

Morphology: The Unsung Hero of Literacy



Contact Me:



Dr. Shelley Blackwell, SLP.D
MTSS Literacy Support Specialist
shelleyblackwell05@gmail.com
[@slblackwellslpd](https://twitter.com/slblackwellslpd)

Learning Intention:
Deepen my
understanding of how
morphology relates to
literacy and how to
support its
development across the
instructional tiers in
MTSS and in Special
Education.

Success Criteria

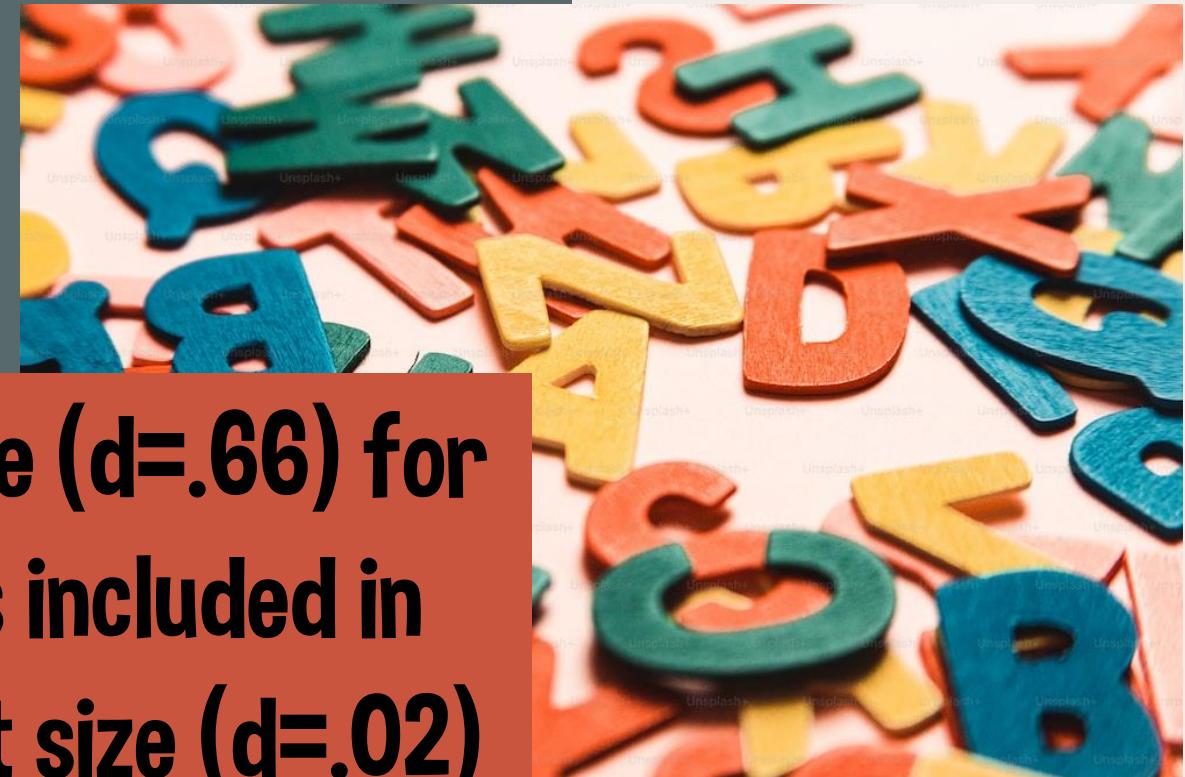
I can explain how morphological awareness affects literacy development.

I have some tools I can use and share with teachers to explicitly teach morphology.

Layers of Language

Word

Unit of Analysis



“There was a medium effect size ($d=.66$) for spelling when morphology was included in interventions and a small effect size ($d=.02$) for the orthographic-only intervention.”

What are the Tiers?

