High Quality Synthetic Phonics Instruction: A Guide for Teachers

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Reading is a transformative skill and provides students with access to the wider curriculum, knowledge of the world they live in, an introduction to vocabulary they are unlikely to hear in everyday language, and an opportunity to discover the unique joy of reading for pleasure. It is, without doubt, one of the most important skills to be acquired by students in the early years of schooling.

In order to read, students need to be able to access and understand the written representation of the language they are learning. The set of conventions associated with a language's writing system, or script, is known as its **orthography**. This includes the rules attached to letter formation, spelling and punctuation, as well as word breaks, emphasis and hyphenation. English orthography presents additional evolutionary challenges that distinguish it from other alphabetic writing systems. This is largely due to the number of languages that have been absorbed into English, along with the orthographic systems linked to them. It is an opaque (or deep) alphabetic language and has a spelling system based on both morphemes (meaningful parts) and phonemes (speech sounds). Consequently, English orthography is considered to be a **morphophonemic** language which means that it is a deep alphabetic writing system organised by both 'sound – symbol' correspondences and morphology.

By definition, an alphabetic system of writing utilises a limited number of symbols (in the case of English, 26) to represent **all** of the spoken speech sounds in the language (in English there are approximately 44 speech sounds - or phonemes, depending on the dialect spoken). This theoretically means that once a person has a working knowledge of the code, they can read and write any word in the language they are learning. It is, however, not that simple. Isolating an individual phoneme in a spoken word is not always self-evident or consciously accessible. Learning an alphabetic system of writing requires **metalinguistic awareness** (the ability to explore, play with and reflect on the structure of language). Some children need additional support in the early years to develop this awareness and to acquire the alphabetic principle.

Ultimately, students need to be taught the code used to read and write. This means they are provided with the necessary tools to become independent readers and writers. The challenge associated with reading any alphabetic orthography, is that it is reliant on the learner's capacity to mentally link the alphabetic symbols (graphemes) with the speech sounds (phonemes) they represent. If they do not understand how words are structured, or how to utilise the code in order to read and spell individual words, any unknown word will remain a mystery.

What is meant by the term, the science of reading?

The phrase 'science of reading' refers to the comprehensive body of multi-disciplinary research that has been conducted over many decades and informs our understanding of **how** we learn to read as well as the essential components of reading instruction. As is pointed out by Louisa Moats in her article entitled '*Teaching Reading is Rocket Science*', the science of reading is "not an ideology, a philosophy, a political agenda, a one-size-fits-all approach, a programme of instruction, nor a specific component of instruction." It is essentially an extensive, rich, and wide body of knowledge. The development of reading has been discussed and captured in several models including both the 'Simple View of Reading' (Gough and Tunmer, 1996) and the 'Reading Rope' developed by Hollis Scarborough (2001). See box 1 and box 2 on next page.

One of the central aspects of successful reading instruction described by contributors to the science of reading and evidence-informed reading models is the role that high-quality structured phonics instruction plays in learning to read. Research shows that teaching phonic knowledge, or the English code, systematically, explicitly and cumulatively, is an essential component of effective reading instruction.

How does the science of reading inform reading instruction?

Overall, there is strong evidence to support the view that a highly effective and successful approach to teaching students to read accurately and fluently is through the delivery of a structured **synthetic** phonics programme. Synthetic phonics is an evidence-informed approach used to teach children the spelling patterns underpinning English orthography. The 'synthetic' component reflects the practice of 'synthesising' or blending together. The 'phonic' part reflects the process of linking individual speech sounds (phonemes) to written symbols (graphemes). Essentially, when a child learns to read using synthetic phonics they learn to link letters to speech sounds and then blend these sounds together to read words. They also learn to separate (segment) words into their constituent sounds and link these sounds to letters or letter strings in order to spell them. This teaches the phoneme-grapheme correspondences, using an oral to written approach, via a well-designed (and carefully delivered) scope and sequence. If students are taught to read accurately and fluently in the first two or three years of school, they will have the significant advantage of being able to read independently in the middle, upper, and secondary years of schooling. Equally important is that any SSPP is part of a broad, rich literacy curriculum that includes high-quality literature.

As students are learning to read accurately, effortlessly and with automaticity, they should be exposed to a rich and broad range of high-quality texts – both fiction and non-fiction. These texts should be chosen carefully, based on their literary merit and instructional potential, and should be previewed, read out loud, discussed and explored through teacher-led activities. Ideally, the instruction should assist students to make connections to previously taught content and to other curriculum areas and ensure that students are building their semantic and general knowledge (see table on page 6).

