

H O W T O



I N T H E F I R S T Y E A R
O F S C H O O L



Jocelyn Seamer
Education

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ABOUT



Jocelyn Seamer is a former teacher, tutor and school leader who has experienced, first hand, the transformative power of evidence based practice in reading instruction. She has lead teams to grow and develop school policy and practice to reflect the vast body of evidence that makes up the Science of Reading.

Through her own classroom practice and leadership roles in schools Jocelyn has developed a strong understanding of how **you** can take simple, yet effective action to get every child on the road to reading proficiency in the first year of school. Jocelyn feels a very personal responsibility to provide opportunities for classroom teachers to have access to the information and training they need to change children's lives and looks forward to helping you achieve great things in your teaching practice.



6 ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF READING INSTRUCTION

Oral Language

Developing the skills for speaking and listening. Oral language skills underpin all aspects of literacy.

Phonological & Phonemic Awareness

The ability to identify and manipulate sounds in words. Essential for reading and spelling.

Phonics

The understanding that spoken sounds can be written down using letters. Phonics is the connections of these sounds and letters

Vocabulary

Understanding what words mean and being able to use a wide range of words.

Fluency

The ability to read automatically, smoothly and with expression.

Comprehension

Understanding what you read. Comprehension is dependent on all of the other skills.



Jocelyn Seamer Education

...promoting effective practice to reach every child...

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There are 6 essential components of reading instruction:

- Oral Language
- Phonological and phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Vocabulary
- Fluency
- Comprehension

These components are interconnected and all are essential for children to reach a proficient level of reading.

The vast majority of teachers and commentators agree on the importance of the 6 components of reading instruction. Where the differences lie is in the methods of instruction that different groups advocate for.

There is an overwhelming consensus that explicit instruction in these components is the very best way to teach reading. This guide is designed to provide insight into what evidence based reading instruction looks like in the first year of school.

BUILDING ORAL LANGUAGE *in the foundation classroom*

Make your classroom a language rich environment

In order for children to develop their oral language skills you need to give them opportunities to talk with one another and with you. You can do this by:

- providing stimulating play environments
- building in 'partner talk' to your lessons across the curriculum
- intentionally using and unpacking rich vocabulary
- reading high quality picture books to children daily

Oral language underpins all literacy learning. If you can't say it, you can't read it or write it.



-encouraging children to ask you to explain words they do not understand

-explicitly teaching sentence structure, syntax and morphology from the start of the year

BUILDING ORAL LANGUAGE

continued

Use Rich Text as the Model for Language

The average quality children's book contains richer language than an adult's television show. Picture books and traditional tales provide wonderful jumping off points to engage children with literature and grow their language skills. You can do this by:

- Choosing texts that model the language you want your children to develop.
- Supporting children to describe settings, characters and events in the story.
- Asking children to order the events of the story and retelling the story to an adult or partner.



- Working with children to label pictures from the text.
- Teach children to recite key passages from or a summary of the text.
- Including elements of the story in play based opportunities so that they can interact with it in ways that work for them.
- Teach synonyms for words in the book and encourage their use in everyday speech on the classroom.

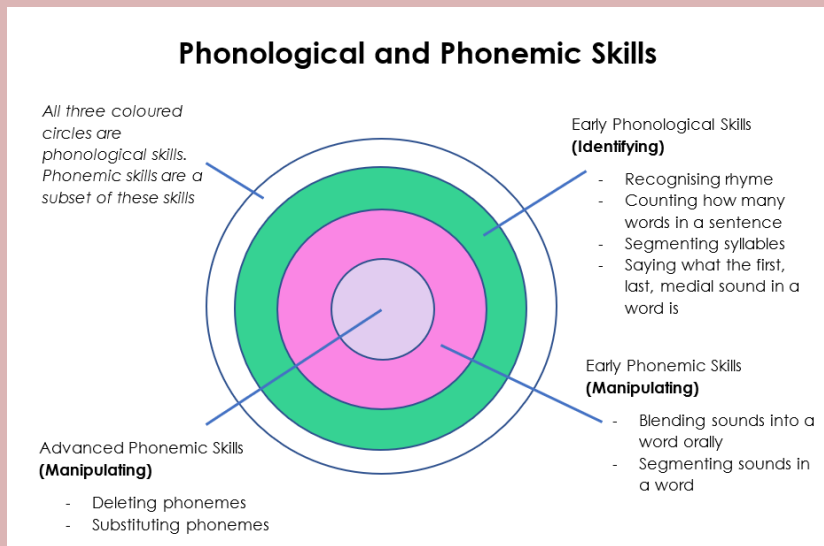


TEACHING PHONOLOGICAL & PHONEMIC AWARENESS

The difference between phonological and phonemic awareness

Phonological skills are the earlier skills associated with identifying words, parts of words and phonemes (sounds). These skills include:

