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Reading

First Edition

Specialist

FOR TEXAS TEACHERS.

A test prep manual for the TExES Reading Specialist
exam #151. Seminar and tutoring available.

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with Mark Mentze, M. Ed., M.A.

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Domain I:

Instruction and Assessment: Components of Literacy

Competencies 1-8

(57% of the test)

Reading Specialist Standard I:

Components of Reading: The reading specialist applies knowledge of the interrelated components of reading across all developmental stages of oral and written language and has expertise in reading instruction at the levels of early childhood through grade 12.



1. Oral Language

Competency 1:

The reading specialist understands oral language acquisition and development and how it effects the development of reading.

A. Basic Linguistic Patterns

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Having a basic understanding of linguistic patterns will enable the reading specialist to identify and address problems or potential problem in a student's speech that may affect their oral reading, fluency, and/or comprehension.

Some basic patterns are:

- Continuant: A sound produced with an incomplete closure of the vocal tract.
Example: All vowels are continuants.
- Stop: A sound produced with a complete closure of the vocal tract
Example: p, b, k, t, j

B. Structures of Oral Language

The complex system of language that relates sounds to meanings is made up of four components, phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic. The basic structure of our language system that a child must discover or acquire is that words can be broken down into morphemes and we form words by combining morphemes. More complex structure develops with experience with the language.

- Phonological components include the rules for combining sounds. Example: We know that an English word can end with "ng" but not begin with "ng".
- Semantic component refers to meaning and is made up of morphemes. Morphemes are defined as the smallest unit of meaning. Example: The word shoes consist of two morphemes: shoe and the plural of shoe.
- Syntactic component involves combining morphemes. Example: More juice
- Pragmatic component involves the rules of language use in different situations. Example: conversation with friend, job interview, an oral book report
(Genishi, www.comeunity.com)

C. Oral Language Acquisition

Some of the beliefs and theories of how oral language is acquired include:

- Imitation - The belief that children acquire their first language through mere imitation of the parents, caregivers, and other people in their environment.
- Behaviorist View - This theory suggests that children produce "correct" sentences because they receive positive reinforcement when they say something correctly and are negatively reinforced when they say something incorrectly.
- Reinforcement or Interaction - The belief that children interact socially (socially is the key) with people hearing the same phrases over and over. They are thought to be responding to a phrase, but do not actually know what each word means. Such as, a mother asking, "Are you hungry?" as she walks to the child with food. The child associates the phrase with eating.
- Noam Chomsky believed in an innate position where children are biologically pre-programmed with the ability to learn a language.

D. Stages of Oral Language Acquisition

Normal oral language is acquired in stages. Development varies from child to child. Generally speaking, the stages are:

- Stage 1: Prelinguistic - 6 months old
Plays with sounds, develops intonation.
Example: babbling, crying, cooing
- Stage 2: One word or Holophrastic stage - 1 year old
Children learn that sounds represent meaning and begin uttering distinct, language specific sounds, start producing their first "words", respond to songs, use gestures, and respond to questions. Example: ball, baby, kitty
- Stage 3: Two word stage - 2 years old
Two words used together often as

Continued

1. Oral Language, cont'd.

SUBJECT+VERB or VERB+OBJECT

Example: “Dog run” and “Give juice”

Prefixes are often left off such as the -ed past tense ending.

Example: “bunny hop” for “the bunny hopped”

- Stage 4: Telegraphic stage - 2 - 3 years

The use of more than two words occurs. Early in the stage, function words such as articles and prepositions are left out, as are many verbs. There is a high interest in language and communication, and a large jump in vocabulary and articulation. Speech resembles text in a telegram.

Example: “Ball go table” for “The ball went on the table.” Children may oversimplify or over generalize the use prefixes.

Example: “runned” for “ran” or “foots” for “feet”

- By about five years old, children use speech generally conforming to the norms of adult speech. The complexity in structure will continue to develop and evolve through experience for another eight to ten years.

(1997, *www.cem.msu.edu*)

E. Relationship to Reading Skills Development

Reading is a task that demands well-developed oral language skills. Without those skills delays and difficulties in normal reading achievement, especially comprehension, may develop. A student’s comprehension of printed language depends largely upon their successful use and understanding of oral language.

Language experiences that allow the child to expand their speaking and listening skills is also increasing their background knowledge and vocabulary. Increased background knowledge and vocabulary will be directly reflected in successful reading comprehension.

