

Crossing Contexts: Teachers of Low-literate ESL Learn from Dyslexia Educators

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What do we mean by “low-literate adult ESL learner?”



Photo: Danielle Boon

Agenda

- Crossing Contexts- Adult ESL meets K-5 dyslexia education
- Our Study Circle – what did we do exactly?
- Findings – what did we learn?
- Implications & Cautions
- Wrap Up & Questions

Seen in learners with reading disabilities **AND** **also** in low-literate adult ESL learners

Unique to low-literate adult ESL learners

Unique to learners with reading disabilities



Guiding questions for our study circle:

- *How are our low-literacy adult ESL learners' reading skills different from & similar to the skills of learners (typically native English speakers-) receiving dyslexia/reading disability interventions?*
- *What knowledge and practices used in K-12 dyslexia/reading disability instruction might have promise for the adult ESL teacher?*
- *Of those practices identified as worthy of consideration for low-literacy adult ESL learners, how would they first need to be adapted for our context?*

Characteristics
common to low-lit
adult ESL

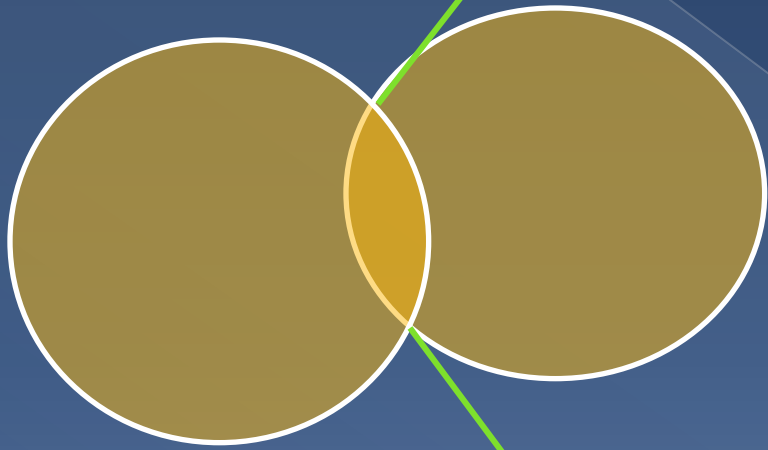
- Unable to copy easily
- Strained fine motor skills
- Unable to easily differentiate symbols

(Note: These are NOT auditory processing issues. These seem to be rooted in a lack of “school experience” and exposure to print).

Characteristics
common to
those with
reading
disabilities

• Interestingly, our group didn't identify anything in our discussions that was *unique to reading disabled learners*, that is anything that didn't ALSO appear in low-literate adult ESL learners...

Seen in learners with reading disabilities
AND also in low-literate adult ESL learners



- Trouble with print/page orientation
- Guessing, not decoding
- Difficulty blending phonemes
- Savvy – many ‘work around’ and coping strategies
- Lack of transfer of skills learned in routine activities
- Confusion of similar symbols b/d, g/q
- Difficulty processing oral instructions
- Decoding so strained, comprehension is lost
- Struggling more than others, despite persistence and excellence in other areas
- “Hit wall” of memorizing and other coping strategies

What can teachers of adult low-literate ESL possibly learn from dyslexia education?

- Both types of learners struggle with reading in similar ways.
- Dyslexia educators know how to break down English reading into small, teachable parts using engaging, systematic, multi-sensory instruction.
- While ESL experts know a great deal about language development, many have not received specific training in reading instruction, particularly for emergent and struggling readers.
- **Why not tap into this rich source of literacy know-how?**



Study Circle, Fall 2013

Exploring Connections: Low-literacy Adult ESL & Reading Disabilities Education



What might
we learn
from
dyslexia
education?

Our Study Circle:

1. Setting the Scene

2. Observation 1 of K-5 dyslexia-education context, reading-focused instruction

3. Guest speaker: Specialist in adult literacy & learning disabilities

Outside Tasks: Posts to discussion board, readings on dyslexia & learning disabilities

4. Observation 2 of K-5 dyslexia-education: CONTENT area instruction

Outside Task: Try 1-2 activities with adult ESL learners & report back

5. Putting it all together

Overview of Study Circle Meetings

What did we find useful for our adult ESL classrooms?



