

# **EFFECTS OF JOLLY PHONICS INSTRUCTION FOR PUPIL BOOK 1 ON REDING ABILITY OF THAI EFL YOUNG LEARNERS**

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## **Abstract**

The research examine whether Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 has a significant effect on the reading ability of Thai EFL young learners at Thai private school in Thailand. The objective of this study were to study the effect of using Jolly Phonics Pupil Book 1 and its instruction with the experimental groups and compare the results with the control groups at a significant level of 0.05. The data were analyzed by using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and independent T-test.

The results were as follows: 1) The Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 has a significant effect at a significant level of 0.05 for Kindergarten level 2, Kindergarten Level 3, and Primary level 1 2) The comparison of Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil book 1 between experimental groups and the control groups shown a significant effect at a significant level of 0.05 for kindergarten level 2, Kindergarten level 3, and primary level 1.

**Keywords:** Jolly Phonics, Synthetic Phonics, Reading Ability, Literacy, EFL Learners

## **Introduction**

Being teachers, it's amazing to see our students enjoy learning and progress in their achievement. To be more specific, as Thai English teachers in kindergarten and primary schools in Thailand, some of us may be happy if we are only concern about the final outcome of the amount of English vocabulary that our kindergartens 2 & 3 and grade 1 students know. Every day, they recite words with the letter names like d,o,g dog, c,a,t cat, etc. and their meanings in Thai. For those who do this often, they are able to match words to the meanings or pictures or even write words correctly, and this impresses the parents and the teachers. But what about the words that they have never recited? Can they read them? Are we, English teachers, really going to be happy for our children to know only those recited words? Is this sufficient to develop their English proficiency to at least be competent, if not to compete with the rest of the world? How do we make English interesting and easy for our Thai EFL students whose exposure to English is mainly at the school. Out of a lot more questions that we have in our mind, one important question is "How should we start it right?"

Is rote learning of vocabulary and meanings the first, correct step to introduce English language learning to our young learners? Based on the Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read by National Institute for Literacy (USA), five areas of successful reading instruction for children include "phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension" (National Institute for Literacy, 2006). Unsurprisingly, this is not the current general practice of teaching and learning English in Thailand. Most Thai students are able to say or sing the alphabet song even before they join their first kindergarten year. They then are

taught how to write each letter and recite the spelling of some basic words using letter names and say the meaning of those words. The idea of letter sound recognition doesn't exist in most Thai schools. This means that the first three areas of successful reading instruction mentioned above have been neglected. Why do we care so much about reading? This is simply because books are an easier source for local Thai students to get exposed to English as people around them hardly communicate in English. Imagine if they can read, it's like they can be exposed to English anywhere, anytime.

Teaching English to young learners without giving importance to phonemic awareness and phonics is just like building a house without strong pillars. From our observation, most students in kindergarten and primary school guess how the word is read whenever they're asked to read them out loud. We thought to ourselves that this is not going to be the effective way of teaching and learning. We can't let the students be gamblers who rely their language learning on the method of guessing alone; we knew we had to find a way out.

Without waiting for any further delays in finding the most effective way to get our young learners the right start in learning English, we looked for possibilities that we can implement in our school by asking and searching about the pedagogy that schools (mostly international schools) and language institutions were using. What was common among them is "Phonics" and even more common is "Jolly Phonics". This made us want to learn more about how Jolly Phonics helps in building the right foundation in learning English for EFL young learners. Fortunately it was at the same time that Beverly Sace, a certified Jolly Phonics trainer was going to hold training in Thailand. We were like, "What a coincidence!" We were extremely eager to learn what changes Jolly Phonics could bring to our students. We decided to travel to Chiang Mai to attend the training in May 2014.

