
UNIT 8 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING READING ACTIVITIES (PHONICS INSTRUCTION)

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Unit, we discussed various strategies and activities that you can use to develop and nurture the oral language competencies of children. In this Unit, we will discuss the strategies and activities that you can adopt to develop and foster a child's decoding skills.

You may recall from Unit 1 of this Course that reading involves decoding and comprehension, thus both aspects should be incorporated into the language lesson. However, this is not the usual case. Reading instruction in most schools is characterized by two aspects:

- a) It is often limited to teaching phonics. It happens because reading is seen only as the ability to decode words using letter-sound relationships, as we discussed in Unit 1. The comprehension aspect is usually missing.
- b) In addition, phonics is also taught incorrectly. Many spend several days and months ensuring that the young children gain the '*Aksharagyaan*' which usually involves learning the names of the letters of a language. For example, the teacher introduces children to 'T for tomato'. Here, she introduces the letter 'T' by introducing its name 'tee' and does not introduce the sound it gives, i.e., /ta/. This is not phonics (sound-letter relationship), as we discussed in Unit 3 as well.

Although phonics cannot be the sole focus of a language programme, yet correct meaningful phonics instruction is crucial to ensure that the child's reading ability gets fostered.

Therefore, in this Unit, we will discuss the decoding aspect of reading by discussing various types and strategies of phonics instruction. The comprehension aspect of reading will be discussed in the subsequent Unit.

Objectives

After completing this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and discuss the meaning of phonics;
- Understand the significance of phonics instruction in the child's early literacy development;
- Discuss the practices that should inform the teaching of phonics to young children; and
- Design and conduct meaningful phonics instruction for preschool and early primary grades children.

8.2 PHONICS: MEANING AND TYPES

You may recall from Unit 28 of MCD-001 that 'phonics' refers to the relationship between graphemes (symbols) and phonemes (sounds) of a language. In simpler words, phonics is a relationship between the written letter shapes such as 'A', 'B', 'C', and their sounds. For example, the letter 'M' gives the sound of /ma/. By making use of phonics, i.e., the sound-letter relationships, children learn how to use the knowledge of sound-letter relationships to read and spell. Thus, phonics instruction is a method of instruction in which the teacher teaches the children about the relationship between letters and sounds represented by those letters. It is the key focus of this Unit as well.

There are three main types of phonics instruction as discussed below.

8.2.1 Direct or Systematic Phonics Instruction

Direct phonics instruction is the most widely used form of instruction that teachers adopt to teach young children to decode letters and words. Those who use this type of phonics instruction believe that phonics is best learnt with explicit and systematic instruction. Let us see what it comprises of:

- a) The aim of direct/systematic phonics instruction is to make decoding skills automatic.
- b) This type of phonics instruction has its roots in the 'phonics' or 'bottom-to-top' approach that we discussed in Unit 2 of Block 2 of this Course. It is rooted in the belief that unless a child has learnt the sound-letter relationship for each letter of the alphabet series, she is unable to move to the act of the 'actual reading'. In other words, it advocates that one learns to read by first learning the rules of phonics, i.e., by memorizing the sounds of specific letters, and then, using or practicing this knowledge to read and write.
- c) It involves directly or explicitly teaching the children about the sound-letter relationship.
 - The teacher's instruction consists of showing the children a letter, such as 'm', and telling them that it sounds as /ma/.
 - The phonemes and graphemes are taught in isolation, not as parts of words. As children become more competent with each phoneme, the

teacher creates structured lessons that involve blending phonemes to create full words. For example, if children know the basic single-letter phonemes (a, b, c, d, e, etc.) and some basic rimes (-at, -it, -ing), they can start blending them to form words like: cat, mat, fat, hat, sat.

- The advocates of this type of instruction rely heavily on a multisensory methodology with the integration of auditory, visual, and kinesthetic experiences. Children practice decoding skills with word lists, worksheets, etc.
- Lessons are carefully sequenced (and perhaps even scripted in some cases) under direct or systematic phonics instruction.

