Slide 1

Emerging Literacy Instruction for Students with Complex Communication Needs

Valerie Wells

Speech-Language Pathologist
Peel District School Board
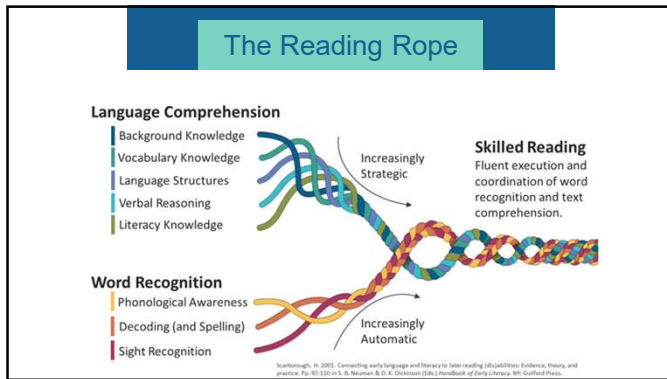
May 11, 2023

1

Slide 2

Land Acknowledgement

2

Slide 3

OSLA (Dec 2021). The Right to Read: *How Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists can support OHRC recommendations for Ontario students.* Slide deck prepared by OSLA (slide 5)

The Ontario Human Rights Recommendations

Universal Design
Accessible, **evidence-informed** instruction for all learners in the classroom

Reading Interventions
Flexible, inclusive, **scientific**, and timely interventions for those 'at-risk'

Accommodations
Timely implementation of effective technological & other accommodations

Early Screening
Use of **effective** measures to identify struggling readers who need more support not later than the end of grade 1

Assessment
Specialist assessments (e.g., psycho-educational) should be available for those continuing to struggle despite high quality support

3

3

The Reading Rope

Language Comprehension
- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Increasingly Strategic

Skilled Reading
Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Word Recognition
- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition

Increasingly Automatic

Scarborough, H. 2001. Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. Pp. 97-110 in S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.) Handbook of Early Literacy. NY: Guilford Press.

4

"students with other disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, hearing disabilities, vision disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) also struggle with reading for many of the same reasons as students with reading disabilities.

They face many of the barriers identified in this report and will benefit from the report's recommendations."

Ontario Human Rights Commission (2022). Right to Read: Inquiry. (P. 3)

5

What happens when our students have Complex Communication Needs (CCN)?

6

These are Students who…

"Are unable to communicate effectively using speech alone"

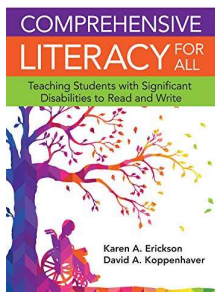Literacy For All Instruction website - ERLC

7

Often present as

Not using speech to communicate or using repetitive (echolalic) speech

Having a limited vocabulary or words they recognize and use (or that can be understood by others)

unable to share their knowledge with others (not making comments or share information)

unable to demonstrate their vocabulary knowledge
(not able to explain their understanding)

8

COMPREHENSIVE
LITERACY FOR ALL
Teaching Students with Significant
Disabilities to Read and Write

Karen A. Erickson
David A. Koppenhaver

https://literacyforallinstruction.ca/

9

Building a Foundation for Literacy

Shared Reading

Shared Writing

Alphabet Knowledge and Phonological Awareness

Erickson and Koppenhaver (2020). Comprehensive Literacy for All: Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write.

10

Shared Reading

It's about developing the student's interest and love of books

It's not the skills the child develops but their interest to participate, engage and interact through literacy.

The enjoyment, while engaging with their communication partners, leads to active participation and interaction in learning activities.

11

Participation (high / low)

High Participation Low Engagement	High Participation High Engagement
Low Participation Low Engagement	Low Participation High Engagement

low — high

Engagement

Erna Alant (2017). Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Engagement and Participation. (p. 37)

12

Shared Reading does NOT have to include

- reading every word on the page
- reading every page in the book
- correctly identifying anything on the page
- progressing through the book in page order
- showing comprehension of the story

Erin Sheldon, 2021. Class notes for Teaching Students with Complex Communication Needs (U of A), Module 5

13

Shared Reading DOES need to include

- enjoyment of the book
- enjoyment of each other
- enjoyment of language
- joint engagement between two people and a text
- There are invitations to engage more deeply with language, such as commenting and sharing opinions

Erin Sheldon, 2021. Class notes for Teaching Students with Complex Communication Needs (U of A), Module 5

14

Shared writing is how we teach children that what we say can be reduced to print.

