

Module 2: Building Oral Language and Phonology

Module Description

In this module, participants will examine the language foundations of reading and learn about the oral and written language systems related to literacy. Participants will learn the progression of oral language development and make connections between the language components and literacy instruction. Building on participants' knowledge and awareness of the language foundations of reading, the next area of focus explores how a language-rich environment in the classroom can help further develop students' oral language and literacy learning. It includes descriptions and examples of the three elements of a language-rich environment and videos of lessons that demonstrate how teachers can provide interactive language opportunities.

In the phonological awareness development and instruction section, participants will learn about the three most common reading related phonological processes and their contributions to reading development and difficulties. Next, participants will learn about the importance of phonological awareness and explore the levels of phonological awareness as well as the developmental progression of phonological awareness skills. Participants will then learn about the importance of phonemic awareness and its relevance to reading. Once participants have learned about phonological awareness and processing and why it is important, they will learn how to teach phonological awareness and implications for typical and struggling readers. Participants will identify where students are on the phonological awareness continuum as a method of formative assessment and learn about effective phonological awareness instruction. Participants will analyze two lessons to identify effective features.

Participants will learn the importance of phonemic awareness instruction and how it is the most important skill for reading and spelling under the phonological awareness umbrella. Participants will learn about continuous and stop sounds and the importance of producing the most "blendable" sounds. Participants will complete phonemic awareness activities and view phonemic awareness videos as well as classify types of phonemic awareness skills. Participants will review effective phonological awareness instruction and analyze two lessons to identify effective features of lessons on phonemic awareness. Finally, participants will review the assessment cycle in relation to phonological and phonemic awareness tasks.

Leaders will consider the topic of oral language and phonology centered around data-driven decision-making, classroom observations, and coaching feedback, and how these processes inform collective and collaborative inquiry about effective teaching and learning.

Module Objectives

In this module, participants will learn the following:

Part 1: The Language Foundations of Reading

- The relationship between language comprehension, reading development, the Simple View of Reading, and Scarborough's Reading Rope model
- The role of early oral language in literacy development
- The progression of oral language development
- The oral language systems related to literacy
- The connections between language and literacy
- The teacher's role in creating a language-rich environment
- The elements of a language-rich environment
- Oral language and the adolescent learner

Part 2: Phonological Awareness Development and Instruction

- The relationship between phonological awareness and reading development in Scarborough's Reading Rope model
- The importance of phonological awareness
- The continuum of phonological awareness skills
- The developmental progression of phonological awareness skills
- Blending and segmenting across the levels of phonological awareness
- Blendable sounds
- The elements of effective phonological awareness instruction
- The importance of phonemic awareness
- The 44 phonemes in standard American English
- About phonemes and minimal pairs
- About the use of phoneme mapping for phonological awareness instruction
- How to capitalize on similarities and differences between Spanish and English
- Effective phonemic awareness instruction
- Types of phonemic awareness skills
- Identification as to where a student is on the phonological awareness continuum
- How to assess phonological awareness skills
- Phonological processing deficits in adolescent learners

Part 3: Leadership

- Leaders will use data collected from interim/benchmark assessments and literacy walk-throughs for effective instruction and phonemic awareness to guide decisions around coaching and professional development
- Leaders will consider conducting observations using a walk-through guide of look-fors to help make coaching and professional development decisions.
- Leaders will be able to distinguish the difference between coaching and evaluation of staff members.
- Leaders will understand how adults learn, the different types of professional development options, and how to use data to drive the professional development of educators.

Module Outline

Section 1: Introduction

Introduction (required)

Welcome to Building Oral Language and Phonology! This module is the second of six online modules in Colorado’s Building a Strong Foundation for Lifelong Literacy Success, a professional learning series aimed at supporting teachers’ efforts to promote reading achievement in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Here are the modules in this course:

- Module 1: Understanding the Science of Reading
- Module 2: Building Oral Language and Phonology
- Module 3: Exploring Phonics and Word Study
- Module 4: Creating Fluent Readers
- Module 5: Developing Vocabulary
- Module 6: Increasing Reading Comprehension

School leaders are provided with the same professional development that k-12 educators take. Some sections are marked required and some are optional. School leaders must complete the required sections and subsections. The optional sections are available for school leaders as a reference.