Box 1 – The Simple View of Reading

Word Recognition (Reading accurately with automaticity) × **Language Comprehension** (The linguistic processes involved in the comprehension of oral language) = **Reading Comprehension**

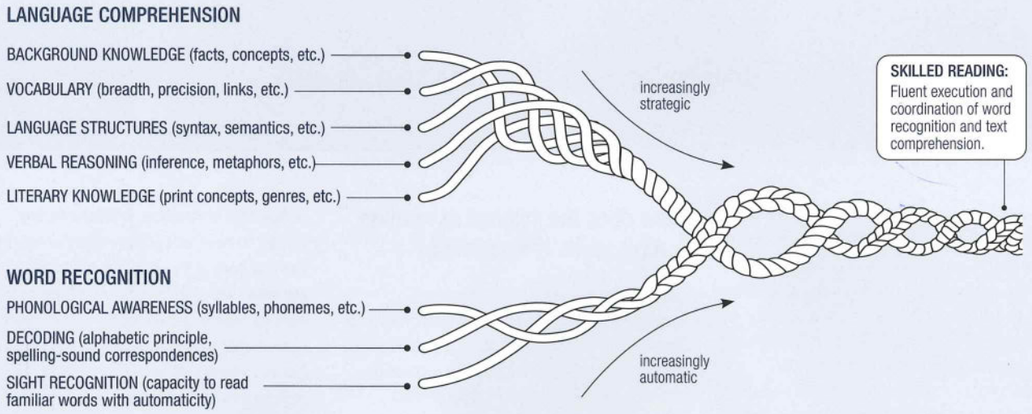
The Simple View of Reading emphasises that reading comprehension is the product of two sets of skills: word recognition and language comprehension. Word recognition refers to the processes involved in accurately reading printed words comprised in text, while language comprehension refers to the processes that enable a reader to understand the messages contained in text.

While this model is called the Simple View of Reading, it is not because reading is a simple process, but because the model is conceptually simple. The equation shown in the diagram above demonstrates that reading comprehension is the product of printed word recognition and language comprehension. If a student cannot decode printed words, they will not be able to comprehend written text and if a student cannot comprehend spoken language, they will not be able to comprehend written text.

The ability to decode an unfamiliar word depends on knowledge of the relationships between sounds and letters (phoneme-grapheme correspondences) and the ability to blend them together quickly, effortlessly and accurately. Phonic knowledge is needed for reading new words and developing word recognition skills – a key component of the Simple View of Reading and the reading acquisition process.

Gough & Tunmer, 1986

Box 2 – The Reading Rope



Scarborough's Reading Rope further elaborates the specific skills that support word recognition and language comprehension. Phonic knowledge is critical to the development of word recognition skills as shown in the lower part of the Reading Rope.

In order to read accurately, students need to master English orthography, acquiring a working knowledge of the alphabetic system that has been used to translate spoken language into written language (knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences). They need to develop the capacity to isolate the sounds in words (phonemic awareness) and recognise that we use letters, either individually or in strings, to map these sounds on to the page when we spell. Students also need to have sufficient knowledge to know which sound the letter (or letters) represent when they view written words, and to know how to blend these sounds together, from left to right, to read the word. As students' knowledge of the alphabetic system improves, so the automaticity and accuracy of their reading increases, until such time as they can read the words accurately and effortlessly. It is this capacity that continues to develop (with practice) to the point at which a student can be described as reading the words and sentences fluently.

For students to comprehend the text that they read (or that is being read to them) they must have sufficient knowledge of: the meaning of the words and implied references; the text topic or theme; the syntactic structure; and, the text structure. It is important that students are prepared well for reading (or for being read to) as comprehension is dependent on the student's capacity to build a mental model of the text as they read.

A skilled reader is able to fluently execute and coordinate the processes of word recognition and text comprehension.