F. Age Appropriate Instruction

Instruction that is inadequate to the child’s age, needs, or the demands of the situation will be unsuccessful. Oral language instruction at any level should be whole, not piecemeal and be pur-

posefully planned to appeal the child’s ability, interest, and age level. Language develops in language-rich environments. Using age appropriate material, oral language instruction should include the opportunity to:

- have language modeled appropriately
- read, listen, and speak for real life purposes
- experiment and be creative with language
- sing and listen to songs
- be read to daily (stories, poems, familiar rhymes, current events, etc.)
- participate in story telling and story re-telling
- develop listening skills
- discuss high-quality literature
- engage in meaningful discussions including cross content area and multi-cultural material

G. Informal and Formal Assessment

Oral language development should be monitored through a combination of informal and formal assessment to address instructional needs.

- Informal assessment should be done regularly to measure progress.

Example: Listen to a child tell a story or retell a story, read orally, or recite a poem.

- Formal assessment might include an auditory analysis test.

H. Research Based Instruction

Research says children should have opportunities to expand their use and appreciation of oral language and to manipulate the building blocks of spoken language through:

- Discussions that focus on a variety of topics, including questioning and problem solving
- Multi-culturally diverse activities that help children understand and make connections to their lives and the world
- Songs, chants, and poems
- Concept development and vocabulary-building lessons
- Games and fun activities that involve talking, listening, following directions, identifying rhyming words and creating their own rhymes

Continued

1. Oral Language, cont'd.



- Auditory activities in which children manipulate the sounds of words, separate or segment the sounds of words, blend sounds, delete sounds, or substitute new sounds for those deleted.
- Interaction with quality literature on a daily basis.
- Systematic Oral Language: Explicit instruction to develop and provide oral language practice. Example: Lessons in word meaning, word analysis, sentence patterns, concept building, sound-letter relationships.

J. Developmental Differences

Children acquire language at different paces; however, they go through the same stages regardless of the span of time it takes. The reading specialist should recognize when the delay or difference is interfering with normal oral language development and base instruction accordingly.

Every child's language or dialect reflects the identities, values, and experiences of the child's family, culture, and community and should be respected. Comprehension is the goal. If a dialect, for instance, does not interfere with comprehension it does not need to be corrected.

The reading specialist can distinguish between a reading problem and natural, acceptable dialectal response to text. Respecting and appreciating diversity in culture and language is necessary in a successful reading program.

The reading specialist understands the factors effecting language development such as:

- age
- culture
- education
- physiological and/or neurological factors
- religion
- second language learning
- socioeconomic status

Common causes of delays:

1. Hearing loss
2. Language delay
3. Genetic inheritance
4. Bad speech habits

(2001, Powell, www.comeunity.com)

2. Phonemic Awareness

Competency 2:

The reading specialist understands and promotes phonological and phonemic awareness and applies knowledge of their relationship between reading competence.

A. Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness refers to the knowledge that every spoken word is composed of phonemes (identifiable speech sounds) and the ability to hear and manipulate these phonemes. At this level the child attends to the construction of words rather than their meaning.

Example: When asked what sound is heard at the beginning of the word “sat” the student will respond with “s”.

Phonemic awareness includes such things as:

- Auditory discrimination
- Isolation of sounds (beginning, middle and ending sounds)
- Phoneme deletion
- Phoneme substitution
- Phonemic analysis (segmentation)
- Phonemic synthesis (blending)
- Rhyming

A phoneme can be defined as an identifiable speech sound which is the smallest part of spoken language that combines to form words.

- 44 phonemes produce every word in the English language.

Example: The word “thick” has five letters, but three phonemes /th/, i, k.

B. Phonological Awareness

This is a more global term that includes the earlier stages of phonemic awareness such as rhyme and syllable awareness. It is the ability to notice and work with the sounds in language. With this awareness children notice:

- isolate the beginning sounds in familiar words
- recognize common beginning sounds (alliteration)
- repeat rhyming songs and poems
- sentences are made up of separate words
- syllables can be broken into sounds
- words that rhyme

C. Alphabetic Principal

The alphabetic principal is the understanding that written words are composed of graphemes (the written letters that make up a phoneme) that systematically correspond to phonemes: i.e., written letters represent sounds.

Example: The word “dog” has three letters and three sounds.

D. Expected Stages and Milestones

Although milestones are reached at different paces they are generally as follows:

Recognition that:

- sentences are made up of words
- words can rhyme - production of rhyming words
- words can be broken down into syllables - production of syllables
- words can be broken down into onsets and rimes - production of onsets and rimes
- words can begin with the same sound - production of words beginning with a particular sound (alliteration)
- words can end with the same sound - production of similar ending sound words
- words can have the same middle sound(s) - production of such words
- words can be broken down into individual phonemes - production of phonemes in a given word
- sounds can be deleted from words to make new words - production of such words

Ability to:

- blend sounds to make words
- segment words into constituent sounds

(2002, Dr. Kerry Hempenstall, www.educationnews.org)

E. Relationship to Reading Acquisition

Phonological and phonemic awareness is crucial to beginning reading instruction (and spelling).

Children must know that written words systemati-

Continued

2. Phonemic Awareness, cont'd.

cally represent oral language. An absence or lack of this knowledge is characteristic to struggling readers. It has been linked to reading failure where insufficiently developed phonemic awareness skills were evident. Research shows a child's ability to learn to read often depends on how much phonological awareness they have when they begin kindergarten. A large vocabulary, being able to communicate a message and hold a conversation, and being motivated to use language in problem-solving contexts are important oral language skills which are contributing factors in a child's foundation for successful formal instruction.

Successful phonemic awareness is critical in successful reading development because:

- It requires readers to notice how letters represent sounds.
- It prepares readers for print.
- It gives readers a way to approach unfamiliar words (word identification, decoding, word attack skills).
- It helps readers understand that letters in words are systematically represented by sounds (alphabetic principal).

F. Age Appropriate/Research-Based Instruction

Phonemic awareness instruction is an auditory activity. Research clearly demonstrates the benefits of explicitly teaching phonemic and phonological awareness skills. Specifically, research has found blending and segmentation to be the two critical skills that must be taught. Research also shows instruction is more effective in small groups. Phonemic and phonological awareness instruction must appeal to the child's ability, interest, age, and strengths in order to be successful. Using age appropriate material, phonemic and phonological awareness instruction should include the opportunity to:

- Hear quality stories and informational books read aloud daily.
- Hear books that focus on sounds, rhyming, and alliteration.
- Sing familiar songs and say familiar nursery rhymes.

- Understand and manipulate the building blocks of spoken language.
- Make up new verses for familiar songs and rhymes by changing the beginning sounds.
- To learn the relationship between sounds of spoken words and the letters of written language. (2004, www.readingrockets.org)

G. Systematic Instruction

Refers to phonological awareness instruction that makes direct, systematic and explicit connections between sounds and letters. Working with small-groups, instruction must show children exactly what they are expected to do. Teachers must model skills they want children to perform before the children are asked to demonstrate the skill. (2004, www.reading.uoregon.edu)

Example:

Reading Specialist: "ball, bat, box" "I hear the "b" sound at the beginning of each of these words. "baby", "boy", "big". What sound do you hear at the beginning of each of these words?"

Student: "b"

Although this is an auditory skill, as skills develop the reading specialist can begin using letter tiles so students can manipulate the letters in a hands-on activity.

H. Formal and Informal Assessment

Early identification is crucial when it comes to helping children who are having trouble learning to read. Developing phonemic awareness should be monitored daily through a combination of informal and formal assessment to address instructional needs.

Informal assessment emphasizes but is not limited to sensitivity to rhyme and alliteration.

Informal assessment might include:

- adding, deleting, separating, or manipulating sounds in a word
- blending tasks

Continued

2. Phonemic Awareness, cont'd.

- categorizing sounds at the beginning, middle, or end of words
- counting the sounds (phonemes) in words
- finding a word that begins or ends with the same sound as the stimulus word
- identify rhyming words
- syllable-splitting tasks

Example: What is the first sound you hear in “hat”?

Example: What word is left if you remove the /l/ from “bland”?

Formal assessment instruments to test for a child’s phonemic awareness tend to be short, easy to administer, reliable, and valid. Assessment of skills can be broken down into three broad categories:

1. Phoneme blending
 2. Phoneme segmentation
 3. Sound comparison
- **Stanovich** - A quick and easy-to-administer phonological awareness test.
 - **The Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation** - Presents a brief assessment instrument and offers detailed evidence for its validity and reliability.

- **The Phonological Awareness** - Contains five different measures of phonemic awareness, plus a measure of sensitivity to rhyme.
- **The Test of Phonological Awareness** - Specifically constructed to be most sensitive to children with weaknesses in development in this area, appropriate for identifying at-risk children, designed as a group-administered test of phonemic awareness for kindergarten and first-grade children.
- Tests which systematically assess the ability to blend onset and rimes, blend separately spoken phonemes, isolate initial consonants, identify rhyming words, isolate ending consonants

G. Developmental Differences

Children develop at different paces; however, the reading specialist knows early identification of developmental weaknesses is crucial. The reading specialist detects developmental differences and delays that will effect reading achievement and intervenes early using research-based, individualized instruction daily.

3. Concepts of Print and the Alphabetic Principal

Competency 3:

The reading specialist understands concepts of print and the alphabetic principal.