Tier 3: whole class core differentiated instruction + additional targeted instruction (often small group in addition to core instruction) + intensive support

Intensive Support

Tier 2: whole-class differentiated instruction + small group targeted instruction (in addition to core instruction)

Strategic Support

Tier 1: whole class data-driven differentiated core instruction

Differentiated Core

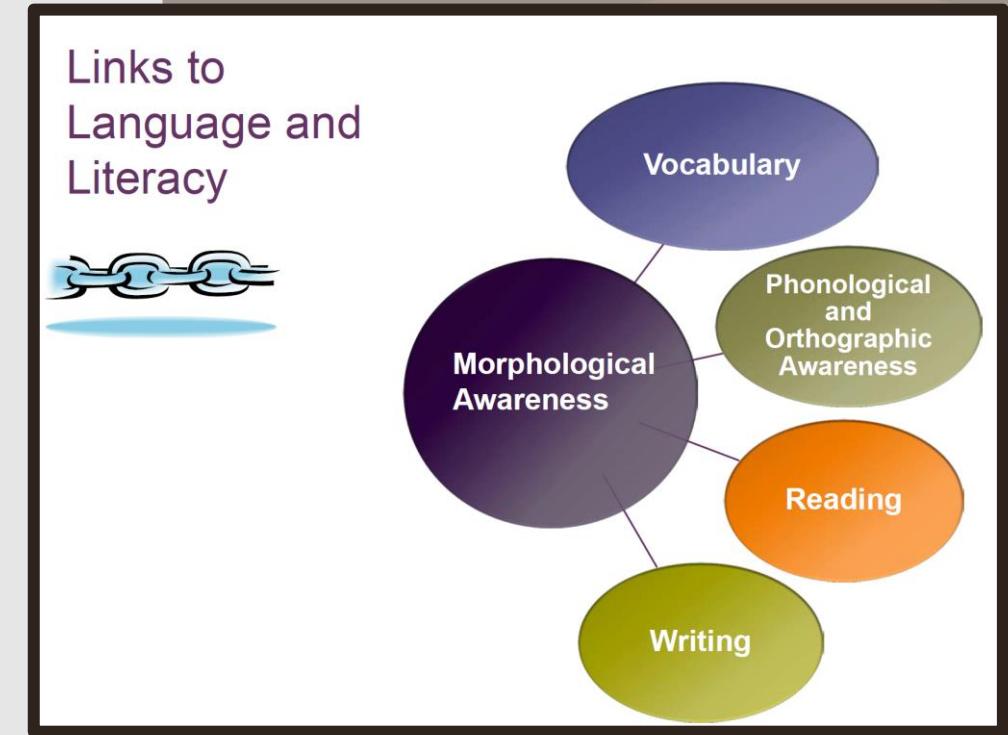


“By 10 years of age, a child’s knowledge about the structure of words is a better predictor of decoding ability than is phonological awareness.”

Kirk, C., & Gillon, G. T. (2009). Integrated Morphological Awareness Intervention as a Tool for Improving Literacy. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 40(3), 341–351. doi: 10.1044/0161-1461(2008/08-0009)

Why address morphology?

- Multi-syllabic words
- Decoding, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Spelling
- Increased linguistic demand of curricular vocabulary
- Technical words in middle school starts at 8-10 per page.
- Technical words in high school increases to 22 per page.
- Morphology connects vocabulary, sounds, spelling, comprehension, and writing



Types of Morphemes

FREE MORPHEMES

- **Lexical** (teach, dog, deliver)
- **Functional** (a, the, and, but)

BOUND MORPHEMES

- **Derivational** (re-, pre-, -ful, -ly)
- **Inflectional** (-ed, -ing, -est)

What's up with Base Words vs. Root Words?
(inside) (transport)

Types of Bound Morphemes

Inflectional Morphemes

- Change what the word does in terms of grammatical properties, but do not create a new word
- They can pluralize the word (**number**)
apartment → *apartments*
- They can change the verb **tense**
shout → *shouted*
- They can show **possession**
Kate → *Kate's*
- They can show **comparison**
sweet → *sweeter*

Derivational Morphemes

- Added to words to form new words
- They can change the meaning of the word.
correct → *incorrect*
- They can also change the grammatical category of the root word
friend → *friendly*
(noun) (adjective)
- Prefixes and suffixes can be derivational
- Examples:

-ness	re-
-ly	pre-
-less	un-

Morphosyntactic: Syntax is encoded into the suffixes

- Suffixes that form **verbs**:

-ate: graduate, educate, exaggerate

- Suffixes that form **adjectives**:

-ic: heroic, fantastic, exotic

-ive: expensive, active, creative

- Suffixes that form **nouns**:

-ate: graduate

-ity: purity, security, salinity

-ion/ian: nation, vision, musician

- Suffixes that form **adverbs**:

-ly: slowly, quickly, carelessly

interruptions

How many morphemes are there? **4**

What are they? **inter** **rupt** **ion** **s**

What do they mean?

inter = **between**

rupt = **break or burst**

ion = **characterized by**

s = **plural form**

→ *tion/tion, cion/cian, sion/sian*





Tier 1 Instruction & the SLP

Weave morphology conversations into existing instruction:

Academic Vocabulary

T: Yes, that's an **octagon**. How did that word tell you how many sides it has?"

S: **Because 'oct-' is a prefix that means 'eight', and 'gon' is a root that means sides, so an OCTagon has EIGHT sides.**

Decoding

T: What do these words all have in common? prevention, prepare, present, preview, pretest, predict

S: **They all have 'pre' at the beginning of the word.**

T: So, you know that part, let's attack the rest of the word now!

Comprehension

From text: ***The gardener is a naturalist.***

T: "Naturalist. That word has nature in it. Nature has to do with the physical world. I also know that -ist has something to do with a person who does a specific action. He must be a person that believes in using things from the earth in his gardening."

Spelling

The weekly word list includes the word 'highest'. Explain the spelling pattern of '**igh**' makes the long i sound, but add that the morpheme **-est** makes it the superlative form (greatest degree of an adjective) and therefore will be spelled 'est', never 'ist'

- **Pronounce the word.** Students pronounce the word. Write the word to read. Talk about **syllables, morphemes, spelling, part of speech, etymology.**
- **Define the word using a student-friendly definition.**
- **Say more about the word using different examples.**
- **Ask students “yes” or “no” questions about the word’s meaning.**
- **Elicit word use by students (e.g., Think-Pair-Share)**

Vocabulary Routine

Include morphology in your discussion about words.

Model curiosity about words and why they have certain morphemes in them.

Include students in that discussion and with each other.

Ex.= interruptions

Example:

**When he struck out in the
bottom of the 9th, he conceded
defeat.**



**How could you incorporate
syntax AND morphology in
your whole group
instruction?**

**Parsing Sentences
Syntax + Morphology!**

POLL—True or False

**Teaching morphology
requires the
preparation of separate
and additional lesson
plans.**





Tier 2 Targeted Instruction

Instructional Questions:

How do we know what morphemes to teach?

How can we connect these to standards?

What materials can we use?

How do we integrate syntax, orthography, and comprehension with morphology?

Building Knowledge through Words:

**Context Clues, Word Building,
Word Function, Application**

Grade 4

Student Workbook

Name

Week 1, Day 1

Uncover the Meaning (Using Context Clues)

Prefixes	Root	Suffixes
uni- in-	form to shape, mold	-er -ly -s

Context	Clues to help find the meaning of the underlined word.	Working Definition of word
I used new software to <u>format</u> the appearance of my essay.		
I could see the strong outline of the rock <u>formation</u> from far away.		
The letter said that my science fair project must <u>conform</u> to the rules of the contest.		

Write a sentence using a word with the root **form** in it to show its meaning.



Parts of Speech

Noun

A noun **names** a thing, person,

Verb

A verb **shows action**. It tells what is doing.

Adjective

An adjective **describes** a thing or idea.

Adverb

An adverb **describes** how an action is carried out

BREAKING NEWS

Prefixes have 3 functions:

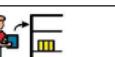
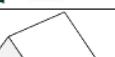
- **Negation** (examples: uncooperative, nonsense, dishonest)
- **Direction** (examples: revise, preview, eject)
- **Intensity** (examples: intense, extreme—*in-*, *ex-* mean 'very')

Suffixes have 2 functions:

- **Change number, tense, or degree**
(examples: dogs, jumped, happier)
- **Change the part of speech**
(examples: fame (noun) → famous (adjective), quick (adjective) → quickly (adverb))

Roots:

- **Anglo-Saxon base words can stand alone as words by themselves**
- **Latin roots cannot stand alone**
- **Greek roots can be combined to form new words and cannot stand alone**

Latin Roots	Visual Cue	Meaning
form		
port		
scrib/script		
spec/spect		
struc/struct		
flect/flex		
dic/dict		
mit/mis		
duc/duce/duct		
pel/puls		
fac/fic/fact/fect		
cur/curs		
aud		
pos/pound		
plic/pliy		

Website Access:

<https://sites.google.com/view/tier3languageliteracy/home>

Language Literacy Interventions

Home Structured Literacy Orthography **Morphology** 

Language Literacy Interventions

 SCAN ME

A scene from a movie or TV show showing two women in a car. The woman on the left, with short grey hair and wearing a blue shirt, is looking towards the camera with a serious expression. The woman on the right, with long brown hair and wearing a patterned top, is smiling and looking towards the camera. The car's interior is visible, including the steering wheel and dashboard.

Let's do a little practice.

Uncover the Meaning (Using Context Clues)

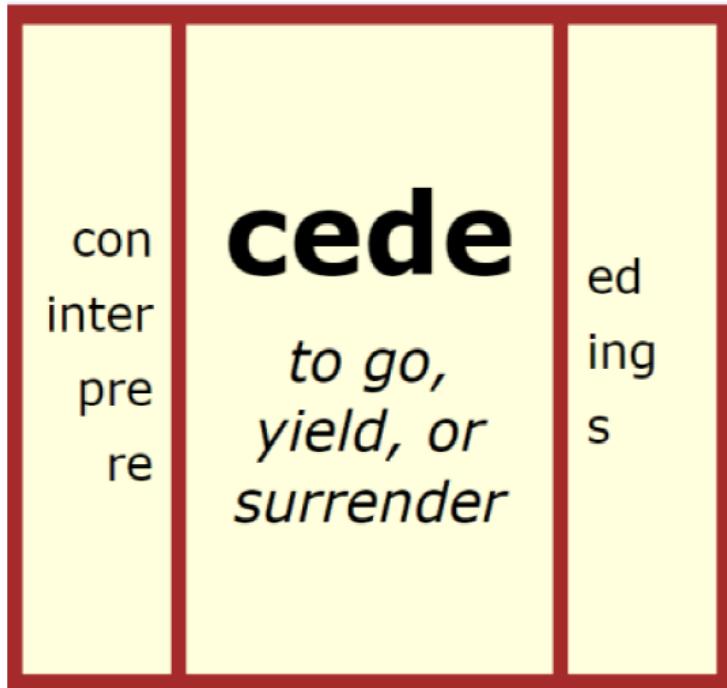
<u>Prefixes</u>	<u>Root</u>	<u>Suffixes</u>
inter-		
con-		
pre-		
re-		
	cede/cess/ceed to go, yield, or surrender	-ing -s -ed

Context	Clues to help find the meaning of the underlined word.	Working Definition of word
After the candidate lost the election, he <u>conceded</u> and went home.		
Watching the bridal <u>procession</u> come in the church was breathtaking.		
His <u>receding</u> hairline made it look like he was bald.		

Write a sentence using a word with the root **cede/cess/ceed** in it to show its meaning.

Day 1

Word Building



What words can you build? List them here:

Day 2

Connect to Function

What is the purpose of the **bolded** word in each sentence? Circle the function and explain.

1. The **preceding** sentence is a rather lengthy one in comparison.

name	show action	describe
------	-------------	----------

I know this because _____

2. I was happy that someone had **interceded** on my behalf the other day.

name	show action	describe
------	-------------	----------

I know this because _____

3. After thirty years of marriage, he looked at his latest pictures and could no longer doubt his **receding** hairline.

name	show action	describe
------	-------------	----------

I know this because _____

4. When he struck out in the bottom of the ninth, his team **conceded** defeat.

name	show action	describe
------	-------------	----------

I know this because _____

Day 3

Expand and Explore

Choose one sentence/phrase and explain how the bolded word's meaning is connected to its target morpheme's meaning.

1. **proceeded** down the hallway

Since **ceed** means _____, **proceeded** means _____.

2. waters began to **recede**

Since **cede** means _____, **recede** means _____.

