

Oral & Written Language Development: Knowledge, Skills, & Strategies

5 CE Hours / .5 CEUs

Course Abstract

This intermediate level course addresses skills considered critical to the development of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. It relates each to the skill sets of Speech-Language Pathologists, summarizes research-supported information regarding each, and identifies strategies and activities for the development of each.

NOTE: Links provided within the course material are for informational purposes only. No endorsement of processes or products is intended or implied.

**(ASHA CE BLOCK – SPACEHOLDER ONLY – COURSE IS NOT YET REGISTERED)
(Intermediate level, Professional area).**

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Recognize components of language and literacy
- Recall information and strategies pertaining to the development of phonemic awareness
- Identify aspects of phonics instruction relevant to speech-language pathology
- Select information and strategies pertaining to the development of reading fluency
- Distinguish information and strategies pertaining to vocabulary development
- Recognize information and strategies pertaining to the development of reading comprehension
- Recall information and strategies pertaining to motivating students to read

Timed Topic Outline

I. Introduction (25 minutes)

Language/Literacy Hierarchy; Components of Language and Literacy

II. Phonemic Awareness (30 minutes)

III. Phonics (10 minutes)

IV. Reading Fluency (45 minutes)

V. Vocabulary (80 minutes)

Indirect Vocabulary Development; Direct Vocabulary Development; Play with Words

VI. Reading Comprehension (60 minutes)

VII. The Motivation to Read (30 minutes)

V. Additional Resources, References, and Exam (20 minutes)

Delivery Method

Correspondence/internet self-study with interactivity, including a provider-graded final exam. *To earn continuing education credit for this course, you must achieve a passing score of 80% on the final exam.*

Accessibility and/or Special Needs Concerns?

Contact customer service by phone at (888)564-9098 or email at pdhacademy@gmail.com.

Course Author Bio and Disclosure

Shari Robertson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is a Professor of Speech Language Pathology and Dean's Associate for Graduate Studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Robertson spent 18 years as a school-based SLP and special education administrator prior to obtaining her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She recently served on the ASHA Board of Directors for as Vice President of Academic Affairs in Speech-Language Pathology and owns several companies, including a publishing company and a consulting business.

Shari has published numerous articles, book chapters, and clinical materials and presented several hundred workshops at state, national, and international venues related to language and literacy. She is known for providing practical, evidence-based information that can be immediately used in clinical practice.

DISCLOSURES: Financial – Shari Robertson has ownership interest in Dynamic Resources, LLC, and received a stipend as the author of this course. Nonfinancial - No relevant nonfinancial relationship exists.

INTRODUCTION

In 2025, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association will celebrate 100 years since the professional organization was established to represent those interested in helping people communicate more effectively. Just as the name of the organization has changed several times, the scope of practice has blossomed from a single focus on “speech correction” to the broad range of services speech-language pathologists provide today. Included in the expansion of services provided by SLPs is the development of both oral (speaking and listening) and written language (reading and writing).

ASHA’s position statement regarding literacy (2001) states that “SLPs play a critical and direct role in the development of literacy for children and adolescents with communication disorders” and that “SLPs also make a contribution to the literacy efforts of a school district or community on behalf of children and adolescents.” Given the current and continued emphasis in state and national education standards on reading, particularly in terms of its impact on accessing curricular content, it has become increasingly critical for SLPs to embrace their role as a facilitator of both oral and written language.

It is not uncommon for SLPs to feel somewhat unprepared to address literacy development, having received little to no coursework related to reading and writing during their formal pre-professional preparation. Nevertheless, SLPs have a very strong knowledge base when it comes to literacy and are uniquely qualified to support language in both the oral and written modes.

The Simple View of Reading

The emergence of the simple view of reading (Hoover & Gough, 1990) has been a catalyst in expanding the role of speech-language pathologists to include reading and writing. For many decades, the argument over how to most effectively teach children to read was divided between those who passionately believed that decoding was the key to reading and those who were equally passionate in their belief that language comprehension was the most critical skill for the development of literacy. This “phonics versus whole language” debate led to scores of children who were instructed using primarily one methodology or the other—often with poor results.

Alternately, the simple view describes reading from a more holistic conceptual framework. Rather than an either/or choice between two opposing views, both Word Recognition and Language Comprehension are considered to be necessary components of literacy. In a nutshell, this means that successful readers must be able to recognize and decode words as well as comprehend their oral meanings. This model helps explain reading failure by students who decode well but cannot comprehend what they read as well as those who have difficulty decoding words but are able to understand material presented orally.

From the perspective of the simple view of reading, SLPs hold key and in-depth knowledge about literacy that many other professionals who work in the area of reading may not. For example, very few teacher education, special education, or even reading specialist programs include entire courses on normal language development. However, SLPs' comprehensive knowledge base in this area is precisely what gives them an edge in terms of understanding the critical role that oral language plays in the development of strong reading skills.

The Language/Literacy Hierarchy

Researchers have long noted the key role of oral language in children's reading and academic achievement outcomes (e.g., Adlof & Perfetti, 2013; Catts, Fey, Zhang, & Tomblin, 2002; Nation & Snowling, 2004; Rescola, 2009, Snow, Scarborough, & Burns, 1999, Stanovich, 1986). For example, Catts et al. (2002) noted that among children with language delay in Kindergarten, 50% were eventually identified with a reading disability in first or second grade. In a long-term progressive study, Rescorla (2009) followed a group of late-talking toddlers to age 17, discovering that delays in language development at 24-31 months is associated with weakness in oral and written language skills relative to their typically-developing peers. These findings support an earlier study by Stothard (1998) who found that children with weak language skills at 5½ were found to have poor reading comprehension at 8½ and 15½. In other words, early language deficits are durable and persist.

Conversely, research has proven again and again that children who have developed a strong oral language base are much more likely to learn to read more easily than students whose oral language skills are even slightly constrained (e.g., Adlof & Perfetti, 2013; Catts, Fey, Zhang, & Tomblin, 2001). Similarly, Wagovich, Hill, & Petroski (2015) found that children with higher language abilities outperformed those with lower language ability in terms of learning new vocabulary through the written mode.

One way to conceptualize, or capture, this relationship is the Language/Literacy Hierarchy, as seen here. It provides a visual representation of what SLPs already know: specifically, that the critical foundation skill for academic success is oral language. All of the other areas related to academic success are subsets of this critical foundation skill.



Receptive oral language (comprehension), which is the first area of development and the largest subset of language, forms the base of this hierarchy. Expressive oral language (speaking) is a subset of receptive oral language in that speakers do not use words or grammatical forms (or other aspects of language) in their conversations that are not a part of their receptive language base. For example, a child will not name an elephant at a zoo if they do not have the concept of elephant in their receptive oral vocabulary. An older child will not use a passive form of

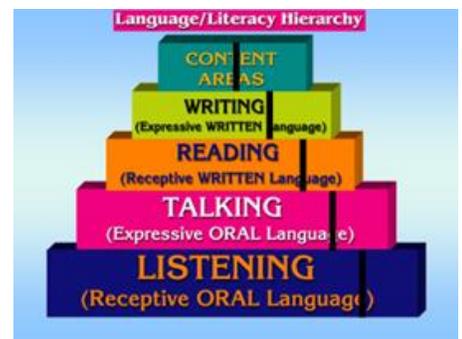
a sentence (e.g. *The cat was chased by the dog.*) if he or she does not understand the passive voice.

The next two tiers of the hierarchy, receptive written language (reading) and expressive written language (writing), are subsets of the oral language tiers. This is where the critical relationship between oral and written language is clearly established. A child's ability to decode a word has no bearing on whether or not he or she actually knows the meaning of the word. That knowledge is embedded in the oral language tiers of the hierarchy. If the word decoded is not in the child's oral vocabulary, reading comprehension will be severely compromised. In this case, a note that instructs a child to "please attend to the gaskin this afternoon" could have very unexpected results if the child is not aware that a gaskin actually a part of a horse.

Phonics (matching symbols to sounds) is a closed set skill. That is, there are only so many sounds/symbol combinations in English and once they are learned, there is no additional knowledge necessary to decode words. However, language is an open set in that there is a potential to learn new words and new constructs throughout the lifespan. Consequently, many children who struggle with reading may decode words adequately, but constraints on their oral language severely compromise their reading comprehension.

Perched at the top of the Language/Literacy Hierarchy are all of the content areas in academics, including social studies, science, math, etc. As such, success in these subjects is highly dependent on the oral and written tiers below. In other words, a student must have a strong foundation in terms of oral language (listening and talking) and written language (reading and writing) to be successful in terms of academic achievement.

Now, consider what happens to the Language/Literacy Hierarchy when a child comes to school with deficits in oral language. Note that even a relatively small deficit in the foundation tiers has ever-increasing negative consequences on the tiers above. So, even a relatively mild constraint in oral language can substantially constrain both reading and writing. By the time we reach the top of the pyramid, where potential achievement in academic content areas has been cut by half, it becomes clear why oral language is so critical to academic success!

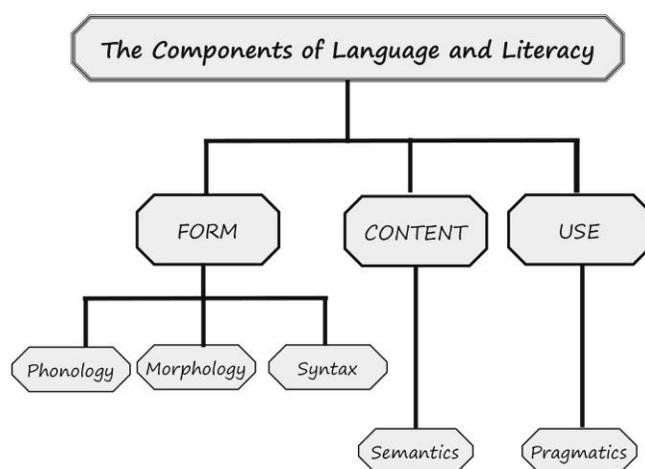


THE COMPONENTS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Language is classically described as symbolic code that is used to express meaning within a specific culture. This code can be expressed via three modes: oral, gestural and written. Traditionally, SLPs have concentrated more on the oral mode of communication in terms of assessment and intervention, which includes talking and

listening. They are also typically very comfortable with the gestural mode of language: SLPs use formal and informal sign to support language development for children who are slow to talk, or those that are non-verbal, and, of course, those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

But, consciously or unconsciously, SLPs are also very knowledgeable about the written mode of language. Every SLP knows that language is made up of three components – Form, Content, and Use. When each component has developed appropriately, the end result is termed communicative competence. While oral and written language are not exactly the same – reading requires some additional skills that are unique to this mode of communication – the fundamental components of oral and written language are identical as illustrated in the figure below.



Let's take a look of each component in terms of how it relates to language and literacy development.

Form

Language form involves the rules we use to combine and manipulate sounds, words, and sentences to communicate our thoughts, needs, feelings, wants, and ideas. Language form,

whether oral or written, involves three sub-categories: Phonology, morphology, and syntax.

Phonology

All languages have a set of rules for how sounds are combined. For instance, there are certain consonants, such as /ŋ/, that are never found at the beginning of English words. Similarly, there are some sounds that are found in one language that are not found in another: as an example, English does not include the “rolling r” that is found in most dialects of Spanish.

Even when reading or listening to nonsense words, native speakers can pick out words that could, conceivably, be “real” words in that language versus those that could not. In Hawaiian, all words must end with a vowel sound. So, a nonsense word such as “swit” could not be part of the Hawaiian language, although it *would* fit the phonological parameters of English. Conversely, the name of Hawaii's state fish is humuhumunukunukuapua'a—a word that definitely does not fit the phonotactic (syllable and word shape) patterns of English. (In fact, the entire Hawaiian phonological system includes only seven consonants. They are /h/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /p/, and of course, /w/.)

Young children's phonological systems develop rapidly. Interestingly, babies initially babble using some sounds that are not included in the language of their parents or caregivers. However, these sounds are extinguished fairly quickly so that English babies literally babble in English (that is, they use only the sounds and sound combinations found in English), French babies babble in French, and Portuguese babies babble in Portuguese! Amazingly, the phonological systems of typically developing children are essentially fully developed (in other words, they are able to produce all the sounds in their language) by the time they start Kindergarten.

However, in order to read, children must develop an ability to not only say sounds, but to segment the stream of speech into its individual components – an essential skill for the development of the sound/symbol relationship (NRP, 2001; NIFL, 2003). Once children are able to understand that words are made up of sounds, they can eventually learn to represent the sound (phoneme) using a specific symbol (grapheme). Children who are unable to segment the stream of speech into individual phonemes will have a difficult time learning to read and spell (this will be discussed in depth in the chapter/section related to Phonological Awareness).

Morphology

The next level of language form deals with how morphemes are combined to convey meaning at the word level. For example, the root word “walk” can be modified by adding grammatical morphemes such as -s (walks), -ing (walking), or -er (walker). When assessing a developing language system, SLPs typically use the mean length of the utterances, as measured in morphemes, from a child's language sample as a measure of the development of language form and sentence complexity.

Children who struggle at the morphological level in oral language will undoubtedly also lag behind their peers in learning to read. A student's knowledge of the internal structure of words affects word recognition, spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension (Carlisle 2010; Bowers, Kirby, & Deacon, 2010). In addition, morphological elements give a reader cues about the meaning of a word (e.g., prefixes, tense markers, plural markers). Effective writing, not surprisingly, also requires a solid knowledge of morphology.

Syntax

Typically developing children produce single word utterances around 12 months of age. They begin to combine words around 18 months—usually beginning with an agent-action semantic construction (roughly comparable to noun/verb). Eventually, child learn to expand the noun phrase and verb phrase in a variety of ways, through such constructs as adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, and superlatives.

Deficits in syntactic skills account for significant variance in reading and writing outcomes (Bowers, 1994; Catts, Adlof, & Ellis Weismer, 2006; Tyler & Nagy, 1990). A child who does not have a good grasp of syntax in oral comprehension and oral expression will most likely also struggle when trying to write and comprehend written sentences and paragraphs. Conversely, a student who does understand grammar can

forego having to figure out the syntactic form of the written passage. This allows the reader to focus their cognitive resources on constructing meaning from what is read, which is, of course, the whole purpose of reading.

Content/Semantics

Semantics deals with the meaning of language in both the oral and written modes. It would seem obvious to us that students who know more words are better readers – however, many people don't understand how oral vocabulary can impact reading. As demonstrated via the Language/Literacy Hierarchy, students who don't have a large *oral* vocabulary from which to draw will certainly demonstrate difficulty in comprehension of *written* passages (Adlof & Perfetti, 2013; Freebody & Anderson, 1983; Ouellette, 2006; Nagy, 2005). In other words, good readers comprehend more because they know the meanings of more words than poor readers (NRP, 2000).

A less-robust vocabulary will also impact a student's ability to write. Students who use incorrect or imprecise words in their written language will most likely have a harder time conveying their thoughts and ideas in this mode. Reading is, at the core, an attempt to derive or create meaning. Consequently, attention to the development of the semantic aspects of oral and written language is a crucial building block for the development of literacy. The critical role vocabulary plays in developing reading will be explored in more depth later in this article.

Use

Just like oral language, written language is a social process that requires a sender (author) and a receiver (reader). In face-to-face communication, the style of the message can be modified based on the context. For instance, in a casual conversation, the speaker may use slang, improper grammar, or even sarcasm when conveying a message. A more formal situation requires more attention to syntax and social conventions (for instance, "hello, pleased to meet you" rather than "hi there, honey!"). Students who do not understand the pragmatic aspects of language typically struggle as they attempt to interpret the sender's message.

There are a variety of pragmatic aspects to written language as well. For instance, authors, like speakers, use a variety of styles to convey their message. Readers must be able to understand the author's purpose and point of view to comprehend effectively. Conversely, when authoring a written composition, students who are unable to ascertain the purpose of the assignment (such as fact-based, persuasive, fiction, and so on), will most likely struggle with composition, impacting on both their ability to send the message and the reader's ability to understand it.

Another aspect of pragmatics that is critical to both oral and written comprehension is an individual's understanding of figurative language. Obviously, the literal meaning of expressions such as metaphors (*she's a peach*), similes (*happy as a clam*), and idioms (*raining cats and dogs*) is quite different than the intended meaning. Misinterpretation of

any of these pragmatic features in either oral or written exchanges will negatively impact comprehension (Cain, Oakhill, & Bryant, 2004; Cain, Oakhill, & Lemmon, 2005).

LITERACY AND CHILDREN WITH COMMUNICATIVE DISORDERS

The take-away message here is that SLPs already hold a great deal of knowledge related to facilitating strong literacy skills. SLPs know that language and literacy are connected across many different parameters. They also know that children who do not have a strong base in oral language will most likely have difficulty learning to read and write well. So, it is obviously of no surprise that a substantial number of the students who have been identified with a language deficit are either already struggling readers or are at risk for reading delay or failure.

(SLPs also hold critical knowledge related to working with persons who use AAC and/or pictures representation to communicate. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this area in depth, many of the strategies provided in the following sections related to accessing or creating written language (reading and writing) can be adapted for use with these individuals.)

The role of an SLP in supporting literacy is not to replace reading teachers. Nor is it abandoning appropriate IEP goals and becoming little more than glorified tutors for students on their caseloads. Rather, it is looking to the research to determine what skills are the most critical for their students to develop in terms of learning to read and then finding ways to weave this into what they already do in therapy—or in their collaborative work in classrooms, clinics, preschools, and/or with parents—to facilitate the development of BOTH oral and written language.

PUT READING FIRST

Luckily, the question of what skills are the most critical for the development of literacy has already been addressed. In 2000, the National Reading Panel (NRP) published the results of a comprehensive analysis of the research literature undertaken to identify student skills and instructional strategies that consistently led to reading success. Although this meta-study was originally published 16 years ago, the findings, which summarize decades of research related to reading instruction, remain relevant as a guide to SLPs in supporting written language development for children with and without communication disorders.

Five skills were identified as being the most critical in developing strong literacy skills – in other words, “what works” in teaching children to read successfully. These five areas of concentration have been adapted by many schools and other educational entities as the foundation for building their reading programs. They are: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension.

In actuality, SLPs have been addressing most of these skills in the oral mode for decades. Increasing phonemic awareness, building vocabulary knowledge, addressing oral fluency, and facilitating language comprehension have long been a part of traditional intervention for children with communicative disorders. In other words, most SLPs are already supporting literacy – they just didn't always know it, or know how to communicate what they were, and are, doing to facilitate written language to others.

Shifting focus to the written mode simply means expanding efforts and thinking beyond oral language comprehension to the comprehension of the written word as well (text comprehension). Same concept – perhaps tackled from a slightly different perspective.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

The CCSS are research- and evidence-based standards that are aligned with university and work expectations and designed to ensure that students are college and career ready when they complete high school. These standards have been adopted by a majority of states, 4 territories, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODA). Thus, their use as a tool to guide skill-based assessment of academic communication proficiency has broad application to students in U.S. public education systems today.

While there are a number of domains addressed in the standards, there are three domains that are specifically related to Communication.

The Phonological Awareness Domain includes basic foundational skills for reading, focusing on the student's ability to hear and identify phonemes, syllables, and spoken words.

