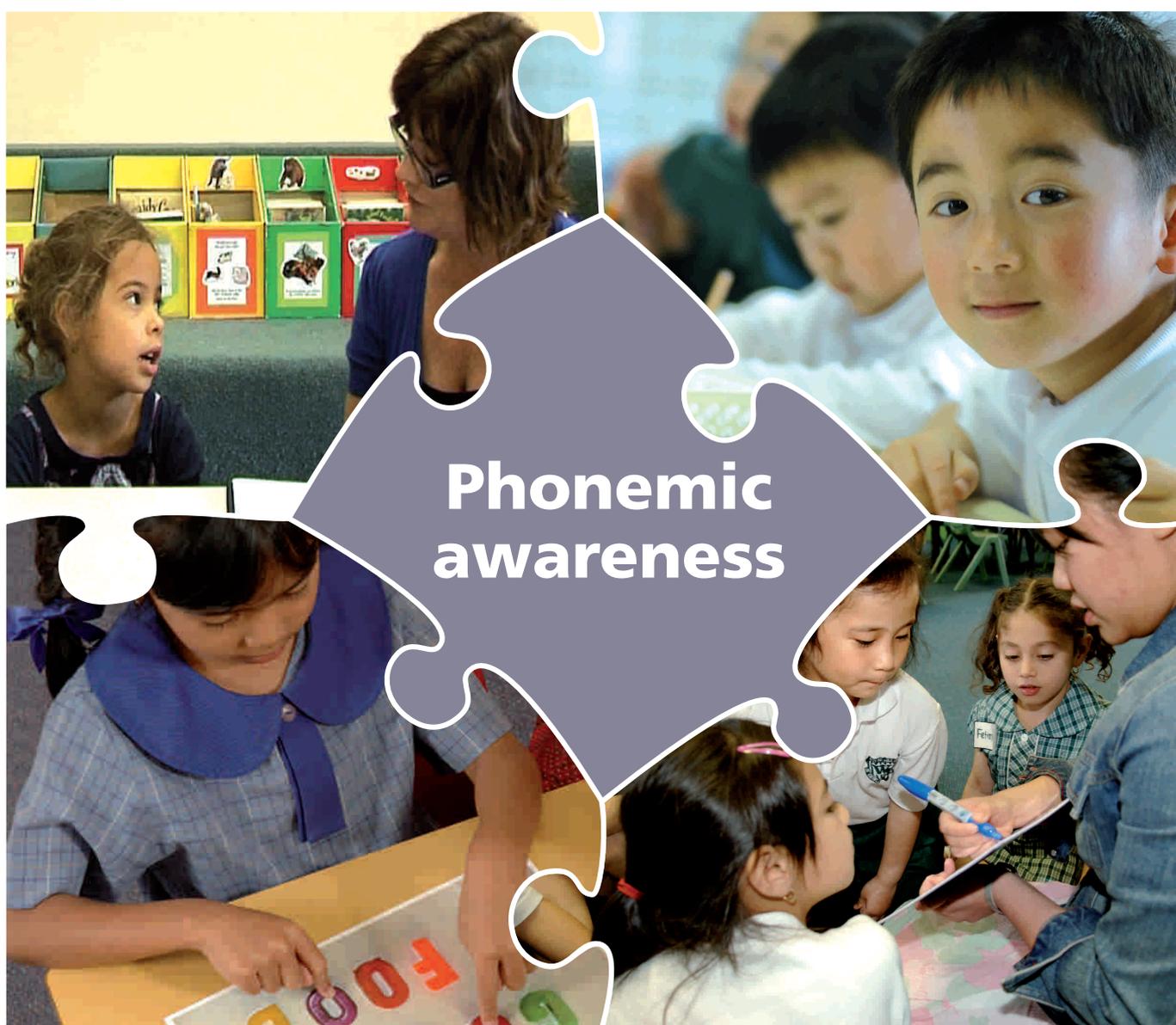


NSW Department of Education and Training
Learning and Development

Literacy teaching guide: Phonemic awareness



The *Literacy teaching guide: Phonemic awareness* and the *Literacy teaching guide: Phonics* are companion guides and as such should be read in conjunction with each other.

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Foreword

This teaching guide on phonemic awareness is one of a series of connected resources to support literacy teaching.

These resources incorporate the most recent research on literacy and literacy education, the findings of national and international reviews and teachers' experience with, and feedback on literacy support materials that the Department has produced in the past.

This guide needs to be read and used in conjunction with that on phonics, which has been simultaneously published. These two critical aspects of literacy need to be taught and learned together.

The Department's position on the teaching of phonemic awareness is clearly stated in our Literacy Policy, namely, that phonemic awareness should be explicitly and systematically taught, within an integrated and balanced program.

This guide reaffirms that principle. Indeed, with the benefit of research and experience, it articulates even more strongly the need for explicit and systematic teaching.

Teachers using this guide will find a significant body of evidence-based information to support the teaching and learning of phonemic awareness. The guide examines and *debunks* some of the commonly held misconceptions or *myths* about teaching phonemic awareness. It recommends a sequence for the teaching of phonemic awareness knowledge and skills and presents a process that supports teachers to teach phonemic awareness in an explicit and systematic way, as part of a balanced and integrated literacy program. Teachers will also find practical ideas and suggestions to enhance their phonemic awareness teaching.

Additional support for the teaching and learning of phonemic awareness is available in the form of a *Literacy Continuum*. This continuum sets out eight critical aspects of literacy and their developmental markers. Phonemic awareness is one of these critical aspects. A further online professional learning resource, linked to the phonemic awareness aspect of the continuum will provide teachers with phonemic awareness learning strategies.

Your feedback and suggestions on this guide would be appreciated. As this resource will be online, it will be regularly revised. Your comments should be emailed to: pa.curriculum@det.nsw.edu.au.

While the teaching of phonemic awareness is essential, no one aspect of literacy learning is sufficient to becoming literate. Effective literacy teaching includes all aspects critical to successful literacy development, within a balanced and integrated program.

I commend this teaching guide to you and wish you every success as you work with your colleagues to improve the learning of your students.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Trevor Fletcher".

Trevor Fletcher
Deputy Director-General, Schools

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Introduction

Purpose

This resource has been developed to help teachers gain deeper insights into the teaching of phonemic awareness. It offers advice on why and how to teach phonemic awareness and provides a range of teaching and learning strategies to develop students' phonemic awareness.

In simple terms, phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and say the sounds in words. For example, students are asked to show their phonemic awareness when they listen for and say the three sounds they hear when the teachers says *mat*.

Phonemic awareness instruction focuses on developing an understanding that words are made up of speech sounds (or phonemes) and that most words consist of a blend of phonemes.

Although the terms phonemic awareness and phonological awareness are often used interchangeably, they are not the same. Phonological awareness is a broader concept that not only includes phonemic awareness, but also encompasses awareness of things like words, syllables and rhyme. Phonemic awareness is a sub-skill of phonological awareness.

Explicitly teaching phonemic awareness (the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words) will assist students to understand the link between spoken and written language when learning to read and spell.

The National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005) identified phonemic awareness as one of the basic *building blocks* of reading.

Most experts agree that teaching phonemic awareness provides students with valuable skills to support reading and writing acquisition.

Accordingly, phonemic awareness should be taught explicitly and systematically as part of a balanced and integrated literacy program.

Links to the *Literacy Continuum*

Early years teachers will be familiar with the early literacy continuum used in the *Best Start* Initiative.

Eight critical aspects of literacy form the foundation of the continuum. Phonemic awareness is one of these aspects.

The continuum describes the development of literacy knowledge and skills typically expected of most students in these eight critical aspects.

Along each critical aspect key developmental points are signalled by *clusters of markers* along the continuum.

Hence, *The process in action: Phonemic awareness* (pp. 28–37) in this guide is organised around each cluster of phonemic awareness markers.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and say the sounds in words.

Teaching phonemic awareness supports reading and writing acquisition.

About this guide

This guide is one in a series, each dealing with a critical aspect of literacy development.

Others in the series focus on:

- Phonics
- Vocabulary knowledge
- Aspects of speaking
- Concepts about print
- Aspects of writing
- Comprehension
- Reading texts.

NB: Other crucial areas of literacy, such as grammar, spelling, punctuation and listening are developed within a number of the above aspects.

It is important that this guide on phonemic awareness (manipulating sounds in words) is used in conjunction with the *Literacy teaching guide: Phonics* (knowing letter-sound relationships). These two aspects of literacy are closely related. Learning about one aspect reinforces the other. Both are concerned with sounds, with phonemic awareness involving spoken language (tasks which are aural/oral) and phonics involving written language (tasks which involve print). For example, you are asking your students to show their phonics knowledge when you ask them to point to the letter *m* in *mat* and provide the sound that it makes.

This guide and each of the other guides, will be supported by a summary of the research upon which the advice in the guide is based.

This guide avoids the use of technical language however, at times, it has been necessary to use terms that are specifically related to the teaching of phonemic awareness. A glossary has been provided at Appendix 1 to define these terms.

Phonemic awareness and phonics are closely related. Learning about one reinforces the other.

Exposing phonemic awareness *myths*

Although it is now widely acknowledged that phonemic awareness is important in learning to read and write, there are a range of views about what phonemic awareness is and how it should be taught. Over time some of these views have influenced classroom practice.

This section exposes some of the *myths* that have developed about phonemic awareness and is intended to prompt teachers to examine and reflect on their classroom practices in light of the information about phonemic awareness teaching provided in this guide.

Some of the more common myths are listed below in italics together with statements in bold that *debunk* these *myths*.

Myth: Phonological awareness, phonemic awareness and phonics are one and the same thing – they all have something to do with sounds and/or letters.

These three terms are closely related, with learning in one area reinforcing the other. However, the three terms are not the same or interchangeable. Phonological awareness is a broad concept that not only includes phonemic awareness but also encompasses awareness of things like words, rhyme, syllables and onset and rime. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, say and manipulate sounds in words and is a sub-skill of phonological awareness. Phonics involves making the connection between sounds and letters when reading and spelling.

Myth: Students will not need to be explicitly taught phonemic awareness if they participate in lots of classroom word games, listen to stories, sing songs and chant rhymes.

Students need to be explicitly taught to listen for the individual sounds in words, to pull them apart (segment) and to put them together (blend). The ability to listen carefully for the sounds in words requires explicit teaching and cannot be left to chance. Phonemic awareness teaching needs to begin early in Kindergarten and be provided in regular, fast-paced teaching sessions (approximately 10 minutes) that cease when students are able to hear, identify, and relate sounds to letters. Reading and telling stories and listening to rhyme, alliteration and the rhythm of spoken language complement the teaching of phonemic awareness and all play a part in encouraging students to attend to the sounds of words and eventually to the sounds within words.

Myth: Students do not need to be taught phonemic awareness because they can still learn to read and spell using other skills such as whole word recognition.

An essential part of learning to read and write is the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds that make up words. Without the ability to hear, manipulate and connect sounds to letter-symbols, learners are deprived of a fundamental means of recognising and producing known words and of figuring out new ones when reading and writing. The National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005) identified phonemic awareness as one of the basic *building blocks* of reading.

Myth: For students, becoming phonemically aware is a time consuming process that needs to be developed over many years.

Phonemic awareness teaching needs to begin early in Kindergarten and be provided in regular, fast-paced teaching sessions (approximately 10 minutes) that cease when students are able to hear, identify, and relate sounds to letters. Byrne, Fielding-Barnsley and Ashley (2000) reported that not only is the attainment of phonemic awareness important for students to be successful readers and spellers but the speed of attainment is important.



Catering for student diversity when teaching phonemic awareness

Schools cater for a diverse student population that includes students from a range of cultural, social, linguistic, religious, economic and political backgrounds and some who may have limited or disrupted educational experiences. These students have diverse needs, interests, experiences, abilities, learning styles and intelligences.

This diversity provides substantial benefits for the students themselves and for the wider community. At the same time, the diverse literacy learning needs of students should be taken into account when planning, teaching and assessing phonemic awareness if all students are to have the opportunity to successfully learn.

