

10. You Are the Teacher

As the teacher, your main function will be to point and say letters, sounds, words, and sentences at the appropriate time. You will be prompted during some lessons to present rules and techniques. These will be made clear for you and will be illustrated at the appropriate time. Your prompts are in balloon form. The balloons are familiar for their use in cartoons—a form that children universally understand to represent the written equivalent of oral speech.

The prompts quickly give students the idea that speaking can be written down; writing can be read; and reading can be spoken. Teaching the *er* in *zipper* illustrates how you will be coached: “double the *p* in *zip* and add *er*.”

The Blackboard

The blackboard is your main teaching tool. All new words appear on the blackboard letter by letter with their spelling. All words already learned remain on the blackboard throughout the program for review. The new word is added to the top of the blackboard.

Hootie Owl

The ever present Hootie Owl—teacher aide and your helper—brings coaching tips and enrichment readings to the students. His readings include *The Zigzag Way* and *How So Many Turtles Got in the Park Pond*.

Individualizing

The program allows the teacher and coach to maintain control over placing students in the program and pacing students through the program. Having each student in the right place and making sure they are not moving too fast or too slow are the keys to individualization. If properly placed in the program and paced through the program, all students can master the material of the program. It is very important that less mature students, or students who are challenged in different ways, have time to go through the program slowly, completely, and entirely. These students are some of the greatest beneficiaries of this program.

Coaches may allow students not yet ready to read to go through the entire program. Students may listen as coaches point and say (students may point and coaches may say) letters and words, and read the stories and poems, pointing as they say each word. Students may attempt the writing and printing pages and use oral composition for the writing lesson. It is important to remember that reading readiness occurs for students at different times from the fourth year until the seventh year. As we have seen early, it helps coaches to remember that, of the beginning six year olds, only half are ready to read—mostly girls. Students not ready in kindergarten can go through this program orally and still return to it as a six or seven year old and be successful in reading the selections and composing the writing lessons. The program provides that:

- The student can proceed at an individual rate.
- At a minimum level, the student can point and you can say the words and sentences while the student repeats them.
- At the maximum level, responses in writing are individual and at the highest level.

Student Prompts

Students have prompts throughout the program. Anytime new functions or ideas are introduced, you will read the instructions to the students. These helps are displayed in written and graphic form. The teacher will tutor or show each student when changes occur. These written prompts introduce new phonetic principles. *Eagle* is a good example, since it shows a silent *a* in the middle of the word and a silent *e* at the end of the word. Usually the silent *e* at the end signals a long vowel in the word; in this case, *e*. You will read for Mat who gives the general instruction and Hootie Owl who is specific in his coaching and readings. Prompts use print in balloons and graphics to instruct the students.

Mat prompts students at the beginning of each writing. These prompts take the form of sentence starters, initial word and sentence generators, picture prompts, story prompts, and references to the art and literature of the lesson. A collage of artwork is often presented with the writing page. Coaches should encourage students to make whatever effort they can to get started. In the beginning, it may be no more than the sound/letter correspondence or the words learned in the lesson. Coaches should always accept what is made and remember that these are the very first efforts for some students. Coaches should also feel free to give their own prompts for the writings. Oftentimes firsthand, individual knowledge is just what is needed to get the flow of writing going.