The Speaking and Listening Domain is divided into two skill areas: *Comprehension and Collaboration* and *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas*. *Comprehension and Collaboration* skills are necessary for students to understand and participate in conversations regarding academic content in one-on-one and group interactions. The skills addressed in the standards for *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* focus on building students' abilities to craft oral presentations that are comprehended by listeners and modify spoken communication based on the context, the purpose for communication, and the demands of the speaking situation.

The Language Domain focuses on three broad areas: *Conventions of Standard English*, *Knowledge of Language*, and *Vocabulary Acquisition*. *Conventions of Standard English* includes competence with standard English grammar and usage in written and spoken language. *Knowledge of Language* targets a student's ability to choose appropriate communication styles (i.e., formal vs. informal communication) across situations. *Vocabulary Acquisition* is a large focus in the CCSS, addressing a student's ability to comprehend unknown and multiple meaning words, comprehend words through analysis of known word parts, utilize reference materials to improve word knowledge, comprehend abstract language, and develop vocabulary for spoken and written comprehension and expression (Schultz, 2015).

Since language in both the oral and written form comprise a large proportion of skills within these standards, it is appropriate for the SLP to be part of the effort to address the development of these core skills in conjunction with IEP goals. While it is beyond the scope of this course to crosswalk each of the CCSS to the skills identified by the National Reading Panel, there is a substantial overlap between the two. Consequently, students who have mastered the five core skills identified the NRP will have a much easier time meeting CCSS (or similar state-adopted standards) than those who are struggling with these core skills.

For example, provided here is a progress monitoring summary of CCSS skills for the phonological awareness domain for grades K, 1, and 2 (from the *Skill-Based Assessment of Core Communication Standards*, Schultz, 2015). If one were to compare the skills listed here to those identified by the National Reading Panel related to phonemic awareness, there is virtually a one-to-one correspondence between the two. A similar pattern is found across a large number of skills included in the Communication Domains of the CCSS and the NRP recommendations.

 Skill-Based Assessment of Core Communication Standards
Progress Monitoring Detailed Summary

Name	Grade	Age		
PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS DOMAIN			% Correct	% Correct
			Date Administered	
Rhyming (K Only)				
K	Recognize and Produce Rhyming Words			
Vowels (1st and 2nd)				
1	Distinguish Long versus Short Vowels in Words			
2	Distinguish Long versus Short Vowels in Words			
Syllable Segmentation (K Only)				
K	Count, Pronounce, Blend, and Segment Syllables in Spoken Words			
Phoneme Blending (1st and 2nd)				
1	Blend Sounds Including Consonant Blends to Form 1-Syllable Words			
2	Blend Sounds Including Consonant Blends to Form 1-Syllable Words			
Phoneme Isolation				
K	Isolate and Pronounce the Initial, Medial Vowel, and Final Sounds in CVC Words			
1	Isolate and Pronounce the Initial, Medial Vowel, and Final Sounds in Single-Syllable Words			
2	Isolate and Pronounce the Initial, Medial Vowel, and Final Sounds in Single-Syllable Words			
Phoneme Manipulation (K Only)				
K	Add or Substitute Phonemes in Simple, 1-Syllable Words to Make New Words			
Phoneme Segmentation (1st and 2nd)				
1	Segment Spoken Single-Syllable Words into Individual Phonemes			
2	Segment Spoken Single-Syllable Words into Individual Phonemes			

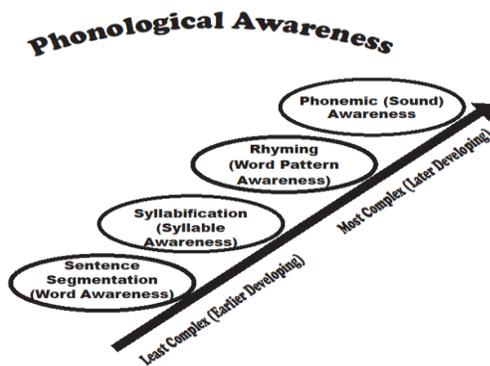
Course Organization

Once the idea that reading and writing is a subset of speaking and listening (think Language/Literacy Hierarchy) and, in fact, is just another mode of language, is embraced, SLPs can implement activities that facilitate the development of literacy along with more traditional oral language intervention strategies related to form, content, and use (and, as appropriate, CCSS). Consequently, this course is organized in sections that address each of the skills identified by the National Reading Panel – plus an additional section that discusses the importance of nurturing a love of reading.

Each section contains an introduction that includes a summary of research-supported information regarding the targeted skill area. This information, unless otherwise noted, is synthesized from the meta-analysis of the research related to literacy that is summarized in the National Reading Panel report. Following this, a variety of strategies and activities, including examples of appropriate children's literature, that support the development of that particular skill are discussed. A collection of resources such as book lists, activity sheets, websites, and/or other materials are provided in a separate section at the end of this course.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

The first skill identified by the National Reading Panel as critical to reading success is *Phonemic Awareness*. Defined as the ability to hear and understand how the sounds of spoken language work together to make words, phonemic awareness is sometimes confused with the larger umbrella term of *phonological awareness*. However, while the latter involves learning to be aware of any size sound unit (e.g., words, syllables), phonemic awareness is the discrete, and more advanced, skill of being able identify and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in words. As a rule of thumb, the younger the child, the larger the unit of sound targeted in instruction or intervention.



To clarify this relationship, the figure here provides a quick visual review of the various levels of phonological awareness.

Developmentally, children must first learn to identify larger units of sound, such as words, and progress toward smaller units, such as syllables and, eventually, phonemes. Each of the skills related to phonological awareness is important to the development of literacy.

However, it is the discrete skill of phonemic awareness that the National Reading Panel found was most highly correlated with reading

success.

Recall that phonemes are the smallest unit of sound in spoken language. They are not the same as letters (often referred to as graphemes) because letters are *not* sounds. So, although educators often talk about “silent letters,” this is actually a misnomer. Letters only *represent* sounds—and in English, they often don’t do a very good job! For example, the sound /k/ can be represented by the letters *c* or *k* or even *ck* or *ch*. Vowels are even worse. Consider the word pairs *go* and *show*, *through* and *blue*, *bright* and *pie*. Each pair has the same vowel sound (phoneme), but is represented by a different letter or set of letters (graphemes).

Phonemic awareness activities can be introduced in the preschool years and are appropriate through age 8 and beyond. Study results reported in the National Reading Panel report indicate that working on only a few of these tasks at a time is more effective than working on all of them, so it is important to target tasks that are appropriate for each child’s skill level. Further, activities related to either phonological or phonemic awareness must be implemented without trying to make any connections to letters of the alphabet. The focus is not on teaching sound-symbol relationships, but on laying the groundwork for an eventual understanding of this concept.

Not surprisingly, children who can hear and isolate the sounds of a language are likely to have an easier time establishing the sound/symbol relationships necessary to learn to read and spell than children who are lacking proficiency in this skill. So, students can

do a better job navigating the twists and turns of English phonics when they have the prerequisite phonemic awareness skills in place.

Tasks typically associated with proficiency in phonemic awareness, as summarized in the sidebar, include phoneme isolation, phoneme identity, phoneme segmentation and blending, and phoneme substitution. Each contributes to creating critical levels of competency related to the sounds of language. Children demonstrate that they have developed phonemic awareness in a variety of ways. For example, they are able to

- Identify the first and last sounds in a word
- Recognize which words in a set begin (or end) with the same sound
- Break apart words into their component sounds
- Blend sets of sounds together to form words
- Remove and replace sounds in words to form new words

Not surprisingly, children with speech or language deficits are at risk for delayed development of phonemic awareness – most likely for the very same reasons they have difficulty extracting information from the spoken environment for language processing.

Thus, targeting phonemic awareness is an appropriate and empirically-supported strategy for facilitating literacy skills for a majority of children on speech/language caseloads.

Consequently, only after children have established word and syllable awareness is it appropriate to move on to phonemic awareness activities – regardless of age. In other words, it may be necessary to “back up” and work on more global phonological awareness activities with older children who have not developed these skills. Alternately, preschoolers who have mastered word and pattern awareness can be provided with activities that target the awareness of phonemes.

Replicated across numerous studies (NRP, 2000) is the finding that improvement in phonemic awareness correlates strongly with improvements in reading and spelling. Consequently, it is never too late to work on phonemic awareness. There is an unfortunate trend in some educational settings in which phonemic awareness instruction is discontinued at a specific and predetermined age or grade regardless of whether or not the student has mastered this critical skill (most often age 8 or second grade). However, abandoning phonemic awareness instruction just because a child has reached a certain age is like trying to build a skyscraper without the proper foundation.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

TASKS

Phoneme Identity

Phoneme Isolation

Phoneme Segmentation

Phoneme Blending

Phoneme Manipulation

Phoneme Addition

Phoneme Deletion

Of all the skills related to phonological awareness, the ability to hear and manipulate sounds—phonemic awareness—was found to be the most highly correlated with reading success.

NRP, 2000

You may make some progress, but eventually there will be a spectacular crash. Thus, advocating for continued instruction in phonemic awareness based on mastery of the skill rather than on age is a critical task for anyone responsible for the education of our children.

SLPs are actually masters of phonemic awareness instruction. It is a common part of intervention to improve articulation in which children are often asked to demonstrate their phonemic awareness skill such as: “Rory, is your sound in that word?” or “Zach, can you use a word that has your sound at the beginning?” Further, SLPs understand the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics. As an example, when asking what sound begins “moo, milk, and mice,” SLPs teach children /m/ rather than “em.” So, this critical skill for literacy has been targeted as a normal part of intervention for most SLPs for many years.

FACILITATING PHONEMIC AWARENESS

The National Reading Panel report indicates that study results were impressive in demonstrating that explicit, systematic instruction targeting phonemic awareness is highly effective under a variety of teaching conditions, with a variety of learners, and across a range of age and grade levels. In the classroom or in the therapy room, incorporation of phonemic awareness activities into lessons and sessions can pay big dividends in terms of facilitating students’ literacy skills.

As mentioned previously, young children progress from an awareness of larger units of speech sounds to smaller units. Consequently, for preschoolers, it is appropriate to begin by encouraging an awareness of syllables and rhyming (phonological awareness skills) as a precursor to targeting phonemic awareness. It is important that preschoolers be provided with multiple opportunities to play with sounds and the sound patterns that make up language prior to asking them to work with individual sound units (phonemes). Once children demonstrate an understanding of the larger units of sound, it is appropriate to move to working with phonemes/sounds.

There are numerous ways to facilitate phonemic awareness within clinical contexts. Provided in this section are examples of activities to highlight specific phoneme awareness skills. Since the phonemic awareness is a skill necessary for reading, it is appropriate that children’s books be utilized to provide practice with phonemic awareness. Beyond the targeted phonemic awareness skill, books facilitate vocabulary development, reading fluency, and rich oral language interactions. Consequently, examples of specific children’s literature that can help facilitate phonemic awareness are provided here in addition to other activities. Additional suggestions for

books that can be used to facilitate phonemic awareness are provided in the resources section.

Phoneme Isolation Activities

Phoneme isolation is the ability to hear a specific sound in a syllable or words. As mentioned previously, SLPs tend to have an excellent grasp on how to help children hear “their sound” in therapy using a variety of strategies.

Head or Toe?

In addition to these time-honored techniques used in articulation therapy, this activity helps children isolate sounds and identify their position in a word. Adding the component of active participation helps make the task more concrete.

Start by highlighting the sound you want them to listen for in isolation. Then, say a word that has the sound either at the beginning or at the end. If the sound starts the word, the children touch their heads. At the end, they touch their toes. For example:

Today we are going to listen for the /g/ sound. Everyone say /g, /g/, /g/.

Now, listen closely. I'm going to say a word and your job is to listen for the /g/ sound. If you hear the sound at the beginning of the word, put your hands on your head. If you hear the /g/ at the end of the word, touch your toes!

Remember, beginning, hands on your head – end, touch your toes.

Let's try it!

Goat (Child/ren put hands on head)
Bag (Child/ren touch toes)

And so forth. Eventually, examples of /g/ in the medial position of a word could be added with the child/children putting hands on hips.

Phoneme Identity Activities

Phoneme Identity is the ability to hear and match sounds in different words.

Books

An excellent way to target this particular skill is to select books that highlight a specific sound for read aloud and read along activities. Several examples are provided here. Additional suggestions are listed in the resources section.

Goodnight, Gorilla (Peggy Rathmann) – As the keeper closes up the zoo for the night, he says goodnight to each animal. Tired from a long day, he is unaware that the gorilla has stolen his keys and letting each animal out of the cage. They all eventually end up in the zookeeper's bedroom, much to the dismay of his

long-suffering wife. The text is minimal, with “goodnight” featured at least once on every page providing focus on the /g/ throughout the engaging story.

Capering Cows (Shari Robertson) – A youngster unable to sleep counts cows instead of sheep. Bare cows, scary cows, friendly cows, and hairy cows frolic with cows that slurp, cows that lick, and cows that pirouette and kick. The story targets the use of interactive reading strategies in which the child is encouraged to repeat or chime in providing multiple opportunities to hear and say the /k/ sound.

Songs and Fingerplays

Songs, fingerplays, and nursery rhymes, long a staple of preschool classrooms, provide multiple benefits to young children in areas such as phonological awareness, vocabulary development, and pragmatics. Most preschool teachers instinctively use songs such as *Willowby*, *Wallowby*, *Woo* (the Elephant Song) or the *Name Game* song (“Hanna, Fanna, Fo, Fanna”) to help children learn to rhyme – and this is good practice. However, these familiar songs can often be manipulated to provide practice with phoneme identity. Here are some examples:

Old MacDonald Had a Farm – The song is sung in the typical fashion until the chorus. Then, add a sound at the beginning of the chorus syllables that matches the initial sound of name of the animal.

Old McDonald had a farm. Ee-i-ee-i-oh!
...and on that farm he had a **Dog. Dee-Di-Dee-Di-Doh!**
...and on that farm he had a **Cow. Kee-Ki-Kee-Ki-Koh!**
...and on that farm he had a **Goose. Gee-Gi-Gee-Gi-Goh!**

The Farmer in the Dell – The song is sung in the usual fashion, but match the first sound of who or what was “taken” to the first sound in the chorus. Like this:

The farmer in the dell, the farmer in the dell,
Fi-Fo the Ferio, the farmer in the dell
The farmer takes a wife, the farmer takes a wife
Wi-Wo the Werio, the farmer takes a wife
The wife takes a child, the wife takes a child
Chi-Cho the Cherio the wife takes a child

Additional “things” that end up in the dell that aren’t in the original song can be included such as:

The farmer takes a zebra, the farmer takes a zebra
Zi-Zo the Zerio, the farmer takes a zebra

Phoneme Substitution Activities

Phoneme substitution, as the name suggests, is the substitution of one sound for another to create a new word.

Books

Cocka Doodle Moo (Bernard Most) – In this story, the rooster awakens one morning to a sore throat and can't say "Cock-a-Doodle-Do." The cow thinks she can help and so she tries to say "Cock-a-Doodle-Do." Unfortunately, the best she can do is "Mock-a-Moodle-Moo." It doesn't wake up the farmer. She tries again: "Sock-A-Moodle-Do?" "Clock-A-Noodle-Poo?" The book continues in this manner—playing with all manner of sounds in the beginning position of the rooster's crow.

The Cat Who Wore a Pot on Her Head (Jan Slepian) – Bendomelina, a cat from a large family, doesn't like all the noise in her house. So, she puts a pot on her head – which happens to cover her ears – to get some peace and quiet. Unfortunately, this makes it difficult for her to understand what people are saying to her. The cat family ends up with "soap in the cake" (instead of "fish on to bake") and chairs hung on the wall (instead of "sweep out the hall").

Phoneme Segmentation and Phoneme Blending Activities

Phoneme segmentation, or separating out each individual sound in a spoken word, has been described as one of the more difficult skills for children to acquire. To develop this skill, we want to provide activities that help children hear the individual phonemes.

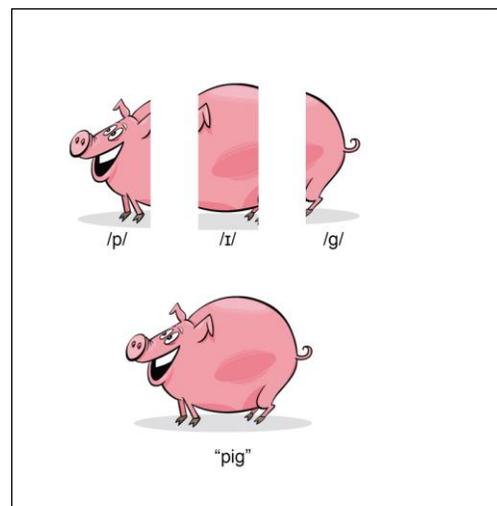
Phoneme blending, on the other hand, is one of the easier skills to acquire. This is not surprising since sound blending is the reverse process of sound segmentation. Thus, once segmentation has been mastered, blending is a relatively easy task.

The activities provided here target both segmenting and blending. In each case, the word is segmented sound by sound and then the sounds are blended back together to recreate the word. It is important to practice these two skills together (segmenting and blending) to help students link segmentation and blending as two sides of the same coin.

Picture Pieces

This activity provides hands-on, concrete practice with sound segmentation as students can physically pull a word apart sound-by-sound and then reassemble it back into the original word.

It is a good idea to start this activity by laminating the pictures you plan to use. Then, cut the pictures into pieces that represent the number of sounds in the word depicted. Assemble the picture and ask the child to say the word. Then, have him or her say each sound while sliding the pieces apart. Reverse



the activity by having the child assemble the picture while sliding the pieces together. Once together, be sure to have the child say the whole word to reinforce the idea that words can be taken apart by sound, but those sounds make the word when put back together again.

Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes

Select and say a word that is made up of one to four phonemes. Students segment by saying each sound in the word while touching their head, shoulders, knees, and toes as appropriate. Always end by having the child/children say the word. For example:

Word: "me"

Students say: /m/ (touch head); /i/ touch shoulders. "me."

Word: "cat"

Students say: /k/ (touch head); /æ/ (touch shoulders); /t/ (touch toes). "cat."

Word: "I"

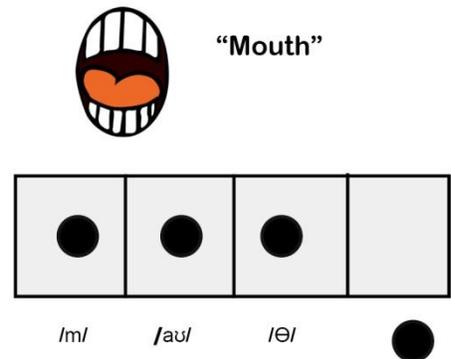
Students say: /aɪ/ (touch head only) "I."

Word: "penny"

Students say: /p/ (touch head); /ɛ/ (touch shoulders); /n/ (touch knees); /t/ (touch toes) "Penny."

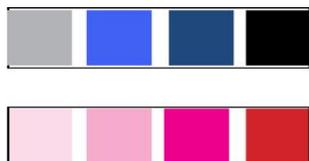
Elkonin Boxes

A well-known, well-researched, and effective strategy to facilitate sound segmentation is the use of Elkonin boxes. This activity gets its name from Russia psychologist D.B. Elkonin (1971) who was instrumental in developing this technique to facilitate early reading skills. Similar to *Picture Pieces*, the idea is to help children visualize each sound as an individual entity through the use of physical manipulation.