Thus, targeted instruction is given to children in the sound-letter correspondence without placing this relationship in the larger, meaningful reading exercise. It means that the teaching of phonics is not complemented by exposing children to complete texts at any stage of phonics instruction.

Pros

- 1) Structure: It provides a structured introduction to reading. This structure ensures no phonemes or graphemes are missed as children receive the instruction.
- 2) Good for Manipulating Letters: The focus on blending and building words using phonemes helps children when they come across (or need to write) unfamiliar words. =
- 3) Research-Backed: Direct, systematic phonics instruction has proven to be an effective means of helping children learn to read, especially children with language-related learning problems.

Cons

- 1) Predominantly Whole Class-Focussed: Lessons are typically conducted with the whole class wherein there is barely any scope for differentiated and individualized instruction as per the needs of the child. Each child is expected to learn the same letter and its sound at the same time, in the same order, and in the same manner.
- 2) Decontextualized: This type of phonics instruction has been criticized for teaching “phonics for its own sake” removed from the actual process of reading. While children acquire the skill of decoding, they do not know what they are acquiring it for. Phonemes and graphemes are learned out of context and disconnected from words. This may confuse children and make them unsure about the purpose of the lesson. The joy and purpose of reading are not understood and experienced by the children.

8.2.2 Integrated Phonics Instruction

Integrated phonics instruction is an extension of direct/systematic phonics instruction. It also involves the direct teaching of sound-symbol relationships, but phonics is taught as one part of an overall reading programme. Let us further discuss integrated phonics instruction.

- a) The aim of integrated phonics instruction is to carry over the learning of phonics to develop and foster other aspects of reading and writing. Thus, both the decoding and comprehension aspects of reading are incorporated in the language lessons, wherein phonics is taught first. The knowledge and understanding of phonics are not the results of reading but the prior condition for reading.
- b) This type of phonics instruction has also its roots in the ‘phonics’ or ‘bottom-to-top’ approach; except children are introduced to the complete texts as well which is done either during or preferably after (not before) the instruction in the sound-letter relationship.
- c) The pedagogy consists of the given:
 - Integrated instruction is typically analytic in its approach. For example, the teacher may introduce children to the words ‘night’, ‘light’, ‘fight’, and ‘sight’. Here, she uses this set of rhyming words to introduce children to the sounds of /la/, /fa/ and /sa/. Also, she makes them understand how by placing a different letter with the ‘-ight’, a new word is formed. Similarly, she may introduce children to words beginning with a certain letter/sound, such as ‘तेल’, ‘तराज’, ‘तवा’, ‘तीखा’ wherein children can associate the letter ‘त’ with the sound of /ta/. As they come across another word that has the letter ‘त’, they can easily recognize the letter and sound represented by it. As children understand the use of analogies in identifying letter and their sounds, they also make use of this analogy to read and write.
 - Children practice sound-symbol relationships in the workbook, play games including word sorting and word-building exercises, and so on.

Pros

- 1) Teaches Sounds in a Meaningful Manner: Sounds are learned as parts of words (the smallest meaningful unit in any language) rather than in isolation.
- 2) Helps Children Identify Patterns: The use of an analogy that involves repetition and clustering of sounds/syllables to identify or form words helps children learn patterns in the language.

Cons

- 1) Some Students Slip Behind: Because instruction is not as structured and direct as phonics instruction, some struggling children could slip behind and may not understand.

8.2.3 Embedded Phonics Instruction

Embedded phonics involves instruction in sound-symbol relationships that are built into authentic reading experiences. Young budding readers are primarily offered reading experiences for information or pleasure and not for the specific purpose of learning a skill (decoding). Let us see what embedded phonics instruction looks like.

