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TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

THE EARLY LITERACY PROJECT

Implementation Report for the New Zealand Ministry of Education

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1. Introduction

The Massey University Early Literacy Project (Chapman, Arrow, Braid, Tunmer, & Greaney, 2018) found that a PLD programme designed to modify instructional strategies to enhance literacy learning outcomes requires a well-resourced approach that explicitly and systematically supports teachers with the implementation of new teaching methods. The Project involved two cohorts of teachers and students. Meaningful changes were observed in Cohort 2 teachers' instructional behaviours following significant modifications to the Cohort 1 PLD workshops and teacher supports. The resulting programme used with Cohort 2 is the foundation of this implementation report.

The significantly improved literacy learning outcomes for Cohort 2 Intervention students were consistent with the theoretical basis of the research project. Initial word learning, which forms the basis of reading comprehension, is dependent on students quickly mastering the ability to decode words in text. Many students benefit from systematic and explicit instruction in word-level decoding and the language foundations associated with the alphabetic principle.

For over three decades, focus on explicit word-level decoding strategies has not been favoured in New Zealand schools or supported by instructional materials and students' readers. Yet, international and New Zealand research clearly indicates that changes to literacy instruction which include a greater emphasis on systematic and explicit instruction aimed at students developing efficient word decoding skills can have a major, positive impact on literacy learning outcomes. The Early Literacy Project findings provided further support for the importance of such a change in literacy teaching. Students in low decile schools derived important benefits from this shift in teaching emphasis.

Despite challenges associated with changing deeply embedded instructional practices, the project demonstrated that modifications can occur in literacy instructional practices through a research-led PLD programme based on a strong theoretical framework. Teachers and students throughout New Zealand stand to gain if the findings from this research project are used to form the basis of a nation-wide strategy for changing significant aspects of literacy instruction in New Entrant/Year 1 classrooms.

This implementation report will explain what was in the Cohort 2 PLD programme and detail how the findings can be used to implement the approach more widely. The recommended implementation includes the provision of PLD through facilitators. This report will also describe the

resources and tools developed and provided to schools and teachers that are necessary to support wider implementation of the Early Literacy Project.

2. Overview of the programme content

2.1 Theoretical and research background

Scientific research on how children learn to read indicates that achievement in reading comprehension performance depends on the ability to recognise the words in text accurately and quickly. For progress to occur in learning to read, the beginning reader must acquire the ability to translate letters and letter patterns into phonological forms (Ehri, 2005; Snow & Juel, 2005; Tunmer & Nicholson, 2011). Making use of letter-sound relationships provides the basis for constructing the detailed orthographic representations required for the automatization of word recognition (or what Ehri, 2005, calls sight word knowledge). When this occurs, cognitive resources can be allocated to sentence comprehension and text integration processes (Pressley, 2006), that is, to the meaning of text.

To discover relationships between spelling patterns and sound patterns, children must also be able to segment spoken words into subcomponents. Children who experience ongoing difficulties in detecting phonemic sequences in words (i.e., phonemic awareness) will not be able to fully grasp the alphabetic principle and discover spelling-to-sound relationships (Shankweiler & Fowler, 2004). Understanding the alphabetic principle, or “cracking” the alphabet code, is necessary (but not sufficient by itself) for being able to read for meaning.

As the reading attempts of beginning readers with a firm understanding of the alphabetic principle become more successful, they will begin making greater independent use of letter-sound information to identify unfamiliar words in text. This independent use, or phonological decoding, supports the learning of new words, from which additional spelling-sound relationships can be induced without explicit instruction (Snow & Juel, 2005; Tunmer & Nicholson, 2011).

There is now a large body of research indicating that explicit, systematic instruction in the code relating spellings to pronunciations positively influences reading achievement, especially during the early stages of learning to read (Brady, 2011; Hattie, 2009; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow & Juel, 2005; Tunmer & Arrow, 2013). From an examination of findings covering a wide range of sources that included studies of reading development, specific instructional practices and effective teachers and schools, Snow and Juel (2005) concluded that explicit attention to alphabetic coding skills in early reading instruction is helpful for all children and crucial for some.

2.2 The Reading Development Framework

The Early Literacy Project and the resulting PLD programme is woven around a theory of reading that is well established as a simple (yet complex) explanation of the components of reading. This theory is the Simple View of Reading (SVR, Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Tunmer & Chapman, 2012b). The simplicity comes from understanding reading for meaning as requiring only two key components. These two components are word recognition (more accurately *visual word recognition*) and language comprehension (more accurately *oral language comprehension*). These two components are illustrated in Figure 1, on the left hand side. The model has been used in as the basis for teaching of reading in England for almost a decade now (Department of Education, 2014; Rose, 2006), with impressive results in the latest PIRLS round (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Hooper, 2017).

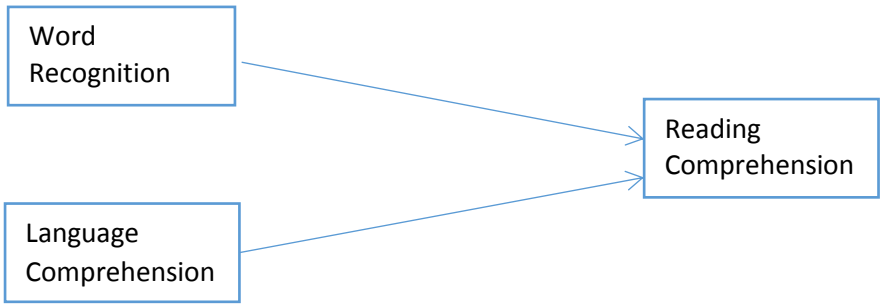

Figure 1: The Simple View of Reading (SVR) Model

In its simplicity, the original SVR model only explains what reading is and does not explain how children develop the two complementary bodies of knowledge and skills that they need. To explain the more complex developmental nature of reading the theory has since been expanded by Tunmer and Hoover (2014) into the Cognitive Foundations of Learning to Read model. This model, with only the observable and assessable skills and knowledge included, is illustrated in Figure 2. The expanded model incorporates the foundational components that are also well established as necessary but not sufficient on their own for reading to develop. Each of word recognition and language comprehension has further foundational components, including the vital understanding of spoken words.

The expanded model is also simplified in that there are additional relationships between the foundational word recognition skills and language comprehension skills that have been removed from the model for parsimonious purposes. For example, oral vocabulary is necessary for efficient and accurate alphabetic coding as well as language comprehension (Ouellette & Beers, 2010;

Tunmer & Chapman, 2012a). It is this model that the proposed Reading Development Framework is based on, as described in this report.

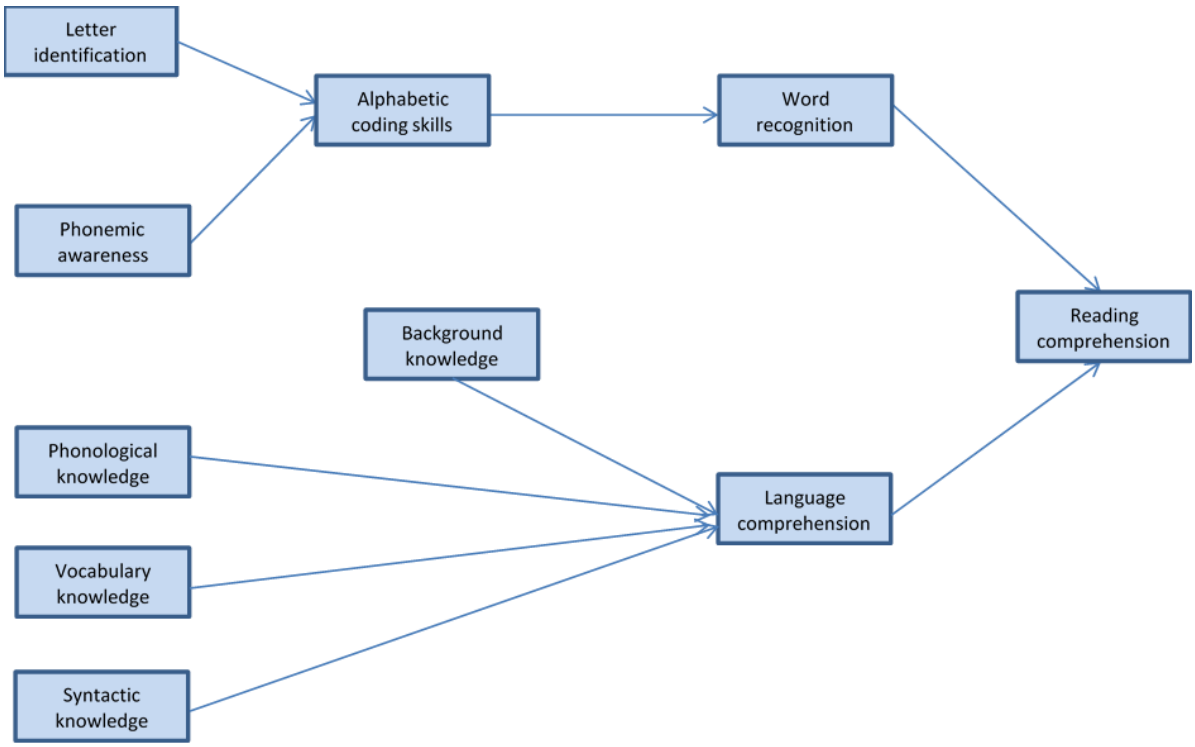

Figure 2: The Cognitive Foundations Model with observable abilities only

The purpose of Early Literacy Project was to add to the repertoire of teaching and assessment practices that teachers in New Entrant classrooms used. These practices are based on what the Cognitive Foundations Model specifies should be taught to beginning readers, as well as research on effective instructional practices. The proposed teaching and assessment practices require building teacher knowledge of aspects of literacy that are known to be low in New Zealand teachers (Carroll, Gillon, & McNeill, 2012; McNeill & Kirk, 2014; Nicholson, 2007; Washburn, Binks-Cantrell, Joshi, Martin-Chang, & Arrow, 2015), but are necessary for effective early literacy teaching (Carlisle, Correnti, Phelps, & Zeng, 2009; Carreker et al., 2007; McCutchen, Green, Abbott, & Sanders, 2009; Moats & Foorman, 2003; Piasta, Connor, Fishman, & Morrison, 2009).

After the first year of the Early Literacy Project (Cohort 1) it was identified that adding to the repertoire was less effective than the usual literacy approaches (Chapman, Arrow, Tunmer, & Braid, 2016), possibly because simply adding to the repertoire led to increased confusion as to how and what to teach. As a result, the programme was amended to support teachers to *change* their

teaching and assessment practices. This minor change of focus in the workshop programme led to more effective outcomes for students and is what is described in this current report.