Teachers have a particular responsibility to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access the curriculum. Accordingly, teachers should refer to Disability Programs Directorate website (see Appendix 2) and to school and regional support staff who can suggest effective strategies and resources to use with these students. In addition, Appendix 3 provides specific advice in relation to teaching phonemic awareness to students experiencing significant difficulties in learning to read.



As well, there may be particular students or groups of students from diverse backgrounds who require additional support to hear and manipulate the sounds of Standard Australian English. Teachers should refer to Departmental websites (see Appendix 2) and to school and regional support staff for assistance in providing effective support to meet

the learning needs of these students. In addition, Appendices 4–6 provide specific advice for teachers when teaching phonemic awareness to Aboriginal students, students learning English as a second language and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The diverse literacy needs of students must be taken into account when planning, teaching and assessing phonemic awareness if all students are to have an equal opportunity to succeed.

To meet the diverse learning needs of all students in relation to phonemic awareness, effective teachers:

- establish what students can already do in relation to phonemic awareness
- provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their phonemic awareness in different ways
- plan for and differentiate phonemic awareness instruction to meet students' different learning needs
- group students responsively to accommodate the diverse range of phonemic awareness learning needs in the classroom, understanding that groupings will be flexible and change as students' needs change
- draw upon the rich and varied experiences and understandings that each student brings to the classroom
- make connections between students' experiences and the learning of new phonemic awareness knowledge
- provide challenge for all students
- ensure that students are engaged, motivated and encouraged to meet learning challenges
- provide appropriate and timely support and feedback to students.



Effective teachers draw on students' experiences and understandings and make connections to these when teaching phonemic awareness.

About phonemic awareness teaching

Principles of effective phonemic awareness teaching

The following principles underpin the teaching of phonemic awareness suggested in this guide.

Phonemic awareness is critical to becoming literate.

An essential part of learning to read and write is the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds that make up words. Without the ability to hear, manipulate and connect sounds to letter-symbols, learners are deprived of a fundamental means of recognising and producing known words and of figuring out new ones when reading and writing.



Phonemic awareness needs to be explicitly taught.



Students need to be explicitly taught to listen for the individual sounds in words, pull them apart (segment) and put them together (blend). The ability to listen carefully for the sounds in words requires explicit teaching and cannot be left to chance.

Phonemic awareness teaching needs to begin early in Kindergarten and be provided in regular, fast-paced teaching sessions (approximately 10 minutes) that cease when students are able to hear, identify, and relate sounds to letters.

Phonemic awareness needs to be systematically taught.

Standard Australian English consists of 44 phonemes (the smallest units of sounds in words). Most words consist of a blend of phonemes.

Teaching phonemic awareness skills in an effective sequence will significantly influence the rate at which students successfully acquire phonemic awareness (see *A suggested sequence for introducing new phonemic awareness learning*, p. 15).



Phonemic awareness needs to be taught in an integrated literacy program.



Phonemic awareness and phonics are interrelated when students engage in reading and spelling. Phonemic awareness helps students understand and use the alphabetic system to read and spell.

Students need to understand that a word is made up of a series of discrete sounds in order for them to make sense of phonics teaching. Thus, phonemic awareness and phonics teaching need to be integrated.

The more students are provided with scaffolded opportunities to practise their phonemic awareness in authentic reading and writing contexts, the more successful they will be in applying and transferring this knowledge.

Phonemic awareness needs to be taught in a balanced literacy program.

Over time, an effective literacy program needs to be balanced in relation to the *Four Literacy Resources* (see Appendix 7) and include teaching of all critical aspects of literacy. While the purpose, task or context of a particular literacy session may require a stronger focus on one aspect over others, an effective early literacy program will incorporate a balance of aspects including phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary knowledge, comprehension, writing, speaking, concepts about print and reading texts.



Sequencing phonemic awareness instruction

In relation to phonemic awareness instruction, *sequencing* involves giving consideration to the order in which phonemic awareness skills are taught.

When students are learning letter-sound relationships, they are making connections between printed letters and speech sounds (phonemes). Phonemes are the smallest units of sounds in words. There are 44 phonemes in Standard Australian English. Most words consist of a blend of phonemes. When there is a need to record phonemes, they are written with / at the front and at the end, e.g. /s/.

An effective sequence for teaching phonemic awareness facilitates student learning by building from simple to complex, common to uncommon and known to unknown.

A suggested sequence for introducing new phonemic awareness learning is provided opposite.

It needs to be noted that many children develop an awareness of words, rhyme, syllable and onset and rime prior to entering school. It is important that teachers *find out* early about this level of awareness and build on it to begin teaching phonemic awareness as soon as possible.



The suggested sequence corresponds well with the phonemic awareness progression in the NSW *English K–6 syllabus* and that used in the key resource, the *Literacy Continuum*.

Teaching phonemic awareness using an effective sequence will facilitate student learning.

Teachers need to begin teaching phonemic awareness as soon as possible in Kindergarten.

Prior to students being taught phonemic awareness, teachers should ensure that students have developed an awareness of words, rhyme, syllables and onset and rime.

A suggested sequence for introducing new phonemic awareness learning

Students need to be taught to:

- recognise that words can begin with the same sound – then produce such words – phoneme identity
 - recognise that words can end with the same sound – then produce such words – phoneme identity
 - recognise that words can have the same medial sound – then produce such words – phoneme identity
 - recognise that words can be broken down into individual sounds – then produce such words – phoneme isolation
 - blend sounds to make words
 - segment words into sounds
- foundational skills for reading and spelling*
- recognise that sounds can be added to make new words – then produce such words – phoneme addition
 - recognise that sounds can be deleted from words to make new words – then produce such words – phoneme deletion
 - recognise that sounds may be substituted to make new words – then produce such words – phoneme substitution.

Specific reference to phonemic awareness is found throughout the NSW English K–6 syllabus.

The NSW English K–6 syllabus and the Four Literacy Resources model

Teaching phonemic awareness is mandated by the NSW English K–6 syllabus and supported by the Four Literacy Resources model of literacy.

Phonemic awareness and the NSW English K–6 syllabus

The importance of phonemic awareness instruction is clearly stated in the NSW English K–6 syllabus.

Sound awareness (phonemic awareness) is the understanding that spoken words are made up of separate sounds and these sounds can be pulled apart and put back together again or manipulated to make new words. Students need sound awareness to be able to use the alphabetic principle effectively in reading and spelling.

While many aspects may be taught in Early Stage 1, it is important that once students know some letter-sound relationships, the teaching of sound awareness links with reading, writing and spelling activities.

NSW English K–6 syllabus, 1998.

Specific reference to phonemic awareness is found throughout the syllabus in the **Indicators**, **Content Overviews** and **Scope and Sequence of Phonological and Graphological processing**.

For example, from the **Indicators**, *recognises spoken words with same sound or given sound; hears and articulates sound segments in words; segments words into onset and rime (e.g. strip – str and ip), syllables, etc.*

For example, from the **Content Overviews**, students will be provided with opportunities to: *articulate sounds accurately in preparation for spelling through activities such as recognising, matching and saying individual sounds, rhymes, blends, etc. Teachers will: demonstrate how to articulate specific sounds when necessary.*

For example, from the **Scope and Sequence of Phonological and Graphological Processing**, students will be provided with opportunities to: *segment spoken words into separate sounds; blend single sounds to form a spoken word.*

Phonemic awareness and the *Four Literacy Resources* model

The *Four Literacy Resources* developed by Professor Allan Luke and Professor Peter Freebody and introduced in *An introduction to quality literacy teaching*, is a conceptual framework that captures the range of literacy capabilities that all students need to become literate (see Appendix 7).

The model organises these literacy capabilities into four key resources:

- Code-breaking** is the ability to break the code of written texts by recognising and using the fundamental architecture of written language, including the alphabet, sounds in words, spelling, structural conventions and patterns.
- Meaning-making** is the ability to understand and compose meaningful written, visual, spoken, digital and multimodal texts.
- Text-using** is the ability to use written, spoken, visual, digital and multimodal texts in functional ways within and outside the school setting.
- Text-analysing** is the ability to critically analyse written, spoken, visual, digital and multimodal texts and understand that texts represent particular points of view and influence people's ideas.

It is important not to assume that the four resources should be taught or learned in a linear or hierarchical sequence. In fact, effective literacy teaching will often address these resources in integrated ways.

In identifying four different groups of capabilities the model does, however, help to unpack the specific resources that students need to develop. Hence there will be times when teachers need to focus their teaching more on one resource than others, depending on students' needs and the lesson purpose.

For example, as part of becoming an effective code-breaker, students need to develop knowledge about individual speech sounds, so there will be times when teachers need to explicitly focus on the teaching of phonemic awareness.

The *Four Literacy Resources* model highlights the importance of developing students' code-breaking skills, and therefore their phonemic awareness. At the same time, it demonstrates the place of phonemic awareness and the need for phonemic awareness teaching to be part of a balanced and integrated literacy program.

In becoming literate, students need to develop literacy capabilities in all Four Literacy Resources. That is: code-breaking meaning-making text-using text-analysing.

There will be times when teachers need to focus explicitly on code-breaking as part of a balanced and integrated literacy program.



NB: Whenever the word 'text' is used it includes written, visual, oral/aural, digital and multimodal texts.

Being *explicit and systematic* about teaching phonemic awareness in a balanced and integrated literacy program

Effective literacy teachers plan, sequence and directly teach phonemic awareness skills. They provide a balanced and integrated literacy program for their students by teaching all aspects of literacy that are key to literacy success. As well, they ensure that phonemic awareness instruction occurs in meaningful contexts.

The teaching of phonemic awareness can be said to be explicit, systematic, balanced and integrated when teachers:

- know the phonemic awareness knowledge, understandings and skills required by the NSW *English K–6 syllabus* and *A suggested sequence for introducing new phonemic awareness learning* (p. 15)
- use assessment information to identify phonemic awareness learning goals for all students
- take into account the diversity of learners in classes and make appropriate adjustments to their planning, teaching and assessment
- group students based on phonemic awareness assessment information, understanding that student grouping needs to be flexible and will change as students' needs change
- plan focused mini-lessons on phonemic awareness based on an effective phonemic awareness sequence (p. 15)
- explicitly teach phonemic awareness skills through modelled, guided and independent teaching strategies (p. 20)
- integrate explicit phonemic awareness teaching with teaching phonics
- include opportunities for students to practise and apply phonemic awareness knowledge and skills within the literacy session and other learning areas
- teach phonemic awareness in a stimulating and rich literacy environment that includes the use of authentic texts and contexts
- ensure that over time, students receive balanced instruction in the skills and knowledge needed to be effective code-breakers, meaning-makers, text-users and text-analysts.

