

*A Colorado professional learning series
based on the book*

Equipped for Reading Success

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Developed in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Education



COLORADO
Department of Education



Module Fourteen

Chapter 12:
Soul Searching



Goals for Module 14

- Understand what letter-sound proficiency is and its importance for phonic decoding and orthographic mapping
- Know the skills needed for phonic/phonetic decoding
- Know the three general levels of phonics instruction and their relevance
- Understand the self-teaching hypothesis and its relationship to orthographic mapping
- Understand and be able to support students with developing letter-sound skills using specific strategies
- Understand the importance of correct phoneme pronunciation during instruction

Let's introduce the learning goals for Module 14. They include:

To understand what letter-sound proficiency is and its importance for phonic decoding and orthographic mapping.

To know the skills needed for phonic/phonetic decoding.

To know the three general levels of phonics instruction and their relevance.

To understand the self-teaching hypothesis and its relationship to orthographic mapping.

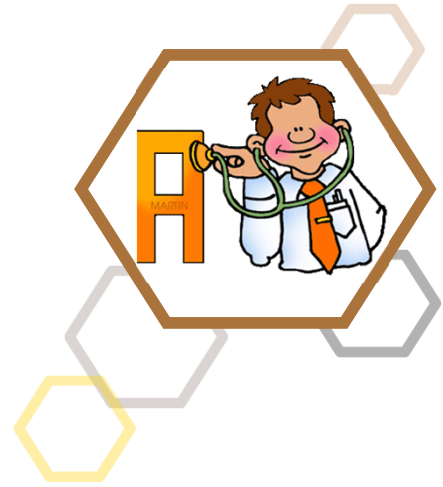
To understand and be able to support students with developing letter-sound skills using specific strategies.

To understand the importance of correct phoneme pronunciation during instruction.



Letter-Sound Proficiency

- Letter-sound proficiency refers to the automatic, unconscious activation of letter-sound knowledge.
- This level of proficiency is foundational for both efficient phonic decoding and orthographic mapping.
- EFRS is designed to supplement and enhance the effectiveness of existing phonics programs.



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The Skills Needed for Phonic Decoding

Phonics – An instructional approach designed to develop letter-sound skills and phonic decoding.

Letter-sound knowledge – The skill of instantly recognizing the sounds that go with letters.

Phonic/phonetic decoding – A word reading strategy that combines letter-sound skills with oral/phonological blending to sound out unfamiliar words.



Figure 12.1
The Skills Needed For Phonic Decoding (pg. 101)

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Figure 12.1 THE SKILLS NEEDED FOR PHONIC DECODING p. 101



The Levels of Phonics Instruction

Explicit and systematic phonics instruction can occur at three general levels:

Level 1 – BASIC PHONIC DECODING INSTRUCTION

- This teaches letter-sound knowledge and oral blending to sound out unfamiliar words.

Level 2 – SIMPLE-RULES PHONICS INSTRUCTION

- This level teaches a limited set of useful phonics rules, for example, the *silent e rule*. These rules often center around the six syllable types of printed English which assist students with correctly pronounce vowel sounds.

Level 3 – DETAILED SYLLABLE ANALYSIS INSTRUCTION

- Students learn the exceptions to the six syllable types of printed English and then the exceptions to the exceptions.

Phonics
ee ur ow
wh y au

Self-teaching Hypothesis

The word study aspect of orthographic mapping usually occurs in the context of what is referred to as the *self-teaching hypothesis*, which says the following:

- When students successfully sound out new words, the sounding-out process allows them to interact with the word's sounds and letters. This promotes memory for that particular letter sequence.
- This sounding out process provides opportunities to map words to long term memory.
- Early strong phonic/phonetic decoding skills indicates that a student will most likely become a good reader if they have phonemic proficiency.

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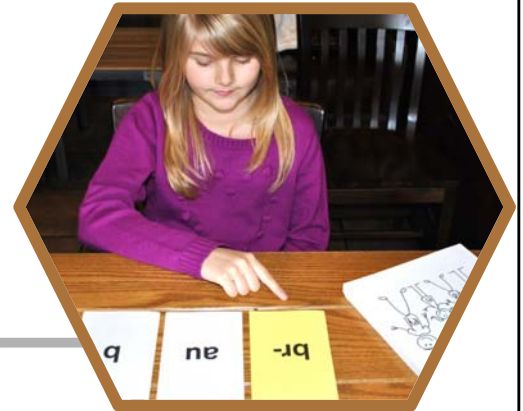
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Level 3: Orton-Gillingham Based Programs

- Simple segmentation training is insufficient to facilitate efficient sight-word storage for many struggling readers.



A solidly strong phonics program is Orton-Gillingham or OG.

Some OG based programs take phonics instruction to Level 3, the level of detailed syllable analysis.

These programs generally are more successful than non-phonics programs.