2.3 Current Practice

The approach outlined in this report contrasts markedly to the current multiple-cues approach to the teaching of beginning reading. Current literacy practices are based on a variety of documents, including the *Effective Literacy Practices* handbooks (Ministry of Education, 2003, 2006). There are three threads to the literacy practices in New Entrant classrooms. These threads are relevant in all classrooms where children are learning to read print. The first thread is the type of instructional approach, which refers to the context of the content instruction. The instructional approaches for reading that are most relevant in the beginning classroom are shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and language experience.

The second thread is a framework for literacy, based on three aspects of Luke and Freebody's (1999) Four Resources Model, which describes what happens when children are reading. These three aspects are 'learning of the code,' to 'make meaning' and to 'think critically'. The third thread to current literacy practices is the "multiple sources of information" model of reading. In this model four primary sources of information are said to be important for all readers, including beginning readers, when identifying unfamiliar words in text. The four sources of *prior knowledge, semantics, syntax* and *grapho-phonic knowledge* are said to be used simultaneously by fluent readers. This model is also referred to as the 'searchlights model' and is largely discredited by contemporary research on reading acquisition (Stuart, Stainthorp, & Snowling, 2008).

The three threads together have led to the view that text meaning is paramount, and that teachers should not dwell on the detail of print (Clay & Cazden, 1990). In turn, this has led to practices in which meaning or syntax is used as the basis for working out what an unknown print word is, with no reference to letter-sound correspondences (see Ministry of Education, 2003 p. 38 for an example of this). This approach has also been influenced by the idea that children learn to read best when everything is in context (e.g., Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 33). The use of sentence context has been promoted as the main strategy for having children work out an unknown word in text, rather than having children learn the word level skills and strategies that are known to be essential for effective reading acquisition.

In contrast to the prevailing practice regarding the use of context as a primary word identification strategy, the New Zealand Curriculum for English states that children will need to make connections

between letters and sounds, and will slowly develop a sight-word reading vocabulary along with knowledge of text conventions (Ministry of Education, 2007). The move to giving the 'learning of the code' a greater level of importance than previous publications is highlighted by the inclusion of school entry foundational skills, such as "an awareness of rhyme", "distinguish some phonemes in spoken words", "be able to read their own names", "identify the first letter of their name", and, "write their name".

Although these skills and types of knowledge are necessarily brief in the curriculum document, they are extended through the development of literacy learning progressions (Ministry of Education, 2010). However, the conflicting instructional guidelines have often led to the misguided use of phonics programmes in isolation from text, with no integration back into the text reading for reinforcement. Additional evidence of such practices has come, initially, from ERO's review (Education Review Office, 2011) of literacy practices in early years settings which indicate that some centres were applying various phonics and phonological awareness programmes in an *ad hoc* fashion.

Once children are fluently reading they are able to read many texts without difficulty and are ready for instruction that has reading for meaning as the goal. It is at this level of achievement that reintroduction of the existing approach to reading can be successful. Children are able to achieve success in reading the print on the page and are able to put all cognitive effort into reading for meaning.

2.4 Advantages of implementing changes to early literacy

Teacher knowledge of English orthography and morphology can help teachers move beyond the perceived limitations of a phonics programme (Snow, Griffen, & Burns, 2005). It is also important for teachers to develop their knowledge of word level skills so they can incorporate the teaching of these skills into their existing programme. When the rules for word decoding and and word spelling are understood, it is easier to work with children to learn these essential skills (McNeill & Kirk, 2013). Children who do not acquire an understanding of these rules, either implictly or through explicit teaching, start to lag behind in their literacy development, and they become reliant on identifying unfamiliar words in text by guessing or using non-text cues (e.g., illustrations). It is these strategies that characterise poor readers (Nicholson, 1991, 1993; Pressley, 2006).

Because beginning readers differ in the amount of reading-related knowledge, skills and experiences they bring with them on entry to school, their literacy learning needs will necessarily differ. As a

result, children will benefit from differences in the degree and intensity of explicit instruction for learning the skills and strategies for identifying words and comprehending text. Children's location along the developmental progression from pre-reader to skilled reader will provide an indication as to the extent and intensity of explicit instruction that is most beneficial for each child (Arrow & Tunmer, 2012; Tunmer & Nicholson, 2011). Because of such differences, differentiated instruction from the outset of schooling is a powerful approach for accommodating the diversity of beginning readers, and for providing instruction that builds on what children already know when they start school (Arrow & Tunmer, 2012).

Children derive greater benefit from beginning reading instruction that includes explicit teaching of phonological awareness and alphabetic coding skills in combination with plenty of opportunities to practice and receive feedback on using these skills during text reading (Connor et al., 2009). This approach does not imply highly structured "phonics" programmes that are overly teacher-centred, or a curriculum that is rigid, fixed, and lock-step, with the same lesson given to every child. This type of structured programme would conflict with the basic principles of differentiated literacy instruction. For some children, a little bit of explicit phonics instruction will "go a long way" in helping them to progress along the path of becoming a skilled reader. Organising instruction to cater for the differing skill needs of new entrants is essential for maximizing the effectiveness of beginning literacy instruction (Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2000).

2.5 Recommendations from the main report

The remainder of this report outlines how the final recommendations of the Early Literacy Project can be implemented. This report does not include a strategy for making changes to Initial Teacher Education as that is beyond the scope of this programme of work. Specific changes and additions to the guidance and material provided by the Ministry of Education for beginning reading are provided. A strategy for scaling up the PLD provided to teachers to upskill their knowledge of language and instructional practices is also provided.

1. Teacher knowledge of the nature of language is essential for teachers to provide effective instruction in the foundations of reading. Just as other professions required technical understanding of foundational knowledge (e.g., doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants) so too do teachers. As Moats (2009) asserted, teachers need to be analytical about language and need such knowledge to systematically and explicitly teach foundational skills to beginning readers. Results from this project demonstrated the positive effects on students'

literacy learning outcomes when teachers increase their knowledge of language foundations.

A national strategy should be developed to upskill New Entrant/Year 1 teachers (at least) in the importance, knowledge and use of foundational language skills involved in successful literacy learning.

2. The fundamental nature of literacy resources for teachers and the philosophy that underpins them have remained largely unchanged over the past 30 years. Attempts to use commercial phonics programmes in conjunction with these resources are of limited success. As we have found in this project, attempts to use systematic and explicit instruction for developing effective word decoding skills are compromised by the use of levelled readers that are based on "natural language". Similarly, instructional resources provided to and used by most New Zealand classroom teachers of New Entrant/Year 1 students are significantly inconsistent with the last two decades of research on literacy instruction.

   The instruction guidebook "Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4" should be phased out and replaced by a much more contemporary text for teachers, based on the abundance of contemporary research frequently mentioned in the ELP report.

3. We found during the course of our project that all participating teachers wanted to be more effective in their literacy instruction. Most saw value in an understood the material presented in PLD workshops about the importance of beginning readers developing effective word decoding skills. Moreover, most valued the opportunity to learn about the importance of understanding the language foundations that underpin effective literacy teaching and learning. Implementing learnings from the PLD workshops and accompanying materials was more challenging for some teachers. The engagement of a coach helped. To bring about significant change in teaching literacy teaching practices will require a systematic and sustained approach to in-service PLD for upskilling teachers' knowledge and instructional practice.

   A strategy for the implementation of a comprehensive PLD programme designed to provide teachers of New Entrant/Year 1 students with effective tools for teaching the five key areas required for effective literacy instruction should be developed.

2.6 Summary

This implementation report is based on the findings of the Early Literacy Project. The recommendations in this report are based on the Simple View of Reading (SVR) and the expanded developmental model of the Cognitive Foundations of Learning to Read. This model is supported by a large body of scientific research on the nature and development of reading. The explicit teaching of the components of the model, such as letter knowledge, phonological awareness, alphabetic coding and vocabulary is also well established as highly effective, especially for children at-risk of difficulties in learning. An explicit approach to instruction is in contrast to existing literacy instructional approaches in New Zealand. However, the benefits to providing teachers with the knowledge to support changes to practice are immeasurable. This implementation report expands on the recommendations from the Early Literacy Project final report.

3. The Early Literacy Project as a strategic approach to early literacy

The Early Literacy Project (Chapman et al., 2018) found that teachers can adopt more effective literacy instructional strategies for the benefit of all students, and especially those students in low decile schools. This was most successful when teachers were provided with an explicit guide that provided a scope-and-sequence driven Reading Development Framework. The framework is one within which teachers could identify the learning needs of their children. It is most effective when combined with an aligned assessment framework and resources to support the explicit instruction of skill.

Effective implementation of a phonics-inclusive instructional framework requires explicit, structured, and sequenced instruction of the phonic elements within the literacy classroom programme. A scope and sequence that provides such a sequence also ensures that cognitive load is reduced to maximise all learning (Clark, Kirschner, & Sweller, 2012; Hempenstall & Buckingham, 2016). Cognitive load is explained in terms of reducing mental effort associated with the competing elements that are not focused on the actual decoding of an unknown word. This is designed to maximize the focus on the germane goal of *learning* and using that to read unfamiliar word in text (i.e., the learning of letter-sound correspondences and the use of them rather than being side-tracked into thinking about the developing meaning of the sentence or the story).

3.1 Scope-and-sequence

A scope and sequence provides a basis for the specific progression of knowledge required for learning to read words and making sense of text. The developmental progression is necessary to ensure that all children receive the content they need. When combined with ongoing assessment of learning the gaps in children's learning can be identified and addressed in a very specific manner. This specificity is critical as some children will continue to have those gaps over a period of time. These gaps will go on to contribute to gaps in later decoding and comprehension.

This scope-and-sequence is underpinned by a robust model of reading development. Ehri's (2014) widely accepted phase theory of word learning provides a developmental progression of word learning to support the word recognition component of the Cognitive Foundations of Learning to Read model. In Ehri's developmental model children begin learning to read by making use of letter names that they know, and then progress into making use of letter-sounds. As reading develops,

children begin to make use of increasingly larger phonic units (digraphs, morphemes, syllables) until reading appears automatized. Reading is not ever fully automatic, and even fluent adult readers must stop to read unknown words, and will often do so by looking for known morphological or syllabic patterns. As children also induce patterns and relationships as they learn to read it is expected that they flexibly move between phases, and do not necessarily follow the full progression of the scope and sequence. If they have induced, or otherwise learned the relationships in their current phase, then they can easily move to the next phase.

