

Research-Based Curriculum

Targeted Phonics

Complete Supplemental Program

Based on Respected Research & Literature

Targeted Phonics

Targeted Phonics is a series of curriculum kits that contain sets of readers that introduce and provide practice for the essential phonics skills necessary to help students unlock words as a basis for becoming successful, competent readers. The kits introduce phonics skills in an organized, research-based progression (Bishop and Bishop 2010). Beginning with *My First Consonants and Vowels*, the kits sequentially introduce the sound-symbol relationships of the English alphabet in the order of their usefulness to beginning readers. *My First Consonants and Vowels* (which includes the 16 highest utility consonants and the five short vowels) is followed by *More Consonants, Blends, and Digraphs*, which covers the harder consonants, the highest utility consonant blends, and the four most common consonant digraphs. The next kit, *Short Vowel Rimes* offers opportunities for students to apply the sound-symbol relationships they have learned in the first two kits. In the *Short Vowel Rimes* books, students decode common short vowel word families in a story-like format, which focuses the purpose of reading on deriving meaning from the text. Finally, the *Short Vowel Storybooks* and *Long Vowel Storybooks* help students practice and progress with their phonics skills in a true story format that lets the teacher also teach the fiction skills of character, plot, and setting. Each kit includes a thorough Teacher's Guide, an Assessment Guide, a Student Guided Practice Book, and an Audio CD of the text. As part of the complete set, the interactiv-ebooks can be used on the computer or interactive whiteboard. These DVDs will allow students to follow the text being read to them, to read and record the text on their own, and to complete several comprehension, phonics, and writing activities, all designed to reinforce learning. The Teacher Created Materials *Targeted Phonics* program teaches essential phonics skills and helps students apply them in real reading contexts with the goal of moving students from merely decoding words to reading independently for understanding.

This white paper will demonstrate the strong research base used in the development of *Targeted Phonics* and explicitly align key research findings with components of the product.

Reading Experts Guide Program Creation

Robert Calfee is a cognitive psychologist with research interests in the effect of schooling on the intellectual potential of individuals and groups. His interests have evolved over the past three decades from a focus on assessment of beginning literacy skills to a concern with the broader reach of the school as a literate environment. His theoretical efforts are directed toward the nature of human thought processes and the influence of language and literacy in the development of problem-solving and communication. His research activities include Project READ-Plus, The Inquiring School, the Text Analysis Project, Methods for Alternative

Assessment, and the Read-Write-Cycle. These projects all combine theoretical and practical facets directed toward understanding and facilitating school change. He has also written critical papers on the effects of testing and educational indicators, ability grouping, teacher assessment, and the psychology of literacy. He is presently Professor Emeritus from Stanford University and the University of California, Riverside, but remains actively engaged in studies of the relation of reading and writing, and the use of pen-based digital technology to support learning. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a recipient of the Oscar Causey Award from the National Reading Conference, and a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences.

P. David Pearson is a faculty member in the programs in Language and Literacy and Cognition and Development at the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, where he served as Dean from 2001–2010. Current research projects include *Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading*—a Research and Development effort with colleagues at Lawrence Hall of Science in which reading, writing, and language are employed as tools to foster the development of knowledge and inquiry in science—and the Strategic Education Research Partnership—a collaboration between UC Berkeley, Stanford, and the SFUSD designed to embed research within the portfolio of school-based issues and priorities. Awards include the 1989 Oscar Causey Award (NRC) for contributions to reading research, the 1990 William S. Gray Citation of Merit (IRA) for contributions to reading research and practice, the 2005 Albert J. Harris Award (IRA) for the year’s best reading disability publication, and the 2003 Alan Purves Award (NCTE) for a publication impacting practice. In 2006 the University of Minnesota honored him with the Alumni Outstanding Achievement Award, and in 2010 AERA gave him Distinguished Contributions to Research in Education Award. He is the founding editor of the *Handbook of Reading Research* now in its fourth volume, he edited *Reading Research Quarterly* and the *Review of Research in Education*, and he has served on the Editorial Review Board for some 20 educational journals.

