

Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words: SIPPS and IES/WWC Instruction (Part 1)

By Ann H. Leon | Categories: Reading Intervention and Acceleration (Grades K-5)

The IES: What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade includes four basic evidence-based principles for early literacy instruction. The suggestions for best practice are in line with the results-based instruction found in all three levels of SIPPS Levels – Recommendation 3: Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words through three increasingly sophisticated levels.

The WWC panel and staff assigned a strong level of evidence to Recommendation 3 based on the positive impacts of teaching students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write words. The positive effects of the practices were observable with diverse students.

As students encounter more and more challenging text, they must be able to read with accuracy and automaticity, prosody, and comprehension. Being able to recognize words quickly allows students to focus more on meaning, which ultimately supports reading comprehension. To read with automaticity, students must learn to:

- Apply their letter-sound knowledge to decode and read words both in isolation and in connected texts
- Segment and read multi-syllable words by breaking down the word using word parts and syllables
- Recognize letter patterns and word parts, and understand that sounds relate to letters in predictable and unpredictable patterns
- Immediately recognize high-frequency words (especially those with irregular, unpredictable spellings)

How might we meet the decoding needs of students? The panel identifies six instructional components:

- Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.
- Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns.
- Teach students to recognize common word parts.
- Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.
- Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.
- Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

In this blog, I'll address the ways the SIPPS Levels supports the first three components.

Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.

- SIPPS Beginning Level has clear instructional routines that support students in learning consonant and short vowel spelling-sounds by pronouncing pure, undistorted continuous and stop sounds.

Phonics and Decodable Words









INTRODUCE SPELLING-SOUND RELATIONSHIPS

[1] Present the sound in an example sentence, have the students say the new sound, and discuss the wall-card mnemonic. [2] "My turn." "My turn again." [3] "Together." "Sound." "Again." [4] "Your turn." "Sound." "Again."

When they are learning spelling-sound relationships, students need explicit instruction that includes modeling, guided practice, attention to how the sounds are made, and ways to remember their spellings. The example we give uses a "continuous sound," which means it can be held for 2 seconds without distorting it. When the sound you are introducing is a stop sound like /b/, /k/, or /d/, use the same routine, but do not hold your finger under the letter as you pronounce the sound. Simply sweep your finger underneath in one continuous motion. Stop sounds cannot be prolonged without distorting them.

- Continuous blending is a powerful technique to teach students to blend from left to right. In continuous blending, there is no pause between the sounds in a word: /mmmaaannn/ rather than /m/ /a/ /n/.

Instruction <i>(using the word am as an example)</i>		
	Point to the left of the arrow and pause.	<i>You:</i> "Sound."
	Sweep your finger under the spellings, holding under each of the continuous sounds for 2 seconds. Do not break between sounds.	<i>Students:</i> "/ămm/"
	Point again to the left of the arrow and pause.	<i>You:</i> "Again."
	Sweep your finger under the spellings, holding under each of the continuous sounds for 2 seconds.	<i>Students:</i> "/ămm/"
	Point again to the left of the arrow and pause.	<i>You:</i> "Read."
	Sweep your finger under the entire word and off to the right.	<i>Students:</i> "am"

- The "Guided Spelling and Segmentation" routine supports students as they use segmentation skills to encode CVC words by sound.

DICTATION OF DECODABLE WORDS (LESSONS 13-55)





[1] (Say the word and use it in a sentence.) "Say ____." "Sound ____." [2] "First sound?" "Write /___/." [3] "What's the word?" "First sound?" "Next sound?" "Write /___/." [4] (Continue through the rest of the word.) [5] (Give feedback.) "Read what you wrote." "First sound?" (Continue through the rest of the word.)

Because segmenting all the sounds in a word is particularly difficult, you may need to provide a lot of support when you introduce this routine. Begin by having the students sound and write the spelling for one phoneme at a time. Decrease the level of support as the students become more proficient.

Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns

After learning and practicing single spelling-sound correspondences, students must go on to understand more complex spellings, such as complex vowels and consonant blends. They also begin to learn common standard syllable types.