The scope and sequence developed for the Early Literacy Project has the same progression from small units for decoding to larger units for decoding. Figure 3 provides a general overview of the Reading Development Framework; Appendix 1 contains the fully specified scope and sequence. The scope and sequence also makes clear that reading is more than decoding and includes the teaching of elements of orthography and meaning making that enable readers to become automatic and efficient decoders who make sense of what they read.

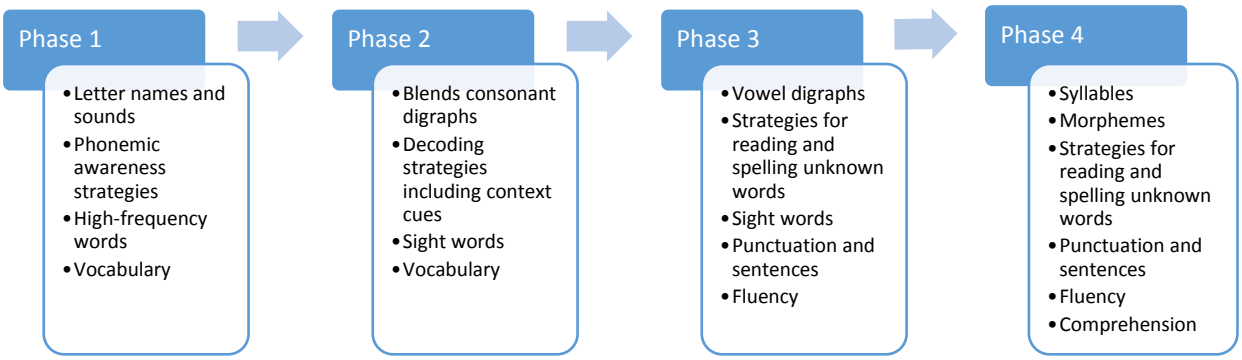

Figure 3: The Reading Development Framework for the scope and sequence

The scope and sequence was integrated with existing resources that schools commonly have available to them. The specific resources included as relevant to each phase (see Appendix 1 for more detail) were the phases from Yolanda Soryl's phonics and Early Words programmes, Ready to Read texts, PM+ texts, Smart Kids phonics, Joy Allcock's resources, and the variety of other programmes including the use of Jolly Phonics readers.

The fully specified scope and sequence is similar to the SATPIN model used in many phonics programmes but with some minor differences. SATPIN refers to the first six letters often taught in phonics programmes. These particular consonants (S, T, P, N) and vowels (A, I) are taught as they can

be combined in a number of ways to enable practice in reading decodable words (at, pin, sat, sit, pat, etc.).

The scope and sequence in the Reading Development Framework includes some of the SATPIN items as first taught but adapted the sequence based on research on how children learn letter sounds (Justice, Pence, Bowles, & Wiggens, 2006). Most children find it easier to learn initial letter sounds when the first phoneme in the letter name is the most common letter-sound (B,T,P) and two vowels that can be used to generate as many CV, VC or CVC words as possible. Teachers and schools were encouraged to adapt the order of the items in the sequences to match the resources they use. For example, if they used Jolly Phonics the order would be SATPIN.

The Reading Development Framework provided both the scope and sequence for phonics, but also for sight word teaching and explicit strategies for reading new words. It also includes recommendations for vocabulary instruction word selection and the order of writing instruction to minimize cognitive load. Sight word teaching refers to the explicit teaching of words that are High Frequency and necessary for reading the earliest decodable texts (e.g., the, of, and). In this curriculum document they are a mixture of irregular (not decodable using the most common g-p correspondences) or decodable but with letter-sounds not yet taught.

Vocabulary instruction was aligned with the phonics and sight word instruction. Alongside the phonics and sight word scope and sequence, explicit instruction in vocabulary is taught in whole class contexts. The whole-class context is used for vocabulary instruction so that all children are able to learn new vocabulary, even if they are unable to access the printed word on the page. In the scope and sequence in Appendix 1 example vocabulary items are provided, but it is anticipated that schools would select their own vital vocabulary that aligns with their thematic planning. The end point of the scope and sequence is where children are able to independently read texts of increasing complexity. The goal is to get children reading at a level that equates to, or exceeds, the Ready to Read texts levelled at Green, as the current aspiration for children at the end of Year 1 of school (Ministry of Education, 2010).

3.2 Instructional approach

To adequately meet the needs of all children, knowledge of effective literacy practices must be part of a teacher's toolbox for literacy instruction, alongside teacher knowledge. For example, Piasta et al. (2009) found that the quality of teaching practices closely reflected levels of teacher knowledge. In conjunction with this finding, others have found that even when teachers do have sufficient

knowledge of appropriate instructional areas or practices, they seldom implement or plan for them in their lessons (McNeill & Kirk, 2014; Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014).

McNeill and Kirk (2014), for example, found that for the teaching of spelling, teachers were generally familiar with a variety of evidence-based practices, but tended not to use them because they felt that they lacked the explicit knowledge of how to use them in practice. In part, this was because many of the teachers felt that they lacked the knowledge required for accurately explaining the rationale behind different spelling patterns.

While teacher knowledge is important for instruction the provision of an explicit and structured programme to support instructional decisions may mitigate some issues of teacher knowledge. One type of explicit instruction, Direct Instruction (DI) consists of programmes that have carefully planned teacher-script lesson plans and have an effect size of 0.59 pooled across studies (Hattie, 2009). In comparison, general types of explicit instruction do not require scripted lessons. Instead, carefully planned structured lessons that teach the curriculum content in a sequenced and incremental manner can be equally effective with an effect size of 0.6 (Hattie, 2009). This means using structured templates for lesson planning that includes revision, explicit teaching of new content, modelling, and scaffolding to apply the new learning in the reading of decodable texts.

This approach is very different to the current use of guided reading in small groups for early reading instruction. Guided reading is a whole-language, constructivist, discovery approach to instruction which uses an implicit phonics approach. In implicit phonics, letter-sound correspondences are taught only as they arise, and not in any systematic fashion. *Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis found an effect size of only .06 for such whole-language approaches.* The direct instruction approach recommended is one in which children continue to learn in small, supportive groups, but not through small 'guided reading' groups. This will require a change to the nomenclature used in beginning reading classrooms, in terms of what happens in groups.

3.3 Current reading materials and guidance materials

The main instructional resources for junior classrooms are the Ready to Read texts and the supporting materials which are predominantly available online through the TKI website. Teachers have also been provided with the Effective Literacy Practice books as well as the Learning through Talk book.

Although the resource guides do refer to phonics instruction and the importance of it, the support for phonics has been in statements referring to phonic knowledge and not in the form of specific

programme guidance. Into this vacuum there have fallen a large number of phonics programmes and additional resources that have been embraced by schools in an ad hoc fashion. As Chapman et al. (2017) note, the number of phonics programmes identified by schools in New Zealand numbers over 50. Not all of these programmes will be appropriate to the purpose or based on research evidence.

For the effective implementation of the Reading Development Framework specific resources need to be in place to support the transition of learners from non-readers to readers. This means that the existing resources may need replacement or revision to meet these needs. To implement the Early Literacy Project more widely we recommend the following for each of these resources.

Literacy learning progressions (LLPs)

Although the LLPs are useful as an overview of yearly progression they are not specific enough within each year, particularly for the first year. The existing LLPS don't capture the nature of the developmental progression of the act of learning to decode words. The progressions do capture the outcomes of developmental progress, over the course of the school year. We recommend that the scope and sequence stands alone but alongside the literacy learning progressions, for the first year of literacy instruction and learning. This provides more clarity in terms of how children develop their decoding abilities in a more specific way.

Sound Sense resource

The Sound Sense resource was an appropriate response to the Select Committee report on the Teaching of Reading in 2001 (New Zealand House of Representatives, 2001). However, although it provides some support for the teaching of phonological awareness and phonic knowledge, it does not provide any systematic guidance. We recommend that this be replaced with the scope and sequence curriculum and with the additional support materials required for it that come from the PLD programme. The reason for this is that teachers' will no longer need the pick and choose guidance from the Sound Sense materials; they will now have a structured approach.

Ready to Read levelled texts

Ready to Read texts are particularly challenging within the scope and sequence curriculum as they are not levelled based on the decodability of words. Thus, even early texts at red level have words at higher levels of phonic complexity (e.g., with digraphs, complex vowel digraphs and varied morphological patterns). These texts can't be used at early levels of the scope and sequence as there are insufficient numbers of the same phonic pattern within each text, and there are larger numbers of words with patterns that are not taught until later.

The existing range is, however, good for teacher reading to students and as text models. In terms of this programme, the Ready to Read and PM+ range continue to be suitable for children in phases 3 and 4. We recommend that the Ready to Read levels Magenta and Red be replaced with a series of decodable texts that align with the Scope and Sequence. Ready to Read texts from Yellow onwards will continue to be suitable for use for children who are in phases 3 and 4 of the scope and sequence.

Effective Literacy Practice Handbook for years 1-4

This text, as with the Sound Sense resource, was a response to the Select Committee Report on the Teaching of Reading of 2001 (New Zealand House of Representatives, 2001). The text refers to the necessary use of phonics, but the mentions of phonics sit alongside recommendations to use less effective strategies for reading unfamiliar words, such as using syntactic cues.

We recommend that this text book be phased out and replaced with a text that reflects contemporary research and best-practice in the teaching of reading and writing, both at the year 1 level and at years 2-4.

'Literacy Online' and 'Sounds and Words'

To support the introduction of the Scope and Sequence and the above recommendations we also recommend that the Literacy Online material be revised to align with the Reading Development Framework. The Sounds and Words webpages will need less revision to align with the framework.

3.4 Assessment framework

In the assessment framework the assessments aligned with the phases and with the type of knowledge being taught in each phase. The Reading Development Framework from Figure 3 is represented in Figure 4, but in terms of what is assessed at each phase. The key aspect of the assessment framework is that it is flexible and beyond the initial screening at school entry can be differentiated based on what phase a child sits within. Not all children need to be assessed on parts of the framework. For example, a child in phase 3 need not be assessed on letter knowledge. Likewise, a child in phase 1 would not be assessed on single word reading.