Ashley Bishop, Ph.D and **Sue Bishop, M.Ed.** have coauthored a book for Teacher Created Materials titled *Teaching Word Analysis Skills* (2010). This book presents much of the theoretical foundation on which the *Targeted Phonics* program is based. Ashley is Professor Emeritus, California State University, Fullerton. While at Cal State Fullerton, Dr. Bishop was Chair of the Reading Department for 20 years and served as the Founding Dean of the College of Education. He has coauthored four books focusing on the reading process and has spoken widely throughout the United States and Canada. Sue is a retired educator in the field of special education. She worked as a resource specialist for the Irvine Unified School District in California. Since retirement, she has taught in the Language Minority Program, also for IUSD.

Meeting Standards

State Standards

Teacher Created Materials' *Targeted Phonics* program is designed to meet the standards for foundational reading skills required in all states. For example, the McREL Compendium of State Standards has the following as a key benchmark: "Uses basic elements of phonetic analysis (e.g., common letter/sound relationships, beginning and ending consonants, vowel sounds, blends, word patterns) to decode unknown words." This, of course, is the essence of the purpose of these kits.






Common Core State Standards

The program embodies the philosophy, as well as the specific standards, iterated in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (2010). These standards include a section for Reading Standards: Foundational Skills. Additionally, in Appendix A of the CCSS, there is a section for Reading Foundational Skills that lays out very specific definitions and examples of the skills to be covered. *Targeted Phonics* addresses these skills purposefully and thoroughly.

The introduction to the "Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (K-5)" section of these Common Core standards states: "These foundational skills are not an end in and of themselves; rather, they are necessary and important components of an effective, comprehensive reading program designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend tasks across a wide range of types and disciplines." *Targeted Phonics* was carefully designed to help teachers and students understand that the purpose of phonics and other basic reading skill instruction is to provide readers with the tools to unlock the meaning of text.

Consequently, all skills are immediately applied in the context of authentic reading scenarios. Correlations to all 50 state standards and the Common Core State Standards can be found on the Teacher Created Materials website, www.tcmpub.com.

Targeted Phonics Scope & Sequence of Skills and Features

Key and Major Focus of Each Kit in the Series		
	MFCV	<i>My First Consonants and Vowels</i> —introduces the 16 most common consonant sounds, the five short vowel sounds, and sound blending.
	MCVD	<i>More Consonants, Vowels, and Digraphs</i> —introduces the five more difficult consonant sounds, the 12 most common consonant blends, and the four most common beginning consonant digraphs (ch, sh, th, wh).
	SVR	<i>Short Vowel Rimes</i> —introduces the 14 most common short vowel word families and includes four mixed practice books so students really begin to use their reading skills.
	SVSB	<i>Short Vowel Storybooks</i> —includes three books for each short vowel sound, introduced in the order suggested by experts (a, i, o, e, u), plus three mixed practice books. Readability levels increase within each set of three and across the 18 books.
	LVSB	<i>Long Vowel Storybooks</i> —includes three books for each long vowel sound, introduced in the order suggested by experts (a, i, o, e, u), plus three mixed practice books. Readability levels increase within each set of three and across the 18 books. The first book in each set of three covers the “consonant, vowel, consonant, silent e” spelling pattern, and the other two cover alternate spellings of each long vowel sound.