A percentage of weak readers in these programs progress slowly and even plateau below grade level.

They display dramatic improvement in reading nonsense words, but only show modest gains in their ability to recognize and retrieve real words.

The foundation for Orton Gillingham- type programs are based on a philosophy that came before the discovery of orthographic mapping and is based on older beliefs about word reading.

If students display proficient Level 1 and 2 skills, but are not efficiently storing words, highly detailed phonics instruction is not necessarily the answer!

When children show a “plateau” effect in good phonics programs like OG, the missing element is almost always phonemic proficiency.

Simple segmentation training is insufficient to facilitate efficient sight-word storage for many struggling readers.



With That Said...

OG based programs have many positive features:

- Their Level 1 phonics instruction helps to develop letter-sound skills.
- Materials are used that promote the phonics aspect of the reading process.
- They help with sounding out words.
- Their strength is in the development of and reinforcement of letter-sound relationships.



Ways it could be stronger:

- Sometimes, but not always, there is an inadequate training of phoneme awareness
- There can be a lack of direct help in fostering permanent word storage.
- Sometimes a student is given unnecessary Level 3 instruction in phonics.

Attention should be directed toward the mastery of phonemic awareness skills. The combination of strong phoneme awareness and strong letter-sound skills will help students efficiently acquire *sight words*.

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Another Approach

- A teacher may want to use a linguistic program for word reading before introducing phonic word reading.
- The linguistic approach may be more developmentally appropriate to introduce reading to students, especially at the onset-rime or basic phoneme level of phonological awareness.
- As children reach the phoneme level of phonological awareness and the full alphabetic phase of sight-word learning, students are likely to greatly benefit from conventional phonics instruction.
- It is the combination of strong phoneme awareness and letter- sound skills that will enable a student to do word study that leads to efficient sight word acquisition.





Phonetic Approximation pg. 103

- Children need to learn these words early on in their reading careers because they are so common.

regular	consistent	irregular
ship	chalk	of
like	walk	one
buzz	talk	the
winter	balk	been
		said

A phonics approach in English is not as reliable as some other languages due to the inconsistency in the spelling of many English words.

Most English words are *regular* or *consistent*.

A *regular* spelling pattern in a written word follows basic phonics rules.

A *consistent* pattern is not actually *regular*, but it is its *consistency* that makes it easy to learn. For example, *-alk* should be pronounced like the *-alc* in *talck*, but has a consistent pronunciation in words like *chalk*, *walk*, *talk* etc.

English has many words with *irregularities*, not all of which are obvious.

Nearly 50% of the Dolch Words, some of the most

frequently used words in English, are *irregular*, although

80 % of single syllable non-Dolch words are phonetically regular

Children need to learn these words early on in their reading careers because they are so common.



Phonetic Approximation (Cont.)

- It is unreasonable to expect students with poor phonemic awareness to learn too many words with phonic irregularities when just starting to read.
- Irregularities in words make it difficult for students to grasp the *alphabetic principle* because the connection between the oral structure of the word and the written structure of the word is not evident.
- A child can use their phonics skills to approximate and then combine that with context to make a positive ID.
- For example, “The weather has *been* great this week.”, could be read as, “ The weather has *bean* great his week.” The words *been* and *bean* are close enough in pronunciation for the student to be able to identify the word correctly.

Alphabetic Principle



Words are composed of letters that represent sounds.

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How to Develop Letter-Sound Skills

- We know that word recognition is NOT based on visual memory.
- Letter-sound skills are partially based on what is known as, *visual-phonological paired-associate learning (PAL)*.
- To be able to match the letter name with a sound involves both matching a visual memory of the letter to the name of the letter and then a sound, all of which involve phonology.
- Memory for letters involves visual memory, while memory for words does not.
- Letter-sound learning is based on matching visual memory with phonological memory.
- There is nothing about the letter m that makes one think of the /m/ sound unless it has been learned.



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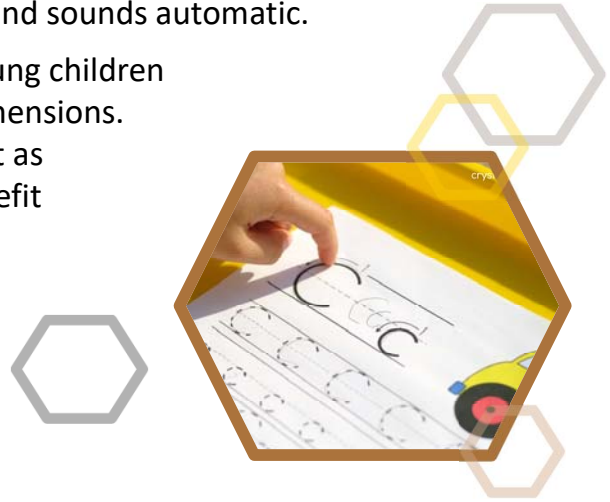
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Well-Established Methods pg. 104

Several well-established methods for learning letters include:

1. **Providing many exposures.** Children can require hundreds of exposures to the letters to make the retrieval of those letters and sounds automatic.
2. **Using multisensory methods of learning.** Young children benefit from experiencing letters in three dimensions. Looking at and saying the letters names is not as efficient for some children. Students can benefit from making letters with clay, tracing large letters with chalk, drawing letters in whipped cream and painting letters with finger paints. They should be able to see letters and recognize both upper and lowercase, in cursive and print.