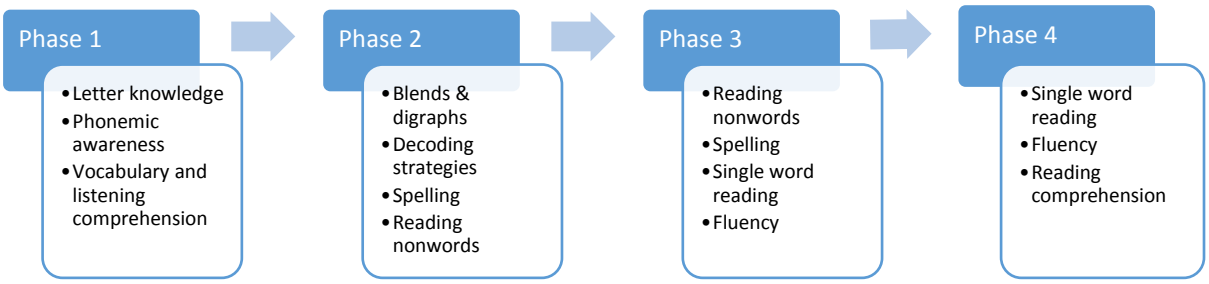

Figure 4: Assessment framework within the Reading Development Framework

Running records are not specifically a part of the assessment framework for the scope and sequence as it is considered to be an outcome measure (Lesaux, 2012) that provides a reading level. The additional MSV analysis that is typically used in a running record (or in prose inventories such as PM Benchmark or PROBE) need not be assessed in this way as they are separately assessed in the other assessment tools. Strategy use may also be observed during lessons themselves.

3.5 Summary

In this section the overall Reading Development Framework has been introduced, beginning with a description of the theory and research that underpins it. The Reading Development Framework consists of four developmental phases. Each phase has a more specific scope and sequence, developed at a weekly level for the systematic and sequenced instruction of phonic knowledge, decoding strategies, and sight word instruction. The instructional strategies required for teaching the scope and sequence are described, and consist of small group instruction using structured lesson plans and decodable texts to apply the phonics and strategy knowledge learned. The placement of children into the phases for instruction comes from using the complementary Assessment Framework. This framework specifies the different assessments required to monitor learning within the scope and sequence. This framework enables teachers to identify children's specific literacy knowledge and use that to place them into the appropriate phase of instruction. Ongoing progress monitoring will enable teachers to ensure that the instruction provided matches the child's level of knowledge. In this way, children who are making rapid progress and have implicitly learned relationships that are not yet explicitly taught can be accelerated to other phases that better match

their existing level of knowledge. Children making slower than anticipated progress can also have more targeted and focused instruction on the content they are having difficulty with.

4. Running the programme: Professional learning workshops

In the Early Literacy Project (Chapman et al., 2018) teachers' implementation of effective instructional strategies was supported by improving teachers' own knowledge of basic language structures and their confidence in teaching word-level skills in explicit ways. To scale-up the project this will require ongoing professional learning and development with coaching and school-level support.

In this section a PLD programme for the scale-up of the Early Literacy Project is described. Firstly, the content of the programme is detailed with the alignment to the Reading Development Framework (Figure 3) and the Assessment Framework (Figure 4). Secondly, recommendations for the delivery of the PLD programme are made. Finally, suggestions for potential PLD for the early childhood education (ECE) sector are made.

4.1 Content of the PLD programme

The modules are developed using the Simple View of Reading (Figure 1) and the Cognitive Foundations of Learning to Read Model (Figure 2) as the theoretical framework. From this theoretical framework the Reading Development Framework (Figure 3) was established to guide instructional practice and assessment in year 1. The Reading Development Framework informs the PLD programme and Figure 5 illustrates the content of the first four modules as they relate to it. The final module (not illustrated) is different in that it draws the content of the previous modules together to cover how differentiated instruction can be implemented in the classroom. Appendix 2 provides more detail on the content of each of the 5 modules, including the order of how the workshops ran.

The workshops were run based on four components. These same components also model the structured lesson plan layout recommended for use with the teaching of literacy.

1. Revision of content from the previous workshops. In workshop one this was replaced by introductions and reflecting on teaching literacy to New Entrants and Year 1 students.
2. Content knowledge including the research and theory explaining why this content knowledge is so important.
3. Pedagogical practice including the use of assessment to drive planning as well as instruction that is systematic, structured, sequenced and explicit.
4. Time to reflect on the new learning, to discuss the application of it and ask questions of the facilitators about the application of the content to their own contexts. Teachers are asked to bring copies of assessments for children they have questions about, or to ask about practice.

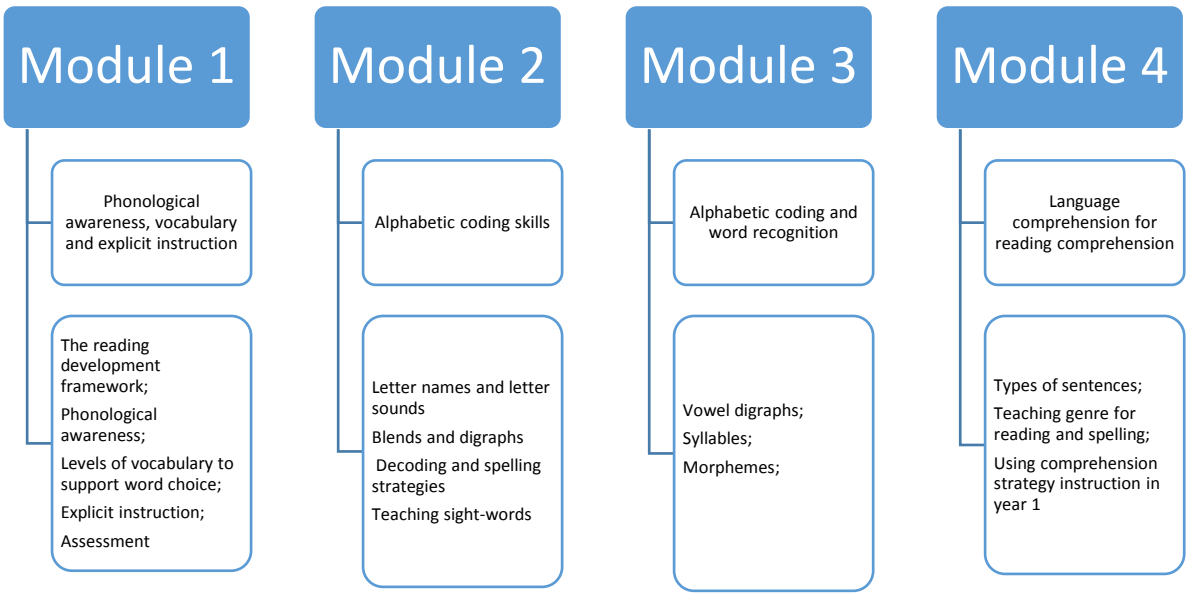

Figure 5: Content of the first four modules aligned to the Cognitive Model reading development framework and the specific taught components

This PLD programme is based on key principles of effective instruction, derived from theory and research on cognitive learning: direct instruction, active learning, scaffolding and modelling (Bjorklund, 2005). The PLD is a combination of workshop and a professional coaching and mentoring programme that is aimed at enhancing teaching effectiveness, making use of teachers' experiences for the active learning to take place.

The modules are also carefully developed to build on one another in terms of content knowledge for teachers. They also reflect the developmental progressions that children make in their literacy learning. The final module integrates the content together to provide a programmatic overview of an effective early literacy instructional programme.

The delivery model for this programme involves 5 workshops; the first is 2-days long and the remainder are one day each. This means that the workshops themselves are 36 hours of PLD and will be supported by at least 16 hours of coaching each year (4 hours per term is the minimum recommended) for two years. Two years is recommended to ensure that teachers are supported to continue the new practices rather than revert back to what was familiar prior to the PLD programme.

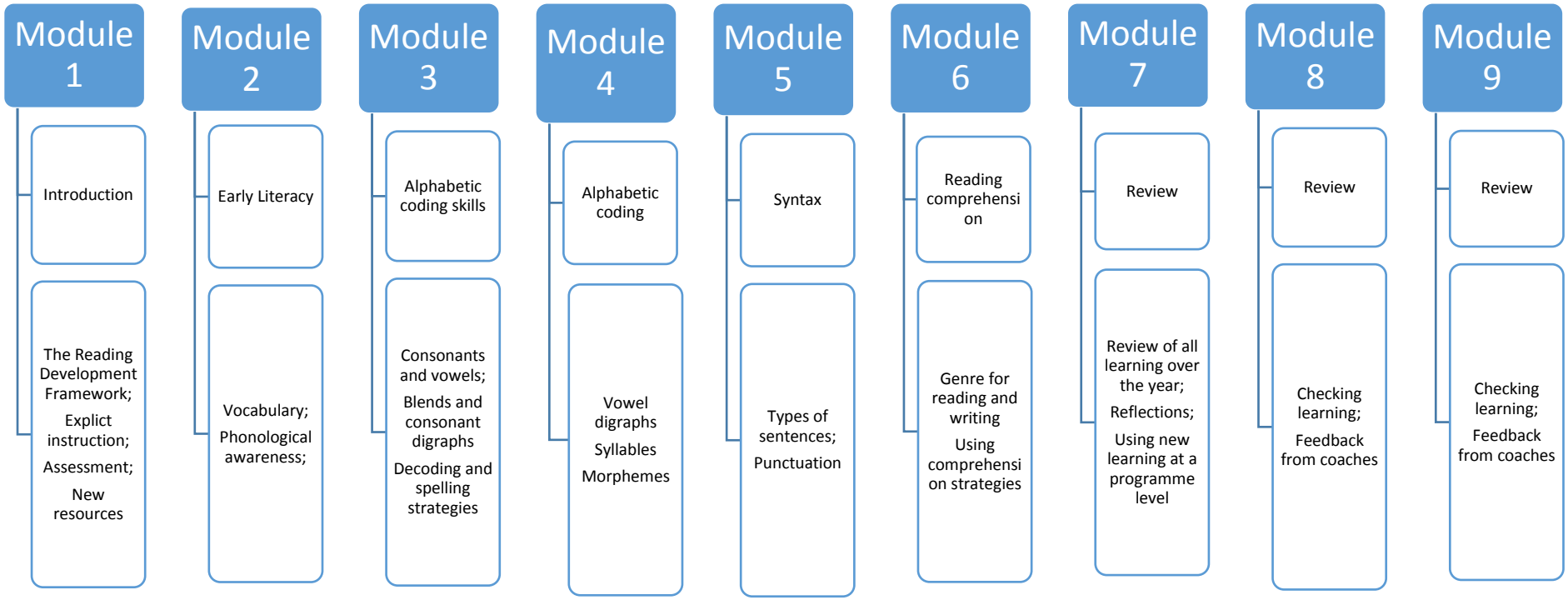

Figure 6: Expanded PLD programme

Although the five workshop model was sufficient to lead to change in the Early Literacy Project, the feedback received indicated that more time was needed to allow for the new learning to embed into practice (Arrow, Chapman, Braid, & Tunmer, 2017; Chapman et al., 2018). As a result of this feedback we recommend a nine workshop model; six in the first three terms of the year (2 per term), one in the last term of the school year, and two follow-up workshops in the following year (see Figure 7). This results in 36 hours of PLD over three terms, with an additional 6 hours in the fourth term and 12 hours in total in the following year.

