

DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Phonological Awareness: Developmental Continuum

Syracuse City School District, New York • June 2007

Topic: Preschool Language and Literacy

Practice: Teach Phonological Awareness

Highlights

- Importance of using phonological awareness continuum and how it relates to phonics
- Why it is difficult to get teachers to focus on auditory aspects of phonological awareness
- Importance of continual revisiting and reinforcement of auditory work
- Segmenting and blending instructional strategies including demonstration of use of manipulatives

About the Site

Syracuse City School District

Syracuse, New York

Demographics:

- 93% Children living in poverty
- 22% Special Needs

- 79% Non-Caucasian
- 15% English Language Learners

Site Highlights:

- Developmental continuum of phonological awareness that guides planning and differentiation of instruction based on children’s skill levels
- Phonological awareness instruction integrated throughout the day into classroom activities, routines, and thematic units
- Explicit and contextualized instruction
- Teacher training in interactive and dialogic reading focused on increasing vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension
- Intensive and ongoing professional development with on-site mentoring by literacy coaches and a focus on individual class needs
- Coach-teacher partnerships that involve teachers in a feedback process focused on inquiry and improvement based on classroom observations and self-reflection

Full Transcript

We were able to use this continuum with our teachers and we made sure that they were inserviced on this continuum and had lots of ideas on how to teach each one of these items on this phonological skills continuum.

And we also made sure that they understood that up above this continuum—which is really auditory, and that we want them to emphasize this auditory piece—that up above this is the phonics piece.

For teachers, the sound symbol is just so logical. And so we have to encourage people to back it up so that they do cover the auditory piece of phonological awareness.

It’s very important that you meet the child where they are and that you emphasize what they understand, keep reinforcing that, because even the brightest child can have days where this isn’t as clear as it should be.

You need that repetition. You need that repeating in a variety of ways. I wouldn’t want to indicate that you do it the same way, but you draw them into that kind of thinking with a lot of different materials and strategies, but you keep bringing them back to it so that it becomes very, very solid,

and so that it becomes automatic, that it's so known to the child that they automatically use it.

One of the harder pieces on the continuum is the segmenting and the blending. We always have encouraged our teachers that when you segment you want to blend it back together. You don't want to leave it hanging out there segmented apart. So you want to bring it back together. Now, naturally, you can do a lot of segmenting, whether you're segmenting words out of a sentence, which is where you need to begin, then you're moving two syllables in a word. And then you're moving into phonemes, which is each individual letter in the word. And then you're moving into the manipulation of the phonemes within that word. You can have bodies, you can have children that are each word in the sentence and there's a space between them, because you want to show that. You could have squares of carpet that children stand on or hop on. You can have children clapping, which is totally auditory with no visual clue except your hands coming together. But you need to know what to do or your hands aren't going to come together at the right time.

The auditory emphasis, you need to spend time on it. And you have to have lots and lots of materials.

So what we do is we pick things that they can manipulate. Here we've chosen blocks. We've chosen a green block because that begins a sentence or begins a word. We've chosen a yellow block because that's somewhere in the middle of everything we're doing, whether it's the sentence or the word. And then we have the end. And red is associated with stop, so we have all these quiet messages being given to the child. So we might have the sentence, "I love you." And we ask the child, "Where is 'I'? Where is 'love'? Where is 'you'?" We could ask that out of order and then, "Let's read it together. 'I love you.'" And so we sweep so that a child is getting a left to right.

When teachers go to plan, they need to have, number one, their whole class in mind. Where is my whole class? And they need to have each individual in mind because they need to be able to plan that whole lesson—that might be at their circle time, that's very brief and introduces the whole class to something on the continuum, perhaps alliteration—but then they need to know what they're going to do with each individual when they break them into small groups.

So, you're never wasting a child's time to go back to the auditory piece. In fact, you're going to have to revisit it over and over again, even if a child is very strong in sound-symbol relationships. So you never put the continuum away.