Extra Language Resources

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Practice Notes

Ver 1.21
June 2014

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Articulation / Sound Production Problems

1. Have a Speech/Language Pathologist advise on which sound/s to target first. Sometimes it is best to work on one sound at a time. For other children you may need to work on "family" of sounds (eg long sounds, short sounds, sounds produced by the back of the tongue). You will also need advice about which words need to be practised (ie words with the sound at the beginning of the word, at the end, or in the middle of the word).

2. Have the speech pathologist help you and the child establish correct tongue or lip position to produce the sound. If your child has difficulty making the sound in the first place, you will both get frustrated, and if you persevere with practice, may even practice an incorrect production.

3. There are stages in the practice of a sound:
   - Isolation (or by itself, not in words)
   - Practice words that contain the sound in the-
       - initial position of words
       - final position of words
       - medial position of words
   - Practice words in short phrases or short sentences
   - Practice words in longer structured narratives, ie within a therapy session
   - Using words that contain the sound in spontaneous conversation, often needing prompting to remember

4. Practising the Sound in Isolation
   - Go to the **eLr** *Phonology* section, choose the sound you are working on (eg k sound), and then select *Isolated*. This means practising the sound in isolation or not in words. There are activities that contain either pictures or icons, and activities that contain letters. Depending on the age of the child, select appropriate activities. These are simple tasks. In the *Drag Central* model, the child produces the sound once, or a number of times. If the sound is produced correctly, an icon is dragged onto the picture. In the *Jumping Icons* or *Jumping letters*, the child says the sound each time the appropriate letter/icon appears. If correct, the letter/icon is clicked. Continue until a set number has been reached.
   - In these tasks, print out the page (eg the picture the child has made in *DragCentral*), and use the page as an "off screen" activity. Each time the sound is said correctly, s/he gets a stamp/sticker/happy face. Scores can be kept of correct productions.

5. Practise the Sound in words:
   - Choose the position required (ie initial, medial, final). You then choose the appropriate length of word.
   - *Consonant-Vowel* words are short and easy (eg c-ar, k-ey), because they have 2 sounds, a consonant and a vowel
   - *Consonant-Vowel-Consonant* words have 3 sounds and are a bit more challenging. Single syllable words may have more than 3 sounds but are still one syllable (eg camp).
   - *Multi-syllable words* contain more than one syllable, and would be harder than single syllable words.
6. Phrases - this section contains activities to stimulate the production of the words in short phrases.
   - When the child is at the stage of practising the words in phrases, or sentences, any of the **eLr** activities can be used to encourage phrase/sentence production. For example, instead of simply naming the picture, s/he can name and talk about the picture.
   - In each of the sections, choose the activity that is appropriate to the child. If the child is pre-reading, choose the tasks with pictures (these have an asterisk). In some of the activities (eg those with pictures and text), the text can be read out to the child. For example, in *CluePics*, the clue can be read, and the child responds by naming the picture.

Oral Narrative

Some children have difficulty knowing where to start when explaining events or telling stories. The goal is to develop confidence in a range of different oral skills (eg telling, requesting, jokes, giving directions). You may need to start by practising very short utterances, and gradually increase confidence with longer utterances. For example:

1. Single word level:
   - Naming pictures - Use conventional picture cards or for **eLr** activities go to *Semantics - Naming* Choose either the nouns or verbs.
   - Have the student think of items within a given category (eg tell me the names of some animals, foods you like, etc). Then, describe the items, say what they do or how you use them. For **eLr** activities, go to *Semantics - Naming*, the student names the picture, then thinks of other items in the category.
2. Sentence Level with concrete support (ie pictures, objects):
   - Using speech in daily events, eg clearly requesting items or events in the class from teachers or other students.
   - Using more specific language to give instructions, describe events or things, give clues. This places more demand on the student.
   - Describe a familiar topic or event to one or two friends, then the class. Describe a less familiar event to a friend, small group, the class.
   - start by providing visual cues (eg describe a picture, recalling 3 pictures from memory, describing emotions of people in a picture). Use classroom situations, such as "tell Johnny what is on your desk", "what you have drawn". Then, "tell me/the class what you have done".
   - Use barrier games, where each student has the same picture, and one student dictates what has to be drawn and where.
   - **eLr** activities - Go to *Semantics - Complex Instructions*. Focus on the student giving instructions to a listener. Turn off the prompt, so the student can generate their own instructions.
3. Short Paragraph Level - less concrete support:
   - Describe imaginative events. Give a topic or idea, and the student makes up a story. Start with a familiar topic and small group, progress to less familiar topics and a larger group.
   - **eLr** activities - Go to *Semantics - Naming*. Use the pictures as a starting point for a description of what it is, and how it is used.
   - **eLr** activities - Go to *Semantics - Spoken Word/Picture Match*. Have the student name the items. If you are in *field of 4 or 6*, the student can select 2 or 3 items and make a short story that includes those items.
   - Read a short story. Then have the students describe what they are thinking, ie what clothes are the characters wearing, the weather like etc.
4. Longer Oral Narrative - This involves retelling events, stories etc. The student needs to be able to set the scene, explain the "episodes" that occurred and how they were dealt with, and then how the story ended. Start at a very simple level:
   - discuss what an "episode" is, ie it's a problem. Spend time talking about different sorts of problems - thus practising describing skills. Then read a story and have the student pick out the "problems" and describe them.
   - then talk about solutions, and how some solutions work and other don't. Describe different examples. Talk about why they did or didn't work. Go back to the story and talk about the "solutions" or "what happened" and why it did or didn't work.
   - then talk about how it ended. Discuss why, and perhaps what they think would happen next.
   - practise this format in describing familiar situations (classroom, playground)
     Have the student describe the same event to a variety of people, ie someone who knows what happened, someone who doesn't know anything about it (need to give extra information), a friendly adult who knows, an adult who doesn't know about it, the principal!
   - Once they can describe isolated problems and solutions, practice linking the episodes in a story. Practice setting the scene (who, where), describe episodes and outcomes, and then how it ended.

