

Research-Based Curriculum



Targeted Phonics

Complete Supplemental Program
Based on Respected Research and Literature

Introduction

Targeted Phonics is a series of curriculum kits that contain sets of readers that introduce and provide practice for the essential phonics skills necessary to help students unlock words as a basis for becoming successful, competent readers. The kits introduce phonics skills in an organized, research-based progression (Bishop and Bishop 2010).

Beginning with *My First Consonants and Vowels*, the kits sequentially introduce the sound-symbol relationships of the English alphabet in the order of their usefulness to beginning readers. *More Consonants, Blends, and Digraphs* covers the more complex consonants, the highest utility consonant blends, and the four most common consonant digraphs. The next kit, *Short Vowel Rimes*, offers opportunities for students to apply the sound-symbol relationships they have learned in the first two kits to decode common short vowel word families in a story-like format, which focuses the purpose of reading on deriving meaning from the text. Finally, the *Short Vowel Storybooks* and *Long Vowel Storybooks* help students practice and progress with their phonics skills in a true story format that lets the teacher also address the fiction skills of character, plot, and setting.



Targeted Phonics Contributing Authors

The late **Robert Calfee, Ph.D.**, was a cognitive psychologist with research interests in the effect of schooling on the intellectual potential of individuals and groups. His research activities included Project READ-Plus, The Inquiring School, the Text Analysis Project, Methods for Alternative Assessment, and the Read-Write-Cycle. These projects all combine theoretical and practical facets directed toward understanding and facilitating school change. During his life, he wrote critical papers on the effects of testing and educational indicators, ability grouping, teacher assessment, and the psychology of literacy. He served as Professor Emeritus from Stanford University and the University of California, Riverside, where he studied the relation of reading and writing, and the use of pen-based digital technology to support learning. He was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a recipient of the Oscar Causey Award (NRC), and a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences.

P. David Pearson, Ph.D., is a faculty member in the programs in Language and Literacy and Cognition and Development at the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, where he served as Dean from 2001–2010. Current research projects include *Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading*—a Research and Development effort with colleagues at Lawrence Hall of Science in which reading, writing, and language are employed as tools to foster the development of knowledge and inquiry in science—and the Strategic Education Research Partnership—a collaboration between UC Berkeley, Stanford, and the SFUSD designed to embed research within the portfolio of school-based issues and priorities. Awards include the Oscar Causey Award (NRC) for contributions to reading research, the William S. Gray Citation of Merit (IRA) for contributions to reading research and practice, the Albert J. Harris Award (IRA), and the Alan Purves Award (NCTE). AERA has also awarded him the Distinguished Contributions to Research in Education Award. He is the founding editor of the *Handbook of Reading Research* now in its fifth volume, he edited *Reading Research Quarterly* and the *Review of Research in Education*, and he has served on the Editorial Review Board for some 20 educational journals.

Ashley Bishop, Ph.D. and **Sue Bishop, M.Ed.** are esteemed literacy educators. They coauthored the book *Teaching Word Analysis Skills*, which presents much of the theoretical foundation on which the *Targeted Phonics* program is based. Ashley is Professor Emeritus, California State University, Fullerton. While at Cal State Fullerton, Dr. Bishop was Chair of the Reading Department for 20 years and served as the Founding Dean of the College of Education. He has coauthored four books focusing on the reading process and has spoken widely throughout the United States and Canada. Sue is a retired educator in the field of special education. She worked as a resource specialist for the Irvine Unified School District in California. Since retirement, she has taught in the Language Minority Program, also for IUSD.

The Targeted Phonics Logic Model

The Logic Model below demonstrates how *Targeted Phonics* is designed to develop students' essential phonics skills as the foundation for decoding and building meaning from words. These foundational skills help students become successful, fluent readers. Evidence of this is suggested through its resources and activities, which are linked to positive outcomes for students. The goal of this table is to help visualize how implementing *Targeted Phonics* can support and contribute to achieving school and district goals.

Problem Statement: There is a need for systematic and explicit phonics instruction at the PreK–2 level.					
Outcome/Goal: To help students develop essential phonics skills to support reading fluency and decoding.					
Theory of Action					
Educators implement research-based Targeted Phonics materials and strategies.	PreK–2 students engage in and utilize Targeted Phonics content and strategies.	PreK–2 students will have increased phonological awareness and phonics skills.	PreK–2 students will have increased achievement reading decodable texts.	PreK–2 students will be prepared to read more challenging grade level text.	Students will become confident, fluent readers of any grade level text.
Logic Model					
Assumptions	Resources/Inputs	Activities	Outputs/Metrics	Outcomes	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School districts are interested and prepared to incorporate systematic and explicit phonics instruction. • Students can develop phonics skills through systematic and explicit phonics instruction. • Phonics awareness leads to the ability to decode and make meaning of text. • Decodable text is an appropriate tool for students to practice and build phonics learning. • Technology is accessible in the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials developed through collaboration of experts in the field • Teachers Guide with key research and lesson plans that include extension and application activities • Student Guided Practice Book with engaging opportunities for practice and application of skills • Focused, skill-based phonics lessons offering pacing plans for daily instruction lasting 6, 9, or 18 weeks in length • 18 engaging Phonics Readers, 6 copies each • Audio recordings of all books • 18 Interactiv-eBooks • Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible 25–60 minute daily lessons • Explicit instruction in phonics skills • Teacher modeling of decoding skills • Collaborative language and discussion opportunities • Multiple opportunities to practice learned skills • Cross-curricular activities to apply phonics skills • School-to-Home connections to support learning at home • Engaging practice activities using pencil and paper as well as technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student engagement in texts and resources • Meets or exceeds expectations of ELA standards • Completion of lesson • Formative and summative assessments • Improvement in language and reading skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of alphabetic principles and graphophonic cues • Application of decoding skills in reading grade level text • Increased confidence in reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of strong foundational reading skills • Increased engagement in reading • Prepared for more challenging text and comprehension activities in upper elementary and secondary grades

Guiding Principles

1. Phonics instruction must support learners in acquiring knowledge of the alphabetic principle in order to be prepared to read.
2. Phonics instruction should follow an explicit and systematic scope and sequence to support student learning.
3. Phonics skills must be applied in context through the use of engaging texts in order to help students develop fluency and comprehension, the ultimate goal of reading instruction.

These guiding principles are the foundation of *Targeted Phonics* and are embedded in every component of the product.

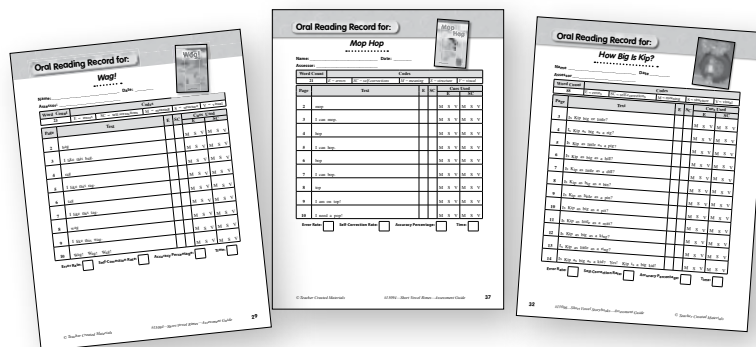
Quality Assessment Guides Instruction

To maximize teaching and learning efficiency, teachers should conduct formative and summative assessments for the purpose of making sure that the needs of all students are targeted and that unnecessary instruction is bypassed. “When we clearly know our learners, we can make informed choices and adjust the learning processes so that all students have an optimal chance of succeeding” (Gregory and Kuzmich 2004).



