

Fidelity Checklist

Mystery Bag

The Mystery Bag strategy is an activity utilized to support phonemic awareness. In this activity, a student pulls plastic letters out from a bag. The student must say the sound of each letter as he or she takes it out from the bag. Once the student pulls all the letters from the bag, the teacher will make a word from the letters for the student to sound-out and speak. If the student is more advanced, the teacher can encourage the student to create the word from the letters. This activity is beneficial for supporting sound synthesis and blending (Edelen-Smith, 1997). Bag activities keep children actively engaged while providing sufficient focus on the sounds within words. The bag activity is encouraged to be completed between the student and teacher or between student and student (Lewkowicz, 1994).

The Mystery Bag strategy fosters active and hands-on learning. This activity allows students to not only visually view letters and words but physically manipulate them as well with tangible, plastic letters. By manipulating the plastic letters, students can experience a more concrete application of blending and segmenting of sounds with letters (Pullen & Lane, 2016). This can lead to improved decoding skills and increased understanding of the alphabetic principle. This activity is not only a hands-on method for improving early phonemic awareness, but it is also fun and engaging for students and teachers (Pullen & Lane, 2016). Furthermore, the Mystery Bag activity or strategy supports sound synthesis and sound blending. Sound synthesis is an important skill related to reading ability as it is the basis for word formation. Sound synthesis includes blending an initial sound to the rest of the word, blending syllables of a word together, and blending isolated phonemes to create a word (Edelen-Smith, 1997). The Mystery Bag strategy provides the students an opportunity to manipulate and blend phonemes into words.

Science of Reading Connection:

This activity connects to the Scarborough's rope model for reading. This model involves many rope strands that represent different components of reading (Scarborough, 2001). The Mystery Bag strategy connects to the lower word recognition strands of the model. These word recognition strands include phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition of familiar words (International Dyslexia Association, 2018). These strands work in unison to help students become accurate, fluent, and automatic in their reading. The Mystery Bag activity supports all these strands through its implementation. Through blending the sounds together to create words, students are reinforcing their alphabetic principle, spelling-sound correspondence, and awareness of phonemes. Furthermore, the activity encourages sight recognition of familiar words through students observing the words teachers create.

Date:

Activity/Class:

Mystery Bag	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1. Prepare student for activity by activating his or her prior knowledge of letters and sounds. This can be done through saying the alphabet and saying the sounds each letter makes.			
2. Explain to the student he or she will be playing a game. Introduce the mystery bag activity by			

showing the student the bag and the plastic letters inside the bag.			
3. Place three plastic letters that can be used to make an easy-to-sound-out word (e.g., pat, cat, dog) inside the bag.			
4. Have the student pull one letter out of the bag at a time. Ask him or her what sound each letter makes.			
5. Place the letters together to make a word. Ask the student if he or she knows the word. Encourage the student to sound out the word and then say it.			
6. Give your student the opportunity to complete steps 4-5 with multiple letter combinations and words.			
7. Have the student follow up on the activity by asking him or her concluding questions, such as, "Did you like the activity? How was creating the words?"			
Total steps completed accurately:			
Percentage of steps completed accurately:			

Additional comments and notes: