

Explicit teaching of onset and rime units to Grade 3 and 4 under performing students improves their isolated word reading and prose reading accuracy.

Procedure:

The students in the intervention group were withdrawn from their classroom for ten one hour sessions. Lessons were conducted in a spare classroom so that the students were in a quiet environment free from distractions. The lessons were conducted over a two week period and took place somewhere between 9am and 1pm with one lesson per day. Lesson times varied so that the students were not missing out on the same thing each day in their classroom.

The lessons followed a similar format and were scaffolded so that the students could become independent by the end of the intervention program. As the intervention program progressed, the amount of teacher support was reduced enabling the students to independently use the actions they had learnt, knowing when and why to use them when reading. Each teaching session focused on the explicit teaching of a specific rime unit as well as the explicit teaching of how to segment and blend words into onset and rime units. Teaching sessions 6-10 focused on two rime units per session. The rime units chosen were those the students had difficulty with as identified in the pre-testing. A total of fifteen rime units were taught. As the series of lessons progressed the students were familiar with the format, they knew what came next and what they were required to do. This increased their independence and self-efficacy. Anecdotal records were kept in the Teacher Reflection Journal commenting on the students' performance, engagement and use of strategies.

Each lesson (except lesson one) began with a review of the previous day's rime unit. The students were asked to articulate what rime unit they had learnt and if they had discovered any other words containing the same rime unit. If so, the words were written on the Word Wall. A running record was then taken on the previous day's rime unit text. This was to ascertain if the students could read the targeted words in a piece of continuous text.

The new rime unit was then introduced for the session. The students were asked if they knew any words containing that rime unit and those words were shared, discussed and written up on the whiteboard if appropriate. The teacher demonstrated to the students how to segment and blend the words into onset and rime units. The students read each word breaking it up into onset and rime and then blending it back together. The students then used magnetic letters to physically segment and blend the onset and rime units in the words.

Reinforcement of the rime unit and the target words then took place in a game, a PowerPoint and through flashcards. The students then recorded the target words in their "Words I Am Learning" book which they could take to show their class teacher and parents and return the next day. The students also recorded the words on the Word Wall which was on display in the classroom.

The students were then oriented to a text containing the target words. The students were asked, “Why do you think we are going to read this text? What words will you be looking for as you are reading? What will you do if you come to a word that you’re not sure of?” The students took part in a shared reading of the text and highlighted the targeted rime unit words. The students then had an opportunity to read the text individually.

The final part of each of the sessions involved a review of what was learnt and focused on metacognition. The teacher asked the students to articulate what new words they had learnt, the strategies they used, how they can use what they learnt and how it will help them in the classroom and at home. The teacher encouraged the students to use a self-script when they are reading so that they will see themselves as self-teachers. The students articulated the rime unit learnt and said, “I know how to read these words. I will remember to say the word by breaking it up into onset and rime when I am trying to read new words. I know that I can read other words with the same rime unit.” The self-talk was an integral component in the program as it enables students to direct and manage their reading ability.

Materials:

Teaching Session Materials:

Onset and Rime Teaching Program (Appendix 2)

The outline for the ten lessons specifying what the teacher and students will do and say. Refer to Appendix 2 for a detailed description of the teaching program.

Rime Units, Target Words and Games for Each Session (Appendix 3)

An outline of each session’s targeted rime units as well as the reinforcement game to be played. Refer to Appendix 3 for a detailed description of each of the rime unit words and the games played in each session.

Rime Unit Texts (Appendix 4)

A short text containing the rime units focused on during each session is introduced to the students so that they practice reading the words in a piece of text. These texts were devised by the teacher. See Appendix 4 for texts used in the teaching program.

Games

Wordmaker Game, Concentration Game, Word Slide Game, Spinner Game, Word Family Sort, Construct A Word, Word Blender. All were used to reinforce the targeted rime unit for the session.

Laptop

A PowerPoint presentation of the words containing the focused rime units for each session was used to reinforce the segmenting and blending of the onset and rime.

Teacher Reflection Journal (Appendix 5)

This was completed daily by the teacher. A running record was taken on the previous day's text and anecdotal comments were made on the students' performance and engagement in the session.

Flashcards

Flashcards with the targeted rime unit were used in each session to reinforce the rime.

“Words I Am Learning” Student Books

Each student was given a “Words I Am Learning” book to record the targeted rime unit words. The book was taken back to the classroom and sent home daily so the students could show their teacher and their parents what they had been learning.

Miscellaneous

Word Wall – A3 paper
Permanent Markers
Portable Whiteboard
Whiteboard Spray and Cloths
Magnetic Letters
3 Individual Whiteboards
Grey lead Pencils
Eraser
Highlighters
Merit Stickers

Onset and Rime Teaching Program

This program was used with three Grade 3 and 4 students.
One lesson was taken per day for ten days.
Lessons were of one hour duration.