*Explicit**Systematic**Balanced**Integrated*

Explicit and systematic phonemic awareness teaching

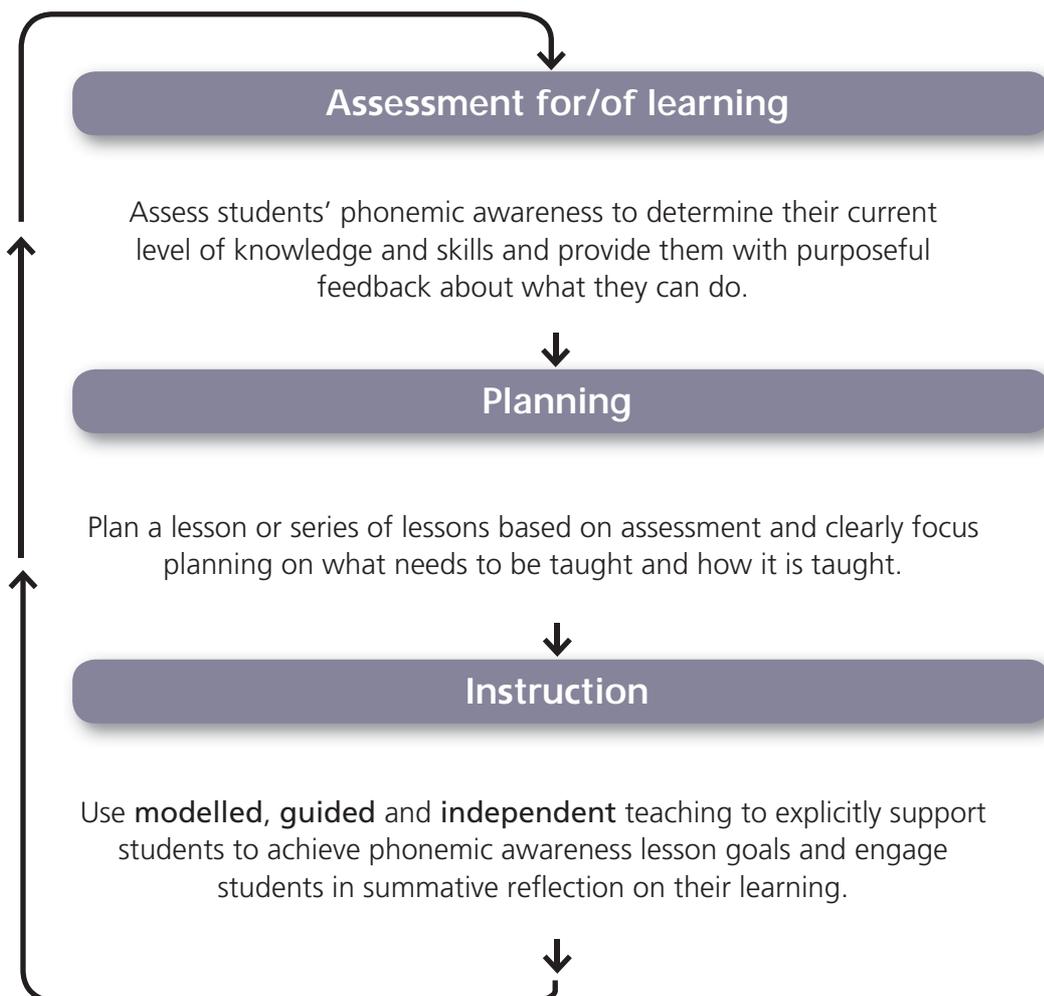
Explicit and systematic phonemic awareness teaching should not be confused with *drill and practise* or a return to authoritarian classrooms where teachers tell and test and where students memorise and regurgitate.

Explicit and systematic teaching involves the deliberate explanation and demonstration of new phonemic awareness learning. Failing to provide students with explicit and systematic phonemic awareness teaching is to leave important learning up to students to *figure out* for themselves, often resulting in frustration, disengagement and underachievement.

The diagram below represents a process for teaching phonemic awareness in an explicit and systematic way and signals the place of modelled, guided and independent teaching within the process.

It is built on the concept that at its most basic level, teaching phonemic awareness in an explicit and systematic way involves a continuous cycle of assessing, teaching and learning.

A process for explicit and systematic phonemic awareness teaching



Three key strategies: Modelled, guided and independent teaching

Three key strategies known as modelled, guided and independent teaching are central to effective literacy teaching. Understanding and using these strategies will assist teachers to teach phonemic awareness effectively.

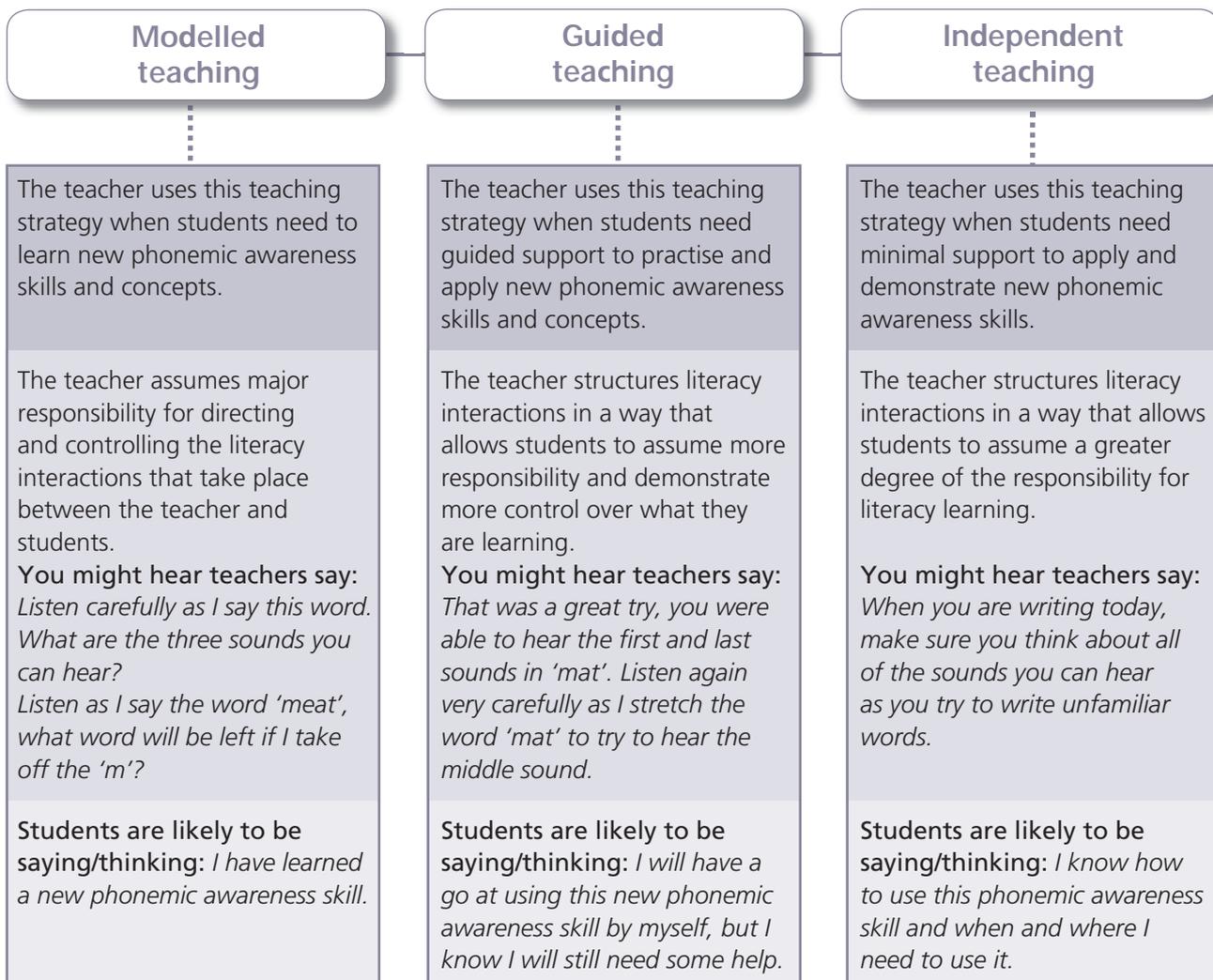
Modelled, guided and independent teaching strategies focus on how the teacher moves the level of responsibility for learning from teacher to student. The strategies emphasise a controlled shift by the teacher according to students' readiness. The teacher's ultimate aim is to support students to move from being dependent learners to being independent learners. That is, to be able to apply and transfer their learning to new contexts.

The teacher decides whether to use modelled, guided or independent teaching with the whole class, a small group or individual students. Decisions about grouping students for phonemic awareness instruction are determined by classroom-based assessment information. The teacher will maximise the potential for students to *take on* new phonemic awareness learning by creating authentic contexts.

In **modelled teaching**, scaffolding is direct, teacher-led and obvious.

In **guided teaching**, scaffolding provides just enough support from the teacher to enable students to successfully demonstrate new learning.

In **independent teaching**, scaffolding provides minimal support from the teacher and greater opportunity for students to demonstrate their new learning and apply it to other contexts.



In an overall sense, the three strategies describe how teachers structure and deliver teaching in response to students' learning needs. Descriptions of modelled, guided and independent teaching are given below.

Modelled teaching

In modelled teaching, the teacher explicitly and directly teaches new phonemic awareness skills and concepts based on a planned, systematic sequence for teaching phonemic awareness. The teacher leads, demonstrates, models and explains the phonemic awareness skill to be learned and *thinks aloud* the learning processes involved. The teacher activates prior phonemic awareness knowledge, introduces new phonemic awareness terminology, builds on known understandings about phonemic awareness, and scaffolds students in concrete and visible ways (see examples of modelled teaching in Anouska's story on p. 22, Kale's story on p. 23 and Baeden's story on p. 23).

Guided teaching

In guided teaching, the teacher still operates in a planned and systematic way but allows students more control. The literacy interactions are focused on the new phonemic awareness learning introduced during modelled teaching. Informed by student assessment information and knowledge of the phonemic awareness learning sequence, the teacher knows exactly what he/she expects students to be able to do. As needed, the teacher provides explicit explanation, scaffolds students with just enough support to succeed, corrects errors and provides feedback. The students are more actively involved and *hands on* with their phonemic awareness learning, talking about, demonstrating, organising, practising and applying what they know and can do (see examples of guided teaching in Kale's story on p. 23 and Baeden's story on p. 23).

Independent teaching

In independent teaching, the teacher has made a decision that students are ready to apply their phonemic awareness learning independently. The teacher knows the phonemic awareness skills he/she wants students to demonstrate as a result of the modelled and guided teaching. As needed, the teacher provides differentiated tasks and increased opportunities for student self-direction and self-monitoring. Students take more control, demonstrating, practising, applying and reflecting on their phonemic awareness learning. Students show they can transfer their phonemic awareness learning to other situations and contexts (evidence of independent teaching can be found in Anouska's story p. 22).

Early years' teachers *talk about* teaching phonemic awareness in their literacy sessions

Previous NSW Department of Education and Training support materials introduced K–6 teachers to the notion of a sustained, balanced and integrated literacy session.

K–6 teachers have developed a range of effective ways of organising literacy sessions.

It is evident that K–6 teachers manage the *ebb and flow* of balanced and integrated literacy sessions in highly individualised ways.

This guide directs early years' teachers to ensure that they incorporate explicit and systematic phonemic awareness teaching into their current literacy session structure.

On these pages, three teachers provide insights into how typical literacy sessions can incorporate explicit phonemic awareness teaching.

Anouska, a Kindergarten teacher, describes how she explicitly teaches phonemic awareness while teaching letter-sound relationships.



The *Best Start Kindergarten literacy assessment* showed that most of my students were already able to recognise and provide words that rhyme. Based on the sequence for teaching phonemic awareness, in my teaching program I have planned to focus my teaching on initial phoneme identity. I link my phonemic awareness teaching to my phonics teaching which means, this week, because I will be teaching my students to recognise and write the letters and sounds for *l*, *f*, *d* and *r*, I will also be teaching them to hear and say these sounds at the beginning of words.

I begin my literacy session with modelled teaching. I choose an enlarged text that features the particular letter-sound relationships that I have planned to focus on.

As I read the text the students follow the text with their eyes. During reading, while attending to text meaning and concepts about print, I reinforce phonemic awareness (rhyming and onset and rime) and previously learned letter-sound relationships.

Following an initial reading, I ask students to listen carefully to some of the words from the text to identify the first sound I make when I say the word slowly and clearly. Then we discuss student names beginning with the sound, other words that begin with the same sound, etc. I then introduce the letter that represents that speech sound.

Those students I observe to know the new letter-sound relationship would be set up to practise and apply the new knowledge by using it to make some words using letter frames, magnetic letters, etc.

Those students that need more help remain with me for some really directed modelled teaching.

Throughout the remainder of the literacy session I make sure I remind the students to use the new letter-sound relationship as they read and write.

Phonemic awareness helps children to read and spell. Teaching letter-sound awareness is important to help children apply their phonemic awareness skills to reading and writing (Stanovich, 1986; Snow, Burns & Griffin 1998; Smith et al., 1998; Education Queensland, 2006; Center & Freeman, 1998).