Contextualizing Phonics Work



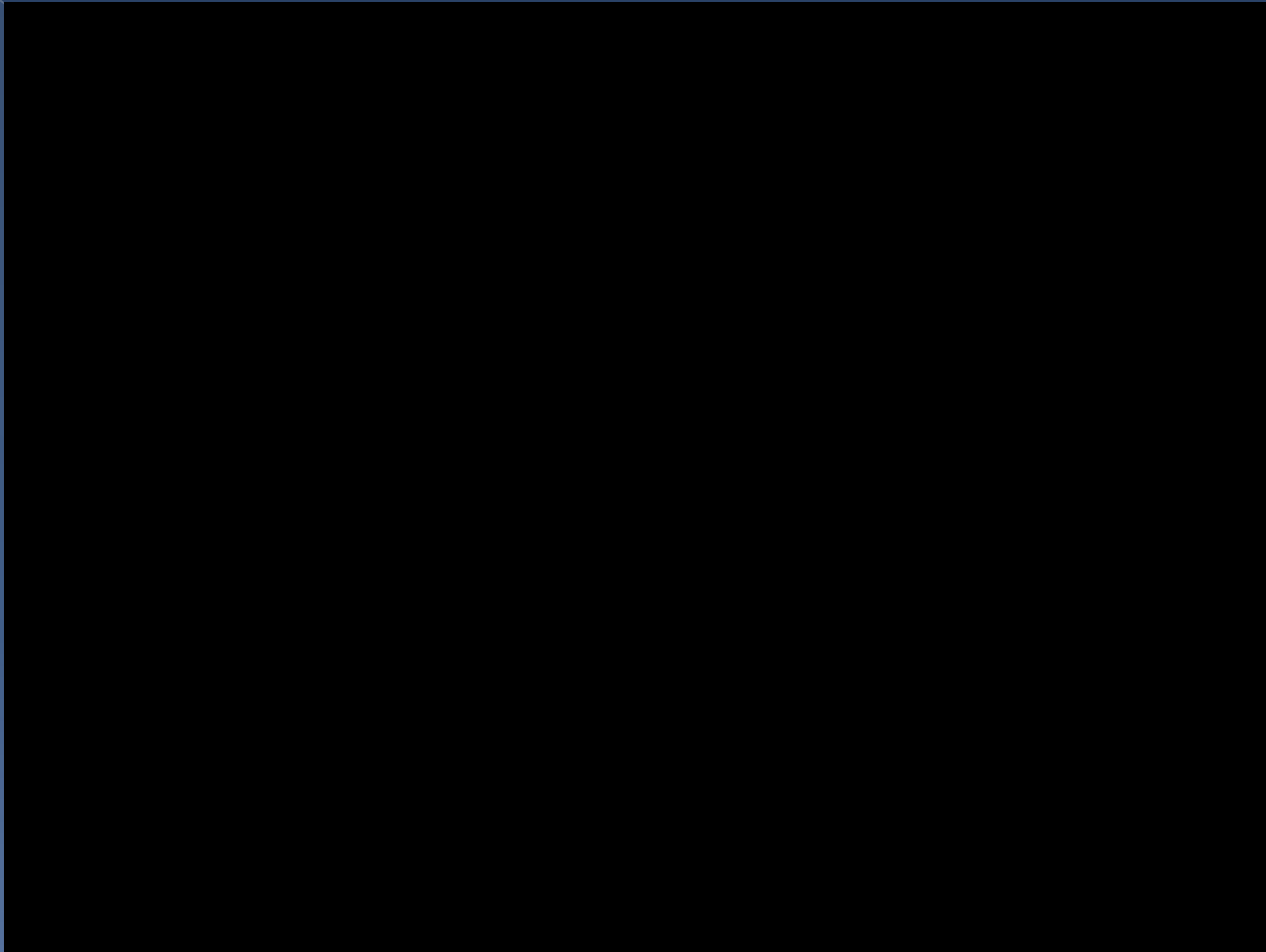
JACK'S APARTMENT

- 1 This is Jack.
- 2 Jack has an apartment.
- 3 Jack has a kitchen in his apartment.
- 4 There is a sink in the kitchen.
- 5 There are pots and pans in the sink.

Contextualizing Phonics Work



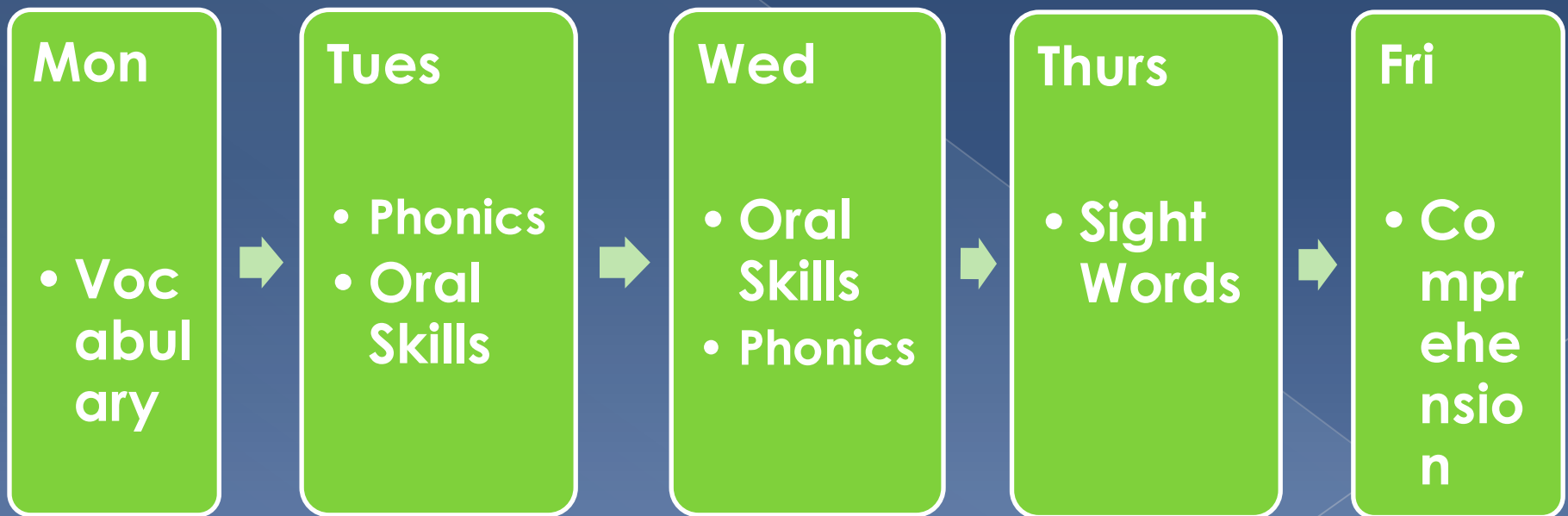
Contextualizing Phonics Work



Video of level 1 ESL students matching housing vocabulary to first letter sound.

Balanced Literacy 'diets'

- How do our students get a balanced literacy diet?
- How are they getting these components throughout the week?

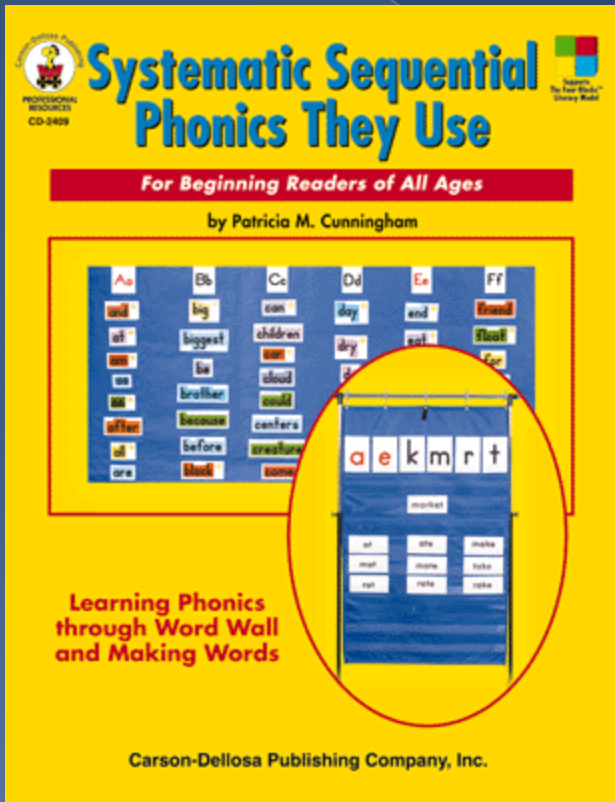


The Big Picture



- **Alphabetics** (phonics & phonemic awareness) are just ONE small piece of a large larger puzzle of reading and reading instruction.

Scope & Sequence



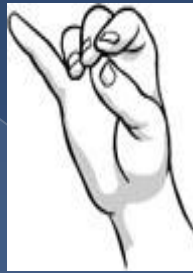
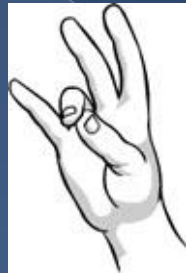
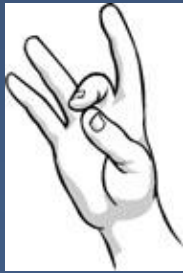
Wilson Reading System - Scope & Sequence Chart

Listed are projected grade levels for **Introduction**, **Application**, and **Mastery**. It is assumed that each grade level would begin the school year assessing skills with expected mastery from the preceding year(s), and review where needed before moving on to new skills. Wilson provides support materials for addressing each skill.

