

Phonemic Awareness Phoneme Isolation (Musselwhite, 2008)

Goal: To support the development of phoneme isolation, which requires recognizing individual sounds (for this activity, initial sounds) in words - ex: "Tell me the first sound in 'dog.' /d/"

Brief Phonemic Awareness Research Review:

The National Reading Panel (2000, www.nationalreadingpanel.org) completed a meta-analysis of scores of articles that studied the effects of phonemic awareness (the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words). A brief summary of findings includes:

- PA (phonemic awareness) training resulted in improvement in students' phonemic awareness, reading, and spelling following training
- effects of PA instruction lasted well beyond the end of training
- students of varying abilities improved both PA and reading as a result of PA training
- characteristics of PA training that were most effective included:
 - a) explicitly and systematically teaching children to manipulate phonemes with letters
 - b) focusing instruction on one or two types of phoneme manipulations rather than multiple types
 - c) teaching students in small groups
- Cautions regarding PA training include:
 - a) PA training is NOT a complete reading program, but rather one component of a complete integrated reading program
 - b) there are many ways to teach PA effectively - teachers must select strategies most suited to the needs of their students
 - c) motivation of both students and teachers, while not extensively studied, is felt to be a critical factor for success

Implications for Students with Complex Communication Needs (CCN), Including Students who Use AAC

We know that 'explicit, systematic instruction' is essential. Often, that means a series of activities that look more like a testing agenda ("Which one starts with /p/?") than a teaching, interactive agenda. While this approach is both effective and time-efficient, sometimes students with significant disabilities are just OVER being tested!! And remember that the National Reading Panel cautions that motivation is a key factor!! In this tip, I'll suggest ways to make activities **AAIF**:

- a) **A**dapted to meet the needs of students who require AAC
- b) **A**uthentic, so students don't feel that they're taking yet another 'test'
- c) **I**ndividualized to meet the context and interests of target students
- d) **F**un and interactive

Goal: To support the development of phoneme isolation, which requires recognizing individual sounds (for this activity, initial sounds) in words - ex: "Tell me the first sound in 'dog.' /d/"

AAIF Activities for Phoneme Isolation (initial sound)

Going on a /D/ Hunt!!!

Objective: Support the student in identifying initial sounds in spoken words; Authentic purpose = going on a hunt

Materials: objects and pictures representing simple words that begin with target sounds chosen for the student, plus foils

Examples: one target sound for student is /d/ because Dad and Daniela (sister) both begin with /d/

Objects: toy dog toy dino doll

Photos: Dad Daniela

Symbols (CVC): doc dot dig

CVC foils: cat / bat / car / pen, etc.)

Bin to store items / photos / symbols that match

Labels for each target letter (ex: d m k)

Activity:

1) Introduce the activity.

- a) Hold up the target letter (remember: research shows that manipulating the letter plus the sound is more effective)
- b) Chant: "We're going on a /d/ hunt . . . We're gonna find some /d/ words. Consider starting with objects, to make the activity concrete during the introduction phase.
- c) Show possible objects, and help student figure out if they go in the /d/ bin or not. 'Dog?' Does it start with /d/?
- d) Give evaluative feedback. If student says yes for dog, say /d/ /d/ 'dog' - it's a /d/!! Hold up the letter, and put the dog in the /d/ bin
- e) Give evaluative feedback for errors also. If student says yes for hat, say /d/ /d/ 'hat' - not a /d/ - let's try again. Make it clear that the hat does NOT go in the /d/ bin. Help students develop their inner voice, reminding them to 'say it in your head.'

2) Increase the difficulty

- a) Now offer the student a choice of several objects or photos or symbols (at least three)

b) Chant: "We're going on a /d/ hunt . . ." etc.

c) Have the student eye gaze or use partner assisted scanning to show which object / photo / symbol begins with /d/



d) Remember to use evaluative feedback!








3) Introduce a second sound. *Remember!!* The brain is a pattern detector!! We need to introduce more than one sound so the student has patterns to detect! Now take the student on a hunt for a 2nd sound (ex: /m/ since it's the first sound in Mom). Repeat the process.

4) Continue the process, focusing on having fun finding items, and 'testing' (showing 4 items or symbols). While you may only practice two sounds the first session, continue this until the student can correctly identify symbols representing about six different sounds.