Text Narrative

Written narrative differs from oral narrative

In written text -

- the function is to relate, describe, teach, reflect without an immediate listener to request clarification
- the topics are usually the "there and then" rather than "here and now", and need to be organised and cohesive around the central topic.
- the text structure needs concise vocabulary and syntax.

The development of written text progresses through -

- Descriptive sequences - description of people or things
- Action sequences - descriptions of actions
- Reaction sequences (age 9yrs) - sequences that describe actions and reactions.
- Complex episodes (mid to late primary) -stories with a setting, episodes and conclusion
- Interactive episodes (late primary)- a number of characters with different goals which interact with each other.
- Expository text (early adolescent) - students can summarise, draw inferences, be able to abstract and generalise, and describe connections between different elements.

Activities to develop text narrative

- spend lots of time developing oral narrative (see oral narrative section).
- provide student with visual plan, ie give the main headings on a page to assist in planning (who, where, problem, solution, how did it end).
- discuss familiar stories, and help student identify the parts of the narrative
- encourage increased use of descriptive words and dialogue within the text.

Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary

Some students have a decreased knowledge base of vocabulary, and need specific activities to expand word knowledge. The vocabulary used in an activity depends on the level of the student. Examples of types of activity include -

- naming objects, pictures, describing words, actions
- naming items that "go together"
- grouping or categorising items
- expand knowledge of existing vocabulary (eg using word in alternative contexts)
- synonym and antonyms
- homophones (words that sound the same, but have different spellings and meanings)
- homographs (words that are spelt the same, but have different meanings)
- concept maps - central theme, related vocabulary, discuss how they are related

e*Lr* - Lower Level / Early Primary:
a) Go to *Semantics - Naming*. You can work with nouns and verbs using different types of activities. Encourage naming, discussion of features, and other related items. You can print off many of the activities (eg Picture Flyout, and PicCards) and cut out the pictures. These are useful for non computer based activities involving naming and sorting into categories. The sorting can involve major distinctions (such as *Animals* and *Foods*), or minor differences (eg those with long tails, and short tails). Encourage spontaneous discussion and a rich language experience.
b) Go to *Semantics - Spoken Word Picture Match*. Similar activities as outlined above can be used with these items. The student can name the item for you to point to. In the 'Related General', and 'Related Specific', discussion about specific uses and differences can occur.
c) Go to *Semantics - Categories*. There are activities in the *Field of 3* and *Field of 4* which are picture based. The student decides which items fit the category. Encourage discussion about the features and differences between items.

e*Lr* - Higher Level
a) Go to *Semantics - Categories*. There are 3 levels - *Unrelated General*, *Unrelated Specific*, and *Related Specific*, with the easiest being *Unrelated General*. Within each section, the task difficulty increases as the 'field' (or number of choices) increases. The word-based tasks are appropriate for older students. Examples of tasks include:
   - which words 'belong in' the group (eg transport)
   - which words are 'parts of' an item (eg a house)
   - which is the 'odd word'
b) These types of tasks encourage categorisation of vocabulary and use of specific vocabulary when giving reasons for their choice. Words that are unknown to the student should be discussed and used in context.
c) Go to *Semantics - Associations*. This section contains graded activities that involve judgements about synonyms, antonyms, relationships between objects and user, and part/whole relationships.
d) Go to *Reading & Spelling - Homophones, and Homographs*. These are useful activities to explore word meanings, and differences in the use of words in context.