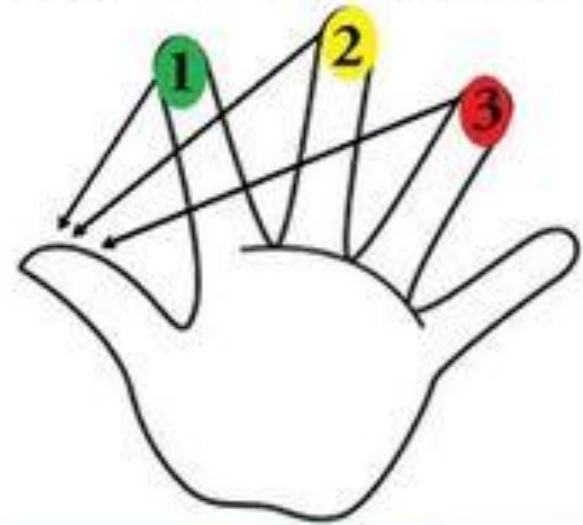
Page 1

	Introduction	Application	Mastery
STEP 1 -- Closed Syllables (3 sounds)			
1.1 -- f, l, m, n, r, s, d, g, p, t, a, i, o (blending) (ex: rim)	K	K, 1	1
1.2 -- b, sh, h, j, c, k, ck, v, w, x, y, z, ch, th, qu, wh, u, e (ex: check)	K	K, 1	1
1.3 -- practice the above (ex: wish, chop, wet)	K	K, 1	1
1.4 -- double consonants l, s, f and - all (ex: bill, kiss, call)	1	1, 2	2
1.5 -- am, an (ex: ham, fan)	K	K, 1	1
1.6 -- suffix s (ex: bugs, chills)	K	K, 1	1
STEP 2 -- Closed Syllables (4-6 sounds)			
2.1 -- ang, ing, ong, ung, ank, ink, onk, unk (ex: bang, pink)	1	1, 2	2
2.2 -- closed syllables with blends (ex: bled, past, steps)	1	1, 2	2
2.3 -- closed syllable exceptions - ild, ind, old, ost, olt (ex: mold, host)	1	1, 2	2
2.4 -- 5 sounds + suffix s (ex: blend, trumps)	1	1	1
2.5 -- 3 letter blends - 6 sounds (ex: sprint, scrap)	1	1, 2	2
STEP 3 -- Closed Syllables (Multisyllabic Words)			
3.1 -- two-syllable words with two closed syllables (ex: catnip, wagon)	1	1, 2	2
3.2 -- two closed syllables, including blends (ex: disrupt, fragment)	1	2	2
3.3 -- words with two closed syllables ending in ct (ex: contract, district)	2	2	2
3.4 -- multisyllabic words with closed syllables (ex: Wisconsin, establish)	2	2	2
3.5 -- ed, ing suffixes added to basewords (ex: slashing, blended)	2	2	2
STEP 4 -- Vowel - Consonant - E Syllable (VCE)			
4.1 -- VCE syllable in one-syllable words (ex: hope, cave)	K, 1	1, 2	2
4.2 -- VCE syllable combined with closed syllables (ex: combine, reptile)	2	2, 3	3
4.3 -- multisyllabic words with two syllable types (ex: compensate)	2	2, 3	3
4.4 -- ive exception (ex: olive, pensive)	3	3	3
STEP 5 -- Open Syllable			
5.1 -- open syllable in one-syllable words, y as a vowel (ex: he, hi, shy)	K, 1	1, 2	2
5.2 -- open syllables combined with VCE and closed syllables in two syllable words (ex: protect, decline)	2	2, 3	3
5.3 -- y as a vowel in two-syllable words (ex: handy, pony)	2	2, 3	3
5.4 -- multisyllabic words with the 3 syllable types (ex: regulate)	2, 3	2, 3	3
5.5 -- a and i in unaccented syllables (ex: Alaska, indicate)	3	3	3
STEP 6 -- Suffix Endings and Consonant-le Syllable			
6.1 -- suffixes er, est, en, es, able, ish, y, ive, ly, ty, less, ness, ment, ful added to basewords (ex: thankful, classy)	2, 3	2, 3	3
6.2 -- suffix ed: sounds d, t (ex: thrilled, punished)	2, 3	2, 3	3
6.3 -- combining 2 suffixes to baseword (ex: constructively, helpfulness)	2, 3	2, 3	3
6.4 -- consonant -le, stle exception (ex: dribble, whistle)	2, 3	2, 3	3

