



Questions about Step 1 ~ The Art of "Hunking" and "Chunking"

What is "hunking" and "chunking"?

"Hunking" and "chunking" is a decoding strategy. It is the training of the eye to look for letter combinations and their sounds in words rather than in individual sounds and letters. Both "hunking" and "chunking" are used synonymously.

What are hunks and chunks?

"Hunks" and "chunks" are the terms we use to referring to letter combinations that make up variant vowels (r-controlled vowels, diphthongs, and digraphs).

How do students "hunk" and "chunk"?

Initially, students "hunk" and "chunk" by circling or boxing in Phonics Dance Letter combinations found in vocabulary words. The training allows the eye to look at more than one letter at a time. As students become familiar with word families, super silent "e", magical "y", root words, consonant clusters, and words within words they go a step further. These combinations are underlined. Seeing words as a collection of sounds rather than focusing on the individual letter sounds allows your students to decode quickly and easily. Making the reading of words automatic.

Why do we need to do the Phonics Dance on a daily basis?

It's simple. Children don't usually learn a new idea or concept in a day or two. They need daily repetition to take the learning process to the point of being automatic. If you rely on a phonics workbook your class will spend two to three days working with a specific set of letter combinations. They might see those combinations at the end of the chapter or possibly on a review test and then that's it. When you Phonics Dance your class has the opportunity to review the sounds that they have learned and use them on a daily basis.

Questions about Step 2 ~ Word Work

Why is word work important?

When you give your class the opportunity to be "word detectives" you increase their ability to decode words and look for patterns in words. It is easy to reinforce language arts concepts that have previously been taught as you work with words.

Is it important to have a word wall in my room?

Having a word wall in your room allows children easy access to a giant dictionary, one that is easy to manipulate.

What kind of Language Arts concepts can be reinforced with word work?

You can easily review concepts such as synonyms, antonyms, homophones, compound words, nouns, verbs, adjectives, contractions, and so much more.

Why is Step 3 Creative Writing so important?

Children need to learn how to express themselves. They also need the opportunity to work with words in real life situations (writing stories). Once your class learns a "hunk" and "chunk" what better way to get them to use it and see it in action than through their own compositions.

Why do you dictate what your students will write?

I do this for a number of reasons. Sixteen years ago when I first started the creative writing process with my class I would ask them to write a story for me. They would make a list of ideas that interested them and then start in the writing process. I found that most students' stories always sounded the same so I began teaching the different writing formats. I wanted each student in my room to know how to write in a variety of ways. I taught these formats through themes that we were learning about in the classroom. I found that if we were learning about families and I have my class write in a variety of formats, using families as the springboard to each composition, my class becomes fluent in the words that correlated with the themes. Not only that, they get to write the high frequency words associated with the theme of the week and become proficient spellers.

Is there ever a time when you let your class write a story that they decide on?

Once we have learned a variety of writing formats I do give them the opportunity to create on their own.

Is Step 4 Student/Teacher conferencing that important?

YES! It allows you to deal with each student on an individual basis. You can isolate one or two concepts that apply to a particular child. It is one of the easiest ways to differentiate instruction. I might have Scott working on paragraph writing while Mackenzie is concentrating on capital letters and periods. The student/teacher conference completes the writing process.

In Step 5 Treacherous Word Training why do children need to circle the variants and underline other elements of the word?

This is the step that allows children to see how words are put together. It allows their eyes to look for combinations in words rather than individual letters, which is so important in the decoding of words.

When do all of these steps come together?

You will see the six steps to literacy come together during the reading process. All of the steps are building blocks to literacy.

The Phonics Dance P 937.845.0149
403 Kennison Avenue F 425.648.3779
New Carlisle, OH 45344 E sales@phonicsdance.com

Visit us on the World Wide Web @ www.phonicsdance.com

Copyright © 2004 The Phonics Dance. All Rights Reserved.