LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

MENTORING MEMOS

Phase 3 Primary UG: Memo 2

Phase Expectation Focus [for WB 16.11.26]	**Q4. How do I implement evidence-informed approaches to early reading, literacy, and oracy that enables pupils to access all areas of the curriculum?** **Q5. How do I plan and teach well-structured lessons that use effective modelling, explanations, and questioning techniques? (Focus on planning for phonics).**
Links to our curriculum	*Our student teachers successfully completed a phonics module in the first year of their course and taught phonics as part of their year 1 placement. As part of this, they looked closely at the intended learning in each part of the lesson and were given a bank of small steps to help them deconstruct videoed lessons and plan their own. Since then, they have revisited phonics subject knowledge in year 2 and 3 English sessions. In Phase 3a, all are asked to teach beginner readers phonics and lessons in which phonics knowledge and skills are applied to the reading of decodable texts.*

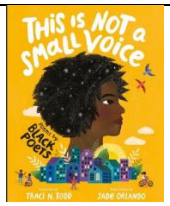
RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT	Department for Education (2023) *The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy*. London: Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/664f600c05e5fe28788fc437/The_reading_framework_.pdf (Accessed: 6 November 2026).
	
	Summary of some key points
	The balance between phonics (word reading) and language comprehension is explained through the **Simple View of Reading** model and evolves as a child progresses:
	• **Equal Core Importance**: Reading is defined as the product of both word reading (decoding) and language comprehension; pupils must develop both to become good, fluent readers.
	• **Early Focus (Reception & Key Stage 1)**:
	  ○ Because beginner readers can only decode a limited number of words, their language comprehension is initially developed through listening, talk, stories, poetry, and rhymes.
	  ○ At the same time, word reading must be taught directly and systematically through Synthetic Phonics (SSP) from the very beginning of school to give pupils the foundation to decode independently.
	• **Targeted Support for Older Struggling Readers**: Older pupils who continue to struggle with word reading still require direct, systematic phonics instruction alongside decodable texts matched to their capabilities so decoding difficulties do not limit their overall learning.

Discussion Points with Student Teacher	How is language comprehension developed throughout the curriculum in R and Year 1? How is assessment used to ensure that any phonics instruction given to older readers is 'matched to their capabilities'?
RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT	Carter, J. (2020) 'Listening to the voices of children: an illuminative evaluation of the teaching of early reading in the light of the phonics screening check', *Literacy*, 54(1), pp. 49–57. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12187 (Accessed: 7 November 2026). **Summary** Jane Carter evaluates the impact of the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check (PSC) on classroom practice and children's perception of reading. **Key findings are**:

	• A negative "backwash" on pedagogy: The high-stakes nature of the test has placed pressure on schools to increasingly teach to the test, at the expense of making links to broader reading comprehension. • Separation of phonics and reading: The emphasis on the PSC distorts young children's understanding of reading. Children often begin to view phonics as a 'subject' - decoding pseudo/real words – is just something they 'do' and they do not see a connection to reading. They view decoding words and reading comprehension/enjoyment as completely separate tasks rather than interconnected parts of literacy.
Discussion Points with Student Teacher	How can student teachers (STs) explicitly talk to children about why they learn phonics?
	Denby, N. (2015) *Training to Teach: A Guide for Students* (3rd edn.). London: Sage Neil Denby explores how successful teaching is not just about what the teacher does but what children learn; that teaching does not automatically mean something has been learned.
Discussion Points with Student Teacher	Discuss with student teachers how their planning – using the small steps – helped them to identify what children had learned and what some may have found challenging.