Scarborough, 2001

Key principles of high-quality phonics instruction

There are numerous synthetic phonics programs available, and many similarities across them in terms of the scope and sequence, instructional activities and routines, and the language or terminology used. Please visit https://dsf.net.au/resources/free-resources for a downloadable document comparing the scope and sequence of a range of phonics programs. Following the criteria for high-quality phonic work listed below, and carefully considering your school context, are the keys to successfully implementing a SSPP across the school:

- The content of the program should be **systematic** and follow a clear, carefully planned, logical **sequence** which introduces the 44 sounds of English and their corresponding letters/letter patterns, which is carried over from one year to the next. While there is no one universally accepted sequence for teaching these phoneme-grapheme relationships, the expectation is that a high-quality program will systematically teach the initial/ basic code before systematically teaching the advanced/ extended code.
- A synthetic phonics program is **cumulative** and builds on students' previous learning to ensure progress and intentionally moves from teaching simple to more complex content.
- The content of the program should be taught at a **brisk pace**. The whole point of learning the phoneme-grapheme relationships is to use them to read and write, so they need to be covered quite quickly. Most children are able to learn the sounds at a rate of three or even four a week. It is anticipated that students will be introduced to a structured synthetic phonics program in the Foundation Year and be able to read and write simple sentences by the end of the year using the code knowledge they have been taught.
- **Blending** and **segmenting** are explicitly taught as the key skills used to decode when reading and encode when spelling words. In addition, students should be taught the more advanced skill of phoneme manipulation (e.g., adding sounds, removing sounds, and changing sounds in words) to support their understanding of alternate pronunciations for letter strings.
- Both accurate **reading** and **spelling** should be targeted and students should be given daily opportunities to apply their growing phonic knowledge to reading and spelling both single words and extended text. Ideally, the opportunity to read words, captions, sentences and decodable books should be provided, as should the opportunity to write words and simple sentences containing the phoneme-grapheme relationships that have been taught. The sequence of decodable books used to practise reading should mirror the phonics scope and sequence being used in the classroom.
- Each phonic session should include **active involvement with material** (e.g. hearing it, saying it, seeing it, handling it) to optimise learning.

An overview of some of the well-designed phonics programs used by schools in Western Australia is provided at the end of this article. It is essential that schools adopt just one program, deliver it systematically as per the program's guidelines, and follow the program sequence with fidelity. Cherry picking from a range of SSPPs is likely to hinder students' progress and create gaps in their knowledge. Additional resources, both commercial and teacher-made, can certainly be introduced, but it is important to adhere to one particular scope and sequence.

What does a high-quality phonic session look like?

An explicit phonics session should consist of approximately 20-30 minutes per day and should be taught discretely as a separate lesson. Since reading and spelling are reversible processes, new phonic knowledge should be introduced in the context of both reading and spelling activities.

Instruction should make use of a routine that is clearly outlined and adhered to in every session. Following a pre-established routine helps the teacher - by minimising the amount of time needed to explain the activities - and the student - by better enabling them to focus on the content since they have a clear understanding of the structure of the session. (This reduces cognitive load for all students and is of particular importance to students with language and learning difficulties.)

A high-quality phonics session may follow a structure similar to that outlined in the table below.

Review	It has been well established in the literature that regular review strengthens previous learning and leads to fluent recall. The more one rehearses and reviews information, the stronger the interconnections become. Many phonic programs stress the importance of beginning each phonics session with a short review of previous learning to activate prior knowledge, review previously taught phoneme-grapheme correspondences, and/or target student errors.
Teach	The bulk of a phonics session is typically spent on explicit and direct teaching of the new code knowledge and/or skills.
Practise	Students should be provided with plenty of opportunities for guided practice of the target code knowledge and/or skills. This often involves word building, word reading, word spelling, word chains, and/or word sorting activities.
Apply	It is also important that students are provided with opportunities to transfer their skills from word reading and spelling to sentence/text reading and writing. This involves having students read and/or write connected text that is matched to the code they have been taught. This could include captions, sentences, passages, or texts depending on the year level of the students.