Finger Tapping

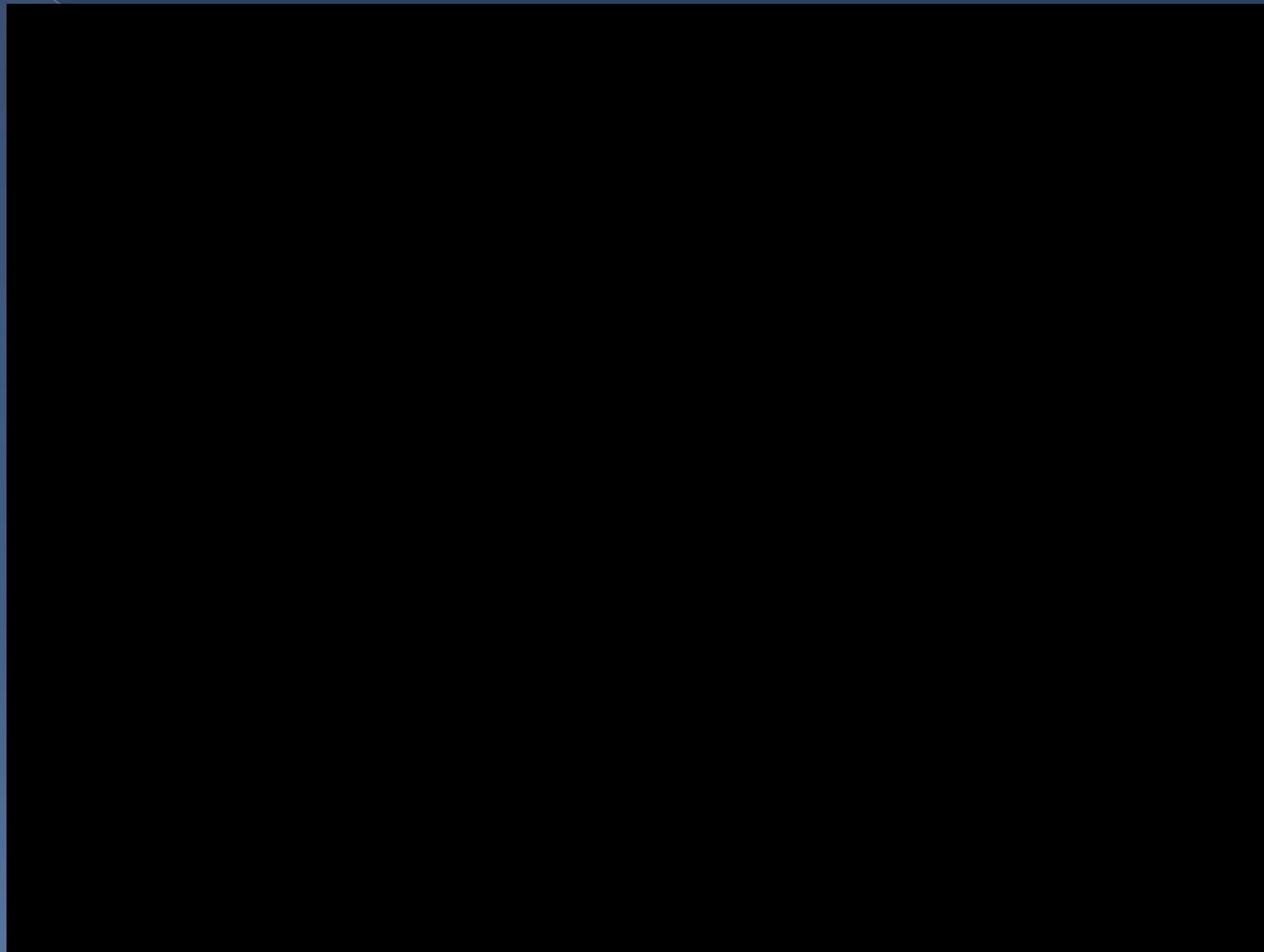


HOW TO TAP WORDS



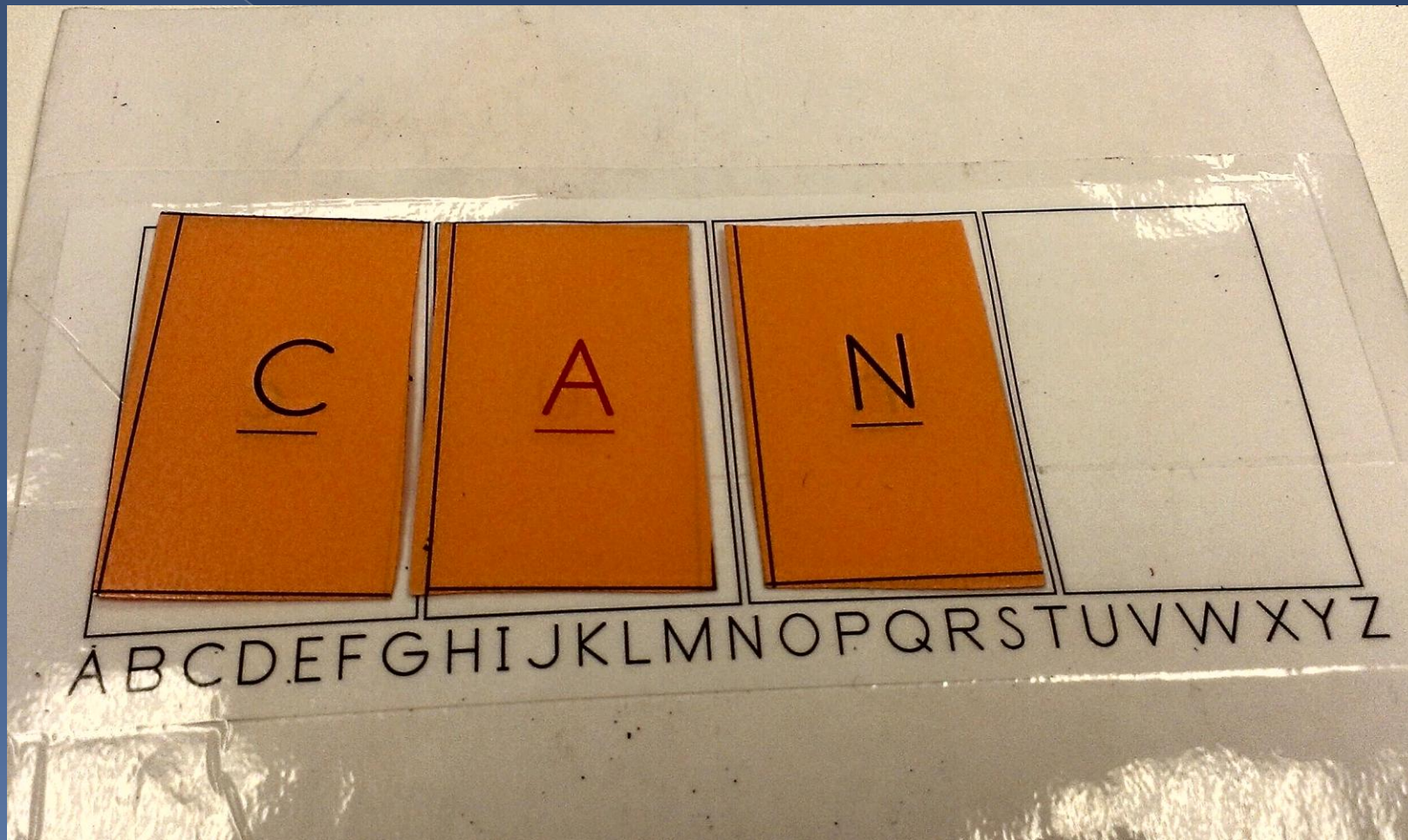
1	2	3
M	A	T

Finger Tapping



Students listen, tap out words, and place letter tiles on an organizer.

