

Chapter 2

Introduction to the Whole-Class and Small-Group Lessons

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Chapter 3 contains whole-class and small-group lessons for instruction of phonemic awareness skills that can be used by preschool, kindergarten, or first-grade teachers. These lessons should be taught as one part of a broader early-reading curriculum. Although the classroom teacher may independently deliver the phonemic awareness lessons, collaboration with other professionals such as speech–language pathologists, reading resource teachers, or school psychologists might also be considered. Many professionals are aware of the critical link between phonemic awareness skills success and learning to read. These professionals can assist with delivery of the small-group component of these lessons or might well be helpful in brainstorming modifications that can be made to the large-group lessons to fit the needs of your class.

Children need to develop a working knowledge as well as a conscious understanding of the sounds and sound structure of our language. Explicitly explaining the vocabulary and concepts related to the various phonological awareness tasks (e.g., blending, syllables, rhyme) is important. At a workshop recently, an audience member asked if we used the word “syllable” in a kindergarten class or if we just referred to syllables as parts of words. It was explained that it is necessary to use the terms (e.g., syllable, word, rhyme, sound, letter) to define the target area along with a definition the children can understand (e.g., the parts of a word). A kindergarten teacher with whom one of the authors collaborates reported a child asking his mother in the car, “Mom, do you know how many syllables are in the word hippopotamus?” This example shows that the child is beginning to understand how to think about words independent of their meaning.

SEQUENCE OF SKILLS

The following lessons are based on developmental information (Moats, 2000) and the authors’ own experiences in presenting these lessons. It takes varying time and practice for children to develop the ability to attend to the sounds in a word and to manipulate these sounds.

We have designed the 20 whole-class lessons so that the first 10 focus on the larger unit phonemic awareness skills (e.g., rhyming, word/syllable awareness, onset–rime) and Lessons 11–20 focus

on the phoneme (e.g., isolation of beginning, middle and ending sounds; phoneme counting, blending, and segmenting).

An outline of the skills targeted each week is listed below:

<i>Week</i>	<i>Area targeted</i>
1	Concept of words
2	Rhyme recognition and discrimination
3	Rhyme choice
4	Rhyme production
5	Syllable awareness/counting
6	Syllable blending
7	Syllable deletion
8	Onset–rime blending
9	Onset–rime blending
10	Review/assessment of rhyme production, blending syllables, and blending onset–rime
11	Initial sound identification
12	Initial sound production
13	Final sound identification
14	Final sound production
15	Medial sound production
16	Phoneme counting
17	Phoneme blending
18	Phoneme blending
19	Phoneme segmentation
20	Review/assessment of initial, medial, and final sound identification; phoneme counting, segmenting, blending, and deleting

The teacher should feel free to adapt the activities in each lesson to the class response. For example, if many children in the class are experiencing difficulty blending onsets and rimes into words, the teacher may wish to spend one more week on that skill. Also, suggestions for additional related activities are provided for each lesson so that the teacher can provide more practice on any skill necessary to meet the needs of the class.

PLAN OF THE LESSONS

The whole-class lessons presented here should take approximately 30 minutes. Beginning with an introduction to the specific skill, the teacher should explicitly state and explain the skill. The introduction to the various phonemic awareness skills is necessary to describe the task to the class. The introduction is the time when children are focused and presentation of multiple examples of the skill can be given. For example, we have had three people be a train (engine, train car, and caboose) and chug in front of the classroom. First, the engine says a sound, next the train car says a sound, and

then the caboose says a sound; finally the class blends the phonemes into a word. Materials such as puppets and objects are suggested to make the introduction informative yet enjoyable.

We have included literature with these lessons to help link phonemic awareness to reading. The stories allow children to look at pictures, follow a sequence of events, listen to oral speech, and practice phonemic awareness skills. The literature also often provides a theme which is then incorporated in whole-class or small-group activities. The books included in these lessons are available in most libraries. Alternative books and a listing of the materials needed for each lesson are included in the Appendix.

The whole-class activities provide a simple way to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop these phonemic awareness skills. The children are often active during these activities and take turns manipulating words, sounds, etc. Sometimes the children participate by responding to or vocalizing particular sounds, words, or syllables during activities. Music, gross motor activity (e.g., jumping or clapping to syllables), and visual stimuli help the children realize that it can be fun to analyze words. It is suggested that children sit in circles for some of the whole-class activities, but that may not be possible dependent upon the size of the classroom. Be flexible in adapting the lesson to fit the needs of the children in the class.