Scope and Sequence Chart

Skills and Features	Kits				
	MFCV	MCVD	SVR	SVSB	LVSB
Alphabet Knowledge					
Understands the concept of a letter	x	x			
Distinguishes letter forms	x	x			
Knows letter names	x	x			
Recognizes uppercase and lowercase letters	x	x			
Recognizes consonants and vowels	x	x			
Letter/Sound Relationships					
Consonants					
Recognizes that letters represent consonant sounds	x	x			
Uses easy beginning consonant sounds: <i>b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, w</i>	x				
Uses harder beginning consonant sounds: <i>q, v, x, y, z</i>		x			
Uses common two-letter blends: <i>bl, br, cl, cr, fl, fr, gr, pl, sl, sn, sp, st</i>		x		x	x
Uses common consonant digraphs: <i>ch, th, sh, wh</i>		x	x	x	x
Recognizes that doubled consonant sounds make one sound: <i>ll, tt, ss</i>			x	x	x
Vowels					
Recognizes that each vowel has one short vowel sound	x		x	x	
Recognizes common short vowel word families (rimes); e.g., <i>ag, en, it, op, up</i>			x	x	
Uses the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern			x	x	
Uses the consonant-vowel-consonant-silent e (CVCe) pattern					x
Uses common two-letter spellings of long vowel sounds: e.g., <i>-ai, -ay, -ee, -oa</i>					x

Skills and Features	Kits				
	MFCV	MCVD	SVR	SVSB	LVSB
High-Frequency Words and Sentence Structures					
Reads repeating simple sentence frames made of easy high-frequency words	x	x			
Reads mixed simple sentence frames made of easy high-frequency words			x		
Reads more complex sentences containing high frequency words				x	x
Understands declarative sentence structure beginning with an uppercase letter and ending with a period	x	x	x	x	x
Understands interrogative sentence structure ending with a question mark		x	x	x	x
Understands exclamatory sentence structure ending with an exclamation point			x	x	x
Text Features					
Target words presented in context with photo support	x	x			
Target words presented in isolation and in context with illustration support			x		
Text supported by illustration				x	x
Text presented in story structure with simple character, setting, and plot development				x	x
Rhyme and rhythm of text used to aid fluency				x	x
Picture glossary	x	x	x		
Story structure introduced			x		
Story structure with simple setting, character, and plot development				x	x

Skills and Features	Kits				
	MFCV	MCVD	SVR	SVSB	LVSF
Lesson Plans, Student Guided Practice Book, and Assessment Guide					
Letter formation activities (handwriting)	x				
Poems, set to music, to provide an anchor for the letter/sound correspondence	x	x			
Simple sentence frames made up of basic sight words	x	x	x		
Vocabulary lists and activity suggestions Three kinds of vocabulary are covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decodable vocabulary • Sight words • Targeted words for building background knowledge 	x	x	x	x	x
Step-by-step activities for Before, During, and After reading the books, including discussion questions	x	x	x	x	x
Extension activities that go across the curriculum, most suitable for centers	x	x	x	x	x
Four Student Guided Practice Book pages, covering phonics and comprehension skills	x	x	x	x	x
Interactiv-ebook with three sections: highlighted word-by-word reading of the text with embedded interactive whiteboard tools, read and record on your own, and activities (two for phonics and two for comprehension)	x	x	x	x	x
Suggestions for differentiating instruction for Below Level and Beginning Language Learners and for On/Above Level and Extensions for Advancing Language Learners			x	x	x
Assessments for pre- and post-testing and progress monitoring	x	x	x	x	x

Features of the Teacher’s Guide and Student Guided Practice Book

For each book, the lesson plan includes:

1. Vocabulary lists and activity suggestions.
Three kinds of vocabulary are covered:
 - Decodable vocabulary
 - Sight words
 - Targeted words for building background knowledge
2. Step-by-step activities for Before, During, and After reading the books, including discussion questions.
3. Extension activities that go across the curriculum, many suitable for centers.
4. Four Student Guide Practice Book pages, covering phonics and comprehension skills.
5. Each book also has its own interactiv-ebook with three sections: highlighted word-by-word reading of the text with embedded interactive whiteboard tools, read and record on your own, and activities (two for phonics, two for comprehension, and one for writing).

