



Provincial Outreach
Program for the Early Years

www.popey.ca

Learning Series - Day 1 Foundational Literacy Skills

April 1, 2025

8:30am - 2:30pm

*Handouts available at - popey.ca/workshop-resources

Connect with us online!



@POPEYBC

Presenter:
Traci Baillie



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POPEY'S APPROACH

POPEY shares research and knowledge around how we learn to read, the reading brain, and the foundational skills that support learning to read and write.

In workshops, POPEY offers a collection of evidence-based strategies for teachers to consider.

Teaching reading is not a one-size fits all model - no two districts are the same, just as no two students are the same.

POPEY meets teachers where they are at.

We invite teachers to consider implementing evidence-based instructional techniques to ensure literacy success for their diverse learners.

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Our learning objectives

In this workshop, we will explore a scope & sequence for foundational literacy skills, focusing on:

- evidence-based instructional routines for phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension
- strategies to support early reading and writing development

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Notes

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The shape of our day

Part 1

- introductions
- comparing three models of reading
- routines and strategies to support a scope and sequence for phonemic awareness instruction
- characteristics of a strong phonics instruction

Break

Part 2

- article – read solo, discuss in partners, share out...
- the reading brain, orthographic mapping
- high-leverage instructional routines for phonics instruction

Lunch

Part 3

- decodable texts – what, when, and why?
- building fluency, teaching vocabulary, and supporting both listening and reading comprehension
- nurturing young writers with mentor texts, bookmaking, and choice



Ice Breaker – the reverse interview

Think about something you could teach someone. Something you would be **excited** to share with others.

- Write your name and your 2 "teach-ables" on a post-it note.
- Find someone from a different school.
- Swap post-it notes and take turns interviewing each other, by asking your conversation partner questions about their teachable skill.

- Travel
- Cooking
- Art
- Sports
- Music
- Dance
- Organizing
- Social Media Accounts
- Pets
- Home Renos



De-mystifying the Science of Reading

The Science of Reading is **NOT**:

- An ideology or philosophy
- A fad, trend, new idea, or pendulum swing
- A political agenda
- A one-size-fits-all approach
- A program of instruction
- A single, specific component of instruction such as phonics



Notes



It doesn't need to be either/or

and, and, and...

Decodable texts	vs.	Authentic literature
Research	vs.	Classroom Practice
The art of teaching	vs.	The science of reading
Individual student needs	vs.	Whole class efficiency
Direct instruction	vs.	Discovery learning
Practice in isolation	vs.	Practice in context
Mastery of skills	vs.	Joy of reading
Structure	vs.	Choice
Urgency	vs.	Joy

Comprehensive = complete; including all elements or aspects of something



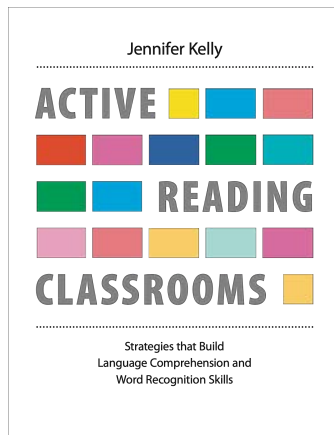
De-mystifying the Science of Reading

The Science of Reading **IS**:

- A vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.
 - Based on research that has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies in multiple languages.
 - An abundance of evidence to inform:
 - how proficient reading and writing develop;
 - why some have difficulty; and
 - how we can most effectively assess and teach ...
- therefore, how to improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.

It is the science of learning

The Active View of Reading: How it differs from other models



Highlighted in Active Reading Classrooms:

- Bridging processes – strengthen both word recognition and language
- Self regulation – students are not passive participants in reading
- Highlights the importance of cultural knowledge as part of the way we understand language around us



Notes

Structured Literacy: an approach that meets the needs to all learners

Structured literacy:

- an evidence-based instructional approach
- comprehensive – addressing listening, speaking, reading, and writing
- characterized by what content is taught and how content is taught



A comprehensive approach that meets the needs of all learners

InternationalDyslexiaAssociationOntario.com

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Structured Literacy–A Comprehensive Approach

WHAT is taught:

- Foundational skills
- Higher-level literacy skills
- All students benefit

HOW it is taught

- Systematic and Cumulative
- Organized, from simple to complex, follows a scope and sequence
- Explicit
- Continuous student-teacher interaction
- Not assuming all students can infer concepts
- Careful and considered practice
- Prompt and specific feedback (corrective if needed)

I Do. We Do. You Do.

