



LISA BURMAN

Our Pedagogical Response to “The Big 6 of Reading”

Oral Language

A language-rich environment is essential for literacy learning. We advocate for intentional teaching that begins with the child, using formative assessment to build both expressive and receptive components of oral language through authentic, engaging and meaningful contexts, such as:

- Symbolic/imaginative play
- Story Tables
- Small World Play
- Conversations for learning and inquiry (“Dialogic Circles”)
- High quality literature available for children to read every day
- Daily reading aloud of high quality literature
- Singing, rhymes and finger plays that engage children in using a variety of sentence structures.
- Frequent opportunities for children to talk as they learn, about their learning and experiences and for their learning.
- Frequent use of collaborative learning strategies such as “Think-Pair-Share/Turn-and-Talk” and the teaching of collaborative learning strategies and language.
- A Workshop model which includes Reflection Circle/Share times where children talk about their thinking and learning with each other.

Vocabulary

Oral language is more than vocabulary development; it is one part of it. Many of the above pedagogical strategies and practices will also develop vocabulary. We also advocate for practices such as:

- Educators intentionally using Tier 2 vocabulary as they play alongside and with children in imaginative play contexts, following the child’s play and embedding rich vocabulary in context.
- Intentional use of Tier 2 vocabulary in everyday conversations, directions for learning and when narrating a child’s experience during play and explorations.
- Singing, rhymes and finger plays that engage children in using expanding vocabularies.
- Choosing high quality literature for Read Aloud, Story Tables, Shared Reading and Reader’s Theatre.
- Use of metalanguage with children during learning conferences, such as reading and writing conferences.
- A rich Word Study programme that is built on a culture of curiosity about words and explicitly explores the etymology and morphology of words in English.
- Explicit teaching of a variety of spelling strategies that also encourage word-building and analogies, thus building vocabulary in meaningful contexts.
- Explicit teaching of word choice strategies and crafting devices within Writing Workshop (bookmaking and/or writer’s notebooks)
- Explicit teaching of strategies to infer the meaning of unknown words when reading – in both informational and narrative styles of writing.
- Explicit teaching of strategies for activating prior knowledge when reading and how to use this to predict at the word level.
- Teach word meanings by including the explicit teaching of morphology and etymology of words within a rich Word Study programme – for all children, not only older or ‘extended’ spellers.



LISA BURMAN

Phonological Awareness

Phonological Awareness is the ability to focus on the sounds within oral language and includes the ability to distinguish rhythm, rhyme, discrete phonemes (sounds) and syllables. It is developmental and is often learnt through engagement with rich language contexts that hold meaning for the child. Phonemic awareness is only one aspect of phonological awareness. We advocate for intentional teaching through engaging, playful and meaningful contexts rather than isolated drilling of phonological awareness components.

- Daily singing, rhyming, finger plays and poems where children engage with rhythm, rhyme and alliteration.
- Literature for Story Tables, Shared Reading and Read Alouds chosen for their use of rhythm, rhyme, alliteration and playfulness with language (as well as for other reasons).
- Transition Games that engage children in playing with words through rhyme, alliteration, syllables, and blending and segmenting phonemes (often using their names – the most important word to them).
- Modelling of how phonological awareness helps you as a speller through Modelled and Interactive Writing

Phonics

Building phonic knowledge (sound-letter correspondence) is helpful as readers and writers. We use it when problem solving spelling and when reading unknown words. However, it is only one strategy we use for spelling and reading and we advocate for it to be taught alongside other spelling and reading strategies, not before or in place of them. Phonics is not a complete reading or writing programme – it is only one part of it.

Children who find spelling or reading a challenging task often have only one strategy when faced with difficult words to read or spell. They often over-rely on ‘sounding out’ (Daffern, 2017). We advocate approaches that explicitly teach and build phonic knowledge alongside all other reading strategies (other decoding strategies, comprehension and fluency strategies and the development of strong reading dispositions).

Ways to intentionally teach phonics within meaningful contexts for children include:

- Engage in a Name Inquiry – investigating, grouping, looking for patterns in the names of the group. To explicitly teach phonics, group names according to initial or final letters, or vowels. Explore the different sounds those letters may make in each name. Or group names according to initial, final or medial sounds and record the letters that make these sounds.
- Harvest words from familiar Big Books and Poems used in Shared Reading and investigate the sound-letter relationships as above.
- Regularly use Modelled Writing: thinking aloud explicitly about the choices you make for spelling and modelling a variety of spelling strategies, including phonics.
- Regularly use Interactive Writing, where the teacher and child/ren ‘share the pen’, children writing what is in their zone of proximal development (eg: initial sound-letter correspondence, high frequency words or vowel choice). This is most effective in small groups, but can be used with larger groups when children can also write on individual whiteboards and remain engaged.
- Play word and letter games with familiar Shared Reading texts. After reading, search for words that contain particular letters and match these with the sound made in that word.
- Play word-building games with magnetic letters (eg: onset-rime; base word and affix)
- Teach, scaffold and model how to use phonic knowledge when writing (in Mini Lessons and Conferences)
- Teach, model and cue individual readers how to use phonic knowledge to problem solve and monitor their reading (eg: “Re-read and get your mouth ready with the first sound.” Or “Check the letter clues. Do they match the word you read?”)



