Facilitator’s Guide

Topics 7 & 8: Phonological Awareness

Overview of Sessions – In addressing phonological awareness, an emphasis is placed on attuning teachers to the phonemes in spoken language. Many highly literate adults are confused about how to segment words in which there are more letters than sounds (e.g., through) or more sounds than letters (e.g., box). Various approaches to developing phonemic awareness, with a particular emphasis on blending and segmenting, are discussed. Also discussed are the relative difficulty of analyzing words into different units (onsets and rimes vs. individual phonemes) and the features of phonemes that make them more and less challenging for children to attend to and/or manipulate (e.g., continuant consonants vs. stop consonants, consonants that differ only in one critical feature [e.g., voicing], etc.).

- Approximate time: 3 - 3 ½ hours
- Handouts:
    - Chapter 4, pp. 77-106, “Phonological Awareness”
  - Slide handouts (To be distributed at end of session.)
  - Phoneme Awareness Practice (1) – to be used in the next day the group meets following completion of the PA
  - Phoneme Awareness Practice (2) – to be used in a subsequent sessions if participants feel the need for more practice.

NOTE: You will always know when your mic is open by looking for the microphone icon next to your name in the attendees box of the control panel. We will remind participants that the session will be recorded.

Throughout this and all sessions, facilitators are encouraged to use the “Raise Hand” feature to let the presenter know if there is someone in the room who wishes to make a comment, ask a question, etc. You are also encouraged to interrupt us whenever you feel it is necessary, particularly if there is a need for more discussion time within the room.

For some of the discussion questions that will be posed to the group, we have included some important points for consideration, which might be used to guide the conversation, if needed. It is not expected that these points will be covered exhaustively in your groups. Also note that the presenter may pose some of the discussion questions or you may – many of the discussion
questions require only a brief discussion and may work well in transitioning from the video back to the slide show (especially if there is more than one facilitator in the room).

** Note that there are many potential Activities listed throughout this module. There is not enough time to engage in all of the activities. As a facilitator, you have a better handle on the group and whether there is a need for more time to process a particular concept. If so, please let us know and we will provide time for the activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide</th>
<th>The Sounds in My Word Video</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As you watch these kindergartners, think about:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Whether the students are segmenting or blending?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What word components are the focus of this lesson?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Which of the components is most challenging for students?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video (2:56) Kindergartner, whole class, October</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Video: The Sounds in My Word.** Kindergartners engage in language play while singing. (Time = 2:56)

**Discussion Q:** Participants consider several questions regarding the activity observed in the video.

Segmenting or blending?

Components of spoken words?

Challenge of the activity?

**FR:** If necessary, restate what is being shared in the room so presenter can participate in the conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide</th>
<th>Syllables are Relatively Easy to Notice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>robobirin</td>
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**Note:** Phonological analysis involves the analysis of SPoken WORDS. In working with children, we WOULD NOT use print to illustrate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide</th>
<th>Onsets and Rimes are more difficult to notice than syllables</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Onset – The sounds before the vowel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rime – The vowel sound and what comes after it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Phonological analysis involves the analysis of SPoken WORDS. In working with children, we WOULD NOT use print to illustrate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide</th>
<th>Phonemes are even more difficult to notice than onsets and rimes</th>
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**Note:** Phonological analysis involves the analysis of SPoken WORDS. In working with children, we WOULD NOT use print to illustrate.
Phonemes are even more difficult to notice than onsets and rimes

Think sounds not letters!  Think sounds not letters!

Phonological Awareness is awareness of the various sound components of spoken words (syllables, onsets & rimes, etc.).

- Phonemic Awareness is a specific type, the most advanced type, of phonological awareness.

Refine your concept of Phonological Awareness

Phonological Awareness is related to but distinct from Phonics Skills

Phonics is the system by which the sounds in spoken language are represented by the letters in printed language.

- The a in cat represents the /a/ (short a) sound.
- Sometimes more than one letter is used to represent one sound. In chat, ch represents one sound.

A child can be quite skilled in noticing and manipulating the sounds in spoken words and yet know nothing about the alphabet and how it works.
Why is Phonemic Awareness important?

Becoming phonologically aware helps children learn about letter-sound relationships.
Phonemic awareness provides a foundation for learning phonics skills.
A child with some phonics skills is generally at least somewhat phonemically aware.

