

**DEVELOPING SKILLS IN PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS**  
**Activities for the whole class and small groups**

by

Janet B. Webster, B.Ed., M.A., Ed.D  
Carol Deuling, B.Ed., B.A.(S-LP)  
Lorelea Frizzell, B.Sc, M.Sc.(S-LP)

## Introduction

During the last few years, educators have begun to realize that students with well developed *phonological skills* are in a better position to master sound-symbol relationships and to become proficient readers. Phonological awareness or *phoneme awareness* is the awareness of sounds in spoken (not written) English (Stahl and Murray, 1994). This includes such skills as rhyming, *alliteration*, matching initial *consonants* and counting the number of *phonemes* in words. Because we believe that teachers are actively searching for ideas which will help students develop phonological awareness, we have developed a set of tasks and activities which may be used with the whole class and with small groups. Many of the ideas may also be easily adapted for use with individuals.

## Literature on Phonological Awareness

We undertook an extensive search of the literature to identify the types of tasks which have been linked to the development of phonological awareness. Many of these tasks were used in research so we have adapted them for the classroom. We have also developed activities which teachers can have students do individually, in pairs or in small groups, in order to consolidate or practise the skills taught in the lesson. Readers interested in references will find a **Bibliography** at the end of this book. Because of the technical nature of much of the research on which the phonological activities are based, we provide a **Glossary** of terms; definitions of any words in *bold italics* may be found there.

In reviewing the literature, we looked particularly for a developmental order which might guide us in the sequencing of the tasks and activities. Unfortunately, research has not yet caught up with the needs of practitioners and a clear developmental progression of skills is not yet available. Until such a sequence of skills is revealed by research, we have tempered what research has already taught us with what we know from our experience working with students. Accordingly, we have imposed the following order on the skills thought to comprise phonological awareness.