5) Extend the activity to shared reading. For example:

a) Read a book, and go for a hunt for pictures that represent your target sounds. 'We're going on a /m/ hunt. We're gonna find some /m/ words . . . look through books together to find pictures and words that start with /m/. Remember, this is about extending learning to books.

b) Help students make a We Went On a Hunt Book. Sample pages:

1. We went on a hunt! 
2. We found some /b/ words!   
3. We went on a hunt! 
4. We found some /m/ words!   

AAIF Activities for Phoneme Isolation (initial sound)

Terrific Tongue Twisters!!!

Objective: Support the student in identifying initial sounds in spoken words. Authentic purpose = finishing a tongue twister.

Materials: pictures and photos representing simple words that begin with target sounds chosen for the student, plus foils

Examples: one target sound for student is /h/ because her name is Haley and she loves hats!

Photos: Hailey Hal (uncle)

Symbols (CVC): hat hot hug hill hut

CVC foils: cat / bat / car / pen / bag / leg, etc.)

Chart paper to write tongue twisters

Activity:

1) Introduce the activity.

a) Hold up the chart paper with the tongue twister written on it, with a slot to fill in

Hal has a hot _____.

b) Read the tongue twister, pointing to each word as you read it. Then stop and ask the student to help you finish it. "Hmmm, what goes here? Listen - all of these words start with the /h/ sound. 'Hal has a hot wonder which one it is?"

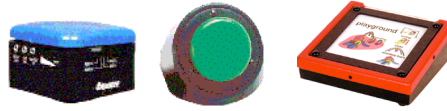
c) Show symbols and help student figure out which one fits.

d) Use evaluative feedback. Ex: She chooses bag. You say. "Let's try it. 'Hal has a hot bag.' Nooo, I don't hear the /h/ sound. Try again.

Ex: she chooses hat. You say 'Hal has a hot hat.' YES! They all have the /h/ sound!

e) Celebrate success! Velcro the hat symbol into the tongue twister. Then record the tongue twister into a message device. Let the

student read it!



Remember to have your student 'read it in your head.' Developing an inner voice is VERY important for all students, but especially for students who rely on AAC!

2) Introduce a second sound. Remember!! The brain is a pattern detector!! We need to introduce more than one sound so the student has patterns to detect! Now build a tongue twister for a 2nd sound (ex: /m/ since it's the first sound in Mom).

Mom makes a messy _____.

3) Continue the process, focusing on having fun finding items, and 'testing' (showing 4 items or symbols). While you may only practice two sounds the first session, continue this until the student can correctly identify symbols representing about six different sounds. Use different slots, such as:

Mom makes / milks / meets **messy mud.**

Mom makes a messy / marvelous / mean **mud.**

Matt / Mom / Mick **makes a messy mud.**

4) Extend the activity to shared reading. For example:

a) Read some tongue twister books.

b) Help students make a Terrific Tongue Twisters book, using the twisters that you have built together.

Great Resources for Supporting (and Understanding) Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Clendon, S., Gillon, D. & Yoder, D. (2005). Initial insights into phoneme awareness intervention for children with complex communication needs. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*. 52(1), pp. 7-31.

Ericson, L, & Juliebo, M. (1998). *The Phonological Awareness Handbook for Kindergarten and Primary Teachers*. The International Reading Association. <http://www.ira.org/>

Erickson, K. and Koppenhaver, D. (2007) *Children with Disabilities: Reading and Writing the Four-Block Way®*. Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa. www.carsondellosa.com

Hall, D., & Cunningham, P. (2007). *Month-by-month Reading, Writing, and Phonics for Kindergarten: Systematic, Multilevel Instruction for Kindergarten*. Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa. www.carsondellosa.com

See also:

www.nellieedge.com (the website by Nellie Edge)

Check out her numerous articles on using motivating activities to teach phonemic awareness and phonics, such as: *Developing Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Skills Within the Context of Songs and Rhymes*

Light, J. and McNaughton, D. (2006) *Maximizing the Literacy Skills of Individuals Who Require AAC*. Pennsylvania State University. AAC-RERC webcast.

http://mcn.ed.psu.edu/dbm/Light_Reading/index.htm