Objectives of the Intervention Program:

- to teach the students to decode words by segmenting and blending onset and rime units
- to identify rime units in words both visually and orally
- to transfer rime unit knowledge to other words
- to use rime unit knowledge to improve prose reading
- to articulate and reflect on strategies learnt
- to develop the student's self-efficacy and self-management skills

Activity	Teacher	Students
Review of previous day's rime unit. (except session1)	Teacher asks students, "What rime unit did we learn yesterday? What were some of our words? Does anyone have any other words with the same rime pattern that they can add to our Word Wall?" Teacher takes a running record of previous day's text.	Students articulate yesterday's rime unit and add any new words to the Word Wall. Students read previous day's text containing rime units to the teacher. Other students work on computer game "Construct A Word" or "Word Blender".
Introduce new rime unit.	Teacher writes three words with the same rime unit on the whiteboard. Teacher reads words to the students and asks if they can hear or see any similar patterns in those words. Teacher asks students if they know any other words using the same rime unit. Teacher writes rime unit words given by students on the whiteboard as well as all the rime unit words targeted for the session.	Students listen to the words being read from the board. Students identify the rime unit. Students provide other words with the same rime unit.
Magnetic Letters	Teacher uses magnetic letters to make up the words written on the whiteboard.	Students use magnetic letters to make up the words from the whiteboard.

	<p>Teacher reads words segmented into onset and rime units whilst physically moving each part and verbalizing the segment and blend, e.g. “l”, “aw”, “law.”</p> <p>Teacher explains to the students that when breaking up words into onset and rime units the rime will begin with a vowel.</p>	<p>Students use the magnetic letters to physically and verbally segment the words into onset and rime units then blend the words back together.</p> <p>Students say, “l”, “aw”, “law.”</p> <p>Students follow this procedure for all the words they make up with the magnetic letters.</p>
Game	<p>Teacher explains game reinforcing the rime units to the students. Games will vary each session. (see Rime Units, Target words and Games For each Session)</p>	<p>Students play game reinforcing the rime unit introduced.</p> <p>Students orally read the words they have made within the game.</p>
PowerPoint	<p>Teacher sets up PowerPoint containing targeted words segmented into onset and rime units then blended together.</p>	<p>Students orally read the targeted words segmented into onset and rime the blended together.</p> <p>Students control the speed of the segmentation using the space bar.</p>
Reinforcement of rime unit.	<p>Teacher emphasizes to the students if they can read ‘paw, saw and jaw’ then they can read ‘draw, claw and thaw’ etc.</p> <p>Teacher reinforces the rime unit words using flashcards.</p>	<p>Students identify the rime unit.</p> <p>Students underline the rime unit in each word on the whiteboard.</p> <p>Students read through all of the flashcards quickly.</p>
Recording	<p>Teacher gives out “Words I Am Learning” book and explains the purpose of the book and that it is to be brought to each session.</p>	<p>Students write the targeted rime unit words into their “Words I Am Learning” book. This will be taken home each day to share with class teacher and student’s family.</p> <p>Students also write the targeted rime units words on the “Word Wall.”</p>
Prose Reading	<p>Teacher introduces and orients a text containing targeted rime unit words to the students.</p> <p>Teacher asks students, “Why do you think you are going to read this text? What words will you be looking for as you are reading?”</p>	<p>Students identify the text as containing the targeted rime unit words so they can practice the words they have learnt in a piece of text.</p> <p>Students identify that they will be able to read the words they have</p>

	<p>What will you do if you come to a word that you're not sure of?"</p>	<p>practiced today because they know that specific rime unit and they know how to break the words up and blend them back together and because they know how to read 'saw' they can read other words with 'aw'. Students orally read the text together and highlight the targeted words within the text. Students read the text three or four times.</p>
<p>Review and Metacognition</p>	<p>Teacher asks the students to identify what new words they have learnt, what strategies they have learnt today, how they can use what they have learnt and how it will help them when they are reading in the classroom and at home. Teacher encourages the students to use a self script when they are reading so that they will see themselves as self teachers.</p>	<p>The students will say: "I have learnt the rime." "I know how to read these words." "I will remember to say the word by breaking it up into the onset and rime when I am trying to read new words." "I know that I can read other words with the same rime unit."</p>