Word Retrieval

Some children may have a good understanding of word meanings (semantic system), but have difficulty retrieving words, or getting the right word. They may be unable to name specific items as they speak, thus use words like "thing", "the one you use to hit with" etc. This difficulty will impact on their ability to competently and smoothly use oral narrative, give directions, have conversations, and produce written text narrative. Activities to practise word retrieval skills include -

- naming pictures of nouns. Start with very familiar common items, and progress to more specific. Encourage increased speed of naming.
- naming pictures of actions (as above)
- give the student a category (eg animals), have them name as many items in that category as possible. The level of the student will dictate how concrete or abstract the category should be. For example:
    - Easier level - animals, things in the sea, buildings, plants, furniture, things in the supermarket, sports, things in the kitchen, tools
    - Middle level - round things, prickly things, occupations, blue things, grains, root vegetables, citrus fruit (ie subcategories)
    - Higher level - coverings, communications
- thinking of describing words - emotions, sizes, weather, attitudes, measurements
- thinking of words within a context - Do "cloze passages". Read a story, stop, and let the student think of what word would be next. You may need to finish the sentence and then let them fill in the word. Start with nouns, then adjectives, adverbs etc. Have them think of as many other words you could use.
- Give a phrase and have the student name the item. Describe a feeling and have the student name one word for that feeling.
- Synonyms and antonyms - name the word and have the student name the synonym or antonym.

Short-Term Memory

A student may appear to have short-term memory problems. This is a complex area and may be affected by task familiarity, language level used (concrete or abstract), length of instruction, and complexity of instruction.

General principles include -
- when introducing new material, use simple language first (concrete ways of explaining, short sentences etc). Examine the vocabulary you are using in class. Explicitly explain and demonstrate new vocabulary, and then incorporate that vocabulary. Provide redundant information. Have the student repeat new vocabulary, and use it in a variety of sentences.
- when giving instructions about well learned routines, encourage the student to attend and manage longer instructions, and more complex sentences.

Teach strategies to help memory of instructions or new material -
- rehearsal - repeat the instruction, out loud first, and then sub-vocally
- visual imagery - drawing/describing a mental picture of new material
- analyse key ideas - concept maps, writing main words or ideas. If following an instruction, highlighting the key words (either verbally, or using written text)
- paraphrasing - student is encouraged to put an instruction into their own words.

Encourage constructive listening behaviour
- memory for facts. Tell the student you want them to listen to a story, and you want them to remember all the people's names (or some other specific piece of information). Then read the story, and talk about what was recalled.
- Activities which involve listening for errors, or for missing information.
- Riddles - listening for 3 or more clues and guessing the item.
- Jokes
- Listening to short stories and making inferences.

eLr activities

a) Go to *Semantics - Spoken Word Picture Match*. Have the student listen and point to the items that are named. The easiest are likely to be the 'Unrelated General' sections, and the most difficult, 'Related Specific' (as the vocabulary is less common). Start with the number of items that the student can easily remember (eg 2 or 3), and slowly increase the number of items. You can start with optimal conditions (eg quiet etc), and introduce distractors that simulate normal classroom conditions.

b) Go to *Semantics - Complex Instructions*. The activities are graded. *One attribute* means you are working with one concept (such as shape), *Two attributes* - 2 concepts (shape and colour) etc. You can then choose length of instructions. *One discriminator* means there is only one choice to be made, *2 discriminators* - 2 choices etc. The most complex instruction would involve 3 attributes and 4 discriminators. Start at an appropriate level for the student. You can choose to click off the prompt and give the student your own directions.

Detecting the Main Idea or Theme

Begin with short fairly obvious material and progress to more abstract ideas. For example-
- give a list of items, and the student names how they are similar (eg concrete items "cat, dog, rabbit", more abstract "sad, happy, annoyed", "ball, wheel, orange").
- Name the theme or main idea in -
  - an event that the student is familiar with, or has experienced (eg a recent sports day, the recess routine)
  - a less recent events (eg well known holiday routines, a day at the beach, going swimming).
  - a short simple story
  - a story with a moral, ie more abstract
- Have a set of cards with a main theme written on them. Students pick one and talk about the main idea - encourage them to use personal experiences or make up a story.
- Use visual representation of main ideas, eg story maps. Show the connection between the theme and the other elements.