This more intense, but less condensed model is more likely to lead to practice change, particularly when supported by coaching and mentoring.The intense nature of the PLD is supported by the research reviewed by Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009). They argue that PLD should be content-based, include active learning through practice and reflections, and be collaborative and collegial. In addition, illustrate that programmes which include the above elements have positive outcomes for children when they run from 30 to 100 hours, over a 6 to 12 month period of time (see also, Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010; Chappuis, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 2009; Neuman & Wright, 2010).

4.2 Delivery

The scaled-up delivery of the PLD programme will require three levels of training (see Figure 7). At the first level PLD providers and their facilitators will need training in the content delivery, provided by the Early Literacy Project developers. At the second level the PLD facilitators will need to provide training to coaches to provide coaching support within the classroom. Coaches should be external to the school itself, employed by the PLD providers. The final level of training is the provision of the PLD programme to teachers themselves. Each level of training will have the same content as the general programme but include elements relevant to the level of training.

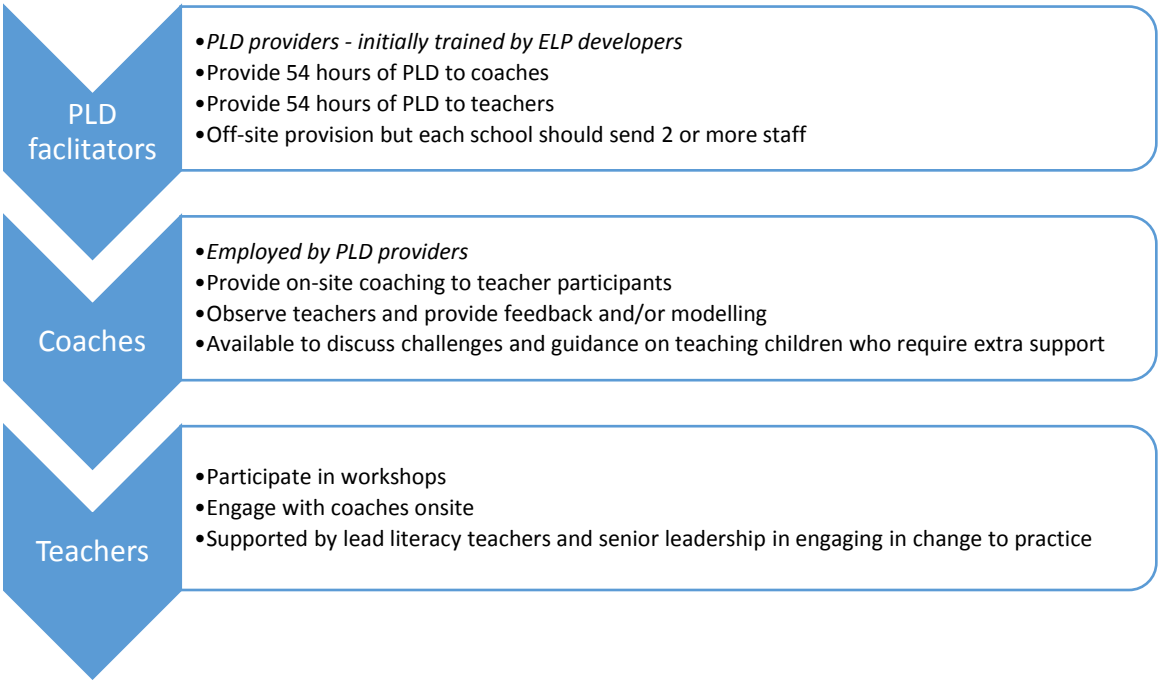

Figure 7: PLD delivery model for the Early Literacy Project

4.3 Implications for early childhood education

The programme described in this report focused on the development of phonemic awareness, as the most important of the phonological awareness skills for direct influence on reading and spelling abilities. This is, however, the pinnacle of phonological awareness development and not the starting point. Phonological awareness begins with the ability to distinguish between words, followed by distinguishing syllables, and then distinguishing between words with rhyming (rime) units. This developmental progression has been well documented (Anthony & Francis, 2005; Lonigan, Burgess, Anthony, & Barker, 1998).

We started the programme teaching phoneme awareness with letter knowledge as there is an extensive body of knowledge that suggests that combining letter instruction with phoneme awareness is the most efficient instructional practice (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001; Hempenstall & Buckingham, 2016; National Reading Panel, 2000). For many teachers and schools, starting with letters and phonemes felt a step too far, and that they needed to teach the earlier developing forms of phonological awareness to orient children towards listening to sounds in words. Research on the development of phonological awareness has found that oral receptive vocabulary

(in any language, not just English, e.g., Atwill, Blanchard, Gorin, & Burstein, 2007) is a key contributor to phonological awareness (Ouellette & Haley, 2011; Walley, Metsala, & Garlock, 2003).

Thus, there are two strands that should be developed in early years education and which form the basis of our recommendations for transfer across ECE and NE/Yr1. The first, oral language, is the most important. The second is developing phonological awareness. Both of these skills can be intentionally taught within holistic early childhood settings (McLachlan & Arrow, 2014; McLachlan, Arrow, & Watson, 2013) such as those in New Zealand. Such practices sit within the Communication strand of Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 2017), and more specifically in the learning outcome of *he korero ā-waha*. The Better Start literacy strand has also been looking at how phonological awareness improves literacy outcomes when taught in New Entrant classrooms, in small groups or whole-class. Throughout this report the recommendation that a Foundation phase be implemented that crosses the boundary from ECE to New Entrants, particularly in ECE centres that draw from populations with large numbers of children who are at-risk of having difficulty in learning to read.

ECE-level programme

A major concern of all teacher in the Early Literacy Project was the language abilities of children as they entered school. This included receptive language and phonological awareness. Although there was little actual evidence that children are starting school with lower level of receptive language compared to other years, we did find low levels of phonological awareness and letter knowledge. Alongside the additional research carried out by one of us (Arrow, 2008, 2010; Arrow & McLachlan, 2014; McLachlan & Arrow, 2014; McLachlan & Arrow, 2017; McLachlan et al., 2013) it is possible to develop the emergent literacy skills of young children in holistic settings. As young children from advantaged homes (such as the children entering high-decile schools) appear to learn this in their homes, young children from less advantaged homes need opportunities to have the same kinds of instruction in ECE that advantaged children get in their own homes.

An ECE-level programme would include building teacher knowledge of the types of vocabulary words children learn, the development of phonological awareness, and how children develop letter knowledge. This programme would briefly cover phonics and reading comprehension so that teachers can use this knowledge in their programmes, but not necessarily teach unless they had children who were already reading prior to beginning school. Pedagogical practices would incorporate strategies for recognizing and responding to children's language and literacy abilities. It would also include teaching strategies that can be used in the holistic settings, both intentionally and to support opportunities as they arise through play.

4.4 Summary

In this section the content and delivery of the scaled-up Early Literacy Project Professional Learning and Development programme is described. The content is described in terms of both content and principles for effective PLD. The PLD programme should be intensive and supported by coaches or mentors. The recommended programme has two additional workshops in the year of provision and needs to be supported by coach visits two per term. It is recommended that there be three tiers to the PLD programme implementation. At the first level, PLD programme providers or facilitators receive training from the programme providers. At the second level the facilitators train the on-site coaches on the programme and on effective coaching. At the final level the facilitators provide the off-site workshops with the coaches working with teachers' in schools.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The main element of the recommended implementation is the introduction of a Reading Development Framework to guide the first year of literacy instruction in primary schools. The main tool of the framework is a systematic and structured scope and sequence for teaching specific phonic knowledge, decoding and spelling strategies, as well as broader reading strategies and vocabulary knowledge. The scope and sequence is supplemented by the introduction of a new series of decodable texts that align with the scope and sequence. The decodable texts will be used to replace the use of the first two levels of the Ready to Read series as resources for teaching how to get print off the page. The second part of the Reading Development Framework is the complementary Assessment Framework. Each phase of the Reading Development Framework is supported by relevant assessment tools. Finally, this report outlines what is necessary to implement the changes required, including the implications for professional learning providers and challenges for leaders and school systems. This consists of a PLD package that is intensive and includes workshops as well as a coaching and mentoring programme.

5.2 Recommendations

To embrace the findings from this project and from the extensive reviews of literacy research elsewhere, changes to literacy instruction and supporting materials will be needed in New Zealand. Accordingly, we make the following recommendations for the implementation of the Early Literacy Project and its programme into the New Zealand educational system.

1. Implement the Cognitive Foundation of Learning of Read Model as the theoretical model of learning to read, to replace the Multiple-Cues or “Search-lights” model of reading.
2. Introduce the Reading Development Framework for Year 0-1 reading and spelling instruction.
    a. Introduce the scope and sequence for teaching and measuring progress in year 1;
    b. Introduce decodable texts to support explicit literacy teaching and the scope and sequence;
    c. Introduce a new assessment framework to support curriculum-based assessment measures for instructional decision making.

3. Replace or revise instructional guidance materials
    a. Support a change in reading approach nomenclature so that early literacy instruction is small group instruction and not guided reading.
4. Provide intensive and comprehension PLD using the Early Literacy Project materials.
    a. Training should be provided to facilitators or providers in the content of the Early Literacy Project and the resulting Reading Development Framework;
    b. Facilitators will be supported by coaches and mentors who will also need to participate in training and visit teachers in the schools;
    c. The workshop programme be extended to seven workshops in one year with two workshops in the following year.

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Appendix 1: Curriculum Document

2017

Year 1 Literacy Curriculum

The Early Literacy Project

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1/1/2017

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I would like to acknowledge the Ministry of Education for the funding of the Early Literacy Project. This scope and sequence was developed as part of the Early Literacy Project PLD programme.