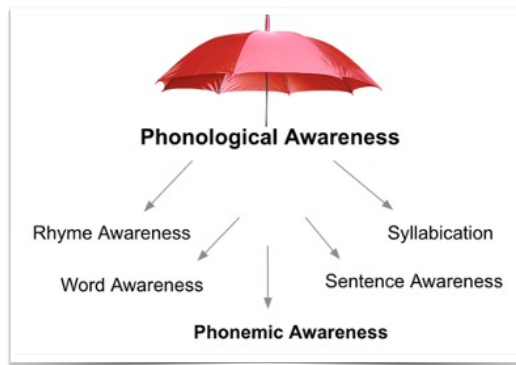
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Phonemic Awareness

the ability to notice and manipulate individual sounds in spoken language



Over nearly four decades of research, "phonemic awareness has consistently been found to be the strongest precursor to, and predictor of, reading achievement" (Kenner, et al).

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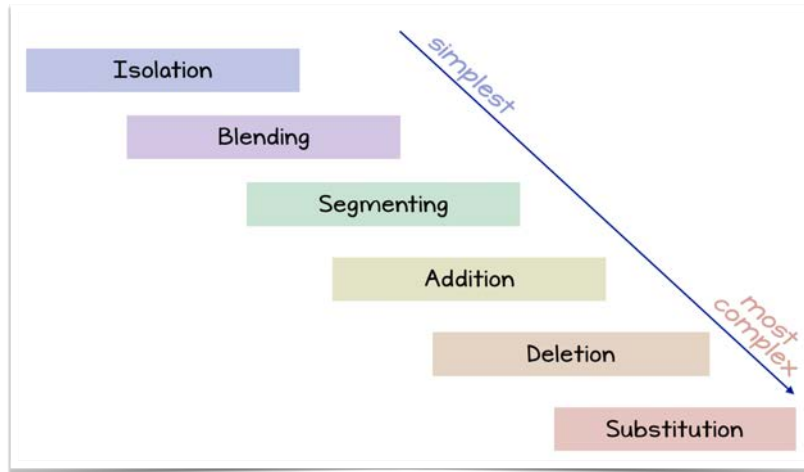
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A scope & sequence for phonemic awareness

...the understanding that spoken words are made up of individual sounds



Phonemic Awareness: The skills that they need to help them succeed! - Heggerty



Phonemic Awareness Instruction

- ✓ Let's notice how sounds are made (articulatory gestures)
- ✓ Let's put sounds together to make whole words (blending)
- ✓ Let's take words apart (segmenting)

- ✓ Let's listen for sounds that are the same (isolation & discrimination)
- ✓ Let's take sounds off of words (deletion)
- ✓ Let's change one sound in a word to make a new word (substitution)

7 Mighty Moves - Kemeny, 2023



Phonemic Awareness: Instruction

Keep in mind:

- Short and frequent sessions
- Focus primarily on blending and segmenting (phoneme-level skills)
- Begin to add letters to this work
- Often integrated into phonics lesson

Ideas for instructional Strategies:

- Use manipulatives to keep it playful
 - Elkonin boxes + bingo chips
 - Pop It fidget toys
 - Race cars + tracks
 - Unifix cubes
- Encourage gestures
 - Hand choppers
 - Tap down arm
 - Finger/thumb tap
- Word Chains – build phonemic awareness and phonics skills at the same time



7 Mighty Moves - Kemeny, 2023



Notes





One Minute – Whole Class Instruction

Rhyme Repetition

T says word pair,
Students repeat:

**hop/mop ran/fan w
et/jet mad/dad**

Examples:

go/no
yes/me
sad/mad
run/fun
rip/bag

Onset Fluency

T says word, Students
say word, then isolate
the onset

T: funny S: funny /f/

Examples:

baker /b/
puppy /p/
dinner /d/
gentle /j/
happy /h/

Blending Phonemes

T says the phonemes
for each word,
Students blend the
sounds & say whole
word

**T: b-l-a-k
Ss: b-l-a-k ... black**

Examples:

r-e-d
p-u-t
b-a-l
f-l-a-g
s-w-i-m

Segmenting Phonemes

T says the word,
Students say word,
then segment it

**T: flip
Ss: flip f-i-p**

Examples:

hop
run
map
play
grab

From – Phonemic Awareness: The skills that they need to help them succeed! – Heggerty

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Letter Sound Recognition & Alphabetic Principle

Think of how many word can you
make from these letters:

s, m, t, d, l

vs

s, m, a, t, d



“When a child memorizes ten words,
they can only read ten words.
If a child learns the sounds of ten
letters, they will be able to read:
350 three-sound words,
4,320 four-sound words and
21,650 five-sound words”.