Conversational Skills

If you suspect a student has difficulty with conversational skills, it is best to observe the student in a variety of situations before forming goals. Note the student's ability to converse with different people (eg peers, teachers), and in different settings (playground, classroom etc). Try to determine where the breakdown is occurring -

- Interaction - Who starts the conversation? Can the student begin a conversation? Maintain appropriate eye contact? Listen and answer appropriately? Know when to change topic or follow a topic change? Know when the listener wants to finish or do something else?
- Inferencing - Can the student detect what sort of interaction is emerging? is it an argument, is it gossip, or is the group sharing and establishing solidarity with quick changes of topic. Can they detect when the nature of the interaction changes.
- Content - Within a conversation, does the student provide the right amount of information? (too much is boring, too little is confusing). If s/he is asked for clarification, is it done appropriately?
- Language - Is the student's lack of language skills causing confusion, eg unable to use specific language, or has poor referential skills (eg uses "it" without establishing what "it" is).

Decide on 1 or 2 areas of difficulty, then decide on activities to initially highlight and teach the concept, and then to practise the skill. Examples of activities include:
- Read examples of the problem area in stories, and discuss what is happening
- Use short plays, and discuss examples of the problem area (eg topic changes, talk about when the topic changed, how did it change, how did the listener respond, how and why did s/he ask for clarification.
- Use role-play with a small group to practice the problem area.
- Some language-delayed children need to be taught scripts to get started or maintain a conversation. Teach them ways to start a conversation, how to comment on what the others are doing (to be included), to ask questions about what is happening, and how to stay on topic.
- If the problem is with language structure, the student may need vocabulary extension activities, or practice with using specific language (eg giving instructions, barrier games etc).

Developing Early Literacy Skills

Learning to speak in most children occurs with relative ease. However, learning to read and write does not occur automatically. Reading and spelling is an extension of our verbal language (speaking & listening), ie written words are spoken words on paper. However, it needs to be taught.

If a child has had difficulty learning to speak (ie delayed language, or a significant difficulty being understood), there is a higher risk that there may be problems learning to read and spell. This is because children who have problems producing sounds may have a deeper difficulty with their "sound system". As reading is based on sounds, this means that acquiring reading skills may also be affected. Some of the problems a pre-school child might have with their speech are -

Language
• difficulty following directions or understanding language
• difficulty naming things quickly
• word retrieval problems
• difficulty recalling things (short term memory)

Speech
• difficulty saying long and complex words (sequencing sounds)
• significant articulation problems

Children with a history of these sorts of problems often have delayed development of their "sound system" or phonological awareness. "Phone" means "speech sound", so this skill means the awareness of speech sounds, ie being able to hear sounds and understand how they are part of words.

Children who are strong in phonological awareness are able "play" with sounds, and this skill develops over time, usually at the same time that reading develops.

How Phonological Awareness is related to Reading Development

Phonological Awareness	Reading Development
Stage 1 - Preschool and Prep Sensitive to sounds in words Rhyming - recognises when words rhyme, matches which words rhyme, recognises "odd one out" Alliteration - awareness of beginning sounds	Logographic Stage - Kinder, age 4 Visual cue phase - rote memory of words needs context to "read" words Can only read learned words, ie sight vocabulary
Stage 2 - Prep and Grade 1 Rhyming - can produce words that rhyme & finish sentences with a rhyming word Alliteration - improves Isolation - can name first and last sounds in words, can recognise if words start/finish with the same sound Segmentation - can clap syllables in words. Can "sound out" words with 2 or 3 sounds	Alphabetic Phase Phonemic cue reading stage - makes use of early knowledge of letter names/sounds Lots of sounding out Can work out new words 50 -100 sight words Three letter words
Stage 3:Manipulation of sounds in words Segmentation; can "sound out" words with 3 & 4 sounds Blending - can blend 3 & 4 sounds to make a word Exchanging - can substitute beginning /ending sounds, delete sounds from words.	Orthographic Stage - middle 2nd year Cracking the code of English language uses multi-letter units (eg tion, ough) Doesn't rely on "sounding out" (phonological method only) Understands how neighbouring letter strings affect neighbour letters Making mental pictures of words
	Skilled Reader Phase Efficient reading - emphasis on meaning, not decoding Phonologic or orthographic analysis used only if required Reading is effortless

Pre-Reading Skills to Focus on
1. Understanding about books:
This means knowing how a book is used, that you turn the pages, and go from left to right through the book. With exposure to books, children begin to realise that the "scribbles" on the page are read, that they relate to the pictures, and that you read them to get to know the story. They also get to know that the words go from left to right on the page. By listening to stories early in life, children develop a love of books, stories, and have a positive feeling about books and reading.

