

Southern Nevada
Regional Professional Development Program



Literacy Strategies

K - 12

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Phonemic Awareness

Instruction in phonemic awareness (PA) involves teaching children to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken syllables and words. PA instruction is frequently confused with phonics instruction, which entails teaching students how to use letter-sound relations to read or spell words. Correlational studies have identified PA and letter knowledge as the two best school-entry predictors of how well children will learn to read during the first two years of instruction.

(National Reading Panel, p. 7)

Most children develop phonemic awareness skills through language play. In fact, about 80% of children develop phonemic awareness without any explicit instruction (IRA/NAEYC, 1998). Many traditional home and school reading activities, such as reciting nursery rhymes, reading alphabet books, sharing poems and riddles, or singing songs, help to develop phonemic awareness by drawing children's attention to the sounds of language and manipulating sounds in a playful environment.

(Early Literacy Instruction in Kindergarten by Lori Jamison Rog, p. 19)

Strategy 1: Integrating Language Play Into Read-Aloud Time

During read-aloud time, the teacher can:

- draw children's attention to the words in the title of the book
- comment on interesting or descriptive words throughout the reading
- use intonation, sound effects and character voices to keep the story exciting.

After children become familiar with a book, it can be revisited to reinforce aspects of language. Rhyming books and alphabet books are among the best resources for language play. Alphabet books reinforce initial consonant sounds and build vocabulary. Children learn to connect familiar objects and pictures to alphabet letters and sounds.

Strategy 2: Recognition of Rhyme and Alliteration

During read-aloud time, the teacher can:

- Draw children's attention to the rhythm of language through poetry, predictable text, nursery rhymes and familiar stories that rhyme. Ridiculous rhymes and rollicking rhythms have great appeal for readers of all ages.
- Which words start the same: *car, cat lock?*
- Which word doesn't belong: *pin, tip, fin?*
- Invite children to supply the last word of each rhyme.
- Follow the model a book provides and make some silly rhymes that are special for each child.

The ability to focus on which elements of sound make words sound the same or different is an important precursor to reading.

Strategy 3: Playing With Language Through Music

Sharing the excitement, fun and beauty of our language can become a natural part of every day. With songs like “Willoughby Walloughby, Woo,” “Down by the Bay,” and “I Like to Eat Apples and Bananas,” building phonological awareness and other language skills is a fun way to involve students in manipulating words and sounds.

Create songbooks, pocket charts, and large poster-sized charts that are accessible for children to use and are at their eye level so they can track the words as they sing their favorite songs over and over again.

- Teacher can substitute children’s names for additional verses to the various songs.
- Teacher can substitute different consonants for the letters.
- Teacher can substitute different vowels for the letters.

Strategy 4: Phoneme Blending and Syllable Splitting

- What word do you get when you blend together /m/.../a/.../p/?
- What is left when you take the /p/ off of *pink*?

The ability to blend sounds and to isolate rimes and onsets are likely to develop along with reading ability; each supports the development of the other.

Strategy 5: Phoneme Segmentation and Manipulation

- How many sounds do you hear in *tent*?
- What word do you have when you replace the /a/ in *pat* with an /i/?

These advanced skills probably develop as a result of learning to read, as they are difficult to do without well-developed spelling skills.

Strategy 6: Stretching Out Words

Think about the word as a big elastic band or a slinky toy.

Using your hands, pretend to stretch the word as the students segment its sounds, and then “spring” it back to normal as they say the words.

Stretching out words is an excellent way to develop phonemic awareness and apply it to writing.

Strategy 7: Clapping or Tapping the Syllables

Have students clap or tap the syllables in their name.

Have students clap or tap the syllables in the words as they read, to reinforce the awareness of the sounds in words.

Phonics

According to the National Reading Panel, “phonics instruction is a way of teaching reading that stresses the acquisition of letter-sound correspondences and their use in reading and spelling. The primary focus of phonics instruction is to help beginning readers understand how letters are linked to sounds to form letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns and to help them learn how to apply this knowledge to their reading (NRP report, p. 8).” Systematic explicit phonics instruction should be integrated into beginning reading and writing instruction.

Research supports teaching children the most commonly occurring letters first and providing opportunities/text for them to practice the use of blending these letters into words in reading and writing.

Suggested Consonant Sequence: b, m, r, s

t, g, n, p
c, h, f, d
l, k, j, w
y, z, v

Suggested Vowel Sequence: a, o, e, u, i

Once the children have developed letter-sound correspondence, strategy instruction can begin.

Strategy 1: To Develop Rapid Decoding Use Onset and Meaning to Figure out a Word

- Look at the first letters
- Notice how the word starts
- Get your mouth ready to make that sound
- Look at the way the word begins
- Look at the picture
- What would make sense here?

