

# Masterclass Notes: Sarah Battistella

## Phase 1 Playberry Laser Phonology Lesson



This is a running log of a lesson with Bec Pawson's year 1 class taught by Sarah Battistella. I've made notes of strategies used by Sarah that might not be noticed by someone new to teaching this way. I have highlighted strategies that keep the lesson moving at a good pace and ensure students are sticking to established routines. Students are always looking where Sarah wants them looking and thinking about what Sarah wants students thinking about. This managing students' cognitive load.

Pay attention to Sarah's consistency and economic use of language. This is key to moving lessons at a good pace and getting through in around 45-50 minutes.

You can see the work Bec has put in establishing the routines.

## Settling the Class

*"Boards parked, hands in laps, and eyes on the screen"*

Notice Sarah's succinct language – explicit, unambiguous. No unnecessary language to cognitively overload any students. This is known as *economy of language* and is incredibly important to effective teaching.

Redirect:

*"Lauren, eyes on the screen"*

Sarah, then moves on without waiting for Lauren. This is called *take up time*. There is no *over-dwelling* and waiting students to follow the instruction with comments like *"now please Lauren, we're waiting"*. Sarah moves on with the lesson with the expectation that Lauren will comply. Sarah checks with a glance to see that Lauren has complied.

## Review: Alphabet

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

### Letter Naming using Alphabet Deck

*"Eyes on the cards, let's go ..."*

Short, clear direction. Sarah's tone friendly and light.

Sarah keeps the alphabet routine fast paced and visibly scans the students to show she's watching and expecting full participation. Students say letter names clearly.

### Handwriting the alphabet

*“Fantastic, can you please group your pens and be ready to write the alphabet ... waiting for everybody ... lids off ... OK let’s begin.”*

Notice there’s no waiting for slower students to be ready. This is deliberate. It communicates that the lesson will move on and students need to keep with the pace of the lesson rather than the teacher waiting<sup>1</sup>.

Sarah then keeps the pace, cueing with the word *‘next’*. Because Sarah is watching students, she can slow down if needed but her intention is to bring students’ pace up rather than have the pace dictated by the slowest students. Slower students do speed up with practice<sup>2</sup>.

When Sarah needs to correct a student, she keeps her language direct, brief and kind:

*“Make sure your tall letters are nice and tall so they come right up”*

This is not a time to question students with “what’s wrong with that letter”, teachers must be efficient with language. Every unnecessary word creates extraneous cognitive for students.

*“Chin it”*

This command is brief. The *chin it* routine involves putting lids on markers. This has been taught, and practiced, and students have *chunked* the two processes of putting the lid on and holding the whiteboard under the chin. Sarah saying *“chin it”* prompts the routine. Bec (classroom teacher) has also worked on students holding boards under chins and nowhere else. This takes insistence and practice.

Sarah re-teaches the formation of the lower case ‘p’. This *diagnostic teaching* depends on watching students as they write the alphabet. With no unnecessary language, Sarah briefly explains what she saw with in terms of the common error (students writing an upper case ‘p’). She then models on the screen what it should look like and then directs students to practice.

*“Park your boards please Year 1”* (with hand gesture)

Without delay, Sarah sits down and gets the Reading Card Pack. This signals that the lesson is rolling on and students must move quickly.

*“No rubbing out, parking your boards”*

It is common for students to fluff about with erasing. Sarah has added an efficiency here by directing students not to wipe. A routine on how to erase boards is worth teaching, otherwise students become distracted by erasing letter-by-letter.

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<sup>1</sup> When teachers only proceed when the slowest students are ready, it signals to the group that there’s no need to follow directions quickly and the whole process slows down. Students respond much faster (even the natural dawdlers) when they know the pace is lively.

<sup>2</sup> Teachers can fall into the habit of allowing slower moving students to dictate the pace of the lesson. This risks losing attention of the majority of students and teaching students they don’t have to move quickly.

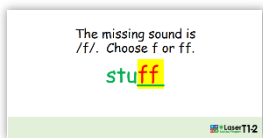


## Review: Reading Card Drill

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

Sarah moves quickly through the deck - bringing students to her pace. The aim is rapid recall of the grapheme-phoneme correspondences so pace is important. Sarah scans the students as she uses the card deck. Students sense her gaze on them and that she wants full participation.

When students go off task they can be quickly cued: "Bill, eyes on the cards". This is said very quickly between cards so to not disrupt the flow of the drill.



## Review: Spelling

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

Students work on whiteboards (from the screen) to choose a spelling from a previously taught spelling rule. Sarah maintains economy of language by keeping her instruction brief. We recommended teachers read the instruction straight from our slides like Sarah has.

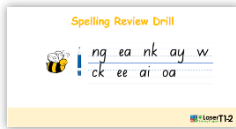
When checking student work, Sarah prompts by asking "how many syllables?" to some students because the --ck rule applies to one syllable words.