Research to Practice

A well-researched assessment tool is incorporated into *Targeted Phonics* to assist teachers in planning instruction for their students. The *Tile Test*, developed by Norman and Calfee (2004) consists of “[c]arefully constructed assessment activities [that allow teachers] to see and hear what students know and how they know it...it provides the feedback needed to guide instruction.”



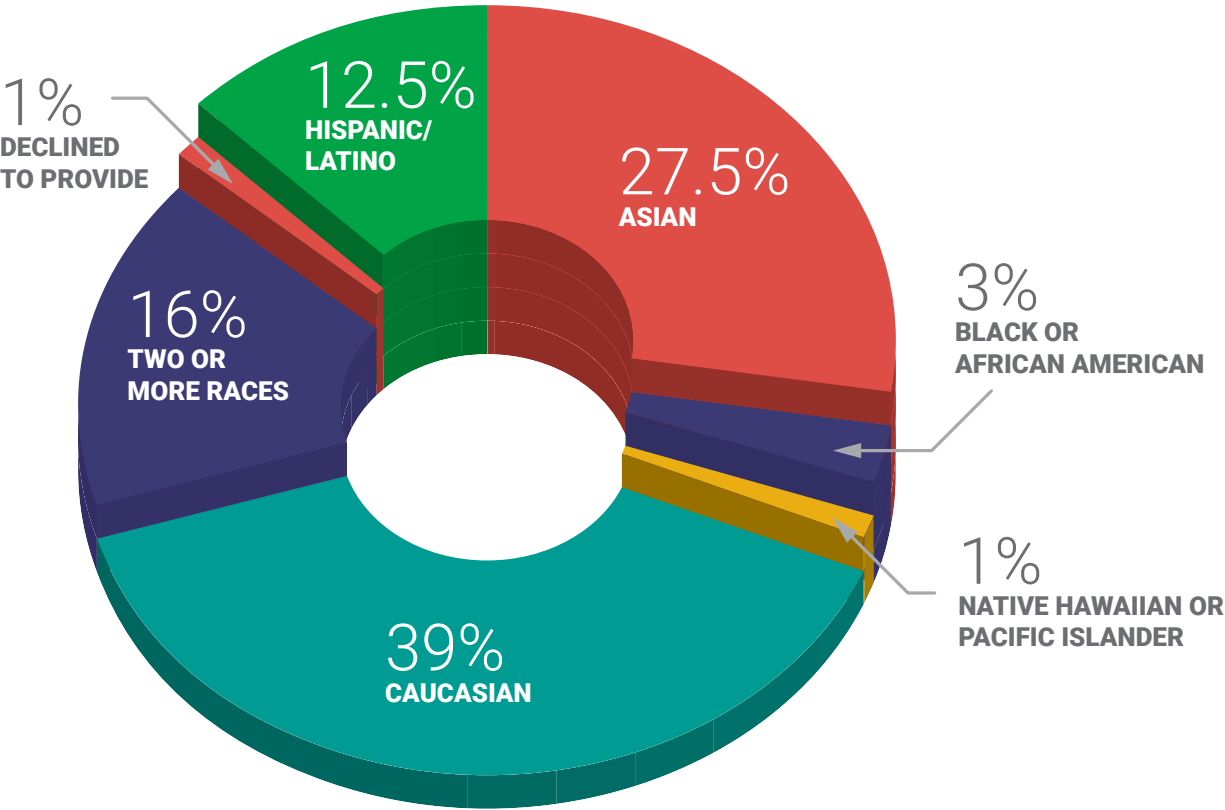
Data Studies Illustrating the Efficacy of the *Targeted Phonics* Series

During the 2021–2022 school year, Teacher Created Materials partnered with St. Madeleine Sophie Catholic School in Bellevue, Washington, to implement *Targeted Phonics*. Teachers in Pre-Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade piloted the curriculum.

Ongoing professional development, lesson plans, and student resources were provided to the participating teachers to support this implementation.

St. Madeleine Sophie Catholic School Demographics

- Enrollment: 153
- Tuition Assistance: 25%
- Limited English Proficient: 10%
- Special Services/Special Education: 32%



Implementation

The goal of the *Targeted Phonics* implementation was to support pre-kindergarten students in building their foundational literacy skills. The goal of the implementation in first and second grade was to support struggling readers identified in need of intervention because they were reading below grade level. Teachers in all classrooms systematically used the program between 20–30 minutes per day for 6 weeks. Prekindergarten students received direct instruction using the *My First Consonants and Vowels* kit, and the first and second grade students received direction instruction using the *Short Vowel Rimes* and *Short Vowel Storybooks* kits, and for the last three weeks of implementation second grade students received instruction using the *Long Vowel Storybooks* kit.

In prekindergarten, scores from a letter and sound ID evaluation were used to measure students' progress and evaluate growth. In first and second grade, scores from the Comprehensive Phonics Survey: Nonsense-Word Reading (Blevins 2017) were used to measure students' progress and evaluate growth. The Comprehensive Phonics Survey includes a systematic list of 50 nonsense words measuring students' decoding skills. The nonsense words are grouped into the following 5 categories: short vowels, consonant blends and digraphs, long vowels, complex vowels, and multisyllabic words.

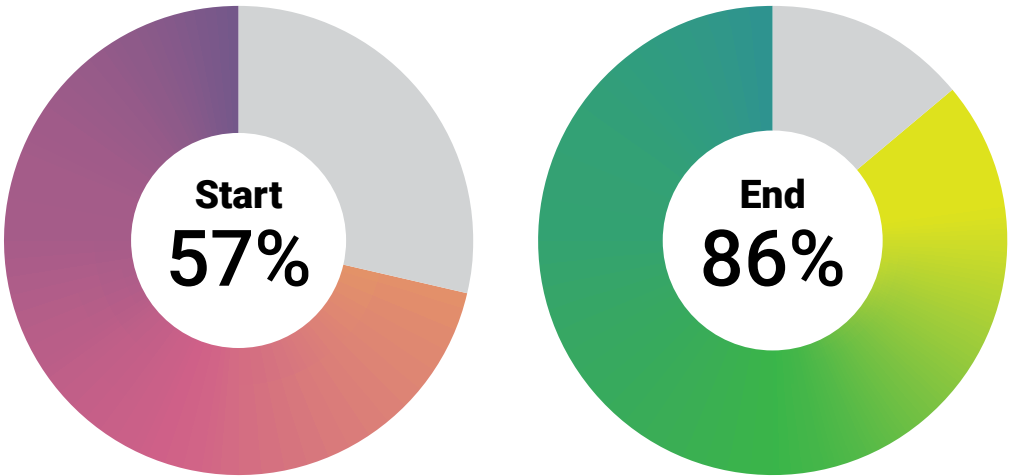


Results

Prekindergarten

At the start of implementation, 57% of students could correctly identify 45 (out of 52 possible) or more upper or lowercase letters as well as could correctly identify 13 or more letter sounds (out of 26 possible). At the conclusion of implementation, 86% of students could correctly identify 45 or more upper or lowercase letters and 13 or more letter sounds. In fact, 72% of students could identify 22 or more letter sounds correctly.

Letter/Sound ID



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The student who showed the most individual growth began the study identifying only 3 upper or lowercase letters and 0 letter sounds. At the conclusion of implementation, the student correctly identified 27 upper or lowercase letters and 11 letter sounds. That change demonstrates 46% growth in letter ID and 42% growth in letter sounds.