3. **successful** completion of a degree

Since **cess** means _____, **successful** means _____.

4. time for **recess**

Since **cess** means _____, **recess** means _____.

Day 4



Tier 3 Intensified Instruction

Morpheme Madness

Name _____

Small Group
Activities

[Link](#)

Morpheme Madness: Suffixes-Lesson 1

Activity 1 – Word Sort

Complete the word sort using the cards and begin thinking about how to explain the words and discussed as a group, answer the questions on the back of the cards.

1. What is the targeted morpheme?

2. What does it mean?

3. Does it change the part of speech when used as a verb?

yes

no

Activity 2 – Word Sums

Suffix:

Activity 3 – Word Building

Use [ed] to build regular past tense verbs for the present tense verbs listed below. Make sure you follow the spelling rules as you write the regular past tense forms.

Example Word	

Present Tense Verb	Regular Past Tense Verb
play	
comment	
present	
bleach	
use	
study	
approve	
admit	

4. What are the spelling rules when using

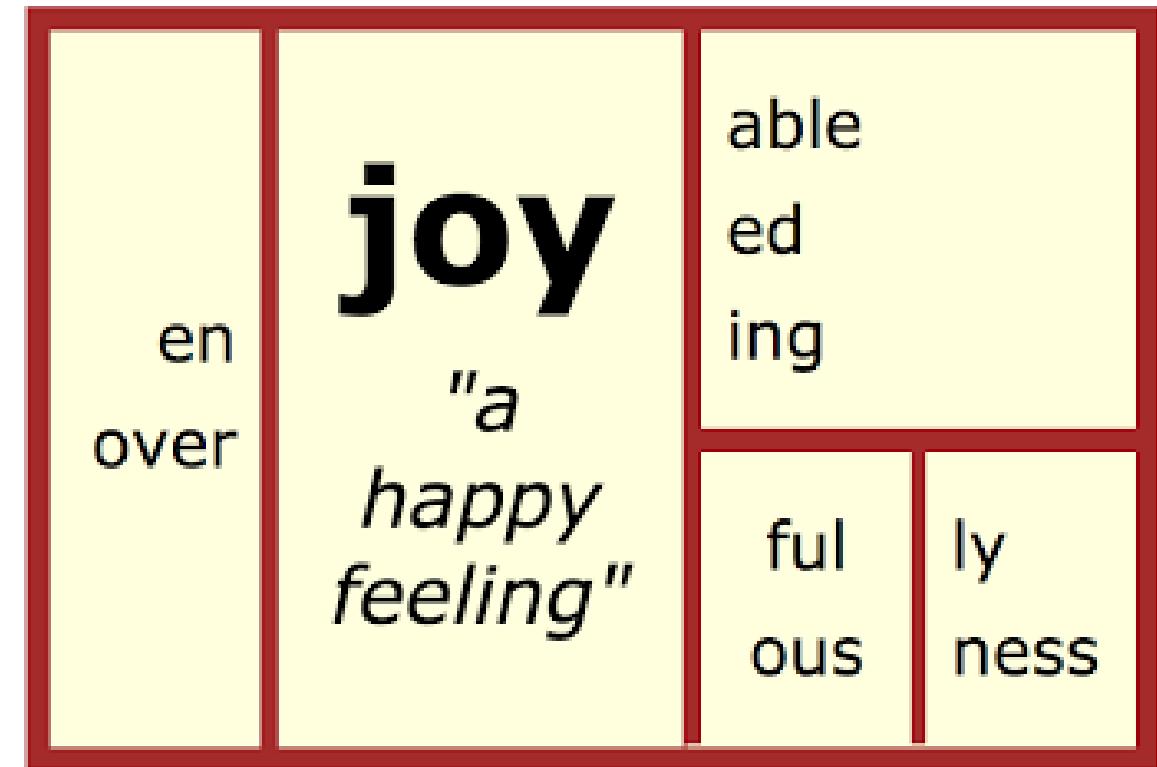
Word Sorts

To introduce new roots/affixes, start with receptive identification and awareness to word structures. One way to address this is through word sorts.