The training was absolutely interesting; it got us inspired and wanted to implement the teaching of Jolly Phonics in our school as soon as possible. The concept of 42 key sounds is sensible and not too complicated for EFL learners. The fun, multisensory approach is a promising sign that it will capture that attention of students with different learning styles. Although we were the only two participants from a Thai school (as the others were from international schools), we did not panic. We thought, "If the international schools can implement Jolly Phonics in their teaching, why can't we." We were positive that we are at an advantage as we understand both Thai and English. We understand the complications that Thai learners may face when learning English, which could be from the mother tongue interference, lack of exposure, etc. Without unnecessary delay, we proposed the implementation of Jolly Phonics in the school for kindergartens 2, 3 and grade 1 to the school director. Despite the school being a local Thai school, the director did not hesitate that the program may not be successful; she approved it with the vision that this systematic, explicit, synthetic phonics program will definitely bring positive changes to our school, more importantly to the children who are the future of our nation.

## **Research Objective**

1. To examine whether Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 has a significant effect on the reading ability of Thai EFL young learners within the experimental groups.
2. To compare whether Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 has a significant effect on the reading ability of Thai EFL young learners between the experimental groups and the control groups.

## Research Methodology

### Scope of study

#### 1. Population

Thai EFL young learners in a private school

The participants of this study were selected using purposive sampling for the experimental groups, while the participants of the control groups were selected using purposive sampling and then random sampling to provide the best chance of an unbiased representative sample as the Control groups originally had more students than the Experimental groups.

#### 2. Sample

The experimental groups consisted of twenty-two kindergarten 2 students, twenty-four kindergarten 3 students and thirteen grade 1 students from Napatsorn Natthanon School. The control groups consisted of the same number of students in each class at Napatsorn School. Both schools are in Pathumthani province, Thailand.

#### International Grade Conversion Guide

AGE	UK	USA / CANADA	THAILAND	AUSTRALIA	NEW ZEALAND
2-3	Pre-Nursery	Pre-KG	Pre-KG	Pre-School	Play centre
3-4	Nursery	Pre-KG	Kindergarten 1	Pre-School	Play centre
4-5	Reception	Pre-KG	<b>Kindergarten 2</b>	Pre-School	Kindergarten
5-6	Year 1	Kindergarten	<b>Kindergarten 3</b>	Pre-School	Year 1
6-7	Year 2	Grade 1	<b>Grade 1</b>	Year 1	Year 2

3. Time: The study began in August 2014 and completed in February 2015. The study covered 6 months teaching of Jolly Phonics (excluding a school break in October 2014). Kindergarten 2 and 3 studied Jolly Phonics on every school day, while grade 1 students had two lessons per week. This allowed us time to complete Jolly Phonics Pupil Book 1 for all 3 classes. Each lesson was 50 minutes long.

#### 4. Variables:

3.1 Independent variable: Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1

3.2 Dependent variables: Students' pre-test and post-test scores on Burt Word Reading Test (1974) Revised.

#### 5. Context:

Students participated in this study are local Thai students who have exposed to some English in their regular English classes; however, they do not use English as a part of their daily lives, so Thai was used to explain the teaching, tell instruction and make the story telling fun and meaningful.

## Research Instruments

1. Jolly Phonics handbook instructions on Jolly Phonics pupil book 1.
2. Burt Reading Test Revised (1974) for pre-test and post-test.
3. The data was analysed by SPSS 17.0 for windows, T-test was used to analysed pre-test and post-test scores at significant level of 0.05, Frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation were also include to interpreted the results.

## Research Result

The summary of research results are presented below.

### Comparing the Post-test score of the independent samples (Napatsorn Natthanon School students (Experimental group) and Napatsorn School Students (Control group)).

The independent t-test (called the Independent-Sample T-test in SPSS) compared the means between two independent groups on the different continuous variable. Below is the SPSS t-test procedure that provides relevant descriptive statistics. In this study, we determine if the students' test scores of the two independent samples (Experimental groups and Control groups) i.e. post-test are different at a significant level of .05; if so it would signify that Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 has a significant effect on the reading ability of Thai EFL young learners for the experimental groups.

- **Kindergarten 2**

*Table 1 Post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School Kindergarten 2 students (Experimental group) and post-test scores of Napatsorn School Kindergarten 2 students (Control group)*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NNATPOST	22	.00	12.00	2.2273	3.58478
NPATPOST	22	.00	7.00	0.4545	1.50324
Valid N	22				

The minimum score for Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test was 0 and the maximum was 12, while the minimum score for Napatsorn School post-test was 0 and the maximum was 7. After the students at Napatsorn Natthanon School received Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1, they took a post-test and the score showed the mean of 2.2273, while Napatsorn School students who did not receive Jolly Phonics instruction showed the post-test mean score of 0.4545, which is lower than that of Napatsorn Natthanon School students. The post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School were more deviant than the post-test scores of Napatsorn School.

Table 2 Post-test frequency and percentage of Napatsorn Natthanon School Kindergarten 2 students (Experimental group) and Napatsorn School Kindergarten 2 students (Control group)

NNAT Post-test				NPAT Post-test			
		Frequency	Valid Percent			Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	0.00	10	45.5	Valid	0.00	18	81.8
	1.00	6	27.3		1.00	3	13.6
	3.00	2	9.1		7.00	1	4.5
	7.00	1	4.5		Total	22	100.0
	9.00	2	9.1				
	12.00	1	4.5				
	Total	22	100.0				

Table 2 shows the occurrence of the post-test scores for both Napatsorn Natthanon School and Napatsorn School. Napatsorn Natthanon post-test score that occurred most often was 0, which contributed to 45.5%, while Napatsorn School post-test score that occurred most often was also 0, which contributed to a high of 81.8%.

Table 3 Independent T-Test: Significance of Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 on the reading ability of Napatsorn Natthanon School Kindergarten 2 students (Experimental group) as compared to reading ability of Napatsorn School Kindergarten 2 students who did not receive Jolly Phonics instruction (Control group)

Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Difference
TESTRSLT	Equal variances assumed	12.083	.001	2.139	42	.038*	1.77273	0.82876
	Equal variances not assumed			2.139	28.164	.041	1.77273	0.82876

\* $p < .05$  (Assumed equal variances at 0.001 significant level)

Table 3 shows the data of the t-test independent samples of the post-test scores from Napatsorn Natthanon School kindergarten 2 students who received Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 and the post-test scores from Napatsorn School kindergarten 2 students who did not receive Jolly Phonics instruction to examine whether the post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School were different from post-test scores of Napatsorn School at a statistically significant level ( $p < .05$ ). The hypothesis for this test was:

$H_0$ : The students' post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School after receiving Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 and the post-test scores of Napatsorn School are equal at a significant level ( $p < .05$ ).

$H_0: \mu_T = \mu_C$

$H_1$ : The students' post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School after receiving Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 and the post-test scores of Napatsorn School are not equal at a significant level ( $p < .05$ ).

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu_T \neq \mu_C$

The column labeled “Mean Difference” is the difference between the two means i.e. Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test scores vs Napatsorn School post-test scores which is 1.77273. The positive number indicates that the mean of Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test is more than the mean of Napatsorn School post-test. The standard deviation showed how deviant the mean scores of both tests were. In this study, the mean score of Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test deviates more than the mean score of Napatsorn School post-test, representing a higher gap range between minimum and maximum scores of the post-test. The column labeled “Sig. (2-tailed)” represents the two tailed p value associated with the test. In this test, the p value is .038.

To decide if we can reject H<sub>0</sub>; we followed the decision rule: If  $p \leq \alpha$ , then reject H<sub>0</sub>. In this case the p value .038 was less than .05, therefore this statistics rejected H<sub>0</sub>. This implied that Napatsorn Natthanon School students’ post-test scores after receiving Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 were different i.e. in this case more than Napatsorn School students’ post-test scores at a significant level of .05, thus concluding that ***Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 has a significant effect on the reading ability of Napatsorn Natthanon School kindergarten 2 students.***

- ***Kindergarten 3***

*Table 4 Post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School Kindergarten 3 students (Experimental group) and Napatsorn School Kindergarten 3 students (Control group)*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NNATPOST	24	.00	21.00	6.5000	6.58060
NPATPOST	24	.00	6.00	1.3750	1.49819
Valid N	24				

The minimum score for Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test was 0 and the maximum was 21, while the minimum score for Napatsorn School post-test was 0 and the maximum was 6. After the students at Napatsorn Natthanon School received Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1, they took a post-test and the score showed the mean of 6.5, while Napatsorn School students who did not receive Jolly Phonics instruction showed the post-test mean score of 1.3750, which is much lower than that of Napatsorn Natthanon School students. The post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School were more deviant than the post-test scores of Napatsorn School.