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Curriculum for learning to read words: An introduction

This curriculum is based on contemporary research on how children learn to read, particularly the developmental model of the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) developed by Tunmer and Hoover (2014). This model is known as the Cognitive Model of Learning to Read and aligns with several developmental, phase models of learning to read, particularly Ehri's (2000, 2005, 2014). It also aligns with the 5 pillars of reading that evolved out of the National Reading Panel (1999); phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge; phonic knowledge, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. This curriculum recognises that these are each elements that must be taught, but also that specific, explicit instruction of word learning is necessary for independent use of reading to further develop fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

This curriculum thus uses Ehri's phase theory of word reading and the Cognitive Model of Learning to Read to specify a developmental scope and sequence, and a supporting assessment framework. It also distinguishes between the content children need to learn and the strategies they need to learn for using it. The teaching of reading is most effective when instruction is explicit, structured, and systematic. The use of a developmental scope and sequence provides the structure and systematic framework for teaching. The lesson planning templates and sample lessons illustrate how to provide that explicit instruction.

Lessons should be explicit and word focused (Hempenstall & Buckingham, 2016). Text is used to support the learning rather than leading the learning. This is because children need to have specific skills and strategies in place for decoding print before they are able to focus on the text. In the first two phases this may mean that they are not reading texts, but are using letters, sentences or other decodable texts to support what they have just learned about content and strategy. The curriculum also follows Fisher, Frey and Lapp's (2011) model of teacher release of responsibility to children: *I do, we do, you do*.

Accordingly, there is no guided reading in the New Entrant classroom unless children are in phase 4. The grouping of children is simply known as small-group teaching and is necessarily homogeneous. However, the children are similar in need rather than reading level. In phase 3 levelled readers should be phased in and the lessons become more like the guided-reading lesson that many teachers will be familiar with. The focus then shifts to reading for meaning as students already have the main phonic knowledge and strategies in place to support their reading of unknown words.

Getting started

In a classroom that starts out the school year with a new group of children all instruction would normally be whole-class instruction. As the term progresses and you have carried out screening assessments and any follow up diagnostic assessments you will start to differentiate instruction using small groups. From that you may find that some children will be in phase 2, 3 or even 4. It is at this point that differentiated small-groups should be implemented in place of any previous small-group/guided reading practices.

Children who already appear to be good decoders at the start of year 1 often become poor spellers as they are not paying explicit attention to the order of letters in words. Thus, it is still necessary to continue whole-class instruction reinforcing the knowledge from each phase, but working on phase specific knowledge in small groups. Whole-class instruction is also appropriate for specific, explicit vocabulary instruction; interactive shared writing for genre and sentence construction, and; other shared learning needs.

In a classroom of a number of year levels and school entry points whole-class instruction may still be used, but the teacher should consider a short reinforcement of the alphabetic principle and phonic knowledge and utilise the time for explicit vocabulary instruction instead.

As the curriculum means that phonological and phoneme awareness, and phonic knowledge, is taught within small group time, stand-alone phonic programmes are not necessary within the class time-table. However, the knowledge gained, resources, and activities can be integrated into the specific small group instruction. Indications of different programme links are made in the small group instruction plan. This also means that there is more time in the classroom timetable to work with groups on reading specifically.

Planning for teaching early literacy

Using a scope and sequence

The Scope and Sequence outlines on the following two pages are overviews of the developmental progression of knowledge required for learning to read words and to meet the requirements for the end of 1 year of school for National Standards. The scope and sequence for phonological awareness is provided separately as some children start school not requiring this knowledge. However, when the assessment data indicates instruction in phonological awareness is necessary it should be taught in conjunction with Phase 1 and/or the first term of the children in the classroom.

As there are a number of ways schools structure what happens to classrooms as children enter school during the year the overall Scope and Sequence following the outlines is listed by phase, with each phase expected to take approximately a term to work through. This can be used flexibly across whole-class and small-group instruction, based on the school structure and nature of the classroom. The phonic knowledge and high frequency words are listed by week, with the letters Bb, Tt, Pp, Oo, Aa and the word *the* taught in the first week. The strategies are listed in order of introduction and should be introduced as soon as possible during the term or phase.

It is expected that vocabulary instruction is explicit and would likely be based on what theme, topic or unit is expected to be covered across the curriculum (or in science, social sciences or arts). Writing would also be taught across the time. The curriculum makes suggestions for writing genre that enables an introduction to writing at a time children are still learning to write and spell words themselves. The strategies used in writing are presented in a developmental progression that matches the phonic knowledge and strategy children are learning. It is expected that learning to write words is taught in conjunction with how to spell. This is emphasised further in the differentiated instruction guide.

General scope and sequence for alphabetic coding and strategy use

Content – learning:

- ☐ Phonological awareness (if necessary refer to PA scope & sequence)
- ☐ Letter names
- ☐ Letter sounds – short vowel sounds
- ☐ Initial blends
- ☐ Standard consonant digraphs
- ☐ Common high frequency words
- ☐ Final blends
- ☐ Vowel digraphs
- ☐ Final and less common consonant digraphs
- ☐ -r and –l controlled vowels

Strategy – is learning how to:

- ☐ Write letters to match to sounds (invented spelling)
- ☐ Blend sounds within print words to decode simple words
- ☐ Use blends as a letter combination to decode simple words
- ☐ Use context cues to confirm decoding attempts
- ☐ Use digraphs as a letter combination to decode simple words
- ☐ Use consonant digraphs in spelling attempts
- ☐ Use vowel digraphs to decode words
- ☐ Spell words using digraphs in a conventional manner

Scope and sequence for phonological awareness

This scope and sequence should be used if, during the first three weeks of school, assessment identifies that children have language and phonological awareness levels that will influence the speed of learning. However, moving to phoneme awareness and phonic knowledge instruction should be attempted as soon as possible.

Prior to alphabetic coding:

- ☐ Can tell that two words are the same or different
- ☐ Hearing words in sentences
- ☐ Can tell that two words rhyme or not
- ☐ Can clap syllables in words
- ☐ Can produce a rhyming word
- ☐ Can blend syllable and onset-rimes
- ☐ Can separate words into syllables
- ☐ Can tell if two words share the same first sound or not
- ☐ Can produce the first sound in a word

Phonemic awareness (develops in conjunction with alphabetic coding):*

- ☐ Can tell if two words have the same final sound or not
- ☐ Can blend orally presented phonemes to produce a spoken word
- ☐ Can segment individual phonemes in spoken words
- ☐ Can delete a phoneme from a word
- ☐ Can add a phoneme to a word
- ☐ Can delete phonemes from a blend unit in a word
- ☐ Can delete and add a phoneme from a word to create a new word
- ☐ Can say the sounds in a word in reverse

*These do not need to be taught as they develop in conjunction with learning to read itself – however, it is necessary to identify children who have difficulty with these as it can predict later reading difficulties.

Detailed Scope and sequence

Phase		Phonic knowledge	Strategy	High frequency words	*Examples* of Theme vocabulary	Writing genre and knowledge
1*	1-3 4 5 6 7 8 9	PA, 1:1, assessment Letter names & sounds: Bb, Tt, Pp, Oo, Aa Ss, Dd, Jj, Ee, Uu Kk, Mm, Ff, Rr, Ii Nn, Hh, Ll, Vv, Zz Gg, Cc, Ww, Yy Qq, Vv *Blending and segmenting across all weeks*	• Print words are made up of letters • Letters have sounds that can be blended together to make words • Blend together to read simple words • Write letters to match sounds	the of, and a, to, in is, you, that it, he, was for, on, as	Belonging Family, cousins, school, community, whanau, marae,	Narrative Pictures as planning your story Dictating to others Writing letters for sounds
2	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Revision sl, bl, pl, cl, fl br, cr, dr, fr, tr, pr sh, ch, wh, th, ph spr, str, scr, spl mp, nd, ft ng, tch, dge ck, ll, ss o_e, a_e, u_e, i_e	• Blend together words with blends to read • Blend sounds including digraphs to read words • Use context cues to check decoding	his, i, at, be from, have, or with, they, this had, by, word, but not, what, all, were we, when, your, can said, there, use, an she, do, their, if will, up, other, about	Safety Roads, cycling, vehicle, pedestrian, visibility, stranger, internet	Narrative cont'd Using segmenting to hear all sounds for spelling Using blend units in spelling Using digraphs in spelling Picture to writing link

3	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Revision Vowel digraphs as one sound ai, ay, ei, ey, au, aw, ea ie, ee, ei, igh, ough oe, oa, ow, oo ew, ue oi, oy, ou, ow er, ir, ur, or, ar	• Recognise and use vowel digraphs in blending to read words • Finding and explaining punctuation • Using punctuation for fluency	each, which, out, many then, them, these, so some, her, would, make like, him, into, time has, look, to, more right, see, go, number no, way, could, people my, than, first, water been, who, call, now	School production Theatre, performance,	Procedural texts Using vowel digraphs in spelling Using punctuation in spelling Chronological ordering Re-reading own writing
4 Ongoing		Syllables Closed, open Vowel-consonant –e, vowel team Vowel-r, consonant-le Morphemes Base words & inflections Compound words Prefixes Suffixes	• Looking for syllables and morphemes for decoding words • Using context and syntactic cues to confirm decoding • Whisper reading to silent reading • Main ideas and summarising	find, long, down day, did, get come, made, may part, over, new sound, take, only little, work, know place, year, live back, give, most	*As decided*	Procedural cont'd Sentence construction; different types of sentences and punctuation Using syllables and morphemes to help spelling

*Phase 1 is likely to be whole-class instruction at the start of the school year.

Whole-class instruction and small-group, differentiated, instruction

Using whole-class instruction

Whole class instruction works best when all children start off with the same levels of knowledge (i.e., all of your children have started school at the start of the year). They will, generally, all be at Phase 1 of development so using your time with all students together will be most effective. You can then follow up with individuals or small groups to further reinforce the practice.

When you have a wider range of abilities whole class instruction should still be used to work through at the lowest phase in your class so that it is reinforced for all children and the most at risk children get a double-dose of instruction for their needs. Once all, or the majority of, children are in phase 3 or higher you can move your focus to explicit vocabulary instruction and modelling comprehension strategies.

1. Use the scope and sequence to ensure all learn what is needed;
2. Use shared reading for modelling components of the scope and sequence;
3. Use shared writing to model using phonic knowledge;
4. Use picture books to develop oral vocabulary in explicit ways;
5. Use handwriting and spelling instruction to support learning.

Using small group instruction

Small group, differentiated instruction is used when you have a larger group of children or when you have a wider range of abilities (e.g., Yr 1 & 2 or Yr 1-3). This is explored further in the following section. It includes a range of lesson plan templates and an exemplar for phase 1. A week planning template for one phase group is provided at the end of that section. Whole class instruction should still be used to work through at the lowest phase in your class so that it is reinforced for all children. The lowest phase children are then getting a double dose in the whole-class setting and in their small-group work.