Strategy 2: To Develop Accurate Decoding Sound Out a Word by Stretching Its Sounds

- Start at the beginning
- Make each sound
- Blend the sounds together

Strategy 3: To Develop Accurate Spelling Recheck Writing by Rereading and Monitoring Sounds

- Recheck your words, look closely at the spellings
- Move your finger under the word while you say it

- Write down all the sounds you hear

Strategy 4: To Develop Accurate Decoding

Use Letter-Sound Information to Rethink a Mistake

- What is this word? (Child says *want* for *like*)
- Do you see a “w” there? (Child says, “no.”)
- What does it begin with? (Child says “l.”)
- What other letters does the word have? (Child says, “k.”)
- What is this word? (Child says, “like.”)
- You need to check what you see?

Strategy 5: To Develop Accurate and Rapid Decoding

Use Pattern Knowledge to Figure out Words

- What do you hear at the beginning of the word *that*
- Do you know how to write *the*?
- Do *the* and *that* begin the same way?
- What do you think the letters are?
- Write the word *that*.

Strategy 6: To Develop Accurate Letter-Sound Correspondence

Notice Positioning of Mouth When Making a Sound

- Say the sound
- How does your mouth move when you say the sound?

Strategy 7: To Develop Advanced Knowledge of Letter Sounds

Understand Variation in Complex Letter-Sound Relations

- That letter can stand for more than one sound
- Make it sound like....

Strategy 8: To Develop Speech to Print Match

Voice Print Matching to Focus Attention Word by Word during Reading

- Point to each word as you read it
- Keep your finger under the word you are reading

Fluency

“Fluency is one of several critical factors necessary for reading comprehension,” according to the National Reading Panel Report. “If text is read in a laborious and inefficient manner, it will be difficult for the child to remember what has been read and to relate the ideas expressed in the text to his or her background knowledge. Reading practice is generally recognized as an important contributor to fluency. (NRP report, p. 11-12)”

Research shows that repeated and monitored oral reading improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement. To increase reading fluency the following strategies are suggested.

Strategy 1: Model fluent reading

This strategy demonstrates for students that a reader's voice can help make sense of written text.

- Read aloud to students on a daily basis.
- Use expression to distinguish between speakers and enhance the text.
- Use a think aloud to demonstrate how fluent reading helps comprehension.

Strategy 2: Use word walls to teach high-frequency vocabulary

This strategy supports frequent and explicit interaction with structurally and phonetically irregular words, as well as words with predictable spelling patterns.

- Introduce 3-5 words per week to be placed on the word wall.
- Systematically and explicitly focus on regular features of irregular words through daily instruction and practice.
- Make or build other words within a family such as the –ad words (bad, sad, mad, dad, etc.) and use in a variety of contexts.
- During center time have students “read the word wall”.

Strategy 3: Student-adult reading

In this strategy, the student reads one-on-one with an adult: teacher, parent, aide or tutor.

- The adult reads the text first modeling fluent reading.
- Then the student reads the same text to the adult. The adult provides assistance and feedback.
- The student keeps reading the passage until he/she can read it with fluency (3-4 times usually).

Strategy 4: Choral reading

This strategy focuses on students reading as a group with a fluent reader.

Everyone must be able to see the same text clearly and easily. The use of big books, overhead stories, or class sets of books is recommended. Text should be at the independent reading level of most of the group.

- Read the text to the group aloud, first.
- Reread the passage and have students join in as they are able.
- Continue to reread the text 3-5 times, having students participate as they can.
- All the rereadings do not have to occur on the same day.

Strategy 5: Tape-assisted reading

Students using this strategy read along in their books with a fluent reader reading the book on an audiotape.

- Select a book at the student's independent reading level.
- Record the book by a fluent reader at 80-100 words per minute.

- Have the student listen to the audiotape first and point to the words as they are read.
- Next have the student read along with the tape as s/he is able.
- Reading with the tape continues until the student can read the book independently and fluently.

Strategy 6: Partner reading

This strategy pairs two students together to read to each other. In one variation a more fluent reader can be paired with a less fluent reader.

- The fluent reader reads a passage of text modeling fluent reading.
- The less fluent reader reads the same passage aloud.
- The fluent reader offers assistance and support as needed.
- The less fluent reader rereads the passage until it can be read independently.

Another variation pairs two readers at the same level rereading a story after hearing the teacher read the story first.

Strategy 7: Reader's theater

In this strategy, students rehearse and perform a play for others. It provides an authentic reason to reread text and practice fluency.