Why is Phonemic Awareness important?

Phonemic awareness is related to the ease with which children acquire phonics skills.
- It enables them to understand the correspondences between the letters in printed words and the sounds in spoken words.
- It enables them to use the names of letters to derive the letters’ sounds.
  - For example: The name for the letter “B” is comprised of the phonemes /b/ and /ee/.

Why is Phonemic Awareness important?

When beginning readers come to an unfamiliar word, they sometimes need to:
1. Think of the sound represented by each letter
2. Hold the sounds in memory temporarily
3. Blend the sounds to get to the word
If the child cannot do the blending step, then he may not get to the word.

Why is Phonemic Awareness important?

When beginning writers want to spell an unfamiliar word, they need to:
1. Notice the sounds that are in the word
2. Think of a letter that would represent each sound
3. Write the letters in a sequence that represents the intended word.
If the child cannot do the segmenting step, then he will have difficulty writing an interpretable word.

How phonemically aware are you?

Let the letters go!
Say the phonemes contained in the names for each picture.

**Activity:** An array of pictures (e.g., sun, bat, fan) is presented. Participants are asked to articulate the sounds in each of the words and discuss the features of the words that make them more or less difficult to segment into individual sounds.

**FR:** Be sure to keep this activity light hearted. Teachers are often surprised by how difficult it is to attend to the individual sounds in some words. Remind them that it is their literacy that is getting in the way. Also, be alert for “schwa-sayers” who may benefit from playful reminders to try to reduce or, when possible, eliminate schwa sounds when articulating individual consonant sounds.

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**General principles that inform instruction in PA**

- Phonological awareness develops in a predictable sequence.
  - Syllables
  - Onsets & rimes
  - Phonemes
- It is easier to draw children's attention to sounds that can be elongated (stretched) without distortion than to sounds that are "stop" consonants.
- Phonological analyses skills develop in a predictable sequence
  - Sound-sorting
  - Blending
  - Segmenting

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What makes phonological awareness so tricky?

There is a natural inclination to focus on the meanings of a words rather than their component sounds.

In this video, the instruction goal is to help the children attend to the rimes in words. Notice how the children keep getting drawn in by the meanings

**Video:** Kindergartners engaged in rhyming words go back and forth between focusing on the sounds in words and focusing on their meanings. (Time = 1:37)

**Activity:** As participants watch the video, have them give a “thumbs up” when the children are focused on sounds and a “thumbs down” when they are focused on meaning.
What makes phonemic awareness so tricky?

Phonemes are influenced by the sounds around them.

- Compare the middle sound you hear when you say “cat” and “can.” Do they sound the same?
- The ending sound in “can” influences the vowel sound.
- This is called co-articulation.

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

What makes phonemic awareness so tricky?

Some phonemes sound a lot like other phonemes.

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

Match the phoneme on the left with the one on the right that is most similar

- B
- S
- T
- V
- K
- D
- G (as in gel)
- P
- Z
- F

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

Several pairs of sounds differ only in whether or not the vocal chords vibrate when the sound is made (voicing).

Activity: Matching phonemes with similar sounds.

Activity: Matching similar sounds.

See p. 82 in the Scanlon et al. book for confusable sound pairs

Another general principle

It is easier to analyze items that are very distinct from one another than those that are more similar. For example,

- The beginning sounds in kite and goat are quite similar.
- The beginning sounds in pig and nose are very different.

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

How does PA Develop?

Phonological awareness and phonics instruction are mutually supportive.

- Becoming phonemically aware helps a child learn letter sound relationships
- Learning letter-sound relationships helps children to extend their phonemic awareness.

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!
Phonological Awareness: How much instruction do kids need?

Many children learn to read and write well without explicit instruction in phonological analysis.
Such children become phonologically aware through engagement with books, songs and poetry that involve rhyme or alliteration.

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

Phonological Awareness can be promoted through playful engagement with language:

Encourage children to notice sound similarities and differences among words in songs, poems, and books.

Alliteration:

Video: Example of a song, “Freddie’s Farm” - featuring alliteration. (Time = 1:19)

Thanks to Andy the Music Man for the music and the video!

Implicit phonological awareness instruction.

