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drastically over the last few decades. Phonics is the study of sound in a language. Children need to learn phonics to learn words to learn sounds for correct pronunciation. It can be overwhelming for parents and teachers to understand which approach is best. Jolly Phonics is a popular program to teach phonics to young children in a more interactive way. Lets break it down further! Jolly Phonics is an interactive and child-centred approach to teaching early literacy concepts. The main philosophy behind this teaching method is that the sound of the letters is more helpful when learning reading and writing rather than the names of letters. There are many different characters, songs, stories and games to help students remember the letters more easily. Children dont learn the alphabet in the order we know; instead they are taught 42 letter sounds. As acknowledged in an article by The Age1, there is a strong need for students in Australia to be explicitly taught phonics, so it is easier for them to understand the relationship between letters and sounds. Many case studies2 have shown evidence of improvement in childrens reading and writing abilities with the use of programs such as Jolly phonics. Jolly Phonics is effective because it uses a more child-centred approach to introducing phonics to children. Learning the correct pronunciation of letters can help give students a head start in reading3, because children learn letter-sound knowledge to put words together. The repetition of the letter sounds they learn in Jolly songs, story books, finger phonics books and other Jolly phonics lessons and resources can help students learn faster and more effectively. Although this approach has some drawbacks, it is particularly beneficial for students who are not visual learners and need a more hands-on and multi-sensory approach to learning. When teaching Jolly phonics, you can easily integrate workbook writing with technology, music, and actions to further strengthen the childrens early literacy foundation. I was amazed by how much could be achieved by teaching letter sounds that the children blended together to make words. It was a complete revelation to me. I felt like I was learning to read and write along with my first class.Sara Wernham Jollylearning.co.uk4 The Jolly range contains all this and much more pupil books, story books, flash cards, posters, and writing When teaching children the Jolly Phonics programme, there are eight helpful steps you can use to assist students in remembering the sounds: Step 1: Read a story containing the sound Step 2: Demonstrate the action Step 3: Show the flashcard Sept 4: Introduce the letter formation Step 5: Blending the sound together Step 6: Sounding the letter Step 7: Dictation of the letter Step 8: Sing a song about the letter Altogether, 42 main sounds are introduced to the children by their sound rather than the letter name. The sounds are not taught in the standard alphabet sequence but instead in 7 different groups. The first group (s, a, t, p, i, n) are letters that can be combined together to create the largest number of simple three-letter words that we frequently use in reading and writing. Some groups also contain digraphs (two-letter words) like ee and oo. The idea of Jolly Phonics is to teach letter-sound relationships to children, building their early literacy skills, in a FUN way! The seven groups of letters should be taught in the following order so children can build and decode words as early as possible: Group 1: s, a, t, i, p, n Group 2: ck, e, h, r, m, d Group 3: g, o, u, l, f, d Group 4: ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or Group 5: z, w, ng, v, oo, oo Group 6: y, x, ch, sh, th, th Group 7: qu, ou, oi, ue, er, ar Jolly flashcards set Jolly readers Jolly workbooks As children are introduced to the Jolly Phonics sounds, they should be taught various skills to help them decode regular words. Sessions should be short and fast-paced to ensure the students enjoy and engage with content without losing interest. Take the students cues and adapt lessons when necessary. If children are tired, simply practice some songs to memorise the letters and complete the writing later. If they are having difficulty learning the concepts, make sure you consider their age, developmental level and whether there may be any other learning difficulties to consider. When teaching Jolly Phonics its important to remember the following steps: Sounds Teaching children the sounds of the letters rather than the name is helpful so children can actually understand the link between the sounds and the way it is written. For example, the letter n will be known as nn not en. Letter Formation Children need to be taught how to form the letters whilst writing. They will learn to use the tripod pencil grip in which the pencil sits between the thumb and two other fingers. Pencil grip is a crucial skill to help with the childrens evolving fine-motor skills when writing. Blending Children will learn how to blend the sounds together to build words. For example, p + a + n = pan. By practising blending these high-frequency sounds, students will develop their reading fluency. Segmenting Children need to hear each individual sound that makes up an entire word. This is done by breaking the word down to