The basic procedure is fairly simple. Students are provided with a template made up of a series of boxes, and small tokens such as chippers, small blocks, or even kernels of corn. Say a word aloud. Students repeat the word, then say each sound in the word as they move the tokens into a box—one token/box for each sound. Students then say each sound again as they move the tokens out of each box. Finish by saying the word aloud.

HINT: Paint strips make great Elkonin boxes!



VARIATIONS:

- Using a paper punch, students punch one hole in a square of paper for each sound they hear in a word. Then, draw a picture to represent the word.
- Line up battery operated “click lights” on a table and click one light on for each sound in the word.
- Clip colorful clothespins on the side of a box or any other handy surface. One for each sound. You can increase the skill level by using different color clips to represent initial, medial, and final sound or any other code that meets student needs.

Phoneme Addition and Deletion Activities

Phoneme addition and *Phoneme subtraction* are similar skills that allow children to understand that new words can be formed when sounds are added or taken away.

I Know Someone/Something

This is a simple, but effective, way to help children learn about blending sounds to make a word by adding one sound to an existing syllable. For example:

Adult: *I know (or see) something that starts with /b/ and ends with /sk/ (b-ook).
What is it?*

Student/s: *Book!*

Adult: *I know someone whose name starts with /p/ and ends with /it/ (P-ete).
Who is it?*

Student/s: *Pete!*

You can also partition the sounds this way:

Adult: *I see something that starts with /kou/ and ends with /t/ (coa-t). What is it?*

Student/s: *Coat!*

If this is initially too difficult, it may be necessary to backtrack to the syllable level prior to working with a single phoneme.

Adult: *I know someone whose name starts with /ti/ and ends with /nə/. (Ti-na).
Who is it?*

Student/s: *Tina!*

Once students are able to understand the activity, they can be encouraged to create riddle questions for others to solve. This increases the difficulty factor slightly and facilitates both sound segmentation and sound blending.

Deletion of sounds is a higher level skill that requires children to manipulate the sounds while holding the word in memory. Many researchers suggest that sound deletion tasks are not appropriate for children under the developmental age of 7 and that children should have a grasp of phoneme segmentation prior to introducing phoneme deletion. The *I Know Someone/Something* activity described above is an excellent lead-in activity for introducing the concept of sound deletion. For example:

Adult: *I'm thinking of something that starts with /m/ and ends with /t/ (m-eat). What is it?*

Student/s: *Meat!*

Adult: *Now say meat without the /m/. What is it?*

Student/s: *Eat!*

Adult: *I'm thinking of something that starts with /l/ and ends with /ait/. What is it?*

Student/s: *Light!*

Adult: *Now, say light without the /t/. What is it?*

Student/s: *Lie!*

Blending Therapy and Phonemic Awareness

Virtually all activities related to phonemic awareness can be provided in conjunction with, or as a supplement to, therapy related to phonological and articulation delays and disorders. However, it is both efficient and efficacious to provide intervention that targets students' IEP goals using materials that also facilitate phonemic awareness skills. You can "double dip" by using children's stories that target phonemic awareness and phonological therapy.

The Word Menders Series (Dynamic Resources)

This book series was written by SLPs for SLPs. Each story is built around oppositional pairs that target a specific phonological process (most books include both minimal and maximal oppositions). As noted in the Table provided, each book in the series targets a specific phonological process as well as one or more phonemic awareness skills.

Title	Phonological target	Phonemic Awareness Skill
<i>Pants on Ants</i>	Initial Consonant Deletion	Phoneme addition and deletion
<i>Go By Goat</i>	Final Consonant Deletion	Phoneme addition and deletion
<i>The Bark Park</i>	Voicing Contrasts	Phoneme manipulation
<i>Sail By Tail</i>	Stopping	Phoneme manipulation
<i>My Cow Can Bow</i>	Front/Back Contrasts	Phoneme manipulation
<i>Miles of Smiles</i>	Cluster Reduction	Phoneme addition and deletion

These books are also designed to provide opportunities for children to predict rhyming words and to chime in on repetitive phrases throughout the story. Each also includes a set of flashcards of the oppositional pairs used in the story that store in a pocket in the back cover of the book.

PHONICS

Understanding the alphabetic principle – that words are made up of letters and that letters represent sounds – is a critical step in learning to read. *Phonics* is the instructional method used to facilitate this principle. It targets the discrete, learned skill of matching a phoneme (sound) with a specific grapheme (letter). Once children understand that there is a letter code that represents the sounds they hear in words, they are ready to begin matching and memorizing these relationships. It is typically at this point that a parent will proudly announce that their child is “learning to read!”

Of course, just as language learning occurs long before the first word is spoken, reading begins well before the first word is slowly decoded and hesitantly read. Learning the code and expressing it – either in the oral or written mode – provides an observable, measurable representation of an extremely complex underlying cognitive construct. However, reading or saying a word is only the tip of the linguistic iceberg. In fact, a great deal of the important development that supports the ability to read or talk is essentially invisible.

Historically, phonics instruction has sometimes overshadowed other critical components of reading – in some instances becoming the primary focus of reading instruction rather than one component of a comprehensive reading program. One of the reasons for this is that phonics instruction focuses on a concrete, closed skill set. Since there are a finite number of letters in the alphabet, there are only so many possible relationships between phonemes and graphemes. Once all of these relationships have been mastered and memorized, phonics instruction is essentially complete. As a result, measuring progress related to phonics is fairly straightforward, which, as we know, is highly valued by those who believe that the only learning that is important is that which can be easily quantified.

However, phonics is not the most important, or even the most fundamental, skill in learning to read. Literacy is primarily a language-based construct that requires a much larger set of competencies than merely matching sounds and symbols – and many of these underlying skills are difficult to pin down using a standardized assessment. Fortunately, by emphasizing that effective reading instruction balances instruction in phonics with a strong program in language enrichment to maximize learning, the National Reading Panel supports what SLPs have known for a long time.

That is not to say that instruction in phonics is unnecessary. To the contrary, research shows that phonics instruction is a key skill in learning to read and instruction related to the alphabetic principle is beneficial to students from K-6th grade (or later if warranted).

The role of a speech-language pathologist is not providing direct phonics instruction to students or becoming a phonics tutor – nor should it be. Classroom teachers, reading specialists, and teachers of children with learning disabilities are well-trained in phonics instruction. Consequently, children with identified deficits related to phonics are typically provided with effective remediation by one of these capable professionals.

What SLPs can, and should, do is work closely with others to determine if children who are having difficulties learning to read have a more fundamental problem related to the linguistic aspects of literacy. Then, these problems can be systematically addressed to maximize a student's potential for reading success.

For example, an SLP may need to emphasize to colleagues and parents that formal phonics instruction is neither appropriate nor effective for children who have not yet developed phonemic awareness. In fact, for many children who struggle with phonics, the difficulty lies not in an inability to match sounds and symbols, but in a lack of phonemic awareness and/or oral vocabulary deficits. Alternately, the problem may lie in a constrained vocabulary as readers must understand the oral meaning of a word before they can comprehend the written version.

So, while SLPs do not provide direct phonics instruction as a part of an IEP or clinical intervention plan, they can certainly point out sound-symbol relationships, as appropriate, when working with students on their caseloads. For example, SLPs typically use the grapheme representation rather than the IPA symbol when providing children a visual cue for "their" sound, strengthening both the concept of sound/symbol relationships and the link between that specific letter and the student's targeted sound.

An excellent way to fold practice with phonics into intervention is to incorporate into therapy books that target language-based constructs, such as vocabulary and predicting, and also include opportunities for matching sounds and symbols. This provides students with a natural context to facilitate the complex linguistic skills that underlie reading while, at the same time, providing indirect learning of the alphabetic principle.

Fortunately, there are many well-written "ABC" books that also provide a rich context for language learning. An overview of two such resources is provided below. Some additional suggestions are provided in the resources section of this article.

A is for Angry: An Animal and Adjective Alphabet (Sandra Boynton) – As is typical of this author, this book is packed with silly critters doing silly things. Pairing each animal with an adjective that begins with the same letter provides a great resource for phonemic awareness and vocabulary (e.g., the rhinoceros is rotund) as well as facilitating an understanding of alphabetic principle. There are also plenty of opportunities for discussion about why the anteater is angry (did he run out of ants? Did he have a bad day?) or the fox is frightened (could it be the flying fish zooming across the top of the page?) or the opossum is outraged (note that the playful pig is making fun of him).

Tomorrow's Alphabet (George Shannon) – This alphabet book engages students by asking them to think ahead and out of the box. For each letter, readers are given a prompt such as "A is for seed," and then asked to predict what that seed could become "tomorrow" (meaning "in the future") that starts with the same letter (*apple*). Some of the tomorrow's alphabet pairs are not too difficult to figure out

(“V” is for paper, tomorrow’s valentine), but some are a bit trickier (*E is for wood, tomorrow’s embers*). This book inspires oral discussion, predicting, critical thinking, and builds vocabulary.

READING FLUENCY

Reading fluency is the ability to read aloud: 1) with a high degree of accuracy, 2) at an efficient rate, and 3) with appropriate prosody or expression. It is described as the bridge between the lower level processes of reading – such as phonics and decoding – and the higher level process of comprehension. Each of the three characteristics listed above are important components in fluent oral reading and comprehension. To break them down further:

Accuracy – Misreading or incorrectly decoding words has a negative impact on text comprehension. For example, decoding the word “garden” as “garage” or “gargle” or “gardenia” would completely change the meaning of the sentence, “She was reading in the garden.” Therefore, the meaning derived from the text by both the speaker and the listener is compromised.

Speed – Readers who must decode word sound by sound deliver choppy, broken, hesitant oral reading. In addition, they must use a substantial amount of their cognitive systems to decode the word, leaving little left over for thinking about what was read. Again, comprehension is negatively affected for both the reader and the listener. Fluent readers don’t waste cognitive resources on decoding individual words. They can, therefore, focus their attention on making connections between what they are reading and their own background knowledge and experience. In this way, reading fluency maximizes cognitive resources, allowing the reader and the listener to concentrate on the content of the text, rather than the form.

Prosody – Reading aloud is a pragmatic activity: we read aloud to convey the meaning of the text to another person, and just as in a conversation, there is a sender (the reader) and a receiver (the listener). Reading aloud is intended to sound like talking, with the appropriate intonational cues to help the listener understand the text while, at the same time, signaling that the reader understands what he or she is reading. However, because they typically must devote a large proportion of their cognitive resources to decoding, non-fluent readers may miss, or misunderstand, the humor, figurative language, imagination, and drama intended by the author. Consequently, they fail to use appropriate stress, intonation, and phrasing with potential negative consequences on both sides of the communicative attempt.

However, very few of us start off as fluent readers. Think about how new readers struggle when asked to read an unknown passage aloud. Their performance is generally marked by long pauses, false starts, a slow pace, and little or no intonation as they work to decode each word as they come to it. Questions, statements, and/or exclamations, typically marked by intonational changes in competent readers, all sound the same because the reader is so engrossed in the task at hand – trying to decode the words – that the actual meaning of the sentence is not considered.

In contrast, fluent readers use appropriate intonation, or prosody – such as using a rising intonation at the end of the sentence to signal a question or a falling intonation for statements. High meaning words (e.g., nouns and verbs) are stressed more heavily than words that impact less on the meaning of the sentence (e.g., articles or conjunctions). They have learned when and where to pause and match their reading and breathing to natural breaks in the text. Fluent readers typically have a solid base of age/grade appropriate sight words that allows them to recognize the majority of the words they read automatically. This results in a quick and effortless delivery because the reader does not have to decode each word individually.

Consequently, as fluency increases, reading more closely resembles the natural rhythms of a typical conversation resulting in reading that is smooth and easily understood by the listener. A student who is reading fluently demonstrates that he or she has made the important shift from decoding sound-by-sound (or even word-by-word) to text comprehension through their accurate, rapid, and prosodic oral reading of written material (Pikulski & Chard, 2005).

The Importance of Prosody

An important point in the discussion regarding the development of literacy is that reading fluency is not an end goal. Rather, the end goal for reading is *comprehension* of the written text. This key point can be lost in the zeal to improve speed and accuracy of oral reading – seemingly at all costs. While speed and accuracy are mostly a reflection of a students' ability to decode words (lower level processes), students who read aloud with appropriate prosody demonstrate that they are actively engaged with the actual content of the text. Good readers learn to “add back” the prosodic elements of oral language that are absent in written language. As such, prosody includes variables such as phrasing, intonation, emphasis, and timing that make reading aloud sound like talking. Consequently, educators are led astray when the emphasis on speed and accuracy overshadows the idea that comprehension is the most important aspect of reading.

The link between appropriate use of prosody and reading success is well documented. For example, Miller & Schwanenflugel (2008) concluded that “early acquisition of an adult-like contour predicted better reading comprehension.” Further, the National Assessment of Education Progress study, conducted by the US Department of Education in 2005, also identified a strong correlation between prosody and comprehension. In a nutshell, providing students with opportunities to improve prosody while reading aloud supports comprehension of the text.

SLPs, with a strong knowledge base related to oral language and social communication, are uniquely well-equipped to facilitate the prosodic elements of reading. Further, in most cases, activities that improve reading fluency and prosody can also facilitate improved performance in other language-based disability areas. Consequently, it is

most appropriate to incorporate activities that improve oral reading prosody into intervention for children with language and literacy delays.

Evaluating Reading Fluency

Typically, only the components of speed and accuracy are evaluated when assessing reading fluency. This is generally accomplished by asking a student to read a passage aloud while noting decoding errors, timing the passage, and comparing the results to a normed database. However, while this does provide information on reading *automaticity*, it is not an accurate assessment of reading *fluency*.

In fact, an over-emphasis on speed over prosody is problematic. Reading too quickly can actually lead to a *decrease* in comprehension of the text – which defeats the whole purpose of reading! So, while speed and accuracy are important, measuring reading fluency on these two parameters alone is counter-productive to facilitating comprehension and literacy development as a whole. As mentioned previously, other than in artificial testing environments, reading aloud is typically for the benefit of the listener. That is, we read aloud to other people and seek to help them understand the text. Excessive speed is a detriment to this pragmatic interaction between reader and listener.

To appropriately assess reading fluency, all three components – speed, accuracy, and prosody – must be considered. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Oral Reading Fluency Scale (US Dept. of Education, 2002), which was utilized in the study mentioned above, is an excellent resource for evaluating reading fluency because it incorporates prosody into the scale. Note that reading at an excessively slow OR fast pace, as well as ignoring punctuation cues, and/or a lack of expression (prosody) places the reader into one of the non-fluent categories. Consequently, requiring students to read a given selection faster and faster, regardless of their speed during the first reading, is counterproductive to being scored as a fluent reader.

NAEP Oral Reading Fluency Scale	
Score	Criteria
4	Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrase groups. Although some regressions, repetitions, and deviations from the text may be present, these do not appear to detract from the overall structure of the story. Preservation of the author's syntax is consistent. Some or most of the story is read with expressive interpretation. Reads at an appropriate rate.
3	Reads primarily in three- and four-word phrase groups. Some smaller groupings may be present. However, the majority of phrasing seems appropriate and preserves the syntax of the author. Little or no expressive interpretation is present. Reader attempts to read expressively and some of the story is read with expression. Generally reads at an appropriate rate.
2	Reads primarily in two-word phrase groups with some three- and four-word groupings. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings may seem awkward and unrelated to the larger context of the sentence or passage. A small portion of the text is read with expressive interpretation. Reads significant sections of the text excessively slow or fast.
1	Reads primarily word-by-word. Occasional two-word or three-word phrases may occur - but these are infrequent and/or they do not preserve meaningful syntax. Lacks expressive interpretation. Reads text excessively slow. A score of "1" should also be given to a student who reads with excessive speed, ignoring punctuation and other phrase boundaries, and reads with little or no expression.

SOURCE: US Department of Education, Institute of Educational Sciences, National Center for Educational Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2002 Oral Reading Study. Accessible at: nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/ors/scale.asp

Similarly, the University of Michigan has developed a Multidimensional Fluency Scale that takes into account all aspects of reading fluency. It also utilizes a 1-4 rating scale, but the rubric is differentiated across four parameters: Pace, Smoothness, Phrasing, and Expression and Volume (available on the web at <http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/professionals/dyslexia-school/reading-fluency/multidimensional-fluency-scale>).

Expression and Volume

1. Reads words simply to get them out. Little sense of trying to make text sound like natural language. Tends to read in a quiet voice.

2. Begins to use voice to make text sound like natural language in some areas of the text but not in others. Focus remains largely on pronouncing the word. Still reads in a quiet voice.
3. Makes text sound like natural language throughout the better part of the passage. Occasionally slips into expressionless reading. Voice volume is generally appropriate throughout the text.
4. Reads with good expression and enthusiasm throughout the text. Varies expression and volume to match his or her interpretation of the passage.

Phrasing

1. Reads in a monotone with little sense of boundaries; frequently reads word-by-word.
2. Frequently reads in two- and three-word phrases, giving the impression of choppy reading; improper stress and intonation fail to mark ends of sentences and clauses.
3. Reads with a mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and some choppiness, reasonable stress and intonation.
4. Generally reads with good phrasing, mostly in clause and sentence units, with adequate attention to expression.

Smoothness

1. Makes frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts.
2. Experiences several "rough spots" in text where extended pauses or hesitations are more frequent and disruptive.
3. Occasionally breaks smooth rhythm because of difficulties with specific words and/or structures.
4. Generally reads smoothly with some breaks, but resolves word and structure difficulties quickly, usually through self-correction.

Pace

1. Reads slowly and laboriously.
2. Reads moderately slowly.

3. Reads with an uneven mixture of fast and slow pace.
4. Consistently reads at conversational pace; appropriate rate throughout reading.
Scores range from 4-16. Generally, scores below 8 indicate that fluency may be a concern. Scores of 8 or above indicate that the student is making good progress in fluency.

(Adapted from Zutell and Rasinski, 1991)

The use of either of these scales – or similar assessments – is a much more accurate assessment of reading fluency than tests that only measure speed and accuracy. Both encourage reading that sounds like conversation, and help students understand that reading aloud is for the listener, rather than to beat the click of a stopwatch.

Strategies to Facilitate Reading Fluency

As one would predict, studies have shown that many children with oral communication delays are at risk for deficits in the comprehension of both oral and written text (e.g., Snowling, 2005; Catts et al., 2002). Fortunately, given the already-full plate that many SLPs are currently managing, reading fluency can be incorporated into intervention that targets other goals related to communication with minimal effort.

*Re-reading a text
seven times is
better than three
times which is
better than one
time.*

Fundamentally, the best way to facilitate reading fluency is to read! So, you will note that the strategies that follow center around having students read aloud with a primary focus on improving the prosodic component of reading fluency.

Repeated Oral Readings

One of the most studied methods of increasing reading fluency is to read the same passage aloud multiple times (e.g., Wolf & Katzir-Chohen, 2001; Stahl, and Kuhn, 2002; NRP, 2000). Often called repeated oral readings, this strategy enhances skill in all aspects of reading fluency: speed, accuracy, and prosody. Reading the same passage aloud numerous times allows the reader to concentrate on lower level decoding, such as sounding out words or identifying individual word meanings, on the first reading trials. Once this information is processed, the reader can then direct his or her attention to reading fluently and discerning text meaning.