2. Word Awareness:
Understanding that our stream of verbal language is not one continuous word, ie that words are separate. Children can be encouraged to tap out words in a sentence. Begin with short, single syllable words, and then work up to multi-syllabic words.
> My name is Tom
> I have a bun
> Come over here
> It is a freezing morning

3. Syllables:
This involves understanding that words are made up of parts, or syllables. Children can be encouraged to tap or clap the parts of words.
> big
> heavy
> caterpillar

4. Sound Awareness:
Games that focus on sounds help children understand what we mean by a "sound".
Some examples are -
- playing games where you listen to a sound, and say what sort of sound it is.
- Long sounds - m, s, z, f, v, sh
- Short popping sounds - p, t, k, b, d, g, ch
- Nosey sounds - m, n, ng
- Voiced sounds (heavy sounds where the voice box is working) - m, b, d, l, z,
- Voiceless sounds - p, t, k, s, f, sh, ch

You can also play with sounds by working out what we are doing when we say certain sounds. For example, "p" our lips pop apart, "t" our tongue is up behind the top teeth, "f" we bite out bottom lip.

Pre-Alphabetic Reading Stage
These skills should be practised till they can be done quickly and automatically. The child should be able to respond in 1 second to each of these tasks.
1. Isolating sounds in words - Naming the first and last sounds in words, then the vowels.
2. Rhyming - Produce real and nonsense words that rhyme.
3. Blending and Sounding Out Sounds in Words - 2, 3 and 4 sound words.
Post-Alphabetic Stage
1. Syllable Manipulation - Naming, isolating and removing syllables in words.
2. Sound Swap - Able to change a given sound in a word.
3. Subtract a Sound - When given a word, can then say the word without one of the sounds.

These skills when mastered provide a sound basis for early reading and spelling. As the reading process occurs, children are taught to recognise commonly occurring letter patterns. For example -
Early letter patterns are -
> "at" words - cat, bat, sat
> "ig" words: pig, big
Later letter patterns:
> "ent": bent, sent, went
> "ast": last, fast, mast
> "able", ance, etc

Literacy Problems

Overview

Many students have trouble with reading and spelling. It doesn't matter what age the person is, it is important to work out at what level the breakdown is occurring. eLr contains activities to:

- develop phonological awareness skills
- strengthen the ability to recognise and spell words with similar letter patterns
- teach spelling rules - plurals, silent letters, contractions, verb tense
- understand vowels - short & long vowels and diphthongs. Assists in the understanding that vowels can sound the same and have different spellings
- practise reading and spelling difficult (demon) words
- learn the homophones (words that sound the same), and homographs (spelt the same)

eLr is not a total reading program. It aims to provide activities to strengthen various skill areas in reading and spelling development. The tasks are designed to be used within an interactive session, with the student receiving reinforcement and feedback from the parent/therapist or tutor/helper. Other aspects of reading development which should occur include development of fluency in reading (eg by use of such techniques as guided oral reading, silent reading etc), and the development of comprehension. Techniques to assist comprehension include vocabulary extension, question answering, developing story structure, summarization, story maps.

First Steps in Helping the Student
The following is a guide to work out the nature of the problem at the decoding, or word level.

1. Standardised tests
These will provide a grade or age level that can provide a base line measure of the student's ability. This base line can then be used to measure progress after a certain amount of intervention has occurred.

2. Informal evaluation methods
To begin planning the intervention program, the student's strengths and areas of difficulty will need to be identified. A suggested approach is as follows:

    I. Sample reading skills
    <u>Reading a passage of text</u>
    You can identify what types of words have been mastered, and where the breakdown is occurring. For example the student may -
- read only the short frequently occurring words, such as "a, the, in, by".
- read some short three letter words (such as 'cat'), but s/he may not have mastered instant recognition of a range of short words (eg mug, top, cap).
- read many of the short words, but have difficulty with words containing initial or final consonant blends, or with differentiating the the "e rule" words (eg tap, tape).
- have mastered most of the short words, words with blends, but have difficulty with words that contain syllables, compound words, etc.

    As they read, take note of their ability to use punctuation, and to make use of the sense of the passage to help work out a word. If they are relying too heavily on "sounding out", it suggests they have not developed visual knowledge of word patterns to help reading become more automatic.

    <u>Reading a word list</u>
    The "**eLr** *Spelling Screening"*, can be used as a reading screen. Have the student read each set of words. The sets are arranged to sample short 3 letter words, words with blends, words with the "e rule", a range of vowel sounds (short, long and diphthongs), non words, and compound words.

II. Sample spelling skills

It is useful to examine the fluency of writing a passage of text. This can uncover patterns and help determine level of breakdown. The "**eLr** *Spelling Screening*" can be also used to help determine the types of words the student is having difficulty reading.

III. Phonological Awareness Skills

All students with reading and spelling difficulties should be screened for phonological awareness skills. This type of screening examines their ability to identify patterns in the sounds of words, to "hear" initial/ final/ and vowel sounds, and to manipulate sounds in words. These skills should be well established, so that the student can respond automatically (ie within 1 second) to the various phonological awareness tasks (see below).