- Identifying how many words there are in a sentence
- Identifying which words rhyme
- Clapping and combining syllables
- Identifying the first and last phoneme (sound) in a word



“The development, or lack of, phonological and phonemic awareness is the most crucial factor in reading success and the biggest predictor of reading failure.”

Phonemic skills are a subset of phonological awareness and involve the manipulation of phonemes. These skills include:

- Blending phonemes to create words
- Segmenting phonemes to spell words
- Deleting phonemes from words
- Adding phonemes to words
- Substituting phonemes in words to create new words



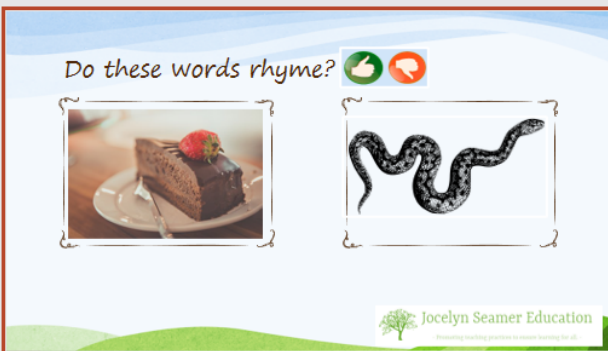
Teaching PA Skills

Like all other aspects of reading instruction, when teaching Phonological and phonemic skills it is best to teach explicitly and intentionally.

You can begin with simple rhyme recognition, syllable blending and segmenting. Provide pictures to support children in their early stages of learning and be sure to closely monitor progress.

The key skill to get children on the road to reading is blending. This should be taught:

- 1) explicitly both with and without graphemes (letters)
- 2) incidentally throughout the day by saying things such as, "I would like you to come and sit on the m-a-t".
- 3) in small groups to children who need extra support. Do this as soon as you notice children are struggling and reteach content as soon as many times as necessary.



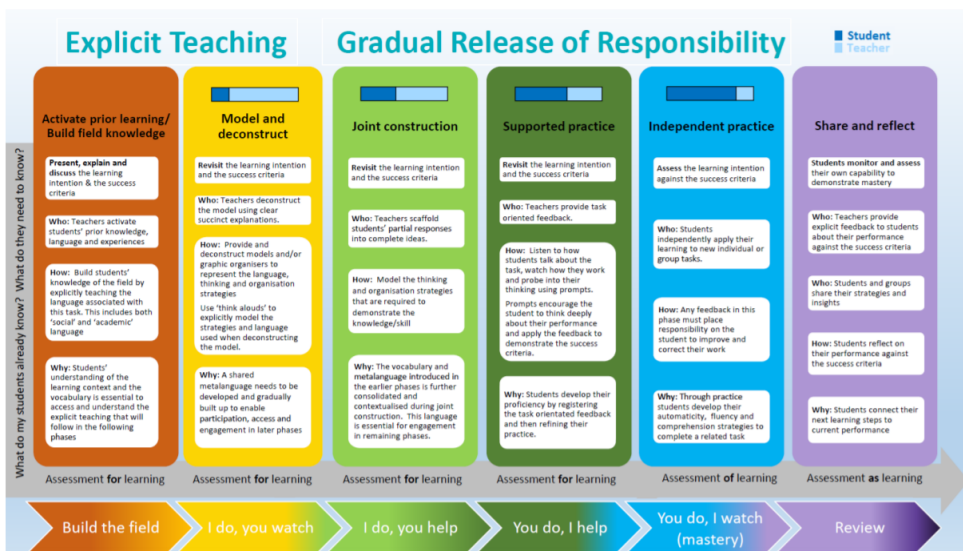
PHONICS fundamentals

Systematically, explicitly, cumulatively, intentionally

Most schools teach phonics in one form or another, however to truly reach every child and make sure that all students are on the road to proficient reading by the end of the school year, it is imperative that phonics is taught systematically, explicitly, cumulatively and intentionally.

