Teaching Handwriting Reading And Spelling Skills
Parent Information Session 2016

**THRASS**

**Phonemic Awareness**
- What is a phoneme?
- How many phonemes in spoken English?

**Graphemic Awareness**
- What is a grapheme?
- Common terms used to describe graphemes

**Phonographemic Awareness**
- Relationship between phonemes and graphemes

**Knowledge of Alphabet**
- Sequencing and naming the 26 letters

**Handwriting**
- Importance of correct letter formation

**Metalinguistics**
- Using the correct language.
What is THRASS?

• THRASS is NOT a program. It is a tool we can use to help our students to learn the 44 phonemes of spoken English and the spelling patterns we use to represent those phonemes in every writing.

• It is an explicit process for teaching students the code of English.

• It is a specific pedagogical practice (SSP). It is a way of teaching literacy. We don’t do THRASS we practice THRASS.
Why have we chosen to use THRASS?

• At Calen District State College we believe that literacy and numeracy are the cornerstones of education.
• English does not have a 1:1 ratio of letters to sounds.
• The traditional way of teaching phonics is not helping our students to break the code of written English.
• THRASS reduces handwriting, reading and spelling to their basics. It allows use to explicitly teach students the basic building blocks of English.
## TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO TEACHING PHONICS

Students are introduced to the lower case letters of the alphabet, and told each letter represents one sound. E.G ‘a’ is (a) as in ant. This is known as the One-Letter-Makes-One-Sound Method (OLMOSM).

When learners know all the lower case letters, capital letters are introduced separately and associated with their name.

Then they are taught to read, write and spell words using these letter-sound associations.

### PROBLEM:
Using the one letter makes One-Letter-Makes-One-Sound Method actually only introduced to 23 of the 44 phonemes that make up the English language.

Why only 23? ‘k’ and ‘q’ represent the same phoneme as the ‘c’ (cat, king, queen) and ‘x’ actually represents a sound that has already been represented with ‘k’ ‘s’.

This method only helps students to read and spell words that contain the most common spelling choices for those letters.

They learn 18 of the 24 consonant phonemes and only 5 of the 20 vowel phonemes!
**THRASS APPROACH**

THRASS using a phonographic methodology.

Learners are taught that:  
**Reading** involving changing graphemes (spelling choices or what you see) into phonemes (speech sounds what you hear or say).  
**Spelling** involves changing phonemes (speech sounds) into graphemes (spelling choices).

Explicitly teaches students the 44 phonemes of English language and enables them to read and spell words that contain **graphs** (one letter representing one phoneme), **digraphs** (two letters representing one phoneme), **trigraphs** (three letters representing one phoneme) and **quadgraphs** (four letters representing one phoneme).

It helps students to understand the relationship between the 44 phonemes of spoken English and the 26 letters of the alphabet.

**KEY IDEA: A LETTER DOES NOT MAKE A SOUND UNTIL IT IS IN A WORD!**
What does THRASS focus on?

• Knowledge of the alphabet, and the naming of the lower case letters and their capitals;
• Using the correct terms from the beginning
• The alphabet as a resource from which letters are selected to represent the phonemes of spoken English
• An awareness for the 44 phonemes (speech sounds) of spoken English
• An awareness for graphs, digraphs, trigraphs and quadgraphs (spelling choices).
• Handwriting skills
Sequencing and naming the 26 letters of the alphabet.

Students must know that there are 26 letters in the alphabet and each has name. Each letter has a capital and a lower case version. They must be able to sequence and name these letters in both lower case and capitals. (Ordering system in English).

Students should not see lower case and capital letters as two separate alphabets. They need to be taught that whether the shape of the capitals is the same as, or different from that of the lower-case, it is still considered to be the same letter and referred to as the same name. Students will then understand very early on, that both lower-case and capital letters form graphemes which are used to individually or in combination to represent the 44 phonemes of spoken English.
The 26 letters of the alphabet are displayed on the THRASS chart in lower case and capital letters above the phoneme boxes. They are displayed in pairs so children see that they are not two separate alphabets.

Letter recognition needs to be completely separate to phonics instruction. **A letter does not make a sound until it is in a word!**
Writing the 26 letters of the alphabet.

Students must be able to correctly form the 26 letters of the alphabet in lower case and capitals. It is vital that students start their letters in the correct position.

**Why is daily handwriting practice so important?**

We want writing to be a fluid process to free up our working memory. Handwriting must be an automatic skill to allow the writer to process thoughts as they write. Daily handwriting practice allows students to get the formation of letters into their muscle memory.