Phonological knowledge, visual knowledge of word patterns, and spelling rules are used in combination by skilled readers and spellers to read and spell familiar words, and to determine unfamiliar words.

Specific Checklist
Use the following steps as a guide in determining at what level the student is experiencing problems in reading and spelling.

1. Check phonological awareness skills. The child should be able to do the following activities quickly and automatically, ie within 1 second.
    *   Recognise if words rhyme
    *   Produce a list of words that rhyme
    *   Recognise the word that doesn't rhyme (odd one out)
    *   Clap out and name how many syllables in a word
    *   Name the first sound in a word which has been said to the student
    *   Name the last sound in a word which has been said
    *   Name the middle sound (ie the vowel)
    *   Segment a word (ie 'sound out' and count how many sounds in a word)
    *   Blend sounds and name the word (eg p-i-g = pig)
    *   Exchange sounds in words (ie substitute sounds, or delete sounds from words)
        - say 'clap', now say it without the 'l' = cap
        - say 'clap', now say it without the 'c' = lap

2. Check letter and sound knowledge
    *   what letters does the person know the names of (ie naming letters, and writing letters).
    *   does the person know the sounds that the letters make
    *   does the person know the vowels
        - the letter names of vowels (a, e, i, o, u)
        - the sounds of vowels
            - say the sound of short vowels in a word (eg pig = /i/)
            - say the sound of long vowels in a word (eg moon = /oo/, feet = /ee/)
            - say the sound of diphthongs (sliders) (eg light = long /i/, fade = long /a/)

3. Check what type of words can s/he read.
    *   any sight words? - which ones
    *   three letter words with different vowel (eg 'at' words, 'an' words, 'ig' words etc).
    *   words with initial blends (eg slam, grip),
    *   words with final blends (eg mend, self)
    *   words with consonant clusters - eg split
    *   words with initial and final blends - eg print
    *   compound words - eg bedside
    *   two syllable words - eg canteen
    *   nonsense words - eg fip, gup, plam, brend

Difficulties with phonological awareness - phonemic awareness section in eLr

1.   What do you mean by "sound out"
Most students need to do activities to heighten their awareness of sounds. Even students aged 9 - 11 years who have literacy problems, are often not sure of what we mean by "sound out" the word. They can be confused by what a "sound" means, or are simply unable to "hear" the different sounds in a word. This will be a significant factor in spelling problems. If a student is not confident in what a sound is, they will be unable to sound out all the sounds in a word, and will have trouble spelling the word. For example, when asked to sound out a word like "spot", the student may respond "sp - ot", thus unable to differentiate each sound.

The *Sound Awareness* section in **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness* can be used as the basis of simple activities that focus on sounds. In this section, sounds are grouped in various categories, such as "popping, long, nasal, voiced, whispered". For example:

- popping - sounds where a little explosion occurs (eg p, b, t, d, k, g)
- long - sounds where no explosion occurs (eg m, n, s, f, v, sh, l, r, z)
- nasal - sounds which come out your nose (eg m, n, ng)
- voiced - "heavy" sounds where voice is used (eg b, d, g, v, z, m, n, ng, dge, r, l)
- whispered - "light" sounds where no voice is used (eg p, t, k, s, f, sh)

As you can see, some sounds fall into more than one category. For example:
p - whispered, popping
b - voiced, popping
m - voiced, long, nasal
sh - whispered, long

The activities in **eLr** include *TicTacLetters* and *Jumping letters*. In each task, the student names the letter, gives the sound, and then decides which category or what type of sound it is. Other "off screen" activities include, having the student listen to a sound and simply name the category. Use of a white board can be a useful method. These types of activities are uncomplicated, but encourage the student to focus on listening to sounds, and differentiating them from letters.

2.   What are the letter names:
Go to *Phonemic Awareness - Alphabet*. There are simple activities that involve naming the letter before a turn is taken in the games (eg *Jumping letters*, or *TicTacLetters*)

3.   What sounds do the letters make:
eLr, *Phonemic Awareness - Alphabet, Letter Sounds*.
Simple games of *TicTacLetters* where the student gives the sound of the letters before taking turns.