Pre-Assessment (required)

Section 2: Language Foundations of Reading

Section Overview (optional)

In this section, we will examine the importance of oral language and the relationship between language comprehension and reading development. We will provide a comprehensive overview of the typical developmental progression of oral language, phonological skill, printed word recognition, spelling, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and written expression. We will focus on oral language and the adolescent learner, as well as how to extend oral language intervention into the classroom setting. Finally, we will discuss each of the five oral language components in detail along with connections to literacy, instructional implications, and considerations for English Learners.

Review of Conceptual Models (optional)

In this subsection, you will review the Simple View of Reading and Scarborough’s Reading Rope that you learned about in Module 1, with a focus on the language foundations of reading. You will also explore how broad oral language skills affect the learning of academic language.

Linking Language and Reading Comprehension (optional)

This section focused on the fact that language development begins at birth through natural interaction, but learning to read and write is not innate and requires explicit instruction, particularly to connect

spoken language with written forms. Strong oral language skills support the development of literacy, and skilled reading occurs when word recognition and language comprehension work together, making it essential for educators to understand language structure and its role in reading instruction.

The Role of Early Oral Language in Literacy Development (optional)

In this subsection, you explore the connections between early oral language development and later reading comprehension success. You will read an article, “The Role of Early Oral Language in Literacy Development,” and review a multimedia presentation that highlights the milestones of language development.

The Importance of Oral Language (optional)

In this multimedia presentation, you will learn the role that oral language plays in learning to read and the reciprocal relationship between language and literacy.

Oral Language and the Adolescent Learner (optional)

In this subsection, you will explore the role that oral language plays in the intermediate, middle school, and high school classroom. You will learn that difficulties with oral language can be hidden in later years and that there is a growing body of evidence that language intervention can be extended into the classroom setting.

The Language Foundations of Reading (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn the systems that make up the foundation of language.

Exploring the Oral Language Systems and Literacy (optional)

In this subsection, you will explore the five components of oral language. This interactive presentation will give you an opportunity to explore each of these components in depth. You will also link to a handout to use as a resource.

Connections Between Language, Literacy, and Instruction (optional)

In this subsection, you will apply your knowledge about language systems to your daily classroom experiences.

Check for Understanding (optional)

Section 3: Language-Rich Environment

Section Overview (optional)

This section of the module will focus on creating a language-rich environment for your students. First, we will define a language-rich environment and the teacher’s role in creating that environment. Next, we will explore the elements of a language-rich environment and how they contribute to language development. Finally, we will observe language-rich classrooms and reflect on how the teacher, the environment, and the materials contribute to these language-rich classrooms.

The Teacher’s Role in Creating a Language-Rich Environment (optional)

This brief multimedia presentation provides a definition of a language-rich environment and describes a teacher’s role in creating one. It also provides examples of each of the elements of a language-rich environment.

Language-Rich Environment Element 1: Interactive Language Opportunities (optional)

In this subsection, learn how to provide interactive language opportunities to build background knowledge, knowledge about print and books, and academic-language skills. You will also read an article, “6 Easy Ways to Improve Turn & Talk for Student Language Development.”

Language-Rich Lesson Examples (optional)

In this subsection, you will have four grade-level videos to choose from that illustrate language-rich classrooms and the ways in which teachers can provide interactive language opportunities. Using a handout, you will record ways in which the teachers provided interactive language opportunities and your observations about how the materials and the classroom arrangement contributed to a language-rich environment. You will also answer guiding questions to identify what you viewed in the video that is similar to your own classroom as well as what you would want to incorporate into your classroom’s language-rich environment.

Language-Rich Environment Element 2: Materials (optional)

This subsection provides examples of how the selection and use of materials are central to the development of a language-rich environment.

Language-Rich Environment Element 3: Classroom Arrangement (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn how the way in which you arrange your classroom and organize your materials influences interactive language opportunities.

Learning to Speak Is Natural; Learning to Read Is Not (optional)

This subsection readdresses the fact that language acquisition is hardwired, natural, and an experience that happens because we are human, but that reading is neither hardwired nor natural.

Check for Understanding (optional)

Section 4: Introduction to Phonology

Section Overview (optional)

This section of the module has two focus areas. In the first, Phonological Awareness, we will review what phonological awareness is, why it is important, and how it impacts other foundational reading skills. Then, in Phonological Awareness and the Conceptual Models, we will examine the importance of phonological awareness in relation to reading development, difficulties, and our grounding conceptual

frameworks that drive our instructional and assessment practices.

Phonological Awareness (optional)

In this subsection, you will be introduced to what phonological awareness is, why it is important, and how it impacts other foundational reading skills. You will learn the very important differences between phonological awareness and phonemic awareness and their importance in learning how to read.