Dr. Martin Kozloff

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Readiness Skills

The two best predictors of early reading success are
phonemic awareness and a student's understanding
of the **alphabetic principle**.



Phonemic Awareness

Students' ability to hear and manipulate the smallest units of
sound in a word – phonemes

Alphabetic Principle

The understanding that there are systematic and predictable
relationships between sounds and letters.

“these skills open the gate for reading.” – Wiley Blevins

Reading Rockets: What is the Alphabetic Principle?

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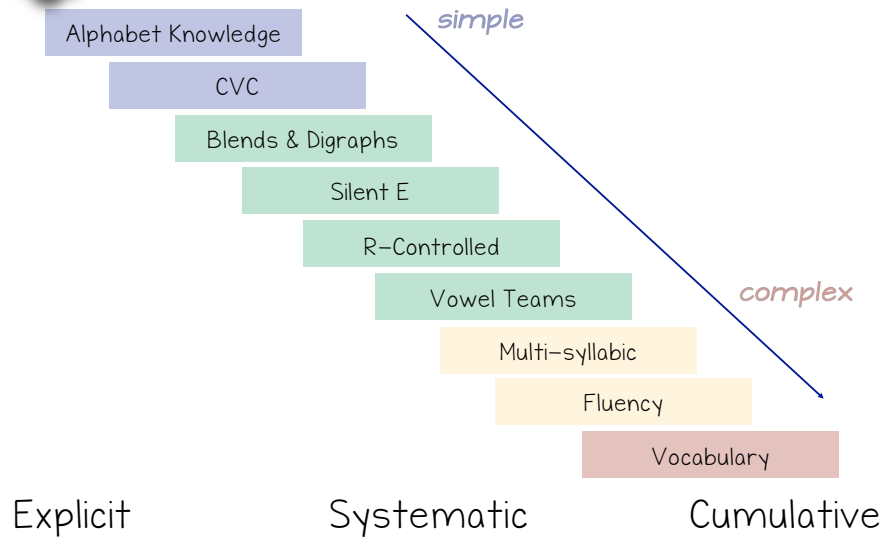


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A scope and sequence for phonics instruction



Phonics Instruction: A Lesson Flow



HEAR IT

- phonemic awareness



TEACH IT

- name and teach new skill/sound



DECODE IT

- decode words with target skill



ENCODE IT

- spell words with target skill



READ IT

- read words, sentences and decodable passages

The last two steps should be approximately 50% of your lesson time. Blevins states “students progress at a much faster rate in phonics when the bulk of instructional time is spent on applying the skill to authentic reading and writing experiences” (2017).



Phonics Instruction

Keep in mind:

- Systematic: Move from simple to complex
 - Following a scope and sequence
- Explicit: “Today I want to teach you...”
- Keep students engaged by:
 - Inviting student responses
 - Have students come to the board to find a word, highlight a phonics skill in a word

Ideas for instructional Strategies:

- Understand “the code” yourself
- Consider using a systematic and explicit phonics program
- White boards will be your best friend!
- Keep lessons lively, and stick to suggested times
- Don’t forget to unpack word meaning
- Word sorts
- Word chains
- Try multi-sensory methods
- Use Elkonin (sound) boxes to support encoding
- Weekly progress monitoring is critical



Notes



Article

Laura Stewart, The Reading League



- False theories about learning to read
- The development of the reading brain and the connection between print and sound (alphabetic principle)
- Models – simple view, the reading rope
- What needs to be taught
- Putting it all together & next steps
- **Reflect:** What are your mirrors? Windows?
- **Discuss:** wonderings, connections, conclusions

“The neural circuitry that is necessary to read is created primarily through instruction.”