Video: Example of a song, “Down by the Bay” - learning the song. (Time = 1:33)

Video: Children in a kindergarten classroom learn the lyrics to the song. (Time = 1:33)

Video: The teacher scaffolds the children’s participation as they create new verses for the song. (Time = 3:59)

FR: Discussion Q: After watching the second video on this slide, encourage discussion about how the teacher scaffolded children’s processing when they appeared unable to determine whether they picture rhymed with hers.

Instead of leaving the choices wide-open she modeled how they could say their word together with her word.
Phonological Awareness: How much instruction do kids need?
If children do not notice rhyme or alliteration that is emphasized in books, songs, and poetry, more of this kind of instruction is unlikely to improve their skills.

In a “typical” early primary classroom, about 30% of the children need more explicit PA instruction. These children will benefit from more explicit phonological awareness instruction.

FR: Discussion Q: Why would noticing rhymes and alliteration be easier than noticing rhymes within a text?
• In text, the children are likely to be drawn more to the meanings of the words than to the sounds
• In text, the rhyming words are embedded and so harder to attend to.

Identifying children who need explicit phonological awareness instruction...
Teachers can begin to identify children who may need more explicit instruction through their daily interactions with the children.

Video: Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear (Kindergarten, whole class, October)

Using daily interactions with students to identify those who might need more explicit instruction.

Video: Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear. A kindergarten teacher engages the class in a rhyming song and conducts a quick mini-assessment of the individual students’ ability to generate rhyme. (Time = 2:33)

How is Phonological Awareness Assessed?
Informal Observations
Scanlon et al. provide a checklist of skills that involve analysis of spoken words (see p. 106):
• Sensitivity to sound similarities in words in books, songs, poetry, etc.
  – Children who find these tasks difficult are definitely candidates for more explicit instruction
• Sorting pictures using sound similarity
• Blending word parts to form real words
• Counting/segmenting phonemes in words

Analysis of Written Spelling Provides Evidence of Phonemic Awareness

Examples of children’s sound spellings

Discussion Q (led by presenter): What do these spellings indicate about the children’s phonemic analysis skills?

Formal Phonological Awareness Assessments

Formal/published methods:
- Measures of Phonemic Analysis Skills Only:
  - Yopp-Singer Test (published in The Reading Teacher in 1995)
- Measures of Phonemic Analysis Skills and other early literacy skills:
  - Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS, University of Virginia)
  - The Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)
  - Diagnostic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

Instruction for children who have difficulty attending to the sounds in spoken words

Explicit Phonological Awareness Instruction: Sound Sorting

One way to encourage students to attend to the sounds in words is to ask them to sort pictures or objects on the basis of sound similarity.

The ability to attend to sound similarities evolves in a predictable sequence:
1. Rhyming words (easier because onset-rime sort)
2. Same initial sound (easier because onset-rime sort)
3. Same ending phoneme (more challenging)
4. Same medial phoneme (most challenging)

Sorting by Rhyme
In this video, the children practice sorting pictures whose names rhyme.

- Notice and discuss
  - What the teacher does to ensure that each child does his/her own thinking
  - What the children do that enables them to more accurately sort the pictures

Video: (4:01) Rhyming Sort (Kindergarten, small group, October)

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

Rhyming sort.

**Video:** children practice sorting pictures whose names rhyme. Each child works with their own folder and pictures and does their own thinking. (Time = 4:11)

**FR: Activity:** As they watch the video, have participants jot down the things they notice about what the teacher does that will help the students to make progress. Discuss the notes after the video adding the following points if they don’t come up:

- Names all of the pictures when presenting them to make sure the children are thinking of the correct words
- Encourages the children to say the words aloud so they can more readily attend to the rhymes
- Has the children name all of the words in a column to make the rhyme more apparent
- When an item is misplaced, the teacher doesn’t identify it for the child. Rather, she alerts the child that something is misplaced and allows the child to do the thinking required to identify the misplaced item.
- Ends the activity with all of the children feeling successful.

Also, have participants refer back to the checklist and think about what could be recorded for the children in the video.