It teaches children that they are authors

Shared Writing

You have participated in shared writing if you have ever:

Printed a note dictated by a child

Written a caption on a child's drawing

Helped a student think of possible words to use in a sentence

Offered a sentence starter to kickstart writing

Erin Sheldon, 2021. Class notes for Teaching Students with Complex Communication Needs (U of A), Module 4

15

Alphabet Knowledge and Phonological Awareness

Letter **name** identification

Letter **sound** identification

Recognizing letter in text (appearance of letter)

Rhyme recognition

Recognizing sounds in words

16

Goal of instruction in the Alphabetic Principle

"***teach students to apply their knowledge of letters and letter sounds*** rather than targeting identification, matching, and mastery through direct instruction and repeated trials."

Erickson, Hanser, Hatch and Sanders (2009). Research – Based Practices for Creating Access to the General Curriculum in Reading and Literacy for Students with Significant Intellectual Disabilities.
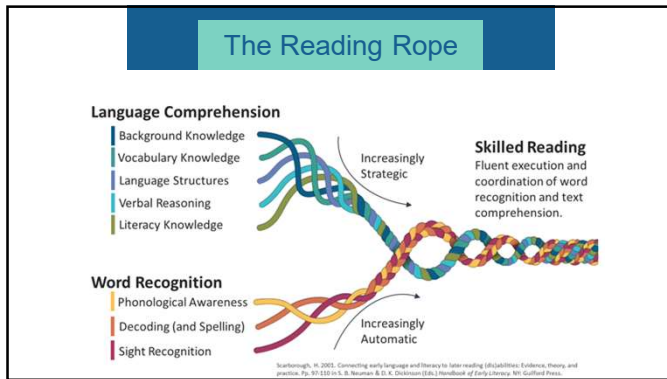
17

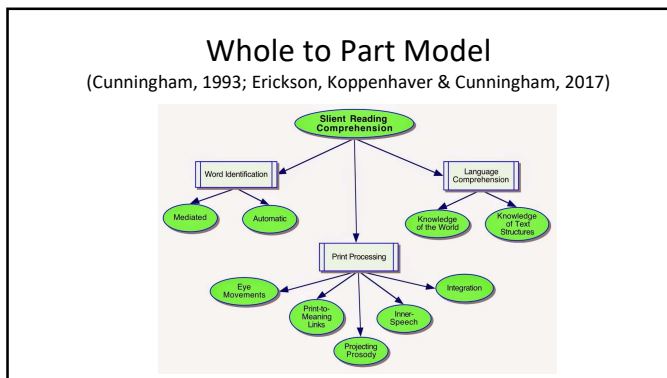## Robust Communication System

Large amount of vocabulary

Vocabulary that represents various parts of speech (not limited to nouns)

Contains Core Vocabulary (frequently occurring across environments) as well as fringe (specific to a context)
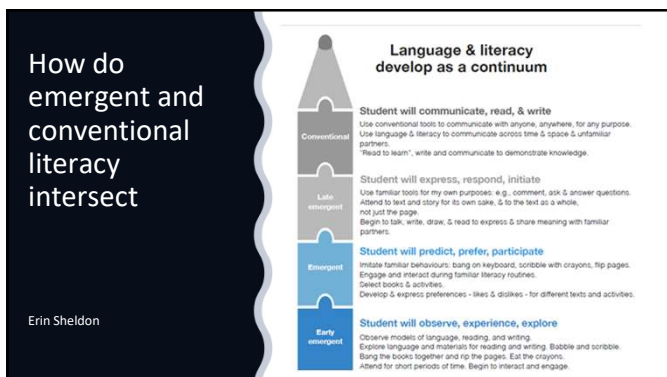
18

The Reading Rope

Language Comprehension
- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Increasingly Strategic

Skilled Reading
Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Word Recognition
- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition

Increasingly Automatic

Scarborough, H. 2001. Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. Pp. 97-110 in S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.) Handbook of Early Literacy. NY: Guilford Press.

19

Whole to Part Model
(Cunningham, 1993; Erickson, Koppenhaver & Cunningham, 2017)

- Silent Reading Comprehension
  - Word Identification
    - Mediated
    - Automatic
  - Language Comprehension
    - Knowledge of the World
    - Knowledge of Text Structures
  - Print Processing
    - Eye Movements
    - Print-to-Meaning Links
    - Inner-Speech
    - Projecting Prosody
    - Integration

20

How do emergent and conventional literacy intersect

Erin Sheldon

Language & literacy develop as a continuum

Conventional
Student will communicate, read, & write
Use conventional tools to communicate with anyone, anywhere, for any purpose.
Use language & literacy to communicate across time & space & unfamiliar partners.
'Read to learn', write and communicate to demonstrate knowledge.