Appendix 3 Rime Units, Target Words and Games for Each Session

Session	Rime Unit	Target Words	Games
1	aw	law, paw, raw, saw, jaw, claw, draw, flaw, thaw, straw	Wordmaker game – students make up words using cards separated into onset and rime units. Students read words and identify if they are real words.
2	uck	buck, duck, luck, muck, puck, ruck, suck, tuck, cluck, chuck, pluck, truck, snuck, stuck, struck	Computer game: “Word Family Sort” from ReadWriteThink. “u” rimes.
3	ick	lick, Mick, Nick, pick, Rick, sick, tick, wick, brick, click, chick, flick, slick, thick, trick, stick,	Computer game: “Word Family Sort” from ReadWriteThink. “i” rimes.
4	est	best, lest, nest, pest, rest, test, vest, west, zest, chest	Flashcards – students turn card over and use the word in a full sentence.
5	ice	dice, lice, mice, nice, rice, slice, spice, thrice	Concentration Game – students choose two cards, read them and identify if they are a match.
6	ain	Cain, gain, lain, main, pain, rain, vain, brain, chain, drain, plain, slain, train, stain, strain	Wordmaker game – “ain”. Students make up words using cards separated into onset and rime units. Students read words and identify if they are real words.
	oke	coke, poke, woke, bloke, broke, choke, stoke, spoke, stroke	Flashcards – “oke”. Students turn card over and mime the word to the others.
7	eat	beat, feat, heat, meat, neat, seat, cheat, pleat, treat, wheat	Word Slide Game – “eat”. Students make up words using the onset and rime slide.
	ock	sock, dock, hock, lock, mock, rock, tock, block, clock, flock, frock, shock, stock	Spinner Game – “ock”. Students use the spinner to make up words with a specific rime unit.
8	ide	hide, ride, side, tide, wide, bride, glide, pride, slide, snide, stride	Wordmaker game – “ide”.
	ale	Dale, gale, male, pale, sale, tale, stale, whale	Concentration Game – “ale”. Students choose two cards, read them and identify if they are a match.
9	ate	date, fate, gate, hate, late, mate, rate, Tate, crate, plate, state, spate	Word Slide Game – “ate”.
	ask	bask, cask, mask, task, flask	Flashcards – students turn card over and use the word in a full sentence.
10	ine	dine, fine, line, mine, pine, wine, brine, shine, spine, whine	Wordmaker game – “ine”.
	ail	bail, fail, Gail, hail, jail, mail, nail, pail, rail, sail, tail, wail, frail, snail, trail	Word Slide Game – “ail”.

Appendix 4

Teacher Devised Rime Unit Texts Used in the Teaching Sessions

aw

One day a little girl saw a small dog with a white paw. The dog was sitting on some straw and it had a broken claw. She wanted to give the dog some meat but the meat was raw so she had to let it thaw out. Later that day she would draw a picture of the dog with the white paw and the broken claw.

uck

Buck the duck was stuck on the back of a truck. Poor Buck, he had such bad luck. He cried, "Cluck, cluck." His friend Puck snuck on to the back of the truck and tried to chuck him a rope. Finally Buck the duck was safe.

ick

Two boys called Nick and Mick were playing a game with their friend Rick. The winner was the one who could flick the stick over the brick. As the boys were playing they saw a fluffy yellow chick walk past. They tried to catch it but it was too slick. The boys got sick of trying to catch the chick so they decided to go home and do a magic trick.

est

An old man was walking west towards the shop. He was wearing a green vest over his chest. As he walked he passed a girl who was going to school to do a spelling test. On his way home he saw a nest up in a tree. When the man got home he had a rest because he was tired but it had been the best day!

ice

Last Sunday morning mum was cooking in the kitchen. She made a really nice cake. I had a slice of the cake, it was delicious. After that I had some rice that was also very nice. There were some crumbs on the floor for the mice to eat. To finish off I had some coke with ice.

ain / oke

Jack and his friend Cain were standing outside watching the train. Then it started to rain so they went inside and had a bottle of coke. Jack poked Cain and he spilled his coke and it made a stain on his shirt. Cain got angry and started to choke Jack and he cried in pain!

eat / ock

When I was putting on my sock I heard the clock go "Tick Tock" and I knew it was time for dinner. I stood on a block so I could see the dinner in the oven. It smelt great! I felt the heat coming off the hock meat. I went and sat back in my seat ready to eat my dinner.

ide / ale

It was a cold day and there was a big gale of wind. The bride stood at the end of the Church with her dad by her side. A tear came to his eye as he looked at her with pride because she looked so beautiful, just like a fairy tale princess. After the wedding the bride and the groom had to ride in the long black limo to the wedding party. At the party the food was stale and the groom choked and his face went pale. Then it started to rain. The wedding ended up being a disaster!

ate / ask

I got a letter from my friend Tate who lives in the state of Victoria. He told me all about his new house with a fancy gate. In the letter he also asked me if I wanted to come to his birthday party. It was a dress up party and everyone had to wear a mask. But it was on the date that mum had to go and pick up the crate full of plates for our new kitchen. So I couldn't go.

ine / ail

We fixed up the rip in the sail and we were ready to head off on our trip around the world on our boat. To celebrate our adventure we had some wine. Then suddenly the sun shine disappeared and there was a big dark cloud in the sky. We all ran one by one in a line down to the cabin inside our ship as it started to rain! Everyone was scared but our captain kept saying, "Don't worry we'll be fine!" The storm just kept getting worse. It was bucketing down with rain and then it started to hail! Then one man started to whine, "I want to go home, this is like jail our adventure around the world has been such a big fail!"

Appendix 5 Teacher Reflection Journal

Running Record of Previous Day's Text:

Title: _____ Number of words _____

Student	Errors	Self-Corrections	Reading Accuracy	Comment
A				
B				
C				

Focus: Rime Unit _____

Target Words:

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Anecdotal Notes on Students' Performance During the Lesson:

Student	Comment
A	
B	
C	