

Title

Teaching Phonemic Awareness and Phonics (Grades PreK-3)

Target Audience

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service teachers of grades PreK-3.

Prerequisites

We recommend that learners become familiar with the related content in the PBS TeacherLine course “RDLA 150: An Introduction to Underlying Principles and Research for Effective Literacy Instruction (Grades K–8).”

Course Description

This course is designed to give educators research-based concepts and instructional practices for teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to elementary students to increase their knowledge of sound/symbol relationships. Learners will study the stages of literacy development and will practice assessing the performance of developing readers. They will reflect upon the interconnectedness of oral language, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, and written language, as well as the role of each in implementing an integrated and balanced language arts program. As a final task, learners will design a plan of instructional activities that develop each area covered in the course: phonemic and phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and phonograms.

Instructor/Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet

Credits

To be determined by college or university

Goals

At the end of this course, learners will have an understanding of:

- The provision oral language has for the foundation of phonological awareness.
- Concepts and instructional practices related to phonological awareness and phonemic awareness.
- Assessing student demonstration of phonological awareness and phonemic awareness.
- Stages of literacy development.

Learner Outcomes

Learners completing this course will be able to:

- Evaluate the performance of developing readers and identify appropriate instructional goals.
- Reflect upon the interconnectedness of oral language, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, and written language, as well as the role of each in implementing an integrated and balanced language arts program.



- Analyze students' writing samples to determine the students' knowledge of letter-sound correspondence.
- Design a plan of instructional activities that develop each area covered in the course: phonemic and phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and phonograms.
- Adapt an existing phonics lesson plan to better address their students' learning needs.
- Incorporate the use of literature in phonics and phonemic awareness lessons.

Outline of Content and Assignments

Each session includes readings, videos, interactive activities, journal reflections, and discussion questions. Work through the sessions in order. The end of each session contains a self-assessment. Each session will provide opportunities to plan and prepare for work on the final project. Instructions for the final project are found in Session 6. In lieu of the final project, alternative projects are offered at the end of Sessions 2, 4, and 6 and are based on topics learned in the preceding sessions. There is a "Prior Knowledge" section at the beginning of each session. Learners should use this prompt to think about their current practices and their understandings of the topic for each session. At the end of the sessions there may be a section called "Transforming Your Practice." Learners should use the questions in this section to determine how their understanding and practices have been changed or adjusted as a result of working through the session activities. Both of these sections are for personal reflection and will not be evaluated by the facilitator.

This course is aligned with ISTE standards, NCTE/IRA *Standards for the English Language Arts*, and NCTE standards. Key concepts are presented through readings, videos, interactives, journal reflections, and discussion forums with the purpose of improving content knowledge, teaching pedagogy, and enhancing student achievement. Assignments will draw upon their knowledge of classroom practice and may include interaction with students.

This course is divided into six sessions:

- Session 1: Language and Literacy Development
- Session 2: Phonemic Awareness
- Session 3: Letter Identification and Letter-Sound Correspondence
- Session 4: Common Phonograms
- Session 5: Connecting Instruction of Phonemic Awareness and Phonics to Reading
- Session 6: Final Project: Designing a Five-Day Lesson Plan

Session 1: Language and Literacy Development

The learner will:

- Define professional goals and expectations for this course.
- Explain prior knowledge about the most effective methods for supporting young students' literacy development in your online journal.
- Debate whether explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics should be required in all preschool and Kindergarten classes
- Discuss a child's development relative to the "Continuum of Children's Development in Early Reading and Writing" and the role of oral language in implementing an integrated and balanced language arts program.

Read

- Language Development from Age 4 to 5 and Age 5 to 6 from PBS
- "Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children" A Joint Position Statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- "Continuum of Children's Development in Early Reading and Writing"

This document presents a continuum of children’s development in early reading and writing from, “Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children.”

Complete activities and assignments

- View the video, “Acquiring Language,” which illustrates how a PreK child learns to speak.
- Complete Session 1 Self-Assessment (not required)

Write in online journal

- Respond to Prior Knowledge and Expectations prompts

Participate in online discussion

- Introduce themselves in the Virtual Café
- Either defend or refute the following argument:
 - Virtually all human beings learn to speak without being taught. Yet, we all need to be taught how to read. Since phonemic awareness and phonics are critical skills in learning to read, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics should be required in all PreK and kindergarten classes.
- Observe the child’s language skills in the video “Acquiring Language” and discuss the following questions:
 - Where is the child’s development relative to the “Continuum of Children’s Development in Early Reading and Writing”?
 - What oral and written language activities would you plan for the child if you were his PreK teacher in a balanced literacy classroom?