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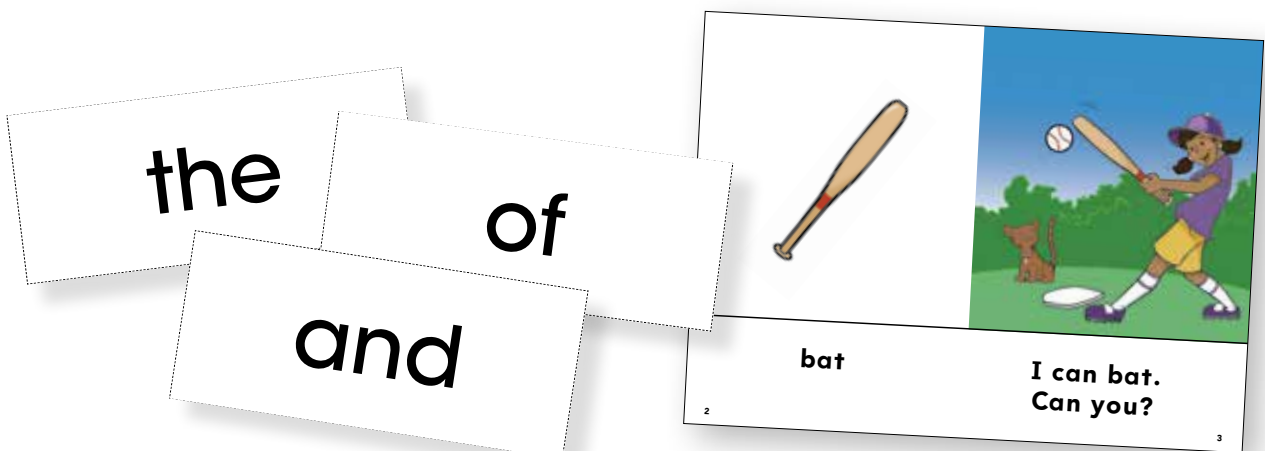
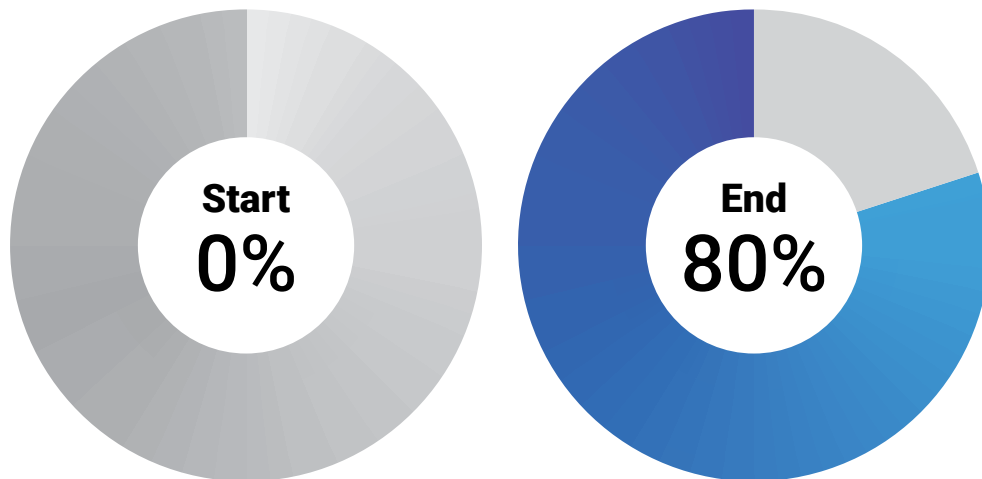
First and Second Grade

At the start of implementation, none of the students could correctly decode 25 or more of the 50 nonsense words on the Comprehensive Phonics Survey. In fact, only 20% of the students could correctly decode more than 13 (25%) words correctly.

At the conclusion of implementation, 80% of students could correctly decode 25 or more of the nonsense words, and 60% of the students could actually correctly decode 30 or more of the nonsense words. This demonstrates significant word knowledge growth over the 6-week implementation period.

Based on the results, all teachers have decided to continue using the *Targeted Phonics* program through the rest of the 2021–2022 school year.

Percent Students Decoding 25+ Words



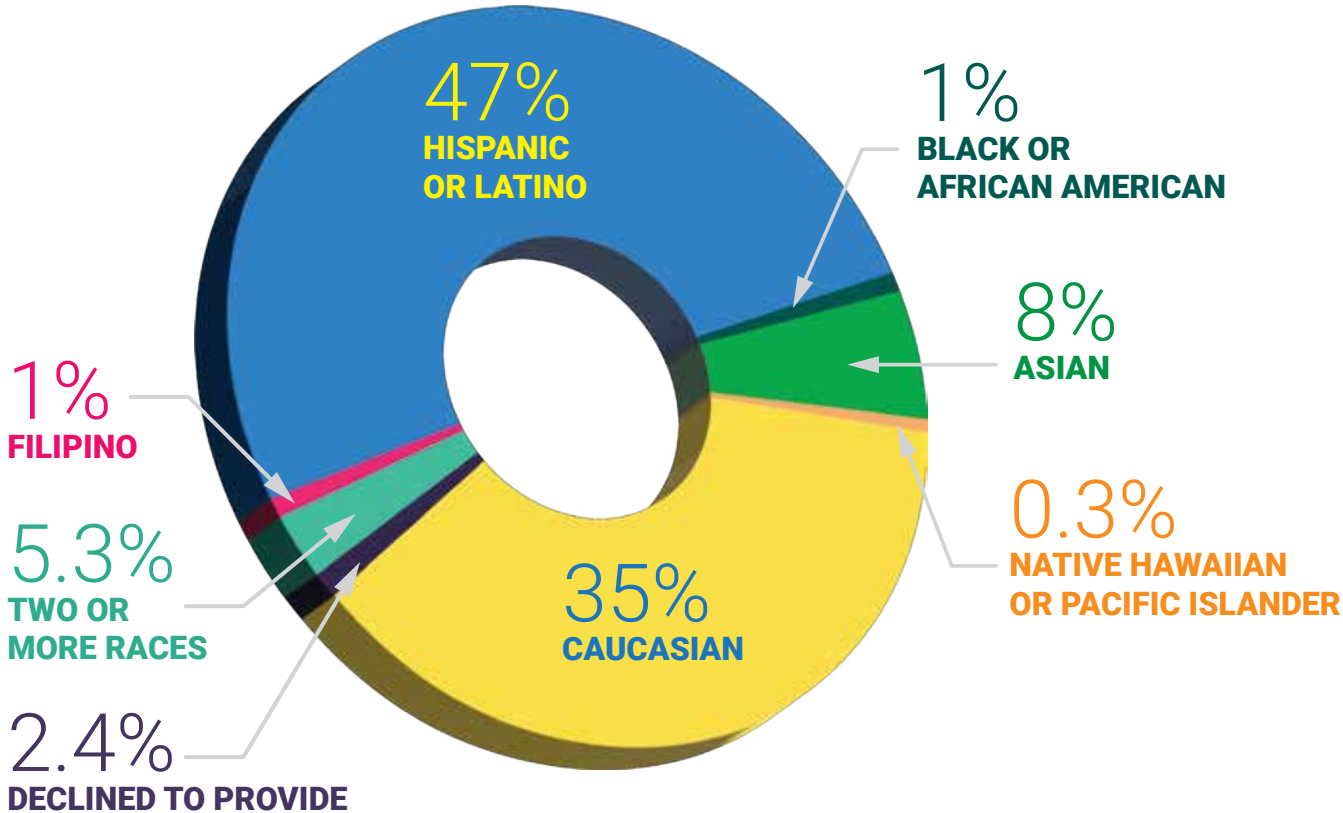
College View Elementary School Data Study

During the 2021–2022 school year, Teacher Created Materials partnered with College View Elementary School in Ocean View School District, located in Huntington Beach, California, to implement *Targeted Phonics*. One kindergarten classroom piloted the curriculum.