How many times would you practice a reading passage that you knew you were going to read aloud in a high-stress or high-profile situation? You certainly would not go into it “cold” without several run-throughs to help you feel the rhythm of the passage, practice

any words that might be a bit tricky to roll off your tongue, and to make sure you understand the content of the passage.

The National Reading Panel found that typical readers need to read a passage four times to reach maximum fluency levels. Less competent readers will need substantially more practice reading the passage aloud to reach the same level of fluency than those with more typical reading skills. While studies have not yet determined the ideal number of repetitions necessary for achieving reading fluency for weaker readers, the general consensus, as reflected in the quote in the sidebar, is the more times the better. Obviously, more difficult passages will require more readings.

Thus, reading the passage aloud numerous times helps the reader master all of the elements of the task more effectively – and fluently! It is important to note here that reading a passage silently has not been shown to lead to significant increases in reading fluency (Hasbrouk, 2006). Ideally, because the goal is to help the children become more fluent readers, passages that are at, or slightly below, students' current reading levels should be chosen for practice.

Using text that is part of the student's classroom curriculum for repeated oral reading is a relatively effortless way of connecting intervention/remediation to the classroom setting. Multiple readings of a passage prior to its introduction in the classroom can facilitate better overall comprehension of the topic (which can facilitate more active participation in the classroom). Of course, prior arrangements regarding a specific passage that your student will be responsible for reading aloud in class is an ideal way to enhance skill development and bolster confidence.

Partner Practice

As the title suggests, this activity incorporates a partner while working on repeated oral readings. It provides students with opportunities to be both the sender and the receiver in the reading process. As the sender, the student needs to take into account the needs of the listener. As the receiver, the student must listen carefully and attend to all the elements of reader's delivery. This particular variation is set up for pairs of students, but you can adapt this activity for use with larger groups as well.

First, assign, or have students decide, who will be the *reader* and who will be the *listener*. The *reader* reads a selection of text aloud three times while the *listener* listens. The *listener* records his/her observations regarding accuracy, speed, and prosody after the second and third readings using the checklist provided here (or create your

Partner Practice!		
Here's How My Partner Improved		
After the 2nd Reading	After the 3rd Reading	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Remembered more words</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Read more smoothly</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Read more quickly</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Read with more expression</i>
Reader's Name _____		
Reading Passage _____		
My Name _____		
Comments:		

own version). Switch roles and repeat!

Model Fluent Reading

Empirical studies have repeatedly suggested that listening to proficient readers who model an appropriate pace and prosody can facilitate the listener's reading fluency (NRP, 2000). While simply reading aloud to children is beneficial, there are a number of strategies that can be employed that provide multiple opportunities for hearing and producing fluent reading.

Echo Reading is effective in facilitating reading fluency in even very young children (Robertson, 2015a). When using this strategy, the adult reads a short passage and then invites the child to "Say what I say" or "Copy me," encouraging the child to repeat what the adult has read. This provides an opportunity for children to experience reading fluency even before they have reached the formal stages of reading instruction. Since Echo Reading does not require children to actually decode the words, they are free to concentrate on the prosodic elements of the story. As with most interventions, the earlier children have the opportunity to practice reading fluently, the more apt they are to become fluent readers once they actually begin to independently decode words.

In *Paired Reading*, the adult models appropriate phrasing, rate, and prosody and the child or student contributes by chiming in as he or she is able to complete the rhyme, sentence, or page. This strategy can be used with children who are already decoding words or with younger children who have heard the story read aloud several times prior to asking them to join in. This is a very natural strategy for most adults, but its value to developing fluent readers is not generally understood or appreciated. Paired reading is particularly effective when books have a strong rhythm and rhyme or a repetitive phrase that the child can read (or say) each time it appears.

(Suggestions for books that are particularly good for echo and paired reading are provided in the Resources section.)

Older children who are still struggling with reading fluency (and other issues related to oral and written language) can also benefit from participating in echo and paired reading with a more capable reader. The key difference is in the materials that are chosen. As with repeated oral readings, books or text passages used in the classroom can be echo or pair read as a way to increase comprehension of the material. If the child will be expected to read the text aloud in class, using paired or echo reading can facilitate a more successful, fluent reading experience.

Progressive Stories

The use of a variety of literature genres is both motivating and beneficial to increasing fluency through repeated oral readings. Progressive stories can be particularly useful because they have repeated readings of the same material built right in. The story is begun with a sentence or two (*This is the house that Jack built*) and an additional part of the story is added each time a page is turned (*This is the door on the house that Jack built*). The story becomes more and more complex as it unfolds, but the reader is only

reading a little bit more “new” material each time the page is turned. This reduces the cognitive load related to decoding so the reader can concentrate on the prosody.

Typically, progressive stories also include numerous opportunities to practice phrasing and expression as the story builds and the child becomes more and more familiar with the structure of the text. (A list of progressive stories can be found in the Resources section of this article.) Start with simpler stories, such as *The Jacket I Wear in the Snow*, and progress to those that include more difficult text and more sophisticated vocabulary (e.g., *Jack’s Garden*).

Sentence Stress

It’s worth repeating – prosody is a key component of reading fluency and contributes to the development of good comprehension skills. So, how does sentence stress contribute to prosody and, eventually, reading comprehension?

Consider the sentence: “They are riding horses.”

Stressing “riding” or “horses” in the sentence makes a big difference in interpretation, signaling whether people are sitting on horses’ backs, or the horses in question are meant for riding rather than pulling a cart or some other purpose. In fact, where the stress is placed in this sentence determines whether “riding” is a verb or an adjective.

Most children learn to use, and interpret, appropriate sentence stress without even being aware that they are doing so. However, this may not be true for children who struggle to process language. In fact, they may be completely unaware of the meanings they communicate through their use of stress as well as what stress conveys when used by others. Consequently, explicitly teaching children who struggle with reading about the role of stress in sentences has the potential to help them improve their reading fluency and comprehension (both oral and written).

Start by reading a single sentence aloud, asking students to listen for the word that has the most emphasis, or sounded louder, than the other words in the sentence. Talk about how we stress the words that are the most important in order to help with comprehension. For example:

Don’t do it!
I bought a **dress**.
I **hate** mashed potatoes.
The party is **tomorrow**!

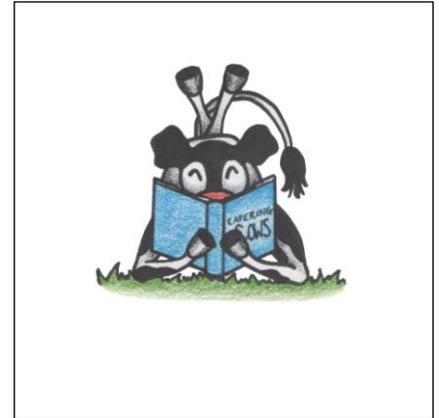
Then, have the student/s read the sentences aloud using the correct stress after following your model. You might also have the student try stressing the *wrong* words (e.g., articles) or try reading the sentences with no stress at all (almost impossible) to really get a feel for why stress is so important.

Contrastive Stress

The goal of this activity is to have the student/s read a sentence multiple times in response to a specific question stressing a different word in the sentence each time to more accurately communicate meaning.

An additional advantage of this activity is that it includes a built-in repeated oral reading component since the student has a chance to read the sentence numerous times. As the text becomes more familiar, more attention can be allocated to the meanings expressed rather than to decoding the words.

Although not required, motivation is often increased when you use a fun picture, such as the one provided here, that depicts an action or attribute or some other interesting detail. Next, construct a sentence that describes the picture. Ideally, it should have, at a minimum, a subject, verb, and a direct object.



“The cow is reading a book.”

The student (or students as this works great in groups) is asked to read the sentences aloud. The student then reads the sentence again in response to a series of questions, stressing the appropriate word to most accurately answer each question. For example:

Prompt: Who is reading a book?
“The **cow** is reading a book.”

Prompt: What is the cow reading?
“The cow is reading a **book**.”

Prompt: What is the cow doing with the book?
“The cow is **reading** the book.”

Poetry and Punctuation

As noted in the title of this strategy, you may need to take time to explicitly teach students how punctuation provides cues regarding how to read aloud with expression. Good readers typically learn about punctuation cues with little or no explicit instruction, but struggling readers often do not. So, discussion and demonstration of punctuation cues is an important component of improving reading fluency. For instance, you may need to demonstrate that a question mark at the end of a sentence should be accompanied by a rising intonation; a period, a falling intonation and a long pause; a comma, a short pause, and so on.

Poetry can be an effective way to provide concentrated practice with using punctuation cues in addition to facilitating a broad range of fluency skills such as rhythm, cadence, expression, and prosody. You can use poetry written by others or work with the child to help him or her write their own poetic masterpieces.

Here is a portion of a poem I wrote for my students to practice reading fluency (among other things). Note that there is punctuation to provide prosody cues, strong rhythm and rhyme, and a silly story that makes it fun to read – not to mention the rich vocabulary.

*My brother eats bugs?
My brother eats bugs!
My horrid and horrible brother eats bugs!
He says they're delicious, and also nutritious,
And wants me to try one, but I'm too suspicious.
Big black ants, little tiny fleas,
Wings and antennae, he downs them with ease.
Crunchy or squishy, fluttery or swishy,
He says they taste yummy, but something sounds fishy.
Grasshoppers, dragonflies, termites, and slugs
My horrid and horrible brother eats bugs!*

Songs and Chants

Songs and chants – particularly those that call for physical participation at various points – are an excellent way to develop the rhythm and cadence of fluent reading. To illustrate the power of a chant in terms of promoting prosody, try saying the alphabet without lapsing into the familiar sing-song rhythm that most of us learned at an early age. It takes quite a bit more effort to say each letter without expression than to just sing it!

The same thing happens when reading a book that is based on an already-known song or chant. The prosodic elements are already embedded into long-term memory, which aids in a delivery that is rich in prosody and intonation. There are a number of books available that are written around songs or chants that can be particularly effective in linking oral and reading fluency. Here are some examples (you can find more in Resources):

I Ain't Gonna Paint No More (Karen Beaumont) – Based on the song “It Ain’t Gonna Rain No More,” the rhythmic text of this book can be either read or sung with equal effectiveness. When Mama catches her son “paintin’ pictures on the floor/and the ceiling/and the walls/and the curtains/and the door,” she sticks him in the tub and declares, “Ya ain’t a-gonna paint no more!” Not to be deterred, the child rescues his hidden supplies and proceeds to paint himself from head to toe. As he adds gobs of paint to different body parts, he accompanies his work with rhyming lyrics such as, “*So I take some red/and I paint my.../HEAD!*” and “*Aw, what the heck! Gonna paint my.../NECK!*” The farther you go, the more body parts are covered until, when you think that the boy has painted everything, he finishes with, “*But I’m such a nut,/gonna paint my.../WHAT?!*” Fortunately, he’s out of supplies and winds up back in the bathtub.

Since the last word of each verse comes on the following page, readers get the satisfaction of completing the anticipated rhyme and seeing each newly painted

body part with every page turned. Also, the author splashes color all over, uses white space cleverly, and includes playful flourishes, such as a marching row of ants on the boy's arm and Easter egg designs on his leg. Elongated figures and exaggerated expressions match the silly tone of the story, and the concerned dog who observes the antics is particularly amusing.

The Seals on the Bus (Lenny Hort) – This is a parody of the classic fingerplay “The wheels on the bus go round and round.” However, here the seals on the bus go *eerrp, eerrp, eerrpp* and the vipers on the bus go *hiss, hiss, hiss*. Finally, the people on the bus go *help, help, help* and run off the bus, leaving it to an entire menagerie of animals who apparently appreciate mass transportation.

Choral Reading and Duet Reading

Students can improve their fluency skills by reading along with a group of readers or with a single, strong reader as a partner.

In choral reading, a group of students read aloud together from the same selection. The adult can read along to set the pace and model targeted skills. Choral reading can be as simple as students reading in unison from a single text passage to something quite complicated with different parts of the passage read in different ways. For example, alternate lines might be read more softly or more quickly, at a higher or lower pitch, or by a sub-group of readers.

When less-fluent readers participate in choral reading, they hear and experience the way classmates use pauses, intonations, and stress to give the piece more meaning. Choral reading can be a powerful and motivating technique to improve reading fluency for students with and without identified communication problems, and is particularly easy to implement for SLPs who provide any amount of classroom-based intervention.

In duet reading, a stronger reader is paired with a less-fluent reader (generally, the stronger reader is an adult). The stronger reader sets the pace and may provide visual tracking by moving his or her finger below each word as it is read in unison. This also provides an opportunity for the weaker reader to experience reading fluency following the lead of a more accomplished reader. To support reading fluency, duet reading can be implemented in a small-group, in one-on-one sessions, or by parents in the home environment.

Audio Books

Use of recorded books is an empirically-supported way to facilitate more fluent reading (NRP, 2000). This strategy provides both a model of fluent reading and opportunities to read along in a form of duet-reading. The evidence provides clear support for the use of this strategy for students in primary through the middle grades. It is also useful for students who are English Language Learners.

There are numerous commercially-available, pre-recorded books as well as websites that provide access to audio-recorded stories. (See the Resources section for some

suggestions). In addition, you can create your own “audio books” library with little more than an inexpensive audio recorder or a computer recording program and a favorite book.

Recalling that the purpose is to encourage the weaker reader to read along, the audio-recorded reader should set a somewhat slower pace, use short natural phrasing, and a good deal of expression (prosody). Choosing books with interesting characters and engaging storylines facilitates reader attention and the potential for positive benefit.

Hank the Cowdog (John Erickson) – This is a favorite series of mine and of students for a whole host of reasons. The stories are set on a cattle ranch in Texas and are narrated by Hank, a dog who is the self-proclaimed “Head of Ranch Security.” Hank believes he is an invaluable part of ranch life, but most of the time he just gets himself in trouble. The cast of characters is rich and diverse (e.g., Wallace and Junior who are buzzards, Drover, Hank’s cowardly sidekick, and a pack of coyotes whom Hank refers to as “cannibals”). The stories are read by the author and his wife who play all the characters to perfection.

The chapters are short, the vocabulary is rich, the stories are hilarious, and they are ALL available in audio-recorded form. Hank has convinced many a reluctant reader (my own son included) that reading can actually be a positive experience. You can find out more about Hank at his website www.hankthecowdog.com.

VOCABULARY

After evaluating decades of research related to literacy, the National Reading Panel (2000) used the quote noted in the sidebar to sum up their findings. This is not exactly

*“Good readers know
more words than
poorer readers.”*

new information to speech-language pathologists who have long understood the critical role of a strong oral vocabulary base to support written language and academic success. To be effective readers, students must be able to make sense of the word they see (reading vocabulary) by comparing it to the words they have *heard* (oral vocabulary). In other words, readers must understand the oral meaning of a word before they can comprehend the written version.

Research has identified early vocabulary proficiency, especially receptive vocabulary, as the strongest variable in predicting later reading success (Adlof & Perfetti, 2013; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001; Mason, Stewart, Peterman, Dunning, 1992). A meta-study undertaken by Scarborough (2001) identified significant correlations between kindergarten expressive and receptive oral vocabulary and later reading outcomes. Similarly, Dickinson and Tabors (2001) identified kindergarten vocabulary as the best predictor in 4th grade reading comprehension. Beimiller (2005) found a strong predictive relationship between vocabulary proficiency in the first grade and reading comprehension in 11th grade.

To derive meaning from the text, readers need to be able to understand the meaning of 90-95% of the words used (Nagy & Scott, 2000). However, although many children can decode words by third grade, they may fail to understand what they read due to vocabulary limitations (NRP, 2000). This relationship is transparent to most SLPs, who understand that in order to construct meaning from written language, students need to have an adequate vocabulary base as well as a set of strategies to establish the meanings of unknown words from context.

The report of the National Reading Panel (2000) indicates that there is a synergistic relationship between and amongst vocabulary development and several of the other key skills related to reading success. For example, children who have strong oral vocabularies more easily learn to identify the individual sounds that make up words (phonemic awareness). Vocabulary knowledge is also linked to decoding. Children learn to map the spoken sounds of a word to its written form with less effort when the word is already a part of their oral vocabulary (Roth, Speece & Cooper, 2002). So, they can more easily sound out and read the word when they already understand its oral meaning.

Word Consciousness

When discussing strategies to increase vocabulary, it is important to keep in mind that, regardless of age, grade, or ability level, our primary goal is to help our students become *word conscious* (Scott & Nagy, 2004). Word conscious students have an awareness of, and interest in, words and their meanings, and strive to understand and harness the power of words. Further, they enjoy words and are eager to learn words and use them in everyday contexts. Word conscious students look for opportunities to expand their vocabularies by learning new words as well as new meanings or new ways to use words they already know.

Unfortunately, many students with language and/or literacy difficulties (and a good number of those without identified disability areas) have not developed this trait, or, even worse, it has been “taught out” of them by well-meant, but poorly planned, instruction. For instance, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, some educators continue to believe that having students look up definitions of words from a prescribed list is an effective way to teach vocabulary. It is not. (More about effective and ineffective methods of vocabulary instruction will be discussed after a brief review of typical vocabulary development.)

Typical Vocabulary Development

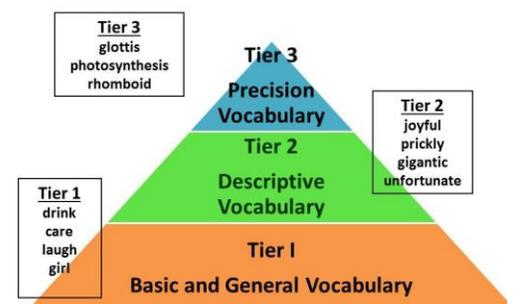
For many children, vocabulary learning seems to develop effortlessly and follow a predictable sequence. Around the time typically developing infants celebrate their first birthday, they recognize a number of words in connected speech and are beginning to produce their first words. By 30 months or so, they have experienced a virtual vocabulary explosion and can produce hundreds of words. These toddlers have also discovered that there are different kinds of words (e.g., nouns and verbs) and have begun to combine them using both semantic and syntactic rules.

So, by the time typically developing children enter Kindergarten, they have acquired a vocabulary of 2,000-3,000 words. By the end of second grade, these children have a minimum of 6,000 distinct words in their vocabularies and add approximately 3,000-3,500 words each year they are in school. By the end of high school, students are expected to have learned an astonishing 40,000 to 80,000 words (Stahl, 1999).

Classifying Vocabulary

Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002) have described a classification system in which vocabulary is divided into groups, or tiers, based on the descriptive value of the words. The framework is a useful tool when making decisions about intervention.

Tier 1 – As shown in the graphic, the first vocabulary tier is the largest and consists of the basic building block words that make up a language. These words are typically well-known and used with a high level of frequency by native speakers of a specific language. In English there are an estimated 8000 word families included in this tier. Tier 1



words rarely require direct instruction for most language learners. While these words are critically important to oral and written language competence, they do not convey specific information but are the building blocks of communication. Basic nouns, verbs, adjectives, and what are typically referred to as “sight words” are found in this tier.