UN	RE	IN/IM
Not, opposite of	Again, back	Not
unhappy	rewrite	inactive
unsure	rebuild	immobile
unrest	restart	inoperable
unfair	reappear	immature
unable	recheck	insecure
unplug	reapply	inaccurate

Word Matrices

A word matrix is a visual way to illustrate morphological families. This is another reliable tool to investigate and make sense of the English writing system.





Word Analogies

Analogy can be used to address vocabulary structures and support recognition of syntactic relationships between words.

Name: _____
Analogy

Directions: Complete each analogy by adding your own comparison.

1. act : acting :: snow : _____
2. bake : baked :: walk : _____
3. dog : dogs :: ride : _____
4. baby : babies :: candy : _____
5. paint : painted :: weed : _____

Directions: Use the words to write three analogies.

song	wash	<u>ponies</u>	girls	songs	daisy
girl	pack	washed	packed	pony	daisies

6. _____ : _____ :: _____ : _____
7. _____ : _____ :: _____ : _____
8. _____ : _____ :: _____ : _____



Word Sums

A word sum shows the pieces of (morphemes) of a word to make a multi-morphemic result. This improves word structure awareness, which in turn helps students with spelling, decoding, and meaning of multi-morphemic words.

Split the words

re fresh

un born

spending

lightest

depressing

hopeless

unhappy

refillable

Write the word sums

friendly = +

misspelling = + +

quietly = +

reminded = +

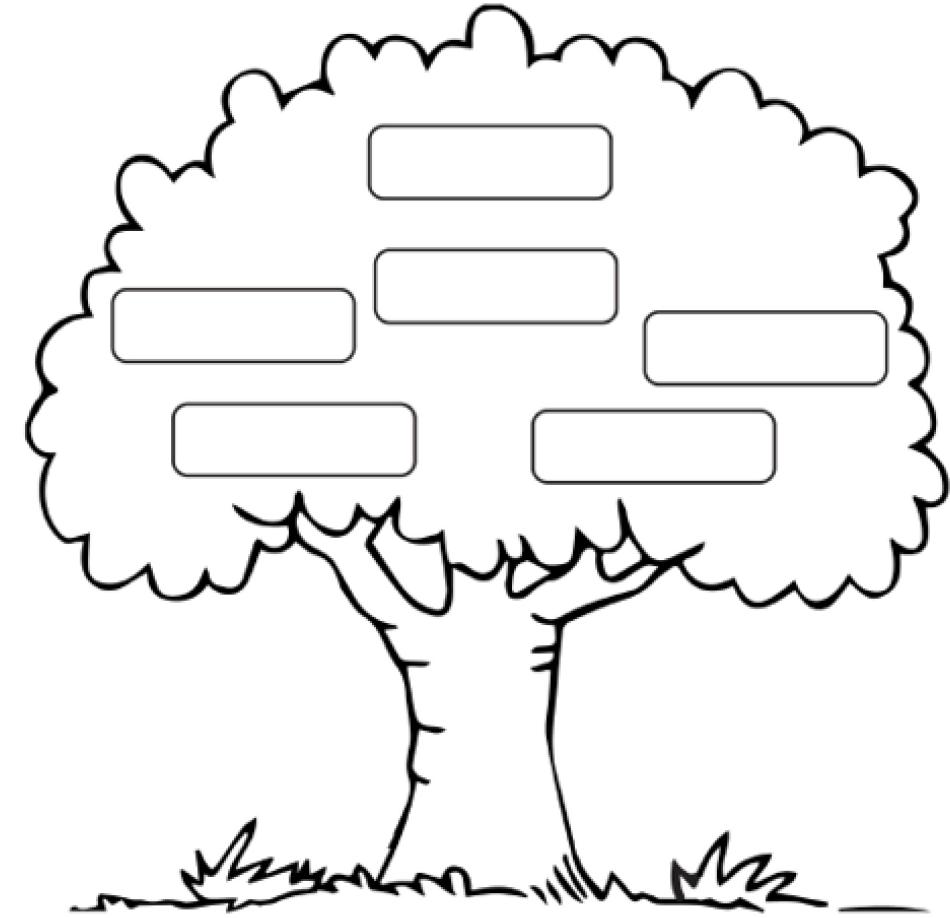
loveable = +

freshness = +



Word Families

Word families help students develop a network of related words, which aids in vocabulary, comprehension, and spelling.



