

How to Teach Phonology in the Classroom

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Abstract. English phonology is one of the biggest part of this language and teaching this to the student can require responsibility of being aware of every sound. Phonology in language teaching refers to the study of sound patterns within a language and across languages. Specifically, it focuses on the categorical organization of speech sounds, known as phonemes, in the mind and how these sounds convey meaning. Unlike phonetics, which examines the physical production and perception of sounds, phonology delves into the distinctive sound units that shape language. In language classrooms, phonological areas include intonation, stress, accent, and features of connected speech (such as elision, intrusion, and catenation). Essentially, phonology helps teachers understand and teach the unique sound system of a language, enabling effective pronunciation instruction.

Key words: phonology, speech sounds, sound patterns, intonation, pronunciation, connected speech.

Introduction: Phonological awareness refers to knowing or being aware of the sound structures in a language. It focuses on the ability to hear, recognize, identify, differentiate, and manipulate individual phonemes or sounds in words. It also includes understanding the number of words in a sentence, the number of syllables in a word, and rhyming pairs. Children should be able to recognize words within sentences and sounds within words. This oral practice of literacy is demonstrated through the use of action or response, including clapping, stomping, tapping, singing, or reciting nursery rhymes.

A thorough understanding of the spoken word is an important part of the elementary school learning process. Some kids get it right away, while others take more practice. Phonological awareness is the foundation of learning to read because it is the foundation of the alphabetic principle. Phonological awareness gives children the skills they need to understand phonics, which are letter-sound relationships through print.

A variety of phonological awareness activities can be used in everyday literacy instruction to increase reading and writing success for all students. A phonological awareness activity that can be used to address several basic skills is picture sorting. Visual images or picture cards can be sorted by initial sound, final sound, syllables, or rhyme. Students can do these activities independently, in small groups, or in an oral whole-group lesson led by the teacher. Poetry, nursery rhymes and traditional songs are a fun way to increase phonological awareness and activity every morning. After a recitation or song, teachers can ask students to clap for the number of words in a sentence or the number of syllables (or beats) in a word. Children can also give thumbs up when they hear rhyming pairs.

Activities that encourage children to segment and blend monosyllabic words are another way to teach phonological awareness. For this, stroking the beginning, middle and end sounds of the hand is a useful activity. The teacher should say a CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) word such as mat. The student must answer by saying each sound of the three letters separately. Slap the first sound on the shoulder, the middle sound on the elbow, and the third sound on the wrist.

Rhyming is the first step in teaching phonological awareness and helps lay the groundwork for beginning reading development. Rhyming draws attention to the different *sounds* in our language and that words actually come apart. For example, if your child knows that *jig* and *pig* rhyme, they are focused on the ending *ig*.

Read Rhyming Stories and Poems

You can begin introducing rhymes by reading a lot of rhyming stories and poems together with your child. As you read, you can begin drawing attention to the sounds of the rhyme. For example you can say, “*I hear rhyming words! Dog and Bog rhyme!*”

You can also ask your child to predict the next word in the rhyming story. For example you can say, “*The cat sat on the*” and wait for your child to fill in the blank.

As you read rhyming books and poems together with your child, really exaggerate the sounds of the rhyming words. Draw a lot of attention to the rhyme. Some examples of rhyming books are *Llama Llama Red Pajama, Jamberry, Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, Sheep in a Jeep, etc.*

Sing Rhyming Songs and Rhyming Chants

Sing rhyming songs and rhyming chants a lot with your child. Singing is so easy to fit into your daily schedule, as you can basically break out in song or chant any time of the day.

Some Examples of Rhyming Songs and Chants are: *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, 5 Little Monkeys, Down By the Bay, Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, I Know an Old Lady, etc.*

Sound Identification

You can begin working on sound identification by asking your child to match the very first sounds in words and then the final sounds. It is helpful to have a set of cards with pictures of everyday objects (*man, boy, girl, cat, dog, house, book, etc.*). You can also cut out pictures from magazines and use those. Once your child is successful at matching beginning sounds, work on ending sounds.

“Say the word **bat**. What is the first sound you hear in the word **bat**?” (b) What is the last sound you hear in the word **bat**?

Sound Deletion and Substitution

You can ask your child to repeat a word and give the first, middle, and last sounds of the word. Then you can change a sound in the word. By manipulating and playing with these sounds in words, the child begins to understand the concepts of language and build a strong reading foundation.

“Say **rat**. Say **rat** again but this time, instead of /t/, say /g/.” (rag)

“Say **cab**. Say **cab** again but this time, instead of /k/, say /l/.” (lab)

“Say **jam**. Say **jam** again but this time, instead of /j/, say /y/.” (yam)

Phonological awareness skills are the basis for reading and without this important skill, potential reading difficulties might occur in the early reading stage. A child who has strong and solid phonological skills will have a strong reading foundation to develop with.

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