

Phonics Interventions:

A word of caution about phonic interventions:

Students who have a large number of decoding errors when reading may not necessarily have a difficulty with their knowledge of phonics. Instead, they may simply misunderstand the overall purpose of reading. For whatever reason, they may not realize that reading is supposed to make sense, and instead see it as an (often painful) exercise in making sounds or calling words to please the teacher. These students tend to substitute invented words instead of real words, and self-correct very infrequently.

In these types of cases, intervention must focus first on the overall goal of reading: meaning. Students should be asked to read simple sentences and discuss or illustrate them immediately afterward. The coaching the teacher does when a student encounters a difficult word can make all the difference in how that student understands what reading is all about. The teacher might prompt the child to use *meaning* clues (“What might make sense here?”), *structural* clues (“What sounds right?”) or *visual* clues (“What word do you know that looks like this word?”). These three cueing systems are explored in more depth below.

Phonics falls under the visual cueing system. If students are unable to produce the correct sounds for letters or letter combinations, they should benefit from phonic interventions. But first and foremost, students should understand that meaning is the overall goal of reading.

Note: These pages were found online at http://www.hallco.org/literacy/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11&Itemid=8

No authorship information was provided at this site, and attempts to find the original author were unsuccessful.

The Three Cueing Systems

	Meaning (Semantic)	Structure (Syntactic)	Visual (Graphophonic)
What is it?	Does it make sense? making sense of text and relaying meaningful connections context clues found in the text and/or background knowledge (comes from the students own experiences)	Does it sound right? making sense of the actual words in the sentences structural cues come from the students knowledge of correct oral language structures the way in which language is put together into sentences, phrases, paragraphs, etc.	Does it look right? breaking words down into letters, sounds, syllables, prefixes, chunks, etc. visual cues come from students developing knowledge of letter/sound relationships and of how letters are formed what letters and words look like often identified as sounding out words

The Three Cueing Systems

	Meaning (Semantic)	Structure (Syntactic)	Visual (Graphophonic)
Instructional Ideas	Teachers need to teach genres, or nature of text forms, purpose for reading, does the word fit, what information do the illustrations provide and what has happened so far. vocabulary lists oral predicting storyline prompts prior knowledge pictures connections webs graphic organizers context clues, pictures, text reading the room “how to choose a book” KWL anticipation guides	Teaching suggestions are to model more complex sentence structures and sentence reconstruction with familiar stories. Behaviors that capitalize on structure; reading ahead, and rereading cut up sentences guess the covered word natural language knowledge of English	Do the sounds and the words I am reading match the words on the page (phonological awareness cueing system) making big words month by month phonics word sorts word analogies sounds and symbols capitalization punctuation directionality word and spaces beginnings and endings word families root words syllables prefixes and suffixes magnetic letters

Sample Questions and Prompts to Promote Students' Use of the Three Cueing Systems

	Meaning (Semantic)	Structure (Syntactic)	Visual (Graphophonic)
Questions & Prompts	<p>What do we know about this topic already? What do we need to know? What would help us understand this text? Why are we reading this book? What other books have we read on this topic? What is going to happen next? What predictions can you make about this text? What could have happened before this story? What could happen after? Show where in the text it says that. Show where the author indicated that.</p> <p>If a student is relying primarily on meaning, it will be beneficial to support her reading strategies that promote looking at letters and sounds.</p>	<p>When I covered up this word in the text, how did you know what word would be appropriate? When I was reading and left out a word, how did you know what word was in the text? Have you hear that phrase/language (e.g. Once upon a time ...) before?</p> <p>If a reader is relying primarily on structure, it will be beneficial to support her reading with strategies that promote meaning and visual cues.</p>	<p>What were the rhyming words in this story? What would do you see within that bigger word? (prompt students to look for the root word in a word with a prefix or a suffix, or for the two words that make up a compound word.) What is the first letter (or last letter) of the word? What sound does that letter (or combination of letters) make? What other words start with that letter and would fit into this sentence?</p> <p>If a reader is relying primarily on visual cues, it will be beneficial to support her reading with strategies that promote meaning and structure.</p>

Examples of MSV Cue

<p>An example of a reader using MEANING cue,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>purring</i></p> <p>The small cat was sitting quietly by the window.</p> <p>In this example, the substitution of purring for quietly made sense to the reader, especially considering her personal experience and interest in cats. The reader may have also recently read another book about cats where the cat purred.</p>	<p>An example of a reader NOT using a meaning cue,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>quetty</i></p> <p>The small cat was sitting quietly by the window.</p> <p>In this example, the substitution of quetty for quietly does not make sense. Not only is quetty not a word but the rest of the sentence doesn't make sense as a result of the error. Meaning was not used on the word or sentence level in this example.</p>
<p>An example of a reader using STRUCTURAL cue,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>standing</i></p> <p>The small cat was sitting quietly by the window.</p> <p>In this example, the substitution of standing for sitting follows the rules of language, and does not present a grammatical problem.</p>	<p>An example of a reader NOT using a structural cue,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>sat</i></p> <p>The small cat was sitting quietly by the window.</p> <p>In this example, the substitution of sat for sitting creates a grammatical error and does not follow the rules of language.</p>
<p>An example of a reader using VISUAL cue,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>smell</i></p> <p>The small cat was sitting quietly by the window.</p> <p>In this example, the substitution of smell for small shows that the reader used the beginning blend as well as the middle consonant L, possibly recognizing the double L pattern in the word smell.</p>	<p>An example of a reader NOT using a visual cue,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>little</i></p> <p>The small cat was sitting quietly by the window.</p> <p>In this example, the substitution of little for small indicates that the cues for the letters were not used. Neither the beginning, end or chunk within the word is similar visually.</p>