The small-group activity can be used for all children in the class if you have enough time to implement multiple small groups throughout the week. An alternative is to invite assistants (parents, teacher assistants, speech pathologist, or other professionals) to help, with each adult instructing a small group simultaneously. You may also decide that your time and resources allow for only one or two small-group lessons. The small-group lessons can then be used to provide extra assistance to the children in your class who seem to be struggling with the concepts presented in the whole-class format. Use the assessment data along with classroom performance to determine which small group or groups of children are most in need of additional practice.

DATA ON EFFECTIVENESS

Phonemic awareness lessons equivalent to the ones included in this book were provided in two kindergarten classrooms during the 1997/98 school year. In the first classroom, all children received the whole-class and small-group components of the phonemic awareness lessons. The lessons were collaboratively taught by the classroom teacher, a speech–language pathologist, and other teaching assistants. In the second classroom, the classroom teacher independently presented the whole-class lessons and other related activities, but none of the children received small-group instruction. In both of the first two classrooms where phonemic awareness was taught, the classroom teacher also taught a letter-sound/letter-name approach to early reading instruction. In a third classroom, the classroom teacher provided a letter-sound/letter-name approach to early reading instruction without a phonemic awareness component. All of the children in the three classes were tested at the beginning and end of kindergarten with the *Phonological Awareness Test* (PAT) (Robertson & Salter, 1997). The mean gain of the class that received both the whole-class and small-group lessons was 50 points. The mean gain of the class that received only the whole-class lessons and related activities was 33 points. The mean gain of the class that received the traditional instruction without a phonemic awareness component was 14 points (Barnes, Smitley, & Throneburg, 1998).

During the 1999/2000 school year the whole-class and small-group lessons were provided in four kindergarten classrooms. All children were individually assessed with the *Phonological Aware-*

ness Literacy Screening (PALS) with the exceptions of the individual rhyme and concept of word sections (Invernizzi & Meier, 1997). The test evaluated skills of rhyming, initial sound identification, letter-sound knowledge, and single-word reading and spelling. Figure 2.1 presents each of the four classrooms' test scores at the beginning and end of the year as well as the difference or gain between the two tests. On the total test score, 112 points were possible. More than 80 children participated in the lessons from the four classes. At the end of the year, most of the children in these classes evidenced substantial gains in the skills during kindergarten, with average class posttest scores that were more than four times greater than average pretest scores. Only six children (7%) were significantly below the class means at the end of the school year (Throneburg, Smitley, & Hilgenberg, 2000).

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of phonemic awareness skills can be accomplished through a number of published assessment tools, such as the PAT, or by informal means. It is recommended that the assessment include evaluation of rhyming, syllable and phoneme blending, as well as initial and final sound identification.

We have included a brief 26-item informal assessment of these phonemic awareness skills at the end of this chapter: 8 items evaluate rhyming judgment and production; 10 items evaluate blending syllables, onset-rime, and phonemes; and 8 items evaluate initial and final sound identification. This assessment also contains three optional sections that evaluate phonics/sound-letter knowledge. The optional section includes 19 items to evaluate sound-letter skills, 5 items to evaluate the ability to read words that can be phonetically decoded, and 5 items to evaluate writing single words that can be phonetically segmented. Two sets of all the test items are included. One set can be used as a pretest of skills, and a second set can be used later as a posttest of skills to evaluate skill growth over the school year.

The phonemic awareness assessment should be administered individually to children. The

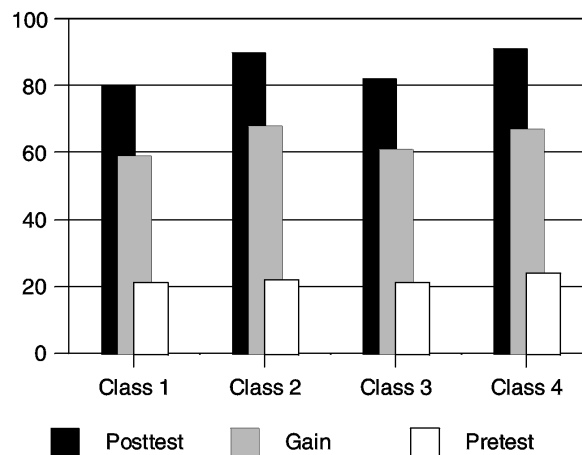


FIGURE 2.1. Average class scores on the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) before and after class lessons.

nonoptional sections (rhyming, blending, and phoneme identification) usually require less than 10 minutes per child. The average time for the optional sound–letter, reading, and writing sections also varies with the skill of the child, but most children complete the tasks in 5–10 minutes. The optional section is strongly recommended by the end of kindergarten. The assessment may be administered by a teacher, teacher aide, speech–language pathologist, or other education professional. The professional who administers the assessment should be aware of the proper production of speech sounds. (Say individual phonemes without adding a schwa vowel—e.g., /sss/ like a snake sound, not /suh/; /f/, just air blowing, not /fuh/.) Detailed information about the phonemes in the English/American language and the correct pronunciation of the sounds is included in Chapter 6.