- Students read from scripts with rich dialogue.
- They play characters or narrators imparting background information.
- The reader's fluency and voice conveys the story.

What about silent reading?

Reading fluency growth is greatest through direct teaching of skills and strategies. Silent independent reading should be encouraged outside of the classroom or during independent work times. While it may contribute to an increase in fluency, it should not take the place of direct instruction.

Vocabulary

The National Reading Panel states, "vocabulary is critically important in oral reading instruction. There are two types of vocabulary—oral and print. A reader who encounters a strange word in print can decode the word to speech. If it is in the reader's oral vocabulary, the reader will be able to understand it. If the word is not in the reader's oral vocabulary, the reader will have to determine the meaning by other means, if possible. Consequently the larger the reader's vocabulary (either oral or print), the easier it is to make sense of the text (NRP report, p. 13)."

Research supports that students learn approximately 3,000 words per year through direct instruction and incidental learning. There are various approaches suggested to foster vocabulary acquisition.

Principles for effective vocabulary instruction:

- New words should be integrated with familiar words and concepts.
- Students should experience words in repeated, meaningful encounters to build automaticity.
- Students should apply the words they learn, using them in other contexts and associating them with other knowledge.
- Instruction should engage students in active processing of word meanings.
- Learn when to consult an authority (i.e., dictionary) and when other cues can be used effectively.
- Learn that not only do words have different meanings (definitions), but words may also have different meanings to different people (connotations).

Strategy 1: Word Associating

Understanding how words connect enables the proficient reader to analyze and synthesis information and to determine ways in which words relate to each other. The process of attaching a new word or concept to an existing one allows the reader to connect and make meaning from the text.

- Do you know a word that is similar to this word?
- What made you think of that association? Why?
- What features do these words have in common?

Strategy 2: Contextualizing

Understanding how the surrounding context provides clues to help the reader predict the meaning of an unknown word. Using contextual techniques allows the reader to be active rather than passive in discovering new words.

- What do you know about the word _____ from this sentence?
- What clues are in the sentence that helped you to figure out the word?
- What words within the sentence help support the meaning of ____?

Strategy 3: Categorizing

Understanding how categorizing words can engage students and encourage them to organize new concepts and experiences in relationship to prior knowledge about the concept. Categorizing vocabulary words allows students to develop an understanding of the words attributes, qualities, and characteristics.

- What do you know about this word?
- What other words come to your mind when you think of the word ____?
- How are these words related?

Strategy 4: Visual Imaging

Understanding how visual imaging can enable students to increase vocabulary development and comprehension across the curriculum. Linking verbal and visual images increases student's ability to store and retrieve information.

- What do you see when you think of the word?
- How does your example remind you of the word?
- Is there an action or experience that could help you remember the word?

Strategy 5: Analyzing

Understanding how analyzing the structure of the words can enable the student to determine the meaning of the word. There are three main word parts: prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Using these word parts students acquire information about the meaning, pronunciation, and parts of speech of new words.

- What word do you have left if you cover the prefix and/or suffix?
- What is the meaning of the prefix and/or suffix?
- What is the meaning of the root word?

Strategy 6: Word Awareness

Understanding how utilizing a new vocabulary word in writing and speaking enables readers to have ownership for that new word. Effective readers acquire up to seven new vocabulary words each day. Students need to know words and gain enrichment from using them and from hearing others use them.

- What do you know about the word _____?
- How can you find out more about this word?
- How often did you use or hear someone else use this word today?

Strategy 7: Wide-Reading

Understanding how wide-reading enables students to foster vocabulary development through a variety of opportunities to read. Students need at least 20 minutes of daily reading in various genres to help increase their vocabulary list by 1,000 words per year. Multiple encounters with words help students commit these words to their long-term memory.

- What are some of the interesting vocabulary words the author used?
- Why are these interesting words to you?
- What kinds of words are common in this specific genre?

Strategy 8: Referencing

Understanding when a resource is needed to bring meaning to an unknown word. Rather than solely using a dictionary to learn the meaning of a new word, resources can aid in learning the meaning of words in appropriate contexts. Other resources can include: a book's glossary, a thesaurus, or the Internet.

- What resource would help you determine the meaning of that word?
- How do you use this resource to investigate a word?
- What feature of the computer could help you understand the word better? How?

Works Cited

Fountas & Pinnell, Guided Reading & Guiding Readers & Writers: Grades 3-6

Ellery, V., Creating Strategic Readers

Comprehension

Comprehension is defined as “intentional thinking during reading in which meaning is constructed through interactions between the reader and the text” (Harris & Hodges, 1995). The National Reading Panel Report states that “Readers derive meaning from text when they engage in intentional, problem solving thinking processes.” Evidence also suggests that comprehension is enhanced when readers can relate the ideas represented in print to prior knowledge and personal experiences. These relationships allow readers to construct mental representations in memory increasing overall comprehension. The best way to increase comprehension is for students to learn a number of comprehension strategies and use them in conjunction with each other.