For *My First Consonants and Vowels* and *More Consonants, Blends, and Digraphs*, the lesson plan also includes letter formation activities (handwriting) and a poem, set to music, to provide an anchor for the letter/sound correspondence. Activities for introducing the simple sentence frames, made up of basic sight words, are provided so that students are familiar with these frames when they read the books.

For *Short Vowel Rimes*, *Short Vowel Storybooks*, and *Long Vowel Storybooks*, the lesson plan also includes suggestions for differentiating instruction for Below-Level and Beginning Language Learners and for On/Above-Level and Extensions for Advancing Language Learners.

Features of the Assessment Guide

A separate Assessment Guide for each kit includes complete pre- and post-test, individually administered phonics assessments to be used for placement and progress monitoring. These guides also include the text from each book and forms to be used for student reading records.

The Research on Early Reading

Early reading requires a child to connect letters in printed words to sounds in the spoken language. Grasping the meaning of printed material is the most important outcome. Standing in the way of meaning, the major challenge for readers of English is that of understanding the relation between printed symbols (letters) and speech sounds (phonemes). For some languages, this relation is transparent. However, “English spelling is complicated because the language is a mix of many languages. English-speaking people have never encountered a word that they didn’t like, that they weren’t willing to add to the language. The result is a spoken language with enormous diversity of expression, a wide range of speech sounds or phonemes, a collection of almost 50 sounds that have to be represented by the 26 letters of the English alphabet” (Venezky 1999). The goal of *Targeted Phonics* is to teach beginning readers those sound-symbol relationships that are of the highest utility so that readers can fluently decode text and understand the meaning that text conveys.

The following subsections of this white paper delineate the research in each of these areas and tell how *Targeted Phonics* implements that research.

Phonological Awareness

Learning the alphabet—the shapes and names of the letters, upper- and lowercase—takes time. Most children accomplish this task, although along the way they may be confused about pairs like *b-d* or *p-q*. However, research shows clearly that learning about sounds and about letter-sound relations is the major challenge. The best predictors of progress in early reading achievement are from various tests of knowledge about sound patterns. Instruction that helps young students recognize and distinguish sounds is generally quite helpful, especially if letters are used to support sound learning (Calfée and Norman 1999). One strategy used in *Targeted Phonics* that assists students having difficulty is to “stretch-and-exaggerate.” For example, a word like *pot* is pronounced by emphasizing how the consonants are produced and extending the vowel sound (Bell 2007). The program uses this strategy throughout, particularly when introducing a vowel sound.

Phonics Instruction

The “great debates” about early reading (for example, Chall 1995) have focused on several issues: (1) to teach or not teach phonics, (2) to teach phonics rules implicitly or explicitly, (3) to teach rules or regularities, and (4) how best to organize the scope and sequence of regularities and exceptions. In general, research suggests that explicit teaching of phonics improves the rate at which students acquire letter-sound regularities, allowing them to pronounce printed words. “The hallmark of a systematic phonics approach or program is that a sequential set of phonics elements is delineated” (National Reading Panel 2000). The *Targeted Phonics* program has a well-researched scope and sequence of phonics skills that are presented sequentially, yet are also accessible individually, so that specific skills can be targeted for those students who need intervention.

Recent research identified five useful phonic generalizations that bear teaching. “1. Single vowels usually have their short sound. 2. Final single vowel-consonant-*e* (-VCe) patterns usually have a long first vowel and a silent final *e*. 3. Vowel digraphs usually have one or one of two sounds. 4. Single consonants usually have one sound, with a few having one of two sounds. 5. Consonant di/trigraphs [including what are typically called *blends or consonant clusters*] usually have one or one of two sounds” (Gates and Yale 2011). *Targeted Phonics* supports the teaching of these generalizations.