*In a situation like this, teachers can economize language even further by simply telling the student the rule they are not using: "stroll has one syllable so we use a double 'l'".*

When watching students work on whiteboards, Sarah whispers directly to students. If Sarah were to say this aloud for the rest of the class to hear, her voice would vie for working memory space with the phonemes the students are holding in their working memories as they spell the words, thus cognitively overloading some students.

*Sometimes teachers mistakenly think that correcting loudly (for others to hear) will benefit other students. This is in fact, disruptive the learning of other students.*

After students chin their boards for 'stroll', Sarah gives concise feedback about how some students have incorrectly chosen a single letter 'l' on the end of 'stroll'. Sarah briefly reminds the students of the spelling rule with only necessary language and moves on to the next word.



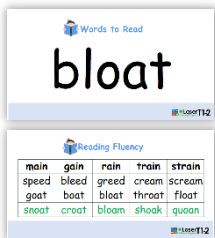
## Spelling Review Drill

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

Sarah reminds students of the routine using an economy of language:

*“Wipe your boards. We can go straight into our spelling review drill. Please make sure you repeat the phoneme and then the letter name as you write. Pens up, ready to go. For this first one, look at my mouth ... ‘ng’...”*

Sarah moves the spelling drill along quickly. She uses pure sounds<sup>3</sup>, giving a clue word for all words. Students are well rehearsed with this routine.



## Words to Read and Word Reading Fluency

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

Sarah narrates compliance<sup>4</sup> by saying:

*“I can see people are ready to do their reading, their boards are parked in their lap”*

...and then cues students to look at the board during the reading:

*“Tracking with me...”*

*“next line...”*

*“Leo, let me hear you...”*

*“Green means they are made up words – let’s go...”<sup>5</sup>*

Sarah listens and watches students carefully and when they struggle to decode a word, she cues sounding out with:

*“Phoneme fingers, let’s go...”*

<sup>3</sup> Pure sounds are carefully articulated and do not have unnecessary schwa sounds – for [more information on pure sounds](#).

<sup>4</sup> Narrating compliance is where the teacher deliberately talks aloud about the behaviours they are noticing that are following an instruction, rule or routine.

<sup>5</sup> Cueing students that the green words are non-words cues them that they will not recognize them and will need to decode.



## Review: Words to spell

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

Sarah quickly transitions the students by saying:

*"Please grip your pens ready to write your words"*

*"Pen in one hand, phoneme fingers ready on the other"*

Then begins without delay:

*"The word is 'bloat' please write 'bloat...'"*

Students segment the word using phoneme fingers<sup>6</sup>. Once students use phoneme fingers they write the word onto their whiteboards. Sarah goes to students she wants to target to check and correct if necessary.

*"Reading from your board, the word you've written is..."*

*"Here's your next word 'load'"* ... (phoneme fingers routine) ... *"please write 'load'"* (students write)

When checking student work, Sarah differentiates for a student by writing the 'd' grapheme for him at the top of his whiteboard for him to refer to. This lifts the cognitive load of worrying about 'b' and 'd' so he can concentrate on spelling.

Sarah uses the same cueing language (above) as she cues<sup>7</sup>. The class continues this routine to the final word.

*"When you've finished writing 'oak' can you please chin your boards."*

Sarah gives the group some brief feedback about letter sizing and use of 'oa' grapheme.

*"Well done ... park your boards please. Pens on top ... eyes to the front."*

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<sup>6</sup> Using phoneme fingers is a phoneme segmentation (PA) task that assists students to link graphemes to phonemes

<sup>7</sup> Keeping language consistent reduces extraneous cognitive load



## New Teaching Point

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

### Directed Discovery Teaching (DDT)<sup>8</sup>

Students are directed to pay attention to the sound on the end of the words *slow*, *snow* and *mow*. Sarah cues the students to just listen by saying *"my turn."*

Students chorally respond to Sarah's question.

Sarah moves quickly through directed discovery slides (incorporating choral response and a student response from Sophie), Sarah simply cues students by pointing to the words on screen and says:

*"So here's our new rule today. The letters 'ow' spell the sound (ō) on the ends of words"*<sup>9</sup>

Sarah quickly initiates a choral read from the class. This choral response ensures another (multisensory) repetition of the rule (an additional exposure) for students.

Sarah chooses non-volunteers to check for understanding with pop sticks. She asks three students:

*"Can you tell us our new rule?"*

The second student called (Dominic) accidentally adds *'after a short vowel'* to the 'ow' rule. He's confused this with the Floss rule.

Sarah very briefly corrects Domenic's misconception and then calls another student (Ella) to say the 'ow' rule.

Sarah could have then asked Domenic again where 'ow' is used to check that he's corrected his misconception but chose not to for reasons of timing.

### Air Write – Multisensory Routine

Sarah and students air-write and say *"(ō) is ow"* three times and then students do the same routine three times on the whiteboards. This multisensory routine builds connections between the visual, auditory and kinesthetic (VAK) memories of the task and enhances recall and retention

The uppercase and lowercase formation is taught explicitly.