- a) The prime purpose of this instruction is to invoke curiosity and interest in children for reading and use the same to introduce and teach phonics to them.
- b) This type of instruction has its roots in the top-bottom-top approach; a balanced comprehensive literacy programme is followed, as discussed in Unit 3 of Block 1 of this Course too. Children are simultaneously introduced to both part and whole aspects, wherein the instruction begins with introducing children to whole texts, fostering the skill of reading comprehension. Teaching sound-letter relationships is deemed necessary but not the sole focus of this type of phonics instruction.
- c) An embedded phonics instruction consists of the given:
 - It involves teaching phonemes and graphemes, preferably when they arise in **teachable moments** in books. It focuses on learning to decode language during reading tasks, rather than through structured lessons. It emphasizes the importance of learning through context and ongoing exposure to words.
 - Embedded phonics doesn't typically start with sound-symbol elements. Phonics instruction is consciously built into shared reading, guided reading, and other authentic experiences that use children's trade books (You will read about these whole language reading strategies in the next Unit of this Course). Thus, it begins with a story and builds phonics into the lesson.
 - At the start of embedded phonics instruction, the teacher does most or all of the reading. They stumble upon phonemes/graphemes that are interesting or recur in the reading session and teach the children about them within the context of the reading session. As children become more competent, the teacher gradually releases responsibility to the child. Teachers may also sit with a child who is reading a text, and when the child comes across a difficult word, the teacher can use it as an opportunity to teach about the phoneme/grapheme that is of concern.

Pros

- 1) Contextualized: Children learn about words and how to decode them while reading actual books. They can use images and surrounding sentences to infer what a word might be. Also, children know why they are learning phonics and it does not become a tiring meaningless exercise.
- 2) Good for Practice: Phonics requires a lot of practice. By infusing phonics into reading exercises, embedded phonics instruction allows children to practice phonics in actual reading experiences.

Cons

- 1) Guess Work: When children look at the context to understand a word, they are guessing rather than thinking about phonetics.

- 2) Cannot be Used in Isolation: It does not work alone, however, at some point, children may need direct explicit and structured instruction too.
- 3) An effective literacy program pays attention to phonics, reading, writing, comprehension simultaneously. This doesn't mean however that they are taught at the same time of the day. Many effective programs have 20 minutes of focused time for phonics in a four-block approach (as you read in Unit 3 of Block 1) and then focus on the reading of connected texts etc. in other blocks. Not to say that phonics cannot be approached in other blocks but it doesn't always need to be "embedded".

In the next section of this Unit, we will be discussing various pedagogical strategies that you can adopt to conduct balanced and meaningful phonics instruction with children.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Identify the type of phonics instruction in the given situations.
 - a) Children practice sound-symbol relationships in the workbook, play games including word sorting and word-building exercises, and so on.
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 - b) Children practice decoding skills with word lists, worksheets, etc.
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 - c) The lesson begins with shared reading, guided reading, and other authentic experiences that use children's trade books and children learn phonics as they stumble upon a particular phoneme.
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8.3 CONDUCTING MEANINGFUL PHONICS INSTRUCTION

In this section, we will discuss various principles, approaches, and respective strategies/activities that you can use to conduct meaningful phonics instruction.

8.3.1 Principles for Teaching Phonics/Decoding

To begin with, let us first quickly list some key principles that should inform your teaching of phonics, irrespective of the strategy or activity you make use

of.

- Build on children's phonological/phonemic awareness.
- Build an understanding of sound-symbol relationships clearly and systematically or step by step.
- Encourage students to become word constructors and word solvers.
- Encourage word study while reading and writing.
- Teach reading and writing as relevant and meaningful activities.
- Extend opportunities to learn and practice the script through the first 4-5 years of formal schooling.
- Encourage children to attend to the sound of the symbols they are learning.
- Introduce mastras early.
- Encourage children to become word constructors and word solvers.
- Give children regular opportunities to read passages at their own level of reading competence.
- Decoding is only one part of your early language and literacy curriculum. However, this should take up only 20-30 minutes per day out of the language learning curriculum.

Finally, remember that the larger goal of teaching phonics is to make the child learn to read and write. Phonics is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Therefore, phonics instruction need not be conducted in isolation from the larger reading and writing exercises.

Now let us look at two significant approaches that can be used to teach phonics to children in a structured manner.