Session 2: Phonemic Awareness

The learners will:

- Use the course readings to discuss the challenges in teaching phonological and phonemic awareness in a balanced literacy program in PreK–3 classrooms.
- Apply working definitions of phonological awareness and phonemic awareness, derived from course readings, to discuss the appropriateness of instructional activities and how to create instructional activities for students with diverse needs.
- Evaluate the performance of developing readers and identify appropriate instructional goals.
- Research Web sites and evaluate one site and its suggested activities for parents to support young learners in one of the phases described in the IRA/NAEYC position statement. (Alternative Project 1).

Read

- “Phonemic Awareness Instruction”
This article presents definitions and processes that constitute phonological and phonemic awareness.
- “Phonemic Awareness Helps Beginning Readers Break the Code”
The authors of this reading remind us that phonological awareness precedes knowledge of phonics and suggest several activities that further phonological and phonemic awareness.
- “Recommended Preschool Activities: Phonological Awareness” from PBS

Complete activities and assignments

- View the video, “Assessing Phonological and Phonemic Awareness,” in which a teacher assesses the phonemic awareness of kindergarten students.
- Complete the Identify Student Knowledge interactive to choose one of the following skills: phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, or phonics. The choice should describe the skill a student would need to possess in order to answer the question or follow the direction presented.
- Complete the Conduct an Assessment assignment to determine the level of linguistic

development indicated by the four students in the video. This analysis will help prepare learners for the final project.

- Complete Session 2 Self-Assessment.
- If learners choose to do the alternative projects rather than the final project, complete: Alternative Project 1: Web Search. Conduct a web search for appropriate literacy activities and evaluate them for effectiveness and appropriateness for a specific grade level.

Write in online journal

- Drawing from the readings and discussions, reflect on ways that developmentally appropriate practices impact instructional decisions for teaching phonemic awareness to specific groups of students.

Participate in online discussion

- Discuss the challenges they see in teaching phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, and phonics to young students.

Session 3: Letter Identification and Letter-Sound Correspondence

The learners will:

- Use course readings about research on systematic approaches to phonics instruction to discuss the difference between *synthetic* and *analytic* phonics instruction. Describe conditions under which one approach may be more appropriate than the other.
- Given examples of instructional strategies designed to teach letter-sound correspondence, evaluate their effectiveness in teaching students and reflect on the characteristics of students who would be best served by the activities.
- Research and discuss what type of adaptations you might need to make when teaching phonics to ELL students or to students with limited cognitive ability.

Read

- “Everything You Wanted to Know about Phonics (But Were Afraid to Ask)”
Stahl and his colleagues clear up many misconceptions about teaching letter-sound correspondence.
- “What We Know about How to Teach Phonics”
The authors of this article have been providing teachers with practical and well-researched advice about how to teach phonics for years. As they read, learners should think about how they might incorporate these instructional ideas into their teachings.

Complete activities and assignments

- View the video, “Teaching Phonological Awareness,” of first-grade students learning letter-sound correspondence. This video has two parts that highlight phonics instruction. In the first part, there is a “Morning-Message Activity.” The second part documents a “Word-Family Activity.”
- Complete an activity by reading scenarios of two different students. Then discuss how phonics instruction might differ for these hypothetical students. Think about what type of adaptations they might need to make when teaching phonics to ELL students or to students with limited cognitive ability.
- Complete Session 3 Self-Assessment (not required)

Write in online journal

- Choose one of the activities from the video and discuss why it would be more effective than the others for their students. Learners that do not currently teach should choose a grade level with which they have experience or a grade level that they would like to teach.

Participate in online discussion

- Discuss the factors that influence choice about how much and what kind of phonics instruction a student needs.

Session 4: Common Phonograms

The learners will:

- Use the course readings about phonograms and how to teach phonics to reflect how you might use common phonograms in your instruction and how you will integrate the phonograms into both reading and writing instruction.
- Design a phonics lesson plan for students with individual needs.
- Assess and provide feedback on two lesson plans in the discussion board.
- Design an instructional lesson to teach a specific phonogram(s). (Alternative Project 2)

Read

- “Phonics and Word Recognition Accuracy”
An effective phonics program includes the use of phonograms, also known as *rimes* or *word families*, as a method for quick identification of word chunks. This component of word recognition is described in this article.
- “A Decoding Program for Poor Readers-And the Rest of the Class, Too!”
This reading describes an exceptional program that focuses on teaching phonograms.
- “The Timing and Teaching of Word Families”
Learners have been reading and thinking about *why* phonograms, or word families, are important in an effective phonics program. It is also important to consider *how* and *when* to teach them, which is the topic of this article.

Complete activities and assignments

- Phonics Lesson Plan for Students with Individual Needs Assignment
- Complete Session 4 Self-Assessment (not required)
- If learners chose to do the alternative projects rather than the final project, they will now complete Alternative Project 2: Designing a Lesson Plan on Phonograms.

Write in online journal

- Answer the following questions:
 - How might you use the list of common phonograms in “Phonics and Word Recognition Accuracy” in your instruction?
 - How will you integrate the phonograms into both reading and writing instruction?