The emphasis of reading instruction across year levels

	Word Recognition	Language Comprehension
Kindergarten	· Tuning into sounds / development of phonological awareness skills (including rhyming, alliteration, syllable segmentation, and phoneme blending and segmenting). · Alphabetic knowledge (e.g., the alphabet song, early recognition of letter shapes). · Explicitly teach concepts of print (directionality of print, location of title and author/illustrator names etc.)	· Read (and re-read) aloud high-quality texts encouraging and guiding discussion about the characters and events in the texts · Support students in oral retell of stories and nursery rhymes · Play (in response to) or perform stories and nursery rhymes using toys, puppets, dress-ups and crafts · Encourage students to perform retell or play in response to stories while making changes (innovations) to them · Provide explicit vocabulary instruction and continue to develop the oral language skills needed for conversation and to exchange factual information (e.g., the weather, how to conduct simple classroom routines, etc.)
Foundation	· Ongoing development of phonemic awareness skills (blending, segmenting and manipulation) · Explicit teaching of the initial or basic code* · Regular opportunities to read and spell simple single syllable (and some two-syllable) words containing the basic/ initial code · Reading decodable captions, sentences and texts matched to developing phonic knowledge · Writing simple dictated sentences matched to developing phonic knowledge	· Read (and re-read) aloud high-quality texts encouraging and guiding discussion about the characters and events in the texts (e.g., a character's feelings, connections to students' own experiences, links to other texts) asking a range of questions and modelling responses · Plan to provide instruction in background knowledge that is relevant to the text being read, and make explicit links between that background knowledge and events or facts mentioned in the text · Perform, retell or play in response to stories while making changes (innovations) to them · Encourage students to perform, retell or play at stories while making changes (innovations) to them · Provide explicit vocabulary instruction with a focus on 'tier 2' words (slightly more sophisticated words that appear frequently in written texts, and which may be taken from books being shared in class) · Teach basic text structure (e.g., beginning, middle, end) and a range of connectives that support students to comprehend and structure texts (e.g., once upon a time, first, next, unfortunately, luckily, finally) · Use oral language activities to support students to use connectives and sentence starters in simple retells
Y1	· Ongoing development of phonemic awareness skills (blending, segmenting and manipulation) · Explicit teaching of the advanced/extended code** · Regular opportunities to read and spell single syllable and multisyllabic words containing advanced/ extended code · Reading decodable sentences and texts matched to developing phonic knowledge · Writing dictated sentences matched to developing phonic knowledge · Opportunities to develop fluency in the application of reading skills, and automatic sight word recognition (regular and some irregular words) · Knowledge of some common affixes (e.g. -s, -es, -ed, -er, -ing, and -est)	· Read (and re-read) aloud high quality books, and encourage discussion about the events or information in the text and the students' responses to the text · Plan to provide instruction in background knowledge that is relevant to the text being read, and make explicit links between that background knowledge and events or facts mentioned in the text · Support students to access stories they can read themselves · Provide explicit vocabulary instruction with a focus on 'tier 2' words · Extend understanding of basic narrative and teach non-fiction structure, and extend the range of (fiction and non-fiction) connectives students know in order to support students to comprehend and structure texts · Examine a small selection of sentences from a text closely to unpack their meaning, considering things like pronoun use (who is 'she' in the sentence, 'The queen glared but she did not say a word'?), choice of adjectives and verbs (what do you think of when it says the prince is 'sulky'? What do you think of when it says the cat 'creeps'?) and conjunctions (it says 'it was raining, **so** I took my umbrella' – 'so' means the writer took the umbrella because it was raining).
Y2	· Further teaching of the advanced/extended code, and spelling conventions and patterns · Regular opportunities to read and spell single syllable and multisyllabic words containing advanced/ extended code · Reading decodable sentences and texts, and writing dictated sentences, matched to developing phonic knowledge as well as less phonically controlled texts · Ongoing opportunities to foster reading fluency and spelling accuracy, and to build increasingly automatic word recognition skills (of both regular and irregular words) · Knowledge of some common affixes (e.g. un-, re-, con-, dis-, pro-, pre-)	· Read (and re-read) aloud high quality books, and encourage discussion about the events or information in the text and the students' responses to the text · Plan to provide instruction in background knowledge that is relevant to the text being read, and make explicit links between that background knowledge and events or facts mentioned in the text · Support students to access stories they can read themselves · Provide explicit vocabulary instruction with a focus on 'tier 2' and 'tier 3' words (particularly in non-fiction texts) · Continue to explore text structure and language features, with an increasing focus on different types of story plots and different types of non-fiction texts (e.g. informative, persuasive, explanatory) · Continued analysis of carefully selected sentences from texts, looking at the use of pronouns as a cohesive device, word choice and its effect on meaning, and the use of additional phrases to add information

***Please note:** A logical sequence for teaching the initial/ basic code would be to begin with the single letter phoneme-grapheme relationships (e.g. the /s/ sound can be represented by the letter 's', as in **s**at) before moving on to two (digraph) and three (trigraph) letter graphemes (e.g. the /sh/ sound can be represented by the letters 'sh', as in fi**sh** and the /ch/ sound can be represented by the letters 'tch' as in i**tch**). The teaching sequence should start with a small number of commonly used single consonants and vowels, which can immediately be combined to form simple VC (vowel-consonant) and CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words, before gradually introducing the remaining common phoneme grapheme relationships which can be combined to form more complex word structures, such as words containing adjacent consonants. These are referred to as VCC (e.g. end), CCVC (e.g. trap), CVCC (e.g. tent), CCVCC (e.g. crunch) and CCCVC (e.g. strap) words.