Phonological Awareness and the Conceptual Models (optional)

In this subsection, you will view a multimedia presentation and identify where phonemic awareness fits into our conceptual models and how it connects to all other reading components.

Check for Understanding (optional)

Section 5: Digging Deeper into Phonological Awareness

Section Overview (optional)

In this section of the module, we will focus on phonological awareness and its importance to reading development, and we will examine how difficulties with phonological processing and phonological awareness relate to dyslexia and other reading difficulties. Once you understand what it is and why it is important, we will turn our attention to how it is taught, provide an instructional continuum and discuss the skills taught in each area of that continuum, and explain the developmental progression by age.

Digging Deeper into Phonological Awareness (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn about the three areas of phonological processing in a multimedia presentation and how these three areas contribute to reading skills through the lens of what you and your students are doing daily in your classroom. You will also explore what phonological processing deficits look like for young learners as well as adolescents and read an article, “Phonological Instruction for Older Readers.”

Thinking About Phonological Awareness (optional)

In this subsection, you will watch a multimedia presentation that introduces the continuum of phonological skills as they relate to both primary and adolescent learners and view a video about phonological awareness skills.

The Developmental Progression of Phonological Awareness (optional)

In this subsection, you will read and reflect on an article by Moats and Tolman, “The Development of Phonological Skills,” and learn about the developmental stages of phonological awareness. You will also view a video by REACH on phonological awareness and identify the level of instruction based on the previous chart.

Check for Understanding (optional)

Section 6: Phonological Awareness Development in Speakers of Other Languages

Section Overview (optional)

In this section, we will specifically cover phonological awareness instruction and development with our English Learner students. This section has three parts that we will address. First, we will look at phonological awareness development in English Learners and how we can be more informed as teachers about the sound systems of other languages. Then, we will also address how phonological awareness is an early predictor of reading development in our English Learners. Last, we will examine similarities and differences between the English and Spanish languages.

Phonological Awareness and Cross-Language Transfer (optional)

In this subsection, you will get a clear picture of the step-by-step processes involved with phonological awareness instruction with English Learners and learn about phonological awareness as a universal predictor of early literacy development. You will read an article, “Latin American Spanish (‘Standard’)” by MultiCSD from Portland State University, and complete a handout about the similarities, differences, and strategies for instruction for English Learners.

Check for Understanding (optional)

Section 7: Phonemic Awareness

Section Overview (optional)

In this section, we will examine the importance of phoneme awareness skills for all students, review the similarities of phoneme pairs and the differences between them, provide an in-depth look at the consonant phonemes and vowel phonemes of the English language, explore how to appropriately pronounce phonemes of the English language, and provide information about pronouncing sounds in a clear and blendable way to build words.

The Importance of Phonemic Awareness (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn about the importance of phonemic awareness.

Phoneme Pairs (optional)

In this subsection you will view a multimedia presentation that describes how phonemes have unique articulatory gestures and the importance of pronouncing phonemes correctly.

Consonant Phonemes in Standard English (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn about consonant sounds, conduct an activity sort, and review a Consonant Sound Pronunciation Guide.

Vowel Phonemes in Standard English (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn about vowel sounds, review a vowel articulation chart, and view a video on vowel production.

Teaching the Sounds in Your Classroom (optional)

This subsection reviews the vowel chart, discusses an important thing to remember when teaching sounds in the classroom, and explains how to reinforce the sounds for adolescent students.

Working with Sounds in Instruction: Blendable, Stop, and Continuous Sounds (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn how phonemes need to be pronounced in a manner that makes them the most “blendable” by viewing a video and a handout of continuous and stop sounds.

Check for Understanding (optional)

Section 8: Effective Phonological Awareness Instruction

Section Overview (optional)

In this section, we will take an in-depth look at teaching phonological and phonemic awareness.

Effective Phonological Awareness Instruction (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn specific things to keep in mind when teaching phonological awareness skills, view a video of phonological awareness instruction, and explore resources for providing instruction to students.

Effective Phonemic Awareness Instruction (optional)

In this subsection, you will view a video of phonemic awareness instruction and decide if the lesson is effective, and review a resource, “Teaching Phoneme Awareness in 2022: A Guide for Educators.”

Blending and Segmenting Across the Levels (optional)

In this subsection, you will specifically look at how blending and segmenting build across the word, syllable, onset-rime, and phoneme levels, and view two videos.