8.3.2 Learning Phonics Using *Pragat Shikshan Sansthan* Approach (PSS Approach)

One of the ways in which you can introduce/teach reading and writing to children during the early years is by using the PSS Approach proposed by Dr. Maxine Berntsen. The PSS approach is an eclectic approach, combining systematic teaching of sound-letter relationship (phonics) with the language experience approach, by bringing children's lived experiences into the school and the reading of small story books with simple texts. Such an approach exposes the child to language in its wholeness. It is, thus, a conscious attempt to break down the artificial divide between phonics and meaning-based approaches to early literacy. Rather, it aims to achieve a balance in teaching literacy to young children by exposing them to the 'part' aspect of language (i.e., sound-letter correspondence) through whole reading and writing activities, based on children's own real-life lived experiences. In this approach, letters and abbreviated vowel signs are grouped to make meaningful words and sentences to form lessons in a given theme, which is usually about relatives, the village, market, school, etc.

The key feature of this strategy is that it introduces literacy to young children by making use of emotionally charged words that hold meaning or are of

interest to the child. For young children such words are those that refer to close relatives and their surroundings--home, pets, village, and school. All cultures have such words. Thus, for instance, in the Marathi language, the first few emotionally-charged words identified for introducing literacy are:

- *mama* (mother's brother)
- *mami* (mother's brother's wife)
- *mi* (I)
- *maza* (my-when used by male), *mazi* (my-when used by female)
- *ha* (this- when used by male), *hee* (this- when used by female)

These words are not only meaningful by themselves but by using these 5-6 simple words, one can make 3-4 meaningful sentences like

- हा मी (This is me)
- हा माझा मामा (This is my uncle), etc.

The letters and vowel sounds needed to make these words are 'म', 'ह', and 'झ' and ा (abbreviated vowel sign for long 'aa') and ी (abbreviated vowel sign for long 'ee'). The addition of vowel sounds right from the first lesson expands the vocabulary immediately and makes it more authentic because most of the words that we speak include vowel sounds. The first lesson, thus, consists of three letters ('म', 'ह', and 'झ'), two abbreviated vowel signs (ा and ी), and one sight word which is to be learned as a whole without breaking it down. For the first lesson, this sight word is the emotionally charged word आई (mother).

Once the children are able to read these words and sentences, identify the letters and the abbreviated vowel signs, then the second lesson which has a different set of words, letters, abbreviated vowel signs and sight word (s) is introduced.

In this way, through the PSS approach children learn to identify individual letters and are able to read words and short sentences almost simultaneously. By using the child's most used and emotionally charged words to introduce literacy, the learning of phonics becomes meaningful, contextual and thus effective for the child. The child becomes motivated to learn, overcoming a chief hurdle in learning to read and write at the foundational stage.

Thus, as stated at the beginning of the description of this approach, there are three major aspects to this approach for teaching reading and writing:

- a) Language experience based on the events from the children's own lives
- b) Systematic instruction in Decoding
- c) Reading of storybooks

Let us understand each of these components of this approach in detail now:

- a) **Language Experience:** When children join school they are already using language for functional and expressive purposes; however they are not

consciously thinking about the fact that they are using language to meet their needs and neither are they aware of the structure of language. So they have not paid attention to the fact that a sentence is composed of words and that a word is composed of sounds. An awareness of the structure of language at an aural level (that is, at the level of hearing) is one of the first crucial steps in learning to be more proficient in oral language and in learning to read and write. Therefore, one of the first focus of this approach is to develop awareness of the structure of language and the sounds (phonological awareness) in their spoken language. Some of the following activities help in this:

1. The very first step is to provide a rich language experience to the child by exposing them to books, stories, songs, pictures, and chitchat about their home experiences. All of this is done by using the child's home language (L1).
 2. During circle time children share news about the events in their lives and ask questions about the news shared by other children by using the child's home language (L1).
 3. Children draw pictures of their experiences and talk about these in their home language. Teachers write down the experiences narrated by children's in children's own words and read them back to children. This helps the children to understand the connection between oral and written language. This also helps children to become aware of the sounds of the language they speak.
- b) **Decoding:** You have read above that the first lesson which is introduced to children makes use of 5-6 emotionally charged words which use three letters ('म', 'ह', and 'झ'), and abbreviated vowel signs (ा and ी). These letters are introduced one by one to children, through the following steps.
1. To introduce each letter, children are shown familiar objects or pictures of objects whose names start with that letter. For example, to introduce the letter 'म', objects such as मणी (bead), माळ (necklace), मोर (peacock), मासा (fish) are used as these are words having the beginning sound of /म/. Children also sound out their own names or the names of their friends and relatives that begin with the sound 'म'. These words are introduced orally as the idea is to make the child aware of the sound of the letter 'म'. The sounds of each of the 3-4 letters in the first group are introduced one by one in this way.
 2. Once the child becomes familiar with the sound of a certain letter and can identify it in a word, she is shown the shape of the letter and told its name. In most Indian languages there is a perfect one-to-one correlation between the sound and the shape of a letter with the corresponding name. Explicit instructions in the form of 'draw a straight line, draw half a circle, etc. are given to help the child understand the correct process of writing the letter. Various activities like writing in the air or on the ground with a wet finger or in a sand tray, making the letter-shape with play-dough or pieces of

string, etc. are carried before the child is asked to write the letter on a slate. This way, the child learns to think of the shape of the letter rather than copying it.

3. The abbreviated vowel sign in the letter group is introduced in the same way through all the above activities stated above for introducing the sound of a letter.
4. All through the decoding phase, the language experience phase of stories, songs, riddles, and books continues to be very active in the class. As mentioned above, the child can read and write simple words and sentences from the first lesson itself. This gives a tremendous boost to the child's self-image and self-confidence and acts as a strong motivator.

- c) **Collective Reading and Writing:** Children read picture books every day. Read-aloud and shared reading of simple story texts help them in meaning-making and also makes them aware of print and how written language behaves. Thus, they know that reading is done by moving from left to right and top to bottom, and the page on the right hand is turned to take the story ahead.

The exposure to a language-rich environment with permission to talk to peers, handle many interesting story books, sing songs, and listen to stories and books read aloud, a word of encouragement, motivates children towards writing. Initially children's writing is in the form of self-invented script (you have read about this in Unit 2 of Block 1 of this Course MCD-003). This is accepted so as not to undermine their confidence that they can write. Gradually, children move towards using correct spellings. Children's written work is displayed in the class. Such an approach soon puts the children on the path to literacy.

8.3.3 Learning Phonics Using '*Varna Samooh*'

'*Varna Samooh*' is a cluster of selected letters of a language. Thus, under this strategy, children are taught phonics by working with a set of letters or 'samooh' at a time. This approach is proposed by the Organization for Early Literacy Promotion (OELP). Some of the key aspects of this strategy are:

- a) Letters are introduced in groups to the children. The usual practice of introducing one letter and its sound at a time is avoided.
- b) The selection of the letters is not random. The group of letters that form words that are closely connected to children are selected first. For instance, in the table given below, the letters of the first *Varna Samooh* are more likely to be used to form words used in listening, speaking and writing than the letters of the sixth *Varna Samooh*. The letters 'क', 'म', 'ल', 'आ', and 'ई' are common in everyday words as compared to letters such as 'ष', 'त्र', 'झ'.
- c) The cluster of letters need not follow the chronological order of the alphabetic series. It means you may introduce children to the letter 'प',

‘त’, and ‘ब’ first and need not follow the order of ‘क’, ‘ख’, ‘ग’, and so on, as this is the case in PSS approach too. However, each cluster has a set of consonants and also vowels, and vowel diacritics (*maatras*). Refer back to the figure of *Varna Samooh* given earlier. This early introduction of vowels and *maatras* is critical to form meaningful, organic words. You may recall from Unit 4 of Block 1 that *maatras* are introduced late in typical classrooms which is problematic.