Ongoing professional development, lesson plans, and student resources were provided to the participating teacher to support this implementation.

College View Elementary School Demographics

- Enrollment: 322
- Free or Reduced Lunch: 70%
- Limited English Proficient: 18%



Implementation

The goal of the *Targeted Phonics* implementation was to support kindergarten students in building their foundational literacy skills. The teacher systematically used the program in both a small-group and whole-group setting between 30–40 minutes per day for 6 weeks. The students received direct instruction using the *My First Consonants and Vowels* kit and the *Short Vowel Rimes* kit, depending on their readiness level.

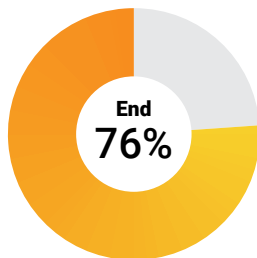
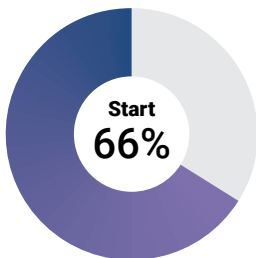
Students were assessed using scores from a letter and sound ID evaluation as well as the Comprehensive Phonics Survey: Nonsense-Word Reading (Blevins 2017) to measure students' progress and evaluate growth. The Comprehensive Phonics Survey includes a systematic list of 50 nonsense words measuring students' decoding skills. The nonsense words are grouped into the following 5 categories: short vowels, consonant blends and digraphs, long vowels, complex vowels, and multisyllabic words. Given the parameters of the academic grade-level standards in California for kindergarten, only the assessment of the first two nonsense word lists (short vowels and consonant blends and digraphs) were taken into consideration for the evaluation purposes of this implementation.

Letter and Sound Identification Results

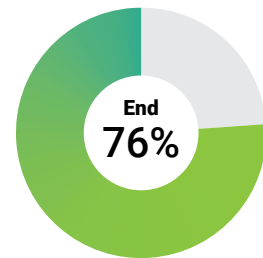
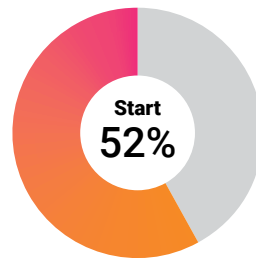
The goal for the students at this point of the school year was 90% accuracy for letter and sound ID. This means the students needed to identify 47 or more (out of 52) upper and lowercase letter as well as 24 or more (out of 26 possible) letter sounds.

At the start of implementation, 66% of students hit that accuracy level for upper or lowercase letters identification and only 52% hit that accuracy level for letter sounds identification. At the conclusion of implementation, 76% of students hit that accuracy level for letter and sound identification.

Letter Identification Results



Sound Identification Results



Of the five students who were not yet at the 90% accuracy level, 3 out of 5 made at least 25% growth and 4 out of 5 actually made at least 30% growth from where they started at the beginning of the implementation.

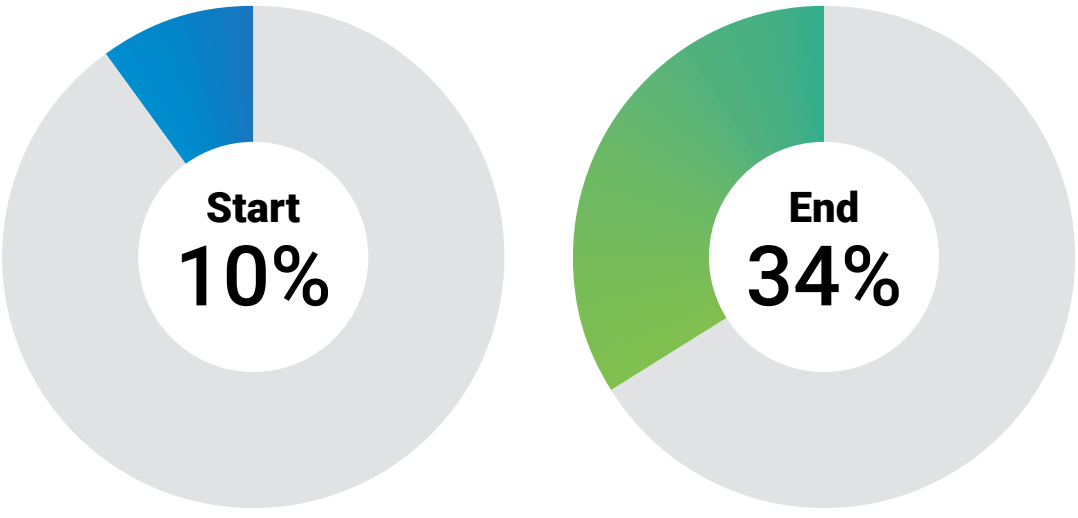


Phonics Survey Results

At the start of implementation, 10% of the students could correctly decode 10 or more of the 20 kindergarten-level nonsense words on the Comprehensive Phonics Survey. In fact, 43% of students could not decode any of the nonsense words on the survey.

At the conclusion of implementation, 34% of students could correctly decode 10 or more of the nonsense words. Additionally, 67% of students could correctly decode 6 or more on the nonsense words. This demonstrates meaningful word knowledge growth over the 6-week implementation period.

Phonics Survey Results



Testimonials

Not only was the program highly successful, but the students and the teachers enjoyed using the materials in *Targeted Phonics* and felt positive growth as a result.

“I liked how user friendly the *Targeted Phonics* program was. I appreciated that the materials were all laid out in a way that made it easy to implement in a busy classroom setting. The pacing was great!”

—Second Grade Teacher

“

Students made significant gains in their phonemic awareness over the course of our work within this curriculum. It was nice to see students enjoying the lessons they were learning so much from.

—Transitional Kindergarten Teacher

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“The instructions and layout of the lessons were easy to follow and predictable. I like that it targeted letter, word patterns, and blends. My [core] program does not target those areas as well as [*Targeted Phonics*] did.”

—Kindergarten Teacher

“I saw a lot of growth in the student’s ability to sound out words... When reading other books with them [outside of *Targeted Phonics*], I saw they were more confident in sounding out unknown words and saw their reading fluency increase as well.”

—First Grade Teacher

“

Thank you so much for allowing us to utilize [*Targeted Phonics*]! My students have absolutely loved it. In fact, they started out the year hating independent reading, and now they ask to read their “Kip books”! This is an awesome program! I am looking forward to continuing to use it in my classroom.

—Second Grade Teacher

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The Research on Reading

In its most basic form, reading is the process by where we look at a series of written symbols and decode those symbols to make meaning from them. However, there is a lot that goes into that process, such as knowing the name of each of the symbols, understanding the sound that each symbol makes, understanding the patterns of sounds symbols make together, have syntactic and semantic knowledge about how the symbols come together, and so much more. With all this in mind, it's no wonder that significant attention to research has and continues to drive best practices in reading/literacy instruction.