Late emergent
Student will express, respond, initiate
Use familiar tools for my own purposes: e.g., comment, ask & answer questions.
Attend to text and story for its own sake, & to the text as a whole, not just the page.
Begin to talk, write, draw, & read to express & share meaning with familiar partners.

Emergent
Student will predict, prefer, participate
Imitate familiar behaviours: bang on keyboard, scribble with crayons, flip pages.
Engage and interact during familiar literacy routines.
Select books & activities.
Develop & express preferences - likes & dislikes - for different texts and activities.

Early emergent
Student will observe, experience, explore
Observe models of language, reading, and writing.
Explore language and materials for reading and writing. Babble and scribble.
Bang the books together and rip the pages. Eat the crayons.
Attend for short periods of time. Begin to interact and engage.

21

At the Early Emergent Literacy
stage, students will

observe

experience

explore

22

Student's expected responses

Observe models of language during shared reading and writing activities

Explore materials for reading and writing
· Babble and scribble
· Bang the books together and rip the pages
· Eat the crayons

Attend for short periods of time

Begin to engage and interact

share a like/dislike with their actions

23

Communication partner's role

The adult may not "Read" the story but point out something of interest on a page

Multiple pages may be flipped at one time or you may only be able to go through 1-2 pages

Introducing what a book is about
· Turn the page to get more information
· There are pictures to look at
· There are words

Student is learning that the text is being used to reflect words that can be spoken – and have meaning (seeing labels, seeing captions being added in discussions, etc.)

Model Communication using the student's communication system

24

At the Emergent Literacy stage, students will

predict

        prefer

                participate

25

Student's expected responses

Start to direct the reading or writing experience
- Bang on keyboard
- Scribble with crayons
- Turn pages in the book

Engage and interact during familiar literacy routines

Develop and express preferences – likes and dislikes – for different books and activities

26

Communication partner's role

Let the student's preferences guide the activity – and add information

Connect with the student regarding their interests – share information about that item of interest (ex. vocabulary building, relate to past experience of theirs or relate it to yourself)

Continue to provide opportunities to see that text shares a message – and start to point out familiar words, letters and sounds

27

At an emergent level, word work will focus on phonemic awareness with activities created to bring attention to
- rhyme (word endings),
- rhythm (to support memory/recall)
- repetition
- alliteration (word onsets)
- predictability

https://literacyforallinstruction.ca/alphabet-phonological-awareness/

28

At the late Emergent Literacy stage, students will

express

respond

initiate

29

Student's expected responses

Make comments, Ask questions, Answer questions

Attend to text and story for its own sake

Attend to the text as a whole – not just to a page

Begin to talk, write, draw and read to express and share meaning with familiar partners

30

Communication partner's role

Expand on the student's understanding of what is happening in the story through

- supporting understanding of vocabulary
- relating information to their personal experiences
- Providing opportunities to use reason, problem solving and other critical thinking skills
- Model use of language structures that the student is not using (expand on their responses)

Can use *information gathering* questions – but not testing ones!

31

https://literacyforallinstruction.ca/shared-reading/
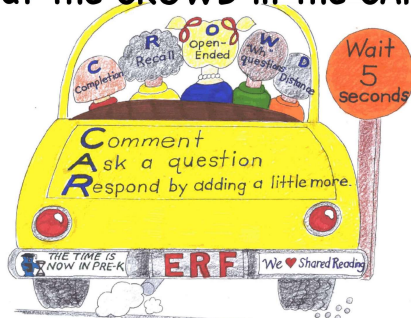
32

Communication partner's role (con't)

Provide the student with opportunities to offer their input into writing activities using sentence starters, familiar structure (ex. I see…), their name, etc.

Students can also be supported in tasks to sequence words to complete a response or to complete an open-ended question (use their AAC system or word cards to complete a response)

33

Oelwein Approach

Part 1: Words   emergent

Part 2: We have words! What do we do with them
- Grammar and sentence construction
- Books   Late emergent
- Reading comprehension
- Composition and creative writing

Part 3: Working from Whole to Parts   Late emergent/ conventional
- Sound and symbol association
- Teaching word families
- spelling

34

Interaction   precedes   *Communication*

Communication   precedes   *Symbol Development*

Symbol Development   precedes   *Language Development*

Loncke, F. (2021). Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Models and Applications.

35

Koppenhaver, D. (2000). Literacy in AAC: What should be written on the envelope we push? Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 16(4), 270-279.

