The Constable Vowel Focused Continuous Production Program (CVCPP)

Historically, and presently the highest number of decoding errors are made on vowel sounds in words. On its face, this seems odd since vowel sounds have the longest duration and the highest amplitude (sound energy) in most words. However, most reading programs teach vowels in isolation, one at a time. One feature of the CVCCP is the introduction of vowel sounds as a *system of contrasts, and in the context of a syllable.*

In our CVCPP our program we introduce i /ɪ/, a /ae/, and o /α/ as a system of contrasts. First, we teach these vowel sounds with their appropriate mouth postures. We use a myriad of emergent literacy activities to build steady state representations of these vowel phonemes. It is only after children can identify these vowels as the medial sounds in *continuously produced* syllables (i.e., vod) or short words i.e. (map), that we introduce the corresponding letter representations.

A second feature of the CVCPP is the use of continuous production, versus segmented production of print. The importance of continuous production is supported by research in speech science. This research underscores the fact that children ages 4-6 use vowel transition information to identify the consonants before and after the vowel as well to support the perception of the vowel. When vowels and consonants are separated in an artificial "tapped out" production, this important vowel transition information is lost to the speaker. Losing this information makes it especially hard for children with phonological processing difficulties and language learning differences to make sense of their output. Children taught this way often attempt to read with the separation of phonemes. Thus, seeing the word stick, they may decode /s/ /t/ /i/ /c//k/ and then say the word stkickt.

 Only when children are reading stories and spelling using the first three vowels at high accuracy, is the way clear to add the next vowel u (ʌ), a vowel produced in the mid-center of the mouth. This vowel is consolidated through a variety of emergent activities. Now the sequence of vowels is produced (i /ɪ/, a /ae/, o /α/ u /ʌ/. Children then spend time producing the new sequence (i /ɪ/, a /ae/, o /α/ u /ʌ/. and consolidating these in literate activities such as reading, spelling, and writing.

Arguably the vowel which is causes the most errors in traditional reading programs in the vowel e (/ε/) This is not surprising because this vowel overlaps with the speech production and speech perception of the vowels i (ɪ) and a (ae). Hence, this is the final vowel introduced and consolidated in a variety of activities, followed by reading words in the sequence of sounds (i /ɪ/, a /ae/, o /α/ u /ʌ/) and then used in stories, and spelling.

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