****Please note:** Explicit teaching of the advanced/extended code should involve teaching the most common alternate spelling patterns for the same sound (e.g. the /ð/ sound can be written as 'oa', 'oe', 'o-e', 'ow', etc) as well as alternate pronunciations for the same letter strings (e.g. the 'ea' letter string represents a different sound in h**ea**d, m**ea**t and st**ea**k).

How do you monitor/check for student progress?

As with all high-quality instruction, regular formative assessment should be used to establish whether students are learning, retaining and mastering the concepts being taught. Formative assessment refers to any activity that is used which provides feedback about student progress, and research indicates that it is one of the most effective means by which we make sure students don't fall behind. As was pointed out by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam (1998, p.2), 'assessment becomes 'formative assessment' when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet student needs'. The quality and timeliness of feedback has also been shown to have a powerful effect on pupil learning and retention. Ideally, in the context of delivering a synthetic phonics program, teachers will be asking questions throughout the session, checking for student understanding, noting any errors made by the students, and providing appropriate feedback as they teach. More importantly, they will be using this information to inform their ongoing teaching. For instance, if several students are struggling with a previously taught sound-spelling relationship from the basic/ initial code, the teacher could devote the review section of subsequent lessons to activities using words containing that target sound. Additionally, the use of a phonics check midway through Year 1 is an ideal way to ensure that all students are on track.

The Year 1 Phonics Check

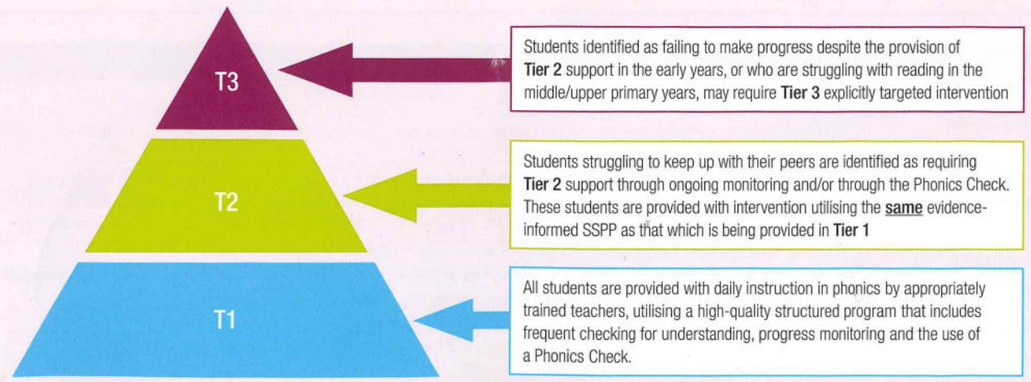
The Australian version of the Phonics Check for Year 1 students is a 5 to 7-minute assessment that lets teachers know how students are progressing in the acquisition of essential phonic knowledge. Its purpose is to check whether students can accurately read a selection of words that are made up of common phoneme-grapheme relationships, all of which should have been taught by midway through Year 1. This competency is considered to be an essential step in learning to read and is highly predictive of, not only students' later capacity to read and spell accurately, but also of their capacity to understand what they're reading. There is now a freely available version of the Phonics Check for schools and teachers in Australia that can be found at the Literacy Hub **https://literacyhub.edu.au/phonics-check.html**. The Year 1 Phonics Check uses the same structure as the UK phonics screening check for year 1 students and is designed to confirm whether the assessed students are making the progress that would be expected after approximately 12 months of instruction in foundation and year one phonics. The advantage of using a tool such as the Phonics Check is that it is exceptionally well-designed and supported, and is ideal for students midway through Year 1. It is exceptionally easy to administer and provides teachers with a snapshot of each student's phonics knowledge. It also provides useful planning and reporting information.