1. Small-group instruction in Phases 1-3 is NOT guided reading but focused explicit needs based on scope and sequence.
2. Text selections are based on what is taught:
    a. Not a levelled text until children are full-alphabetic in word recognition (phase 3);
    b. Could be alphabet cards, high frequency cards, teacher created sentences, decodable texts.

Differentiated Instruction planning

Group: Phase 1	Group: Phase 2	Group 3: Phase 3	Group 4: Phase 4
• Alphabet names & sounds: see in print and words • Syllable and rime awareness • 1:1 matching • Concepts about print • Attempts at writing and spelling	• Consonant blends • High frequency sight words • Basic punctuation • Spelling letters for sounds • Decoding, using blends and paying attention to all letters • Blending and segmenting phonemes	• Trigraphs & vowel structures • Syllable spelling patterns • Morphemes • Advanced Word attack using chunks/or unitizing for decoding instead of sounding out • Spelling using chunks including morphemes • Cross-checking across meaning and syntax for decoding attempts • Checking for meaning	• Syllable structures • Morphological knowledge including role of meaning • Comprehension strategies • Syntactic structures • Analogy for decoding unfamiliar words • Morphemes for identifying meaning of unfamiliar words • Purpose of reading beyond learning to read
Explicit teaching activities			
• Explicit syllable and rime awareness instruction • Matching spoken word to printed unit reinforced with predictable texts • Initial sound sorting • Teaching names and sounds	• Explicit instruction in blends, sounds, sight words and strategy use • Reinforce with decodable text • Sounding and blending • Segmenting and blending • Say it and move it • Irregular and regular high frequency words	• Explicit instruction in patterns, strategy use, sight words and cross-checking attempts • Reinforce with a combination of decodable and levelled text • Irregular and regular high words • Analogy use • Teaching letter patterns • Question clusters • Direct comprehension instruction	• Explicit instruction reinforced with levelled text • Question clusters • Direct comprehension instruction • Story mapping • Text structure • Summarisation

Independent extension and home activities			
• Alphabet ring cards with letters that are already learned and being learned attached. • Mum & Dad encouraged to read child's library book to them and find letters in it.	• Decodable texts or teacher created sentences to re-read • Alphabet & high-freq words on rings to practice for fluency	• Texts with taught units within – levelled texts • Spelling words with taught units (not tested, just practiced) • Whisper reading	• Texts with taught units within • Spelling words with taught units (not tested, just practiced) • Silent reading • Asking questions about story and discussing
Centre/rotation activities			
• Handwriting using letters • Using phonic apps to practice sounds of letters • Dictating stories to teacher, peer, or into book apps • Reading known picture books and shared reading books – finding known letters	• Creating words with letters • Sentence construction with h-f words and punctuation cards • Handwriting using letters and words • Partner reading decodable texts • Phonics apps	• Games or apps to reinforce larger units • Handwriting and spelling using learned units • Genre writing using learned units and sight words • Partner reading	• Games or apps to reinforce larger units • Handwriting and spelling using learned units • Genre writing using learned units and/or summarise story • Partner or silent reading
Resource types to use			
• Letters (magnetic, plastic, foam, flash cards) • Letter-sound flip-charts (e.g., Smart Kids) • Smart Kids phonics 1 • Yolanda Soryl stage 1 resources • Predictable texts (original RtR and PM books) • Alphabet books • Sounds like Fun (Allcock)	• Decodable texts (Yolanda Soryl EW readers 1 & 2; Word detective; Letterland; About Words; Jolly Readers; Little Learners) • Alphabet cards & resources • High-frequency word cards • Punctuation cards • Smart Phonics 2 kit • Yolanda Soryl stages 3-5 • Sounds like Fun	• Levelled texts (yellow +, particularly PM+ range; Word detective) • Syllable and morpheme apps or games • Smart Phonics 3 kit • Yolanda Soryl stages 6-7 (if available)	• Levelled texts (Green +; all trade books including Ready to Read) • Comprehension activities and resources • Syllable and morpheme apps or games

Using Assessment

Assessment

The curriculum refers to the use of four types of assessment taken from Walpole and McKenna (2007) and Lesaux and Marietta (2012). Screening should take place at the start of each school year and at the start of each school term to check on progress towards each of the phases. The Assessment Schedule illustrates when each form of knowledge (refer to the Assessment and Type table) should be screened. There will be some children who achieve ceiling on screening measures and should then be screened in the following phase.

Diagnostic assessment is the bread and butter of assessment and is the ongoing informal and formal assessment that teachers use every day. This literacy curriculum requires diagnostic assessment of phonic knowledge using a phonics measure such as reading blends and digraphs but also reading nonwords. As a result of assessment children should be placed in the phase which best aligns with their current learning needs in the scope and sequence. Lower is always better than higher as it won't hurt the children to receive extra reinforcement in already known knowledge.

Screening

These are assessments that provide a broadly defined estimate of achievement. Such assessments don't give a great deal of detail but may give a general level of achievement in the area. The use of a nonword reading measure is a screening measure used in this curriculum to identify, broadly, the application of coding and strategy knowledge.

Diagnostic

These are assessments that provide detailed information in a specific area. It can also include whether children are meeting an objective or criteria, such as achieving a specific lesson learning intention. The findings of such assessments are the specific information to guide instruction. This curriculum provides for observational diagnostic assessment but also uses specific consonant blend and digraph as well as vowel digraph assessments. Phonological awareness measures of blending and segmenting can be used to indicate strategy use without requiring phonic content knowledge.

Progress-Monitoring

These assessments gauge student growth over time and are particularly useful for constrained skills that have a set number of items to learn. One example is the progress monitoring of letter name and sound knowledge over time, but also of blends and digraphs. Other assessments are available for this, including Running Records for progress monitoring of fluency.

Outcome

These are, usually, formal measures corresponding to outcomes, generally used for governance reporting and Ministry reporting. This curriculum document refers the Observation Survey as the main form of outcome assessment with children in Year 1. Others may be used to support teachers OTJs. The PACT tool and other resources available on TKI are recommended to meet these needs.

Assessment tools and form listed by purpose and type

	Screening	Diagnostic	Progress-monitoring	Outcome[1]
Alphabet	Letter lists	Letter lists	Letter lists	Letter assessment
Phonological Awareness	Gail Gillon probes; PIPA	Gail Gillon probes		
Phonic Knowledge	Concepts about print; Nonword reading; Spelling	Blends & digraphs; Phonics Inventory; Teacher observation: using word parts		Hearing and Recording sounds in words
Strategy Use	Concepts about print; Nonword reading	Teacher observation: blending & segmenting		
High Frequency words	Clay word reading	Teacher observation: use in reading and writing	High frequency word list checklists	Burt word reading; Writing words
Fluency	Running Record	Teacher observation: integrating knowledge and strategy	Running Record; PM Benchmark	Running Record
Vocabulary	Junior Oral Screening Test	Teacher observation: Speaking and listening		
Listening Comprehension	Record of Oral Language (phonological memory)	Teacher observation: shared & small group reading		

[1] All subtests from Observation Survey as the only outcome assessment widely used nationally for end of Year 1.

Schedule of assessment

A suggested schedule of assessment follows. The schedule provides recommendations for when screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessments should be used. The recommendations are suggestive only as children should be assessed based on their current learning levels and needs rather than on everything.

School entry

At the **start** of a child's first year at school ALL children should be screened in:

- Alphabet knowledge – for diagnostic purposes ensure recording of all known names and sounds
- Phonological awareness – follow up with diagnostic assessment if necessary (see the phonological awareness scope and sequence)

If children have ***low*** levels of knowledge, and there are concerns in their language development they should also be screened in:

- Oral vocabulary
- Phonological knowledge (RoL)

These children will be in Phase 1

If children have ***high*** levels of knowledge in these screening measures they should be followed up by screening in:

- Phonic knowledge
- Strategy use
- High frequency words

These children will be in Phases 2-3 depending on assessment results

Term 2

In term 2 Phase 1 children should be screened in phonic knowledge, strategy use and high frequency words. Diagnostic assessments can be followed up or carried out through observations of learning in lessons.

In term 2 Phase 2 and 3 children should be assessed diagnostically in phonic knowledge, strategy use and high frequency words to ensure they are still in the right phase. Some children may move to the next and some may need to continue in the phase they were in, for reinforcement. Children who were in phase 3 should be assessed in fluency as well.

Terms 3 & 4

Assessment at the start of terms 3 and 4 should follow as for term 2. At the end of term 4 all ongoing assessment will inform OTJs for National Standards. This would be supplemented by school assessments including fluency measures from running records.

Identifying what phase children are in

To more clearly identify how assessment data can help identify the phase children would be in the phases have been broken down into what a reader looks like at each phase, based on assessment data recommended here. This is followed by an overview of the general forms of content knowledge and strategy knowledge children will need to learn at each phase. Below that box there is a short overview of the things to consider when planning, such as the linking of phonic knowledge to strategy use, the types of texts that best support the learning, and what the guided reading practice looks like for children in each phase. Each phase overview ends with a list of forms of teacher knowledge that teachers should ensure they are familiar with to teach within each phase.

