

Phonological Analysis vs Synthesis

- Phonological awareness or “phonological sensitivity” can be broken down into two basic categories: analysis and synthesis
 - Analysis means breaking words apart into syllables, onsets, rimes, or phonemes
 - Tasks include alliteration, rhyming, segmentation, isolation, categorization, and manipulation
 - Synthesis occurs when parts of words activate the whole word
 - Most common task: blending

Role of Blending and Analysis

- Blending is essential for phonic decoding
 - Letter-sound knowledge + phonological blending = phonic decoding
- Analysis is essential for spelling and for remembering the words we read
 - Letter-sound knowledge + phoneme analysis = phonically appropriate spellings
 - Letter-sound proficiency + phonemic (analysis) proficiency = a memory system prepared to remember written words

Considerations Regarding Blending Assessment

- Blending should be assessed separately from analysis (k-3)
- Phoneme-level blending skills develop earlier than phoneme-level analysis skills
 - Students who are skilled in both phoneme analysis and blending
 - Students who are weak in both phoneme analysis and blending
 - Students who are weak in phoneme analysis but not blending

Additional Considerations in Assessing Blending

- Most weak readers can blend phonemes by the end of 2nd grade
 - Most typical readers can by the end of 1st grade
 - Average or better blending scores do not rule out phonological issues as a source of reading difficulties
 - Weak phoneme blending relative to peers at any level is a strong indicator of a likely phonological problem that affects reading

Task vs. Skill

- Different analysis tasks do not tell us different things
- Phoneme manipulation is best because it incorporates the other tasks (i.e., segmentation, isolation, manipulation, and blending)