Kale, a Kindergarten teacher, describes how he explicitly teaches phonemic awareness to his class.

Most of my students do not yet have an understanding of rhyme awareness on the developmental sequence of phonemic awareness teaching. I have decided to concentrate on a lot of aural/oral experiences for my students over the next couple of weeks before beginning to introduce letter-sound relationships.

I begin each literacy session with a dedicated time devoted to teaching rhyme awareness. I engage the students in enlarged texts that have rhyming words, introduce raps and rhymes and orally play with words using a lot of active aural/oral student-based activity, like clapping, tapping and joining in with songs, jingles known and new to students. I also use as many opportunities as I can throughout the day to reinforce this (lesson breaks, etc).

Throughout the rest of the literacy session, I take every opportunity to highlight the sounds in words. From what I've been doing, I can already see that this is having a big impact on my students and I'm confident that they will be better prepared to tackle phoneme identity.

Phonemic awareness needs to be taught early and fast (Byrne, Fielding-Barnsley & Ashley 2000).

Baeden, a Year 1 teacher, explains how he caters for the individual phonemic awareness needs of students within his literacy session.

Most of my students have a good knowledge of phonemic awareness and I make sure that I constantly remind them to use this knowledge when reading and writing, not only in the literacy session but in their reading and writing in other learning areas.

There are a few exceptions where I need to provide additional explicit teaching for individuals who have difficulty hearing the sounds in words when blending and segmenting.

This usually involves me:

- sitting with the student one-on-one during a class writing session and explicitly modelling how to hear and record sounds in words as the student writes
- providing the student with particular support to blend phonemes as the student is reading.

Phonemic awareness instruction should be part of a balanced literacy program. It develops reciprocally with the teaching of reading and spelling (Yopp, 2000).

Key resources that will assist and enhance phonemic awareness teaching

Examples of books that play with language or provide opportunities for students to talk about and use words and sounds:



	<i>Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus</i>	Willems, Mo
	<i>Does a Cow Say Boo?</i>	Hindley, Judy
<input type="radio"/>	<i>Wanted! Have You Seen This Alligator?</i>	Waring, Richard
	<i>A Squash and a Squeeze</i>	Donaldson, Julia
<input type="radio"/>	<i>Billy's Bucket</i>	Gray, Kes
	<i>The Snail House</i>	Ahlberg, Allan
	<i>My Dog and the Birthday Mystery</i>	Adler, David
	<i>365 Penguins</i>	Fromental, Jean-Luc
	<i>No Jumping on the Bed!</i>	Arnold, Tedd
	<i>Let's Get A Pup! Said Kate</i>	Graham, Bob
	<i>James Herriot's Treasury for Children</i>	Herriot, James
	<i>My Best Friend</i>	Hutchins, Pat
	<i>The Frogs Wore Suspenders: Rhymes</i>	Prelutsky, Jack
	<i>The Old Woman Who Named Things</i>	Rylant, Cynthia
<input type="radio"/>	<i>Leo the Late Bloomer</i>	Kraus, Robert
<input type="radio"/>	<i>Take Me Out of the Bathtub and Other Silly Dilly Songs</i>	Katz, Alan
<input type="radio"/>		

Other useful resources:

- Elkonian boxes, blank word frames, word boxes
- picture cards
- coloured counters, *unifix* cubes, blocks
- large rubber bands
- visuals such as photographs, posters, etc.
- collections of rhymes, raps, chants, songs, poems.

See pp. 53–59 for learning activities that incorporate the use of these resources.

Explicit phonemic awareness teaching in action

Navigating this section of the guide

This section of the document is about implementing explicit phonemic awareness teaching in the classroom. It provides specific guidance for teachers about how to systematically assess, plan and teach the phonemic awareness segment of their literacy sessions. It has been designed to be used with the *Literacy Continuum* and to specifically link with, complement and support the *Best Start Kindergarten literacy assessment* process.

The information contained on the next double page (p. 26 and p. 27) is vital to understanding how to:

- navigate this section of the document
- put explicit phonemic awareness teaching into practice in the classroom.

At a glance: The phonemic awareness aspect of the Literacy Continuum (p. 26), is a one page summary of the five clusters of markers that appear along the phonemic awareness aspect of the *Literacy Continuum*.

A process for explicit and systematic phonemic awareness teaching (p. 27), is a diagram that presents a process for teaching phonemic awareness in an explicit way. The diagram is built on the concept that effective teaching involves a continuous cycle of assessing, teaching and learning.

The process on p. 27 is informed by this core concept but goes further to *step out* for teachers how to be more explicit, particularly about the planning and teaching that needs to take place to maximise the potential for student learning. It specifically demonstrates how teachers can use modelled, guided and independent teaching in the phonemic awareness segment of their literacy sessions.

Following p. 26 and p. 27, each double page thereafter focuses progressively on a different set of phonemic awareness markers on the *Literacy Continuum* and provides a model of the kind of teaching needed to move students to the next cluster of markers on the continuum.

Teachers need to systematically assess, plan and teach phonemic awareness within their daily literacy sessions.

At a glance: The phonemic awareness aspect of the *Literacy Continuum*

(The following clusters of phonemic awareness markers are those that are represented on the *Literacy Continuum*.)

► Markers assessed through *Best Start Kindergarten literacy assessment*

First cluster of markers

- Unable to identify words that rhyme.
- Unable to identify words that start with the same initial sound.

Second cluster of markers

- Identifies rhyming words on some occasions.
- Identifies words that start with the same initial sound on some occasions.
- Says the word when the teacher models onset and rime, e.g. teacher says *mmmm/at*, child says *mat*.
- Segments spoken multisyllabic words into syllables, e.g. *ba/na/na* when clapping.

Third cluster of markers

- Consistently identifies words that rhyme.
- Consistently identifies words that start with the same initial sound.
- Provides a word starting with a given sound.
- Orally blends two and three sounds to make a word.
- Segments words orally into onset and rime, e.g. *t-ent*.
- Segments one syllable words (up to three sounds) into separate sounds.

Fourth cluster of markers

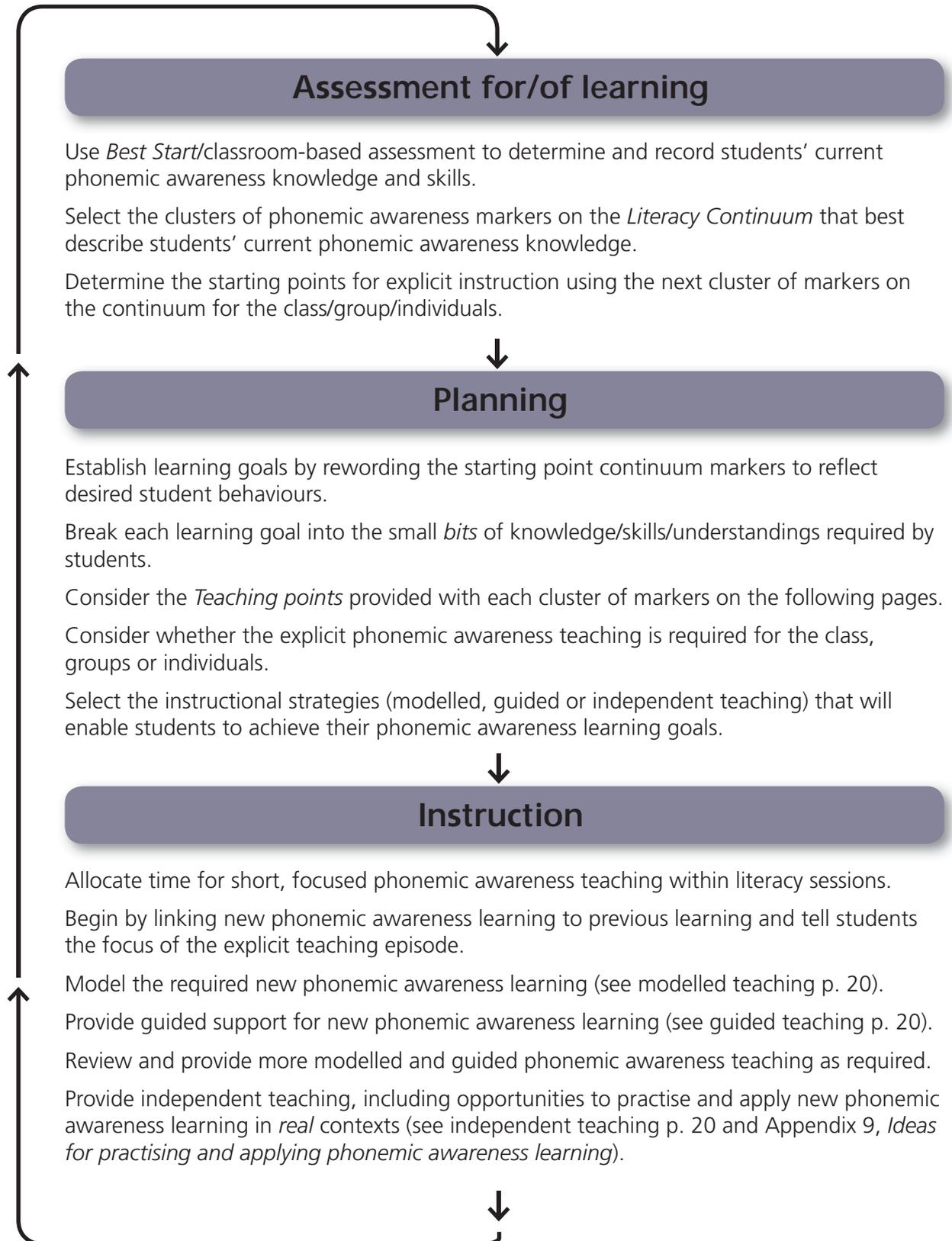
- Says the new word when asked to delete one phoneme (phoneme deletion).
- Says the new word by adding a phoneme to an existing word (phoneme addition).

Fifth cluster of markers

- Says the new word when one phoneme is substituted for another (phoneme substitution).

Appendix 8 shows links to the NSW *English K–6 syllabus* and support documents for each cluster of continuum markers.

A process for explicit and systematic phonemic awareness teaching



The process in action: Phonemic awareness

First cluster of markers

- ▶ Unable to identify words that rhyme.
- ▶ Unable to identify words that start with the same initial sound.

NB: This cluster of markers could be useful to inform transition to school programs.

Assessment for/of learning

Use classroom-based assessment or *Best Start* assessment to assess the above markers.

The first cluster of markers on the *Literacy Continuum* would be the starting point for explicit instruction for those students who have not yet demonstrated behaviours described in the above cluster of markers.

Based on the first cluster of markers, the new learning goals would be:

- begins to recognise that words rhyme
- begins to recognise initial sounds of spoken words.

Planning

Based on the learning goals, the explicit teaching would be focused on:

- the concept of rhyming words
- how to listen for rhyming words (explicit teaching example provided on page 29)
- the concept of initial sounds
- how to identify some sounds in initial, medial and final positions, e.g. /a/, /m/, /t/, /s/.

Teaching points:

- phonemic awareness experiences are oral/aural, not written
- use the terms *rhyme* and *sounds* explicitly
- a small subset of phonemes that are easy to identify make a good starting point
- single consonants should be addressed before consonant clusters, e.g. /s/ before /ʃ/
- continuous sounds (e.g. /m/, /s/, /l/) are easier to manipulate and hear than stop sounds (e.g. /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, and /g/)
- when introducing continuous sounds, exaggerate them by holding on to them: *rrrrrrring*
- for stop sounds, use iteration (rapid repetition): */k/-/k/-/k/-/k/atie*
- draw attention to the position of the lips and tongue, e.g. for the /m/ lips are pressed together
- introduce the sounds in initial, medial and final positions in words.

Instruction

Following is an example of short, sharp, explicit phonemic awareness teaching focused on how to listen for rhyming words.

Link new learning to previous learning and tell students the focus of the explicit teaching episode.

Say: Yesterday we read a book that had lots of words that end the same way, or rhyme. Today we are going to listen for more words that rhyme.

Model the required new learning.

