

Providing Opportunities to Read and Practice Learned Phonics Patterns in Skills-Aligned Texts

Deliberate practice is an important part of the learning process (Ericsson et al., 1993). This is a special type of practice that is purposeful and systematic.

For example, second-grade teacher Jamison Carter is teaching his students about diphthongs, which are gliding vowels that often appear in clusters. His students have previously mastered the following:

- /i/, /y/, /igh/—diphthongs that form the sound similar to *eye*: *hi, cry, my, light, bright*
- /ey/, /ay/, /ai/—diphthongs that form sounds similar to *great*: *they, stay, strain*

They are currently learning about the diphthongs of /ou/ and /ow/ that form the sound similar to *ouch*. Mr. Carter’s whole-group lesson is designed to address the needs of students who are at the beginning and the advanced levels. He uses a routine across his lessons that begins with a warm-up. He first identifies the diphthong pattern they are focusing on, and he provides examples that are at first minimally, and then more overtly, different from one another. In addition, he brings in *r*-controlled vowel word patterns that they have learned more recently and are still practicing. (See lines 5 and 6 in the table that follows). This method, pioneered by Blevins (2017), provides students with a predictable routine.

Line 1 (minimal contrasts—new to known)	shot-shout moth-mouth fund-found
Line 2 (focus on one spelling)	cow now, down town, brown drown clown crown
Line 3 (focus on other spelling)	out, round sound, south, mouth, mouse house
Line 4 (mixed set, target skill)	couch ground how frown about growl
Line 5 (review words for mastery)	stir verb born burn sports serve
Line 6 (review words for mastery)	roar porch third thorn thirst fork
Line 7 (challenge words)	downtown campground doghouse dropout somehow thundercloud
Line 8 (connected text)	How do I drive to the next town?
Line 9 (connected text)	My house is south of this town.

Source: Blevins (2017, p. 77).

The words Mr. Carter shares have high utility, because children will see these often as they read longer passages in texts he carefully selects that support alignment with the skills he is addressing at the time. Also, once these new words are added to their word journals, children will have them to use when writing.

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Lapp, D. (2022). *Teaching reading: A playbook for developing skilled readers through word recognition and language comprehension: Grades PreK-6*. Corwin.