REFERENCES

- Barnes, C., Smitley, J. [M.], & Throneburg, R. [N.] (1998). *Phonological awareness training: Effects on phonological awareness and reading skills*. Paper presented at the National Convention of the American Speech–Language–Hearing Association.
- Invernizzi, M., & Meier, J. (1997). *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Moats, L. C. (2000). *Speech to print*. Baltimore: Brookes.
- Robertson, C., & Salter, W. (1997). *The Phonological Awareness Test*. East Moline, IL: LinguiSystems.
- Throneburg, R. N., Smitley, J. S., & Hilgenberg, K. (2000). *Individual student differences in phonological awareness training in kindergarten*. Paper presented at the National Convention of the American Speech–Language–Hearing Association.

Phonemic Awareness Assessment

Child's name _____ Pretest date _____
Teacher's name _____ Posttest date _____

There is a line following each item on the test. The examiner may indicate with a +/- the correctness of the response or may record the child's actual response on the line.

RHYMING

Instructions/Practice

The first thing we are going to do is work with some rhyming words. Words rhyme when the ends of the words sound the same. For example, "pot" and "hot" rhyme. "Pot" and "hot" both have the sounds "ot" at the ends of the words. Now listen to these words "bag", "rake"—they don't rhyme because they sound different at the ends of the words (*pause between initial sound and rest of word*) "b-ag," "r-ake." Let's think of a word that rhymes with "cat" (*let the child respond and give him or her feedback as to why response was correct or incorrect*). Now I am going to ask you about some more rhyming words, but I won't be able to help you. Don't worry if you don't know all the answers; go ahead and take your best guess about each answer.

Rhyming Judgment

Listen to these words and tell me if the two words rhyme or don't rhyme with each other.

Pretest

1. lake–cake
2. cat–dog
3. red–bed
4. fox–box

Posttest

1. pig–dig
2. hop–sad
3. mat–sat
4. five–pink

Rhyming Production

Next I'm going to say a word, and I want you to think of a word that rhymes with it. The word you think of can be a real word or a silly made-up word. For example, if I say the word "show," words that you can say that rhyme with it are "toe, mow, go, coe, low, doe, poe." You only need to tell me one word that rhymes with the word I say. Tell me a word that rhymes with . . .

- | | | | |
|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| 5. pop | _____ | 5. shoe | _____ |
| 6. sun | _____ | 6. win | _____ |
| 7. light | _____ | 7. mat | _____ |
| 8. rice | _____ | 8. bake | _____ |

Total correct

rhyme pretest /8

Total correct

rhyme posttest /8

From *A Sound Start* by Christine E. McCormick, Rebecca N. Throneburg, and Jean M. Smitley. Copyright 2002 by The Guilford Press. Permission to photocopy this form is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use only (see the copyright page for details).

BLENDING

Instructions/Examples

Next I'm going to say some pieces of words, and you need to listen very carefully and put the pieces together to figure out the secret words I'm saying. For example, if I say (*pause 1/2–1 second between segments*) “gi–raffe,” you can put the pieces together and tell me the secret word is “giraffe.” If I say “d–og,” you can tell me the secret word I said was “dog.”

Syllables

Pretest

1. play-ground _____
2. bas-ket _____
3. am-bu-lance _____

Posttest

1. base-ball _____
2. ta-ble _____
3. hel-i-cop-ter _____

Onset–Rime

(Say individual phonemes without adding schwa vowel—i.e., /sss/ like a snake sound, not /suh/; f, just air blowing, not /fuh/.)

4. f-all _____
5. b-ake _____
6. s-un _____
7. c-at _____

4. p-ot _____
5. s-and _____
6. c-oat _____
7. f-ish _____

Phonemes

8. p-i-g _____
9. c-a-n _____
10. f-i-ght _____

8. b-oa-t _____
9. k-i-te _____
10. s-i-t _____

Total correct

blending pretest /10

Total correct

blending posttest /10

PHONEME/SOUND IDENTIFICATION

Initial Sound

Now we're going to listen for some sounds in words. First, I want you to tell me the beginning sound in the words I say. I want you to listen and tell me the sound you hear, not the letter that makes the sound. For example, the first (or beginning of) the word “sack” is /sss/. (*If a child responds with the letter name, tell him or her that you need to know the sound he or she hears and not the letter. Give him or her an additional chance to respond to the item.*) What is the first sound in the word . . . ?

