

WEEK 6 / SESSION 1

Essential Questions:

- Why is phonological awareness so important in learning to read?
- How might phonological awareness and an understanding of the alphabetic principle be developed in early readers?
- How can teachers maximize the benefit of reading aloud and shared reading?
- What is a print-rich environment? What role does environmental print play in helping readers make a correlation between printed words and the people, places, and things in their lives?

Phonological Awareness: “Hearing” before

“Reading) in the accompanying resources to supplement this lecture.

- Slide 1: Explain that “hearing” is an important foundation of “reading”. Before young children ever even look at the letters of the alphabet or the words on a paper, they need phonological awareness. This means they need to be able to focus attention on the smaller sounds in a language.
- Slides 2-3: What is phonological awareness? Phonological Awareness is the ability to hear the smaller sound-parts that language is made up of. Young children need to be aware that oral speech is made up of words. Words can be broken down further into syllables. How many syllables do the following words have?

Pakistan
Shalimar
Charsadda
Mohenjodaro
Fatima
Balochistan

Slide 4: Syllable = Onset + Rime. Each syllable can be broken down into a starting sound (called an onset) and a rime (the ending) e.g.

Pak= P (onset) + ak (rime)

Shal= Sh (onset) + al (rime)

Char= Ch (onset) + ar (rime)

What are the onsets and rimes in the following syllables?

Neck

Salt

Phone

Slide 5: Phonemes: Starting sounds and rimes are made up of even smaller individual sounds called phonemes.

The syllable Pak contains three phonemes: P + a+ k

The syllable Shal contains three phonemes: Sh + a+ l

The syllable Char contains three phonemes: Ch + a+ r

At this point you might revise students' understanding of phonemes. Ask: What is the difference between a letter and a phoneme? Provide the example that S and H are letters of the English alphabet but S-, H- and Sh- are three different phonemes.

Slide 6: Ask students to quickly sketch a diagram (taking no more than a minute) that shows the relationship between language, words, syllables, onsets & rimes and phonemes. Suggest that they begin from the highest or lowest phonological unit and progress to the other extreme. (This diagram should show that language can be split into words, which can be split into syllables etc., until they reach

phonemes, i.e. the smallest phonological structure of language.)

○ Slide 7: Explain that the smaller units e.g. starting sounds (onsets) and phonemes are harder for children to hear than the larger units e.g. syllables and words. Add that phonological awareness falls on a **continuum of complexity**, with language and words being the easiest for children to identify and phonemes the hardest.

○ Slide 8: Connect this understanding (that phonological awareness lies along a **continuum of complexity**—phonemes are harder to hear than words) to a literacy curriculum for beginning readers. Explain that phonological awareness might be taught in a way that begins with easier tasks and graduates to more difficult ones—refer to the diagram.

Q. What is the difference between “phonological” awareness and “phonemic” awareness.

Make clear that phonological awareness is a much bigger concept, encompassing an awareness of phonology (including words, syllables, rhymes, phonemes) while phonemic awareness is one element of this (the ability to hear/recognize the individual, smallest components of the sounds of speech.)

Phonemic Activities for the Preschool or Elementary Classroom”

Divide students into small groups. Explain the purpose of the activities and assign one or two activities to each group. Ask them to read about the activity and then to try to demonstrate it – first to each other. Then ask them to demonstrate it to the whole group – with a short introduction about how it builds phonemic awareness.