizing the vowel patterns of a word, he or she will be able to see these patterns automatically and read the words as a whole. You can further facilitate this skill by putting whole words on flashcards and organizing them so that the words correspond with the skill being taught.

In order to aid with fluency once a student has grasped the skill of automatically recognizing the vowel patterns and whole words, a strategy can be used called “Read Naturally.” I actually use this technique with one of my students and find it to be highly effective. This is an excellent strategy to use to help build fluency and at the same time test the students’ comprehension. The following outlines the strategy step-by-step:

1. The student reads a short paragraph out loud, without any practice.
2. The teacher reads the paragraph line by line. After each sentence, have the student repeat it in the exact same way you did. Remember to read with rhythm and flow so that the student understands that it is important to read sentences as a whole rather than by individual words (this will also help with comprehension).
3. The student reads the paragraph at least two more times (time the student for one minute informally to see how many words he or she can read within that time frame).
4. Ask the student comprehension questions.
5. The student reads the paragraph again twice (time the student formally if you feel that he or she is ready and record it on a chart or table).

I believe that this technique is very useful for students because, not only does it focus on fluency, but it also aims at helping students with comprehension. I have been using “Read Naturally” for about a month and see much improvement with the way my student is reading. She is much faster and now has a rhythm to her reading. Also, the use of timing the student and recording it allows him or her to visualize how many words they can read in a minute. Visually seeing the improvement is an excellent way to motivate young readers who are struggling with fluency. When they actually see how much they improve, the student realizes their potential as learners. Hopefully these strategies will have the same effect for your students! Good luck!

Title, con't from p. 2

B) CHANGING CHAIRS: Students all read a picture book. Students sit in a semi-circle and one chair is taken away. The person who is standing asks a question about the books. "Does your story have a happy ending?" Each student whose book fits the description must stand up and find another chair, and the person remaining without a chair asks the next question.

C) CHARADES/PICTIONARY VOCAB: Students must use their vocabulary terms. They are split into teams and each child must choose a vocabulary word to mime or draw for their team.

D) STORY SWITCHEROO: This activity allows students to work together to write a story. Each student writes the name of a boy, folds the paper to cover the answer, and passes it to the next person. Then each student writes "And" and fills in the name of girl and folds and passes the paper again. Then each student writes "Met at" and fills in the name of a place and folds the paper again. Then each student writes "He said" and writes down a statement and folds and passes the paper. Then each student writes "She Said" and writes down a statement and folds and passes the paper. And finally each student writes "And They" and writes down a statement. At the end, each student reads aloud their story.

Ex: Mike and Mary went to the beach. He said, "Wow, its a lovely day". She said, "Yes, I would like to dance". And they lived happily ever after! (Usually the stories will be quite silly. *Make sure that stories only include appropriate answers, so use your judgment if you can use this activity with your students.)



Thank you, teachers!

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The Value of Miscue Analysis

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Last time I introduced steps you can take to aid in the initial assessment of your students. Now you are quite well on your way to really influencing your student's learning. One scenario I have struggled with in the past is knowing when I should correct a student's reading and when I should accept it as part of the learning process, so it does not disturb the concentration and flow of their language learning. Miscue analysis has served as a tool to help organize the ongoing assessment of student learning and as a tool for determining when it would be most beneficial for a tutor/teacher to correct the student.

Miscues are a deviation or difference between what the student says and the text. There are three areas of study in miscue analysis. One should consider the syntactic, semantic, and graphophonic acceptability of the errors.

- Does the miscue change the meaning of the text?
- Does it sound like language and does it serve as the same parts of speech as the text words?
- Would the miscue appear to look and sound like the text word?

Essentially, these simple questions will help you determine if the miscue is of high quality or low quality. High quality miscues can be left uncorrected. However, low quality miscues serve as teachable moments where you can address different strategies, mini-lessons, and corrections.

Low Quality Miscues:

- The meaning of the sentence is significantly altered or changed.
- A nonword is used in place of a word.

High Quality Miscues:

- There is little to no meaning change as a result of the miscue.
- When a student successfully self corrects.
- When it is acceptable because of the student's dialectal differences.

Miscues can be analyzed qualitatively or quantitatively. Miscue Analysis not only serves as a tool in correcting student's miscues but can also be recorded to differentiate the progress of the student and particular areas of weakness.

Vacca, Jo Anne L, et. al. Reading and Learning to Read. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc, 2003.