Pretest

1. mat _____
2. bed _____
3. soup _____
4. cap _____

Posttest

1. fit _____
2. map _____
3. book _____
4. duck _____

Final Sound

Now I want you to listen for the ending sound or the last sound in the words I say. For example, the last sound in the word “sack” is /k/. What is the last sound in the word . . . ?

5. fan _____

5. gas _____

6. rake _____

6. ham _____

7. leaf _____

7. knot _____

8. hot _____

8. sick _____

Total correct
identification pretest /8

Total correct
identification posttest /8

TOTAL PRETEST SCORE /26
(Rhyming + Blending + ID)

TOTAL POSTTEST SCORE /26
(Rhyming + Blending + ID)

The following sections of the test are *optional*. These sections evaluate phonics/sound–letter knowledge as well as phonemic awareness skills.

Grapheme–Phoneme (Letter–Sound)

Tell me a sound each of these letters make. (*Present the letter page, pointing to letters one at a time.*)

*Pretest**Posttest*

1. m _____

6. a _____

1. m _____

6. a _____

2. b _____

7. i _____

2. b _____

7. i _____

3. z _____

8. u _____

3. z _____

8. u _____

4. k _____

9. l _____

4. k _____

9. l _____

5. n _____

5. n _____

Phoneme–Grapheme (Sound–Letter)

Now I am going to say a sound, and I’d like you to write the letter that makes that sound. You can look at the alphabet written at the top of the page if you don’t remember how to write a letter. (*Present short vowel sounds.*)

1. d _____

6. e _____

1. d _____

6. e _____

2. s _____

7. o _____

2. s _____

7. o _____

3. g _____

8. p _____

3. g _____

8. p _____

4. r _____

9. j _____

4. r _____

9. j _____

5. t _____

10. w _____

5. t _____

10. w _____

Total correct
letter–sound pretest /19

Total correct
letter–sound posttest /19

READING WORDS THAT CAN BE PHONETICALLY DECODED

Tell me what you think this word says. Many children your age can't read yet, but I just want you to take a guess about what the word might say. (*Reading list page included on page xx.*)

Pretest

1. fan _____
2. run _____
3. it _____
4. bag _____
5. dad _____

Total correct

reading pretest /5

Posttest

1. kid _____
2. bus _____
3. at _____
4. nut _____
5. mom _____

Total correct

reading posttest /5

WRITING WORDS THAT CAN BE PHONETICALLY SEGMENTED

(*Give student a copy of the child's writing page located on page xx.*) Try to write the words I say. Listen for the sounds and write down the sounds that you hear. You can look at the alphabet at the top of your page if you forget how to write any of the letters. (*Score 1 point for each correct letter.*)

1. mad _____
2. nap _____
3. bug _____
4. fun _____
5. lip _____

Total correct

writing pretest /15

6. big _____
7. sad _____
8. man _____
9. rug _____
10. lid _____

Total correct

writing posttest /15

TOTAL OPTIONAL PRETEST /39

TOTAL OPTIONAL POSTEST /39

Child's Writing Page

(Copy page for pretest and posttest)

Child's name _____ Date _____

Teacher's name _____

Circle: Pretest sample or Posttest sample

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss
Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Sound-Letter

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Writing Words

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

From *A Sound Start* by Christine E. McCormick, Rebecca N. Throneburg, and Jean M. Smitley. Copyright 2002 by The Guilford Press. Permission to photocopy this form is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use only (see the copyright page for details).

Letters for Grapheme–Phoneme (Letter–Sound) Assessment

m	b	z
k	n	a
i	u	l

Reading Lists

Pretest Words

1. fan
2. run
3. it
4. bag
5. dad

Posttest Words

1. kid
2. bus
3. up
4. nut
5. mom

Copyright © 2002 The Guilford Press. All rights reserved under International Copyright Convention. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, or stored in or introduced into any information storage or retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the written permission of [The Guilford Press](http://www.guilford.com).

Guilford Publications
72 Spring Street
New York, NY 10012
212-431-9800
800-365-7006
www.guilford.com

From *A Sound Start* by Christine E. McCormick, Rebecca N. Throneburg, and Jean M. Smitley. Copyright 2002 by The Guilford Press. Permission to photocopy this form is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use only (see the copyright page for details).