Say: I am going to say three words. I need to find the two words that rhyme. I will listen to the last part of the word carefully. The words are 'rat', 'hat' and 'dog'. The words 'rat' and 'hat' both have the 'at' ending. So they are the rhyming words.

Provide guided support for the new learning.

Provide other examples of three words where the two rhyming words are together, not separated, e.g. *sun, frog, dog*. Support students to listen to the end sounds to find the rhyming words. *Say: Well done, 'frog' and 'dog' rhyme. They both sound the same, they end with 'og'.*

Review and provide more modelled teaching and guided teaching as required.

Provide independent teaching, including opportunities to practise and apply new phonics learning in *real* contexts.

Practise and apply new phonemic awareness learning in *real* contexts. This will involve:

- making explicit links for students between new phonemic awareness learning and other contexts and learning areas.
- ensuring that students are provided with opportunities to practise new phonemic awareness learning as part of the processes of reading and writing within the literacy session.

Appendix 9, *Ideas for practising and applying phonemic awareness learning*, provides some independent teaching activities organised around each cluster of markers that could be used to support this part of the process. Decide whether students have achieved the learning goals using observation, interaction and students' work samples.

The process in action: Phonemic awareness

Second cluster of markers

- ▶ Identifies rhyming words on some occasions.
- ▶ Identifies words that start with the same initial sound on some occasions.
- Says the word when the teacher models onset and rime, e.g. teacher says *mmmm/at*, child says *mat*.
- Segments spoken multisyllabic words into syllables, e.g. *ba/na/na* when clapping.

Assessment for/of learning

Use classroom-based assessment or *Best Start* assessment to assess the above markers.

The second cluster of markers on the *Literacy Continuum* would be the starting point for explicit instruction for those students who have not yet demonstrated behaviours described in the above cluster of markers.

Based on the second cluster of markers, the new learning goals would be:

- recognises some rhyming words
- recognises some words with the same initial sound
- says the word when given onset and rhyme
- segments spoken words into syllables.

Planning

Based on the learning goals, the explicit teaching would be focused on:

- reviewing and consolidating listening for rhyming words
- reviewing and consolidating how to identify initial sounds (explicit teaching example provided on page 31)
- how to identify some more sounds in initial, medial and final positions, e.g. /i/, /f/, /d/, /r/, /o/, /g/, /l/, /h/
- how to blend and segment onset and rime
- the concept of syllables.

Teaching points:

- it is easier to distinguish onsets than individual phonemes; the initial element: /h/=onset, the final element: /igh/=rime (high)
- the onset element must be a consonant, consonant blend or consonant digraph
- every syllable in every word must have a vowel (or y)
- most syllables start with a consonant, e.g. *trum/pet*
- when syllabifying a word that has two consonants that are not consonant blends make the break between the two consonants, e.g. *diff/fer/ent*
- usually divide a word before a single middle consonant, e.g. *ba/con*
- when dividing a word into syllables, the *-le* form acts like a magnet and drags the consonant in front of it into the syllable, e.g. *waf/fle*.

Instruction

Following is an example of short, sharp, explicit phonemic awareness teaching focused on how to identify words with the same initial sound.

Link new learning to previous learning and tell students the focus of the explicit teaching episode.

Say: Yesterday we were listening to rhyming words. Today we are going to listen closely to the first sound in words.

Model the required new learning.

Say: I am going to say three words, making sure that I listen very closely to the first sound. Two of these words start with the same sound, 'mmmmake', 'rrrrun', 'mmmmilk'. When I say 'make' and 'milk' my lips are pressed together for the /m/ sound.

Provide guided support for the new learning.

Present a series of quick three-word lists. Students listen and repeat the words, clapping for the two that start with the same initial sound and saying the sound. *Say: Great work, the words are 'father' and 'far' and they do begin with the /f/ sound. Point out words that have a known initial sound in the medial or final position. Say: Clap when you hear the /s/ sound at the end of the word.*

Review and provide more modelled teaching and guided teaching as required.

Provide independent teaching, including opportunities to practise and apply new phonics learning in *real* contexts.

Practise and apply new phonemic awareness learning in *real* contexts. This will involve:

- making explicit links for students between new phonemic awareness learning and other contexts and learning areas.
- ensuring that students are provided with opportunities to practise new phonemic awareness learning as part of the processes of reading and writing within the literacy session.

Appendix 9, *Ideas for practising and applying phonemic awareness learning*, provides some independent teaching activities organised around each cluster of markers that could be used to support this part of the process. Decide whether students have achieved the learning goals using observation, interaction and students' work samples.

The process in action: Phonemic awareness

Third cluster of markers

- ▶ Consistently identifies words that rhyme.
- ▶ Consistently identifies words that start with the same initial sound.
- Provides a word starting with a given sound.
- Orally blends two and three sounds to make a word.
- Segments words orally into onset and rime, e.g. *t-ent*.
- Segments one syllable words (up to three sounds) into separate sounds.

Assessment for/of learning

Use classroom-based assessment or *Best Start* assessment to assess the above markers.

The third cluster of markers on the *Literacy Continuum* would be the starting point for explicit instruction for those students who have not yet demonstrated behaviours described in the above cluster of markers.

Based on the third cluster of markers, the new learning goals would be:

- identifies rhyming words
- identifies words with the same initial sounds
- provides words with a particular initial sound
- orally blends sounds to make a word
- segments words orally into onset and rime
- segments one syllable words into separate sounds
- identifies medial and final sounds in some words.

Planning

Based on the learning goals, the explicit teaching would be focused on:

- consolidating the identification of rhyming words
- reviewing and consolidating how to identify initial sounds
- how to identify remaining sounds in initial, medial and final positions, e.g. /u/, /c/, /b/, /n/, /k/, /v/, /e/, /w/, /j/, /p/, /y/, /x/, /q/, /z/
- how to say words that start with a nominated initial sound
- how to orally blend two sounds to make a new word
- how to orally blend three sounds to make a new word (explicit teaching example provided on page 33)
- reviewing and consolidating how to break words into onset and rime
- how to segment words into two sounds
- how to segment words into three sounds.

Teaching points:

- prior to blending phonemes, students should be able to hear phonemes in the initial, medial and final positions; the initial position is easiest, followed by the final position; the medial position is most difficult
- use a variety of approaches, e.g. *Does 'frog' end with /g/? Can you hear a /g/ at the end of 'frog'? Is there a /g/ at the end of 'frog'? Is /g/ the last sound in 'frog'?*
- prior to introducing blending and segmenting of phonemes, teach students to blend and segment syllables and compound words, e.g. *ellephant ; football*
- when identifying or combining sound sequences, a CV (consonant-vowel) pattern should be used before a VC (vowel-consonant) pattern, followed by a CVC pattern (e.g. *red*).

Instruction

Following is an example of short, sharp, explicit phonemic awareness teaching focused on how to orally blend three sounds to make a new word.

Link new learning to previous learning and tell students the focus of the explicit teaching episode.

Say: Last week we listened to the first sound of a word. Today we are going to blend, or push together, three sounds to make a new word.

Model the required new learning.

Say: This word is a colour word. I will clap the number of sounds as I say the word, 'red'. There are three sounds /r/ /e/ /d/. I will now push these sounds together, 'red'. The word is 'red'. I have some new red shoes.

Provide guided support for the new learning.

Present a series of CVC words. Students listen, repeat the sounds, e.g. /s/ /u/ /n/ counting the number of sounds as they clap. Encourage students to use their hands to push the three sounds together. *Say: What is the word? Who can use it in a sentence? Well done. The word is 'sun' and it does have three sounds.*

Review and provide more modelled teaching and guided teaching as required.

Provide independent teaching, including opportunities to practise and apply new phonics learning in *real* contexts.

Practise and apply new phonemic awareness learning in *real* contexts. This will involve:

- making explicit links for students between new phonemic awareness learning and other contexts and learning areas.
- ensuring that students are provided with opportunities to practise new phonemic awareness learning as part of the processes of reading and writing within the literacy session.

Appendix 9, *Ideas for practising and applying phonemic awareness learning*, provides some independent teaching activities organised around each cluster of markers that could be used to support this part of the process. Decide whether students have achieved the learning goals using observation, interaction and students' work samples.

The process in action: Phonemic awareness

Fourth cluster of markers

- ▶ Says the new word when asked to delete one phoneme (phoneme deletion).
- Says the new word by adding a phoneme to an existing word (phoneme addition).

Assessment for/of learning

Use classroom-based assessment or *Best Start* assessment to assess the above markers.

The fourth cluster of markers on the *Literacy Continuum* would be the starting point for explicit instruction for those students who have not yet demonstrated behaviours described in the above cluster of markers.

Based on the fourth cluster of markers, the new learning goals would be:

- identifies new words after deleting phonemes
- says new words after adding phonemes.

Planning

Based on the learning goals, the explicit teaching would be focused on:

- how to delete phonemes and identify the new word (explicit teaching example provided on page 35)
- how to add phonemes and identify the new word.

Teaching points:

- when teaching phoneme deletion, use concrete material such as counters to represent phonemes initially and then replace with letters to consolidate the link between phonemic awareness and letter-sound knowledge
- it is more logical to say that a particular sound (phoneme) *goes with, matches or is represented by* a particular letter rather than *b says /b/*
- when teaching phoneme deletion, encourage students to use each new word in a sentence to consolidate meanings
- when modelling phoneme deletion and addition, verbalise the processes being undertaken
- when adding phonemes, begin with easy to hear sounds (continuous sounds) then move to more difficult-to-hear single sounds (stop sounds) before introducing consonant blends
- when teaching phoneme addition, initially use concrete materials such as counters to represent phonemes and then replace with letters to consolidate the link between phonemic awareness and letter-sound knowledge
- teach phoneme deletion (e.g. take the /s/ away from *slip*) and phoneme addition (e.g. add /t/ to *rip*) before phoneme substitution.

Instruction

Following is an example of short, sharp, explicit phonemic awareness teaching focused on how to delete phonemes and identify the new word.

Link new learning to previous learning and tell students the focus of the explicit teaching episode.

Say: Last week we broke words into three and four sounds. Today we are going to learn about phoneme deletion, that is, taking phonemes out of words to make a new word.

Model the required new learning.

Say: Listen to this word 'slip'. Listen as I say the sounds in the word 'slip', /s/ /l/ /i/ /p/. There are four sounds in this word. Support the students to count the sounds, holding up their fingers to show how many sounds they can hear. What new word will I make if I take the /s/ away from 'slip'? I will make the new word 'lip'.

Provide guided support for the new learning.

Say: The next word is 'clap'. Listen as I say the word 'clap', /c/ /l/ /a/ /p/. What new word will I make if I take the /c/ away from 'clap'? Say: Well done, the new word is 'lap'.

Review and provide more modelled teaching and guided teaching as required.

Provide independent teaching, including opportunities to practise and apply new phonics learning in *real* contexts.

Practise and apply new phonemic awareness learning in *real* contexts. This will involve:

- making explicit links for students between new phonemic awareness learning and other contexts and learning areas.
- ensuring that students are provided with opportunities to practise new phonemic awareness learning as part of the processes of reading and writing within the literacy session.

Appendix 9, *Ideas for practising and applying phonemic awareness learning*, provides some independent teaching activities organised around each cluster of markers that could be used to support this part of the process. Decide whether students have achieved the learning goals using observation, interaction and students' work samples.

The process in action: Phonemic awareness

Fifth cluster of markers

- Says the new word when one phoneme is substituted for another (phoneme substitution).

Assessment for/of learning

Use classroom-based assessment to assess the above markers.

The fifth cluster of markers on the *Literacy Continuum* would be the starting point for explicit instruction for those students who have not yet demonstrated behaviours described in the above cluster of markers.

Based on the fifth cluster of markers, the new learning goals would be:

- says and identifies new words after substituting phonemes.

Planning

Based on the learning goals, the explicit teaching would be focused on:

- how to substitute phonemes and identify the new word (explicit teaching example provided on page 37).