The Science of Reading: Evidence for a New Era of Reading Instruction – Stewart



High-leverage instructional routines for phonics instruction

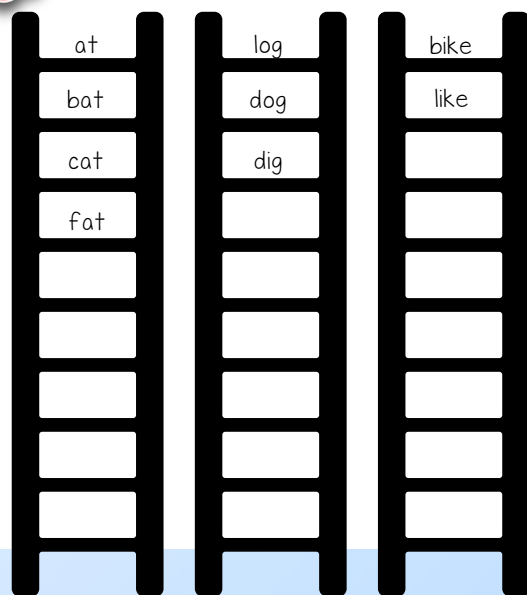
- ✓ Let's play with sounds – daily
- ✓ Let's study something new – 1–3 times per week
- ✓ Let's blend some words – daily
- ✓ Let's build some words – 2–3 times per week
- ✓ Let's write some words – 2–3 times per week
- ✓ Let's study some spellings – 2–3 times per week
- ✓ Let's read! – daily
- ✓ Let's review something that was a little tricky – as needed

Including both systematic phonics and meaningful interactions with texts leads to the most powerful outcomes for beginning readers.

Shifting the Balance: Burkins & Yates



Word Ladders – playing with sounds, letters, words



Easily differentiated to be responsive to your students' varied abilities & needs, and can be extended to a literacy centre for additional engagement & practice.



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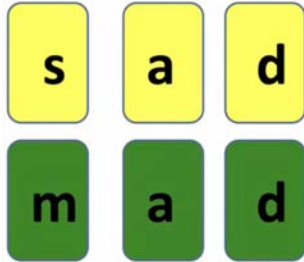


Word Building / Word Chains

Word Awareness Focus

Teacher Language

(Begin with sad.) Change sad to mad.



Skill

encoding

decoding

This is sophisticated phonemic awareness work: Students are substituting, deleting, and adding sounds (encoding). And then they're using their knowledge of spelling to create the new word, and then read (decode) the new word to make sure it's correct.



Instructional Strategy: Word Chains

Teacher Language

Skill

(Begin with mat.) Change mat to sat.

encoding

Change the S to an F.
Now tell me what word you
have?

decoding

Change fat to fit.

encoding

Change the F to an S. What word is that?

decoding

What letter do you need to change sit to lit?

encoding

Now add an S to the beginning of lit.
What word do you get?

decoding



High engagement

High-Frequency Word Routine

STEP 1 Introduce in Context

"I see a cat," said Pam.



STEP 2 Read (SEGMENT, then discuss known sound-spellings)

/s/ = s /d/ = d ai = irregular

SAME AS "HEART WORDS"

STEP 3 Spell

s a i d



STEP 4 Write

said

STEP 5 Extend (Writing, Connect to Known Words)

(oral and written sentence frames or sentence starters)



Notes



Increasing Reading Achievement & Preventing Reading Failure

“Informed classroom instruction that targets specific language, cognitive, and reading skills beginning in kindergarten enhances success for all but a very small percentage of students with learning disabilities or severe dyslexia.

Researchers now estimate that 95 percent of all children can be taught to read by the end of first grade.”

– Louisa Moats, teacher, psychologist, researcher & author



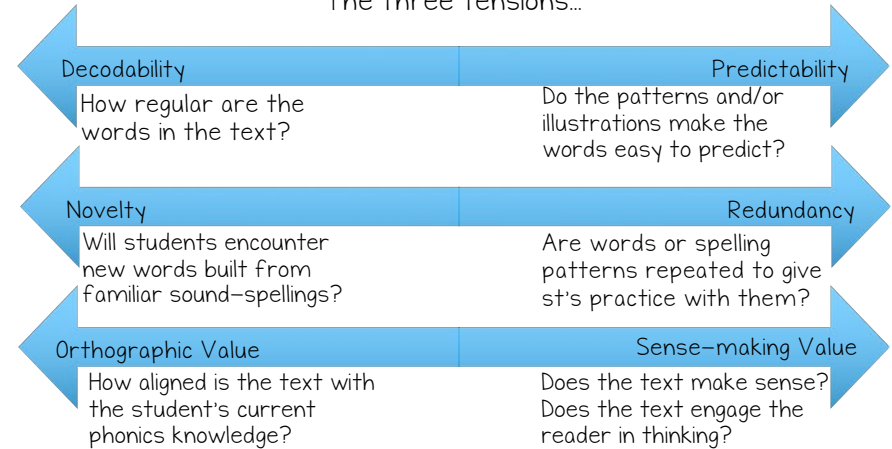
[Teaching Reading Is Rocket Science – Louisa Moats](#), Visible Learning for Teachers – Hattie



Considerations for choosing books

Questions to ask when considering beginning texts:

The three tensions...



Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates



Using Decodable Texts



Before Reading a Decodable Text

- Introduce the Skill (including Handwriting)
- Model Blending
- Teach High-Frequency Words
- Define & Build Vocabulary

Options for Reading

- Whisper Read (circulate and listen in) Orthographic mapping
- Choral Read (read together) More Fluent readers
- Echo Read. (provide extra support and/or model an aspect of fluency):

After Reading

- Reread to build Fluency
- Focus on comprehension
- Writing Follow-up (encoding)
- Word Building (encoding)
- Dictation (encoding)

Differentiating High Impact Phonics Routines with Wiley Blevins



Notes



Fluency

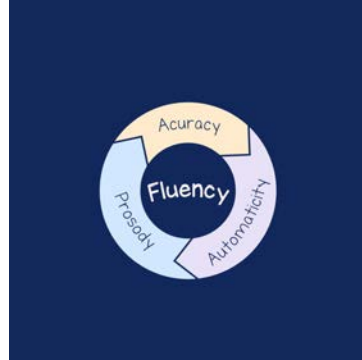
Fluency refers to the development of three components: accuracy, automaticity and prosody and provides the bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Duke & Cartwright, 2021)

Accuracy refers to identifying or reading letter names/sounds and words correctly.

Automaticity can be considered in two levels:

- word level (ability to read words quickly and effortlessly)
- text level (ability to read connected text including sentences, passages and books quickly and effortlessly)

Prosody refers to a reader's natural voice and expression



Building Fluency

Keep in mind:

- More than just reading fast
- Don't teach phonics in isolation
- Avoid "round robin" reading
- Be mindful of how you use independent reading time



7 Mighty Moves – Kemény, 2023

Ideas for instructional Strategies:

- Small Group instruction affords specific, immediate feedback
- Model, model, model!!!
- Read aloud, cloze reading, choral reading, echo reading
- Partner Reading
- Reader's Theatre
- Beat the Clock Timed Reading
- Repeated Reading

Remember...fluency is not an isolated skill
subskills: phonemic awareness, sound-symbol knowledge, automaticity at letter or word level

Vocabulary

Why teach vocabulary?

- A rich vocabulary supports learning about the world, new ideas, and enjoying the beauty of language
- Vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to reading proficiency
 - tightly related to reading comprehension in primary, intermediate, high school, and adults

READ WRITE SPEAK LISTEN LEARN

Notes



Vocabulary Instruction

Ideas for Instructional Strategies:

Keep in mind:

- Prepare student friendly definitions
- Learners need repeated exposure in meaningful contexts
- We learn words that are relevant, meaningful and useful
- We learn words when we have opportunities for active engagement with those words
- Rich read alouds with planned, pre-selected vocabulary, re-read, connect to content other subjects for active engagement
- Use text sets
 - www.readworks.com (Article a Day)
- Use and model sophisticated language, starting in Kindergarten
- Model being word curious!
- Dive into morphology – look for word parts



Reading Comprehension Strategies

Read-aloud texts: choose texts that will stretch listening comprehension by providing exposure to rich ideas, wide vocabulary, background knowledge, and novel language structures

- model comprehension
- ask students to retell what they've read
- prompting or questioning before, during, and after reading



Skilled comprehenders use these strategies

- **connecting** to prior knowledge – schemas
- **self-questioning** – ask themselves questions about the text
 - an essential component of planning to understand a text
- **predicting** – using prior knowledge and clues from text to make hypotheses about the text content
- using **text structure** – organize text information to make meaning
- **visualizing** – mental imagery to remember information from texts
- **making inferences** – integrate bits of info and fill in the gaps
- **summarizing** – prioritize the importance of info to get the 'gist'
 - this requires complex working memory and cognitive flexibility

We can explicitly model these comprehension skills and engage students in conversations that allow them to practice comprehension.



Notes



Nurturing and supporting young writers

- Writing must be a predictable, daily routine
- Children need to see themselves as writers, each with a unique identity
- Writing is a process of decision-making and action
- Writers need a disposition for risk-taking
- Writers need a sense of momentum to know they are growing
- Writers work with a sense of craft guiding them, and they learn craft from mentors
- Teachers must act as if children are capable, competent writers

Holding these beliefs about writing will help shape our plans, actions, and responses as we support and guide young writers.