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Methods (Cont.)

3. Teach a small set of letters at a time. Start with a few letters and build upon them.

- When students do not achieve complete letter knowledge by the end of kindergarten, they need to continue individualized work on letters until they are mastered. Expecting them to read even the simplest words, forces them to “compensate,” because they don’t have the letter-sound skills to efficiently sound out new words or anchor words in permanent memory.
- Teaching should be geared toward a restricted set of new letters learned using multisensory approaches and multiple exposures, while reinforcing letters already learned.



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Teaching should be geared toward a restricted set of new letters learned using multisensory approaches and multiple exposures. Add to this list while reinforcing the previous letters until all letter sounds are automatic.



More Methods (Cont.)

4. Teach letter sounds in a developmentally appropriate manner.

- Research shows us that students learn more easily the sound of the letters whose sounds appear first in the letter's name.
- The letters b, c, d, g, p, t, v and z are easier to learn because the sound they make matches the first sound in the letter's name (e.g., b /bee/, c /see/, d /dee/, j /jay/).
- It is harder to learn the sounds of letters whose sound appears second in their name (e.g., f /ef/, l /el/, m /em/, n /en/, r /ar/, s /es/).
- The most difficult are the letters in which the letter's sound is not present in the letter's name.



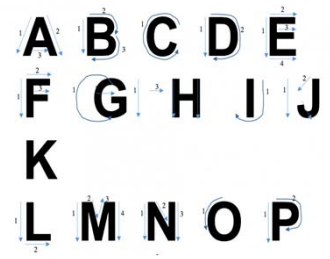
Students should learn the names of the letters in alphabetical order. When teaching letter sounds, alphabetical order is not as efficient.



Another Method

5. Point out visual features of letters.

- Teaching visually distinct letters such as t and c is a valid approach for preschoolers and students with low cognitive skills. After mastering a few letters this way, switch to the method of using easiest letters, more difficult letters, etc.
- It is better to teach the letters t, f and l together as well as c, o, e because these letters share similar features and must be distinguished from one another.
- Teaching similar looking letters at the same time forces students to pay attention to detail.
- Teachers can draw attention to similarities and differences between the visual features of letters. Differences in lower case vs upper case letters should also be pointed out.



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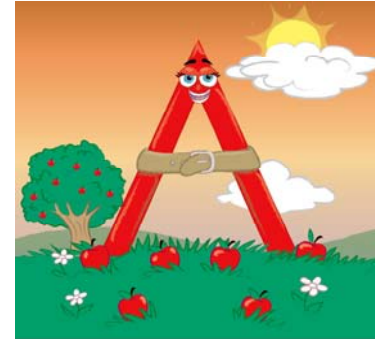
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Embedded Mnemonic Letters

6. Teach letter sounds using embedded mnemonic letters.

- Educators often teach letters with a key word and an accompanying picture.
- For example, “a is for apple.”
- Pictures that accompany a key word provide no advantage over teaching a key word without a picture.
- Several studies have shown, however, that when the accompanying picture of a key word is drawn in the shape of the letter it is representing, students learn the letter sounds more quickly.
- For example, “s is for snake.”



A has a point at the top of her head.
Under her belt, she hides apples so red.

A - Apples

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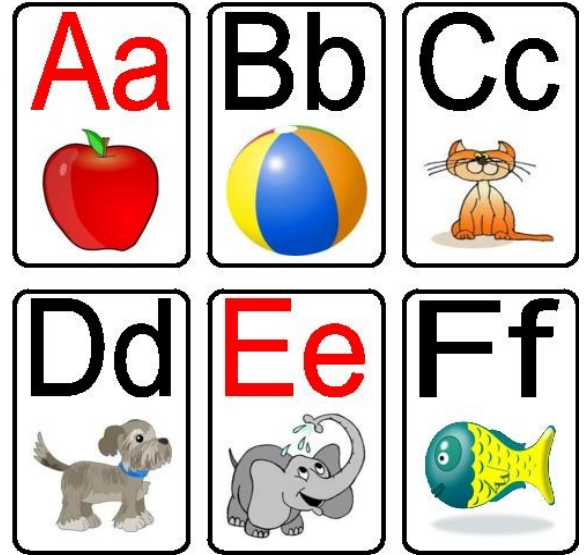
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Flash Cards for Letter-Sound Skills pg. 110

- *When a student makes an error* – Correct the error immediately and put the card back in the pile so the student will see it again soon.



