Components of an Explicit Phonics Lesson

The National Reading Panel notes that systematic, explicit phonics instruction is beneficial for all students (2000). In order to apply this finding in the classroom, the terms explicit and systematic must be universally defined. Systematic phonics instruction includes a preplanned sequence of skills that progress from easier to more difficult. The skill sequence is based upon scientifically-based reading research and includes ongoing review. An example sequence for letter-sound correspondences is i, t, p, n. s, a, l, d, f, h, g, o, k, c, m, r, b, e, y, j, u, w, v, x, z, qu. The reason for this order is that over 100 words can be read and spelled using the first eleven correspondences (Carreker, 1992). Most phonics programs would have similar reasons for the sequencing of the instruction.

Explicit phonics instruction is instruction in which the teacher directly tells students the expected outcome, overtly models the skill, and provides students with many opportunities to apply the skill with ongoing feedback. Synthetic phonics instruction is explicit and systematic and has been identified as being very effective (NICHD, 2000). The critical components of an explicit phonics lesson are outlined below:

- **Phonemic Awareness Warm-Up**
    - A brief warm-up to explicit phonics instruction activates students' phonological processor and prepares them to make the connection to print.

- **Introduction/Review of Sound/Spelling(s)**
    - Teachers use effective instructional techniques to explicit connect phonemes and graphemes.

- **Blending**
    - Students are involved in a variety of activities that help them accurately decode and recode new words using the focus phonics element(s).

- **Word Work**
    - Student knowledge of high-frequency words, compound words, affixes, and word study elements is expanded through concise practice and application tasks.

- **Decodable Text**
    - Students are asked to apply the newly learned phonics element in text that is controlled for high-frequency words and sound/spelling correspondences.

- **Dictation**
    - After having the opportunity to decode words using the lesson objective, learners are asked to map speech to print through a word, phrase, or sentence dictation task.