Tier 2 – Tier 2 words provide more detail and specificity than those found in Tier 1 and occur across a variety of environments. These words are used with a high level of frequency in adult language and literature and are extremely important to both reading and writing. Tier 2 words more accurately express feelings, emotions, and information; however, they may have multiple meanings and leave room for interpretation by the listener. Tier 2 words are an appropriate focus for direct instruction techniques because they have a powerful impact on both oral and written language. In addition, they are good indicators of progress in the academic curriculum. There are approximately 7000 families that make up Tier 2 in English.

Tier 3 – The third tier, the smallest, is made up of words which are typically described as “precision” vocabulary. These are low-frequency words that evoke a specific image or concept. Tier 3 words are most often associated with specific field of study or school subjects (e.g., biology, chemistry) or with particular occupations, hobbies, or dialects. Tier 3 words can be especially tricky for adolescents who are struggling with academic vocabulary.

Here’s an example of a core word meaning that is described via the three tiers:

1	<i>old</i>	General term for something/someone that is not young
2	<i>aged, mature, elderly</i>	More specific vocabulary related to things/people that are “old,” but still leaves room for personal interpretation
3	<i>antediluvian, decrepit, hoary, senescent</i>	Vivid, specific, and advanced vocabulary—paints a strong mental picture

The boundaries between vocabulary tiers can be a bit fuzzy at times as word knowledge is acquired differently by different individuals. For example, “asphalt” might be considered a Tier 2 word for a child who grows up in an urban environment; however, this may be a Tier 3 word for a country kid who has never seen a paved road. Consequently, it’s important to think about what a student brings to the learning environment when targeting specific words in direct vocabulary instruction.

Vocabulary Sets

Although we often divide vocabulary into oral and written categories, in actuality, we all have four different sets of vocabulary available for communication. These are:

- Listening Vocabulary
- Speaking Vocabulary
- Reading Vocabulary
- Writing Vocabulary

The most comprehensive set – and the first to develop – is *listening vocabulary* which is comprised of the words we understand. This is the foundation vocabulary upon which the other three sets are based (think of the Language/Literacy Hierarchy described earlier in this article). The next is *speaking vocabulary*—the words we can say and use in conversation. Both are part of our oral vocabulary. The remaining two sets, *reading vocabulary* and *writing vocabulary*, are the written language versions of oral vocabulary. These are the words we understand when we read and those we use in our writing.

Although dependent on one another, each vocabulary set is used for a different purpose and *all* are necessary in order for a student to be successful in the academic setting. Those who are proficient in oral and written language are able to pass words back and forth among the vocabularies with ease as the situation dictates.

What does it Mean to Know a Word?

Regardless of the vocabulary set, word knowledge is not an “all or nothing” phenomenon. To maximize vocabulary development, students need to learn words in a variety of ways. For instance, vocabulary development does not just involve learning the meaning of a word. Rather, vocabulary development progresses both horizontally and vertically as children learn richer, more complete word meanings as well as multiple definitions for a single word.

For instance, youngsters may use the term *uncle* in their conversational speech long before they have developed the full understanding of the word. A child may initially fast map the word “uncle” as referring to any man. Horizontal development of the word continues as the child begins to understand that an “uncle” is a man who is related to your family, but is not a member of your immediate family. Eventually, he or she figures out that an uncle is a brother of your mother or father.

In contrast, understanding that the word “bank” can mean a place to invest your money, the area along a river, a mound of snow, or a specific type of basketball shot is an example of vertical vocabulary development.

Vertical and horizontal vocabulary development are both key components in becoming word conscious, but there are many more. This table, adapted from the *Put Reading First Report* (2000), provides a useful summary of the different ways words can be learned to facilitate the development of a strong vocabulary base.

Types of Word Learning	Examples
New meaning for a known word	The student has the word in her or his oral or reading vocabulary, but learns a new meaning for the word. <i>Example: The student understands the concept of a tree branch. Increase vocabulary by adding branches of rivers and branches of government.</i>
New word representing a known concept	The student is familiar with the concept, but does not know the particular word for the concept. <i>Example: The student has a lot of experience with baseballs and globes, but does not understand that they are an example of spheres.</i>
New word representing an unknown concept	The student is not familiar with either the concept or the word that represents the concept. <i>Example: The student may be not familiar with either the process or the word photosynthesis.</i>
Clarification and/or enrichment of the meaning of a known word	The student is learning finer, more subtle distinctions or connotations in the meaning and usage of the words. <i>Example: The student learns the difference between running, jogging, dashing, and sprinting.</i>

VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

Children with Oral Language Deficits

A reduced or constrained vocabulary is one of the hallmarks of children with language delays or language literacy disorders. This is a serious obstacle to the development of reading and writing – which is, of course, critical to success in academic, social, and vocational settings. Lacking adequate vocabulary, and effective strategies to learn new words, students simply do not have the building blocks they need to effectively comprehend what they read. Furthermore, children with small vocabularies in the early grades learn words at a slower pace than their peers, setting in motion a spiral of negative effects such as frustration, antipathy, and failure that is difficult to break (Stanovich, 1986). For instance, rather than learning 3,000 new root words a year, students with oral language deficits or delays may only learn 1,200, causing them to fall farther and farther behind. This suggests that they will graduate – if they graduate – with a vocabulary smaller by nearly 22,000 words than their typically developing peers!

There are a number of reasons why students may not learn vocabulary at a pace that would allow them to succeed in academic and social settings. However, most often, students with special needs do not learn words because of some combination of the following traits:

- They don't engage in conversation as often as their peers.

- They aren't alert to new or interesting words.
- They often don't – or don't know how to – listen carefully when they are read to.
- They don't read on their own.

Fortunately, deficits in vocabulary can be remediated with quality instruction. Although vocabulary development is an appropriate and beneficial target for all students, it is especially critical that students who are at-risk vocabulary learners (this includes diverse learners) receive intervention that is both purposeful and empirically-proven to enhance the development of word knowledge and to help them become independent word learners.

Vocabulary can be learned via indirect means or direct instruction. Both serve an important, albeit different, role in word learning. However, regardless of the type of learning, vocabulary knowledge is enhanced when words are learned in a natural context and integrated into the student's knowledge base via repetition and connections to the student's life experiences.

Indirect Vocabulary Development

According to Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002), typically developing children learn about 3,000 new words each year while in school. To achieve this, students must learn approximately *8 new words every single day of the year* – including weekends! However, school-aged students are directly taught an average of 8-10 words each week which translates into about 400 new vocabulary words a year. Applying some simple math reveals a gap of around 2,600 words each year that students must learn by some other means.

So how do students acquire so many new words? An extensive body of research indicates that the answer is through *incidental or indirect learning* – that is, by interacting in conversations with adults and peers and by encountering new words in text, either through their own reading or by being read to by an adult or more capable peer (Stahl, 1999). These incidental encounters with words account for the vast majority of vocabulary development in typically developing children (Adlof & Perfetti, 2013).

However, this does not mean that vocabulary development cannot be deliberately facilitated via indirect learning. In fact, much can be done in the early years to ensure rapid vocabulary development and greater comprehension of grade-level texts in the upper grades. Time and time again, evidence has shown that early intervention through indirect teaching of vocabulary to be highly effective in facilitating vocabulary growth (Baumann & Kame'eumi, 2003).

Talking

The more oral language a child has, the more word meanings he or she learns. For example, Weizman and Snow (2001) found that the quality of the language that young children hear and that of their oral interactions with others is a strong predictor of vocabulary knowledge in later years. This is nothing new to SLPs, who are typically masters at engaging children in conversations that are rich in content and appropriate to the developmental level of each individual child. Consequently, we can do much to support vocabulary development by helping parents learn to engage students in rich, interactive conversations in their home environments.

The quality of the oral language experiences at school is also important to facilitating the development of a broad and deep vocabulary. Typically, university training programs for classroom teachers do not include instruction related to oral language development and effective classroom talk. It's not surprising, then, that research has found that classroom language is heavy on closed-ended questions and revolves around topics of "here and now." Further, vocabulary tends to consist of a small corpus of Tier 1 and a smattering of Tier 2 vocabulary words (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).

Consequently, teachers can be encouraged to use more Tier 2 words and open-ended questions by modeling good "teacher talk" during collaborative classroom lessons, or by providing in-services or handouts, or even recommending a good resource book or article.

Reading Aloud

As important as oral language experiences are to vocabulary development, talking and listening in everyday language is not sufficient to facilitate the kind of vocabulary growth necessary to support strong literacy skills. This is because everyday conversations tend to tap into a relatively small group of vocabulary words that lack the richness and variety that we encounter in written language. In fact, a study by Hayes and Ahrens (1988) revealed that children's books contain approximately twice as many infrequently used or rare words than even conversations among college graduates.

Consider the following list of words that come from the book *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type* by Doreen Cronin.

Exasperated	Sincerely
Mediation	Emergency
Concessions	Impatient
Furious	Snoop
Demands	Bovine

Although this book is tagged on Amazon for ages 3-8, these are not words that we would typically use in conversations with children of this age. However, exposure to rich vocabulary such as this *in context* is an important building block to helping children develop the kind of vocabulary necessary for comprehension and expression of written language. (Note that the word "typewriter" is also a part of the story, but

that might require a bit of a history lesson first!)

So, reading to children – no matter what age or grade – is an important and effective method of building vocabulary indirectly. Children learn new words by hearing them used in context and, when paired with conversations about new vocabulary and concepts, they learn to link new words to their prior knowledge and experience.

Interactive Reading

While simply reading aloud helps build vocabulary, engaging children in the reading experience through the use of interactive strategies has been found to be even more beneficial in learning vocabulary. Interactive reading, in which the child is encouraged to be an active participant in the reading interaction, helps children learn more new words – and learn them more quickly – compared to reading experiences in which the child is merely a passive listener (Robertson & Nelson, 2004).

There are a variety of ways to engage children in the reading process. However, the strategies described below are built on the current research related to early language and literacy development and have been extensively field tested.

Echo Reading

This very simple strategy encourages children to begin to understand that what is written on the page matches the words that are produced orally. Although it is not a natural strategy, it is an easily taught and highly effective method of actively including even very young children in the reading interaction —so that we are reading *with* children, not just *to* them. To use this strategy, the adult reads a short phrase and then invites the child to repeat what was read by using prompts such as “Copy me!” or “Say what I say!” Books that are most appropriate for echo reading have short, simple phrases (generally one per page) complemented by highly engaging and child-friendly illustrations and story lines. This strategy can also be used with children who have begun to recognize words. Echo reading with an adult helps these emerging readers learn a book quickly and gain confidence in their ability to eventually read a story independently.

Paired Reading

Paired reading (sometimes referred to as shared reading) is a very natural strategy. The adult reads part of a phrase (or page or story) and the child takes a turn and “reads” another part. Through the effective use of pausing, intonation, and stress, adults signal to the child that it is his or her turn to “read.” Books with repetitive, predictable, and/or rhyming phrases allow pre-readers to anticipate what is coming next and chime in with confidence. Children are not pressured to take their turn. Rather, they are invited to engage in the reading interaction by selecting books that are particularly suited for paired reading and are personally motivating to the child (e.g., a book about dinosaurs for a child who loves dinosaurs). This is an effective and engaging technique to help children become happy and confident readers.

Friendly Questions

Open-ended or *friendly* questions encourage children to think critically about a story and to use more complex language; they reduce the pressure that often results from the expectation that there is just one “right” answer. Parents and educators know that they should ask questions during reading interactions, but most are astonished, and often somewhat chagrined, when they realize how many fact-based questions (*scary questions*) they are asking children. Asking open-ended questions and accepting all answers encourages children to verbally participate in the interaction without fear that they might provide the “wrong” answer. In addition, open-ended, friendly questions encourage children to produce longer verbalizations and use more complex language than merely answering a question with a rote response (which tends to be one or two words in length).

Although all children can benefit when adults employ more friendly questions in their reading interactions, it is especially important to encourage parents and educators of children who are at an increased risk of reading difficulties (such as children with developmental and language delays, children from low socioeconomic status (SES) households, or families in which English is not the primary language) to use these questioning strategies. This provides multiple chances to participate in interactions with adults that facilitate active engagement and opportunities to use more complex language in meaningful contexts.

Prediction

This strategy is presented as a compliment to friendly questioning. Both strategies target increased language and critical thinking skills and encourage children to actively participate in the reading interaction.

Since prediction in its purest form is only available the first time a book is read, adults must take the time to read a new book in its entirety before sharing it with a child to determine if it has good potential as a prediction story. Some books provide visual prediction cues about what might happen next in the story or even what might be on the next page (e.g., *Who is Driving?*). For others, children must rely only on the words of the story (e.g., *Is Your Mama a Llama?*) and their own imagination to help them predict the next event. Both types of books are excellent resources for building language and thinking skills.

Wordless Books

Wordless books help children learn to read without words. Because the story is in the pictures, using this book genre as a context for learning provides multiple opportunities for the use of friendly questions and predicting. Further, unhampered by a set story line, children are able to become the “authors” of the story and tell it any way they wish. This helps children learn that what they say can be written and what is written can be read. The use of wordless books as vehicles for quality adult-child interaction related to literacy is especially appropriate for families who may not be proficient in English as well as with those families members who are not literate. Wordless books also provide valuable

experience in sequencing, thinking skills, predicting, and editing. (The use of wordless books with older children to enhance text comprehension will be discussed later in this article).

Reader's Theatre

This strategy capitalizes on a child's natural interest in dramatic play by encouraging children to engage their whole bodies and minds in a story. Reader's Theatre can be as simple as a book that is written around a fingerplay, (e.g., *Five Little Monkeys*) or as complicated as creating a dramatic representation of the story using puppets or even commercial props (e.g., *Run, Turkey, Run!*). Children who are at risk for impoverished or delayed development of dramatic play skills, such as children with autism and children with language disorders, can particularly benefit from practicing play in the familiar and safe environment of adult-child reading interactions.

A summary of the characteristics of books to use with each of these strategies, as well as some sample book suggestions for each strategy, are provided in the resources section of this article. For additional information on the use of interactive reading with families and in therapy see *Read with Me: Stress-Free Strategies for Building Language and Early Literacy Skills* (Robertson, 2015).

Independent Reading

Studies suggest that 25-50% of vocabulary learning occurs through reading (Stahl, 1999). Further Stahl suggests that if a student reads one hour a day, five days a week, he or she will be exposed to approximately 2,250,000 words during the school year (yes, that is TWO MILLION, TWO HUNDRED, AND FIFTY THOUSAND words). If we assume that 2-5% of these words are unfamiliar, he or she will have encountered 45,000 to 112,500 new words during that year. Consequently, it only makes sense to encourage students to read on their own.

It is important to allow students to select books that interest them regardless of the level of the book. So, rather than focusing on "appropriate" reading levels, SLPs can encourage their students to read all types of books—some simply for enjoyment and some that may challenge them a bit. The important thing is to get noses into books! (A more thorough discussion of encouraging independent reading is provided in the Motivation section of this course.)

Direct Vocabulary Development

A large majority of vocabulary is learned indirectly through talking and reading. However, incidental encounters do not ensure that students will acquire all the words they need to be successful in all settings. Typically, students cannot learn in-depth word meanings and vocabulary nuances that are necessary for understanding a specialized area of instruction (e.g., chemistry) or a specific literature selection (e.g., *Beowulf*) via indirect experiences only. This is especially true for students with language learning deficits or second language learners. For instance, Ricketts et al.

(2011) found that word knowledge gained through incidental learning is constrained by expressive oral vocabulary skills. Thus, children with depressed oral language will most likely fall farther and farther behind their peers without intentional, explicit, and direct vocabulary instruction.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of direct vocabulary instruction in use today that is not supported by evidence. For example, research shows that rote memorization of words and definitions is one of the least effective instructional methods of teaching new vocabulary, resulting in little long term effect (Baker, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1995). Students who are directed to learn new vocabulary by looking up definitions and memorizing them out of context almost never remember these word meanings after the test. Yet, this technique, which has largely been found to be, essentially, a waste of time for a majority of students with and without learning challenges, is still in use in classrooms across the country.

When first learning a new word, people focus on the description of the concept, rather than the definition (Beck, McKeon, and Kuckan, 2002). For example: the dictionary definition of the term "Illusion" is "an erroneous perception of reality." Unless one has a thorough understand of the words "erroneous," "perception," and "reality," this definition does nothing to help clarify the meaning of the word. However, a description such as "something that looks like one thing, but is really something else or is not there at all" is much more apt to assist in understanding what an illusion actually is.

Given this, it is not surprising that when asked to write a sentence using a dictionary to assist in learning a new word 63% of sentences were judged to be "odd," 60% of students' responses were considered by teachers to be unacceptable, and students did not retain or assimilate the information effectively (Miller & Gildea, 1987, Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Consequently, it is important to engage students using strategies and techniques that have been proven to be effective in building vocabulary knowledge. As listed in the sidebar, research regarding effective vocabulary instruction can be synthesized down to six overarching principles that guide us as we plan intervention that facilitates vocabulary development.

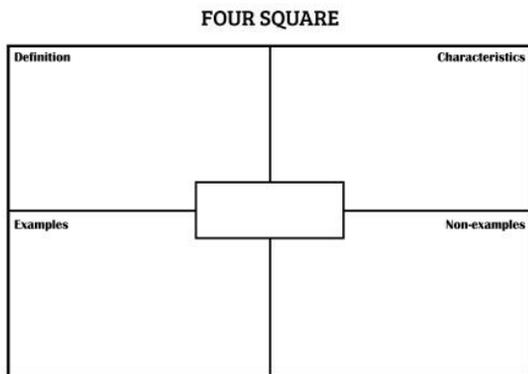
1. Instruction does not rely on looking up definitions
2. Teaching words parts enhances learning
3. Students must represent their knowledge of words in both linguistic and non-linguistic ways
4. Active engagement is essential
5. Playing with words is an effective strategy to help students become more word conscious
6. Repeated exposure is essential

Each of the strategies discussed here addresses at least one, and typically several, of the guiding principles provided by the current literature base. The strategies can be used with a wide variety of ages and abilities, adapted as appropriate.

Four Square

Four Squares help students move beyond memorization of definitions and cement the meaning of the word within their cognitive schemas. Four Squares are appropriate for students from second grade through high school. In fact, they are particularly useful for tier three words that can be challenging for older learners. The template is easy to create by folding a standard piece of paper in half, rotating it 90 degrees, and then folding again to create the four quadrants.

A basic four square, as depicted here, includes:



Center: Word

First quadrant: *Student Friendly Definition* (this can be from the dictionary, generated by the class or provided by teacher/SLP)

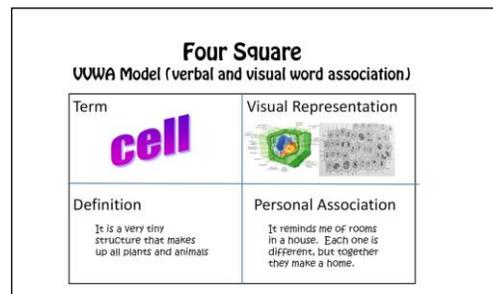
Second quadrant: *Semantic Classification* (Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, etc.)

Third quadrant: *Antonym(s)* for the original word

Fourth quadrant: *Synonym(s)* for the original word

There are a variety of modes of Four Squares. The Frayer Model uses the same basic framework, but stipulates characteristics, exemplars, and non-exemplars for the quadrants. The VVWA Model (Verbal and Visual Word Association) adds both a visual component and a personal association to the student's understanding of a word. It's a powerful method of really getting students to think about and connect with the targeted word.