Emergent literacy is a relatively "low stakes" intervention involving literacy activities that are relatively easily implemented: reading stories with children, providing basic technologies for communication and reading/writing access, and prompting exploration of print materials (p. 273)

36

Slide 37

Students with Complex Communication Needs have a Right to Literacy Instruction

37

Slide 38

A LITERACY BILL OF RIGHTS

All persons, regardless of the extent or severity of their disabilities, have the basic right to use print. Beyond this general right, there are certain literacy rights that should be assured for all persons. These basic rights are:

1. The right to an *opportunity to learn* to read and write. Opportunity involves engagement in active participation in tasks performed with high success.
2. The right to have accessible, clear, meaningful, culturally and linguistically appropriate texts at all times. *Texts*, broadly defined, range from picture books to newspapers to novels, cereal boxes, and electronic documents.
3. The right to *interact* with others while reading, writing, or listening to a text. *Interaction* involves questions comments, discussions, and other communications about or related to the text.
4. The right to *life choices* made available through reading and writing competencies. *Life choices* include but are not limited to, employment and employment changes, independence, community participation, and self-advocacy.
5. The right to *lifelong educational opportunities* incorporating literacy instruction and use. Literacy educational opportunities, regardless of when they are provided, have potential to provide power that cannot be taken away.
6. The right to have teachers and other service providers who are *knowledgeable* about literacy instruction methods and principles. Methods include but are not limited to instruction, assessment and the technologies required to make literacy accessible to individuals with disabilities. Principles include, but are not limited to, the beliefs that literacy is learned across places and time, and no person is too disabled to benefit from literacy learning opportunities.

7. The right to live and learn in environments that provide varied models of print use. Models are demonstrations of purposeful print use such as reading a recipe, paying bills, sharing a joke, or writing a letter.
8. The right to live and learn in environments that maintain the expectations and attitudes that all individuals are literacy learners.

Yoder, D.E., Erickson, K.A., and Koppenhaver, D.A. (1997)
https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/

38

Slide 39

The inquiry is not just about an equal right to read – it is about an equal right to a future.

Right to Read Executive Summary – p.7

39

Resources

Literacy Instruction for Students with Significant Disabilities -
https://literacyforallinstruction.ca/

Caroline Musselwhite's site (lots of Resources) -
http://www.aacintervention.com/

Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium - https://erlc.ca/ (resources)
Resources to support CCN Population
https://arpdcresources.ca/consortia/complex-communication-needs-ccn/

Jane Farrall

Training courses, blogs and video clips (especially one on systematic sequential
phonics)

https://www.janefarrall.com/

40

Resources – page 2

Project Core - http://www.project-core.com/
Professional Development modules on communication and using Core
Vocabulary – also "Teaching Communication During Academic Instruction,
"Shared Reading", "Predictable Chart Writing", "Alphabet Knowledge and
Phonological Awareness"

Dynamic Learning Maps –
https://www.dlmpd.com/all-modules-in-alphabetical-order/
Beginning Communicators -
https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1YOwjPrAT6FAZW5?Q_JFE=qdg
Shared Reading -
https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9soEeaJobFAqQPX?Q_JFE=qdg
Also have ones on Speaking and Listening, Symbols, Whoa re Students
with Significant Cognitive Disabilities, Teaching Text Comprehension –
and many more

41

Resources – page 3

PRC – Saltillo AAC Literacy Planners
2020 - https://www.prentrom.com/assets/uploads/planner/PRC-
literacy-planner-02202020.pdf
2021 (Chapter Books) -
https://www.prentrom.com/assets/uploads/planner/prc-planner-
2021-min(8).pdf
2022 -
https://www.prentrom.com/assets/uploads/2022planner/planner
-2022-min.pdf
2023 -
https://www.prentrom.com/assets/uploads/23Planner_Digital_FI
NAL.pdf

42

14
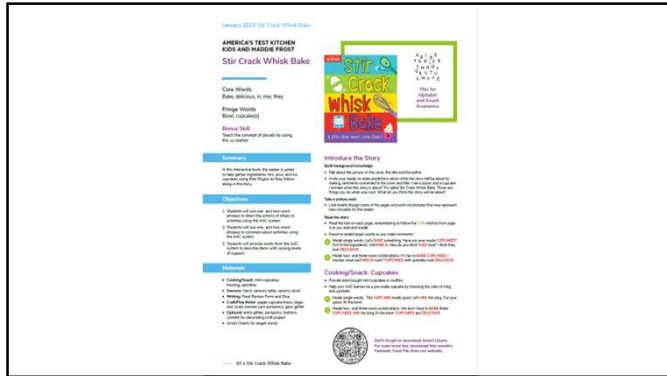
43

Resources - page 4

Janice Light
Literacy Instruction (Janice Light) -
https://aacliteracy.psu.edu/index.php/page/show/id/15/index.html

AAC Learning Center Moodle (Penn State University) - https://aac-learning-center-moodle.psu.edu/

Dr. Laura Clark
Reading and Writing 4 All -
https://sites.google.com/view/emergingreaders/home

44