Teaching phonics systematically means having a system or structure that you use every day, every time you teach. Creating instructional routines that you and your students come to know and rely on releases cognitive load to focus on learning new knowledge and skills.

Explicit Teaching requires you to be the leader of learning in your classroom. You are not simply a facilitator of learning. You stand at the front and deliver lessons designed to help children acquire specific knowledge and skills. A common structure for explicit teaching is the 'I do, we do, you do' structure.



Graphic developed by the Northern Territory department of Education

Quality explicit teaching requires students to be active learners. You do something, they do something, you do something, they do something. There is no opportunity for students to be passive in a great explicit teaching lesson.

PHONICS *cntd*

In order for your phonics instruction to support children's cognitive load **your approach should be cumulative**. That means that each section builds on the one before in a set sequence of skills and knowledge.

For example, the first set of graphemes (sounds) a child might learn to read could be: s, a, t, p. The words they are then asked to read are made up of only these graphemes.

The next set may be i, n, m, d and the words they are asked to read then come from all of the graphemes children have learned so far.

The program builds in this way, adding in another small chunk of graphemes as each set is learned.

Decodable texts are a key part of this cumulative approach as they ensure that children aren't asked to read words with graphemes that they haven't yet learned. This prevents them from using inefficient guessing strategies.



Section 1

vol teg

AN INFORMAL PHONICS ASSESSMENT

c o a d g q t l b h k
r n m l j p u w v y f
s z e x

sit top wet pan mat
sh th ch qu ng ck

shut chip duck quit
tent stop champ stick

Unit Name: _____
First Name: _____

Assessment Dates: _____

Phonological and Phonemic Skills

Recognise Rhyme Produce Rhyme Clap Syllables
Delete Syllables Identify First Sound
Identify Last Sound Blend sounds 3 / 4 / 5
Segment sounds 3 / 4 / 5 Substitute 1st sound

Phoneme Grapheme Correspondence

Recognise: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z sh th ck qu ng
Blend words with the above sounds - 3 sounds / 4 sounds
Segment words with the above sounds - 3 sounds / 4 sounds

Recognise and read words containing ph wr lch dge ay
ce tgh ow oo ar air er oa oy a_e ea i_e o_e
u_e ear ow oi ai oa aw ur ear ure ew are

Writing Skills

Form letters using correct stroke order
Segment words and write down sounds - 3 sounds / 4 sounds
Write a simple sentence using capital letter finger spaces
Full stops exclamation mark

To learn more about assessing and teaching these skills visit www.jocelynseamereducation.com

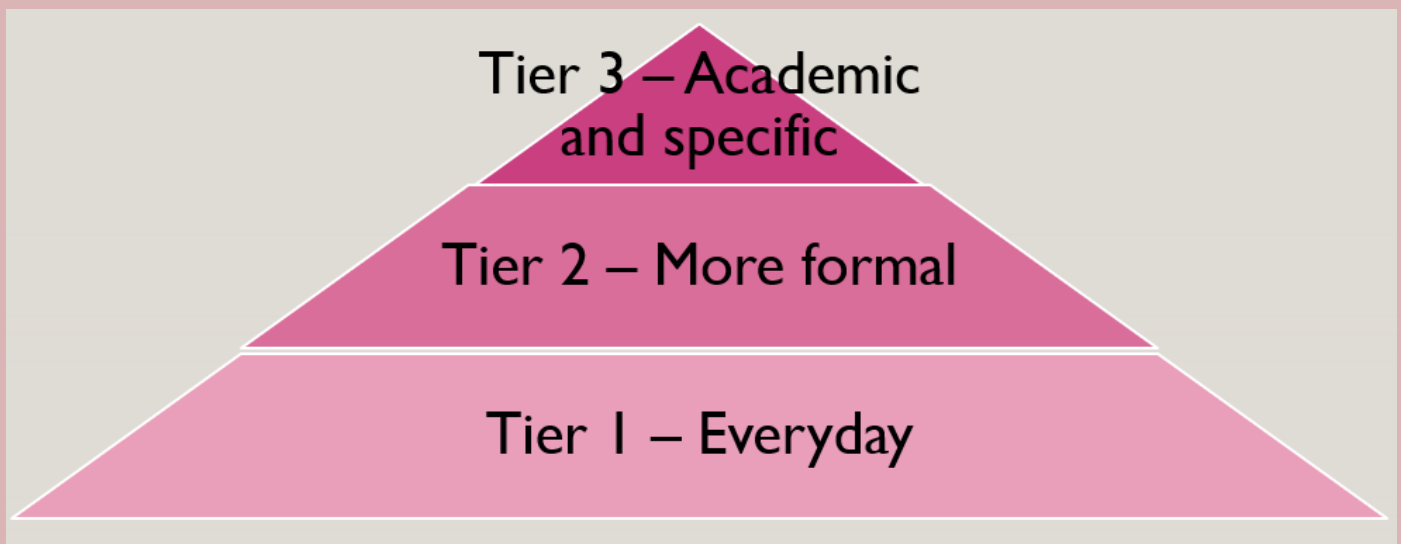
Intentional teaching is made possible when you regularly assess student knowledge and skills and monitor growth. This enables you, as the teacher, to adjust and adapt to your students' real time needs. Knowing precisely how your students are progressing is essential to providing extra support so that students can keep up instead of having to catch up later.