Use a restricted group of cards – Only about 5-10 cards. With some struggling students, you may want to use fewer.

Use multiple forms – Present the letter cards in uppercase and lowercase. Make sure students see words printed in cursive as well

Select type of response – Sometimes answers will be the letter name, and sometimes the letter sound.

Require multiple responses – Letters have more than one common sound. Have them give as many common sounds as possible. For vowels, have students give long and short sounds.

Add blends, rime units and other word parts – Prefixes, suffixes, Dplch words and punctuation.

Work for speed – Work toward effortless recognition.

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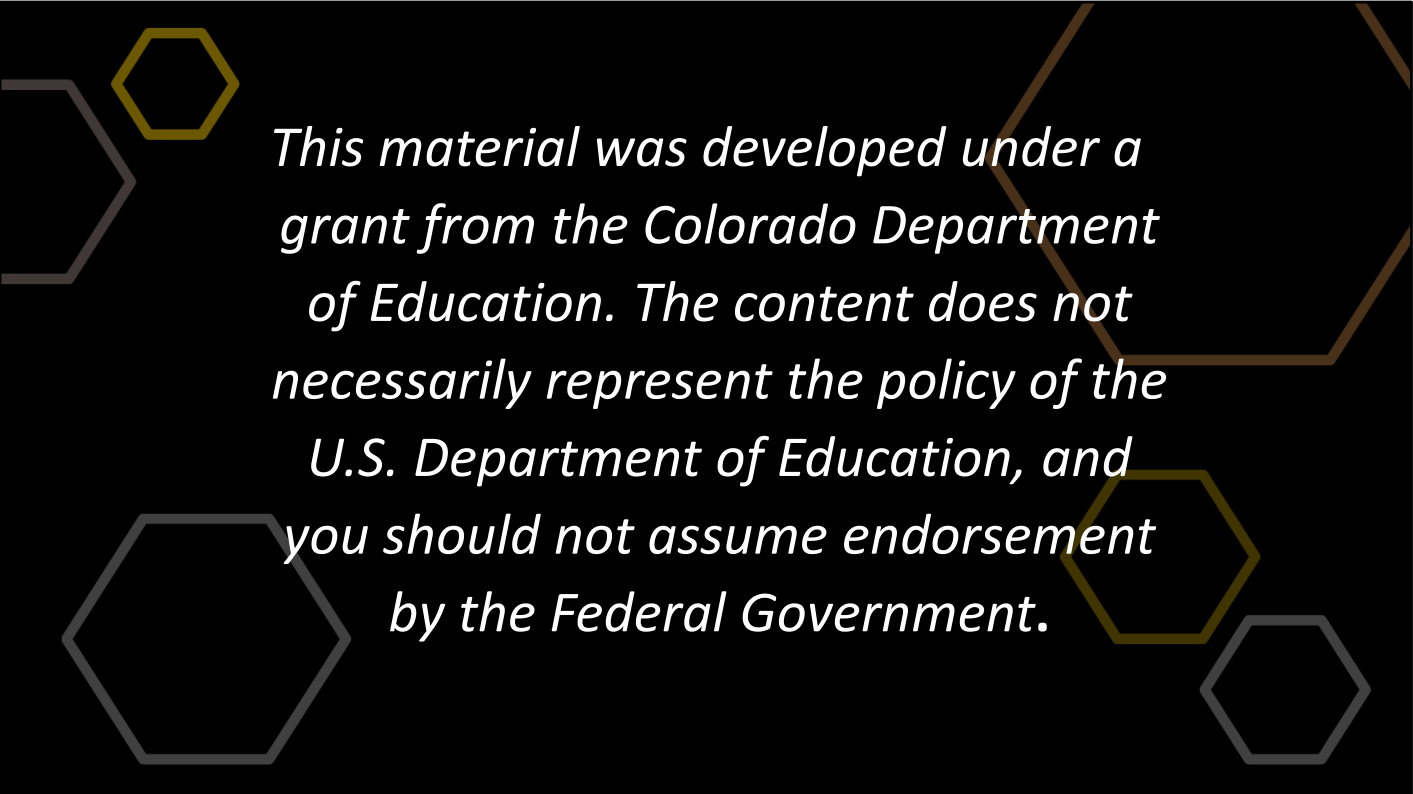


Coming Up in Module 15

Chapter 13 – Addressing Compensating Students

- Common Signs of Compensating
- Addressing the Compensator
- Prevention of Compensation





This material was developed under a grant from the Colorado Department of Education. The content does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



Please visit the CDE Specific Learning Disability website for more information:

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-SLD>