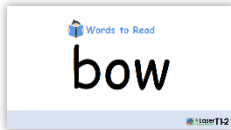
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<sup>8</sup> DDT is a technique from Playberry Tier 3 where the teacher directs students to discover the new learning for themselves. DDT can take different forms, but is always brief.

<sup>9</sup> Sometimes teachers feel the need to overelaborate: *"Now everybody, when you hear the sound (ō) at the ends of words, English has a very cool rule for how to spell that (ō) sound. Can you see it? Yes, everybody, it's the letters 'ow'. 'Ow' is a wonderful spelling that we use on the ends of words when we are wanting to spell the long vowel sound (ō)"* This unnecessary wordiness creates extraneous cognitive load and loses student attention.

*When practicing on the whiteboard, sometimes teachers insist that students do the full multisensory routine saying “(ō) is ow” as well.*

Sarah, checks that students are correctly forming the letters, going first to students who may struggle. She then moves onto upper case formation.



## Words to Read – New Teaching Point

(Refer to Teachers’ Manual for directions)

Sarah says:

*“We are going to practice reading some words with our new sound ‘(ō) is ow”*

She then cues in a student still fiddling with his whiteboard.

*“Owen, are you ready to go? ... Fantastic.”*

Note that Sarah doesn’t dwell on Owen and says *“Fantastic”*, before he has tuned in. This gives Owen take up time<sup>10</sup>. Adding saying *‘fantastic’* communicates an expectation of compliance and is more effective than saying *‘please’* and waiting for the student to fully comply.

Insisting full attention of the class is an important settling technique at the beginning of each section of the lesson. Beginning without all students’ full attention signals that they don’t have to pay attention and quickly becomes infectious.

Sarah moves the class along at a fast pace, watching for participation. She cues a student who has forgotten what he’s doing *“Rocco, eyes on the board”* and maintains lesson flow.

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<sup>10</sup> **Take up time** allows students a moment to comply without the teacher looking at them and waiting. The teacher gives the instruction and diverts their gaze from the student, saying ‘thanks’ or ‘thankyou’. This allows teacher to resume the flow of the lesson and communicates to the student that the teacher expects compliance (without having to wait on the student). Most students will follow. If not, the teacher can briefly cue the student again increase their level of intrusion if necessary.



## New Words to spell

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

Sarah quickly moves to students from the reading task by using even briefer language than in the review spelling section from earlier.

*"Time to spell, please grip your pens."*

Sarah puts her phoneme fingers in the air to cue the students and begins without delay."

*"Phoneme fingers. First word 'bow...'"*

...and then follows the exact same routine from the *Review words to spell* section. Sarah moves, checks boards and helps students correct errors. Some students need additional support. Sarah extends<sup>11</sup> a student by asking them to write 'throw' between the class set.

### Self-marking routine

*"OK, you are going to be marking your own words with the help of people in the classroom."*

Sarah uses pop sticks to choose non-volunteers to read out the letter names<sup>12</sup> of the words as the rest of the class checks their words, making any corrections.

Sarah then asks students to chin their boards and has a close look at students' boards and asks them to park their boards.



## Heart (irregular) Words

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

Sarah has a little fun reminding students about their *superhero arms* needed for the multisensory routine for heart word spelling and then says:

*"We are going to tap them out two times and then I am going to ask you to write it and chin it. This first word is 'once' ... please write 'once' "*

Then the routine from the teachers' notes is followed with the class. Sarah watches the students for participation and correct routine. Notice that Sarah starts the students off and then stops spelling aloud so she can listen to the students. Sarah gives a second round of feedback on letter formation for the letter 'p' and asks students to park their boards.

<sup>11</sup> Have 2 or 3 additional words ready on your planner for students who need extending during spelling routines.

<sup>12</sup> When spelling words students must use letter names because sounds are not helpful when a phoneme has multiple spellings like with the long (ō) sound.





## Dictation

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

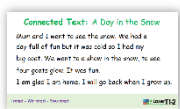
Sarah spends a few moments insisting students park boards so she has their full attention to then go through the process for dictation. Sarah reminds students of the COPS routine.

Sarah reads the sentence and has the students chorally repeat it x2. They students write. You can hear the students quietly saying the words to themselves. Sarah circulates and helps some students with spelling by cueing them to use phoneme fingers.

Sarah puts the complete sentence up on the board. Sarah points out key features of the sentence that she wants students to pay attention to. Students check their sentence against the COPS routine.

*“Park and wipe”*

...is the instruction Sarah gives to students once she has seen their board? Sarah pays closer attention to the students in the front row as they have been strategically placed there. She gives a few front row students some corrective feedback.



## Connected Text

(Refer to Teachers' Manual for directions)

This follows a 'I read – We read – You read' routine. Sarah reads first modelling fluency and prosody (I read) Students track with her. Then Sarah reads with the class (we read). Finally the students read and Sarah uses a pointer to prompt.