Table 5 Post-test frequency and percentage of Napatsorn Natthanon School Kindergarten 3 students (Experimental group) and Napatsorn School Kindergarten 3 students (Control group)

NNAT Post-test				NPAT Post-test			
		Frequency	Valid Percent			Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	0.00	6	25.0	Valid	0.00	6	25.0
	2.00	2	8.3		1.00	11	45.8
	3.00	2	8.3		2.00	4	16.7
	4.00	2	8.3		3.00	1	4.2
	5.00	2	8.3		5.00	1	4.2
	6.00	2	8.3		6.00	1	4.2
	8.00	1	4.2		Total	24	100.0
	9.00	1	4.2				
	12.00	1	4.2				
	14.00	1	4.2				
	16.00	1	4.2				
	18.00	2	8.3				
	21.00	1	4.2				
	Total	24	100.0				

Table 5 shows the occurrence of the test scores for both Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test and Napatsorn School post-test. Napatsorn Natthanon post-test score that occurred most often was 0, which contributed to 25%, while Napatsorn School post-test score that occurred most often was 1, which contributed to 45.8%.

Table 6 Independent Sample T-Test: Significance of Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 on the reading ability of Napatsorn Natthanon School Kindergarten 3 students (Experimental group) as compared to reading ability of Napatsorn School Kindergarten 3 students who did not receive Jolly Phonics instruction (Control group)

Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Difference
TESTRSLT	Equal variances assumed	30.098	.000	3.720	46	.001*	5.12500	1.37763
	Equal variances not assumed			3.720	25.378	.001	5.12500	1.37763

\* $p < .05$  (Assumed equal variances at 0.000 significant level)

Table 6 shows the data of the t-test independent samples of the post-test scores. The post-test scores from Napatsorn Natthanon School kindergarten 3 students who received Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 and the post-test scores from Napatsorn School kindergarten 3 students who did not receive Jolly Phonics book one instruction to examine whether the post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School were different from post-test

scores of Napatsorn School at a statistically significant level ( $p < .05$ ). The hypothesis for this test was:

$H_0$ : The students' post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School after receiving Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 and the post-test scores of Napatsorn School are equal at a significant level ( $p < .05$ ).

$H_0: \mu_T = \mu_C$

$H_1$ : The students' post-test scores after receiving Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 and the post-test scores of Napatsorn School are not equal at a significant level ( $p < .05$ ).

$H_1: \mu_T \neq \mu_C$

The column labeled "Mean Difference" is the difference between the two means i.e. Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test scores vs Napatsorn School post-test scores which is 5.12500. The positive number indicates that the mean of Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test is more than the mean of Napatsorn School post-test. The standard deviation showed how deviant the mean scores of both tests were. In this study, the mean score of Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test deviates more than the mean score of Napatsorn School post-test, representing a higher gap range between minimum and maximum scores of the post-test. The column labeled "Sig. (2-tailed)" represents the two tailed p value associated with the test. In this test, the p value is .001.

To decide if we can reject  $H_0$ ; we followed the decision rule: If  $p \leq \alpha$ , then reject  $H_0$ . In this case the p value .001 was less than .05, therefore this statistics rejected  $H_0$ . This implied that Napatsorn Natthanon School students' post-test scores after receiving Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 were different i.e. in this case more than Napatsorn School students' post-test scores at a significant level of .05, thus concluding that ***Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 has a significant effect on the reading ability of Napatsorn Natthanon School Kindergarten 3 students.***

- **Grade Level 1**

*Table 7 Post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School Grade 1 students (Experimental group) and Napatsorn School Grade 1 students (Control group)*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NNATPOST	13	3.00	27.00	15.2308	8.24777
NPATPOST	13	.00	16.00	7.3077	5.66252
Valid N	13				

The results were that the minimum score for Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test was 3 and the maximum was 27, while the minimum score for Napatsorn School post-test was 0 and the maximum was 16. After the students at Napatsorn Natthanon School received Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1, they took a post-test and the score showed the mean of 15.2308, while Napatsorn School students who did not receive Jolly Phonics instruction showed the post-test mean score of 7.3077, which is much lower than that of Napatsorn Natthanon School students. The post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School were more deviant than the post-test scores of Napatsorn School.