Phonemic Awareness Lesson Example (optional)

In this subsection, you will view a video on how to use Elkonin boxes to support phonological instruction, learn how to use phoneme-grapheme mapping (especially for older struggling students), and learn how to incorporate multisensory methods to complement instruction.

Identify Types of Phonemic Awareness Skills (optional)

In this subsection, you will review a summary of phonemic awareness skills. Then you will read five teacher-student scenarios and select the type of phonemic awareness skill each demonstrates in the next subsection.

Phonological or Phonemic Sound Scenarios (optional)

In this subsection, you will read five examples of student responses to phonological and phonemic awareness activities. For each, you will select scaffolds and “next steps” for instruction. You will also identify where the student is on the continuum to demonstrate how you can use it for formative assessment.

Check for Understanding (optional)

Section 9: The Phoneme Grapheme Connection

Section Overview (optional)

In this brief section, we will consider the connection between the awareness of the sounds in spoken words and how students may represent them in written words. We will see that this process develops over time and is connected to advanced phonemic awareness.

Importance of Phoneme Grapheme Connections (optional)

In this subsection, you will be introduced to the bridge between phonemic awareness and phonics/spelling, a conceptual understanding that students must develop through phoneme/grapheme mapping.

The Importance of Phonemic Awareness and Spelling Development (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn about the relationship between phonemic awareness and spelling and how voicing and allophonic variations can affect how students spell words.

Phonemic Awareness and Spelling Instruction (optional)

Spelling development occurs in phases. In this subsection, you will learn about these phases and how they are directly related to the development of skills in phoneme segmentation.

Check for Understanding (optional)

Section 10: Assessing Phonological Awareness

Section Overview (optional)

In this section, we will focus on the importance of phonological awareness assessments. You will be

introduced to the assessment cycle that will also be elaborated on in Module 3. We will then provide an overview of some tools available for screening and diagnostic assessment.

The Assessment Cycle (optional)

In this introductory subsection, you will view the three components of the assessment process.

Diagnostic Assessment (optional)

In this subsection, you will connect the diagnostic assessment information to the continuum and review two example assessments, the Quick Phonological Awareness Screening (QPAS) and the Phonological Awareness Screening Test (PAST), which is appropriate for adolescents.

Progress Monitoring (optional)

In this subsection, you will learn about the need to monitor progress and why it is important.

Check for Understanding (optional)

Section 11: Leading Oral Language and Phonology

Section Overview (required)

In this section, you will consider the topic of oral language and phonology centered around data-driven decision-making, classroom observations, and coaching feedback, and how these processes inform collective and collaborative inquiry about effective teaching and learning.

Data Driven Decisions: The Phonemic Awareness Health of Students (required)

Assessment in phonemic awareness provides the information that educators need to make instructional decisions. Screening measures predict potential risk, as those students who are determined to be at risk in early foundational skills such as phonology will need targeted instruction on the underlying skills of phonemic awareness. All students who receive instruction on phonemic awareness as a science of reading practice should be monitored for continued growth and proficiency.

School Leaders Literacy Walk-Throughs and Observation: Phonemic Awareness (required)

In this section school leaders are introduced to a sample literacy walk-through observation tool of effective instruction and a tool for phonemic awareness instruction that follows the scientific principles of reading.

Coaching Vs. Evaluation (required)

It's important to have a clear understanding of observations conducted for coaching and those conducted for evaluation. In this section school leaders will understand the purpose of coaching vs the purpose of conducting an evaluation.

Coaching Guides for Phonemic Awareness (required)

Coaching is a form of job-embedded professional development. As indicated in the previous subsection, coaching differs from evaluation. Here, we are going to talk about effective coaching techniques and introduce a possible coaching guide to support the educators' development of effective instruction as well as the teaching of phonemic awareness.

Professional Learning and Phonemic Awareness (required)

The walk-through observations, interim/benchmark assessments, additional screenings, progress monitoring, and diagnostic data centered around phonemic awareness provide the information needed for building team structures to begin the discussion around potential professional development needs.

Check for Understanding (required)

Section 12: Closing Activities

Section Overview (optional)

Section 12 includes instructions for you to put some of what you learned in this module into practice, an assessment to compare how your knowledge of topics covered in the module might have changed since the beginning of the module, and a module evaluation.

Put It into Practice (optional)

In this activity you will review and answer four reflection questions.

Post-Assessment (required)

Module Feedback (required)

Resource Library

Section 13: Module Completion

Module Completion (required)