

READ FOR AFRICA's

Reading and spelling method based on

Ph o n o - G r a p h i x



Phono-Graphix™ is a straightforward reading and spelling method, which was developed by Carmen and Geoffrey Mc Guinness in 1993, at the Read America clinic in Orlando, Florida. It takes the sounds of the English language – and teaches the various sound-pictures (letters) that represent those sounds in careful stages. (www.phono-graphix.com)

International Research

Results of the 1996 Orton Annals of Dyslexia study conducted at the Read America clinic by Dr. Mc Guinness of the University of South Florida, showed a remarkable 98% success rate at getting clients to grade level in just 12 sessions. This was the average for all clients, including those with reading related learning disabilities.

Local Research (South Africa)

The application of Phono-Graphix was then explored in South Africa as part of a Master's Degree in Education at Wits University. A research project was conducted at the Sparrow Skills Centre, where Phono-Graphix was shown to be an effective pre-cursor to literacy practices. In 2012, Read For Africa bought the complete rights to Phono-Graphix in Africa and has applied the method to the South African context. This means that Read For Africa is also able to make the method and resources more accessible to teachers, parents, therapists and other practitioners at reduced prices.

The Phono-Graphix method addresses 3 things. The nature of the written code (sound pictures – letters or letter combinations representing the sounds of the language); the nature of the learner who needs to access this code and the 3 skills required to access this code.

1. The True Nature of the Code

There are four concepts about the English written code:

1. Letters are **pictures of sounds** - these are pictures of sound **c a t**

The nature of the learner – It has been demonstrated that all learners, including young children can understand this perfectly well. Children have a remarkable ability to assess visual figures. A two-day old baby is able to distinguish her/his mother's face from any other human face. Children assess and use visual figures in the world around them every day.

2. Sound pictures can be represented by **one or more than one letter** **sh i p** has three sounds and therefore three pictures.

The nature of the learner – It has been demonstrated that learners, including young children can manage this. They reuse figures in the world around them every day.

Square ■ triangle ▲ house ▲ *no rule was needed to recognise this as a house, so why should there be a rule to recognize <sh> as 'sh' or <oa> as 'o-e'? We didn't need to first learn that "When a triangle goes walking with a square it makes a house" in order to be able to understand this image. We learned this in context*

3. There is **variation** in the written code – there are many ways to show most sounds.

b oa t s l ow m o s t t oe n o t e

The nature of the learner – it has been demonstrated that learners, including young children can easily learn that these <oa> <ow> <o> are all a picture for the same sound. Children



learn easily enough that these are all pictures of flowers, even though they all look different. Learners handle variation in the world around them every day, so they are therefore able to handle variation in the code.

4. There is **overlap** in the code - sound pictures can represent more than one sound.

This picture <ow> can be “o-e” in sh ow or “ow” in fr ow n

The Nature of the learner – it has been demonstrated that learners, including young children can manage this as they easily manage the fact this this symbol ● can be a picture of a ball, a circle, a moon, a dot and much more!

2. The Three Skills Needed by the Learner to Access This Code

Segmenting – the ability to separate the sounds in words

Blending – the ability to blend sounds into words

Phoneme Manipulation – the ability to pull sounds in and out of words

These skills are taught in the context of real words and learners are provided with strategies to practice and use these skills independently and in varying contexts. The code (written language) and the skills are taught together and reading and spelling are taught at the same time because the two processes are reversible.

It is vital that the code and the skills are taught simultaneously for two reasons.

1. **The nature of the code** – The code doesn't exist in isolation from the process of segmenting, blending and manipulating phonemes. Neither do these processes exist without the code. One without the other will always be two halves of a whole. So we teach these together in the context for which they exist—reading and spelling real words.

2. **The nature of the child**—humans learn best when material and procedure are linked and embedded in the context for which it was intended (Bandura, 1985; Flavell, 1977).

The very important **techniques of Buddy Reading, Mapping and Scratch Sheet Spelling** are fundamental to the method and are integrated into all lessons and transferred into other learning areas. This ensures that learners have ample opportunity to use their skills and the knowledge of the code in real life situations.

This is why Read For Africa is able to teach most children how to read within the first 3 to 6 months of being exposed to literacy instruction. The sooner children learn to read, the more time there will be for spelling and comprehension instruction. The easier children find it to read, the more they will want to read, therefore building their visual memories to become even better spellers!