Table 8 Post-test frequency and percentage of Napatsorn Natthanon School Grade 1 students (Experimental group) and Napatsorn School Grade 1 students (Control group)

NNAT Post-test				NPAT Post-test			
		Frequency	Valid Percent			Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	3.00	1	7.7	Valid	0.00	1	7.7
	5.00	1	7.7		1.00	2	15.4
	8.00	2	15.4		3.00	1	15.4
	9.00	1	7.7		4.00	2	15.4
	13.00	1	7.7		8.00	2	15.4
	15.00	1	7.7		9.00	1	7.7
	18.00	1	7.7		11.00	1	7.7
	20.00	1	7.7		15.00	2	15.4
	21.00	1	7.7		16.00	1	7.7
	25.00	1	7.7		Total	13	100.0
	26.00	1	7.7				
	27.00	1	7.7				
	Total	13	100.0				

Table 8 shows the occurrence of the test scores for both Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test and Napatsorn School post-test. Napatsorn Natthanon post-test score that occurred most often was 8, which contributed to 15.4%, while Napatsorn School post-test score that occurred most often was 1, 4, 8, and 15, which contributed to 15.4% each.

Table 9 Independent Sample T-Test: Significance of Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 on the reading ability of Napatsorn Natthanon School Grade 1 students (Experimental group) as compared to reading ability of Napatsorn School Grade 1 students who did not receive Jolly Phonics instruction (Control group)

Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Difference
TESTRSLT	Equal variances assumed	3.004	.096	2.855	24	.009	7.92308	2.77475
	Equal variances not assumed			2.855	21.256	.009*	7.92308	2.77475

\* $p < .05$  (equal variances not assumed at 0.096 significant level)

Table 9 shows the data of the t-test independent samples of the post-test scores. The post-test scores from Napatsorn Natthanon School grade 1 students who received Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 and the post-test scores from Napatsorn School grade 1 students who did not receive Jolly Phonics instruction to examine whether the post-test scores of

Napatsorn Natthanon School were different from post-test scores of Napatsorn School at a statistically significant level ( $p < .05$ ). The hypothesis for this test was:

$H_0$ : The students' post-test scores of Napatsorn Natthanon School after receiving Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 and the post-test scores of Napatsorn School are equal at a significant level ( $p < .05$ ).

$H_0: \mu_T = \mu_C$

$H_1$ : The students' post-test scores after receiving Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 and the post-test scores of Napatsorn School are not equal at a significant level ( $p < .05$ ).

$H_1: \mu_T \neq \mu_C$

The column labeled "Mean Difference" is the difference between the two means i.e. Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test scores vs Napatsorn School post-test scores which is 7.92308. The positive number indicates that the mean of Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test is more than the mean of Napatsorn School post-test. The standard deviation showed how deviant the mean scores of both tests were. In this study, the mean score of Napatsorn Natthanon School post-test deviates more than the mean score of Napatsorn School post-test, representing a higher gap range between minimum and maximum scores of the post-test. The column labeled "Sig. (2-tailed)" represents the two tailed p value associated with the test. In this test, the p value is .009.

To decide if we can reject  $H_0$ ; we followed the decision rule: If  $p \leq \alpha$ , then reject  $H_0$ . In this case the p value .009 was less than .05, therefore this statistics rejected  $H_0$ . This implied that Napatsorn Natthanon School students' post-test scores after receiving Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 were different i.e. in this case more than that of Napatsorn School students' post-test scores at a significant level of .05, thus concluding that *Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1 has a significant effect on the reading ability of Napatsorn Natthanon School grade 1 students.*

## Discussions

Six months of Jolly Phonics instruction have brought tremendous improvement to our students' reading ability. A number of useful components that contribute to this development was gathered and listed below.