The Phonics Check, which comprises 40 decodable real and invented words (20 of each) is administered by the classroom teacher on an individual basis providing immediate feedback on each student's progress. The Check can be used as a formative assessment tool, in that it can guide feedback and instruction on an individual basis (identifying specific gaps in knowledge or misconceptions held), or, it can be used as a summative assessment – providing information about a cohort of students and guiding planning for the whole class. Some students may be identified by the classroom teacher as requiring additional support and in need of ongoing tier 2 intervention. The Check should be used as one of several progress-monitoring tools to identify students' competencies in developing foundational literacy skills.

Given that public primary schools in Western Australia will be required to implement a phonics assessment from 2023, it is likely that many schools will make use of the Phonics Check available via the Literacy Hub. There are many advantages to accessing this particular assessment tool, including the development of a new (equivalent) version each year; the reduction in time needed to score and interpret the data collected (both at an individual and a class level); and, the fact that the tool is designed to be both user-friendly and engaging for students.

Ideally, schools will have in place a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) which ensures that increasing levels of support and intervention are provided to any student identified as falling behind. This approach dove-tails in to the aim of the Phonics Check in that any student identified with gaps in their knowledge is provided with small group instruction that is targeted, explicit and delivered with increasing levels of intensity, to ensure they are given the opportunity to catch up with their peers. How well they respond to this intervention is monitored and used to inform continuing support and intervention. This approach is often referred to as the Response to Intervention (RTI) model of support and the Phonics Check can be incorporated into the model as a means of ensuring students do not fall through the gaps and get left behind.

Response to Intervention (Phonic Knowledge)



Examples of High Quality Structured Synthetic Phonics Programs

Sounds-Write	
Training Provider	DSF Literacy & Clinical Services 08 9217 2500 https://dsf.net.au/events Sound Literacy (South-West WA) https://soundliteracy.com.au
Program Summary	*Sounds-Write* explicitly teaches reading and spelling utilising a linguistic phonic approach. It teaches the skills, conceptual knowledge and code knowledge that are essential for learning to read and spell successfully. Sounds-Write has been found to be an exceptionally effective program both internationally and locally, and can be implemented as a whole-class program for beginning readers (Foundation to Year 2) or used as a highly effective intervention for individuals of any age who are struggling with reading and spelling acquisition.
Days of Training	Four (Face to face) (Online training is also available on specific dates each year, over 6 week blocks for each course)
Cost of Training	$836 to $920 (discounts available for off-site training at schools, multiple registrants, tertiary students, and newly qualified teachers).
Resources provided	Sounds-Write trainees are provided with a comprehensive resource file (including lesson scripts). This allows trainees to begin using the program as soon as training has been completed.
Additional support/ mentoring available	DSF Sounds-Write trainers offer ongoing support and mentoring to Sounds-Write practitioners. This consultation provides schools with the opportunity to review their classroom practices and school-wide implementation of the Sounds-Write program. Schools can structure this follow-up school consultation according to their needs and can seek additional support or request additional knowledge. Examples may include providing support with a whole school scope and sequence, planning, classroom observation or modelling of a phonic lesson, ongoing PL to address any additional areas of need, review of current resources or discussion with the leadership about change management and implementation. Support materials including interactive whiteboard software, activity books, and decodable readers can be purchased from https://dsf.net.au/online-store

Letters and Sounds (Enhanced)	
Training Provider	DSF Literacy & Clinical Services 08 9217 2500 https://dsf.net.au/events
Program Summary	The Enhanced *Letters and Sounds* program effectively targets the development of oral language, reading, and spelling skills in the early years (Foundation to Year 2/3), and can also be used to provide targeted phonic intervention for struggling learners. It aligns with the achievement standards outlined in the Australian Curriculum (English) and has been shown to significantly improve whole-school literacy outcomes.
Days of Training	Two (A three day version of the course is also available as a 'Train the Trainer' model.)
Cost of Training	$432 - $455 (discounts available for off-site training at schools, multiple registrants, tertiary students, and newly qualified teachers).
Resources provided	Trainees are provided with a free copy of the Letters and Sounds manual plus a comprehensive resource file. This allows trainees to begin using the program as soon as training has been completed.
Additional support/ mentoring available	DSF Letters and Sounds trainers offer ongoing support and mentoring to Letters and Sounds trainees. This consultation will provide schools with the opportunity to review their classroom practices and school wide implementation of Letters and Sounds. Schools will be able to structure this follow-up school consultation according to their needs and will have the opportunity to seek additional support or request additional knowledge. Examples may include providing feedback on a whole school scope and sequence, classroom observation or modelling of a Letters and Sounds lesson, ongoing PL to address any additional areas of need, review of current resources or discussion with the leadership about change management and implementation. There is a large range of resources (including games, activities and decodable books) commercially available which complement the Letters and Sounds program.