The body of research that paves the way for reading instruction is immense. Several models are consistently used to define a framework for reading instruction. Gough and Tunmer (1986) originally proposed the Simple View of Reading (SVR), which says that reading comprehension has two basic components: language comprehension and word recognition (decoding). Hollis Scarborough (2001) further delineated the components of skilled reading—language comprehension and word recognition and their respective subsets of skills—as woven strands in a rope. In recent years, Kate Nation’s work layers the idea that students’ language skills have an effect on their ability to decode and comprehend text (2019). And still more recently, Duke and Cartwright (2021) expanded SVR to take into consideration what they call bridging processes (e.g., concept of print, reading fluency, graphonological-semantic cognitive flexibility) that bring together students’ word recognition and language comprehension skills. They also call attention to students’ active regulations skills, such as motivation, engagement, and executive functioning skills as being key to support reading development.

Each of these has nuances, but are grounded in the same pedagogical strongholds: Phonics instruction is important for all students. One reason for this is that research shows that there is a clear connection between phonics development and comprehension. In his book, *A Fresh Look at Phonics*, Blevins (2017) clearly explains the connection:



“Phonics instruction teaches students how to map sounds onto letters and spellings. The more phonics skills students learn, the better they are able to are to **decode**, or sound out, words. The more opportunities students get to decode words...the stronger their **word recognition** skills become. When students begin to recognize many words automatically...the better their reading **fluency** becomes. ...Reading fluency improves reading **comprehension**.”



The goal of *Targeted Phonics* is to teach beginning readers those sound-symbol relationships that are of the highest utility so that readers can fluently decode text and comprehend the meaning that text conveys.

The Importance of Phonics Instruction

The debates about the importance of phonics instruction have been resolved—phonics knowledge is essential to reading success. In fact, the Institute of Education Science recommends teaching students to recognize and manipulate the segments of sound in words and to link those sounds to letters, which is necessary to prepare them to read words and comprehend text with a strong level of evidence. Thus, the discussion turns now to how research suggests teachers should integrate phonics instruction into their literacy plan in a way that is “efficient, effective, and timely for all students.” (International Literacy Association 2019).

Research suggests that phonics instruction should be explicit and systematic. Explicit phonics instruction “means that sound-spelling correspondences are initially taught directly to students. Systematic instruction means that instruction builds from easy to more complex skills with built-in review and repetition to ensure mastery...” (Blevins 2017, xxv).

Gates and Yale (2011) identified five useful phonic generalizations that bear explicit teaching. “1. Single vowels usually have their short sound. 2. Final single vowel-consonant-e (-VCe) patterns usually have a long first vowel and a silent final e. 3. Vowel digraphs usually have one or one of two sounds. 4. Single consonants usually have one sound, with a few having one of two sounds. 5. Consonant di/trigraphs [including what are typically called *blends* or *consonant clusters*] usually have one or one of two sounds.” *Targeted Phonics* supports the teaching of these generalizations in an explicit approach. The following are the main focus of explicit instruction within each kit of the *Targeted Phonics* program. Each kit systematically presents the key phonics skills from easy to more complex. Additionally, the kits themselves progress from least to most complex in skill.



- **My First Consonants and Vowels**—introduces the 16 most common consonant sounds, the five short vowel sounds, and sound blending.
- **More Consonants, Vowels, and Digraphs**—introduces the five most difficult consonant sounds, the 12 most common consonant blends, and the four most common beginning consonant digraphs (ch, sh, th, wh).
- **Short Vowel Rimes**—introduces the 14 most common short vowel word families and includes four mixed practice books so students really begin to use their reading skills.
- **Short Vowel Storybooks**—includes three books for each short vowel sound, introduced in the order suggested by experts (a, i, o, e, u), plus three mixed practice books to support review and repetition to help ensure mastery. Readability levels increase within each set of three and across the 18 books.
- **Long Vowel Storybooks**—includes three books for each long vowel sound, introduced in the order suggested by experts (a, i, o, e, u), plus three mixed practice books to support review and repetition to help ensure mastery. Readability levels increase within each set of three and across the 18 books. The first book in each set of three covers the CVCe spelling pattern, and the other two cover alternate spellings of each long vowel sound.

According to research, the following are some of the key characteristics of effective phonics instruction:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| → Readiness Skills | → Word Awareness |
| → Scope and Sequence | → High-Frequency Words |
| → Blending | → Reading Connected Text |

The *Targeted Phonics* program addresses many of these important characteristics.



Readiness Skills

“The two best predictors of early reading success are alphabet recognition and phonemic awareness” (Blevins 2017). English is an alphabetic language. Alphabet recognition involves understanding the concept of a letter, distinguishing letter forms and shapes, and fluently knowing the names and sounds of letters. This can be especially challenging for letters that are similar visually, such as *b* and *d*, *E* and *F*, or *p* and *q*. Students best learn the alphabetic principles through direct instruction of letter names and sounds, active engagement, multiple exposures to print, and a wide use of text (Blevins 2017).

This understanding is extended by building students’ phonemic awareness, which is “the conscious awareness that words are made up of segments of our own speech that are represented with letter in an alphabetic orthography (written system)” (Moats 2020). According to the studies examined by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), there is a strong level of evidence to suggest that engaging in instruction that helps students recognize and manipulate segments of sounds in speech, understand letter-sound relations, and link knowledge of letter-sound relationships with phonemic awareness will have positive effects on learning (Foorman et al. 2019).



Research to Practice

The lessons and activities within *Targeted Phonics* help build students’ alphabet and phonemic awareness skills through direct instruction using decodable texts as well as practice with rhyme, letter-sound relationships, blending, segmenting, and phoneme manipulation.

My CI Words

Learning Objectives

- Students will learn the CI sound.
- Students will recognize the CI sound in decodable words.
- Students will identify the CI sound in words and sentences.
- Students will identify the CI sound in words and sentences.

My CI Words

Reading the Poem

Building Oral Language

My CI Words

Directions: Name each picture below. Trace the CI and write to complete each sentence. Then read the sentences.

1. is for <u>ck</u> ock.	2. is for <u>ck</u> oud.
3. is for <u>ck</u> ass.	4. is for <u>ck</u> imb.
5. is for <u>ck</u> iff.	6. is for <u>ck</u> own.

Scope and Sequence

“The hallmark of a systematic phonics approach or program is that a sequential set of phonics elements is delineated” (National Reading Panel 2000). “Although there is no ‘right’ scope and sequence, programs that strive to connect concepts and move through a series of skills in a stair-step way offer the best chance at student success” (International Literacy Association 2019).



Research to Practice

The *Targeted Phonics* program has a well-researched scope and sequence of phonics skills that are presented sequentially from least to most complex, yet are also accessible individually, so that skills can be taught sequentially or specifically targeted for those students who need intervention.