Focus on Vowels

In English, vowels are the “glue” that binds together consonants to form syllables. Many consonants depend on the vowel to be heard. In *pat*, the *p* and *t* sounds are little more than air puffs until they are blended with *a*. Once beginning readers understand this principle, then they become phonemically aware; when *pat* is changed to *tap*, the letters tell the reader to switch the beginning and ending sounds, but all of the speech elements are the same (Murray et al. 2008). In *Targeted Phonics: My First Consonants and Vowels*, the short vowel sounds are introduced and the *Targeted Phonics: Short Vowel Rimes* kit features the short vowel sounds in word family/rime groupings. In *Targeted Phonics: Short Vowel Storybooks* and *Long Vowel Storybooks*, the vowel sounds and their spelling patterns are the focus. The *Targeted Phonics: Short Vowel Storybooks* focus on the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) patterns. In *Phonics Readers: Long Vowel Storybooks*, the CVCe pattern for each vowel is introduced, followed by the vowel digraphs, which are pairs of vowel letters that make the long vowel sounds.

High-Frequency Words

Skeptics of the value of phonics instruction often point to exceptions from regular spelling patterns (for example, Cook 2004) as evidence of the limited value of phonics. The exceptions do attract attention because many show up quite often in printed materials. High-frequency words are often critical connectors within phrases and sentences; e.g., *all, of, was, to* (Fry and Kress 2007, 49-58). The most effective way to promote learning of these words is to provide early learners with extensive opportunities to read engaging stories that use these words. With frequent exposure, students will learn these words as wholes; in addition, students will read with increased fluency and speed (Prescott-Griffin and Witherell 2004). In *Targeted Phonics* sight words are introduced systematically along with the phonics generalizations in the form of sentence frames and to provide context for the focus sound.

Context

A commonsense notion, supported by substantial research, is that beginning readers become better at both decoding and understanding when they have numerous opportunities to read and reread stories (Nagy and Scott 2000, 269-284). One reason for this effect is the role of context. Well-written stories support both decoding and vocabulary growth because of the clues provided by the surrounding words and, in the case of stories designed for young children, the accompanying illustrations. When young readers encounter an unknown word, decoding clues, visual clues, and contextual meaning can combine to allow them to handle a “challenge word,” to both pronounce it and grasp its meaning. While there is an element of guessing in this approach, teaching readers to monitor meaning can ensure that the guess makes sense by fostering a search for meaning, which in turn can reinforce learning of spelling-sound patterns. By providing meaningful reading experiences following phonics instruction, *Targeted Phonics* provides students with the context in which to apply the phonics skills but also allows them to focus on reading for understanding, the ultimate goal of any type of reading instruction.

Curricular Connections

The learning of literacy can be embedded in and benefit from other curricular activities. Literature, drama, art, history, biology, and even physical education depend in some way on reading and writing. While it shows up regularly in discussions of elementary school teachers about their curricular practices, actual research on this topic is difficult to find (Gavelek et al. 2000, 587-608). *Targeted Phonics* rests on the assumption that integration is a useful and profitable practice and an engaging way to provide practice in reading and spelling a broad range of English words.

Struggling Readers

Early readers can run into problems for a variety of reasons, including delayed language development, difficulties in auditory and phonological processing, and impoverished language and literacy environments (Stone et al. 2004; Fountas and Pinnell 2008; Vellutino 1979). Research on these predictors is extensive, as are evaluations of instructional programs and practices. The short answer to the question about how to help these students is that (1) they require extra time and careful scaffolding, but (2) the same essential elements promote achievement growth for these students as for others. As a supplemental resource, *Targeted Phonics* allows teachers to assess students and then choose those portions of the product that will support the specific needs of struggling learners.

English Language Learners

Immersion in rich oral language experience in a social environment establishes both receptive and productive growth of English for students who are learning both the English language and English literacy. It helps if the classroom includes environmental print, including numerous exposures to the alphabet. Decoding may be less of a challenge for Spanish speakers who have acquired literacy in Spanish because they have basic knowledge on which to build. Because the illustrations are carefully integrated with the text in *Targeted Phonics*, the books in the program will provide a satisfying experience for the students (Goldenberg and Coleman 2010).