- SIPPS Extension Level (and SIPPS Plus, a decoding intervention for older students) addresses the spelling-pattern stage of the reading. Spelling patterns beyond consonants and short vowels are taught in explicit lessons.
- Students are introduced to new spelling patterns and review previously introduced patterns.
- Students use their growing knowledge of spelling patterns during the Read a Mixed List routine in daily lessons. The words in the list are a mixture of newly introduced and previously introduced spellings.
- The Guided Spelling routine is never a spelling test. It is an opportunity to develop segmentation skills and to apply and reinforce decoding through encoding. The Guided Spelling rationale and description in the SIPPS Teacher's Manual provide a full explanation of this important practice.
- The Guided Spelling routine also teaches students to “think ahead” when there is more than one way to represent a sound (e.g., the long a sound can be represented in three common ways: a_e, ai, and ay). The guiding approach teaches students to be thoughtful spellers; moving away from the mindset of “I know how to spell this word” or “I don’t know how to spell this word” to “what are the ways this word might be spelled?”, an approach that is applicable to any words the student may want to spell.

Instruction (using the word growl as an example)		
		<p>You: “Growl. They heard the dog growl. Say growl.”</p> <p>Students: “growl”</p>
	Point to writing line number 1 on the board.	<p>You: “Question?”</p> <p>Students: “Which /ou/?”</p>
	Hold up two fingers. (This shows that they use the second spelling on the ou_, ow wall card.)	You: “Write growl.”
	Monitor and assist until the students have finished writing.	
	Point to writing line number 1 on the board.	You: “Read and spell what you wrote as I write it.”
	Write growl on line number 1 on the board as the students spell it. (The students spell using letter names, not sounds as they do in Beginning Level.)	Students: “growl, g-r-o-w-l”

Teach students to recognize common word parts

The panel recommends that students learn to analyze common word parts using base words and affixes.

- SIPPS Extension Level (and SIPPS Plus) and SIPPS Challenge Level start the process of adding inflectional endings to base words that have short vowel spellings, final-e spellings, and complex vowel patterns. New knowledge is applied to reading and to guided spelling.
- Explicit instructional routines include specific correction routines that support students' thinking when they are uncertain about a pronunciation. Correction routines train the students' brains to think carefully about a word they are unfamiliar with.

"How Many Consonants?" Correction

(e.g., the students read hoping instead of hopping)

[1] (Point to the two vowels.) "How many consonants are between the two vowels?" [2] (Point to the first vowel.) "Long or short?" "Sound." [3] (Point to the left of the word.) "Read."

Use this correction when the students confuse short-vowel and final-e spelling patterns in words with inflections such as *cutting, wagged, rides, baked, and shining*.

- SIPPS Extension Level (and SIPPS Plus) supports students as they begin to read syllable by syllable; this process is extended fully in SIPPS Challenge Level. The instruction and practice give students the tools they need to unlock unfamiliar words. SIPPS Extension Level provides structured support for reading polysyllabic words in three steps:
 - In lessons 17-25, the teacher frames each syllable to guide the students to look at each word part.
 - In lessons 26-31, the students learn to recognize and read consonant-l-e syllables.
 - In lessons 32-40, the students read polysyllabic words that have a VCCV pattern. For more information, see the Reading VCCV Words routine in the Routines Appendix of the Extension Level Teacher's Manual.
- Polysyllabic decoding beginning in SIPPS Extension Level gives first- and second-grade students the tools they need to meet the reading demands of grade-level text.
- SIPPS Challenge Level continues the deeper work of morphology by providing daily instruction and consistent experience with base and root word with various affixes. For example:
 - produce
 - produced
 - producing
 - production
 - The work with morphology increases students' ability to decode polysyllabic words, but it also supports comprehension of words with connected meanings.

My next blog will feature the final three instructional components of Recommendation 3: Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words through three increasingly sophisticated levels.

To learn more about the first two recommendations in the report, see Part 1 and Part 2 of this blog series.