

Exercise Description: Old MacDonald's Flying Farm

Old MacDonald's Flying Farm presents a repeated syllable, such as shu, and then a target syllable, such as chu. The participant holds the mouse button down over the flying animal to hear the repeated syllable shu. The participant must identify when the target syllable chu is presented and then release the mouse button.

Old MacDonald's Flying Farm's Goals

The goals of Old MacDonald's Flying Farm are to:

- Improve identification and discrimination of phonemes (phonological awareness)
- Increase the speed at which the participant identifies and understands rapid, successive changes in sound (listening accuracy)
- Improve the participant's ability to hold sounds in memory (working memory)

How Old MacDonald's Flying Farm Accomplishes Its Goals

Old MacDonald's Flying Farm develops phonological awareness skills by helping the participant learn to distinguish between syllables that differ by an individual phoneme, such as the /sh/ in shu and the /ch/ in chu. (A phoneme is the smallest unit of speech sound that distinguishes one word from another. See Phonological Awareness.)

One way in which Old MacDonald's Flying Farm accomplishes this goal is by first presenting repeated syllables that have been modified by introducing a silent gap in between the consonant sound and the vowel sound; for example, ki is initially presented as k-i. (The target syllable is always presented using natural speech.) As the participant progresses through the exercise, Old MacDonald's Flying Farm decreases the duration of the silent gap until the repeated syllables are presented at the rate of natural speech. Old MacDonald's Flying Farm also decreases the length of time between the repeated syllables as the participant progresses.

Old MacDonald's Flying Farm helps the participant develop listening accuracy by first presenting highly stretched phonemes and adaptively decreasing the phoneme stretch.

Old MacDonald's Flying Farm helps the participant improve working memory by challenging the participant to continuously attend to the repeated syllable and recognize the target syllable.

How Scores Are Calculated for Old MacDonald's Flying Farm

The score for Old MacDonald's Flying Farm is based on how far the participant advances through the 18 adaptive levels, which adjust the gap between the consonant sounds and the vowel sounds, for each of the 5 phoneme contrast pairs. The aggregate score for Old MacDonald's Flying Farm, Phoneme Identification, and Phonic Words determines the phonological awareness score.

How Old MacDonald's Flying Farm's Goals Relate to Your School's Goals

Because Old MacDonald's Flying Farm helps participants learn to recognize and discriminate words that differ by an initial sound, Old MacDonald's Flying Farm prepares participants to master more advanced phonological awareness skills. These advanced skills, which are components of state curriculum goals, include:

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Language

- Decoding
- Blending sounds to form words
- Adding, deleting, or changing target sounds in order to change words