Here's an example of a VVWA for the word "cell."

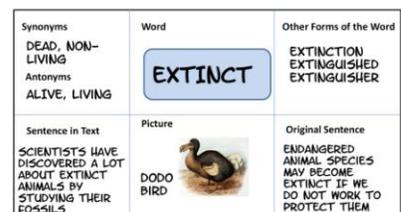


Pick Six

Based on the same principle as Four Square, Pick Six goes a step – well, actually two steps – farther by adding two additional boxes to the Four Square model. Pick Six is especially well-suited to use with words that students encounter in academic texts, but may be used for words gleaned from other reading material as well. A template for Pick Six is created by folding a piece of paper in half lengthwise and then folding into thirds.

As seen in this completed example, students quote the word as it is used in the original context and then create an original sentence as well as a visual

Pick Six

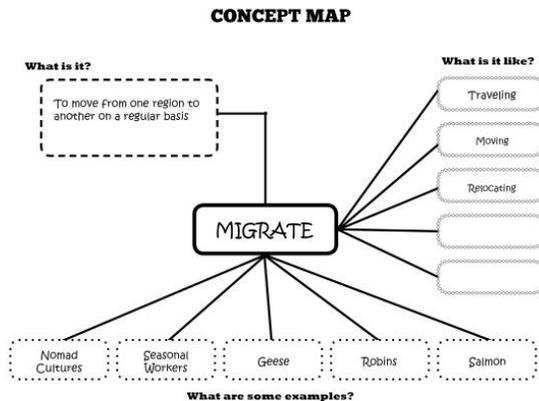


representation. Listing synonyms and antonyms and other forms of the word help cement the new knowledge into the student’s working vocabulary.

Concept Maps

This activity provides students with a more complete understanding of new terms and activates previously learned information already stored in their cognitive systems. Concept maps may be created with a single student, in small groups, or with an entire classroom. As with most of the activities related to learning new word meanings via direct instruction, this activity is appropriate for students of all ages – from early

elementary through high school. The example provide here was completed by a small group of 4th grade students.



Of course, the complexity of the vocabulary will dictate the number of boxes that would be filled in. You can also modify the terminology for older students if you wish, substituting the term “*Definition*” for “*What is it?*,” “*Characteristics*” for “*What is it like?*,” and “*Exemplars*” for “*What are some examples?*”

Word Studies

Word study is an important building block for reading fluency, spelling, and text comprehension (Carlisle, 2010). Understanding the internal structure of words such as affixes, grammatical markers, root words, and syllabification helps students translate words from their oral vocabulary sets (listening and speaking) to the written sets (reading and writing). In fact, by 10 years of age, Mann & Singson (2003) found that morphological knowledge is a better predictor of decoding abilities than phonological awareness.

Find the Root

sugary
stressful
entirely
toothless
helping
happiness
undone
prewash

A good place to start to help students begin to learn about the internal structure of words is to focus on the root word. Once students can identify the main part of the word (the root), they can eventually start to pick out the additional parts that modify, alter, or enhance the meaning (the branches). Start by providing a list of multisyllabic words, such as is provided here (avoid compound words for this activity). Ask students to circle, or highlight the root word. You can then discuss the other “parts” and their meanings in regards to how the meaning of the original root might be affected (e.g. tooth/less, un/done, pre/wash).

Roots and Branches

Create flashcards that include a variety of root words and multiple affixes. A sample set is provided here. Have students make as many multi-syllabic words as they can from these “roots and branches.” This activity can be modified to work with individuals, small

dis-	cheer	-ly
un-	happy	-ful
	hope	-less
	honest	-ing
	like	
	tie	

groups, large groups, or learning teams. Lists can be substituted for flashcards. Eventually, you can have students create the sets of flashcards or lists and challenge one another.

SEEP (Stem, Examples, Explanations, Picture)

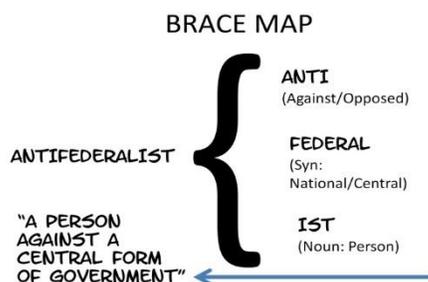
SEEPs help students build both individual word knowledge and general word consciousness through the study of word parts and applying this knowledge to words they encounter in the classroom or during social discourse. A SEEP template may be created simply by folding a regular piece of paper into four sections and adding the headings: Stem, Examples, Explanations, Picture. Alternately, as noted here in the sample SEEP focusing on the prefix “mal-“, you may create a template with pre-made headings.

STEM (word part: prefix, root, suffix)	EXAMPLES	EXPLANATIONS	PICTURE
MAL-	MALPRACTICE MALEVOLENT MALEODOROUS MALIFICENT (SLEEPING BEAUTY) DRACO MALFOY (HARRY POTTER)	SOMETHING BAD OR EVIL	

Choose (or have the student/s choose) a stem and work through the rest of the SEEP with a student or group, discussing each section and brainstorming examples and explanations. The inclusion of visual representations/pictures to represent the meaning of the word part (which students can draw themselves) creates a powerful word study in one small package.

Brace Maps

Brace maps are a type of graphic organizer that assist students in understanding how to break down a multi-syllabic word into its parts, using their knowledge of each part of the word to discern the overall meaning. Brace maps provide a visual connection between words and their parts and helps students begin to draw connections on how suffixes, prefixes and word stems/root words work together to communicate meaning.



As demonstrated in the sample here, a multi-syllabic word is placed on the left side of the brace. Each part is then listed on the right side with a brief definition of prefix, suffix, and/or stem. A definition, derived from the combination of the individual meanings, is then created.

Using core vocabulary from a specific unit of study or subject area is an ideal source of words to study. However, in this case, it is also appropriate for the SLP or educator to

select words that highlight specific types of affixes or roots. Alternately, students can identify unknown words encountered in class readings or discussions (or any other

establish meaning/word knowledge. The key task is teaching students the critical skill of breaking words down into their constituent parts as a strategy for word learning.

Commonyms

Commonyms (commercially available as a game called “Tri-Bonds”) are groups of three words that share a common trait. Here are some examples:

<i>Tree, Car, Elephant</i>	(Trunk)
<i>Yard, Pogo, Chop</i>	(Stick)
<i>Softball, Baseball, Vampire</i>	(Bat)

Solving, and creating, commonyms is an outstanding way to help students build their vocabulary skills and become more word conscious. In both cases, they must activate broad and deep (horizontal and vertical) knowledge of the words.

To increase engagement, commonyms activities can be played in teams to encourage students to use their collective knowledge of the vocabulary words to solve the problem. For example, a team of 2-4 students is given a commonym to solve with the stipulation that teams must confer and come to an agreement on their answer. The team must also designate one person to provide the answer. A correct answer earns 3 points for the team. An incorrect or no answer opens the door for another team to “steal” for 2 points. If (actually WHEN) an individual student blurts out the answer without group input, the team loses a point and he or she must sit out for the next round. (This is a good lesson in pragmatics and game etiquette.) To increase the challenge, teams (or individual students) can be encouraged to create commonyms for one another. This is a much more difficult task that typically requires some direct instruction on how to create a commonym.

A good resource for this activity is www.thinkablepuzzles.com which currently has more than 250 commonyms (and the answers) of varying levels of difficulty available for download at no charge.

Hink-Pinks

Hink-Pinks are word puzzles that result in rhyming pairs. To solve them, students must bring to bear their knowledge of word meanings and fit this into the required rhyming pattern. Here are some examples:

<i>Move, female deer</i>	(Go doe)
<i>24 hours with toys</i>	(Play day)
<i>50% of a giggle</i>	(Half laugh)
<i>A totally cool father</i>	(Rad dad)
<i>A vehicle covered with black, sticky goo</i>	(Tar car)

Hinkie-Pinkies require a two-syllable rhyming answer. These are a bit more challenging:

<i>A smelly digit</i>	(Stinky pinkie)
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A more elegant knit
Loony flower

(Better sweater)
(Crazy daisy)

Hinkity-Pinkities (three-syllable rhyming pairs) are VERY challenging – p even for those who have a pretty good vocabulary, So, save these for students are particularly interested in these kind of word puzzles and motivated by difficult problems.

The White House
A scary pastor

(President's residence)
(Sinister minister)

As with Commonyms, a team competition may be employed to engage students in the activity, but students often enjoy solving and creating these rhyming word puzzles individually. www.thinkablepuzzles.com is also a good resource for Hink-Pinks (and several other word games).

Word Strings/Word Trains

For both of these activities, students create new words using a part of the word that precedes it. Neither of these activities requires templates or more than minimal prior planning (always a good thing for busy SLPs).

Word Strings

Given a word, students are challenged to create a new word by changing only a single letter. Then, the “new” word is modified again by changing a single letter to create another word. Like this:

word....ward....hard....herd....held.....meld....melt....pelt.....

Word Trains

Given a word, students are challenged to come up with a word that starts with the letter that ends the previous word. Like this:

drink...kind...dinosaur...reason...nice...elephant...taught...tingle.....

Students can be challenged to create word strings or word trains individually; however, these activities also work well in group settings. Start by having all students stand. Decide if you are going to create word strings or word trains. An adult or activity leader writes a word on the board. The next person comes up with an appropriate word (depending on whether you are creating word strings or word trains) and writes it on the board next to the first word. Each person in line then continues the string/train by building on the word written down by the preceding player. Players must be prepared to define their word if challenged. A player who gets “stuck” and cannot create/come up with a new word to fit the pattern must sit down. The next player may then choose to add a new word to the string OR can request a new stem to start a new string.

This activity may be extended in several ways. To create competition, teams earn a point for each word they add to the string. Last word (when other team is stumped) is

worth two points. Or, give teams the same starting word and a time limit that is appropriate for the skill level of the group (such as 5 minutes). The team with the longest string or train gets two points (or however you choose to score). For word strings, you may choose to allow words to be modified by adding or subtracting a letter as well as changing a letter. (e.g., trade/tirade, gate/grate). Check out www.briancleary.com for a free, interactive word train activity.

Analogies

Some people may equate analogies to word problems in math: something you have to learn, but not really useful to “real life.” To the contrary! Analogies are an excellent vehicle for vocabulary-building and, by their very nature, facilitate word consciousness. (By the way, word problems really CAN come in handy in “real life” if you happen to be traveling on a train headed west at 60 mph and want to know when you will pass a train traveling east at 45 miles an hour). Analogies are appropriate for supporting vocabulary development of students at virtually any level—from the earliest grades through high school and beyond.

To complete an analogy, a student must know the meaning of both words and be able to critically compare the characteristics associated with each to make a determination regarding the relationship between the two. Consequently, students are building vocabulary while simultaneously flexing their critical thinking and memory muscles.

The first step in completing an analogy is to identify the relationship between the first pair of words. This, of course, requires an awareness of the meanings of both these words. Are they synonyms or antonyms? Is there a cause and effect or a part to whole link? Once students figure out how these words “go together,” they can much more easily select an appropriate word to complete the second pair. Here are some examples of different types of analogies:

Synonym	big:large::small:little	sweet:saccharin::awful:vile
Antonym	in:out::up:down	inflate:deflate::frail:strong
Part/Whole	wheel:bike::tire:car	paragraph:essay::pixel:photo
Characteristic	cold:snow::sweet:sugar	steamy:tropical::frigid:polar
Cause/Effect	fire:burn::ice:freeze	spin:dizzy::wound:pain
Object/Location	cow:barn::bird:nest	ratchet:toolbox::oil:pallette
Classification	purple:color::hammer:tool	mace:weapon::terrier:canine
Action/Object	fly:plane::drive:car	charcoal:sketch::chisel:sculpt
Item/Purpose	fork:eating::crayon:coloring	rasp:smoothing::acid:etching

Product/Worker	smell:nose::sight:eye	portrait:artist::aria:soprano
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Teaching analogies can make both students and teachers a bit nervous. Luckily, there is a wealth of material available in printed form as well multiple on-line sources that provide lists of analogies by category, activity sheets, and even entire lesson plans. Several sources for analogies are provided in Resources (both in the book lists and web resources sections).

Triple Play

This activity can be used with an entire classroom or adapted for smaller groups. Students may be engaged in a variety of ways. For instance, you may choose to allow one student to give the clues and the rest of the class is allowed to “play” each round without keeping score. Alternately, this activity can be made competitive by dividing the groups into teams and keeping score. You may also wish to assign some students to special roles such as scorekeeper, team cheerleader, or judge.

There are three “rounds” to this activity. Each targets a different manner of providing clues to guess the word. Students take turns giving the clues to each other, their team, or the entire class. To provide multiple opportunities to learn the targeted words, use the same words for each round (so, each word is described via definition, a single word, and pantomime over the course of the activity). However, you could also change this up by using different words for each round or recycling vocabulary from a previous lesson or week to more firmly reinforce the concept. For children who struggle with vocabulary, you may choose to allow two students to collaborate to provide the clues or provide some other modification as appropriate.

Begin by writing targeted vocabulary words on index cards (Tier 2 or 3, as appropriate). Fifteen or twenty vocabulary words for a single large group is an appropriate amount. Generate twice as many for two teams. Then, proceed as described below:

Round One (Definitions)

Clue-giver draws a card and provides a definition (using his/her own words) for the targeted word. The student can revise the definition as many times as necessary within whatever time limit you provide or until someone guesses the word. Another way to time this is to have each team keep playing until they have guessed all of their words—then have the other team try to beat their time with a second set of words.

Round Two (Single words)

In this round, the student who is giving the clues can only say a single word at a time. This could be a synonym, a rhyming word, or a related word. For example: the targeted word is: “depression.” The clue could be “sad” or “1930s” or “dent.” This encourages critical thinking and exploration of multiple meanings of the targeted vocabulary word. Again, only a single word can be used at a time. Someone must make a guess before a new single word cue can be given. (Feel free to subtract points for clue-givers who violate the rule!)

Round Three (Charades or pantomime)

This round requires the clue-giver to refrain from speaking. Clues must be given only in the form of a pantomime or charade. You may want to first teach students the standard silent cues for charades such as “number of syllables” (hold up appropriate number of fingers) or “sounds like” (cup hand to ear) just to help get the fun started. Guessers can shout out as many guesses as they like, but the clue-giver cannot make any verbalizations. Again, deduct points as you (or your designated student judge) see fit.

Word Sorts

Word sorts are a versatile and effective way to encourage meta-cognitive discovery learning related to both morphological knowledge (word parts) and whole-word knowledge. The basic premise is to take a group of words and sort them into various categories. The key to making word sorts really work is to encourage students to think creatively about how words can be grouped and labeled. It may be necessary to model the process using self-talk and/or provide quite a bit of scaffolding when students are just beginning to figure out word sorts, but it is worth the time and effort. As students brainstorm, discuss, compromise, and create the categories, they build strong semantic connections and more effectively internalize word meanings.

This activity works especially well for teams of 3-6 students, but can be adapted for individuals or smaller groups. First, students are provided with a list of words. You may pre-create flashcards or write the words on the board and have the students create the cards. Then, students begin to sort the words into groups of two words or more by some specific parameter (whatever the students decided). Students then select a label that defines the group. Students continue to sort, group, and label until all words are assigned to a category. Students share their categorization schemes and discuss their rationale for organizing and grouping the words.

There are a variety of ways that this activity may be extended or modified to address specific skills or clinical targets. For instance, words to be sorted may be brainstormed by the students around a specific theme, academic subject, or words found in a selection of literacy text. Or, random words may be sorted rather than those associated with a theme. Once students have sorted the words into groups, they can be encouraged to add additional words that fit the theme and their chosen categories.

Another way to extend the activity is have students re-sort the original set of words into different groups/categories. Or, give the words to the student(s) in pre-sorted groups and have them try to figure out an appropriate label for each.

To begin, identify an overarching topic or theme. This might be a subject area or current lesson, a holiday season, sports, or words found in a particular piece of literature or text.

Cinquains

Based on Japanese haiku, a didactic *cinquain* is a five-line, non-rhyming poem that specifies how particular types of words are used to create a theme (as described in the sidebar). Most appropriate for students over the age of seven, cinquains can be used to target a number of linguistic skills in addition to vocabulary. Cinquains provide students with practice using all four vocabulary sets as they create, edit, and read aloud their poems. Word consciousness is facilitated as students draw from the different vocabulary sets and find ways to use words they know in new ways or find new words to use in familiar contexts.

As an added bonus, reading fluency can be enhanced as students practice reading their poems aloud. Since students will most likely read their poem multiple times, repeated oral reading practice is built right into this activity. Also, the natural cadence provides practice with prosody without having to worry about coming up with a rhyme.

The level of the task can be increased by having students try to write cinquains using only words that start, end, or include a specific sound (great for incorporating into artic/phonology therapy) or link them to classroom curriculum by using vocabulary or themes from current units of study in social studies, science—or anything!

Below are samples of cinquains that were created by a variety of student and amateur authors. Note that, despite the simplicity of the structure of the poem, the vocabulary is rich and complex. A well-written cinquain allows you to close your eyes and see just what the author is trying to convey.

How to Build a Cinquain

Line 1

One word (noun) which names the topic.

Line 2

Two words (adjectives) that describe the topics

Line 3

Three words (verbs) to express the action of the noun

Line 4

Four words to express feelings or make an observation

Line 5

Repeat topic word, or one word that sums it up, or a synonym

Soil	Space	Mountain
Terra firma	Infinite, Mysterious,	Massive, Silent
Nurturing, composting, weathering	Expanding, Collapsing, Beckoning	Towering, Growing, Sheltering
More than just dirt	Waiting to be explored	Make me feel small
Home	Space	Majestic

Here are two examples of cinquains that were developed around a specific academic topic (labeled by me as “*super-charged cinquains*”). These cinquains were created by a junior and senior – both of whom were identified as language learning delayed.

Blood
Leukocytes, Plasma
Circulating, Oxygenating, Clotting
Regulates the Body’s Temperature
Hemoglobin

Lung Disease
COPD, Emphysema
Gasping, Heaving, Coughing
Alveoli damaged from smoking
Pleurisy

These were not easy to create. In fact, they required several days of research on the part of the authors. However, the end results were quite extraordinary. Both students were justifiably proud of their efforts and had developed an exceptionally rich understanding of the academic vocabulary related to the topic and a deeper knowledge of the overarching theme of the cinquain.

Computer Technology and Web Resources

Also cited by the National Reading Panel as having promise for increasing vocabulary, computer and web resources can be both motivating and effective. Given this, here are some resources that can assist in supporting vocabulary learning.