Finger Tapping



Word work: short /a/ sound

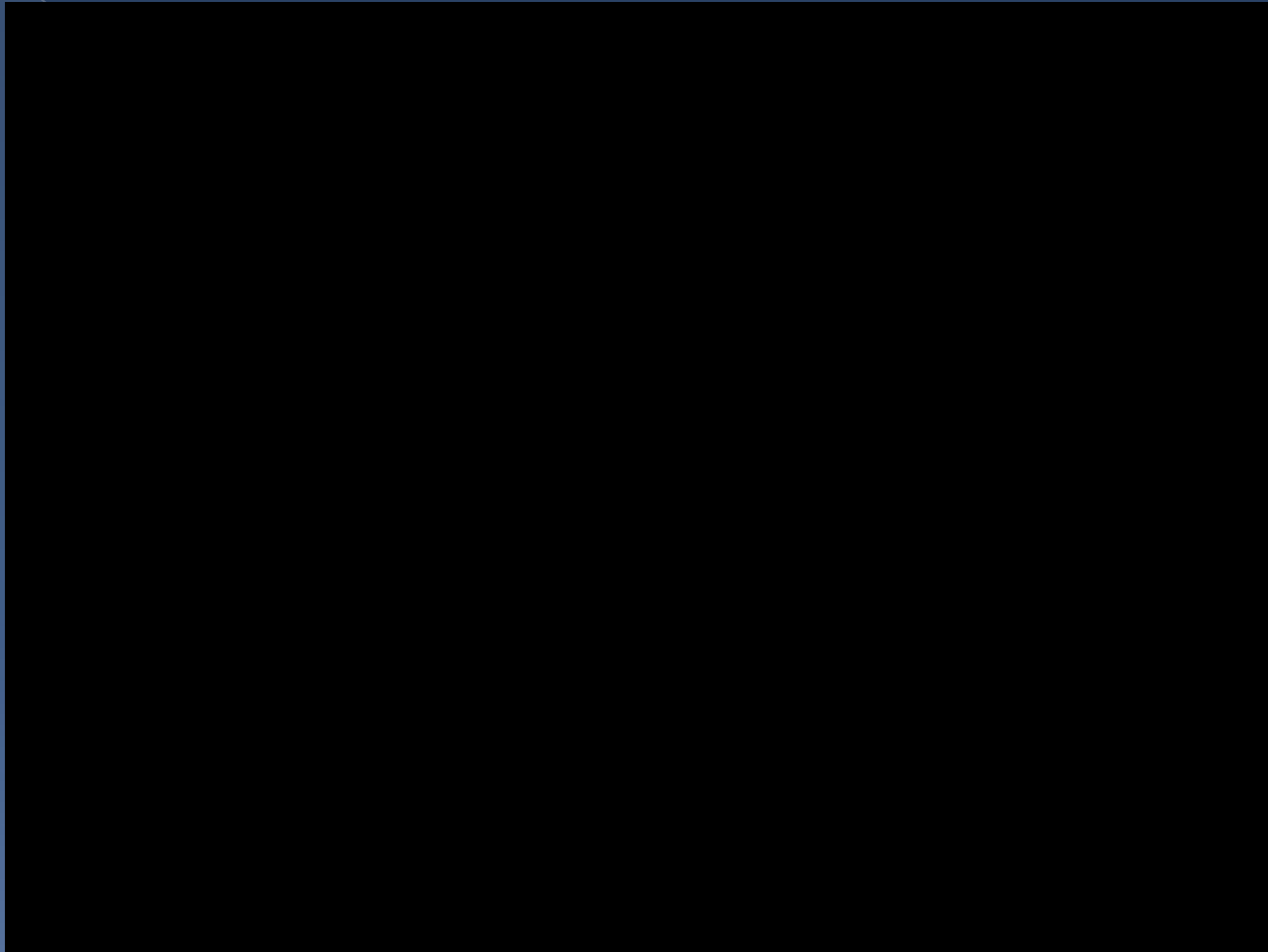
a



sad sat mad mat map



Finger Tapping



Students listen to a word from the teacher, tap out the sounds, then write on long strips.

Checking Work

Advanced Level Guide

Beginning Level Guide

A Complete Sentence...

1. ... has a subject (person, place, thing)
2. ... has a verb (an action)
3. ... the subject and verb agree (go together)
4. ... starts with a capital letter
5. ... ends with punctuation (?!)

1. Capitalization

2. Punctuation

3. Number of Sounds or Words

4. Spelling

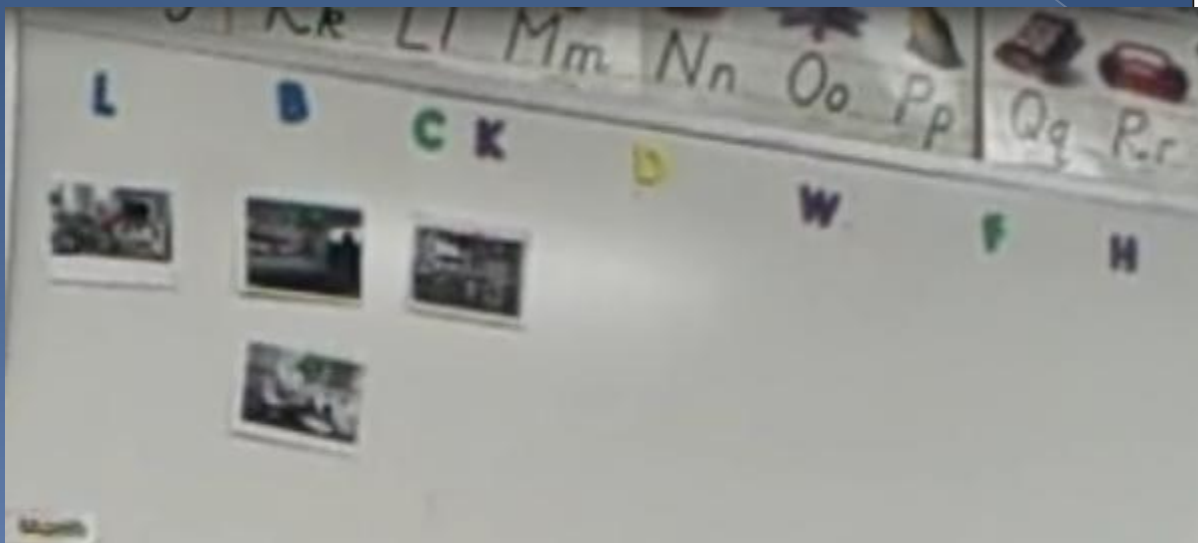
5. Makes Sense

Spelling Lists

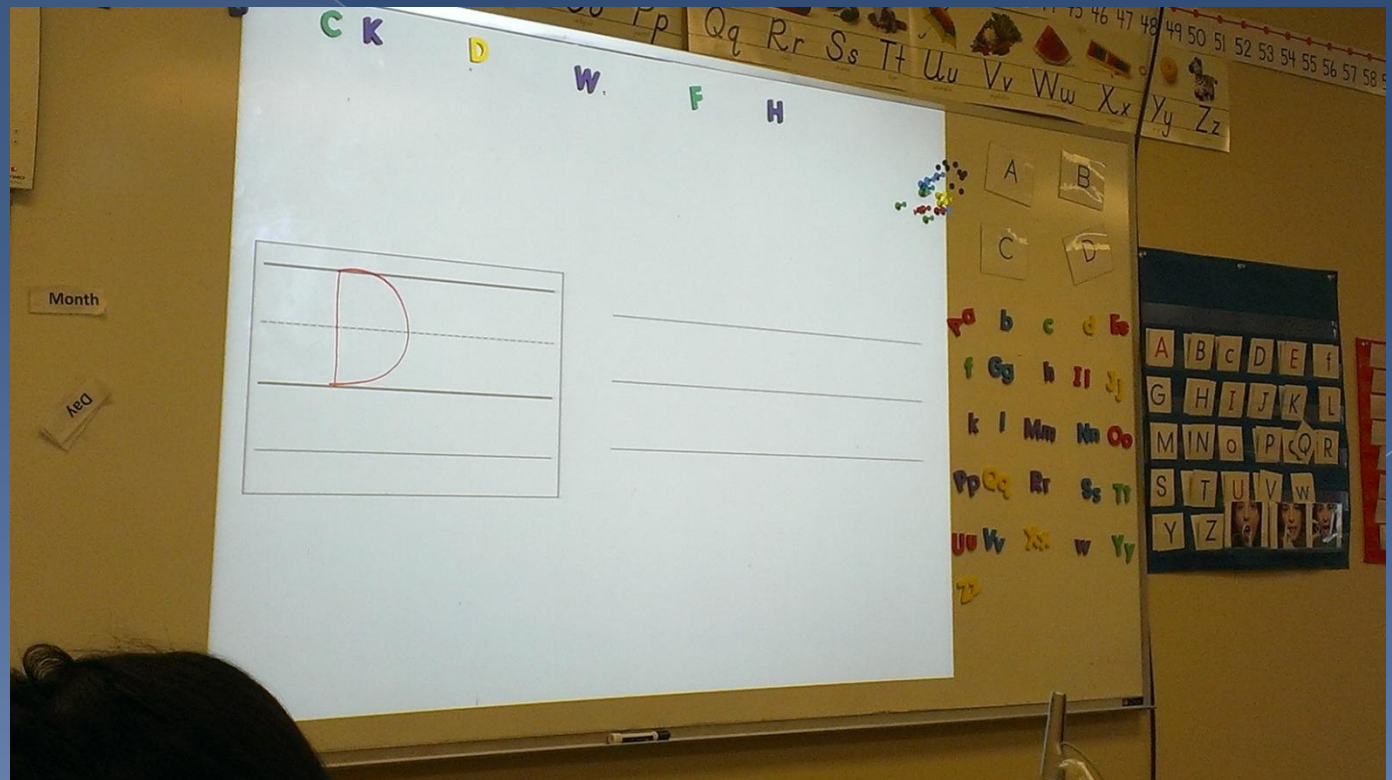
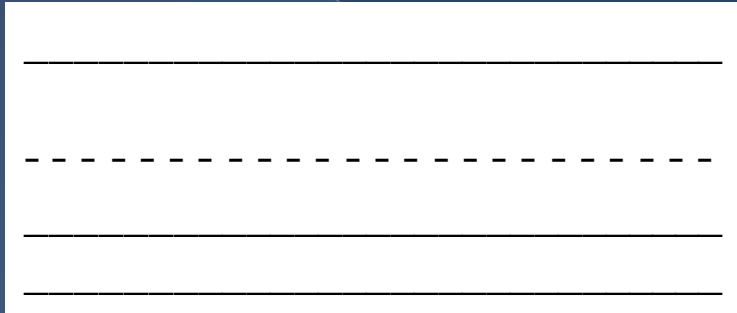
Spelling list	Copy	Write
us		
bus		
but		
tub		
sub		



