Blending

About the Strategy

BLENDING is a strategy that helps develop students' phonemic awareness, which is part of phonological awareness. Segmenting and blending are the two most critical skills in the development of phonemic awareness. Blending is the opposite of segmenting and involves the ability to say a spoken word when its individual phonemes are said slowly. Students should practice blending onset-rimes and individual sounds in a word. Blending tasks take place orally without the written word. Blending should be taught using direct and explicit instruction, but after such instruction, it can also be reinforced with educational games/activities. For additional information about Reading: Foundational Skills, see Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts Appendix A, pages 17-22 (http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf).

Implementation of the Strategy

- Select the word(s) to blend.
- Determine which type of blending you are going to work on with your students, moving from the easiest to more difficult segmenting tasks (blending onset-rime, blending individual sounds). It is best to begin blending 2 phoneme words and then to move on to 3 phoneme words.
- Say the sounds in a word slowly (e.g., "/c/-/a/-/t/" [individual sounds] or "/p/-/it/" [onset rime]).
- Give the students the prompt (e.g., "What word?").
- Repeat the tasks until students can fluently blend words with accuracy.
- Once students understand the concept, create a more game-like situation to practice blending. Play Guess the Word with students where you say a word slowly and they have to blend the sounds together to correctly identify the picture of the spoken word.

Measuring Progress

- Teacher observation
- Conferencing
- Informal blending assessment

Research

Bursuck, W. D., & Damer, M. (2011). *Teaching reading to students who are at risk or have disabilities: A multi-tier approach* (2nd Ed). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Chard, D. J., & Dickson, S. V. (1999). Phonological awareness: Instructional and assessment guidelines. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 34*, 261-270.

Lundberg, I., Frost, J., & Peterson, O. (1998). Effects of an extensive program for stimulating phonological awareness in preschool children. *Reading Research Quarterly, 23*(3), 263-284.

Wisconsin State Standards

Reading: Foundational Skills

– Phonological Awareness

Grade Level

K-5

Purpose

Use with students to support phonological awareness: explicitly teach blending of individual sounds in a word

When to Use

Before Reading
During Reading
After Reading

Grouping

Whole Group
Small Group
Partners
Individuals

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Blending

Decide which words you want students to blend and select which blending task (onset-rime, individual sounds) on which you would like them to work.

Direct Teaching of Blending	
Blending Onset-Rime	After hearing the teacher slowly say the onset [the beginning sound(s) that precedes the vowel in a syllable] and the rime [the rest of the syllable that contains the vowel and all that follows it], students say the whole word. Example: Teacher: "/s/-/ell/. What word?" Student: "sell" Teacher: "/m/-/ake/. What word?" Student: "make"
Blending Individual Sounds	After hearing the teacher slowly say the individual sounds in the word, students say the whole word. Example: Teacher: "/n/-/a/-/p/. What word?" Student: "nap" Teacher: "/a/-/s/-/k/. What word?" Student: "ask"
Games/Activities to Promote Blending	
Guess the Word	*Materials:* Collect several pictures (or a picture board) of 2, 3, and 4 phoneme words (e.g., cat, pot, lid, stop). *Directions:* Pronounce the target word slowly, stretching it out phoneme by phoneme. Have the students blend the word into the whole spoken word and identify the correct picture of the word on the board.

Bursuck, W. D., & Damer, M. (2011). Segmenting and blending sequence. *Teaching Reading to Students who are at risk of have disabilities: A multi-tier approach* (2nd Ed.), p. 42. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Chard, D. J., & Dickson, S. V. (1999). Phonological awareness: Instructional and assessment guidelines. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 34*, 261-270.

Word Picture Cards

Examples of word picture cards that can be used during the segmenting race and segmenting sort games.