LISA BURMAN

Fluency

Fluency is not just the ability to read quickly. It is a highly complex process, integrating multiple knowledge sources to read with meaning, accuracy and prosody (phrasing, rhythm, emphasis, pitch and volume). This integration makes fluent reading sound smooth. Fluency and comprehension are interdependent. All readers (child and adult) need texts that are easy for them to read in order to be fluent.

We advocate developing fluency through meaningful experiences with high quality literature such as:

- Daily modelling of fluent reading through Read Alouds with high quality literature – and intentionally reading aloud a variety of text types, showing how fluent reading sounds depending on the text type or purpose for reading.
- Readers Theatre – either with prepared scripts or by modifying familiar Big Books that include direct speech.
- Choral Reading with poems, raps and chants – particularly through Shared Reading
- Explicit teaching of how to use punctuation to guide fluency decisions. This can be taught within a Writing Workshop study of punctuation and also through Shared Reading and Reader's Theatre. Teachers model and scaffold how to change your voice, expression, volume, pace and pitch depending on the punctuation cues.
- Daily independent reading, where children choose texts to read and have the opportunity to re-read and build fluency. They are taught how to choose texts that are 'just right' for them and build understandings that a text that is too difficult will make it difficult to understand and read fluently.
- Reading Conferences happen during Independent Reading and will include personalised reading goals about fluency.
- Frequent opportunities for children to read with and to each other.
- Daily independent reading where children read familiar texts and build their automaticity of words read in context.
- Daily Shared Reading in the Early Years, reading familiar texts, playing with the words and language in these Big Books and Charts. This pedagogical practice builds fluency through the development of automaticity of sight words read in context and modelling and practising of intonation and phrasing.
- Play word recognition games with familiar Shared Reading texts. (eg: clap every time we read 'and' or count how many times the word 'the' is written)
- Create 'Sentence Jigsaws' (Transformations) where familiar texts (from Shared Reading) are reproduced and cut into individual words for children to re-create, thus giving more print-focussed experience. Play with these 'jigsaws' by changing a word and re-reading. How does fluency change?
- Read Along texts – access audio texts with a written text. Children listen to the fluent reading and also read along with it.
- Frequent opportunity to re-read familiar Big Books and Shared Reading charts – individually, in pairs, small groups and whole group.
- Playing with Story Tables, small world play and imaginative play contexts to build fluency in oral language.



LISA BURMAN

Comprehension

Comprehension is the complex and active process of constructing meaning of a text (written, oral or visual). We advocate for the intentional teaching of comprehension strategies so that comprehension is taught not just tested. Comprehension is highly dependent upon a reader's back-ground knowledge and oral language. The goal of comprehension teaching is for the reader to monitor his/her own reading comprehension, adjusting strategies according to purpose and text and to be able to think deeply about texts. The goal is not to be able to use each comprehension strategy individually – they are strategies that are integrated and used flexibly by each reader.

We advocate for the teaching of comprehension strategies in a variety of meaningful contexts and to connect these in many areas of learning, not just in during reading instruction.

- Daily Reading Aloud to children of picture books (information and story) and novels so they build connection to reading and texts as a meaningful and enjoyable endeavour.
- Intentional teaching of comprehension strategies such as predicting, inferring, making connections (using background knowledge), synthesising, summarising, visualising and asking questions.
- Use of Gradual Release of Responsibility model during Reading Workshops and Reading-focused Read Alouds and Shared Reading
- Active thinking aloud (modelling) about strategy use by the teacher when reading aloud high quality literature (eg: "When I read the cover, I'm predicting...because I can see...").
- Scaffolding and cueing of strategy use during Reading Conferences and Small Group learning contexts (eg: Reciprocal Reading, Guided Reading, Literature Circles, Shared Reading).
- Daily opportunities to talk about texts (in a variety of learning areas, not only during Reading Workshop), reinforcing the goal of reading is constructing meaning. These can be in partnerships, small groups and/or whole group.
- Clear and consistent use of metalanguage of reading – comprehension, decoding and fluency strategies (eg: predicting, use picture clues and letter clues, re-read and notice the punctuation clues.)
- Daily independent reading, where children choose texts to read and have the opportunity to re-read and build fluency. They are taught how to choose texts that are 'just right' for them and build understandings that a text that is too difficult will make it difficult to understand and read fluently. Reading Conferences happen during Independent Reading and will include personalised reading goals about comprehension.
- Daily independent reading where children read independently and to others and practise their comprehension strategies.
- Create a 'Book Club' Culture of reading so children and families understand the importance of talking about books and not only saying the words on the page.
- Engage children in Book Clubs where they have guided choice about the text they read and talk about together – building comprehension in a social learning context.
- Teach and use the pedagogical practice of Reciprocal Reading that utilises the strategies of predicting, clarifying, summarising and asking questions.
- Explicitly teach comprehension strategies with a variety of text types and reading/viewing purposes (i.e.: information texts, poetry, song, electronic reading such as websites, picture books and novels.)
- Explicitly teach, model and scaffold how to monitor comprehension, checking with cues within and outside of the text, to ensure meaning is constructed and not lost. Reading conferences play a large role here – they are more than 'listening to reading' but are a teaching time that focus on each reader's integrated use of strategies to construct meaning from the text.