Book Making

Learning Through Language, Learning About Language

- ▶ Is developmentally appropriate. Brings a sense of play to making.
- ▶ Encourages children to do bigger work and develop stamina for writing.
- ▶ Causes children to live like writers
- ▶ Makes the 'reading like writers' connection so clear.
- ▶ Helps children begin to understand the process of composition and decision-making.
- ▶ Helps children begin to understand genre, purpose & audience.

beliefs guide our actions



Teaching With Mentor Texts

What is a mentor text?

A well-crafted text that you show students to help them see how they can better craft their writing and use conventions.

- * Creative people in all fields have mentors.
- * Students learn reading and writing are interconnected.
- * Mentor texts help you teach writing descriptively, instead of prescriptively.
- * Mentor texts help students teach themselves about writing.

The 'how' is the craft of writing.

What are you doing as a writer to make your writing better?



Notes



Give Students the Choice of Genre

Increasing engagement through choice of genre.

- * Ask students, "what is your favourite topic to write about?"
- * Modelling 'think aloud,' explain your favourite topic to write about and all the different genres you can choose to write.

- A small moment story about my dog
- A poem about dogs
- A labeled diagram of a dog
- A 'how to' book about taking care of dogs
- An information book about dogs
- A persuasive paragraph on why dogs are better pets than cats



The Choice of Topic & Genre



Increasing engagement through choice.

- What is **your** favourite topic? One that you'd like to write about.
- What **genre** would you choose?
- Share your **topic and genre choice** with your table group.

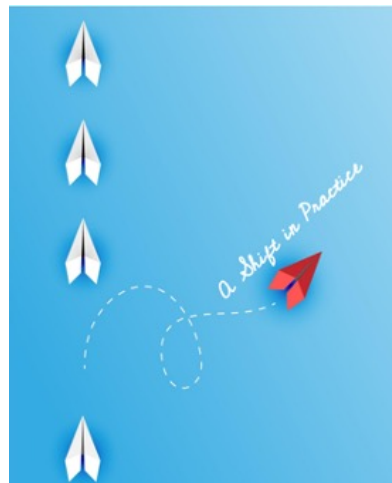
- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| - A small moment story | - A persuasive paragraph |
| - A poem | - A review |
| - A 'how to' book /guide | - A poster/brochure |
| - An information book | - A comic strip |

An invitation- Exit ticket

- * **Mirrors** and **Windows** from today?

What is something you might take back to your classroom to::

- Start
- Learn more about
- Keep



Notes



Traci Baillie
Teacher Consultant
traci@popey.ca



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Sources *Digital Resources*

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- [Decatur Public Schools – MTSS diagram](#)
- [Defining MTSS with Stephanie Stollar – Podcast](#)
- [Evidence for a New Era of Reading Instruction](#)
- [How We Learn To Read – Harvard Medical School](#)
- [International Dyslexia Association Ontario](#)
- [ONlit – Fluency Overview](#)
- [Reading As Meaning Making – Victoria State Government Department of Education \(Australia\)](#)
- [Reading Rockets: The Active View of Reading](#)
- [Reading Rockets – Basics: Sight Words & Orthographic Mapping](#)
- [Reading Rockets: Models of Reading](#)
- [Reading Rockets: What is the Alphabetic Principle?](#)
- [Science of Reading Defining Guide](#)
- [Shanahan on Literacy](#)
- [TheSixShifts.com](#)
- [Maryanne Wolf](#)



Sources *Books & Articles*

- How to Be a Better Writing Teacher workshop – Anderson & Glover
- Bringing Words to Life – Beck, McKeown, Kucan
- A Fresh Look at Phonics – Blevins
- ILA workshop: Adding Encoding to Phonics Lessons, Wiley Blevins
- Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates
- Executive Skills & Reading Comprehension: – Cartwright
- Craft and Process Studies– Glover
- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum
- Phonemic Awareness: The skills that they need to help them succeed! – Heggerty
- Active Reading Classrooms – Kelly
- 7 Mighty Moves – Kemeny
- Next Steps in Literacy Instruction – Smartt & Glaser
- UFLI Foundations Manual
- A Teacher's Guide to Getting Started with Beginning Writers - Wood Ray & Cleaveland**
- A Teacher's Guide to Vocabulary Development Across the Day – Wright



Notes