Affix: _____

Meaning: _____



Word Building

Students practice combining affixes with base words to make new, longer words. They begin to recognize common prefixes and suffixes and understand how they function within words.

Name: _____

Build bigger words.



vise

or ion re ing ad super

Write the words you build.

1 _____

5 _____

9 _____

2 _____

6 _____

10 _____

3 _____

7 _____

11 _____

4 _____

8 _____

12 _____

Etymonline.com

Examples: recess, adventure



IEP Learning Targets for Reading Standards

Essential
Elements for
ELA

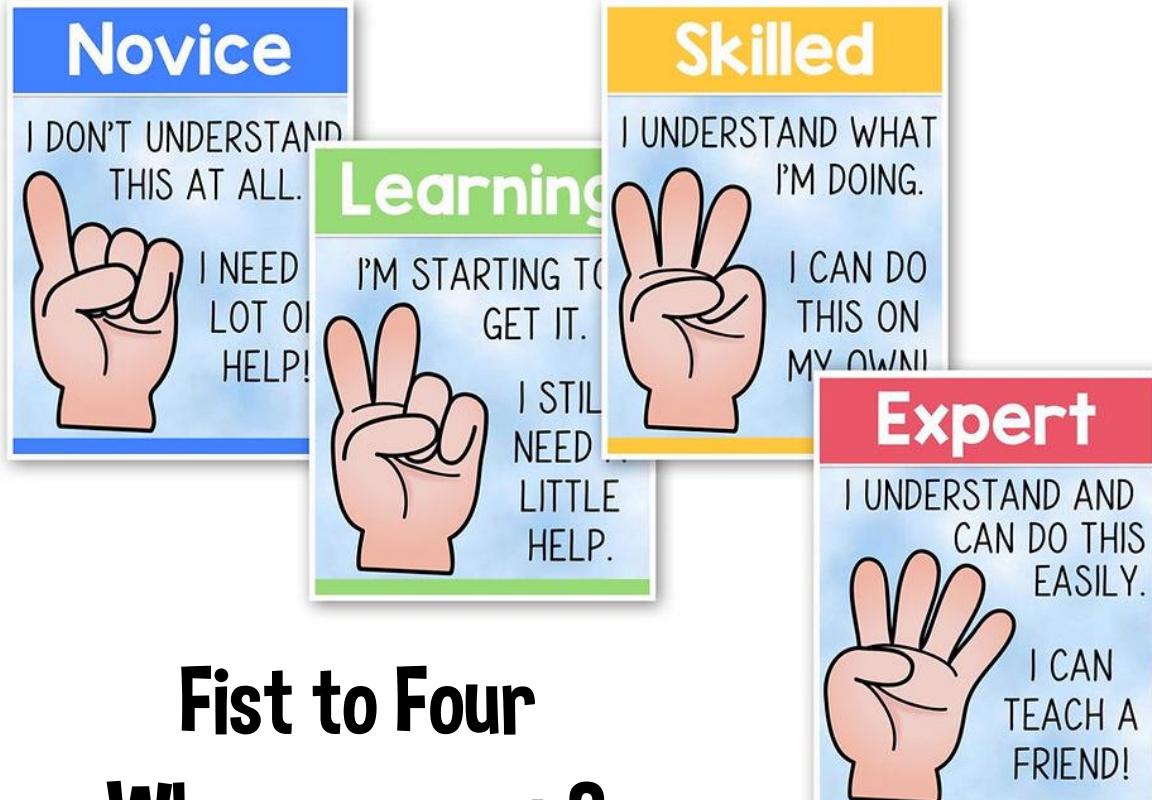
Word Recognition

Reading Fluency

Reading
Comprehension

Ongoing Language Comprehension Development

Success Criteria



I can explain how morphological awareness affects literacy development.

I have some tools I can use and share with teachers to explicitly teach morphology.



“Like a good conversation, good instruction is interactive; it is not Input
Input → Input → Input.”

—Anita Archer

Dr. Shelley Blackwell, SLP.D
shelleyblackwell05@gmail.com
@sblackwellSLPD



Contact Me

References

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