

Using synthetic phonics to support the literacy of English learners.

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Synthetic phonics has made quite a come-back in the past few years, and is useful for teaching the skills required in the early stages of reading and writing.

The approach I use incorporates step-by-step teaching. A half-hour session includes:

- Handwriting (focusing on formation and comparative size)
- Sound pack (flash cards of each letter to quickly identify and give the sound)
- Sound to symbol (I say the sound and the learner writes the letter)
- Heart words (words we have to know by heart, read quickly then written. A quick google will give you word lists to use)
- New skills (a quick google of 'phonics teaching order' will bring up resources and plans)
- Dictated text (based on the new skill)
- Book reading (this can be a book with the skill appearing in it, or something of interest to the learner)

The approach works because it is based on the needs of the learner. We first find out what the learners know and what the gaps in skills are. We work incrementally, and don't move on until skills are mastered. We then move on to accessing reading and writing for purpose as soon as we can.