VOCABULARY

Knowing about and using a range of words is crucial for comprehension and writing

Vocabulary Instruction Before Reading a Rich Text

Front loading vocabulary and concepts means that children have strong language foundations to understand what you are reading means. This is especially important for students learning English as an additional language or dialect. When front loading vocabulary, you can simply show a picture and explain what the word means, asking children to repeat this to their partner.



Vocabulary Instruction After Reading a Rich Text

Once children have a context in which to consider the target word you are teaching (the rich text you read to the class), you can undertake further exploration of the word. This can involve examining definitions, developing lists of synonyms and matching pictures and words.

Remember that children will require you to lead this until they are able to read words for themselves.

Talking as a foundation for writing

If you want children to use a broad vocabulary in their writing they need to be able to use that vocabulary orally.

Once you have explicitly taught children about target words you can begin provide scaffolds for them to use the words orally.

For example, display

the enormous ----- sat straight and tall.

Then ask children to orally insert a word in the gap. This provides an opportunity to use the word 'enormous' over and over again.

To reinforce this language learning you can display pictures of large things in your morning routine asking children to 'turn and talk' to their partners and use the word enormous.

Take advantage of incidental moments during the day where you can draw students' attention to appropriate use of the word 'enormous'.

This contextualised learning and inclusion of 'student talk' will make a big difference to your students' learning.

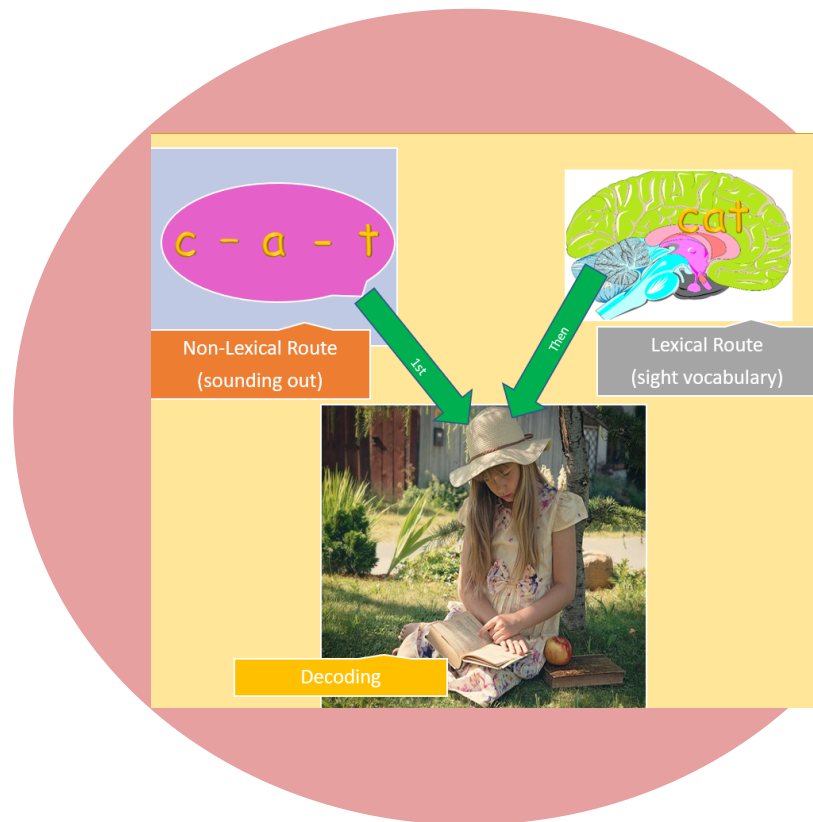
Finally, present the target words in different contexts to reinforce their meaning.