Skills and Features	Kits				
	My First Consonants and Vowels	More Consonants, Vowels, and Digraphs	Short Vowel Rimes	Short Vowel Storybooks	Long Vowel Storybooks
Alphabet Knowledge					
Understands the concept of a letter	✓	✓			
Distinguishes letter forms	✓	✓			
Knows letter names	✓	✓			
Recognizes uppercase and lowercase letters	✓	✓			
Recognizes consonants and vowels	✓	✓			
Letter/Sound Relationships					
Consonants					
Recognizes that letters represent consonant sounds	✓	✓			
Uses easy beginning consonant sounds: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, w	✓				
Uses harder beginning consonant sounds: q, v, x, y, z		✓			
Uses common two-letter blends: bl, br, cl, cr, fl, fr, gr, pl, sl, sn, sp, st		✓		✓	✓
Uses common consonant digraphs: ch, th, sh, wh		✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognizes that doubled consonant sounds make one sound: ll, tt, ss			✓	✓	✓

Skills and Features	Kits				
	My First Consonants and Vowels	More Consonants, Vowels, and Digraphs	Short Vowel Rimes	Short Vowel Storybooks	Long Vowel Storybooks
Vowels					
Recognizes that each vowel has one short vowel sound	✓		✓	✓	
Recognizes common short vowel word families (rimes); e.g., ag, en, it, op, up			✓	✓	
Uses the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern			✓	✓	
Uses the consonant-vowel-consonant-silent e (CVCe) pattern					✓
Uses common two-letter spellings of long vowel sounds: e.g., -ai, -ay, -ee, -oa					✓
High-Frequency Words and Sentence Structures					
Reads repeating simple sentence frames made of easy high-frequency words	✓	✓			
Reads mixed simple sentence frames made of easy high-frequency words			✓		
Reads more complex sentences containing high-frequency words				✓	✓
Understands declarative sentence structure beginning with an uppercase letter and ending with a period	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understands interrogative sentence structure ending with a question mark		✓	✓	✓	✓
Understands exclamatory sentence structure ending with an exclamation point			✓	✓	✓
Text Features					
Target words presented in isolation and in context with illustration support			✓		
Text presented in story structure with simple character, setting, and plot development				✓	✓
Rhyme and rhythm of text used to aid fluency				✓	✓
Picture glossary	✓	✓	✓		
Story structure introduced			✓		
Story structure with simple setting, character, and plot development				✓	✓
Lesson Plans, Student Guided Practice Book, and Assessment Guide					
Letter formation activities (handwriting)	✓				
Poems, set to music, to provide an anchor for the letter/sound correspondence and support fluency	✓	✓			
Simple sentence frames made up of basic sight words	✓	✓	✓		
Vocabulary lists and activity suggestions Three kinds of vocabulary are covered: decodable vocabulary, sight words, targeted words for building background knowledge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Skills and Features	Kits				
	My First Consonants and Vowels	More Consonants, Vowels, and Digraphs	Short Vowel Rimes	Short Vowel Storybooks	Long Vowel Storybooks
Lesson Plans, Student Guided Practice Book, and Assessment Guide (cont.)					
Step-by-step activities for Before, During, and After reading the books, including discussion questions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Extension activities that go across the curriculum, most suitable for centers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student Guided Practice Book pages, covering phonics and comprehension skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interactiv-ebook with three sections: highlighted word-by-word reading of the text with embedded interactive whiteboard tools, read and record on your own, and activities (two for phonics and two for comprehension)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suggestions for differentiating instruction for Below Level and Beginning Language Learners and for On/Above Level and Extensions for Advancing Language Learners			✓	✓	✓
Assessments for pre- and post-testing and progress monitoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Blending and Word Awareness

Blending is one of the key strategies that students should be taught as they learn to decode words. Although it is important for students to practice blending words in isolation, it is more powerful when students can practice decoding in context using connected text.

One strategy used in *Targeted Phonics* is phonemic blending, where the sounds are stretched out and blended together. For example, a word like pot is pronounced by emphasizing how the consonants are produced and extending the vowel sound (Bell 2007). The program uses this strategy throughout, particularly when introducing a vowel sound. These skills are then applied to the reading of the phonics book called for in the lesson.

Word building and word sorts are two types of exploration activities that increase students' word awareness. Within the *Targeted Phonics* program, students are taught word building activities where they change one letter to make a different word, such as changing the word pit to *mit*. This kind of activity involves awareness of rhyme, the position of specific sounds within a word, as well as the ability to blend and segment words. Word sorts are also used within *Targeted Phonics* to help draw students' attention to patterns within words in order to think about how words work and apply those patterns to both writing and reading.



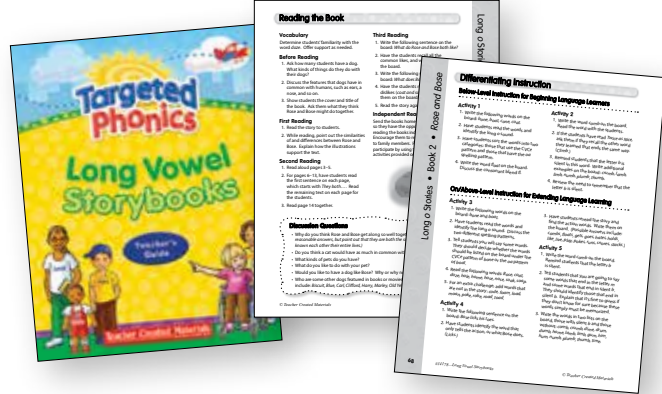
“Our brains are not as fully evolved for processing written language as they are for processing spoken language, and, therefore, learning to read and write is more challenging than learning to speak.”

—Louisa Moats (2020)



Research to Practice

One strategy used in *Targeted Phonics* is phonemic blending, where the sounds are stretched out and blended together. Within the *Targeted Phonics* program, students are taught word building activities, where they change one letter to make a different word, such as changing the word pit to mit. Words sorts are also used within *Targeted Phonics* to help draw students' attention to patterns within words in order to think about how words work and apply those patterns to both writing and reading.



High-Frequency Words

Skeptics of the value of phonics instruction often point to exceptions from regular spelling patterns (for example, Cook 2004) as evidence of the limited value of phonics. The exceptions do attract attention because many show up quite often in printed materials. However, “84%–87% of English words actually do follow common and consistent sound-spelling patterns (Anderson, et al. 1985). High-frequency words are often critical connectors within phrases and sentences; e.g., *all, of, was, to* (Fry and Kress 2007, 49–58) and must be addressed during instruction because a lack of mastery will result in fluency issues (Blevins 2017).

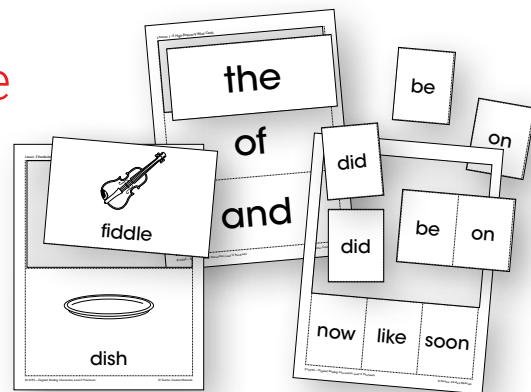
Thirteen words make up approximately 25% of all words in print. They are: *a, and, for, he, in, is, it, of, that, the, to, was, & you.* (Johns and Lenski 2019)

One effective way to promote learning of these words is to provide early learners with extensive opportunities to read engaging stories that use these words. With frequent exposure, students will learn these words as wholes; in addition, students will read with increased fluency and speed (Prescott-Griffin and Witherell 2004).



Research to Practice

In *Targeted Phonics* high frequency words are introduced systematically along with the phonics generalizations in the form of sentence frames and to provide context for the focus sound. Many high frequency words are also repeated across multiple texts within each kit to allow for repeated practice and review.