write and spell it correctly. Segmenting is a skill that helps children decode and write sight words more effortlessly. Tricky words There are many words in English in which the sounds and spellings dont match. For example, the and she. These two words are spelled similarly, but the pronunciation is different. The children are taught these words separately and shown some strategies on how to remember their diction. I have learnt that the key to making English lessons successful for young learners is to provide them with a variety of enjoyable and age-appropriate activities such as stories, songs and chants, and active games.Tessa Lochowski jollylearning.co.uk4 Generally speaking, the Jolly Phonics program is aimed at children aged 4-5, but ultimately, it depends on your child and when they are ready. Some might be keen to learn and even have extra practice, while others may show no interest, may have difficulty paying attention, or may not be ready. Many fun pre-learning activities can be done with children to prepare for the program, such as singing the Jolly songs, identifying sounds or reading the stories. Yes, the Jolly phonics application is comprehensive and interactive, making it one of the top 10 educational apps5. The app allows the child to follow each letter sound in the grouping sequence, encourages them to form the sound, play different games to recognise the sound and lastly, blend the sounds together to create simple words. Its important to note that solely using the app to teach children Jolly Phonics is not enough. The app is simply a means to consolidate childrens knowledge and demonstrate skills they have already learned. This paid app is available for both Apple and Android users. The Jolly Phonics kits are readily available online. If you dont want to buy the whole kit and want just the primary resources, be sure to check on Amazon. The set of activity books, readers and workbooks are available to purchase individually. There are also many other Jolly Phonics product ranges that you can buy as a set or on their own. You can also buy different sets at Officeworks6 and Modern Teaching Aids7. A systematic program that starts with easier sounds and progresses to more difficult ones at the next stage An enjoyable, multi-sensory method of learning phonics important for School Readiness 42 different letter sounds are taught in a specific order to ensure children can build words as early as possible Each letter is associated with a sound, action, song and storyline, making it easy to remember for students Children learn to put words together and read at a faster pace Multiple resources available within the Jolly Phonics material, to consolidate childrens knowledge Continues to teach Jolly grammar and other English rules for six yearsChildren learn the name of the alphabet letters at a later stage, as they must refer to them by the sound (not necessarily a disadvantage) Parents whose first language isnt English may struggle to understand the program Initially, children spend more time decoding words rather than understanding the context and meaning of the words in stories Certain sounds have more than one way of being written, e.g. the sound ai is similar to a-e (gate) and ay (day), but the students will only be taught one form first, e.g. the word rain. The tricky words list doesnt cover all the vocabulary in the English language which is difficult Overall, Jolly Phonics is a fun and engaging synthetic phonics program10 that teaches children about letter-sound relationships and develops their reading fluency. The advantages far outweigh any drawbacks; think of Jolly Phonics as the building blocks of reading quickly and fluently. The involvement of parents and teachers is the key to ensuring this program is effective. There are many preschools and early learning centres that use Jolly Phonics in their educational program, such as Read to Grow in WA9. They describe why they use Jolly Phonics in their article HERE9. Whether you use the books, songs, actions, flash cards, or everything combined, the most essential thing is your child should have fun while they are learning these key skills necessary to learn how to read and write. If they enjoy and develop a natural interest, children will inevitably succeed to become fluent readers. You can find out more details about the Jolly Phonics program by visiting the Jolly Learning website HERE8. Dont forget, there are many things you can do to improve your childs language and literacy skills such as Storytime before Bed you can read my article HERE on the benefits of daily stories with your child. Do you have a Jolly classroom? Have you used the Jolly Phonics program? I would love to know what you thought of it. Let me know in the comments below! Dull, predictable: The problem with books for prep students, Henrietta Cook, The Age. Published: Sep 29, 2018. Accessed online at on April 1, 2023. Case Studies, Jolly Learning. Accessed online at on April 1, 2023. How phonics can give children a head start with reading English, Dr Susan Russak and Dr Richard Wong, British Council. Published: Feb 1, 2019. Accessed online at on April 1, 2023. Jolly Phonics Authors, Jolly Learning. Accessed online at on April 1, 2023. Thinking apps on: Top 10 educational apps, Irish Examiner. 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