Teaching Expectations	Assuming a typical class timetable of 25 hours a week, student teachers should be teaching (as directed by the school mentor) for 15 hours per week and entitled to 1-hour PPA per day in line with ECT entitlement. Teaching details: • **Solo teaching whole class** - 2 hours per day - 10 hours per week (1 core subject lesson and one foundation subject lesson or science lesson per day) under the direct supervision of the class teacher or ITT Mentor**. For this week, at least 3 of the core lessons will be phonics.** • **Team teaching with mentor** for 2-3 hours per week from the teacher's plans, to develop skills and knowledge in a subject that either has not been previously taught or they are less confident with (for many, this could be phonics and the focus Foundation Subjects) • **Supporting small groups** as directed (part of the 15 hours for this week) • **One formal observation of a more experienced teacher** focussed on teaching Early Reading – do this before solo teaching
Curriculum Professional Development Activities (CPDAs)	• **In WB 16.11.26**, the focus will be on the Early Reading CPDA. Please see full details available on the LJMU website. • Remember, this is part of the teaching for the week and not additional. • For those based in KS2, this is the **minimum** teaching that should be completed in this key area. If your mentor feels you need to do more to meet phase expectations, this should be discussed and targeted as part of your weekly meeting.

Reminders for Students	• Plan your early reading lessons on the specific LJMU pro-formas (see section E of the LJMU website) • Use the bank of small steps to help you plan and think about assessment. • Have at least one of your early reading lessons formally observed (LAF completed), • Plan all other lessons are planned on the LJMU individual planner • Complete the post lesson analysis use information in subsequent lessons. • Upload all plans and evaluations to your Placement File. Please name and date each one clearly so that your evidence is easily located. • Ensure you prepare for your weekly meetings as modelled in the Placement Training (3.11.26). Rewatch the recording if necessary. • Arrange to complete a formal observation of your mentor focussing on how they plan for talk opportunities and ensure rich conversations are happening.

Reminders for Mentors	If you were unable to attend the Mentor Placement and ITaP Training on 3.11.26, **a recording is available here.** This clarifies placement expectations including those around early reading. **Adaptative Teaching ITaP** • Thank you for all your work supporting the student teachers during the ITaP week. As with all ITaPs, please fill in the Mentor Evaluation after the ITaP is completed. **Key weekly meeting discussion points** • **See Mentor Guide to Weekly Meetings for details** • Review learning and progress linked to the adaptive teaching ITaP. Set a follow-up target if appropriate • As WB 16.11 is an Early Reading focus, discussions around this and a SHARP - related target could be pertinent as this week's subject knowledge target. • Arrange the 3 lessons to team-teach next week. These should be subjects your ST feels less confident with at this point.
Key Dates	**Early Professionalism Check** • **Professional mentors** – if you did not manage to complete the early professionalism check on your student teacher on Friday, please **access the short survey via Abyasa.**
Education Updates	**TES – Will a national push on oracy risk benefit only those children who are already confident speakers?** - link - This article argues that simply increasing speaking opportunities is not enough; what is needed is a deliberate, inclusive curriculum design to ensure that pupils with speech, language and communication needs are not further marginalised. **Schools Week: Does a great education mean more than what happens inside the classroom?** – link - argues that the arts, culture and extracurricular activities help children discover their passions, build confidence and broaden their world view.
Recommended Read(s)	  Research strongly suggests that reading aloud to children, purely for pleasure, can have a positive impact on their own reading attitudes and attainment as key aspects, such as vocabulary knowledge, increase. **This week we are suggesting poetry to read aloud in class!** **A First Book of Bugs** by Simon Mole (Author), Adam Ming (illustrator) captures the life and ways of insects in a funny, colourful way. **This Is Not A Small Voice**: Poems by Black Poets selected by Traci N. Todd, illustrated by Jade Orlando – a gorgeous anthology of poems by celebrated posts such as Benjamin Zelhaniah, Maya Angelou and Joseph Coelho which explores themes such as love, pride, music and family.
Teaching and Thriving	Student teachers, If you'd like to talk to a Wellbeing Advisor, you can: • **Book an appointment online** • Contact us by phone: **0151 231 3664** or email: **studentwellbeing@ljmu.ac.uk**