Correct pencil grip will also ensure legibility, fluency and pain free handwriting.
Correct Pencil Grip.

PENCIL GRIP
Correct pencil grip will ensure legibility, fluency and pain free handwriting. Poor pencil grip will remain with the learner for a lifetime and can cause pain, stress and tiredness in the joints and muscles of the fingers and hands, thereby reducing output.

The following rhyme should be used at the beginning of every handwriting session to assist learners with correct pencil grip. It should also be used informally as the teacher sees fit.

PENCIL GRIP RHyme
Crocodile, Crocodile, Crocodile snap,
Turn it around and lay it on its back.
Crawl right up,
Come right back,
Turn it to the left,
Turn it to the right,
NOW I'M READY,
TO START TO WRITE.
© Danyse Ritchie

1. Start by holding the pencil horizontally, gripping the non-writing end with the index finger and thumb of the non-preferred hand. While saying the words, Crocodile, Crocodile, Crocodile snap, bring the index finger and thumb of the preferred hand together several times in a snapping motion emulating a crocodile’s snapping jaws. As you approach the tip of the pencil place the index finger and thumb into position approximately 50mm above the sharpened area as shown in fig 1.

1. 'Crawl' the index finger, middle finger and the thumb up the pencil up then down again until you arrive at the correct distance above the point.

2. Flip the pencil over towards you so that it rests on the upper part of the index finger. Bring the middle finger into play by sliding it under the pencil so that it provides support. See fig 2.

4. Using the thumb and fingers,'roll' the pencil to the left, then to the right. Now you're ready to write! The final position should see a tripod grip using the pad of the thumb, the side of the middle finger and the tip of the first finger. See fig 2.
The THRASS chart

26 letters of the alphabet displayed in letter boxes

There are 24 consonant phoneme boxes.

Vowel line

There are 20 vowel phoneme boxes.

Phoneme boxes. There are 44 phoneme boxes on the THRASS chart.

The 120 pictures on the THRASS chart represent 120 of the most common graphemes (spelling choices)
Phoneme Boxes

This phoneme box is on the consonant side of the chart.
It is in Row 3.
It is Box 3.

THRASS picture that relates to each word.

THRASSWORD

Grapheme choices are shown inside the box.

The box locates the phoneme.

Graphemes not shown on the chart are represented by an * called a GCA (Grapheme-Catch-All)
A phoneme is a speech sound. (What you hear)

There are 44 phonemes in spoken English.  
24 consonant phonemes and 
20 vowel phonemes.

Each phoneme is represented by a phoneme box on the THRASS chart.
PHONEMES

Let’s have a go

How many phonemes can you hear in the word rat?
How did you go?

There are three phonemes in rat.

/r/ as in rain

/a/ as in ant

/t/ as in tap
How many phonemes can you hear in the word happy?
There are four phonemes in happy.

/h/ as in hand

/a/ as in ant

/pp/ as in hippo

/y/ as in pony
How many phonemes can you hear in the word school?
There are four phonemes in school.

/s/ as in sun

/ch/ as in school

/oo/ as in moon

/l/ as in leg
GRAPHEME

A spelling choice in the English language.
(What you see)

There are 120 graphemes on the THRASS Chart.

Consonant phonemes and graphemes are above the black vowel line.
Vowel phonemes and graphemes are below the black line.
GRAPHEME

Graph – one letter representing one sound e.g. ‘t’ in knight

Digraph – two letters representing one sound e.g. ‘ea’ in beach

Trigraph – three letters representing one sound e.g. ‘igh’ in light

Quadgraph – four letters representing one sound e.g. ‘eigh’ in eight
Colour coding graphemes

**BLUE** for consonant graphemes

**RED** for vowel graphemes

*e.g. truck, stamp, flower*
Let’s have a go

Work out how many phonemes in truck

Then write a grapheme to represent each phoneme.
truck
(has 4 phonemes)
How about another go?

Work out how many phonemes in **rainbow**

Then write a grapheme to represent each phoneme.
GRAPHEME

rainbow
(has 5 phonemes)

r
ai
n
b
ow
c
v
c
c
v
YOUR TAKE HOME PACK

THRASS Chart
THRASS Overwrite chart (Beginners Print) and OHP Pen
THRASS spelling chart
THRASS Picture Word Sheet
Four colour pen to colour code graphemes
Any questions before we move on and go into the classrooms to see THRASS at work?.