Teaching points:

- when modelling phoneme substitution, verbalise the processes being undertaken
- when substituting phonemes, begin with the easy-to-hear sounds (continuous sounds), then the more difficult-to-hear single sounds (stop sounds), before introducing consonant blends
- teach phoneme deletion (e.g. take the /s/ away from *slip*) and addition (e.g. add /t/ to the word *rip*), before phoneme substitution (change the /u/ to /a/ in *lump*)
- encourage students to use each new word in a sentence to consolidate meanings
- when teaching phoneme substitution, use concrete materials such as counters to represent phonemes initially and then replace with letters to consolidate the link between phonemic awareness and letter-sound knowledge.

Instruction

Following is an example of short, sharp, explicit phonemic awareness teaching focused on how to substitute phonemes and identify the new word.

Link new learning to previous learning and tell students the focus of the explicit teaching episode.

Say: Last week we listened to words and took away one of the sounds to make a new word. Today we are going to change a sound in a word to make a new word.

Model the required new learning.

Explain that sometimes a new word can be made by changing one of the sounds in a word. *Say: 'hat'. Now I am going to make a new word by changing the /t/ at the end of 'hat' to a /m/. Listen as I say the word /h/ /a/ /m/. The new word is 'ham'. I like ham and eggs.*

Provide guided support for the new learning.

Provide students with other words and ask them to make new words by changing a sound in the words. *Say: That's right, you've made a new word by changing a sound.*

Review and provide more modelled teaching and guided teaching as required.

Provide independent teaching, including opportunities to practise and apply new phonics learning in *real* contexts.

Practise and apply new phonemic awareness learning in *real* contexts. This will involve:

- making explicit links for students between new phonemic awareness learning and other contexts and learning areas.
- ensuring that students are provided with opportunities to practise new phonemic awareness learning as part of the processes of reading and writing within the literacy session.

Appendix 9, *Ideas for practising and applying phonemic awareness learning*, provides some independent teaching activities organised around each cluster of markers that could be used to support this part of the process. Decide whether students have achieved the learning goals using observation, interaction and students' work samples.

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Appendix 1

Glossary

alliteration

Alliteration is the use of the same consonant sound at the beginning of several words in close succession, e.g. *slippery, slithering snakes*.

alphabetic principle

The alphabetic principle is the understanding that letters are used to represent speech sounds and that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds.

blend (noun)

A blend is a combination of two or three consonant letters with separate sounds, e.g. *br, dr, str*; sometimes called a consonant cluster.

blend/blends/blending (verb)

To blend is to merge sounds together to pronounce a word, e.g. /s/- /a/- /t/ blends together to pronounce the word *sat*.

continuous sounds

Continuous sounds can be voiced for several seconds without distortion. All vowels and some consonants (i.e., *f, l, m, n, r, s, v, w, y, and z*) are continuous sounds.

consonant

A consonant, e.g. *t, s, b, r, d, g*, is any letter other than a vowel (*a, e, i, o, and u*).

consonant digraphs

A consonant digraph is two consonants that together represent a single sound, e.g. /*ch*/ in *chip* or the /*sh*/ in *ship*.

graphological processing

Graphological processing is the processing of visual information about words and texts in print, e.g. punctuation, letter sequences.

graphophonic information

Graphophonic information is information related to letters and sounds. Students use graphophonic information to assist decoding at the word level.

multimodal text

A multimodal text is a text that includes more than one *mode*. It may incorporate combinations of spoken or written language, still or moving images, it may be produced on paper or electronic screen and may incorporate sound.

multisyllabic word

A multisyllabic word is a word that consists of more than one syllable, e.g. *banana* (/ba/na/na/) has three syllables.

onset and rime

Onset and rime are the separate sounds in a word, i.e. the beginning part of a word (onset) and the rest of the word (rime), e.g. *b-ark*.

phoneme

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word, e.g. the word *if* has two phonemes /i/ and /f/.

phonetically

To spell phonetically is to write words according to the way they sound rather than the standard dictionary spelling.

phonics

Phonics involves making connections between sounds and letters when reading and spelling.

phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is a broad concept that includes phonemic awareness as well as an awareness of things like words, rhyme, syllables and onset and rime.

phonological processing

Phonological processing is the processing of information about the sounds of language and letter-sound relationships when comprehending text, e.g. single sounds, blends.

scaffold/scaffolds/scaffolding (verb)

To scaffold is to provide temporary 'point of need' support that enables students to acquire new learning. Support is progressively adjusted as students become increasingly able to independently demonstrate their learning.

segment/segments/segmenting (verb)

To segment is to break up a word into separate sounds, e.g. the word is *sat*, the separate sounds are /s/-/a/-/t/. It is the reverse of blending.

segmentation

Segmentation is the breaking down of a spoken word into word parts by inserting a pause between each part. Words can be segmented at the word level (in the case of compound words), at the syllable level, at the onset and rime level, and at the phoneme level.

semantic information

Semantic information is information related to meaning. Students use semantic information to assist decoding at the word, sentence and text level.

stop sounds

Stop sounds involve a puff of airflow and are pronounced only momentarily. Letters with stop sounds include *b, c, d, g, j, k, p, q, t,* and *x*.

syllable

A syllable is a unit of sound within a word, e.g. the word *cat* has one syllable, the word *bobcat* has two syllables.

syntactic information

Syntactic information is information about the way in which sentences and clauses are structured. Students use syntactic information to assist decoding at the word, sentence and text level.

vowel

A vowel is any letter other than a consonant, i.e. *a, e, i, o, u*.

Appendix 2

Websites for additional information and support

Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate website, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, NSW, viewed 12 May 2009, <<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/aet/index.htm>>

Board of Studies NSW, NSW Government, Sydney, NSW, viewed 12 May 2009, <www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>

Boys' and Girls' Education, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, NSW, viewed 12 May 2009, <detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/equity/boysgirlsedu.htm>

Disability Access: Whole of Life, All of Life, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, NSW, viewed 12 May 2009, <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/communityed/disabilityaccess/da_edtraining.htm>

English as a Second Language (ESL) education, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, NSW, viewed 12 May 2009, <<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/multicultural/esl/index.htm>>

Equity Programs and Distance Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Training, viewed 12 May 2009, <<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/equity/index.htm>>

Gifted and Talented Education, Curriculum K-12 Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, NSW, viewed 12 May 2009, <www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/gats/index.htm>

Multicultural Programs Unit, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, NSW, viewed 12 May 2009, <<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/equity/multicultural/index.htm>>

Priority Schools and Equity Coordination Unit, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney, NSW, viewed 12 May 2009, <<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/equity/psec/index.htm>>

Appendix 3

Supporting students with significant difficulties in learning to read

'Certain teaching approaches for the teaching of reading have emerged in the empirical literature as effective for all students, whether or not they experience reading difficulties.' (National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005) *Teaching Reading*, Report and Recommendations, p. 16)

Contemporary research demonstrates that reading difficulties can, in the main, be prevented when early explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics are part of the classroom reading program.

It is expected that all but a very small number of students will have mastered all but the most complex of the phonemic awareness and phonics skills necessary for proficient reading and spelling by the end of Stage 1. More complex letter/sound relationships will continue to be taught throughout Stage 2 (NSW *English K-6 Syllabus* p. 82)

For the 2-4% of students who have been identified with significant difficulties in learning to read, continued individualised systematic instruction in phonics beyond Stage 1 is required as part of their reading instruction.

Students with significant difficulties in learning to read invariably have difficulties understanding and applying letter-sound correspondence to decipher unfamiliar words they encounter in text.

Whilst there exists a reciprocal relationship between phonemic awareness and phonics, once letters are introduced the focus of decoding instruction should be on students using their knowledge of letter-sound correspondence (phonics) to blend and segment words as they read and spell.

Further information about planning and programming explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics can be found at:

Disability Programs Directorate

<<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/programs/disabilitypgrms/dpresources.php>>

Appendix 4

Supporting Aboriginal students

Aboriginal Education & Training Directorate encourages teachers to adopt the approach of teaching phonics and phonemic awareness to Aboriginal students from a bidialectal perspective.

It is important to develop and maintain ongoing partnerships with Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc to provide culturally inclusive learning environments for Aboriginal students.

In planning to teach phonics and phonemic awareness for Aboriginal students it is important for teachers to be aware of Otitis media (OM) and the language and dialects used by Aboriginal students. This knowledge and understanding will assist teachers in how to best address these differences in their teaching and learning plans as they guide Aboriginal students towards meeting age appropriate outcomes.

Teachers need to be aware that many Aboriginal students suffer hearing loss from OM and that these students experience great difficulty in learning in busy and noisy classrooms. One of the many specific problems for children suffering OM is poor phoneme discrimination with an inability to hear low intensity sounds, such as *ed, s, v, th*.

Strategies to support children with OM include:

- revising the correct production of sounds
- practising hearing and saying the correct sounds in words, learning and practising segmenting words into syllables, segmenting beginning sounds from the rest of words and segmenting individual sounds
- learning, practising and applying the correct alphabetic code to the sounds in a word.
(Intervention Strategies for Aboriginal Children with Conductive Hearing Loss, Department of Education, Western Australia)

Teachers need to also be aware of the differences in language and dialect between Standard Australian English, Aboriginal English and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander creole. The diversity of a child's language is heavily influenced by geographical location and family interactions.

It is common for Aboriginal students to *code-switch* between the different dialects. Code-switching is a term used to describe a speaker's movement from one language or dialect to another. This movement can occur at various levels of language use (sound, grammar and meaning) and for various reasons. Change from one language or dialect to another is often governed by social rules and expectations.

Although Standard Australian English is similar to Aboriginal English, it has specific differences in structure (grammar), semantics (meaning) and phonology (sounds). The difference in phonology makes it difficult for students to sound out words. For this reason there is a need to make sure students develop strengths across all code breaking and meaning making skills.

The different linguistic features of Standard Australian English need to be systematically taught and scaffolded for Aboriginal students through a variety of modelled, guided and independent teaching strategies. Such supportive teaching strategies will facilitate students' success in the use of a variety of written and spoken genres, whereas negative strategies, such as correction after the task, may lead to students feeling devalued and unwilling to participate in lessons.

Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/aet/index.htm>

Appendix 5

Supporting students who are learning English as a second language (ESL)

In relation to students who are learning English as a second language (ESL), there are a number of issues that need to be considered in developing literacy in English, including the teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness.

When teaching phonics to students whose language background is not Standard Australian English teachers need to consider the letter-sound relationships in Standard Australian English that may cause confusion for these students. For example:

- choice of symbols
- number of symbols
- sequence of symbols
- directionality of symbols (scanned left-right, right-left, top-bottom)
- the relationships between written symbols and spoken language e.g. letters may correspond to different sounds
- the pronunciation of words
- intonation patterns including stressed and unstressed sounds
- grammatical usage
- morphemes (the smallest meaning units within words) may be different or used to serve a different function.

ESL students are very diverse in terms of their language background, prior educational experiences, knowledge of English and literacy experience in either English or their first language. These diverse experiences may impact on ESL students' development of literacy in English in the following ways:

Age at enrolment:

ESL students may enrol with little or no English at any age or stage of schooling. As a result, students in the upper primary or high school years may have no understanding of letter-sound relationships in English and may require specific teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness.

Student's first language:

The similarity or difference between the student's first language and English in the area of sound-symbol relationships may impact on the student's development of that understanding in English. For example, students who have experienced a language with a different script such as Greek or Arabic or a language such as Chinese which uses characters may experience some difficulties.

Previous education and development of literacy skills:

Some ESL students are literate in their first language and have had school experiences comparable to those of their English-speaking peers, while others, in particular refugee students, may have had very little or severely disrupted previous education. As a result, some have well-developed literacy skills in their first language while others have no literacy skills in any language.

Previous learning of and exposure to English:

Some students with some previous learning of, or exposure to, English will come to school with knowledge of the letter-sound relationships, while others with no or very limited opportunity to hear English or interact with English speakers will require ongoing opportunities to practise and refine their English language skills.