FLUENCY

More than just fast reading

Fluency is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression (*Reading Rockets*). While the reading rate (speed) is important and necessary, it is not the only consideration when we reflect on whether a child has achieved reading fluency.

Accuracy - fluency begins with accuracy. So often we assume that fluency comes from learning 'sight words', but the reality is that accurate reading is the product of developing orthographic mapping (letter patterns and words are committed to long term memory for instant retrieval). This is achieved through considered practice in decoding and encoding (reading and spelling) words.



Text Level Fluency Stems from Grapheme and Word Level Fluency

Measures of fluency often relate to whole text level, but rarely do we consider fluency as an accumulation of skills.

Graphemes - children need to have instant recognition and 'reading' of graphemes.

Word blending - children will work three levels of blending:

- reading out loud sound by sound,
- reading sound by sound 'in your head'
- reading smoothly and seemingly effortlessly in their head.

Repeated reading as a strategy to improve fluency

Repeated reading of texts (decodable texts in the first year of school for most children) has been shown to improve reading skills and comprehension. The goal of this repeated reading is NOT to get faster each time but to read in a natural, story-teller type way.

Through repeated readings (3 readings of the text) children are aiming to pay better attention to punctuation, improve prosody (phrasing) and ultimately build comprehension. Tips for managing repeated reading:

- Use partner reads so that everyone reads to someone. In this time you circulate through the room spending time with children who need a little extra support.
- Read the text out loud to students AFTER they have read the text once. This allows them to hear what the phrasing should sound like so that they can emulate it.
- Explicitly teach about punctuation and its role in phrasing and comprehension.
- Find potentially tricky words and 'preteach' them to the students before they read their text.



the

Irregular High Frequency Words

Instead of teaching 'sight words', teach children irregular high frequency words as they arise in decodable texts. Instead of asking children to read the words instantly, show them the regular parts and circle the irregular parts. Attending to the graphemes (sounds) in the words will help orthographic mapping to develop more easily.

COMPREHENSION

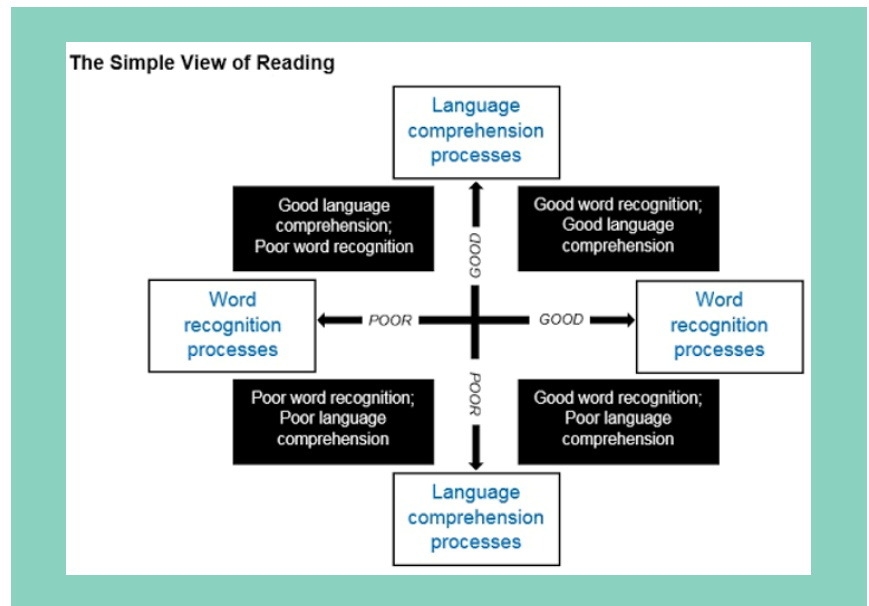
Simply put, comprehension means understanding what you read

We often spend a considerable amount of time 'teaching comprehension'. This very often involves teaching students a range of strategies and getting them to apply these strategies in a range of contexts. This can be a waste of time when we consider what comprehension is made up of.

