

Introduction

Phonics in Action

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'*Phonics in Action*' is the seventh volume of a teaching resource package series produced by the English Section, Curriculum Development Institute, Education Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in support of the implementation of the *CDC Syllabus for English Language (Primary 1-6) 1997*.

Design of the Resource Package

'*Phonics in Action*' is a video-based resource package. It is intended to provide resources for professional development workshops among small groups of English teachers working in the same school. Two series of workshops, namely 'Understanding Phonics' and 'Teaching Phonics', can be run using the materials in this resource package.

- **Understanding Phonics** is intended for teachers who are not very familiar with phonics and would like to learn more about it before incorporating the teaching of phonics into their school English programme.
- **Teaching Phonics** is intended for teachers who are familiar with phonics but would like to get some ideas on how to incorporate the teaching of phonics into their school English programme.

Teachers may choose to work on either or both series of workshops.

Contents of the Resource Package

Each set of '*Phonics in Action*' consists of the following materials:

1 Facilitator's Guide

This book provides suggestions and materials for conducting the five workshop sessions in conjunction with viewing the video segments. It states clearly the objectives, programme and suggested procedures for each workshop session. It includes the handouts, keys and overhead masters for all workshop activities. There is also a word list of useful groups of letter sounds and a glossary to provide reference for the workshop facilitator and participants.

- 1 set of Photocopiable Masters This folder contains an additional set of masters of all the evaluation forms, activity sheets and overheads to be used in each workshop session.
- 1 'English Letter Sounds' card This card provides a quick reference for the English letter sounds.
- 1 'Phonics in ELT' leaflet This leaflet includes a brief introduction to the teaching of phonics and a checklist of the English letter sounds.
- 1 Audio CD This 40-minute audio CD has a recording of three poems, a riddle and four tongue twisters to support the seven workshop activities. It also has a recording of the letter sounds with examples as listed in the 'English Letter Sounds' card and the 'Summary of Useful Groups of Letter Sounds'.
- 2 VHS Video Tapes*
- Video Tape One
Understanding Phonics This 40-minute video tape focuses on what phonics is and introduces different groups of letter sounds with examples.
 - Video Tape Two
Teaching Phonics This 30-minute video tape focuses on the teaching of phonics to learners in primary schools and presents some exemplar learning activities.
- 2 VCDs*
- VCD One
Understanding Phonics This 40-minute VCD focuses on what phonics is and introduces different groups of letter sounds with examples.
 - VCD Two
Teaching Phonics This 30-minute VCD focuses on the teaching of phonics to learners in primary schools and presents some exemplar learning activities.

*The content of the VHS video tapes and VCDs is identical.

Icons

The following icons are found in the right column of the suggested procedures for each workshop session. They specify the resources needed for conducting each workshop activity. The facilitator may refer to them when preparing the materials.



Pre- or Post-session
Self-evaluation Form



Activity Sheet



Key



Overhead Master



Video Segment



Audio CD



'English Letter Sounds' card



'Useful Groups of Letter
Sounds' word list



'Phonics in ELT' leaflet

Facilitator

We suggest that an experienced teacher in the school's English Panel takes up the role of facilitator in each series of workshops using the materials in '**Phonics in Action**'. The ideal number of participants in each workshop is 10-15.

The facilitator does not have to be an expert in phonics. His/Her major responsibilities are to:

- read the Facilitator's Guide and view the relevant segments from the video tapes or VCDs before each workshop;
- select the workshop format that is most appropriate for the participants;
- select the workshop activities to use and modify them, if necessary, to meet the needs of the participants;
- plan a programme for each workshop, including the workshop objectives and specific times, including times for breaks;
- make logistic arrangements for each workshop, e.g. booking a large room, the video cassette recorder, VCD player or audio CD player, and making overheads, etc;

- duplicate the handouts to distribute to the participants from the set of photocopiable masters or the Facilitator's Guide;
- lead the discussions during each workshop; and
- find out if the objectives of each workshop are achieved and if not, what follow-up action is necessary.

Effectiveness of Phonics

A lot of teachers have shown interest in teaching phonics to primary school learners. Phonics can facilitate the development of the four language skills, and especially helps learners build up strategies for pronunciation, spelling and reading. Application of phonics knowledge helps young learners gain proficiency and confidence in reading aloud, and develop an interest in reading books in English.

In order to enhance young learners' interest in learning English, we suggest incorporating the teaching of phonics into the school English programme and teaching phonics in the context of the regular learning or teaching resources. We **do not** recommend teaching phonics as a formal system and/or out of the context of the regular learning or teaching resources.

Limitations of Phonics

Teachers also need to understand the limitations of phonics. Phonics is a useful tool for helping young learners develop strategies for attacking the pronunciation and spelling of unknown words. Phonics does not enable young learners to find out the meaning of unknown words. Teachers need to help learners develop skills in reading for meaning.

Understanding Phonics

Understanding Phonics

'Understanding Phonics' is intended for teachers who would like to learn more about phonics before incorporating the teaching of phonics into their school English programme.

There are altogether **4 sessions** of learning in 'Understanding Phonics':

- Session 1 Background Knowledge
- Session 2 Initial Consonants, Consonant Digraphs, Consonant Blends and Short Vowels
- Session 3 Ending Consonants, Consonant Digraphs, Consonant Blends, Long Vowels and Other Vowels
- Session 4 Onsets, Rimes and Syllables

The programme outlines the schedule for the different activities in each workshop session. The facilitator may adjust the time schedule which includes the time for viewing the video segments and completing the workshop activities to meet the needs of the participants.

Video Segments

The video segments are the input components in each session. They provide the necessary explanation and clarification required for the content in each session. The facilitator may follow the suggested schedule for each session and invite the participants to watch the relevant segments and complete the pre-, while- and/or post-viewing activities.

Workshop Activities

There is a variety of workshop activities in each session. The pre-, while- and/or post-viewing workshop activities are designed to help the participants reflect on the content of each session. They stimulate teachers' thinking and encourage them to share their views and experiences in learning phonics. The workshop activities on individual or groups of letter sounds enable the participants to experience how phonics is learnt in context. Participating in these activities helps teachers gain first hand experience in learning phonics and provides them with ideas for designing their own activities when teaching phonics.

The facilitator is encouraged to select, modify and conduct the suggested workshop activities to suit the participants' needs. Suggested keys are provided in this Guide for facilitator's reference.