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Lesson in Action: Small-Group Phonics and Spelling Lesson, First Grade, /o/

In the beginning of first grade, some students in this class were still working on blending, segmenting, and spelling CVC words, as well as remembering consonant and short-vowel sounds. Other students were independently reading books with a couple of sentences per page. Their teacher identified a small group of children who needed a review of a concept the whole class had already covered (short o). In addition to reviewing this short o, I planned for a lot of interleaved practice, revisiting prior concepts such as consonant sounds and spellings, and practicing segmenting and blending. The whole lesson took about 25 minutes and we ran out of time for reading connected text; in the future, I would split a full lesson into two 12–15-minute partial lessons to better hold the students' attention and engagement and ensure we get to all lesson components across the two.

Read the lesson plan on the opposite page or online, then watch the video (access it using the QR code), then come back to read the post-lesson reflection comments annotating the lesson plan.

Video 4.1 Small-Group Phonics and Spelling Lesson, First Grade, /o/



Phonics and Spelling Lessons: A Planning Template

Teacher Materials:

- Grapheme cards (*i, a, m, s, t, p, f, g, h, n, k, x, j, r*)
- Decodable texts: *Max and Cat, Too Big, Jon and Sis* (also have short *e* titles on hand for early finishers)

Student Materials:

- Individual whiteboards, markers, erasers

Goal:

- Short *o*

Warm Up and Review (2 minutes):
 (Display, choral response. Place on table. When finished, say the sound, and ask students to point to the letter)

- Review (visual/auditory):
i (short *i*), *a* (short *a*), *m*, *s*, *t*,
p, *f*, *g*, *h*, *n*, *k*, *x*, *j*, *r*
- Blend: *rat, hit, mat*
- Segment: *pig, hip, sat*

Introduce a New Concept (2 minutes):
 Introduce sound /o/ as in *otter*. Repeat, isolate sound. Show *o* spelling.

- Beginning of the word: *otter* or *on* or *ox*.
- Middle of a word, as in *mom* or *not*.

Spell words.

- (demo) *fog*
- (demo) *mom*
- (we do) *on*
- (we do) *got*
- (we do) *job*

Read (decode slowly, return and read more quickly)

- (demo) *dot*
- (demo) *on*
- (we do) *hop*
- (we do) *box*

Spell Words/Word Work (3 minutes):

- Word chain: *not* → *lot* → *pot* → *hot* → *hat* → *mat* → *map* → *mop*

Read Words (3 minutes):
 Word sort: Read the word slowly, then sort it under the category it belongs to (o or a in the middle)

| | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <i>cod</i> | <i>lot</i> | <i>rag</i> | <i>mad</i> | <i>bat</i> |
| <i>cot</i> | <i>got</i> | <i>pat</i> | <i>wag</i> | |
| <i>dog</i> | <i>fog</i> | <i>max</i> | <i>bag</i> | |

Write Connected Text (5 minutes):

- He can jog.
- Bob got me a pot.
- The dog sat on the bag.

Read Connected Text (10 minutes):
 Short *o*.

- Max and Cat*
- Too Big*
- Jon and Sis*

Clarify the Takeaways (1 minute)
 Repeat /o/ as in *otter*.

I always intend to say, "How do I spell that sound?" but sometimes I slip and say, "What letter makes that sound?"

One thing I need to be careful of is to hold the sound, not repeat the sound. For example, I notice when sounding out "pig" I repeated /i/, /i/, /i/. It would have been better to just hold the sound /iiiiii/. Sometimes when children to to spell, they repeat the sound and end up writing a letter multiple times.

I used a picture anchor because I wasn't sure if they knew the animal.

When we use words that fit the spelling pattern that students don't yet know, I embed quick definitions.

I noticed some confusion with m and n, so I helped them to say the sound and notice the difference in mouth positions (though I don't call this out). I need to include words with m and n in the next lesson.

I did a lot of redirecting to get them to look back at the board, not at me.

Noticing some of the challenges these three students had next time I will offer the letters we need to make the words so they are working from a limited choice.

Rewatching this, I think I should have included visual anchors (otter and apple) to support their sorting.

I decided to stop the lesson because their attention was waning. I can repeat this lesson with new words and have them read the connected text in that lesson.

I noticed the students needed support with the concept of letter versus word and needed a lot of support overall to write the sentence so I stopped after one. In the next lesson, I will model a sentence for them first and then have them practice.

When she said that the letter *i* spells /ē/, I connected what she knows (spelling in Spanish) to what she's learning (spelling in English).