4.   Which word rhymes:
eLr, *Phonemic Awareness - Rhyming*.
Two sections - *Rhyme Identification* and *Odd one Out*.
Rhyme Identification:
   PicPairs model - Two "lists" of pictures without a written name. If you are unsure of what the picture is, select "both" on the control bar to reveal the word. It is desirable that the student does not see the word, as this influences their ability to "hear" sounds in words. They tend to focus on the spelling or the letters. To do the activity, click on one of the pictures on the left and say the word. Then click on a picture on the right that rhymes.
Odd one out:
   MultPic Slideshow model - The tasks which are labelled "high contrast" are easier, as the word which doesn't rhyme has a vowel which is easily discriminated from the other two words. The pictures appear without words (words can be revealed by selecting "both"). As above, it is desirable that the student does not see the word. The student says the name of each picture, and clicks on the one that doesn't rhyme.

Word Based Activities:

In each of the sections *Rhyme Identification* and *Odd one Out*, there are also word based activities. These are designed for use by older students who may be able to read and spell short words, but are having trouble with spelling vowel sounds. Reading each word reinforces reading skills, and focussing on the sounds of the vowels strengthens spelling skills. These students should be encouraged to accompany the computer task with off screen writing activities. For example, after completing the task on the computer, write the words that match, and perhaps sounding out each of the words.

5.   Naming the first, last or vowel sound in a word:

eLr *Phonemic Awareness - Initial Consonants - Final Consonants - Vowels*
There are various ways to strengthen a student's perception of sounds in words.
- *Starts/ends with the same sound* - name three or four pictures, and then pick which words start/end with the same sound
- *Identify initial/final/vowel sound* - name a picture, and then name the first/last/vowel sound
- *Word generation* - name a picture, and then name other words which start/end with the same sound
- *Odd one out* - name three or four pictures and listen for the one which has a different first/last/vowel sound

In each of the sections there are activities which are picture based (ie the student names a picture), and also some that are word based. When working with picture based tasks, it is often better not to have the word under the picture. If you are unsure what the picture is, select "both" (picture + word) on the screen, and then select "image" (ie to turn off the word). If the word is on, the student may be confused. For example, if the word is "bath", the student may think the final sound is the "h" sound, when it is actually the "th" sound.

The word based tasks are used with older students who are able to read short words, but need reinforcement of reading skills, and are working on spelling skills. In this section different spelling for the same sound is often demonstrated (eg a word may start with the same sound (the /f/ sound), but have different spellings (eg face photo).

6.   Sounding Out Words:

eLr *Phonemic Awareness - Sounds in Words & Sound Letter Links in Words*

Both of these sections contain activities using words *With sound/letter correspondence* (ie that each letter has a sound), and for words *Without sound /letter correspondence* (ie where one sound may have two letters, as in "bath").

The *Sounds In Words* section does not link letters with sound, whereas the *Sound Letter Links in Words* section matches letters to the sounds and words.

For both sections, the student should:
- look at the picture
- say the word
- sound out the word, using a finger for each sound
- say how many sounds
- then click the buttons on screen to check if they were correct

Depending on the age of the student, and the aim of the activity, the student may then benefit from writing the word, and underlining the letters to match the sounds. This extension would be for a student who was concerned with spelling development.

There are pictorial based, and word based tasks within each section. The word-based tasks would be for students for whom spelling was an issue, ie above Grade 3 level.

Nonsense words are also used in the *Sound Letter Links in Words*. Use of nonsense words is important to practise knowledge of how sounds relate to each other in the English language.

7. Consonant Blends:

Consonant Blends occur when two consonants are together in a word. For example, "stop" has two consonants at the beginning of the word - 's' and 't', and "nest" has two consonants at the end of the word - 's' and 't'. Children with reading and spelling difficulties need to practise listening to, and spelling, words with consonant blends. Blends which contain 'l' and 'r' are often the most difficult to identify.

Go to: **eLr** *Initial Blends*, and *Final Blends*. There are two main sections in each area - *Identifying Initial/Final sound*, and *Counting Sounds in Words*. There are pictorial based activities, and word based activities.

Identifying Initial/Final Sound:
The *MultiPic Slideshow* model presents 4 pictures. The student says the name of each picture, and identifies which words start with the same two sounds. The "high contrast" tasks are easier, as the consonant blends are unrelated (eg /sp/ and /tr/). The "low contrast" tasks are more difficult as the choices are related (eg /sk/ /sp/).

The *PicTextMatch* model is useful for older students. It requires the student to look at the picture, say the word, and select the two letters that represent the sounds that the picture starts/ends with.

Counting Sounds in Words:
The *Pic sound buttons* model presents a picture. The student says the name of the picture, sounds out the word using fingers or buttons to count the sounds, and then clicks the on screen buttons to check. The on screen buttons display the letters which represent each sound, thus giving reinforcement for the spelling of the sounds.

The tasks are named to enable the teacher to select specific blends - eg "sp st sk", "mixed /s/ blends", "/l/ blends" etc.