School-to-Home Connections

“Correlational studies have repeatedly documented the significance of...parents’ educational level, family socio-economic status, the uses of print and the number of books in the home, and the frequency of parent-child storybook reading” to early and continued literacy success (Purcell-Gates 2000). There is little that schools can do about education level or socio-economic status of the parents, but teachers can encourage and support literacy activities in the home. When young students bring home the books they are reading and the products of their school work, especially when they are proud of what they have done, and even more so when they have ideas about how to capture parental attention, then the family has a way to link to classroom literacy. Purcell-Gates (2000) describes several large-scale studies demonstrating the impact on language and literacy achievement of programs that include simple steps like those described above. Teachers are encouraged to send the *Targeted Phonics* readers home when the students have mastered them. Each reader includes discussion questions and extension activities at the end. These are distinct from the classroom activities, providing families with options for engagement in the home.

Technology and Reading Instruction

In synthesizing theoretical approaches, The National Reading Panel report, “Teaching Children to Read” (April 2000) and “Every Child a Reader: The Report of the California Reading Task Force” by the California Department of Education (1995) were essential, particularly in the decision to develop an interactiv-ebook to accompany the *Targeted Phonics* kits. The National Reading Panel Report (2000) states, “The seven studies that reviewed the addition of speech to computer-presented text indicate that this may be a promising use of technology in reading instruction.” Teachers may choose to have students use the audio CD at a listening center while the child follows in a copy of the reader or to use the interactiv-ebook on a computer or interactive whiteboard. The interactiv-ebook allows students to choose to have a book read to them while each word or phrase is highlighted or to have the book read without highlighting. Furthermore, the National Reading Panel Report authors found, “The use of computers as word processors may be very useful, given that reading instruction is most effective when combined with writing instruction.” The writing component of the interactiv-ebook allows students to write about the story they read. It also allows students to record themselves reading the nonfiction books. Diagnostic tools such as this are crucial to informed, effective reading instruction. The National Reading Panel noted that technologies allow teachers to use computers for reading assessment (2000). The National Reading Panel’s findings are confirmed by The California Reading Task Force, which was charged with making a set of recommendations to improve the achievement of students in reading. The task force determined “ongoing diagnosis that informs teaching and assessment that ensures accountability” is an essential component of any reading program (California Department of Education 1995). The opportunity for the child to record his or her voice reading the story into the computer allows teachers to keep continuous reading records including miscue analysis of students’ oral reading.

Quality Assessment Guides Instruction

To maximize teaching and learning efficiency, it is important for teachers to conduct formative and summative assessments for the purpose of making sure that the needs of all students are targeted and that unnecessary instruction is bypassed. “When we clearly know our learners, we can make informed choices and adjust the learning processes so that all students have an optimal chance of succeeding” (Gregory and Kuzmich 2004). A well-researched assessment tool is incorporated into *Targeted Phonics* to assist teachers in planning instruction for their students. The *Tile Test*, developed by Norman and Calfee (2004) consists of “[c]arefully constructed assessment activities [that allow teachers] to see and hear what students know and how they know it. ...it provides the feedback needed to guide instruction.”

Conclusions

In summary, the research literature on instructional theories and strategies related to teaching beginning reading was thoroughly reviewed and studied in order to create an effective supplemental phonics program. The work and expertise of program consultants Robert Calfee, P. David Pearson, Ashley Bishop, and Sue Bishop provided the strong foundation for the program. The pedagogy of *Targeted Phonics* is based on the educational community's knowledge of effective reading strategies including the use of technology and assessment to guide instruction. As prescribed in the Common Core State Standards, this program puts phonics instruction in its proper place in a balanced reading program, focusing on moving students from decoding words to understanding text.

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