InitiaLit	
Training Provider	MultiLit 1300 559 919 https://multilit.com/
Program Summary	*InitiaLit* is an evidence-based whole-class literacy program providing all children with the essential core knowledge and strong foundations to become successful readers and writers. InitiaLit is a three-year program, covering the first three years of school (Foundation to Year 2). In the context of a Response to Intervention framework, InitiaLit is a Tier 1 program, designed to be delivered to whole classes by classroom teachers.
Days of Training	Two
Cost of Training	$1,050 - $1,156 (discounts available for multiple registrants)
Resources provided	Workshop training materials cover the practical implementation and delivery of the program.
Additional support/ mentoring available	The InitiaLit program materials can be purchased from https://multilit.com/programs/initialit/ . InitiaLit readers are also available for purchase.

UFLI Foundations	
Training Provider	Auspeld admin@auspeld.org.au https://auspeld.org.au/events/
Program Summary	*UFLI Foundations* is an explicit and systematic phonics program that provides teachers with detailed but easy to follow lesson plans. UFLI Foundations targets: phoneme blending and segmentation practice; accuracy and automaticity of grapheme-phoneme correspondences; decoding automaticity of words with previously learned concepts; explicit introduction of new concepts; decoding and encoding practice; reading and spelling irregular words; and, reading and spelling connected text. It is designed for use in Foundation – Year 2.
Days of Training	Free webinars and training modules available via the UFLI website and YouTube channel. Auspeld is currently working with the developers of the UFLI Foundations Program to create training for Australian teachers.
Cost of Training	Online content freely available.
Resources provided	There is an extensive collection of free support materials available in the UFLI Toolbox, including lesson slide decks, decodable passages and more.
Additional support/ mentoring available	UFLI Toolbox

Let's Decode	
Training Provider	Associate Professor Lorraine Hammond PhD AM Edith Cowan University l.hammond@ecu.edu.au
Program Summary	*Let's Decode* is an explicit and direct systematic approach to teaching phonological awareness and systematic daily decoding instruction from Kindy (taking 6 minutes) to Year 2 (20 minutes). The focus of *Let's Decode* is the instructional language used to teach reading precursors including: concept of word, auditory blending, rhyming, segmenting, letter-sound knowledge, the strategy of decoding words (using smooth blending), high frequency irregular words, sentences and longer texts.
Days of Training	One Training is based in a school with children available for presenter to demonstrate and participants to practice with.
Cost of Training	Fees are nominal or free. There is no charge for schools in the Kimberley Schools Project and schools undertaking research. (Schools may be asked to pay a small fee for resources.)
Resources provided	Trainees are provided with sample teaching PowerPoints; scope and sequences with daily lessons for Kindergarten, Pre-Primary, Year 1 and Year 2 Teachers; decodable materials; and, a video demonstrating how to deliver a lesson.
Additional support/ mentoring available	Follow up coaching is provided through the Kimberley Schools Project and for schools taking up *Let's Decode* for research purposes. This involves face to face observations of staff using a checklist.

PLD Literacy	
Training Provider	PLD Literacy 08 9227 0846 www.pld-literacy.org
Program Summary	PLD provides an Australian, evidence-based approach to Structured Synthetic Phonics (SSP) for primary school educators. Aligned with the Science of Reading, PLD's SSP approach extends from the junior primary years through to upper primary years and thereby facilitating a whole school approach.
Days of Training	A range of online courses for different year levels are available or onsite training can be tailored to school needs.
Cost of Training	Training Room Seminar (1 day): $169 Online Seminar (1 day): $125 School-based sessions and short online courses (charged by the hour)
Resources provided	Trainees are provided with Teaching Sequence and Screening & Tracking manuals, tracking sheets, training videos, Term Tip videos, Whole School Literacy Plan booklets, and High Frequency word charts. Other program materials can be purchased from https://pld-literacy.org/
Additional support/ mentoring available	PLD provides ongoing support and coaching for classroom teachers and literacy coordinators.