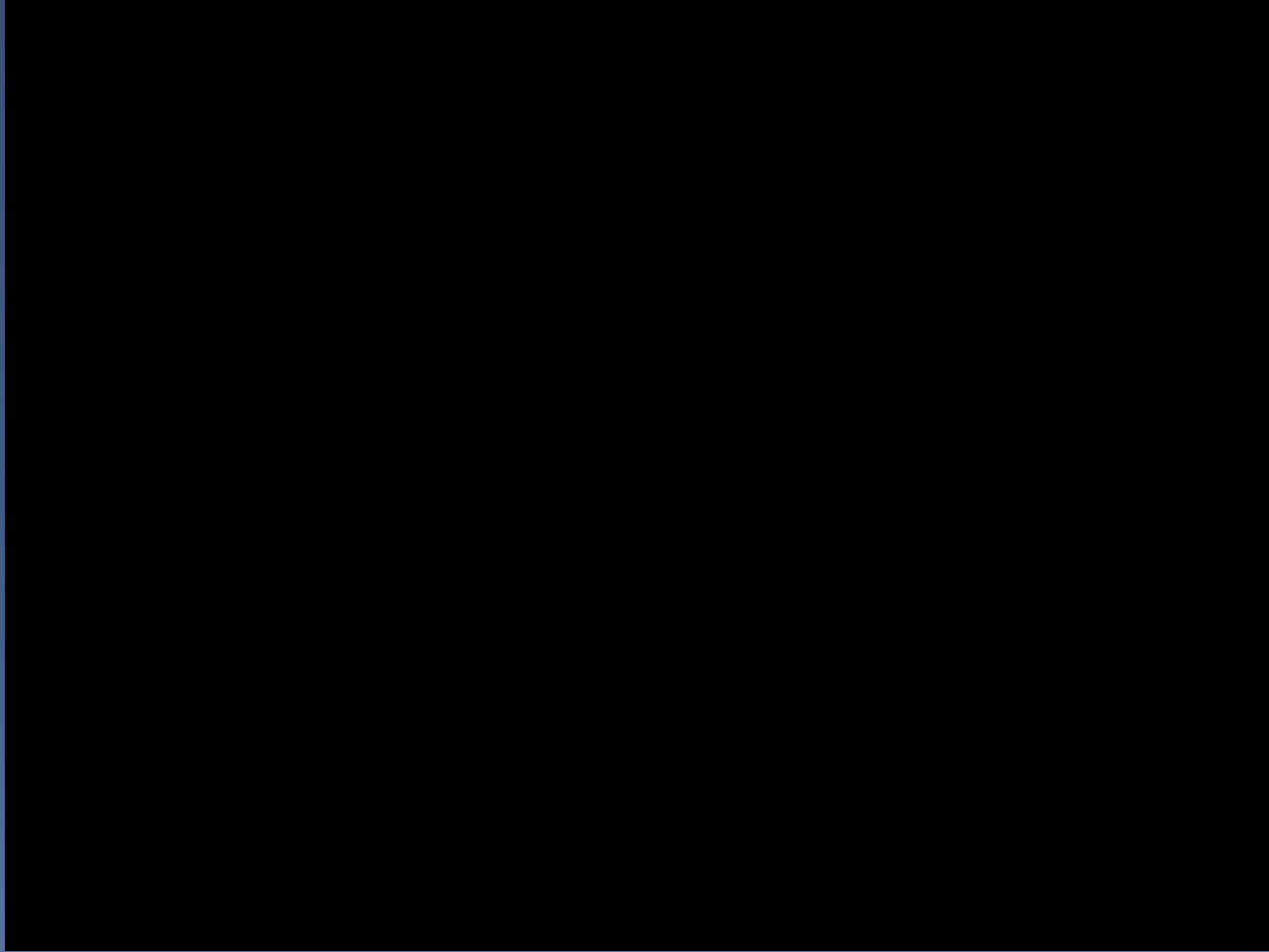
Bus	Boat	Car
Motorcycle	Van	Walk
Plane	Truck	
Bicycle	Train	