The simple view of reading tells us that effective reading comprehension is made up of oral language comprehension and strong decodable skills.

We also know that comprehension is mostly improved by building schema (background knowledge of the text content) and vocabulary so doing both of these things every day is important.

So the recipe for strong reading comprehension is:



- 1) Build vocabulary (particularly tier 2 vocab)
- 2) Make sure that children have strong background knowledge (often general knowledge about the world)
- 3) Engage children in discussions to develop oral language skills
- 4) Spend a little bit of time (but not too much) on comprehension strategies
- 5) Teach children about the interplay between text and graphics/pictures
- 6) Teach about plot structure and text features that impact on meaning

END OF FOUNDATION EXPECTATIONS

For Reading and Writing
According to the Australian Curriculum



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Education

By the end of the foundation year students will

PHONICS

Recognise the letters of the English alphabet, in upper and lower case and know and use the most common sounds represented by all letters.

Students need to know the most common sound represented by ALL letters as well as how to read with the most common digraphs (sh, th, ng, ch).

HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

Read high-frequency words

This does not mean that students know 100 'sight words' but rather that they can read a bank of irregular, high frequency words that appear in their decodable texts. These words should be words such as 'the', 'was' & 'is' which contain graphemes the children have not yet learned rather than 'at', 'that', 'in' which can be sounded out easily.

BLENDING

**Blend sounds orally
to read consonant-vowel-consonant
words**

In order to read fluently, foundation children need to have developed quick and smooth blending skills so that they can find the meaning of the text they are reading.

READING

Read short, decodable and predictable texts with familiar vocabulary and supportive images, drawing on their developing knowledge of concepts of print, sounds and letters

If a child cannot use their phonics knowledge to decode words and monitor to make sure that what they are saying makes sense, they are not able to achieve the foundation level for reading.

WRITING

Their writing shows evidence of letter and sound knowledge, beginning writing behaviours and experimentation with capital letters and full stops.

They correctly form all upper- and lower-case letters.

Children need to be able to write at least one simple sentence independently by the end of foundation without copying. They need to be able to sound out words to write them down, have correct spacing of words, know how to use a capital letter and full stop. An adult should be able to read this writing back and understand it.

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LEARN MORE...



Live Masterclass for Foundation Teachers

The Top 3 Mistakes Foundation Teachers Make in Reading Instruction (and how to avoid them)

In this free Masterclass you will learn key actions to take to get your students' reading on track.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Reading Success in the First Year of School



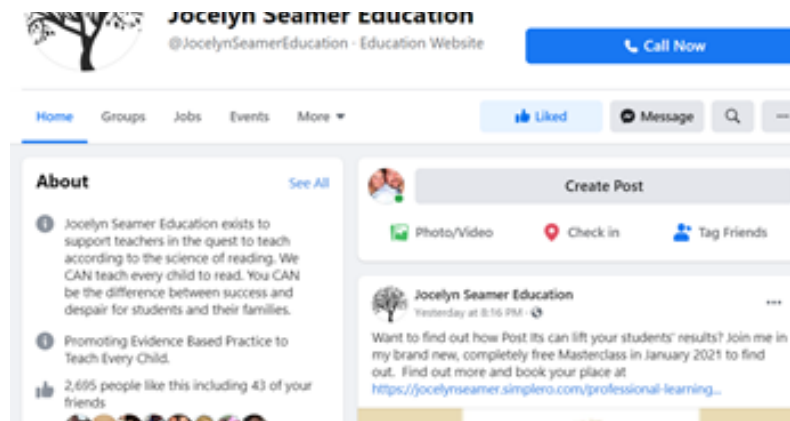
This 12 week Teach Along will set you up for success to teach reading to your foundation students in 2021.

[LEARN MORE](#)



The No-Nonsense Educator Blog brings you a range of posts on literacy instruction according to the Science of Reading.

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8 KEY ACTIONS OF

The Science of Reading



1

Intentionally teach oral language skills & knowledge

2

Explicitly build vocabulary & background knowledge

3

Explicitly Teach Phonemic Skills

4

Teach phonics explicitly and systematically

5

Teach phonics according to a set sequence

6

Closely monitor progress and reteach as needed

7

Teach blending and segmenting together

8

Provide decodable texts that align with your phonics sequence



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