Jolly Phonics/Jolly Grammar	
Training Provider	DSF Literacy & Clinical Services 08 9217 2500 https://dsf.net.au/events
Program Summary	Jolly Phonics is a comprehensive program, based on the proven, fun and multi-sensory synthetic phonics method that gets children reading and writing from an early age. Students are taught the five skills of: learning the 42 letter sounds, letter formation, blending, segmenting, and tricky words. These five skills form the foundation that children build on with each year of grammar teaching.
Days of Training	1
Cost of Training	$245
Resources provided	Workshop training materials cover the practical delivery and implementation of the Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar programs.
Additional support/ mentoring available	DSF Jolly Phonics trainers offer ongoing support and consultation to teachers who are implementing the program. There is a large range of resources (including teacher handbooks, student workbooks, readers, flashcards and more) commercially available.

Teachers with strong background knowledge of both the theory and implementation of a structured synthetic phonics approach in the classroom may also use the following resources as a framework for their phonics instruction. These extremely comprehensive and well-designed resources can be used in the development of, and to support, a carefully planned phonics scope and sequence.

Little Learners Love Literacy	
Website	https://www.littlelearnersloveliteracy.com.au/ https://dsf.net.au/events
Resource Summary	Little Learners Love Literacy® resources and professional learning workshops support explicit and systematic teaching of reading and spelling through seven stages of instruction. The teaching of the sequence is brisk, with both reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding) being taught together. Resources include decodable readers, teacher activity books, games, Speed Sound and Chants cards, and more.
Additional support/ materials available	Little Learners Love Literacy® provide professional learning workshops which provide a grounding in the latest theory and research as well as hands-on experience with the program and resources. DSF can organise training by LLLL specialists to support the delivery of high-quality phonics instruction utilising LLLL resources.

Phonic Books	
Website	https://www.phonicbooks.co.uk/ (UK) https://dsf.net.au/resources/online-store/phonic-books (WA) https://dsf.net.au/events
Resource Summary	Phonic Books feature a highly structured phonic sequence which encourages reading success and the building of confidence in beginner and reluctant readers. The Dandelion reader series introduces only a few letter/sounds at a time allowing independent reading from the outset. There are multiple parallel books in each unit which provide practice whilst offering different stories. Each unit introduces new letters/sounds while revising previously taught phonic letters/sounds and high-frequency or sight words. Resources include decodable readers, Reading and Writing Activity books, games and more.
Additional support/ materials available	The Phonic Books website includes free posters and support materials which supplement the resources, as well as information and guidance for teachers using the materials. DSF trainers can also provide a comprehensive day of PL to support the delivery of high-quality phonics instruction utilising Phonic Books resources.

Information regarding the programs listed above has been sourced from the program website and authors and was correct at the time of publication.

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The Castles and Coltheart Word Reading Test: Peering Back at the Past and Foretelling the Future

By Genevieve McArthur

When children start learning to read, they need to learn a number of new skills. They need to learn that written letters (e.g., k) represent speech sounds (e.g., "ck") – the "letter-sound" rules – and that if they are trying to read a new word that they do not know, they can try to decode the letters in a written word into sounds to try and work out what the written word "says". This skill has been given several names including phonological decoding, phonological recoding, non-lexical reading, and phonics, to name just a few.

Each time a child reads a new word using phonological decoding, they strengthen the neural representation of that whole written word in their "mental lexicon". Once that representation is strong enough, they will start reading the word – as a whole – without using the letter-sound rules. This skill also has a lot of names including word recognition, lexical reading, and sight word reading.

Now, if a child was lucky enough to be learning to read a written language that almost always follows the letter-sound rules (e.g., Finnish), children would be able to decode, and then learn to recognise, almost all written words. However, English loves to adopt words from older times (e.g., I, two, who) and other countries (e.g., bourgeois), which do not completely follow the letter-sound rules of modern English. So, children cannot learn these words using the letter-sound rules. They need to use their word recognition skills to learn to recognise them "by sight".

Although researchers and educators and clinicians have known for a long time that phonological recoding and word recognition are two separate skills needed to learn to read regular and irregular words in English, most reading assessments mixed these two types of words together in tests of word reading accuracy. It was not until the 1990s that researchers decided it was time to develop a test that assessed these skills separately so that they could determine if a child's poor reading development stemmed from a problem with just one skill or both. This test – called the Castles and Coltheart (yes, unusual name, we agree), consisted of 30 regular words and 30 irregular words, which

If you want to test phonological recoding specifically, you need to use words that are completely novel to all children, and hence need to be made-up nonsense words