Handwriting and Phonics

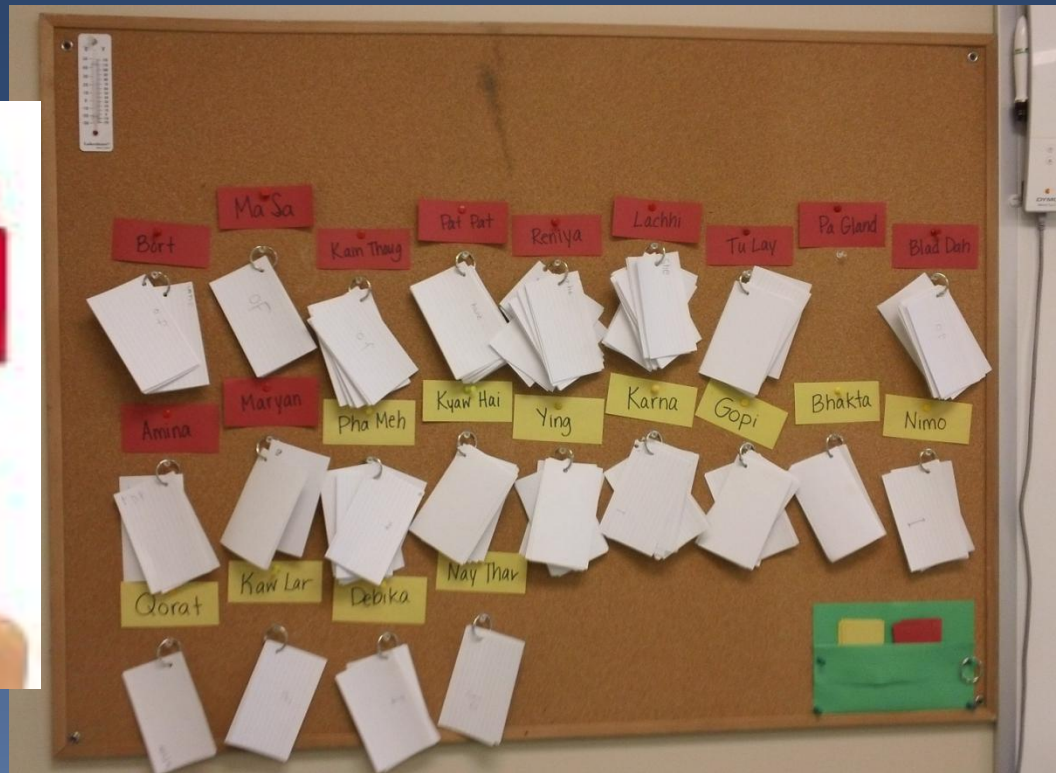


Handwriting and Phonics



Students are constantly moving between decoding and encoding, and handwriting practice is a multisensory task.