ESL students who are at the beginning stage of learning English may not be able to distinguish individual sounds or phonemes as they are focusing on gaining meaning from the whole text.

In developing a teaching program for ESL students, it is essential to provide a balanced and integrated approach to the teaching of phonics, giving students opportunities to practise and repeat sounds to develop their listening and speaking skills as a foundation for the development of literacy skills. For some ESL students who only use English and hear English sounds at school, learning accurate letter-sound relationships within a meaningful context is integral to developing an understanding of how language works.

Multicultural Programs Unit

[<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/equity/multicultural/index.htm>](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/equity/multicultural/index.htm)

Appendix 6

Supporting students from low socio-economic backgrounds

Educational research confirms the profound and growing effects of social and economic inequality on the educational outcomes of students. Currently, there is a significant and unacceptable gap between the average achievement of students from low socio-economic status (SES) families as a group and all students.

The reasons for the links between educational outcomes and socio-economic status are complex. Students from low SES backgrounds are a diverse group encompassing the full range of learning abilities. Generalisations about the nature, background and experience of these students cannot do justice to the diversity of students or their communities.

Support for students from low SES backgrounds must focus on improving literacy outcomes. English language literacy is the tool which learners need to participate fully in education and training. Since the late 1990s, literacy teaching in NSW public schools has been underpinned by a social or functional view of language that acknowledges that literacy is learnt in social contexts and children's views about the nature and purpose of literacy are shaped by the cultural and social practices they engage in at home, at school and in the broader community.

While it is imperative that aspects of literacy critical to early literacy success, such as phonics and phonemic awareness, are taught explicitly and systematically, it is important that they are taught in a balanced and integrated way. This means to acknowledge that students learn to read by integrating the four sources of information (semantic, grammatical, graphological, phonological) and by acquiring strategies to apply the four literacy resources (Freebody & Luke 1990) to interacting with a text.

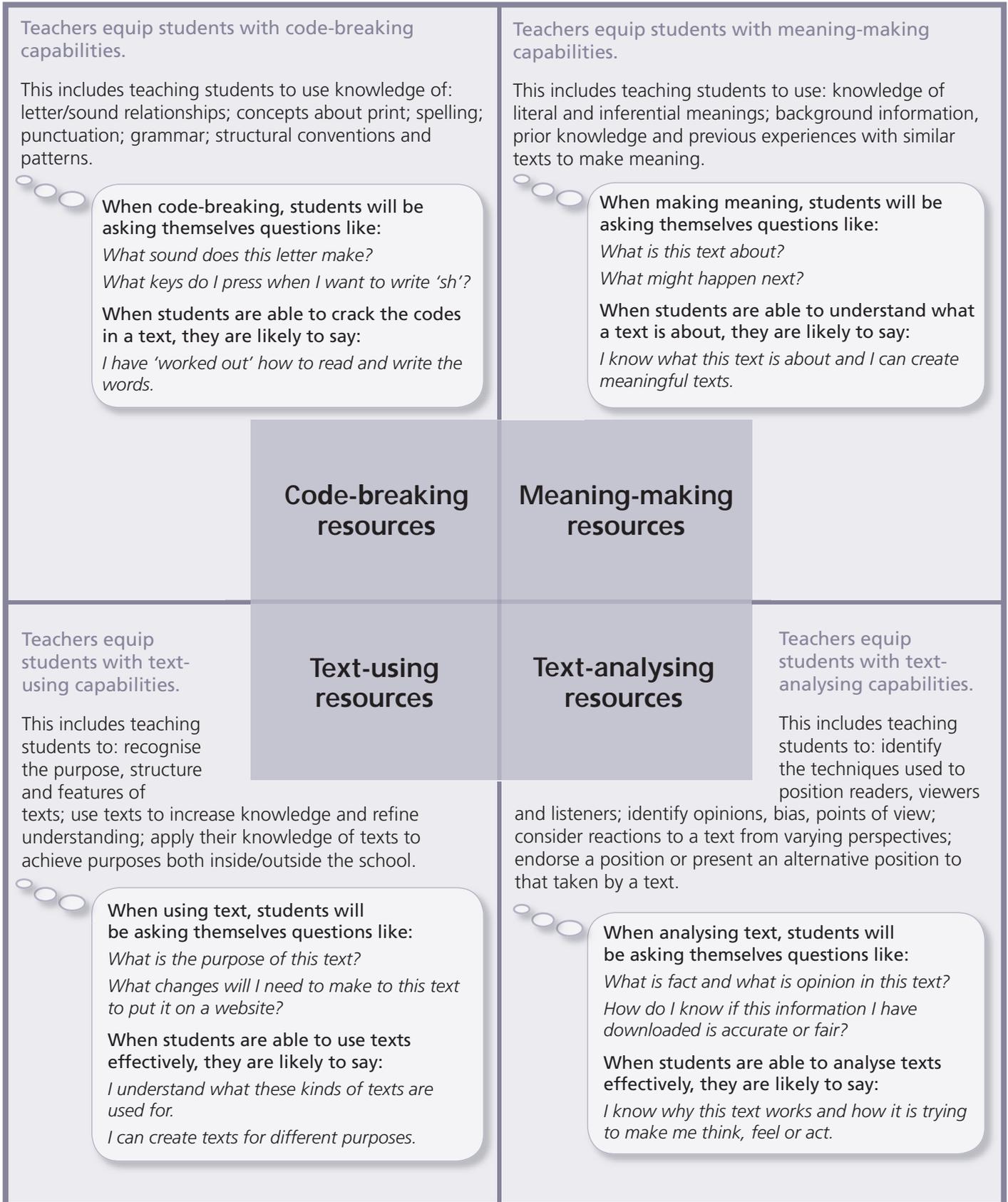
Explicit, systematic, balanced and integrated teaching of the four literacy resources (code-breaker, text participant, text user, text analyst) is essential for all students regardless of their stage. It is particularly important for students from low SES backgrounds as these students often have a greater dependence on school to provide the knowledge of language required to access the school curriculum. They may arrive at school with orientations to language and meaning-making that are different from the orientations required and valued by the school. When the meanings for which the student typically uses language when engaging in home interactions are very different from the meanings that are required at school, the student will need ongoing assistance to respond effectively to what the school is offering and demanding.

Priority Schools and Equity Coordination Unit

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoriesaz/equity/psec/index.htm>

Appendix 7

The *Four Literacy Resources* model



NB: Whenever the word 'text' is used it includes written, visual, oral/aural, digital and multimodal texts.

Appendix 8

Linking the NSW *English K–6 syllabus* and the *Literacy Continuum*

<p>First cluster of markers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Unable to identify words that rhyme. ▶ Unable to identify words that start with the same initial sound.
<p>Outcomes and Indicators</p> <p>TES1.2 Demonstrates basic skills of classroom and group interaction, makes brief oral presentations and listens with reasonable attentiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>listens and repeats words that rhyme</i> • <i>listens and repeats initial sounds of words</i>
<p>Scope and Sequence Phonological and Graphological Processing ES1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>joins in rhymes and chants</i>
<p>Second cluster of markers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifies rhyming words on some occasions. ▶ Identifies words that start with the same initial sound on some occasions. • Says the word when the teacher models onset and rime, e.g. teacher says <i>mmmm/at</i>, child says <i>mat</i>. • Segments spoken multisyllabic words into syllables, e.g. <i>ba/na/na</i> when clapping.
<p>Outcomes and Indicators</p> <p>TES1.2 Demonstrates basic skills of classroom and group interaction, makes brief oral presentations and listens with reasonable attentiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>recognises and says some words that rhyme on some occasions</i> • <i>listens and repeats some initial sounds of words on some occasions</i> • <i>listens and repeats onsets and rimes within words</i> • <i>listens and claps syllables in words</i> <p>RES1.6 Demonstrates developing reading skills and strategies for reading books, dealing with print and comprehending texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>recognises some words that rhyme</i> • <i>segments words into onset and rime</i> • <i>recognises some spoken words with the same initial sound</i> • <i>segments words into syllables</i>
<p>Scope and Sequence Phonological and Graphological Processing ES1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>say the first sound in some spoken words</i> • <i>recognises some spoken words that begin with the same sound (e.g. <i>pat, pin</i>) or a given sound</i> • <i>segments spoken multisyllabic words into syllables</i>
<p>English K–6 Modules ES1</p> <p>Teaching English: Phonological Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>clapping syllables in students' names and familiar words</i>
<p>Teaching English: Spelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>recognises some sounds in words</i>

Third cluster of markers

- ▶ Consistently identifies words that rhyme.
- ▶ Consistently identifies words that start with the same initial sound.
- Provides a word starting with a given sound.
- Orally blends two and three sounds to make a word.
- Segments words orally into onset and rime, e.g. *t-ent*.
- Segments one syllable words (up to three sounds) into separate sounds.

Outcomes and Indicators

TES1.2 Demonstrates basic skills of classroom and group interaction, makes brief oral presentations and listens with reasonable attentiveness

- *identifies and says words that rhyme*
- *listens and repeats initial sounds of words*
- *listens and repeats onsets and rimes within words*
- *listens and provides syllables*

RES1.6 Demonstrates developing reading skills and strategies for reading books, dealing with print and comprehending texts

- *identifies words that rhyme*
- *segments words into onset and rime*
- *recognises spoken words with the same initial sound*
- *segments spoken sentences into individual words*
- *segments words into syllables*
- *recognises and supplies syllables*

WES1.11 Begins to use letters to represent known words when spelling

- *says beginning sounds of spoken words, for example, 'sit' starts with /s/*

Scope and Sequence Phonological and Graphological Processing ES1

- *recognises rhymes and provides a rhyming word, given a predictable context*
- *says the first sound in a spoken word*
- *recognises spoken words that begin with the same sound (e.g. *pat, pin*) or a given sound*

Content Overview ES1 Talking & Listening

- *recognises and says rhymes*

English K–6 Modules ES1**Teaching English: Phonological Awareness**

- *provides rhyming words in oral cloze activities*

Teaching English: Spelling

- *recognises sounds in words*

Fourth cluster of markers

- ▶ Says the new word when asked to delete one phoneme (phoneme deletion).
- Says the new word by adding a phoneme to an existing word (phoneme addition).

Outcomes and Indicators

TES1.2 Interacts in more extended ways with less teacher intervention, makes increasingly confident oral presentations and generally listens attentively

- *listens actively and responsively by participating in listening activities involving blending and segmentation of sounds*

RES1.6 Demonstrates developing reading skills and strategies for reading books, dealing with print and comprehending texts

- *hears and articulates sound segments in words*
- *identifies some letters*

Scope and Sequence Phonological and Graphological Processing ES1

- *vocally stretches a word to highlight first, middle and last sounds*

Content Overview ES1 Talking & Listening

- *builds a range of phonological skills, such as matching and saying individual sounds*

Fifth cluster of markers

- Says the new word when one phoneme is substituted for another (phoneme substitution).

Outcomes and Indicators

RS1.6 Draws on an increasing range of skills and strategies when reading and comprehending texts

- *exchanges sounds to make a new word*

Scope and Sequence Phonological and Graphological Processing S1

- *manipulates phonemes to make new words, e.g. exchanges one sound in a spoken word with a different sound to make a new word*

Content Overview Reading

- *exchanges one sound for another to make a new word*

English K–6 Modules

Teaching English – Reading

- *manipulates letter sequences of a word*

Appendix 9

Ideas for practising and applying phonemic awareness learning

First cluster of markers:

- ▶ Unable to identify words that rhyme.
- ▶ Unable to identify words that start with the same initial sound.

During sessions with written and spoken texts, e.g. shared reading texts, rhymes, chants, poems, students clap/click when they hear rhyming words.

Heighten awareness of rhyme by searching for words that rhyme with students' names.

Students give a nonsense word that rhymes with their name, e.g. *Linda-minda*.

Teach speech rhymes and simple tongue twisters, e.g. *Peas in the pan go pop, pop, pop*.

Students sort picture cards according to rhyme, e.g. *wall, ball*.

Students sort picture cards according to the initial sound.