The word based activities are designed to be used for students who can already read and spell short words, but who need practice reading, and reinforcement for the different ways to spell certain sounds (ie that one sound can be spelt in different ways).

Which students should do phonological awareness?

It is strongly suggested that all students with reading or spelling difficulties will most likely benefit from phonological awareness activities. The screening section will have helped determine at what level the student is having difficulty. As a guide, two examples will be outlined.

Example 1: The student knows many of the 100 Most Common words (such as "a, the, in on"). S/he has not established confidence in reading and spelling short three letter words.

- Review letter names - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness - Alphabet*
- Do "What do you mean by a sound" activities (see above) - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness - Sound Awareness*
- Rhyming - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness - Rhyming* (pictorial activities)
- Initial Consonants (naming, identifying same, word generation) - in **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness* (pictorial activities)
- Final Consonants (naming etc, as above) - in **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness* (pictorial activities)
- Vowels (naming etc, as above) - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness* (pictorial activities)
- Sounding out Words - **eLr** *Sound/letter links in words* (pictorial activities)
- Begin teaching recognition of short three letter words - **eLr** *Reading and Spelling - Three Letter Words*. Use the activities to encourage reading, and also lots of writing (spelling) of the words in each task.

- As skills increases, introduce longer word patterns - **eLr** *Reading and Spelling - Four Letter Words.*

Example 2: The student can read three letter words confidently, most words with initial and final blends, and is having trouble with words containing 2 - 3 syllables or words with longer letter patterns (such as "ight"). This student is having difficulty spelling words with the more difficult blends (eg /l/ and /r/ blends), words with the "e rule", and is having major problems spelling the vowel sounds in words.

- Begin by reviewing "What do you mean by a sound" activities - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness - Sound Awareness.* These students have often experienced repeated failure, and are not sure of what is meant by "sounding out" words. (See above for complete description)
- Review ability to identify initial and final sounds - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness - Initial Consonants*, and *Final Consonants*
- Ensure the student can automatically say the vowel sound in a word - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness - Vowels* (see above for description). Start with naming long vowels (easier to hear), short vowels, and then diphthongs).
- Segmenting/Sounding out words - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness - Sound/letter links in words.* Start with pictorial activities, and then move on to word based activities.
- Sounding out words with initial and final blends - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness - Initial blends / Final blends.* Do pictorial, and then word based activities.
- Review the "e rule" - **eLr** *Reading and Spelling - e rule.* Spend time sounding out the short word (eg cap), versus the long word (cape).
- Review spelling of four letter words (words with final blends, and containing frequent letter patterns) - **eLr** *Reading & Spelling - Four letter words.*
- Spelling words with vowels - start with long vowel digraphs as these are easier to identify - **eLr** *Reading & Spelling - Long Vowel Digraphs.* Ensure all activities are accompanied by off screen tasks, such as writing the words, sounding them out, finding other words with similar patters etc.
- Begin spelling and reading multi-syllable words - **eLr** *Phonemic Awareness, Word Awareness, Syllables in a word* for pictorial based tasks. Also **eLr** *Reading & Spelling, Multiple-syllable words* for word based activities.
- Begin introducing demon words - **eLr** *Reading and Spelling - Demon Words.*

For both students, it is important to decide clearly what are the immediate goals you plan to work on. It is best to have about 3 main goals at any one time. If there are too many goals, the student will often get confused and not have enough time to consolidate. Use the forms in the Support Section, to organise sessions and home practice. For example, the "*My Word List*" sheet, is a useful way of summarising the sets of words you are working on. It also provides a way to perform quick reviews (during the session, and also at home).

e*L*r Spelling Screening

Say each word, giving an example of usage (eg *"sat" "he sat down"*). Have the student write the word. Do not correct or give clues. Give positive reinforcement for doing a good job at listening and writing. Do the sets in order, one set at a time (may be done in several sessions). The student does not need to know which words were correct or incorrect.

SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	SET 4
sat	skin	hand	squid
pen	brag	mist	split
rim	clap	camp	scrap
jog	slip	runt	spring
mud	twin	self	strap
vet	crop	melt	
fix			
win			

SET 5	SET 6	SET 7	SET 8
blend	shell	feel	hope
brisk	thong	look	place
slant	push	tooth	wide
drift	chin	hurt	stone
swept	witch	dark	cage
plump		hawk	mule
		heat	
		dead	
		short	

SET 9	SET 10 (non words)	SET 11	SET 12
boil	jed	fear	cowboy
goat	gop	care	pancake
snail	vum	fight	footpath
fry	bov	played	sunshine
tray	rin	dropped	carpet
clown	fomp		music
	belk		magic
	plam		lemonade
	frot		marmalade
	blant		telephone
	prend		mystery