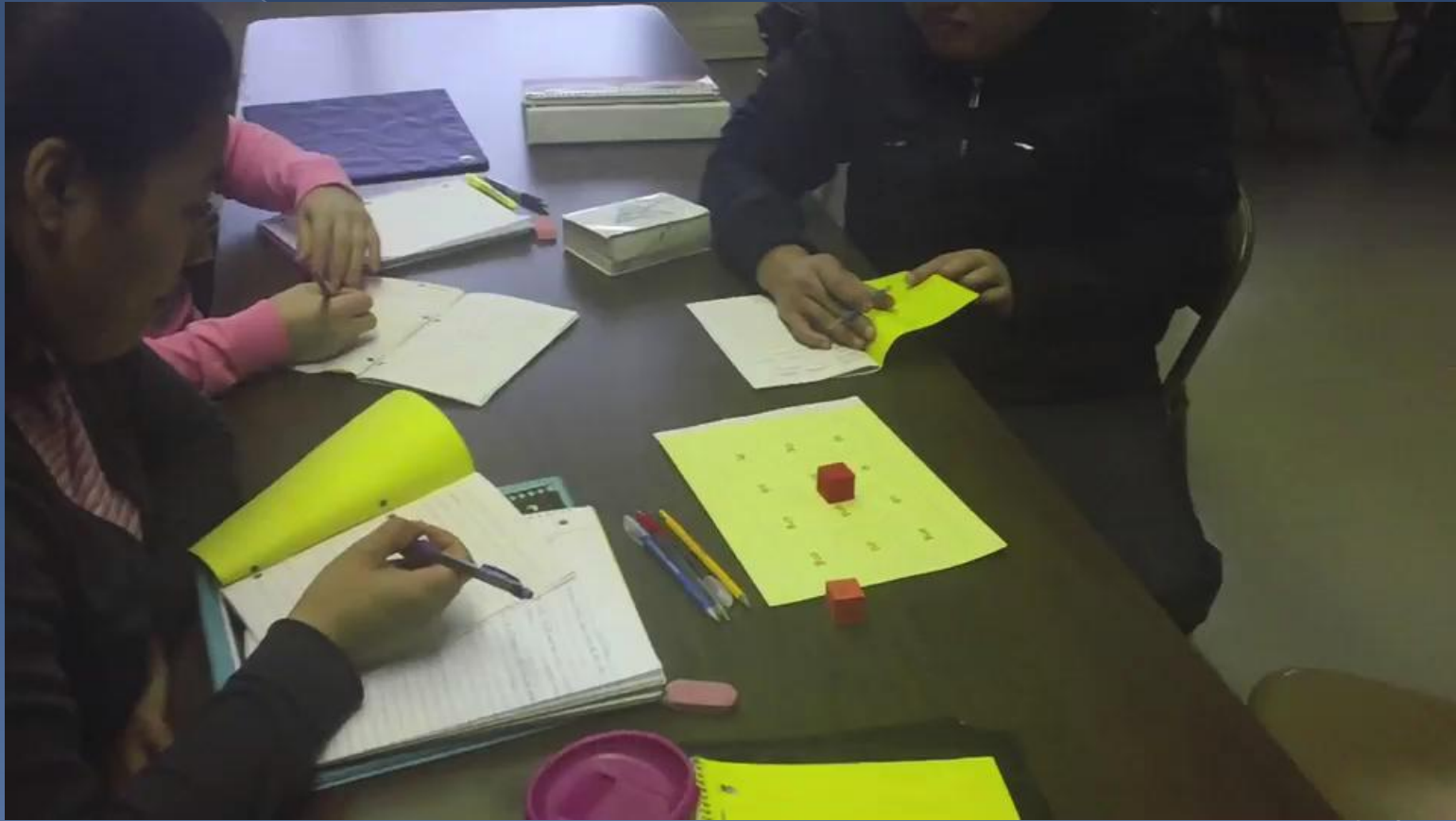
Multi-sensory Sight Word Instruction



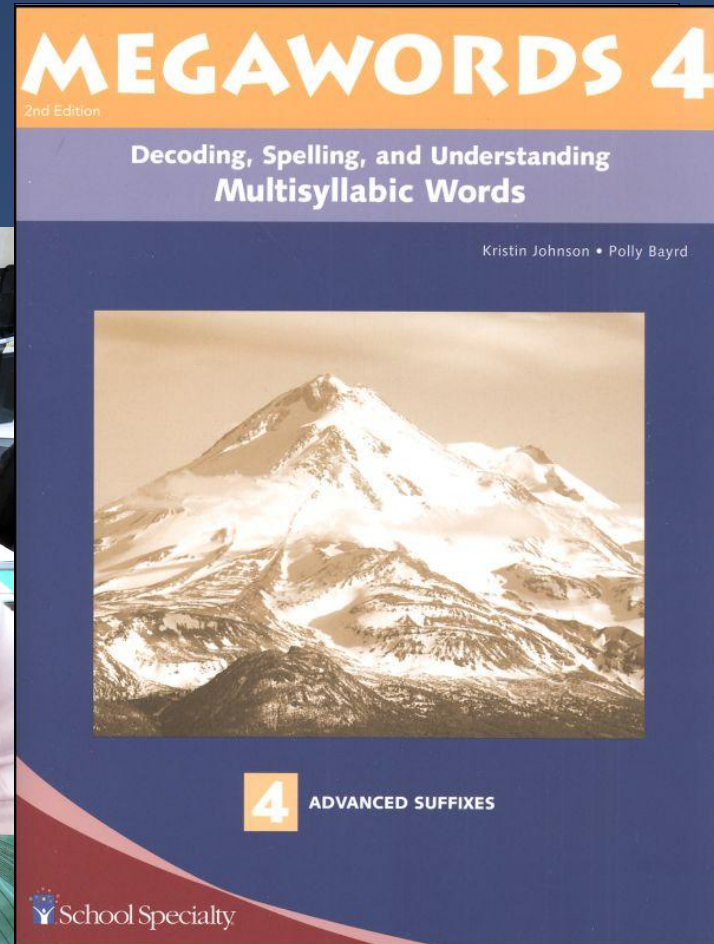
“Spelling & Pronunciation” mini-lessons



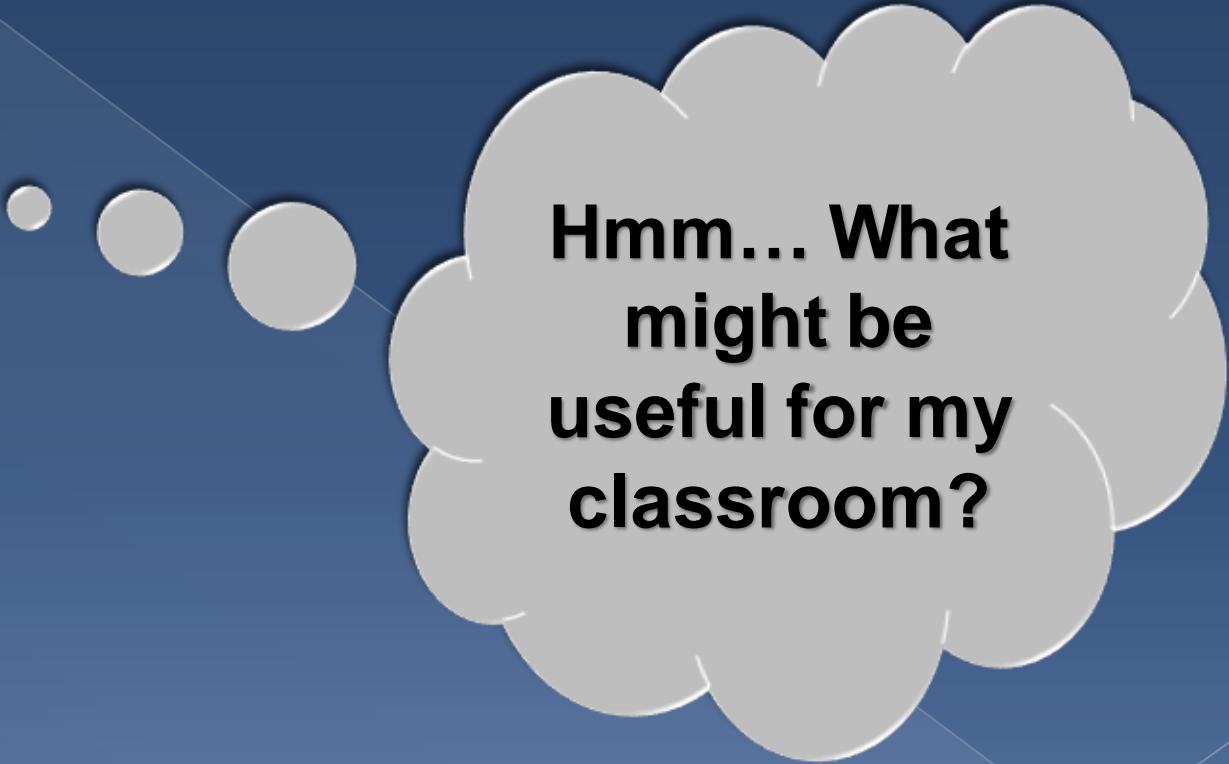
Spelling Dictation: Cues and Clues



Megawords: syllable types & vocabulary building



**Take a moment to reflect on
these findings**



**Hmm... What
might be
useful for my
classroom?**

What do we need
to keep in mind
when considering
dyslexia-
education
practices for the
adult low-literate
ESL classroom?

CAUTION

WATCH YOUR

STEP

Adapting for adult ESL classrooms

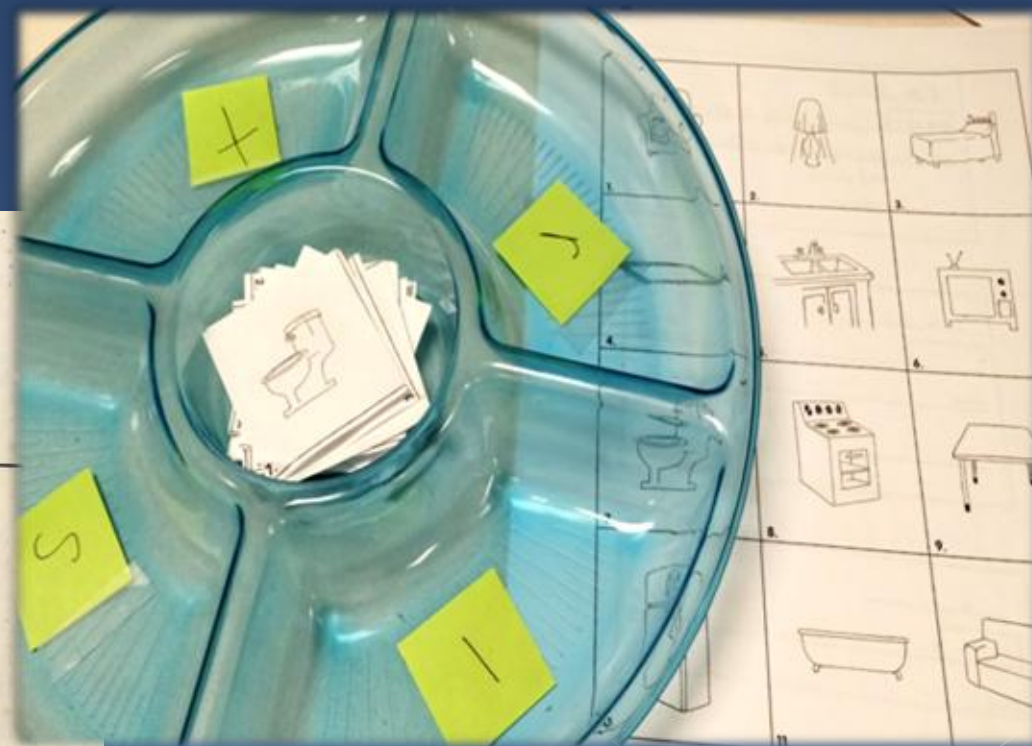
- Content should be adult appropriate.
- Pay attention to how your students react to activities. Don't push.
- Connect the wholes and parts of literacy instruction.
- Balance your role as a literacy AND a language instructor.



Contextualizing Phonics Work

JACK'S APARTMENT

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Collaborative Inquiry as Professional Development



**Who might know
more about _____
than I do, and how
could we explore
this together?**

Six-word summaries:

Colleagues unraveling reading
It's all connected.

Systematic chaos
Reading, watching, tapping, learning

Chunking, tapping, categorizing,
breaking down whole

Finding overlap
Consulting expertise
Practicing mindfulness

Fingers, eyes and ears to words



**Thank
you!**

Jessica Jones
Kristin Klas
Kristin Perry
Patsy Vinogradov

**And THANK YOU
to COABE for
supporting this
project with an
incentive grant**