Reading Connected Text

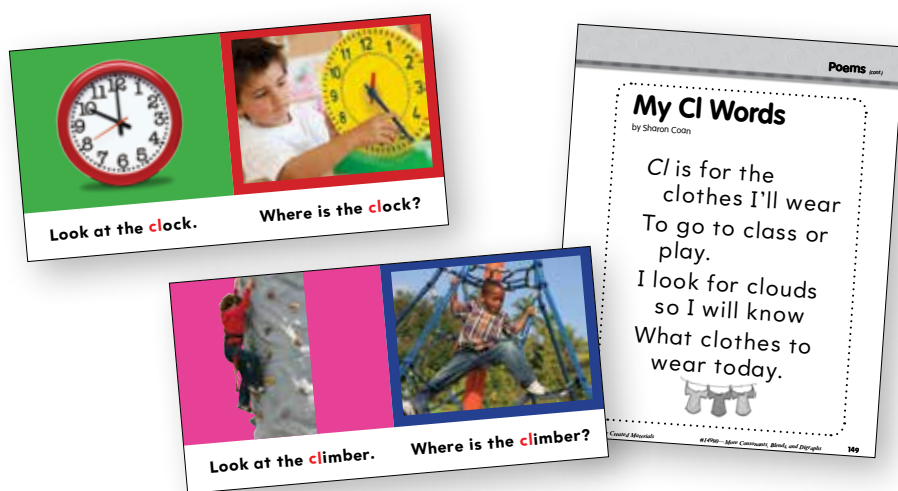
A commonsense notion, supported by substantial research, is that beginning readers become better at both decoding and understanding when they have numerous opportunities to read and reread stories (Nagy and Scott 2000). One reason for this effect is the role of context. Well-written stories support both decoding and vocabulary growth because of the clues provided by the surrounding words and, in the case of stories designed for young children, the accompanying illustrations. When young readers encounter an unknown word, decoding clues, visual clues, and contextual meaning can combine to allow them to handle a “challenge word,” to both pronounce it and grasp its meaning. While there is an element of guessing in this approach, teaching readers to monitor meaning can ensure that the guess makes sense by fostering a search for meaning, which in turn can reinforce learning of spelling-sound patterns.



“Phonics instruction should teach kids to hear the sounds, to recognize the letters or spelling patterns, and then to connect the sounds and the letters/spellings. They need a lot of practice with those elements within words and some reading practice with them, too (that’s where decodable texts come in handy—as part of the phonics instruction).”

—Timothy Shanahan (2022)

“Decodable books provide beginners with practice in applying the grapheme-phoneme relations that they have learned to decode words and to build their sight vocabularies. Reading words in meaningful context ensures that syntactic and semantic identities of words become bonded to spellings and pronunciations to form amalgamated units in memory. Building a store of sight words that can be read as single units from memory automatically is essential for students to read and comprehend text. This allows readers to focus the attention on the meaning of the text while words are recognized automatically out of awareness” (Ehri 2020).





According to the studies analyzed by WWC, there is a moderate level of evidence to suggest that reading connected text has positive effects on student learning. “Reading connected text accurately, fluently, and with appropriate phrasing and comprehension requires students to identify words quickly, integrate ideas in the text with their background knowledge, self-monitor their understanding, and apply strategies to support comprehension and repair misunderstandings” (Foorman et al. 2019).

“Both decoding and letter-sound mapping skills require knowledge of the alphabetic writing system. Gradual acquisition of this knowledge propels students through the alphabetic phases to become skilled readers.”
 —Linnea Ehri (2020)



Research to Practice

By providing meaningful reading experiences of decodable books that include developmentally appropriate/learned high-frequency words following phonics instruction, *Targeted Phonics* provides students with the context in which to apply the phonics skills but also allows them to focus on reading for understanding, the ultimate goal of any type of reading instruction (International Literacy Association, 2019).



Addressing Diverse Learning Needs

Supporting Struggling Readers

Early readers can run into problems for a variety of reasons, including delayed language development, difficulties in auditory and phonological processing, and impoverished language and literacy environments (Nation, 2019; Stone et al. 2004; Vellutino 1979). Research on these predictors is extensive, as are evaluations of instructional programs and practices. The short answer to the question about how to help these students is that (1) they require extra time and careful scaffolding, but (2) the same essential elements promote achievement growth for these students as for others.



“Many struggling students need explicit, systematic instruction before they habitually notice details of both speech and print.”

—Louisa Moats (2020)



Research to Practice

As a supplemental resource, *Targeted Phonics* allows teachers to assess students and then choose those portions of the product that will support the specific needs of struggling learners. Additionally, differentiation suggestions and activities are provided to further support students' phonics development.

English Learner Support

Evidence suggests that phonological awareness transfers from one language to another (Yopp and Stapleton 2008). “Children who have developed phonological awareness in their native language bring that insight to additional languages,” however, the sounds they are learning may not be familiar depending on their primary language (Yopp and Yopp, 2022).

Immersion in rich oral language experience in a social environment establishes both receptive and productive growth of English for students who are learning both the English language and English literacy. It helps if the classroom includes environmental print, including numerous exposures to the alphabet, as well as instructional support through the use of visuals, examples, and picture cards as often as possible. It is also important to clearly articulate sounds found in English that are not part of students' native languages. For example, the /ă/ sound in *can* does not occur in Spanish, and the /v/ sound in *vet* does not occur in Arabic. Additionally, the blend /st/ is never found at the beginning of a word in either language. Knowing this, special attention and support can be provided to those students when learning unfamiliar letter-sound relationships.

Because the illustrations are carefully integrated with the text in *Targeted Phonics*, the books in the program will often provide language support clues for the students (Goldenberg and Coleman 2010). Research also shows that the systematic approach to phonics instruction is beneficial to English learners (Adesope et al. 2011).

Application of Phonics Knowledge

Writing

It is well documented that there is a reciprocal relationship between reading and writing (Conrad, Harris, and Williams 2013; Deacon, Benere, and Pasquarella 2013). As students write, they use their knowledge of sound-letter relationships as well as concepts of print to record their ideas. The act of writing helps students understand the link between hearing and identifying phonemes and matching those to their corresponding graphemes. It's like a cycle. "Studies have revealed the impact of decoding, spelling, and word reading on phonemic awareness; the impact of morphology and oral reading fluency on decoding ability; and the impact of writing on reading comprehension. This reciprocity has been found in longitudinal correlational studies and in instructional studies" (Shanahan 2020).



Research to Practice

Many of the *Targeted Phonics* activities require students to label pictures, or write sentences or short stories as a way to encode the phonics skills they are practicing, or as a way to show comprehension of the story.



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"Those who learn to spell easily usually have well-developed phoneme awareness, and the poorest spellers usually have phonological processing weaknesses. This is because mapping spoken to written words requires matching representational units (graphemes) to individual phonemes rapidly and accurately." (Moats 2020)

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Curricular Connections

The learning of literacy can be embedded in and benefit from other curricular activities. Literature, drama, art, history, biology, and even physical education depend in some way on reading and writing. “High quality phonics teaching involves the use of auditory, visual and kinesthetic activities that...encourages them to activate as many of their senses as possible” (NSW Department of Education and Training 2009).

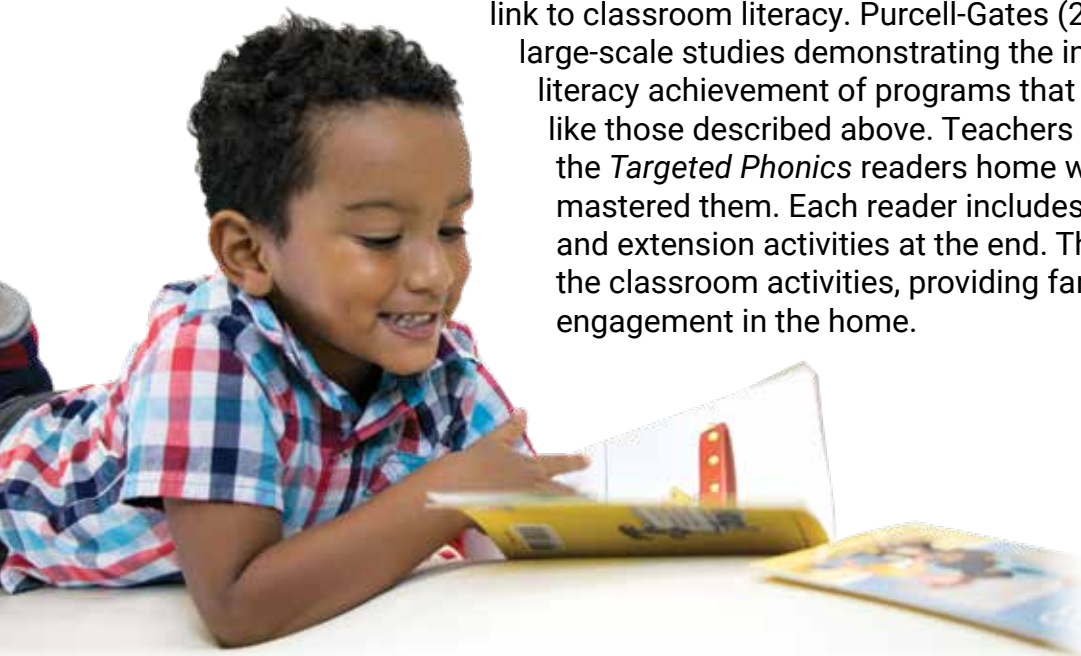


Research to Practice

Targeted Phonics understands the importance of integrating phonics into cross-curricular activities, and therefore contains extension activities that incorporate movement, drama, listening skills, and art into each lesson to help students apply the phonics skills they are learning. In this way, students are able to enhance their learning through multi-sensory experiences (Gavelek et al. 2000).

School-to-Home Connections

“Correlational studies have repeatedly documented the significance of...parents’ educational level, family socio-economic status, the uses of print and the number of books in the home, and the frequency of parent-child storybook reading” to early and continued literacy success (Purcell-Gates 2000). There is little that schools can do about education level or socio-economic status of the parents, but teachers can encourage and support literacy activities in the home. When young students bring home the books they are reading and the products of their school work, especially when they are proud of what they have done, and even more so when they have ideas about how to capture parental attention, then the family has a way to link to classroom literacy. Purcell-Gates (2000) describes several large-scale studies demonstrating the impact on language and literacy achievement of programs that include simple steps like those described above. Teachers are encouraged to send the *Targeted Phonics* readers home when the students have mastered them. Each reader includes discussion questions and extension activities at the end. These are distinct from the classroom activities, providing families with options for engagement in the home.

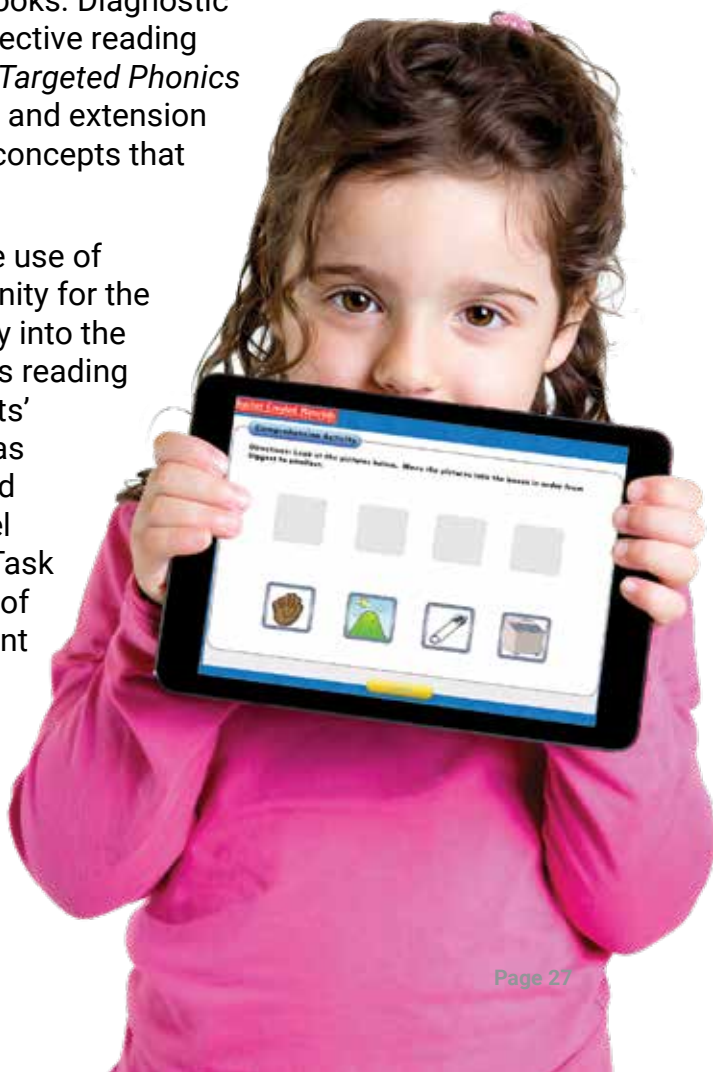


Using Technology to Support Phonics Instruction

In synthesizing theoretical approaches, The National Reading Panel report, “Teaching Children to Read” (April 2000) and “Every Child a Reader: The Report of the California Reading Task Force” by the California Department of Education (1995) were essential, particularly in the decision to develop an interactiv-ebook to accompany each of the books in the *Targeted Phonics* kits. The National Reading Panel Report (2000) states, “The seven studies that reviewed the addition of speech to computer-presented text indicate that this may be a promising use of technology in reading instruction.” Teachers may choose to have students use the audio recordings at a listening center while the child follows along using a copy of the reader or to use the interactiv-ebooks on a computer or interactive whiteboard. The interactiv-ebook allows students to choose to have a book read to them while each word or phrase is highlighted or to have the book read without highlighting.

Furthermore, the National Reading Panel Report authors found, “The use of computers as word processors may be very useful, given that reading instruction is most effective when combined with writing instruction.” The writing component of the interactive-ebook allows students to write about the story they read. It also allows students to record themselves reading the books. Diagnostic tools such as this are crucial to informed, effective reading instruction. Further, the use of technology in *Targeted Phonics* provides “additional opportunities, repetition, and extension activities to allow for review and practice of concepts that have been explicitly taught” (Ordetx 2020).

Assessment is also a key feature through the use of technology in *Targeted Phonics*. The opportunity for the student to record their voice reading the story into the computer allows teachers to keep continuous reading records, including miscue analysis of students’ oral reading. The ability to use technologies as a means to conduct assessment is supported by the findings of The National Reading Panel (2000) as well as by The California Reading Task Force, which was charged with making a set of recommendations to improve the achievement of students in reading. The task force determined “ongoing diagnosis that informs teaching and assessment that ensures accountability” is an essential component of any reading program (California Department of Education 1995).



Conclusion

Learning how to read is a complex task. It requires many cognitive skills to work together, such as applying concepts of print, recognizing learned words and decoding unfamiliar words accurately, using appropriate fluency, and comprehending the meaning of the words to recall later. Before any of this can take place, students must have a strong sense of oral language, the alphabet, letter-sound relationships, and spelling patterns, as well as the ability to transfer those skills to what they are reading.

Developing strong reading skills begins with high-quality phonics instruction as the building blocks for success. *Targeted Phonics* provides a systematic approach to teaching phonics using engaging student resources, explicit lesson plans, cross-curricular extension activities, purposeful technology support, and colorful texts that apply learned phonics skills. Each of the resources within *Targeted Phonics* serves to support students' foundational literacy skills to best prepare them to read with fluency and accuracy on the road to comprehension.



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