V. S. no	consonants					vowels				maatras				
1	क	म	ल	न	प	अ	आ	ई		।	ो			
2	च	र	स	त	ग	अ	आ	ई	ए	।	ो	ँ		
3	ज	य	ह	व	ड	घ	अ	आ	ई	ए	।	ो	ँ	
4	ध	द	थ	भ	ठ		अ	आ	ई	ए	।	ो	ँ	
5	ट	व	श	छ	फ	ड़	अ	आ	ई	ए	।	ो	ँ	
6	ढ	झ	त्र	ष	ख		अ	आ	ई	ए	ऊ	।	ो	ँ

Now let us see how you can use the *Varna Samooh* to teach phonics to the children.

- Choose the *Varna Samooh*. For instance, you may take a *Varna Samooh* with three consonants (क,प,म) and three vowels (अ,आ,ई).
- Introduce children to the *Varna Samooh* orally. As you do so, make sure that you give children opportunities to recognize these sounds in complete words too. Or else, children will find it a meaningless exercise.
- Once the children are introduced to the *Varna Samooh* orally, introduce these to the children visually as well. You may expose children to complete texts and specific words, such as some words, characters' names, names of familiar objects, or words that interest them. Explicitly tell children the sound represented by the selected letters. Encourage them to locate these in their books too.
- Practice and make children learn to recognize the sounds and shapes of all the consonants and vowels that are being introduced within a *Varna Samooh*. For this, you may give them workbooks, worksheets, etc.
- Next, introduce them to an Akshara chart (letter and syllable chart) that depicts all the possible letters (with or without *maatra*) they can form. For instance, by using the *Varna Samooh* of letters 'क', 'प', 'म', 'अ', 'आ', and 'ई', the given akshara chart will be formed.

अ	आ	ई
क	का	की
प	पा	पी
म	मा	मी

Develop a practice of daily recitation of this chart. You may also encourage children to locate these letters in their books too. In this approach, maatraas are taught as an integrated unit with the akshara (not /k/ + /ee/ = 'kee').

- e) Demonstrate how different words can be formed by making use of the akshara chart. For instance, one may pick soundsymbols 'क' and 'म' and join these to form the word 'काम'.

This practice is contrary to the sight word practice (as used in the previous approach). No predetermined words are given to the children, rather they form their own words on their available knowledge of phonics. This way, children can form and also write invented spellings; an important aspect of emergent reading and writing.

- f) As children understand how these symbols/letters can be used to form words, encourage them to form their own words using an Akshara chart. You would see that by introducing a single cluster of letters, you have opened the possibility of forming many words. You can encourage children to form their words by following the given techniques:

- Write down each of the sound symbols of the Akshara chart on individual paper cards. Let children manually join these tiles to form words of their choice.
- You may display the Akshara chart and tell children to place their fingers on sound symbols in the Akshara chart and you may write down the resulting word on the blackboard while also saying it aloud.
- You can ask children to refer to the Akshara chart and write down words of their choice in the notebook. You may also encourage children to draw a picture related to the word formed by them. This will help the child to connect the written forms with the mental picture in her mind, and her drawing will make the written word meaningful for her.

- g) Also, display the words/sentences/poems formed using the Akshara chart. A sample of the same is given below.

- Thematic Words: पापा, काका, काकी, मामा, मामी
- Rhyming Words: काम, माप

At first, not all children may be able to read and write these words, but gradually, they will pick up and will be able to read and write these words/text on their own.

- h) Once children get equipped with a strong understanding of a particular *Varna Samooh*, move on to another one and repeat the given steps. Also keep in mind, as you teach children using this strategy, make sure children continue to experience and explore complete texts and participate in whole reading exercises as well.

4.3.4 Strengthening Phonics Using Words from a Storybook: A General Strategy

While the *Varna Samooh* approach and the PSS approach are specific approaches with a clear direction and structured framework to teach literacy, in this Section we will state a general strategy which you can use to introduce sight words and sound-letter correspondence to children. This strategy can be used along with *Varna Samooh* approach and the PSS approach, as described in the following paragraphs.

You have been reading in various Units that children need to be familiarised with print extensively right from the foundational years. One of the ways this can be done is when the teacher reads aloud storybooks to the children. This can be used as an opportunity to introduce and teach children sound-letter correspondence. Let us see how this can be done.

