

Literacy for ALL!

Gretchen Hanser
gretchen_hanser@med.unc.edu
February 15, 2006

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Model Demonstration Classroom Project

- 1) Develop classrooms that provide meaningful literacy opportunities for students with the most significant disabilities, including deaf-blindness.
- 2) Create resources for teachers and districts across NC.
- 3) Provide regional trainings about literacy for students with significant disabilities, highlighting the model classrooms.

Model Classrooms are being developed in:

Pitt County
Brunswick County
Cleveland County

Two Private Students from Mecklenburg County are also being served

Agenda

- An Overview of Typical Literacy Development
 - Emergent Literacy
 - Conventional Literacy
- Writing
- Reading

The Emergent to Conventional Literacy Continuum

- **Continuum:** A link between 2 things, or a continuous series of things that blend into each other so gradually and so seamlessly that it is impossible to say where one becomes the next.
- **All** students are somewhere on this continuum
- Provides a structure for understanding where students are in literacy development
 - Helps us identify appropriate goals & instructional activities.

The Reciprocal Relationship of Language and Literacy

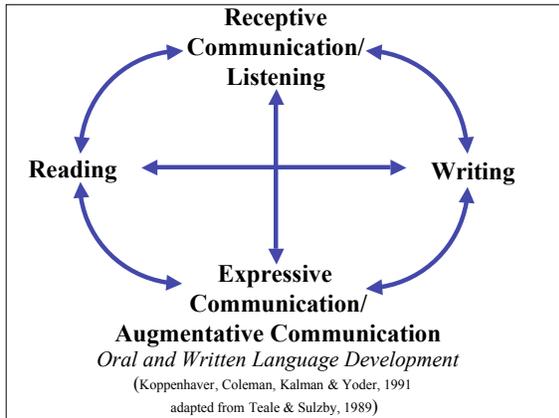
(Snow & Tabors, 1993)

- Early language is the foundation for literacy.
- Students use their language to engage in literacy activities.
 - Phonology, Vocabulary, Syntax, Morphology, Pragmatics
- In turn, involvement in literacy activities, increases their language.

A Current of View of Literacy Development: Emergent Literacy

(Teale & Sulzby, 1986, 1991)

- Emergent literacy begins at birth long before formal instruction.
- Children learn about literacy when they are actively engaged.
- Children learn about literacy through real life experiences & interactions.
- Reading, writing, speaking, listening all develop concurrently.



What are Typical Emergent Writers & Readers Busy Doing?

- Engage in over 1,000 hours of meaningful interactions with print (Heath, 1983).
- Building language and concepts about the world.
- Begin to understand that reading & writing are for a purpose.
- Begin to understand the mechanics of how books/print works.
- Engages in sound play to support phonological awareness.
- Explore writing in many different forms: scribbling, lines, pseudo letters and/or learned letters.
- Might start to notice that words contain different letters.
- Begin to develop letter knowledge.
- Develop a sense of story structures.
- Develop understandings rather than mastery of skills.

Characteristics of Beginning Conventional Writers & Readers

- Continue to build their vocabulary through writing & reading.
- Understands how print is read from left to right, & top to bottom.
- Understands that readers & writers use their eyes to track print across the page.
- Understands that there is a relationship between symbols and sounds.
- May be developing phonemic awareness.
- Can label some of the common letters & their sounds.
- Can read some sight words.
- Writing includes lots of inventive spelling.
- Draws upon their vocabulary to write long sentences packed with detail.

What Emergent Literacy Looks Like For OUR Students

Ongoing Assessment of Early Writing

Look for changes in the following over time:

- Interest/attention to others' modeling writing
- Ease with student selecting writing topic
- Increased length and variation of letters
- Use of different letter patterns
- Use of punctuation
- Use of numbers
- Inclusion of letters from name or personally important things
- Use of spaces to reflect word-like groupings
- Use of early sound or inventive spelling
- When using AAC devices to write, can look at relevance of writing to chosen topic

The Dilemma of How Emergent Writing Looks

- Situation: Emergent writer is physically unable to write with a marker/crayon/pencil and instead uses a keyboard.
- How is their form?
- What is our initial response?
- What would they be doing if they could use a marker/crayon?
- These emergent writers are learning that PRINT carries meaning.

Consider the Environments of Early Typical Emergent Writers

Learning about the functions of writing occurs through interactions with others:

- Modeling
- Giving meaning to the attempts children make

Motivating Students to WANT to Write

- Choice
- Personal connection/interest
- Variety
- Understanding of what to do
- Something will happen because of their writing

What Conventional Literacy Looks Like For OUR Students

Tactual Symbol Set

(By Hanser, 2004, Adapted from Texas School of the Blind, Maryland School for the Blind and Goosens and Crain)

<u>Function</u>	<u>Shape</u>	<u>Texture</u>	<u>Color</u>
Pronouns/WH words	Octagon	Laminate	Orange
Verbs	Triangle	Felt	Pink
Adjectives	Heart	Bumpy	Blue
Nouns	Square	Smooth	Yellow

Reading

"The single most important activity for building these understandings and skills essential for reading success appears to be reading aloud to children" (p.33)

IRA & NAEYC Position Paper on Early Literacy, (1998)

Tips for Supporting Student Learning During Book Reading

- Personally meaningful is the mantra.
- Kids need a changing selection of books.
- Kids need to interact with an adult about books, daily.
- Kids needs to work with books independently, daily.

Recreation Linked to Literacy

- Fashion Do and Don'ts
- Music Critic
 - Switch Accessible CD
 - Write About It
- Leveled games that are slowed down, but competitive
 - Virtual skateboarding, mountain bike etc.

"Once where there was an observer, let there now be a participant."

(Eliot Eisner)