

9. The Integrated Literacy System

The program for beginning readers is an integrated literacy system. This means that the application of letters, sounds, and reading and writing for meaning are extended into all areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This can be illustrated by reviewing each of the seven pages that make up each lesson. Each lesson has the following interactive pages.

The Review Page

The first page of each lesson—the Tree of Sounds and Word Wall—is the review page. This review page places each sound with its letter(s) on the tree. By pointing and saying the sounds of the letters, the student reinforces the sound/letter correspondences, thus associating the letters just learned with the sounds made from infancy. Written graphemes are associated with the appropriate oral phonemes. The students may make the sounds and point to the written letters. You may coach the student by saying the sounds as they are pointed to. This page also places each word just learned on the Word Wall. The student may continue to say the word orally while seeing it in print and hearing it said by the coach. In this way speaking, listening, and writing skills are utilized.

The Teaching Page

The teaching page, page two, always introduces the lesson word. The word is pointed to, said, spelled, and said again. The student, who has seen the word and letters and said the word and names of the letters, should now be instructed to point and say all of the words and letters. The student sees and says. The student leaves the page knowing how to read the word and the previous words learned.

The Spelling and Pronunciation Page

The spelling and pronunciation page, page three, begins with the lesson word appearing and being spelled in print, and pointed to and spelled letter by letter. Then the word appears a second time, where it appears letter by letter, but, this time, each letter should be sounded letter by letter. Exceptions, like the silent *e*, should be pointed out. Again the student is allowed to say the sounds but point to the letters. This should be repeated until the student masters the sounds of the letters. The student will learn the pronunciation of the word associating the sounds (phonemes) to the letters (graphemes). The sounds of each letter are embedded in the lesson word.

The Reading Pages

Pages four and five are reading pages. The student finds the lesson word with its embedded sounds now embedded in reading of stories or poems. Each reading is read through by the coach from its beginning, pointing and saying each word and line. Next, each line is pointed to and read word for word. The student repeats the process and may need considerable prompting to get through each story or poem.

It is important to attempt to read each line all alone, but the coach should always intervene with prompts to avoid frustration. The letters and sounds are embedded in words; words are embedded in the readings.

The Handwriting Page

The handwriting lesson on page six is constructed around the letters of the lesson word. This page simulates primary printing paper, and the student can refer to the page as the handwriting lesson is completed on real paper. These printing pages may also be placed in a portfolio, which will be useful in monitoring the student's progress in eye-hand coordination, fine muscle control, and writing dexterity.

In addition, the ease with which letters can be made is an indication of how fast the student can progress through the reading and writing lessons.

The Writing Page

On the writing page, the last page of each lesson, ask the student to follow the instruction to write the lesson word and to generate other words that are similar. As the lessons progress, the writing prompts become more and more challenging and generative. Lesson words generate other words. These words generate sentences. The sentences generate writings and compositions of the student's own creation. This page simulates primary printing paper, and the student can refer to it while writing on the real paper.

Summary of the Integrated Literacy System

These seven pages illustrate the degree to which the system integrates spelling, pronunciation, reading, writing (composing), and printing (handwriting). As the students move through the pages of each of the 37 lessons, the power of phonics and phonemic awareness will create effective and enthusiastic readers and writers.