Strategy 1: Comprehension Monitoring

Readers learn how to be aware of their understanding of the material.

- Students should determine what is causing difficulty in understanding.
- Use a think aloud procedure to model where and when understanding difficulties occur.
- Look back in the text to try and solve a problem.
- Restate/paraphrase a text to make it more understandable.
- Look forward in a text to solve a problem.

Strategy 2: Cooperative Learning

Students learn reading strategies together.

- Keep groups small (no more than 3 – 4 members).
- Partner reading
- Summarization of paragraphs
- Making predictions
- Oral reading and listening

Strategy 3: Graphic and Semantic Organizers

Students make graphic representations of the material to assist them.

- Teach students how to create graphic organization of ideas.
- Use graphic metaphors such as an umbrella for main idea and details below the topic.
- Use maps for expository text structure.
- Use box diagrams of a story (problem box, action box, results box).

Strategy 4: Question Answering

Readers answer questions posed by the teacher and receive feedback.

- Ask students questions before or after reading text.
- Have students look back in text to find answers to questions they cannot answer after one reading.

- Ask students to analyze questions to determine if it is tapping literal or inferential information or if they must use their prior knowledge base.
- Be selective in using the “end of chapter” questions.

Strategy 5: Question Generation

Readers ask themselves questions about various aspects of the story.

- Have students generate questions during the reading of a passage. These questions should integrate information across different parts of the passage.
- Ask students to evaluate their own questions checking to see if important information was covered and if the questions could be answered by reading the text.
- Provide feedback on the quality of the questions.
- Teach students to evaluate their own questions.

Strategy 6: Story Structure

Students are taught to use the structure of the story as a means of helping them recall story content in order to answer questions about what they have read.

- Teach students to ask and answer 1) Who is the main character? 2) Where and when did the story occur? 3) What did the main characters do? 4) How did the story end? 5) How did the main character feel?
- Teach students to construct a story map recording the setting, problem, goal, action, and outcome overtime.
- Have students construct story maps while reading text.

Strategy 7: Summarization

Readers are taught to integrate ideas and generalize from the text information.

- Teach students to summarize through example and feedback.
- Teach these basic steps: 1) delete trivia, 2) delete redundancy, 3) replace a list of exemplars with a superordinate term (apples, oranges, bananas replaced by the word fruit), 4) select a topic sentence to serve as a scaffold of the summary, 5) invent a topic sentence if one is not explicitly stated.
- Allow opportunities to summarize single and multiple paragraphs.

Writing

The National Commission on Writing states, “Writing today is not a frill for the few, but an essential skill for the many... Writing is how students connect the dots in their knowledge.”

It is essential that writing occurs on a daily basis and is taught in all curriculum areas. There are two basic purposes for writing: **(1) Writing to Learn** (to help students learn about a concept and reflect on their learning process); **(2) Writing to Produce** (to evaluate students’ knowledge about a subject, i.e. research papers, book reports, essays, and letters)

Pre-Writing (generating topics/ideas)

- Selecting a topic is crucial. Teach students how to select a topic that is not too broad. For example, Disneyland – a better choice might be a specific incident at Disneyland.
- Students need sufficient information. Have students list everything they know about the topic and decide if more information is needed.
- Ideas should be shared. Encourage students to discuss and share their initial ideas with others (oral rehearsal is essential for second language learners in assisting vocabulary development).

Drafting (putting ideas down on paper, including new ideas discovered by the writer while drafting)

- Students need to be constantly rereading what they have written.
- Students should skip lines in order to facilitate revision later, when they are ready to add words or phrases.
- Writing should be kept in a folder with student name and date. This will allow students to return to previously written pieces for the purpose of revision.

Revision (making changes to improve the first draft)

- Encourage students to question writing. For example, does the author need to add more information or reorganize for clarity?
- Teach students to circle the beginning word of each sentence and make changes as necessary to improve sentence fluency.
- Teach students how to choose a draft that will go to publication from a selection of rough drafts. Encourage students to choose the draft that they would like to develop further.

Editing (correcting errors in grammar, usage and mechanics)

- Focus on one skill at a time using mini-lessons.
- Focus on the positive by getting students to highlight/circle what they have done correctly (for example, capitals at the beginning of sentences). As students identify what they have done correctly, they may notice other errors.
- Have students edit grade appropriate skills by themselves first, then assist in or complete the editing process.