Assessment Schedule for children during their Year 1

	Term 1[2]				Term 2				Term 3				Term 4			
	S[3]	D	PM	O	S	D	PM[4]	O	S	D	PM	O	S	D	PM	O
Alphabet[5]	X	X				X	X				X				X	X
Phonological Awareness	X	X				X	X				X				X	
Phonic knowledge	X				X	X				X	X			X	X	X
Strategy use	X				X	X				X				X	X	
High Frequency words	X				X	X				X				X	X	X
Fluency						X					X					X
Vocabulary	X					X	X				X					
Listening Comprehension						X								X		

[2] Term refers to child's individual school term
[3] D: diagnostic assessment; S: screening assessment; PM: progress monitoring; O: outcome measures for NS purpose (Observation Survey/Running Records)
[4] PM continues if the child is not making the same progress as their peers
[5] Screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring of alphabet knowledge is the same test but considered in different ways

Phase 1: Prealphabetic

Cognitive Model: developing alphabet, alphabetic principle and phonological awareness

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Looks like, in assessment data:
• Low alphabet knowledge
• Low to no reading and spelling
• Low PA</td></tr>
<tr><td>Content needed:
• Alphabet names
• Syllable and rime awareness
• Early letter sounds – consonants
• 1:1 matching
• Concepts about print</td><td>Strategy needed:
• Seeing letters in print
• Words are made of letters
• Attempts at writing and spelling</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Planning
• Letter names and sounds
• Echo reading
• Predictable text</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Links to existing resources
Alphabet cards, magnetic letters, whiteboards, predictable text (old style Ready to Read and Magenta PM+), alphabet books (Word detective, Letterland; Jolly Readers), Smart Phonics 1, Yolanda Soryl stages DPA/1-2 & alphabet resources, Sounds like Fun (Allcock)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teacher knowledge
PA development
PA teaching activities</td></tr>
</table>

Phase 2: Partial alphabetic

Cognitive Model: developing alphabetic coding

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Looks like, in assessment data:
• Has letter names
• Most letter sounds
• Some Clay word reading, small number of Burt words <5
• 7-20 in PA tasks
• Some spelling attempts
• Some psuedoword attempts</td></tr>
<tr><td>Content needed:
• Letter sounds (vowels)
• Consonant blends
• Phoneme awareness
• High frequency sight words
• Basic punctuation</td><td>Strategy needed:
• Spelling letters for sounds
• Decoding, using blends and paying attention to all letters
• Blending and segmenting phonemes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Planning
• Content first, reinforced by strategy
• Sounding and blending
• Choral reading to partner reading
• Text choices to match what is taught – use of decodable text</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Links to existing resources
Decodable texts (Yolanda Soryl EW readers 1 & 2; Word detective; Letterland; About Words; Jolly Readers; Little Learners), alphabet cards, high-frequency word cards, punctuation cards, Smart Phonics 2 kit, Yolanda Soryl stages 3-5, Sounds like Fun (Allcock)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teacher knowledge
• PA development
• Units of print to draw attention to
• Importance of integration of content and strategy
• Reasons for spelling errors to draw attention to and/or plan to address
• Understanding that this looks like slow progress at fluency level, but will speed up transition to the next phase.</td></tr>
</table>

Phase 3: Full alphabetic

Cognitive Model: building on alphabetic coding for automatic word recognition

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Looks like, in assessment data:
• All letter names and sounds (perhaps some direction confusion)
• Good phonological awareness (>20)
• Has blend and digraph knowledge
• Can read all Clay high frequency words
• Up to 20 (or more) Burt words
• Spelling words with appropriate phoneme matches
• Good psuedoword reading</td></tr>
<tr><td>Content needed:
• Trigraphs
• Vowel structures (digraphs, diphthongs, r-controlled)
• Syllable spelling patterns (doubling consonants, vowel/consonant patterns, silent letters)
• Morphemes (compound words, tense endings, plurals)
• Advanced punctuation (comma etc.)</td><td>Strategy needed:
• Word attack using chunks/or unitizing for decoding instead of sounding out
• Spelling using chunks including morphemes
• Cross-checking across meaning and syntax for decoding attempts
• Checking for meaning</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Planning
• Letter/spelling patterns
• Irregular high frequency words taught
• Partner to whisper to silent reading
• Early comprehension strategies (predicting, summarising, main idea)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Links to existing resources
Levelled texts (yellow +, particularly PM+ range; Word detective), syllable and morpheme apps or games, Smart Phonics 3 kit, Yolanda Soryl</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teacher knowledge
• Syllable patterns
• Morphemes and spelling effects
• Vowel patterns
• Regular and irregular words
• Distinguishing between spelling attempts and conventional spellings</td></tr>
</table>

Phase 4: Consolidated

Cognitive Model: advanced alphabetic coding based on linguistic comprehension

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Looks like, in assessment data:
• 20 + Burt word reading
• 20+ Phonological awareness
• All spelling
• All psuedoword</td></tr>
<tr><td>Content needed:
• Syllable structures
• Morphological knowledge including role of meaning
• Comprehension strategies
• Syntactic structures</td><td>Strategy needed:
• Analogy for decoding unfamiliar words
• Morphemes for identifying meaning of unfamiliar words
• Purpose of reading beyond learning to read</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Planning
• Silent reading
• Text choice for reinforcement of content and strategies as well as meaning</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Links to existing resources
Levelled texts (Green +; all trade books including Ready to Read), comprehension activities and resources</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teacher knowledge
• Morphemes and different forms, including pronunciation changes
• Comprehension strategies and their role
• Genre
• Syllable structures
• Syntactic structures
• Advanced semantic features (synonyms, antonyms, idioms, etc.)
• Using discussion to manage reading behaviours instead of requiring reading aloud</td></tr>
</table>

Appendices

Lesson Plan for Phase 1

Phase: **Content:** **Strategy:**	
Children	
Specific items being taught	
Resources:	
15 minute session	**Recap of previous session and reminders about how it helps with reading**
	Explicit instruction: Say-it and move-it
	Guided practice in content and strategy: Sounding and blending with taught letters
	Explicit instruction: High frequency words
	Integrating content and strategy in reading/writing together: High frequency word(s), letters, blending
	Reading/writing with a peer

Example of Planning for alphabet instruction in phase 1

Phase: **Content:** **Strategy:**	Late Pre-alphabetic Letter sounds/High frequency words Sounding and blending letters to make words
Children	Small group
Specific items being taught	Content: *Bb, Tt, Aa* High frequency words *the* Strategy: Finding and using letters in words by blending words
Resources:	Magnetic letters (b, t, a, o, n, h, e); text with taught high frequency words *The bat sat on the mat at school.*
15 minute session	Say-it and move-it to teach letters Point to letter and move it up the whiteboard. *This letter's name is b; what is its name? That's right, b. The letter b makes the sound of /b/, what sound does the letter b make? That's right it makes /b/. Point to the letter and say it with me "/b/,/b/,/b/."* REPEAT with other letters.
	Sounding and blending with taught letters Have all 3 letters in front of you on the whiteboard. *We put these letters together and we can make words. Let's start with this letter* [a – push up whiteboard] */a/. You say it with me /a/. Good. Now let us add this letter* [t – push it up next to the a] */t/. You say it with me /t/. Good. Let's try blending the sounds to read a word – you do it with me with your letters. /a/* [pause] */t/.* REPEAT. *Now we bulldoze the words together /a/-/t/, at. Let's do that again. What is the word we just blended together. Well done. Let's try another one.* REPEAT to make bat and mat. Do with other letters if children suggest them, for example sat.
	High frequency words *Remember that there are words that we need to learn that help us to do our reading. Today we will learn one of them – you might know it already. The word is the, T, H, E* [spell the letters out using magnetic letters], *the. You say it too – the. Let's spell it out using our letters – say the letter names as you put them together.* REPEAT two more times.

	Choral read new text *Well done. Now we are going to read using what we have learned today. Here is the sentence we are going to read. Let's look at together. What letters or words can you see?* [Give opportunity for children to find the letters or words and perhaps notice school as well]. *I can see that the sentence starts with a word we have just learned …* [pause to give children an opportunity to attempt it themselves]. *Good (or: the first word is the, the word we just learned* [repeat teaching of word]. *Now we will sound out and blend the next word … and the next …* [provide on if not taught previously or sound out together if necessary] *… and the next … and the last word is school,* [run your finger under it as you say it slowly] *s – k – oo – l. What is a bat? Here is a picture that the sentence is describing.* [Brief discussion]. *Let's read it together again* [read until fluency, practicing sounding out as necessary].
	Partner read text *Now you are going to take it away and take turns reading your sentence with your partner. After you have each read it four times I want you to get your writing book and try writing your sentence. Say the letters and the words as you write them. Once you have written the sentence you can draw a picture of the sentence. Good work and don't forget to put your sentence in your book bag to go home.*

Lesson Plan Template for general use

Phase: **Content:** **Strategy:**	
Children	
Specific items being taught	
Resources:	
15 minute session	**Recap of previous session and reminders about how it helps with reading**
	Explicit instruction
	Guided practice in content and strategy
	Integrating content and strategy in reading/writing through discussion/guiding questions
	Reading/writing independently

Planning for instruction over 4-5 days

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Children					
Focus instruction (e.g., content)					
Secondary focus (e.g., strategy)					
Resources:					
Lesson components					
Teacher knowledge					

Planning for Explicit Vocabulary instruction

Book title	
Tier two words from the book	
Or expansion to tier two words from book concepts	
Read the story	
Closer look at the words Today's selection	
Word 1 Child-friendly definition Children say it In the story context Out of the story context Questions reasons examples Making choices	

Word 2 Child-friendly definition Children say it In the story context Out of the story context Questions reasons examples Making choices	
Word 3 Child-friendly definition Children say it In the story context Out of the story context Questions reasons examples Making choices	

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Appendix 2: Detailed description of the 5 workshop model

Module 1

- Introduction to what we are trying to do, to each other etc.
- Survey to identify levels of teacher knowledge of the content to follow
- Introduction to the theory that underpins the programme and the instructional practices
- Introduction of the phases developed for instructional making and progress monitoring, including the use of the scope and sequence curriculum for identifying needs and planning for them
- Introduction to explicit instruction and systematic, structured lesson planning in a differentiated system
- The importance of assessment to provide the appropriate level of instruction, including the use of provided assessments.

Module 2

- Reflections on the implementation of practices as a result of module 1
- Vocabulary instruction across all phases and the importance of explicit vocabulary instruction for all
- Understanding what phonological awareness and phoneme awareness is and the role it plays in learning to read new words.
- Understanding consonants and vowels and the structure of written words compared to spoken words
- Teaching early phoneme awareness and letter knowledge with learning to read words

Module 3

- Reflections on the implementation of practices from module 1 and 2 including challenges and working together to find ways to address those challenges
- Revision on the previous module and the teaching of the content
- Understanding a wider range of spelling patterns including digraphs, syllables and morphemes
- Teaching a wider range of spelling patterns for reading and spelling

Module 4

- Reflections on the implementation of practices from modules 1, 2 and 3, including challenges and working together to find ways to address those challenges
- Revision on digraphs, syllables and morphemes and the teaching of the content in reading
- Understanding sentences and punctuation to be able to explicitly teach for reading comprehension and writing
- Text structure and how to teach to early readers and writers for reading comprehension and writing
- Understanding reading comprehension strategies and how to teach them to early readers

Module 5

- Reflections on the implementation of practices from modules 1 through to 5 including challenges and working together to find ways to address those challenges
- Revision on syntax, text structure and comprehension strategies and how to teach them in the New entrant and Year 1 classroom
- Revising assessment of the elements of the cognitive model and how the research project also assessed those elements
- How to share the new knowledge and research with colleagues.