Puzzlemaker

Generates word puzzles, crosswords, and cryptograms from a personalized list of words. A great resource for extra activities to solidify newly learned vocabulary.
<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/?cfid=283554&cftoken=73308940>

Jeopardy

Create free game boards (no registration required)
<https://jeopardylabs.com>

Vocabulary University

Offers grade level puzzles, thematic games, and word activities including root word practice.
www.myvocabulary.com

Twenty Questions

Complete directions:
<http://www.wikihow.com/Play-20-Questions>

Pictionary

Generate Pictionary Words and/or play online
<http://www.wordgenerator.net/pictionary-word-generator.php>

Fictionary/Dictionary

Complete directions:

http://www.ehow.com/how_4443074_play-game-dictionary.html

Lexipedia

This is a multi-lingual visual dictionary that creates a word web and defines words based on parts of speech. Great for visual learners.

www.lexipedia.com

Visuwords

A dictionary and a thesaurus that's a great resource for writing. It allows the user to look up words to find their meanings and associations with other words and concepts. The user can produce word diagrams to see how words associate.

www.visuwords.com

Tag Galaxy

Entering a key word creates a 3D orbiting galaxy of words and their associations. Click on any word to move it to the center of the galaxy, then click again and watch the globe populate with images from Flickr.

<http://taggalaxy.com>

READING COMPREHENSION

The final task of independent reading is *text comprehension*, which is, of course, the fundamental purpose of reading. But, "Children don't automatically extract meaning from a text simply because they can say the words on a page," (Roller, 2001). Text comprehension is a complex skill that is difficult, if not impossible, to isolate and target as an individual entity.

On the one hand, we know that phonemic awareness, knowledge of phonics, appropriate levels of reading fluency, and a robust vocabulary all contribute to reading comprehension. As such, children who lack these skills will likely struggle when trying to extract meaning from written language.

On the other hand, we cannot assume that comprehension occurs merely because these prerequisites for reading are in place. While research supports the importance of each skill, they may not be entirely sufficient for comprehension to occur. In short, comprehension is more than just the sum of its parts.

However, we do know that good readers have in common two key core characteristics above and beyond these building blocks. Specifically, good readers have a *purpose* for reading and they are *active* in the reading process. Both of these characteristics substantially affect a reader's ultimate comprehension of the material. Consequently, text comprehension is facilitated by encouraging students to become active, purposeful readers.

READING WITH A PURPOSE

Consider how the concept of having a purpose affects daily life. When you get up in the morning, you may take a shower, choose what you will wear, eat breakfast, feed your pets, and any number of other tasks. Regardless of the list, you have a purpose for getting up and getting moving. Perhaps your purpose is to get to work on time, or to meet a friend for coffee, or get to your dentist appointment, or even to catch a plane to start your vacation. But, you set your alarm and complete these tasks because you have a *purpose*. Similarly, you do the laundry, dust, wash dishes, or vacuum because you want your house to be a pleasant place to live – another purpose. (Alternately, it could be because your mother-in-law is coming to visit and you don't want her to know how you *really* live... but that's a purpose too!) Your purpose might not always be pleasant or fun (e.g., a dentist appointment), but you are aware of it and you shape your behaviors to accomplish it.

But what happens if you haven't identified a purpose? You most likely end up dawdling around, aimlessly puttering at this and that, getting nothing accomplished and before you know it, your day is over – and you probably have no idea where it went!

The same principle applies to reading. When a person picks up written material, he or she typically has a reason for reading it. Purposes for reading may include gaining information about a particular topic of interest to you, reading a travel guide to prepare for an upcoming vacation, completing an assignment, keeping up with current events via the newspaper or web, or even just reading for the pure enjoyment of getting lost in a story. However, if the individual doesn't know why they are reading something, the chances are that he or she won't really connect to the text and won't remember what was read – even if they had all the foundation skills of reading in place.

It is easy to assume that students intuitively understand the purpose of a reading assignment. For instance, a classroom teacher very likely expects that their students understand that the purpose of reading assigned text is to learn the material well enough to participate in classroom discussion, or answer a series of questions, or apply the material to a class activity or an exam. Although never explicitly stated, many of the students in the class will understand this purpose.

However, a struggling reader's purpose is often to just be able to get through the passage. So, in the mind of this reader, once the assigned text has been read all the way through, the purpose is fulfilled. Unfortunately, this mismatch in expectations is a recipe for disaster. From the teacher's point of view, the student is lazy, doesn't follow directions, or doesn't care. The student is mystified as to why the teacher is upset and may eventually just stop trying altogether.

Consequently, it is important that we explicitly discuss various purposes for reading. Then, we provide students with practice self-identifying the purpose for reading a specific passage or, alternately, to self-advocate by explicitly asking for direction if they cannot identify the purpose on their own.

Strategies to Facilitate Purposeful Reading

The House

This activity is an excellent introduction to, and demonstration of, the importance of having a purpose when reading. This is a higher level activity (as is text comprehension) requiring that students are able to read independently to some degree. It may be undertaken with individual students, but works especially well in groups.

To begin, students are provided with three different-colored highlighters and a copy of *The House* passage (Pichert & Anderson, 1977) as shown here. (It is sometimes helpful to provide three copies of the text so the student has a "clean" copy for each step of the activity.) NOTE: It is perfectly acceptable to read the passage together as a pre-activity task to make sure everyone can decode, and understands, all of the words.

<p>The two boys ran until they came to the driveway. "See, I told you today was good for skipping school," said Mark. "Mom is never home on Thursday," he added. Tall hedges hid the house from the road so the pair strolled across the finely landscaped yard. "I</p>

never knew your place was so big,” said Pete. “Yeah, but it’s nicer now than it used to be since Dad had the new stone siding put on and added the fireplace.”

There were front and back doors and a side door that led to the garage that was empty except for three parked 10-speed bikes. They went in the side door, Mark explaining that it was always open in case his younger sisters got home earlier than their mother.

Pete wanted to see the house so Mark started with the living room. It, like the rest of the downstairs, was newly painted. Mark turned on the stereo, the noise of which worried Pete. “Don’t worry, the nearest house is a quarter mile away,” Mark shouted. Pete felt more comfortable observing that no houses could be seen in any direction beyond the huge yard.

The dining room, with all the china, silver, and cut glass, was no place to play so the boys moved into the kitchen where they made sandwiches. Mark said they wouldn’t go to the basement because it had been damp and musty ever since the new plumbing had been installed.

“This is where my Dad keeps his famous paintings and his coin collection,” Mark said as they peered into the den. Mark bragged that he could get spending money whenever he needed it since he’d discovered that his Dad kept a lot in the desk drawer.

There were three upstairs bedrooms. Mark showed Pete his mother’s closet that was filled with furs and the locked box that held her jewels. His sisters’ room was uninteresting except for the color TV that Mark carried to his room. Mark bragged that the bathroom in the hall was his since one had been added to his sisters’ room for their use. The big highlight in his room, though, was a leak in the ceiling, where the old roof had finally rotted.

Next, using the yellow (or whatever color specified) highlighter, the student is asked to mark “everything that is important” in the passage. Using whatever method is most appropriate for the number of students and the time available (preferably this would be a whiteboard and a chart), compare and contrast what parts of the selection were highlighted by each student. Typically, there is little agreement and students often tend to use the “highlight everything because it might be important” approach. As a result, large sections of the passage are highlighted, but students are unable to articulate why they highlighted each. (This is what commonly happens for many students when they read assigned passages without having an identified purpose.)

Following this, students read the passage a second time. This time, specify a different color highlighter (blue perhaps) and direct the student to highlight everything that would be important information for a potential house burglar. You may provide a “clean” copy of the passage if desired.

Finally, students are asked to do a third reading of the passage, but this time highlighting (with yet a different color) everything that would be important for a potential home buyer to know.

It typically becomes apparent very quickly that the latter two tasks are much easier for students to complete and there will also be a great deal more agreement between and among student/groups regarding the information that is important in each scenario. In addition, the amount of information highlighted is typically less for the two focused scenarios and the reader will be able to articulate why he or she highlighted it (i.e., provide a rationale as to why this information is important).

A discussion of the power of having a purpose for reading text completes this activity. Students now have a much better grasp of why this is an important part of reading – and how it actually can help them read more efficiently and comprehend better.

What's my Purpose?

This strategy helps students identify their specific purpose for reading a selection of text (such as an article, a book chapter, an assignment, a story, etc.) Start by having students brainstorm potential purposes for reading. This step may require quite a bit of scaffolding. In fact, particularly for younger students, you may have to actually provide a list of purposes as the first step. Next, provide students with different reading scenarios and ask them to identify possible potential purposes for reading the text selection.

To keep intervention functional and linked to classroom curriculum, have students bring their assignment books (or work with teachers to obtain reading assignments) and identify the purpose of assigned readings. It's helpful to provide a form such as the one depicted. The student, with or without assistance as appropriate, checks the box(es) that applies to the reading passage and clips it to the assignment as a reminder.

Text _____

My Purpose for Reading This Selection

- Read for pleasure
- Read to learn new vocabulary
- Read to be able to discuss with others
- Read to learn a procedure
- Read to find answers
- Read for specific information
- Read to compare and contrast
- Read and reflect
- Read and summarize
- Other _____

NOTE: You may need to extend this activity by teaching students how to ask their teacher, or whoever assigned the text, for an explicit explanation of the expected purpose of the reading assignment.

Name That Purpose

It is important for students to identify their purpose for reading. However, just as for oral language, written language is a two-way street. It requires both a receiver (the reader) and a sender (the author). So, we can help students improve comprehension of written text by helping them understand that effective authors also must have a purpose for writing. In this way, we help students gain a better understanding of text by teaching them the different ways authors can structure text to convey meaning.

For example, authors may write to:

- Tell a story
- Compare and contrast
- Convince an audience
- Convey information
- Entertain
- Report and inform
- Share an experience

Text _____

My Purpose for Reading This Selection

Read for pleasure

Read to learn new vocabulary

Read to be able to discuss with others

Read to learn a procedure

Read to find answers

Read for specific information

Read to compare and contrast

Read and reflect

Read and summarize

Other _____

The Author's Purpose for Writing this Selection

Tell a Story

Compare and Contrast

Convince an audience

Convey information

Entertain

Report and inform

Share an experience

Other _____

The form shown here, which combines both the reader's and author's purposes, can be used as a more advanced version of the previous activity. In this case, the reader identifies both their purpose for reading the text and the author's purpose for writing the material. This helps the student focus on the critical elements of the written material that relate to the identified purposes rather than potentially getting lost in the details.

ACTIVE READERS

Having a purpose for reading is important, but successful readers must also be *active* in the reading process to be able to comprehend text during independent reading.

For instance, if you are driving across the state to visit a friend (your purpose) but you are not actively engaged in the process of driving, chances are you will not be successful in fulfilling your purpose. Perhaps you have all the skills and prerequisites that are necessary for a successful long distance drive—you actually own a car, you have a driver's license and understand speed limits and traffic signs, you have downloaded a GPS app to your phone, and can read a map when technology fails. However, if you don't engage or utilize those skills and prerequisites—you don't open either the app or the map, you don't put gas in the car, you don't pay attention to exit signs, you neglect the thumping sound of a tire going flat—you may end up somewhere, but probably not where you planned!

Readers who are active in the reading process use meta-cognitive strategies to *think* about what they are reading. They engage in self-questioning to determine what they already know and what they don't know about the topic of the selected text. They use context clues to derive possible meanings for unknown vocabulary words and strive to make personal connections with the reading material.

Typically, students who struggle with reading comprehension do so because they don't know how to engage in the reading interaction. They don't understand the power—or in many cases, even the concept—of active, purposeful reading. We facilitate reading comprehension by attending to the prerequisite skills discussed previously and by taking time to explicitly teach student about their role as an active participant in the reading process.

Strategies to Encourage Active Engagement

Predict-It

We can help students become more purposeful and active in reading by engaging them in tasks that follow a *predict-read-review* format as is used in this strategy. *Predict-read-review* primes the student to listen for specific vocabulary or components of the text, thereby providing a purpose and encouraging active engagement. If you like, you can add a little competitive “carrot” to spice things up as is shown in some of the extension activities that follow.

This particular activity is extremely flexible and can be used with individual students, with groups, or entire classroom. It may be undertaken as an entirely orally activity for very young children or used to develop consensus-building and encourage logical thinking for older children.

First, show student/s the cover of the book and, depending on how you want to structure the activity and the age of the participants, perhaps some illustrations as well. **IMPORTANT:** don't share or show any words other than the title. Next, ask the student/s to predict words that they think the author might have used to tell the story. Read the story. For younger students, I prefer to read the story aloud. For older students, you may choose to have them read the story independently either silently or aloud. Students keep track of the words they predicted that were used in the text.

Predict-It lends itself to a group activity – large or small – and there are a number of variations that may be used to extend or modify this activity. For example, large groups can be broken into smaller teams so that they may brainstorm a list of predicted words together. A friendly competition to determine which team predicts the most words correctly can be motivating. For older students, you can ask groups to negotiate and come to a consensus on their top ten words – with reasons for their selections. You may also choose to have students predict words that they believe would not be in the text – again, providing a rationale. This is actually a much more difficult skill in many ways and students typically enjoy the challenge without getting frustrated.

Predict-A-Story

This activity also utilizes the *predict-read-review* format and, in addition to facilitating active engagement, builds vocabulary and helps students become more word conscious. To participate successfully in this activity, students must have a working knowledge of the components of story grammar. Consequently, if students have not been exposed to story grammar, you will need to pre-teach this skill prior to using this

strategy. This may take several lessons; however, explaining the components of story grammar and demonstrating their role in story telling facilitates students' potential to comprehend both oral and written stories effectively.

Choose a story grammar scheme that is appropriate for the age/grade/ability level of your students. For elementary grades, the suggested components are: setting, characters, problem, action, and resolution. There are more sophisticated story grammar schemes, but this is typically a good place to start and covers the important elements

Once students have a general grasp of the elements of a story, create a list of vocabulary words for a specific story or book. Try to include words from tier 2, or even tier 3 for older students. Be sure to include words that would be found in each element and also some words that might work in more than one category—just to make it interesting.

Next, have the student/s predict in which part of the story each word will appear. A chart, such as the one provided here, provides a visual scaffold of the activity. The grid can be completed with an entire class or students could fill out the chart independently prior to reading the story.

Then, read the story, either aloud or assigned as independent reading —whatever is most appropriate for your student or group. Once the story has been read, return to the chart and review the predictions. When students are provided with a scaffold such as this, both in terms of the story structure and vocabulary words, comprehension is facilitated because the cognitive system has been activated prior to reading. Students are typically much more engaged in the reading as they search for the targeted words to see if they made the correct predictions. Of course, the element of competition may be incorporated as appropriate to keep students engaged.

The chart depicted here was completed with a group of 4th grade students and based on a favorite chapter book series, *Hank the Cowdog* by John Erickson. Note that some words have question marks next to them. These are words that students identified as potentially being in more than one part of the story, reflecting growth in critical thinking, story awareness, and both metacognitive and metalinguistic skills. Only after the story is read can a final determination about the word – such as whether it was used

PREDICT A STORY				
The Setting	The Characters	The Problem	The Action	The Resolution
Texas	Hank	Buzzards (?)	Searching	Safe(?)
Ranch	Heifer (?)	Rustlers (?)	Yelling	Reward
	Buzzards (?)	Lost	Running	Rescued
	Rustlers (?)	Safe(?)		

Selected Vocabulary
Hank the Cowdog (John Erickson)

Ranch	Safe	Reward
Rustlers	Texas	Running
Guard	Lost	Pete the Barn Cat
Buzzards	Searching	Rescued
Searching	Heifer	Hank

as a noun or a verb – be made. This encourages students to be active in the reading process as they seek to figure out which category was actually “correct.”

Wordless Books

Many people make the incorrect assumption that wordless books, sometimes referred to as merely “picture books,” are only for younger children. On the contrary, wordless books can tell quite complex stories using very sophisticated illustrations. In addition, the term *wordless* can be a misnomer. In fact, many wordless books actually have words; however, the words do not tell the story. That is left up to the imagination of the reader!

Wordless books are an excellent go-to resource for targeting many different skills related to literacy – including reading comprehension. As an added bonus, wordless books also facilitate higher level skills such as critical thinking, sequencing, vocabulary development, and perspective-taking. Since the story is told through the illustrations, students become the “author” by creating text to communicate the story as they interpret it. This provides a *purpose* and promotes *active engagement* as students have to create a storyline while simultaneously managing vocabulary selection, writing mechanics, spelling, and grammar.

The basic technique follows a simple four-step process:

1. Preview the book.
2. Student writes the text to tell the story.
3. Edit to create a finished product.
4. Share with others.

Start by reading through the book with the student using open-ended questions, predicting, and other interactive strategies to encourage critical thinking about the story. For an older student, you may prefer to have them preview the story on their own to encourage active engagement. However, this requires a certain level of motivation that may be lacking in struggling readers, so be prepared to step back in and provide some scaffolding as necessary. Next invite the student to begin to create the text that tells the story shown in the illustrations.

“Sticky” notes are a very useful manipulative for this activity. Depending on each budding author’s current skill levels, you can have students either write directly on the sticky note or have them dictate the story to you or another adult. Typically, this would consist of one note per page, but its fine to add more if the student has a lot to say! Individual sticky notes can easily be removed if editing is required and replaced with a “fresh” note. It is important that the student not be overly concerned about writing mechanics or grammar initially. Rather, the goal is to just have the student just get his

or her ideas written down. Then, go back and edit for content and sequencing, replacing sticky notes with the edited versions as necessary.

Next review the story that the student has created by reading it aloud together. Encourage the student to think about the vocabulary – can more descriptive, more precise, or more colorful words be used to make the story sparkle? Is the “tone” of the story right for the targeted audience? Does the story make sense? Could adding cohesive words such as *however*, *before*, *suddenly* and others help tie the story together better? This process may play out over several intervention sessions, requiring multiple revisions and numerous sticky notes as the student refines the content of the story. Lastly, assist him or her as appropriate in editing for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and writing mechanics.

Using wordless books in this manner also provides practice with reading fluency (through repeated oral readings) as students will need to read and re-read the text that they created and they make edits until the story is “just right.” Eventually, have students share their finished stories with other students, their families, or some other audience.

A list of suggested wordless books is provided in the Resources section.

Picture This!

A common misconception held by many adults, including educators, is that a student should not be engaged in another task while listening to text being read aloud. This is most likely because they were taught that in order to listen carefully, one must look at the person who is speaking or reading aloud and refrain from doing anything else. Consequently, students are not typically encouraged to draw or doodle while being read to—or while they are supposed to be reading.

However, because the human brain can process information so quickly, simply sitting and listening may actually cause us to drift off task. In a nutshell, our brains become bored and what is being said or read then simply goes “in one ear and out the other.” One way to help “anchor” students to the content, as recommended by the National Reading Panel report, is to provide explicit permission to, and direction in, using mental images.

Consequently allow, and encourage, students to make doodles or draw or otherwise engage their brains as they listen to a story or a text passage. As appropriate for their age and developmental level, encourage children to “draw what this story makes you think about” or “make a scribble about this story” (NRP, 2000). It is also helpful to encourage students to sequence the story through quick illustrations (stick figures work fine) or to draw something that they already know about that has a connection to what is being read (or that they are reading independently).

What they draw isn’t particularly important. What is important is that adults are careful not to be too rigid in specifying what should be drawn. The point is to let children free-

associate to anchor the information into their existing cognitive schemas. Afterwards, encourage students to talk about what they drew – and why!

To facilitate this, look for books that have strong possibilities for visual imagery. This typically means those that have a rich vocabulary and an intriguing story line. Here are a few examples.