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**Guidelines for Designing Picture Sorts**

Use pictures or objects with names that are:
- Unambiguous
- One syllable
- In the child’s vocabulary

In early instruction or for kids who are struggling,

Use pictures with names that:
- Have stretchable consonants
- Do not include consonant clusters
- Incorporate sorting principles that take the developmental sequence into account
- Syllables, then onsets and rimes, then single phonemes

Use items with distinctly different sounds.

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!
Choosing items for beginning sound sorts.

**Activity:** Have participants work in pairs to list names for the pictures displayed on the slide as beginning with stretchable or stop consonants (or can’t decide). Discuss which pictures might be good choices for beginning instruction.

More challenging sorting activities.

**Video:** Kindergarten students sort by ending sounds (Time = 3:58)

**Activity:** After watching the first video, have participants use the checklist to decide what the “sound sorting” portion probably looks like for these students.

**Video:** Simulation with audio track from kindergarten classroom. Sorting pictures by medial sounds. (Time = 1:24)

General Principle of Phonological Analysis:

Phoneme sorting is easier than phoneme blending.

Sound Blending

The teacher says the component sounds in words.

Children blend the sounds to form the whole word.

This phoneme analysis skill is similar to the last step in the process of sounding out an unfamiliar printed word.
Order of difficulty for sound blending.

**Discussion Q (led by presenter):** Why would it be important to select pictures so carefully?

**Discussion Q (led by presenter):** Why would blending with pictures be easier than blending without pictures?

Choosing words for sound blending with picture choices.

**FR: Discussion Q:** Why would these items be good for early instruction on this skill? Encourage participants to think about how children would likely approach this task and about what they have learned about the ease with which different sounds can be attended to.

- In order to reliably choose the correct response the child needs to blend the two components of the word. If, for example, there was only one word that started with /r/ the child could choose the correct response (e.g., rock) by simply attending to the beginning sound.

- All of the onsets have stretchable sounds. Therefore it is easier for the teacher to pronounce them without distortion and, as a result, it is easier for the children to blend them.

Blending onsets and rimes.

**Video:** Kindergartners blend onsets and rimes with picture choices. (Time = 3:05)

**Video:** The same children, a few weeks later, engage in blending without the support of pictures. (Time = 2:39)

**FR: Discussion Question:** As these two children well match for this kind of instruction at this point in time?

- This is an appropriate instructional activity for Zach and probably too easy for Taylor.

- The teacher could choose to work a bit longer
with Zach and send Taylor off to work on something that is more productive for her.

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Sound Blending
Adjusting the Level of Challenge

- Group children with similar skills
- Within a group, modify items and challenge to fit the individual children’s needs:
  - Choose different children to blend onset-rime items and single phoneme items
  - Use words with stretchable consonants for children who need more support
  - Increase or decrease the time between word segments to make items more or less challenging

With similar skills.

Slide 54

Select sets of items to use for Blending Practice

Pictures that might be used for blending activities.

Activity: Have participants work together to select groups of pictures that would be appropriate for different blending tasks (i.e., initial instruction with onsets and rimes, single phoneme blending for children demonstrating some proficiency, etc.)

***See last page of this document for sorts of various types and the associated rationale***

Slide 55

General Principle of Phonological Analysis:

Phoneme sorting and blending are easier than phoneme segmenting.

Slide 56

Sound Counting/Segmentation

Segmentation: The ability to articulate (say) the component sounds in spoken words.

This is a skill that children depend on heavily when they write.
Progression of difficulty for sound counting/segmenting activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Challenge</th>
<th>Types of Words to Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easiest</td>
<td>Two-phoneme words with rimes and stretchable consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three-phoneme words, stretchable consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>srt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three-phoneme words, stop consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three- or four-phoneme words that include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consonant blends (e.g., /fly/, /stop/)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Challenging</td>
<td>Longer words with consonant blends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Order of difficulty for sound segmentation.

**Activity (lead by presenter):** Generate suggestions for words that would fit each type listed.

**FR:** Sometimes participants will offer words like *in* and *am* as suggestions for two phoneme words with stretchable consonants. Note that these words do not have onsets, just rimes and that it is challenging to break a rime into its component sounds.

Elkonin Boxes are often used to assist children in learning to segment words into phonemes. Start with teacher modeling.

Gradually shift responsibility to the children.

See description of using Elkonin boxes and a sample instructional dialogue on pages 102-103 of the Scanlon et al. book.

