



Teaching Phonics Using the *Jolly Phonics* Approach



Key Words : Jolly Phonics, Elementary School, Foreign Language Curriculum

Overview


This is a report of a pilot study on teaching phonics to 5th and 6th grade students in *Mie, Japan*. A revised course of study will be implemented in **2020** and phonics will be a new element added to the 5th and 6th grades **foreign language curriculum**. Due to the time constraint, we modified the *Jolly Phonics* approach and taught 18 sounds in two semesters. All the students enjoyed learning phonics and acquired the sounds.

Until 2019 Phonics was not included in the Course of Study for elementary, JH and H Schools.

Problem #1 Whole-world Approach	Problem #2 Romaji	Problem #3 Katakana English
JPN students learned reading through “whole-word like” approach in JH and H schools. Limited exposure to the written form of a word paired with an audio was <u>NOT effective</u> for JP students to <u>become fluent readers of English</u> .	JP students applied Romaji systems to read English words. The Romaji systems did not work; and this resulted in <u>incorrect pronunciations</u> . (e.g.) favorite(ふぁぼりて)	Due to the limited exposure to the written form of a word paired with an audio , JP students write <u>Katakana above English words</u> . Thus JP students’ English pronunciation <u>does NOT accurately mimic that of a native English speaker</u> .

From 2020 Phonics is added to the Course of Study for elementary schools.


Finally phonics has been included in the textbooks and is now taught at all elementary schools in Japan, however there are some problems.

Problem #1 Initial Sounds Only	Problem #2 Do NOT Teach Blending	Problem #3 5th & 6th Grades Only
(e.g.)  32 sounds are taught. Students are expected to identify the initial sounds of each words.	Students are NOT taught blending of sounds . For example, a word “bed” is a blend of b-e-d. JPN students will be able to identify the initial sounds of words, <u>but will NOT be able to blend sounds and say words correctly</u> .	Phonics is newly added and disregarded , about 10 out of 140 hours are spend to teach 32 initial sounds in elementary school. <u>10 hours of phonics is NOT sufficient for non-native speakers of English to become fluent readers of English</u> .

Our Approach to the Problems

Our Solutions to the Problems are:

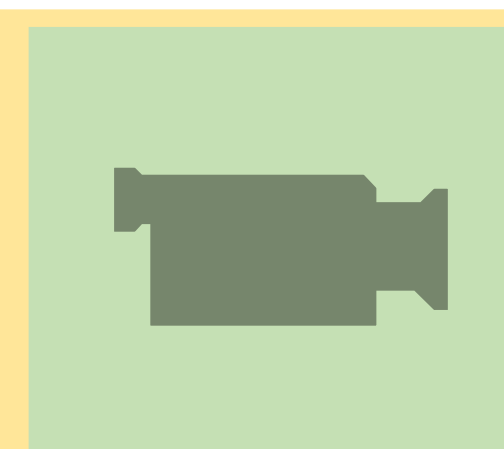
We got a special grant to teach phonics at a small school in Mie, Japan. We examined 3 approaches of teaching phonics (i.e., whole-word, analytic and synthetic phonics approaches) and chose Jolly Phonics which is one of the examples of synthetic phonics approaches.

Solution #1 Identify 42 Sounds	Solution #2 Teach Blending	Solution #3 From 3 rd to 6 th Graders
We applied the Jolly Phonics approach to teach 42 sounds . Our students are expected to identify whether a target sound (e.g., “b”) is a word.  bib rabbit frog crab	After being exposed to the target sound, students learn how to blend sounds . For example, the instructor points to “b” and has students say “b.” The instructor points to “a” and has students say “a.” <u>After reviewing all sounds, the instructor has students blend the sounds and say a word</u> . (e.g.) b-a-ck → back	In order to acquire 42 sounds , our students start to learn phonics in the 3rd grade . They spend <u>10 mins a week for 4 years</u> to learn phonics. According to our research, <u>students can read about 30% of words in the textbooks if they acquire 42 sounds of Jolly Phonics</u> .

We have more info in our video clip.

Our Next Steps are:

- We will teach phonics with Jolly Phonics approach at other schools.
- We plan to research whether students have acquired sounds.



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