

Using Coaching to Support the use of a Planned Language Approach’s Big 5 Skills Case Study

In this scenario we will be exploring how the coach supports education staff’s use of effective practices from PLA’s Big 5: Phonological Awareness for All Children and DLLs.

Scenario

Wendy, a Head Start teacher, is working with her coach Zach to improve her teaching practices that support early language and literacy skills for all children including dual language learners. She finds it difficult to provide opportunities to learn sounds of words for the four-year-old children who speak other languages. In her classroom, she has several children who speak Spanish and Arabic.

Wendy identified on the needs assessment that she wanted to focus on strategies to Support Phonological Awareness for All Children and DLLs: Play games that encourage children to blend units of sound into words in English and the home language.

Sample Needs Assessment - Phonological Awareness (Preschoolers)

SAMPLE NEEDS ASSESSMENT – Phonological Awareness (Preschoolers)											
Coach Name:			Date:								
Read each statement and use the 1 to 5 scales to show how often you are using each practice now, and how often you would like to use it. Then write the difference between current use and desired use of the practice. This * applies to learning English. Speech sounds are important for understanding words in all languages, but sounds may not always be represented by letters in different languages.											
Teaching Practices	I am doing this now...					I want to do this...					Differences between current use and desired use
	Not at all					Not at all					
1. Talk, talk, talk—say lots of different words to help preschoolers build their vocabularies in English and home language	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Encourage careful listening and attention	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Read rhyming stories and poems and identify the rhymes in them*	1	2	3	4	5	1	3	4	5		
4. Play with interesting words in English and the home language	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Model how to listen to and blend syllables into words*	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Play games that encourage children to blend units of sound into words in English and home language	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	

Wendy indicated on her needs assessment that she was not using effective practices to support phonological awareness. She wanted to work on supporting children to blend units of sound into words in English and the home language by playing games during small groups.

Putting It Into Practice

How could coaching be used to support Wendy as she works on improving her teaching practices?



Shared Goals and Action Component

Once Wendy identified the practice, using the needs assessment, she worked with her coach to set a goal and develop an action plan.

Wendy indicated on her action plan that she wanted to work on practices that support Phonological Awareness for All Children and DLLs. Specifically, she chose the following practice from the needs assessment: Model how to blend units of sound into words by playing games with children during small groups.

Wendy then identified that she would know she had achieved the goal when:

- She played games that encourage children to blend units of sound into words in English and the home language with 5 children (2 Spanish speaking, 1 Arabic speaking, and 2 English speaking children) during small group for two consecutive weeks.

Wendy indicated in her action plan that she would meet this goal by:

- Reviewing the Big 5 teaching practices and her program's research-based curriculum to identify strategies and tips for encouraging children to blend units of sound into words in English and the home language
- Use the DLL app to learn key words and phrases in Spanish and Arabic and listen to how the words are pronounced – paying attention to how sounds are blended so that she can accurately model this for children.

- Watch exemplar videos in the ELOF Effective Practice Guide: Language and Literacy
- Shadow another teacher who uses games as a chance to model blending sounds in both Spanish and English

Focus Observation Component:

Once Wendy completed her needs assessment and developed a goal and action plan, her coach conducted a focused observation focused on the goal (teaching practice) play games that encourage children to blend units of sound into words in English and the home language during small groups.

Wendy's coach, Zach, watched for instances of Wendy encouraging and modeling how to blend sound into words in English, Spanish and Arabic.

Reflection and Feedback Component:

After Wendy and Zach completed the focused observation component of the PBC cycle, they prepared for the next component, Reflection and Feedback. Zach provided Wendy feedback during a planned debrief meeting the morning after the focused observation. They also used this time to talk about next steps to enhance the practices.

Zach identified successes and areas for additional improvement or refinement about the implementation of teaching practices.

Zach also provided Wendy an opportunity to reflect during the coaching session and discuss successes.

Zach then encouraged Wendy to review additional content in the Effective Practice Guides related to supporting the ELOF language and literacy goals.