Foundational Facts

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) The PSF measure assesses a student's ability to segment three- and four-phoneme words into their individual phonemes fluently. The PSF task is administered by the examiner orally presenting words of three to four phonemes. The student then to verbally produces the individual phonemes in each word. For example, if the examiner says "sat," and the student says "/s/ /a/ /t/" he or she receives three possible points for the word. The PSF measure has been found to be a good predictor of later reading achievement (Kaminski & Good, 1996)

Phoneme segmentation is only ONE measure of phonological awareness. Students should have exposure to a variety of phonological instruction and practice such as rhyming, syllabification, onset and rime, segmentation, blending, and substitution activities.

During Assessment

Assessing phoneme segmentation provides an indicator of risk of later reading success.

During Instruction

Deliberate, sequenced instruction in phonological awareness enhances student reading ability.

Good Idea

Heggerty activities, *Working Out with Phonemic Awareness* Drills, scheduled daily practice

Shanahan on PA (2018)

"Phonemic awareness instruction should teach kids to hear the sounds, and phonics instruction then builds on that knowledge."

Not So Great

Practicing Phonemic Awareness (PA) with a blending board or other visual. PA should be done with ears only.

Instructional Guidelines for Planning Phonological Awareness Activities

Identify the precise phonological awareness task on which you wish to focus and select developmentally appropriate activities for engaging children in the task. Activities should be fun and exciting — "play" with sounds, don't "drill" them.

Be sure to use phoneme sounds (represented by / /) and not letter names when doing the activities. Likewise, remember that one sound may be represented by two or more letters. There are only three sounds in the word cheese: /ch/-/ee/-/z/. You may want to target specific sounds/words at first and "practice" beforehand until you are comfortable making them.

Continuant sounds (e.g., /m/, /s/, /i/) are easier to manipulate and hear than stop sounds (e.g., /t/, /q/, /p/ /b/). When introducing continuants, exaggerate by holding on to them: rrrrrring. With stop sounds, just pronounce the short "pure" consonant sound one time and without the "uh" sound added at the end, to ensure accurate blending. For example, /b/ should not be pronounced "buh".

When identifying sounds in different positions, the initial position is easiest, followed by the final position, with the medial position being most difficult (e.g., top, pot, setter).

When identifying or combining sound sequences, a CV pattern should be used before a VC pattern, followed by a CVC pattern (e.g., pie, egg, red).*



*Note: CV = consonant-vowel; VC = vowel-consonant; CVC = consonant-vowel-consonant

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