

Module Eight: Part 2

- b) **Pace:** How quickly should the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code be introduced?

To appreciate the history of the *emphasis on a quick pace* for introducing the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code and how *pace* can be reconsidered

To be able to set a *suitable pace* appropriate for different settings and circumstances based on a full *Teaching and Learning Cycle*

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Module Eight: Part 2 continued

- b) **Pace:** How quickly should the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code be introduced?

To understand the issues regarding pace and the notion and misunderstandings of the 'phases' described in the publication *Letters and Sounds* (DfES 2007)

To consider pace relative to the use of the *Phonics International* programme and the *Oxford Reading Tree Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters* programme (Oxford University Press)

PACE

How quickly should the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code be introduced?

PACE

Systematic Synthetic Phonics teaching is often associated with the phrase:

" First, fast and only "

First, fast and only

FIRST: Teach the phonics *before* asking learners to read books **INDEPENDENTLY**

FAST: Teach phonics fast so that learners can quickly *put code knowledge to use* with cumulative words, sentences and texts

ONLY: Teach phonics decoding as *the method to lift words off the page*, **not multi-cueing reading strategies** based on guessing words from word 'shape', picture, context or initial letter cues

Books

The word '*only*' is often *misinterpreted* to imply that learners are **not allowed access to books** other than cumulative, decodable reading books.

This is not true, learners are simply not asked to read **independently** books that, in effect, *they cannot read* !

PACE

So, the words '**first, fast and only**' refer to a speedy introduction to the letter/s-sound correspondences of the alphabetic code so that learners can quickly apply what they know to reading literature.

Don't go so fast that you leave many learners 'behind' from the outset.

PACE

- Steady pace at the speed **you can manage in your context** – account for age, stage, time available, needs
- Scope: **One focus correspondence every two days**; up to **4 per week**
Later, reduce to **1 or 2 per week** for revision and spelling word bank work

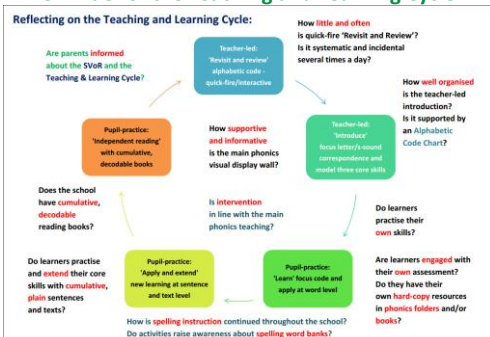
PACE

- If English is being taught as a **second or new language** in a non-English speaking country, then the pace and provision depends on school or regional **expectations** and the **time available** within the individual setting

PACE

- Don't waste time with '**busy work**', '**time fillers**' or '**extraneous activities**'
- Allow **sufficient time** for pupils to embed code knowledge and to practise phonics skills in a **FULL 'teaching and learning cycle'**

Reminder of the Teaching and Learning Cycle:



PACE and the PHASES

- Pace can be much **steadier** than described in *Letters and Sounds*
- Aim for children **keeping-up** from the start rather than premature differentiated grouping
- Phases Two to Five were intended as '**steps of introduction**', **not** differentiation
- Even at the pace of introducing **two focus letter/s-sound correspondences per week**, you will cover a comprehensive alphabetic code **Manageable: Introduce a focus correspondence on one day, consolidate on the following day**

PACE and the PHASES

- Phase Four is an 'empty' phase, and if you introduce shorter and longer words from the outset of your systematic programme, you **don't need to stop** introducing new letter/s-sound correspondences **steadily** (about **2/3** per week)
- Phase Six is a **flawed** notion because teaching about **verb endings, plurals, prefixes and suffixes** is **required right from Reception** to address natural language and wider reading and writing. **So, teach grammar and spelling from the outset, not after Phase Five** (which is vast) is completed.

PACE and the PHASES

Do the maths!

30 weeks X 2 per week = 60 graphemes
 60 x 2 years = 120
 60 x 3 years = 180

Day 1: Teacher-led session to introduce focus letter/s-sound correspondence to whole class followed by **sustained pupil-practice for every individual to learn letter/s-sound correspondence and apply the 3 core skills at word level**

Day 2: **Extend to sentences/text at every learner's own level**
 Revise and complete work

PACE and the PHASES

Note for England:

Many teachers have been advised or instructed to **group** their children according to their phases - in effect, **in terms of what the children have learnt** – interpreting the phases as a means of **differentiation**.

This was **never the authors' intention**: the phases are merely an **order** of introducing the letter/s-sound correspondences **in steps**.

PACE and the PHASES

Note for England:

There are different approaches to grouping **within** a class rather than **across classes** – enabling the class teacher to maintain **full** understanding of **all** the pupils' alphabetic code knowledge and skills.

This involves a close look at ways of providing **really effective teaching and learning and aiming for keeping up and extension work**.

Units 1 to 6
 2 days for every focus correspondence + incidental teaching of any correspondence

Units 7 to 12
 1 focus correspondence per week for spelling + spelling word banks

Possible pace for ORT Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters:

Plenty of time ...

1 book per 2 weeks

... for children to keep up with the learning

2 years @ 1 book per 2 weeks