Participate in online discussion

- Post their lesson plan from Phonics Lesson Plan for Students with Individual Needs assignment and describe how their lesson plan serves the needs of students with diverse learning styles. Attach lesson plan to the post.

Session 5: Connecting Instruction of Phonemic Awareness and Phonics to Reading

The learners will:

- Predict the challenges to maintaining the balance between phonemic awareness instruction and reading for comprehension.
- Debate about which is better for beginner readers: part-to-whole instruction or whole-to-part instruction.
- Discuss the characteristics that would make a book or a Language Experience chart a good choice for teaching phonograms with word families.

Read

- “Alphabetics”
In this article, the National Reading Panel addresses the question, “Does instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics improve reading?”
- “Whole to Part Phonics Instruction: Building on What Children Know to Help Them Know More”
This article presents many approaches to teaching phonics.

Complete activities and assignments

- View the video, “Teaching Initial Consonants,” in which a teacher and first grade students are engaged in whole-to-part phonics instruction using a Language Experience song chart to focus on initial sounds. The lesson objective is to help students discover that the similar sounds (phonemes) they hear at the beginning of words are represented by similar letters (graphemes).
- View the second part of the video, “Teaching Phonograms with Word Families,” which focuses on teaching word families.
- Complete Session 5 Self-Assessment (not required)

Write in online journal

- Discuss the challenges in implementing a balanced literacy approach by reflecting on the following question:
 - Given the importance of a strong phonics component in your literacy program, what problems do you foresee in maintaining a balance between phonemic awareness instruction and reading for comprehension?

Participate in online discussion

- Post their opinions to the following question:
 - Which is better for beginning readers: part-to-whole instruction or whole-to-part instruction? Use examples from your teaching experiences and/or professional reading to support your response.
- Incorporate their thoughts about the video in the discussion. Use the following conversation points:
 - How did the teacher support (scaffold) the students’ learning?
 - What are five characteristics that would make a book or a Language Experience chart a good choice for teaching this lesson?

Session 6: Final Project: Designing a Five-Day Lesson Plan for Teaching Phonemic Awareness or Phonics

The learners will:

- Design and evaluate a lesson plan that synthesizes the concepts of phonemic awareness and phonological awareness.
- Using the criteria that Moustafa gives in “Whole to Part Phonics Instruction: Building on What Children Know to Help Them Know More” for selecting children’s books and language experience charts for phonics instruction, compile a list of books that satisfy the criteria and an activity for each book that would be appropriate for teaching a phonological pattern. (Alternative Project 3)
- Assess their learning in this course by comparing their prior knowledge and acquired knowledge.
- Analyze the learning experience in this course by reflecting on their professional goals and expectations.

Final Project: Designing a Five-Day Lesson Plan for Teaching Phonemic Awareness or Phonics

Learners will complete one of the two following projects:

- You will create a five-day lesson plan with the goal of developing phonics skills appropriate for the

grade level and developmental stage of students you identify as the participants in this series of lessons. Your lesson plan will include reading and writing activities that address appropriate phonemic awareness and phonological awareness, as well as skills needed to develop reading fluency, reading comprehension, and writing. The activities must be based on scientific research, and they must be original to you.

The assessment criteria for the final project are provided in the final project assessment rubric. Your lesson plan should include:

- A plan for gradual release of responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student.
- The main components of a lesson plan: goals, objectives, prerequisites, materials, lesson description, lesson procedures, and assessment.
- An implementation process for using the lesson plan, including a description of your students (if you have access to a classroom).
- A discussion board post asking for feedback from colleagues (if you do not have access to a classroom).

Submit your five-day lesson plan and your reflection paper to your facilitator.

- **Alternative Project 3: Linking Phonics Instruction to Reading**
If learners chose to do the alternative projects in lieu of the final project, they will complete Alternative Project 3: Linking Phonics Instruction to Reading.

Write in online journal

- Reflect on the following questions:
 - What have you learned and what skills have you acquired from the course?
 - Identify the essential ideas and strategies you gained from this course and how you plan to incorporate them into your current or future classroom.
 - How does this learning experience compare with your goals and expectations?
 - Were there any professional goals you were unable to achieve? Why?
 - How do you plan to address these areas of professional development in the future?

Schedule

It will take you approximately 30 hours to complete this course. Each session should take approximately 4-5 hours. If you find yourself spending several hours more than this in any given session, please contact your facilitator to make sure this is necessary to complete the given assignments.

Requirements

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments.
- Maintain an online journal.
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge.
- Be self-directed and self-motivated.
- Ask for assistance when they need it.

Materials (hardware, software, plug-ins)

Technical Requirements

- Word processor
- Internet service provider



- E-mail
- PBS TeacherLine plug-in requirements

Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by university institution only

Evaluation

This course can be taken for graduate credit on a pass/fail basis, or for a letter grade and graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.

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