### 1. Make the most effective use of the multi-sensory approach of Jolly Phonics

Learners have different learning styles. It is important for teachers to understand this and prepare a variety of class activities that different types of learners enjoy. For instance, some students are visual learners; they learn best by watching, while kinesthetic learners are those who learn best by actually doing things. Using Jolly Phonics materials such as the Big Book, songs, flashcards, magnetic alphabets, etc. wisely can help enhance the learning of all types of learners.

### 2. Create the learning environment

Learning can be at anytime, anywhere. Teachers can help create the learning environment by making appropriate selective English phonics materials available to the students, for instance, by putting the letter sound wall frieze around the classroom so the students can see it often or even providing the Read and See book at suitable time for them to read, etc.

### 3. Practice makes perfect

It is vital to revise all the sounds at the beginning of every class in order to ensure that the students remember every sound learned before they begin with the new sounds. When we

learned each new sound, we stick that letter sound wall frieze on the wall and used it as our sound revision material; the Jolly Phonics songs can also be used for this purpose.

Practice doesn't necessary be done at the school only; parents can also help with this at home.

#### 4. Keep the parents informed about what is going on in the Jolly Phonics class

Because Thailand is an EFL country, the concept of English Phonics may be familiar to specific groups of people only. It is crucial to hold at least a meeting with the parents to introduce phonics, its benefits, etc. to them before the start of the phonics course, so they understand what their children would be learning about. In the meeting, the teachers should also suggest ways that parents can help their children with the learning at home, e.g. providing useful websites or advice on how they can help their children at home. It was observed that children whose parents support the study or the practice at home also perform well in Jolly Phonics class.

#### 5. Hold training for Jolly Phonics teacher

Having the right start makes the teaching and learning more effective and smoother. Jolly Phonics teacher should be trained before they actually teach the students. This is because the foundation of phonics deals with the ability to hear, identify and say the sounds that correspond to the print of the letters. Due to mother tongue interference, some sounds may be difficult to pronounce than other sounds and need to be pointed out to the students explicitly. Some of the sounds that we need to be very careful with are /r/ and /l/, /w/ and /v/, /ch/ and /sh/, etc. Of course, we don't want our students to be saying the words 'lice' instead of 'rice', 'wan' instead of 'van' or 'ship' instead of 'chip', so the master models (teachers) must pronounce these sounds correctly first.

### **Giving importance to details makes the learning even better**

#### 1. Getting all students to remember the 42 sounds, blend the words, and segment the sounds

The Big Books and Jolly Phonics actions help the students to remember the letter sounds better. However, some students only recognize the sounds when they see actions or pictures related to those sounds, while some can say the sounds right away when seeing the letters. As time goes by and there are several repetitions, most students began to say the sounds by just seeing the letters.

This process may take longer with EFL learners as compared to the native learners, therefore, the teachers should allow enough time for interesting practice activities when planning the lessons.

It is also found that with more practice students were able to blend the words better toward the end of the course. Fast learners can blend right away after they see the words. Only some of the grade 1 students can segment the sounds in words, while most kindergarten 2 and 3 cannot do this yet.

#### 2. Preparing suitable materials for teaching mixed-ability class.

When taking time with slower learners, some faster learners could be bored. The teachers could then ask those faster learners to practice by themselves with the flashcards, magnetic alphabets, etc. This helps the teachers to tackle slower learners and achieve the overall improvement of the class.

### 3. Reading the test right

Over the six months, the students received Jolly Phonics instruction for Pupil Book 1, thus some words on the Burt Word Reading Test (1974) Revised were difficult for them as it contained some alternative spellings and tricky words. However, they did their best during the tests.

### **Limitations**

As this study was conducted at a Thai private school over a period of six months, it was difficult to have the students from all 3 classes to be present in every lesson. Some of them didn't come to school due to different reasons such as sickness or travelling with parents. Another concern is that there may be students who attend Phonics classes at language schools; this may influence their pre-test and post-test scores. Lastly, the amount of parent's support alters the student's improvement; some parents have more time to teach their children at home, which could influence the progress of the students and thus impact the test scores.

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