

Maximizing the Literacy Skills of Individuals Who Require AAC

Janice Light- Penn State University

Extract from Workshop presented in support of ACCPC. Toronto, Canada - May 2007

Elements of Effective Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction		
Content	Read interesting texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular and repeated readings • Talking about text • Encourage active participation
	Build Language skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New, complex vocabulary • Teach syntax and morphology
	Phonological awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonic Segmentation • Sound Blending
	Letter-Sound Correspondence	(as opposed to letter-name correspondence)
	Early reading skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoding single words • Decoding in the context of shared reading
	Early writing skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictating / Telling stories • Writing stories • Sound spelling
Procedures	Direct, Explicit instruction in basic skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce task • Model task • Guided practice • Independent practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If correct, confirm and encourage ○ If incorrect, Model, prompt, and re-check
	Errorless Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaffolding support • Numerous opportunities to practice • Meaningful, fun materials
Adaptations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate need for spoken responses • Provide alternative response modes (eye pointing, pointing, signing, SGD) • Scaffolding support • Systematic data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision defects: large print • Hearing impairments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start with sounds within auditory range ○ Provide visual cues of sounds (mouth, tongue positions) • Teach sight words also • Use written words and signs as input • Use highly motivating materials

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FIRST STEPS IN LITERACY INSTRUCTION:

1. Phonological Awareness

Initial Phoneme segmentation:

- *Goal: The student will match a target phoneme presented orally to the correct picture of a word that starts with the target phoneme*
 - Present and label four pictures (baby, cat, mom, apple)
 - Say target phoneme while showing letter: /b/
 - Instruction: Point to the picture starting with /b/

Sound Blending:

- *Goal: The student will blend 3 target phonemes presented orally in sequence (with each phoneme extended 1-2 seconds), determine the target word, and then point to the correct picture of the target word*
 - Present and label four pictures (baby, cat, mom, apple)
 - Say target word orally extending each phoneme (c – aaa – t)
 - Instruction: Point to the picture

2. Letter-Sound Correspondence

- Progression of instruction:
 - Lower case letters first
 - Most frequently used letters first: E T A O I N S R H L D C U M F P
 - Dissimilar letters first (visually and auditorily): A M T S I F D R O G L H U C B N K V E W J P Y
 - Short vowels before long vowels
 - Blends after single letter-sound correspondences
 - Gradual increment of new letters
 - Few dissimilar foils first (e.g., b, m)
 - Gradual increase of complex foils (e.g., b, d)
- *Goal: The student will match a target phoneme presented orally to the correct letter*
 - Present 4 letters
 - Say target phoneme: /b/
 - Instruction: Point to /b/

3. Single word Decoding

- Start when student knows 6-7 letter-sound correspondences and is competent with sound blending (80% accurate)
- Continue practicing phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and building language skills
- Careful selection of foils:
 - Picture 1: Target word e.g., map
 - Picture 2: initial sound substitution e.g., nap
 - Picture 3: medial vowel substitution e.g., mop
 - Picture 4: final sound substitution e.g., mat
- *Goal: The student will decode / read a single word presented in writing and match the word to the correct picture*
 - Present 4 pictures
 - Present the target written word
 - Instruction: Read word and point to the picture

4. Decoding in the context of shared reading

- Continue practicing phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and building language skills
- Infuse new decoding skills into meaningful reading experiences

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- *Goal: Student will decode single CVC words presented in the context of a story and will say the word or match the word to the correct picture on a communication display or device*
 - Highlight target words in the book
 - Read sentence out loud and track words with finger
 - Pause at the highlighted target word
 - Instruction: Read the word and point to the correct picture in your display
- *Goal: Student will decode a single CVC word presented in writing and match the word to the correct picture in an I Spy book*
 - Present the written phrase, ending with the target word (e.g. I spy a ____)
 - Read out loud "I spy a _____ (pause)"
 - Instruction: Read the word and point to the picture in the book

NEXT STEPS IN LITERACY INSTRUCTION:

5. Building more advanced literacy skills

- Expand decoding skills (e.g., consonant clusters, long vowels, silent e)
- Expand participation in shared reading: gradually increase number of targeted words
- Continue to review / build automaticity in phonological awareness and decoding skills
- Continue to read and build language skills to ensure comprehension (semantic and syntactic knowledge)

6. Building Reading Comprehension

- *Goals:*
 - *Student will read the text and summarize the main points after each paragraph*
 - *Student will respond to wh-questions about the story including factual and inference-level questions (e.g., Who is it about? What happened?)*

7. Writing Instruction

- Engage student in interesting experiences: build world knowledge and provide topics to write about
- Meaningful writing activities: telling stories to adults, patterned story telling, writer's workshop, publishing
- Step 1: Patterned Story Writing
 - Read familiar stories with repeated pattern
 - Model writing for the student
 - Build new story with student following familiar pattern: have slots for the student to write, provide maximal scaffolding
- Step 2: Writing with familiar story schema
 - Read familiar stories with repeated scheme
 - Model writing for the student
 - Provide scaffolding support: student develops parts of the story
- Step 3: Expanding writing experiences
 - Use photos, pictures etc. of student's experiences
 - Encourage student to write stories
 - Model writing process
 - Encourage student to write using letters and sounds
 - Provide word bank