A. Concepts of Print - *Concepts related to how print is organized and used in reading and writing as well as book handling skills.*

From birth, children are surrounded by print. While printed words are all around them, they may not be aware of them or their role. When children develop an awareness of print they become aware of:

- print in their surroundings.
 - the shapes and names of letters and recognize them in any context.
 - that print carries a message and is used for many purposes.
 - one-to-one correspondence between spoken words and printed words.
 - that books have similar characteristics: author, illustrator, front/back, top/bottom.
 - conventions of print: upper/lower case, punctuation, directionality.
 - developmental stages and patterns
 - directionality: how print is tracked during reading, developed during the emergent stage and transition into conventional literacy
- Example: Top of page to bottom, left-right progression, from the end of one sentence to the beginning of the next (return sweep)
- letter vs. word: noticing the difference between letters and words, realize words are composed of letters
 - the identity of letter shapes, names, upper and lower case
 - the meaning of punctuation
 - word-by-word matching - the ability to match words printed on a page to spoken words.

As children transfer this knowledge into writing they will write with:

- Spaces between words - showing understanding that each spoken word is an individual word in print.

Modeling and Teaching

Children learn about print by seeing many useful examples. The classroom should be a print rich

environment.

Example: calendars, posters, instructions, books, bulletin board displays, labels, signs, writing instruments to explore writing, magnetic letters, stamp letters, and tile letters to manipulate, word walls, alphabet charts

Modeling is essential at this level. The reading specialist knows how to be a reading model to show the importance of and usefulness of reading.

Concepts of print can be modeled quickly and easily numerous times throughout the day. As you read to a child or group of children, model holding a book correctly, point to the author's name, title, directionality, etc. Additionally, think out loud as you write. Point out the ways print is used in everyday life.

Example: "I need to pick up some things for the classroom at the store. I'm going to write a list of the items I need." Say the words as you write them, point them out, and discuss them.

Example: Directionality can be modeled while pointing to the print in a big book, poem, song, or chant in a pocket chart. During repeated reading, students follow along and the language of the text is learned. Students can practice and make connections between words as they eventually identify words they say with words printed in the text.

- Discuss student drawings and writings.
- Display a word wall.
- Encourage children to bring and share books from home.
- Have the students point out where to begin reading, where to read next, etc.
- Model punctuation in reading and writing.
- Provide daily opportunities to practice "reading" and print development (letter manipulations, word play, writing).
- Provide opportunities for paired readings and listening to books on tape to provide examples of varied expression.

Continued

3. Concepts of Print and the Alphabetic Principal, cont'd.

- Read to the students daily, and discuss the print and book as you go along.

C. Assessment

Observation is key to knowing who to assess and when. Early intervention is crucial. Print concept assessment is easy and can be done fairly quickly. There are formal assessment tools; however, an assessment using just a book can help the reading specialist understand what a child knows about book concepts, directionality, concepts of letters, words, and punctuation.

To assess a child:

Select a developmentally appropriate, emergent level book that has the features listed below. The book should reflect the child's interests.

The book should contain examples of the following features:

- Print and illustration on a single page or two consecutive pages
- Multiple lines of text on a single page
- A variety of punctuation marks

Ask the student to point out:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The beginning of the book
- The end of the book
- Where to begin reading
- Where to read next as the book progresses (return sweep)
- Individual letters (first and last), words (first and last), more than one word
- Punctuation

D. Alphabetic Principal

The alphabetic principal is the understanding that written words are composed of graphemes (the written letters that make up a phoneme) that systematically correspond to phonemes (units of sound): written letters and letter patterns represent sounds.

Example: The word "dog" has three letters and three sounds.

- Graphophonemic knowledge - Recognition of letters of the alphabet and the understanding of sound-symbol relationships.

Children need to be able recognize and name a number of letters in different contexts in order to successfully begin reading. In reading, students recognize letters and how they connect individually or in combinations with sounds.

As the alphabetic principal develops it is important for children to:

- Recognize and name letters: eventually rapidly and accurately
- Recognize beginning letters in familiar words
- Recognize both capital and lower case letters
- Associate some letters to the sounds they represent

E. Age Appropriate/Research-based Instruction

Children should have opportunities to expand their use and appreciation of printed language throughout the day. Students will develop an understanding of and appreciation for the purposes and variety of functions of printed language through instruction that appeals to their age, interests, strengths, and cultural diversity. Concepts are extended through literature and daily writing. The reading specialist distinguishes between beginning writing and drawing and uses instruction to encourage developing concepts of print and the alphabetic principal.

The reading specialist knows to:

- Draw attention to the numerous ways printed letters and words are used in every day life.
Example: newspapers, notes home, letters to friends, shopping list, e-mail
- Show that printed material is all around and read examples from everyday life.
Example: Print...calendar, bulletin boards,

3. Concepts of Print and the Alphabetic Principal, cont'd.

events (classroom); menus, phonebooks, food cartons, road signs (outside examples)

- Provide activities in which children combine and manipulate letters to change words and spelling patterns.

Example: using letter manipulatives: a child spells h-a-t and then can replace the h with a c to spell c-a-t.

- Provide as much direct instruction and practice as needed in sound-letter relationship.