See Words for Phoneme Counting on p. 101 in Scanlon et al.
In this clip,
• Analyze what the student knows and is able to do.
• What would be appropriate next steps?

Video: A first grader uses Elkonin boxes in a sound segmentation activity. (Time = 1:56)

Discussion Q: What kinds of consonants are in the words the child is segmenting?

Revisiting the checklist.

FR Activity: Have participants use the checklist to evaluate the boy seen in the preceding video.

Written spelling promotes the development of phonemic awareness.

When children attempt to write words, they practice saying the words slowly, one sound at a time, which is precisely the skill needed to segment words by individual phonemes.

Engaging in sound spelling, therefore, is an important way in which children become more attuned to the individual sounds in words.

How written spelling promotes the development of phonemic awareness (cont.)

Discussion Q: What is required of children in order to use sound spelling?
Children Sound Spelling

In this clip, the children are spelling the name of a picture from a book they have just read.
- LEF (leaf)
- LTBG (ladybug)

What do their sound spellings tell you about their phonemic awareness?

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

Using children’s sound spelling to think about their phonemic awareness.

**Video:** Kindergartners think of one object from a book they have just read and use sound spelling to write the word. The teacher provides feedback on their spelling.

(Time = 2:44)

Integrating Phonemic Awareness into Classroom Routines

- Read Aloud/Shared Reading
  - Rhyming text
- Alliterative text
- Morning Message
  - Shared writing – model phoneme segmentation
  - Rhymes
  - Alliteration
- Writing
  - Sound spelling

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

General Instructional Principles Related to Phoneme Awareness

It is important for children to understand the application of what they are learning. For example, we might say:

"We are learning to notice the sounds in words because, when we want to write a word, if we can figure out what sounds are in it, it will be easier to decide what letters to use to write it."

"We are learning to listen to sounds and then to figure out what word they make when we put them together because that’s one of the things people do when they read. They look at the letters, think of the sounds that the letters make, and then put the sounds together to figure out the word."

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

General Instructional Principles Related to Phoneme Awareness

The ability to notice and manipulate the component sounds in words develops gradually.

- Syllables
- Onsets & rimes
- Individual phonemes
  - Beginning sounds
  - Ending sounds
  - Middle sounds

Stretchable sounds are easier to analyze than stop consonants.

Sorting and blending are easier than segmenting.

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

End of Phonological Awareness

Thoughts/Questions?

Think sounds not letters! Think sounds not letters!

**Websites**

DIBELS Data System: https://dibels.uoregon.edu/


Texas Primary Reading Inventory: http://www.tpri.org/
Slide 54 Activity

Using the pictured items, ask participants to select groups of pictures that would be good for:

**Onset-rime blending – for initial instruction and practice**

Sample sets consisting of 4 pictures are listed below. They are appropriate because the initial consonants are stretchable and each set contains at least two words that rhyme and two words that begin with the same phoneme.

- sun, soap, rope, rake
- fan, fork, man, mouse

**Onset-rime blending – for children who are already demonstrating some proficiency with this skill**

Appropriate 4 item sets are listed below, for children who are able to blend onsets and rimes with stretchable consonants in the onset position, it is fine to use items with stop consonants in the initial position. Notice that there are still at least two words in each set that have the same initial phoneme. Also notice that car and kite start with the same phoneme even though the phoneme is spelled with a different letter.

- bus, tape, toes, bike
- car, jar, kite, jet

**Single phoneme blending – for initial instruction and practice**

All of the consonants in each of these sets are stretchable – which allows the teacher to articulate the consonant sounds without adding a distorting schwa (uh) sound.

- Mouse, man, sun, seal
- Fan, fish, rain, roof

**Single phoneme blending – for children who are already demonstrating some proficiency with this skill.**

These items include both stretchable and stop consonants.

- lock, leg, bus, bike
- rake, rain, bike, bus

Which item(s) would be inappropriate to use for any phoneme blending task?

- fire – because it is a two syllable word

Which items would be inappropriate to use in a single phoneme blending activity?

- fork – because it is too difficult to segment the sounds in the r controlled vowel.
- fire – because the second syllable consists of an r controlled vowel

Lamp has 4 phonemes and includes a consonant blend – not altogether inappropriate to use but more challenging.