- a) Read out a storybook to children and also show the same to them while doing so. (You will read more about various reading strategies such as read-aloud and shared reading in the next Unit 9). They will not be able to decode the words of the book in the very first reading sessions (or maybe even a couple of subsequent reading sessions too); yet the idea is to make them explore the text in the books visually.
- b) While they could not decode the words as you were reading aloud, they did listen to the words of the story when read out by the teacher. After the narration, ask them to share the words they would like to learn to read and write from the story. They are most likely to give you certain words, such as the names of the characters, locations, objects, phenomena, and so on.
- c) Spell out these words and display them on the board or a chart paper.
- d) Read out these words with the children.
- e) Ask them to locate these in their books, underline these and read these too (if they have their own copy of the story book that has been read out by the teacher).
- d) As they do so, ask them to list out words that have common sounds. For example, the words 'पानी' and 'पेड़' have the same common initial sound. Use these words to highlight that the sound of the letter 'प' represents the sound of /pa/. In other words, clearly tell the child that the letter 'प' is used to denote the sound of /pa/.
- f) Write down other words that begin with the letter 'प', preferably suggested by the children to further reinforce the sound and letter of 'प'. Doing so helps the child to understand that 'प से पतंग' is as true as 'प से

पेठा', 'प से पूरी' or 'प से पीला'. In other words, she understands that 'प' represents the sound of /pa/.

- g) Similarly, introduce other letters too (with and without maatraas) to the children using the words from the story.

Given below is a list of video links that you may use to further build sound-letter awareness amongst children.

Blending akshara and syllable symbols to form words

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=pbGMHLW2_A&feature=emb_logo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gA-ehUNzRYY>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4_LDdTzea4

Sound-letter awareness through introducing words having a common initial sound

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-nOjBLLqG4>

Locating letter in the textbook words

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8R7p_stQxDk

Word recognition in letter/syllable grid

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjaOFKczeyw>

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) What do the following include under the PSS Approach to reading and writing?

- a) Language Experience

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- b) Decoding

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- c) Collective Reading and Writing

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- 2) Which of the following steps is NOT correct about the *Varna Samooh* approach?

- a) The group of letters that form words are the ones that are closely connected to children.

- b) The selection of the letters is random.

- c) The usual practice of introducing one letter and its sound at a time is avoided.
- d) Each cluster has a set of consonants and also vowels, and vowel diacritics (maatras).
- e) The cluster of letters need not follow the chronological order of the alphabetic series.

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8.4 SUMMING UP

The ability to read consists of the ability to decode and comprehend the text. The ability to decode requires a child to learn sound-letter correspondence. The understanding of phonics is to be developed by developing a strong phonological awareness in the children.

There are three types of phonics. First is direct or systematic phonics instruction, wherein the teacher explicitly teaches children about the letters and sounds represented by them. Barely any exposure or effort is made to complement the teaching-learning of phonics with the reading of complete texts. The second type of phonics instruction is called embedded phonics instruction. Children who are exposed to whole texts are expected to understand the rules of phonics by merely analyzing the words. No direct efforts are made to train children in sound-letter correspondence. The third type of instruction is embedded phonics which involves instruction in sound-symbol relationships that are built into authentic reading experiences. Young budding readers are primarily offered reading experiences for information or pleasure and not for the specific purpose of learning a skill (decoding).

As you teach children phonics, you may use the PSS approach which includes teaching children to read and write using the words that hold an emotional connection to them. Another option is that you opt to teach children phonics by using a set of letters, better known as '*Varna Samooh*'. The use of storybooks is yet another option to ensure effective and meaningful phonics instruction for the children.

8.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) a) Integrated Phonics Instruction
- b) Direct Phonics Instruction
- c) Embedded Phonics Instruction

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 2) a) Asking, identifying, reading, and writing various words that hold meaning in children's lives or they would like to learn to read and write.
 - b) Introducing children explicitly to the specific letters and their respective sounds of the selected words.
 - c) Asking children to draw something and write about it using the words that they have learned and displaying the children's drawing and asking them to explain their drawing and read the explanation they have written under the drawing.
- 2) b