Rhyming word sit down

Students walk around in a circle taking one step each time a rhyming word is said.

When you say a word that doesn't rhyme, the students sit down:

she	tree	flea	spree	key	bee	sea	went
-----	------	------	-------	-----	-----	-----	------

Body name game

Point to a part of the body, saying a rhyming word and ask the students to say the body part. This highlights the rhyme with a visual cue (pointing). Point to nose and say 'rose', students say 'nose'.

Say: *I'm going to point to something on my body and say a word. You're going to say the body part that rhymes.*

Give two examples: Say: *I'm pointing to my leg, and I say 'beg'. You say 'leg'. I'm pointing to my nose. I say 'rose' and you say 'nose'.*

A list of body parts and rhyming words:

deer-ear	pail-nail	sack-back	go-toe	gum-thumb
put-foot	bye-eye	deck-neck	see-knee	bear-hair
fin-chin	band-hand	peek-cheek	farm-arm	feel-heel

When the students are able to do this, turn it around. The teacher points to a body part, e.g. *knee*, and the students respond with a rhyming word such as *bee* or *me*.

I'm going shopping: matching sound for item

Have a collection of items, pictures or actual items. Students select items according to the request.

Say: *I'm going shopping and I want to buy something starting with (for example) /m/.*

Students select from the collection of items.

Scavenger hunt

Choose pictures of things that include known sounds in the initial position and put them in a container or plastic bag. Have enough pictures to distribute to groups of two or three students.

Take each picture out and discuss what the picture is. Take care to enunciate clearly and emphasise the initial sound. If the picture is a drum, ask the students: *What is the first sound in 'drum'?*

Give each group a bag with a picture previously discussed in it. Explain that the team's task is to find other things in the classroom with the same initial sound.

Students walk around the room, collecting objects with the same target initial sound and putting them in the container or bag.

After a set time, each group shows their objects to the rest of the class for confirmation.

Variation: Put your letter of your target sound in the bag with, or instead of, the picture. Introducing the letter adds a phonics component.

Second cluster of markers:

- ▶ Identifies rhyming words on some occasions.
- ▶ Identifies words that start with the same initial sound on some occasions.
- Says the word when the teacher models onset and rime, e.g. teacher says *mmmm/at*, child says *mat*.
- Segments spoken multisyllabic words into syllables, e.g. *ba/na/na* when clapping.

Provide opportunities for students to clap, stamp, click for each word when listening to words within a sentence or each syllable when listening to a word.

Start by clapping syllables in the students' names. This is an effective activity because it starts with something very familiar.

Rhyme Innovations

Share a known rhyme with students.

Ask students to improvise on a known rhyme e.g. *Hickory Dickory Dock* by substituting different numbers for *one*, such as:

The clock struck two ...
The mouse yelled, 'Boo!' Hickory dickory dock
Mum lost her shoe. Hickory dickory dock
The clock struck three ...
I climbed the tree. Hickory dickory dock

Sound *Lotto*

Make *Lotto* sheets by dividing a sheet of A4 cardboard into sections. The number of sections will depend on how many letter-sound correspondences have already been taught. In each section draw/paste a picture as a clue for each sound.

Teacher says a sound and shows the picture of an object beginning with that sound.

Students put counters on all pictures which represent words beginning with the given sound.

Use the following procedures to reinforce knowledge of sounds:

- Ask students to say the words for each picture.
- Ask students what the first sound for the word is.
- Tell them to point a picture which starts with a given sound.
- Ask students to say the sounds for each card.

Picture card sort

Place three objects or picture cards on the table. Two of these should begin with the same sound and one should begin with a different sound, e.g. *bag*, *box* and *flag*.

Ask students to group the objects together that have the same beginning sounds. Name each object slowly and clearly. See if any students can identify the beginning sounds as /b/ and /f/. See if any students can identify any medial or final sounds when you slowly and clearly name each object. Repeat this process with other objects.

Three words in my pocket (Tune: *Grand Old Duke of York*)

Encourage students to contribute words for the song and different actions to accompany each verse.

<p>1. Three words in my pocket – One word is not the same. The starting sound is different. I'll clap and say its name.</p> <p>Book and dog and baby. Which one should I name? The different word is dog. That word doesn't start the same.</p>	<p>2. Three words in my pocket – One word is not the same. The starting sound is different. I'll stomp and say its name.</p> <p>Fish and fly and turtle. Which one should I name? The different word is turtle. That word doesn't start the same.</p>
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The word box

Prepare a box with different objects for students to select one at a time.

Invite students to pick an object and then clap the name of the object in syllables.

What am I?

The teacher delivers riddles in the following format:

What am I?

I am a two syllable word.

My first word part is 'drag'.

I breathe fire.

My second syllable is ... Students provide on

Yes, that's right, I am a 'dragon'.

Examples of other two syllable words include:

bathroom, tennis, keyboard, pencil, mummy, rainbow, tiger, window, etc.

Examples of other three syllable words include:

kangaroo, telephone, aeroplane, crocodile, butterfly, mosquito, beginning, computer, etc.

Third cluster of markers:

- ▶ Consistently identifies words that rhyme.
- ▶ Consistently identifies words that start with the same initial sound.
- Provides a word starting with a given sound.
- Orally blends two and three sounds to make a word.
- Segments words orally into onset and rime, e.g. *t-ent*.
- Segments one syllable words (up to three sounds) into separate sounds.

Ask students to sort pictures which have a common letter combination. Make sure that there are pictures with other sounds or blends so that students need to discriminate, e.g. pictures of *tr* words: *tree, train, truck, tractor, trampoline*. Non-examples: *frog, sheep, kite*.

Ask students to clap syllables in words, e.g. students' names, characters in texts, rhymes, chants, jingles.

Provide a spoken word and a matching picture as a visual clue. Ask students to clap or tap sounds or phonemes in the spoken word. Initially use CV and CVC words, e.g. *am, cat*.

Guessing game: (for a rhyming word)

Invite students to guess a particular word after giving certain clues. First clues will be semantic.

For example, from a text read earlier during modelled reading:

Say: It's something brown (an attribute or characteristic).

You wear it (function).

It rhymes with 'flipper'.

Rhyming words through music

Begin the lesson by teaching students to sing the song *A-Hunting We Will Go*.

Oh, a-hunting we will go, a-hunting we will go.

We'll take a little fox and put it in a box

and then we'll let it go.

Ask students to identify the two words that sound the same in the song (*fox* and *box*). Continue to sing the song encouraging the students to complete the rhyme in the second line.

We'll take a little whale and put it ... ('in a pail', 'in jail')

We'll take a little frog and put it ... ('on a log', 'near the dog')

We'll take a little snake and put it ... ('on a cake', 'in the lake')

Encourage students to sing the song together several more times using both the original lyrics and the three new verses.

The following rhyming patterns may be used as a resource to provide variety in rhyming patterns:

Some rhyming patterns that start with:

at (s, f, m, r)	ip (z, l, r, sh)	an (f, m, r, v)
eat (f, m, n, s, h)	et (s, v, m, n)	ock (l, r, s)
ick (s, l, th, t)	ay (l, r, s, p)	ee (s, b, t)
ame (f, n, g, t)	an (f, c, v, p)	ed (b, f, r, l)
ag (b, n, s, r)	ick (k, l, p, s)	all (b, c, f, t)
ell (b, s, f, sh)	ine (d, f, m, sh)	ack (b, j, qu, t)
and (b, h, l, s).		

Mystery colour

Say words beginning with a selected initial sound, e.g. /p/ *pig, penguin, porcupine*.

Students repeat the words and say the initial sound. Students then give a colour word that begins with the same /p/ sound, e.g. *pink, purple*.

I spy

When sharing a picture book, photograph or visual image. Say: *I spy something that begins with the /s/ sound. Can anyone tell me what it might be?*

Or

I spy something on this table, in the room, etc. that starts with the /p/ sound. Can anyone tell me what it might be?

Blending with blocks

Model phoneme blending by manipulating blocks or other objects that are the same size but coloured differently.

Start with two blocks and tell the students that each block represents a sound. Move one block forward and say /u/. Touch another block and say /p/.

Blocks are then put together slowly (stretching out the /u/) and when the blocks connect, the /p/ is pronounced. Students can hear and see that when /u/ is connected to /p/, the word is *up*.

When students are proficient with words that contain two sounds, work with words that contain three sounds.

Variation: The level of difficulty may be increased by using more sounds and blocks and by switching from plain blocks to letter tiles.

Note: When demonstrating and practising with the students, be aware of the way you are facing and how the children will view what is being demonstrated.

Rubber band stretch

Model with a large rubber band how to stretch out a word as the word is said, *mmmm-aaaa-p*.

Model with stretched out band how to bring rubber band back to original length and say the word fast: *map*.

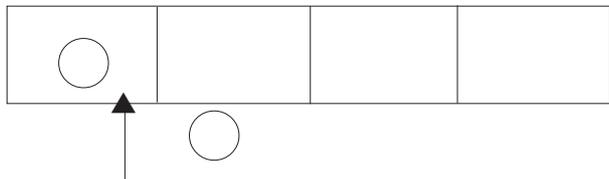
Students pretend to stretch rubber bands as they say the sounds in different words.

It is important for the students to attempt to pronounce the stretched form of the word after the stretching has been demonstrated.

Sound boxes

After students can do *Rubber band stretch*, show students how to make sound boxes on their individual whiteboards or sheets of paper/cardboard.

A word box is a drawn rectangle that is divided into sections corresponding to the sounds heard in words.



Students learn to say a word, stretching it out, and then slide a marker into each box as they hear each sound or phoneme.

Variation: Eventually the students will replace the counters with magnetic letters and then move to writing the letters in the respective divided sections.

Bag game

Make up small plastic bags containing an object or picture and a number of *unifix* cubes that are connected to represent the number of phonemes in the name of the object.

Student selects a bag, removes the cubes and says the name of the object. The students then break apart the cubes as they pronounce each sound of the word.

Fourth cluster of markers:

- ▶ Says the new word when asked to delete one phoneme (phoneme deletion).
- Says the new word by adding a phoneme to an existing word (phoneme addition).

Using coloured counters – Addition of sound(s)

Start with one sound on the table (represented by a coloured counter or square).

Say: *Show me /o/*.



Introduce addition of sounds by saying, *If that says /o/, show me 'so'.*

The students should place a different coloured counter or square in front of the sound already on the table.



A counter could be added at the end, in which case, *If that says /o/, show me 'on'.*



Using letter shapes – addition of sound(s)

Repeat the process outlined above, replacing the counters or squares with letters using cut up letters, letter tiles or magnetic letters.

To introduce phoneme deletion, begin by using students' names. Delete the beginning sound, for example: *_ally* (Sally), *_ayne* (Wayne), *_rent* (Trent), *_iley* (Riley)

Using coloured counters – Deletion of sound(s)

Place at least two sounds on the table. Introduce deletion or omission of sounds by saying, *If that says 'me', show me /e/*.



The students should remove the first coloured counter, the one that represents /m/, leaving just the /e/ on the table.



Bag game

Make up small plastic bags that contain an object or picture and a number of *unifix* cubes that are connected to represent the number of phonemes in the name of the object.

Student selects a bag, removes the cubes and says the name of the object. The students then break apart the cubes as they pronounce each sound of the word, e.g. *stop*. The students break off the first cube and say the remaining sounds, e.g. *top*.

Fifth cluster of markers:

- Says the new word when one phoneme is substituted for another (phoneme substitution).

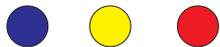
Using coloured counters – Substitution of sound(s)

Ask the students to show the three sounds in the word *mop* by using coloured counters. Then ask them to point to each coloured counter as they say each sound in the word *mop*.



Say: *If the three coloured counters represent the word 'mop' which counter will I need to change to now make the word 'map'?*

Students must determine that the sound that changed was the one in the middle, take away the counter representing the medial sound, and replace it with a different colour.



Using letter shapes – Substitution of sounds

Variation: Repeat the process outlined above replacing the counters or square with letters using cut up letters, letter tiles or magnetic letters.