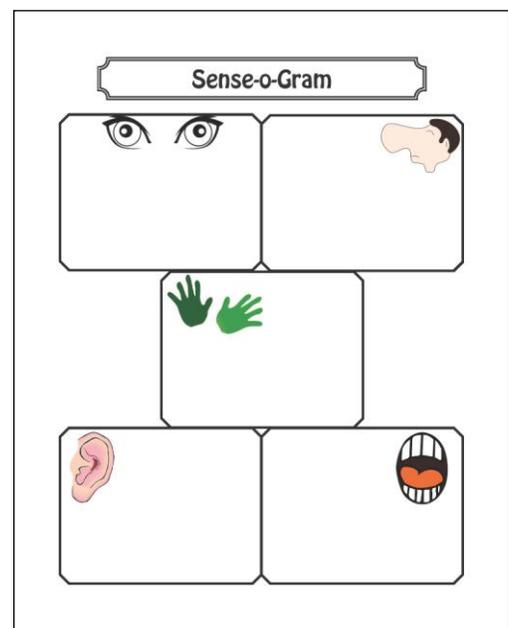
Something From Nothing (Phoebe Gilman) – Grades K-5. Baby Joseph eventually outgrows his blue blanket which has begun to wear out. An old tailor recycles it again and again – first into a jacket, then a vest, then a tie, and eventually only enough is left to cover a button. There is a surprising ending that helps the reader think about what it means when we say “something from nothing.” Students become actively engaged in the story as they create drawings of blue coats, ties, buttons, and blankets from their own imagination.

Wings (Christopher Myers) – Grades 6 and above. One day, Ikarus Jackson surprises his friends and neighbors by unfolding his “long, strong, proud wings” and flying over the rooftops. Rather than being amazed and awed, he is taunted, and ostracized and, eventually, even kicked out of school. Luckily, one lonely girl decides to find and befriend Ikarus. Standing up to his tormentors, she helps him see that being different isn’t necessarily bad and declares that his flying is, indeed, “beautiful.” After students have created their ideas of what Ikarus and his wings might look like, you will want to share the book’s gorgeous cut-paper illustrations of the world as seen from the viewpoint of a boy who flies.

When Lightning Comes in a Jar (Earnest and Patricia Polacco) – All ages. Rich in vocabulary and imagery, it is not uncommon for students to start to sketch as soon as the title of this book is read aloud. The story revolves around two family reunions – one past and one present. There are “roly-poly” aunties and “zillions of meatloafs” and “gazillions of Jell-O salads.” As the title suggests, the day culminates with Gramma showing children how to catch lightning (bugs) in a jar. There are so many possibilities for visualizing this story that you may find students filling multiple pages with sketches and doodles.

Sense-O-Gram

This activity provides more structure than the free association described above, which is necessary for some students, but is still open ended enough to encourage visualization and active engagement. It can be used with a wide variety of students – from early elementary through high school. (In fact, I know a master teacher who uses this very successfully to help high school students learn specific third tier vocabulary related to her field of agri-science).



Start by reading a story aloud such as *Night in the Country*, by Cynthia Rylant. Nonfiction materials that are rich in the description of sensory experiences are also a good choice. Older students can be encouraged to read the selected text independently. Using a template such as the one provided here, students write words or phrases (or draw a picture) from the story or reading assignment that relates to, or activates, one or all of their five senses.

While effective, it is best to use this strategy in small doses and/or in conjunction with other activities that support reading comprehension.

Students may share their sense-o-grams with the rest of the class and/or may keep a notebook of all of their sense-o-grams to remind them of what they know about each passage.

Here’s How I Think

Another way to support students’ understanding of what they read is to help them monitor their own comprehension by activating their metacognitive skills. This activity doesn’t involve teams, templates, or pre-planning. It isn’t fancy or particularly creative. However, it is an extremely powerful way to provide a live demonstration of how an effective reader engages with text. It can be considered a form of thinking out loud in a way that helps students see how an accomplished reader processes text. Although simple on the face of it, use of this strategy can result in a big payoff for students who struggle with reading comprehension.

Start by selecting a text passage or story that is appropriate for the age and ability level of the student/s. Pause at suitable intervals to explicitly model active engagement and comprehension monitoring. You’ll find some examples in the chart provided here. Engage student/s in the process as appropriate by periodically asking them to suggest thinking strategies or to identify the strategy you are using. One caveat: because this is mostly a “spectator sport” (i.e., students are not as actively engaged as other strategies), this activity is best done in small doses and with text that has a high level of interest to students. However, learning to use comprehension monitoring strategies such as these helps students make the transition from helpless, clueless reader to active, engaged reader.

Strategy	Self-Talk Examples
Prediction	<i>“I’ll bet someone is going to eat that apple pie Samantha left on the window sill!”</i>
Questioning	<i>“Is the author trying to mislead me so I reach the wrong conclusion?”</i>
Personal Connection	<i>“This article is about hearing loss. My grandmother was born deaf. According to the information here, she must have had a sensory-neural type of hearing loss.”</i>
Decoding	<i>“That’s a hard word. I’d better take time to sound it</i>

	<i>out and see if it makes sense in the sentence.”</i>
Unknown Word – Using Root Word	<i>“I know what physical means, so physicality must have something to do to with the shape or characteristics of something.”</i>
Unknown Word – Using Morphemes	<i>“I know that satisfactory means okay and I know that the prefix un- means “not” or “opposite” so unsatisfactory must mean something is not okay.”</i>
Unknown Word – Using Context	<i>“I don’t know what rampion is, but since it “grows in a garden” I’ll bet it is an edible plant.</i>
Summarizing	<i>“Hmmm, so this article was about candle making and specifically how to make scented candles.”</i>

Adapted from Report of the National Reading Panel (2000)

Questions! Questions! Questions!

Asking and answering questions is a core activity for assessing a students’ level of comprehension as well as to help them self-monitor their own level of comprehension. There are two kinds of questions that students need to understand in order to maximize their comprehension of written language: 1) questions they ask themselves for comprehension monitoring (“I CAN ASK THAT” questions) and 2) questions asked by others (“I CAN ANSWER THAT” questions). Oftentimes, SLPs are able to assist classroom teachers in determining the kinds of questions that are difficult for specific students and work together with them to design effective instruction to facilitate better comprehension.

I Can Ask That! Questions (Personal Comprehension Monitoring)

One way readers actively engage in the text is by asking questions before, during, and after they read to clarify fuzzy spots, identify key points, make predictions, and self-assess their understanding of the text. It is extremely important for students to learn to regularly engage in metacognitive self-questioning to help them avoid the trap of thinking they have “read” the assigned text just because they have decoded all (or most) of the words. It is often helpful to clue students in on the fact that if they learn to ask the right kinds of questions of *themselves* the questions that *teachers* ask on tests or during oral quizzes will be much easier to answer.

You can help students learn to flex their metacognitive muscles by explicitly teaching them the kinds of questions that they should be asking themselves before, during, and after reading. Some suggestions are provided below (note that some of these are covered by the activities outlined in this chapter).

Sample Self-Questions to Ask PRIOR to Reading

- What is my purpose for reading this text passage? (See *What’s my Purpose* activity above)
- What is the author’s purpose for writing this text passage? (See *Name that Purpose* activity above)

- What do I already know about the topic?
- Is there new vocabulary that I have recently learned that I should pay attention to?
- Are there answers to questions that I know will be asked about this text that I should be looking for?

Sample Self-Questions to Ask DURING Reading

- Does this make sense?
- Do I understand all the words?
- What is the topic?
- Can I identify the main idea?
- How does this relate to my life or something I already know?

***Suggestion: Use the "Here's How I Think" activity described above to model comprehension monitoring via self-questioning during reading.*

Sample Self-Questions to Ask AFTER Reading

Be able to answer all of the questions in the first two categories, PLUS:

- Can I summarize the key points or plot features?
- Are there words I still don't understand?
- How does this information relate to what I already know?
- Do I need to read other material or sections of the text to provide missing information?
- Have I formed an opinion about what I read? What is it?
- What questions do I still have about this passage?

I Can Answer That! Questions (Understanding Questions Asked by Others)

In addition to asking themselves the right questions to maximize comprehension during reading, students need to be able to give the right answer to demonstrate their comprehension to others. This can be intimidating, particularly when students don't understand that there are different kinds of questions that require different kinds of answers.

“Right-There” Questions

Right-There questions are those for which the answers can be found right in the text, typically in a single sentence. Sometimes referred to as text-explicit questions, these questions require a concrete answer that is typically either correct or incorrect (close-ended questions). Classic Wh- questions are examples of Right-There Questions. Students need to know that if they cannot remember the answer to a question of this type, they can typically find the answer simply by re-reading the text.

- Right There Questions typically use terms such as: Who, What, When, Where, List, Name.
- Typical Use on Exams: True or False, Fill in the Blank, Multiple Choice, Word Bank

“Think-About-It” Questions

These types of questions, that require an answer based on information from more than one sentence in the text, are sometimes referred to as text-implicit questions. These are open-ended questions that require students to infer or synthesize information rather than merely provide a rote answer.

- Think-About-it-Questions typically use terms such as: Why, Summarize, Compare, Contrast, Explain, or Retell
- Typical Use on Exams: Essay or Short Answer Questions

“What-I-Know-and-Think-Matters” Questions

Another type of open-ended questions, the answers to this third type of question are not found in the text at all. They require the student to tap into their prior knowledge of the subject or some aspect of their life that relates to the text. (These are sometimes called scriptal questions).

- What-I-Know-and-Think-Matters Questions ask students to: Reflect, Predict, or Provide an opinion.
- Typical Use on Exams: Essay Questions

SQR3

This strategy works especially well with middle and high-school students, although some upper-elementary students may be candidates as well. It is also appropriate for use with adults. The strength of this technique is that it provides a scaffold or framework for reading text that facilitates comprehension. It also provides a purpose for reading and, if done correctly, thoroughly and actively engages the student in the reading.

Survey (or Skim) – Prior to reading the passage and to create a context for reading,

- *The title and introduction*
- *Key words*
- *Main headings and subheadings*
- *Figures and/or graphs, including the caption*
- *Summaries or study questions*

Question – While surveying, formulate questions about the text such as:

- *What is this written passage (chapter, story, assignment) about?*
- *What question is this written passage trying to answer?*
- *What do I already know about this topic?*
- *How does this information help me?*
- *What is my purpose for reading this text?*

Read – Employ active reading strategies while you read the written passage:

- *Look for answers to the questions you developed.*
- *Answer questions at the beginning or end of chapters or study guides.*
- *Study all graphics—charts, figures, graphs, pictures, etc.*
- *Reread all captions.*
- *Note all the underlined, italicized, bold printed words or phrases.*
- *Monitor comprehension. As necessary:*
 - *Reduce your speed for difficult passages.*
 - *Stop and reread parts which are not clear.*
 - *Break passage into smaller chunks rather than trying to read it all at once.*

Recall (or recite) – Immediately after reading the written passage (in whole or in part):

- *Answer the questions formulated in the Q phase.*
- *Summarize what was read orally or in writing.*
- *Underline or highlight new vocabulary words and/or key points.*
- *Compare and contrast information found in this passage to what you already knew or thought you knew.*

Review – This is an on-going process and is the antidote to the “cram and jam” technique that so many students default to because they don’t how to study effectively. Students who learn to review every day do not have to engage in “panic study” or try to rely on rote memorization of random facts. Routinely using these review techniques on a regular, on-going basis facilitates a deeper, more diversified level of comprehension.

- *Review notes, study guides, and other class material.*
- *Participate actively in classroom discussions.*
- *Re-read text passages several times.*
- *Attempt to recall meaning of new or specialized vocabulary and/or key phrases.*

- *Create an outline or a semantic web of the targeted material—first with resources available and then from memory.*
- *Ask and answer your own questions about the material.*

“Top Ten Ways to Improve Your Reading”

Some students may find it helpful to have a summary of self-activating strategies available to use as a reference during reading interactions. This can be accomplished through a *brainstorm-discuss-synthesize-implement* activity or by simply providing the list of strategies, discussing them, and then help students learn to use the reference consistently and appropriately.

The reference can take any form such as a poster or a bookmark. Of course, with the rapid advances occurring in e-book technology, bookmarks may soon be as relevant as a typewriter. Perhaps you’ll just want to create an app for that! Regardless, provided here is a list of strategies that are helpful for when students get “stuck” on a reading passage. Notice that “give up” is not one of them.

**READING
SUCCESS
STRATEGIES**

• • • • •

1. Identify a purpose
2. Read and re-read
3. Look at headings and pictures
4. Create a mental image
5. Define unknown words
6. Ask questions
7. Think about what you already know
8. Think about what you don't know
9. Summarize what you read
10. Ask for help

• • • • •

THE MOTIVATION TO READ

While each of the skills discussed so far is critical to literacy development, there is more to building better readers than simply teaching a set of specific skills. In fact, the motivation to read has been identified by the National Reading Panel as the final component in effective reading instruction. There is a strong correlation between *how much* a student reads and *how well* they read. In other words, the best readers read the most and poorest readers read the least. While we can't claim that reading more *causes* children to be better readers, it *is* possible that better readers may simply choose to read more (because they enjoy it).

Students who struggle with oral and written language have been described as suffering from the Matthew Effect, in which "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" (Stanovich, 1986). From this perspective, good readers read more and become better readers resulting in a higher motivation to read even more. They value reading and view themselves as "readers." This is sometimes described as a positive reading spiral. Conversely, poor readers read less and, because they are exposed to less written language, become poorer readers who, in turn, become more and more reluctant to read. This creates a negative spiral related to reading (Gambrell, Palmer, Coddling, and Mazzoni, 1996).

An essential key to helping students become motivated to read is to differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For any behavior, extrinsic motivation is the result of outside factors, such as stickers, chips, or other tangible rewards. Conversely, intrinsic motivation involves engaging in a behavior because it is personally rewarding rather than by a desire to gain a reward or recognition. Ideally, students are intrinsically motivated to read. In essence, they *want* to read because they value reading, they find it enjoyable, and they feel good about themselves when they are reading.

Clearly, helping struggling students find their motivation to read can be a challenge. Programs that rely on extrinsic motivation (such as earning a pizza party for everyone who reads a certain number of books over the summer) typically do very little to help struggling readers want to read more. Rather, they tend to reward the students who are already good readers because it is easier for them to earn the rewards. This sets up another cyclical phenomenon. Better readers find reading to be more enjoyable and easier (intrinsic motivation) so they naturally read more and easily earn the rewards (extrinsic motivation) even though they don't really need them to read. Alternately, readers who struggle typically do not like to read, and they don't feel good about reading or about themselves as readers. Consequently, it is very difficult for them to earn the rewards, so, they give up easily or don't even try. The good readers get the pizza party. The struggling readers feel even worse about themselves.

Because so many of the students on our caseloads struggle with reading, it is not uncommon to hear them make negative statements about reading (e.g., "It's boring." "I hate to read." "I'm too tired to read now."). They do not consider themselves readers and, as a result, tend to read much less than their classmates. However, there are a

number of strategies that can be implemented to help reluctant readers discover that reading can be a rewarding activity. The goal is to replace the feelings of dread and avoidance with anticipation and pleasure. No small feat, but doable!

Strategies for Motivating Children to Read

Choice

Numerous studies support the idea that providing students of all ages with access to a balanced library of reading materials, particularly in relation to leisure reading, increases the likelihood that they will engage in more reading experiences and value reading as an activity (Worthy and McKool, 1996; Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000). So, the first, and arguably the most important, step in encouraging unmotivated students to read is to get their noses into books of their own choosing. However, the choice must be genuine: this means *any* book, of *any* level, of *any* genre that piques their interest. In other words, students should not be required to read a certain level or genre to achieve a specific reward. All reading must be valued if *our* motivation is to increase *students'* motivation, not just that which is deemed "appropriate" by a third party. Consequently, magazines, song lyrics, movie and TV scripts, comic books and other reading materials are all fair game.

However, since reluctant readers, by definition, are not beating down the door to their local library in a quest for truckloads of books to bring home and read, it may be necessary to intervene by making available, and encouraging exploration of, books that we believe may be of interest to them.

Nonfiction

Studies have found that children as young as kindergarten enjoy non-fiction reading materials and will self-select informational materials when given the opportunity (e.g., Pappas, 1993; Mohr, 2006). Non-fiction provides multiple opportunities to build vocabulary and learn new concepts with the added bonus of expanding a student's world view. Luckily, non-fiction choices for children are expanding both in terms of quality and quantity. So, making non-fiction reading materials available that address a subject in which the student has an interest (e.g., sports or hunting magazines), are filled with fun facts (e.g., *The Guinness Book of World Records*), or, depending on the age of the reader, have subjects that are scary (e.g., poisonous insects) or strange (e.g., *Ripley's Believe it or Not*) can be helpful in encouraging reluctant readers to read. Also consider materials that explain how to do something (e.g., *How to Hunt the Whitetail Deer*) and authors who clearly love their subject area and communicate this through their writing.

Visual Learners

Many children on speech/language caseloads do not process information efficiently through the auditory mode (which is very likely why they have been identified with a language delay or disability). Unfortunately, strongly visual learners are not typically well-supported in regular education classrooms where a great deal of the information is

presented orally. Students are expected to listen, process, and assimilate what is being taught into their cognitive schemas using primarily the auditory mode. This can be extremely discouraging for visual learners who typically blame themselves for their learning difficulties and may easily give up on themselves in the academic setting. So, it is important to look for opportunities to show visual learners that there are books for them, too!

Visual learners will be drawn to books that include a high level of detail and/or include unexpected ways to look at objects. Once we have them “hooked” on the visual aspect of the book, the words become tools that allow these students to learn more about the visual content—which is what really interests them. From personal experience, my son, a visual learner if there ever was one, spent hours lost in *Where’s Waldo* and other similar books. (Personally, “Waldo” gave me a headache and I really didn’t care WHERE he was. But for him, this was pure joy.) He eventually graduated into Joan Steiner’s *Look-Alikes* books and then Steve Biesty’s *Cross Sections* series where he would read incredible amounts of fine print text to discover what was going on in the pictures. Other visual learners I have worked with demonstrated a similar pattern: once they discovered that reading can involve all sorts of fun visual detail, they were much more willing to engage in text.

Here is a sampling of some excellent books for visual learners. Each incorporates strong visual content and detail. You may wish to try out a few with the students who just don’t seem to be interested in reading. You may find that once they understand that *looking* at a book is not only allowed but encouraged, their motivation to read increases.

Look-Alikes (Joan Steiner) – The catch phrase for this I series of books, “*The more you look, the more you see,*” aptly sums up what students will experience inside these books. Hundreds of “found” objects are used to create three-dimensional everyday scenes. At first glance, they look exactly like one would expect them to look—but a more detailed inspection yields surprising findings. For instance, in the “street” scene, a bus stop sign is actually a meat thermometer, a sweater with buttons serves as a store front. In other scenes, a shoehorn fills in very nicely as a slide and real human hair forms the golden curtains for the Nutcracker ballet. These scenes provide a virtual smorgasbord of engagement opportunities for visual learners of all ages who will want to read all the fine print in the back of the book to find out how the author “did that.”

Fun with Hand Shadows (Sati Achath) – Just as the title suggests, the author, a shadow puppeteer, ventriloquist, and magician, shares all of his secrets about how to create some of the most amazing hand shadows you can imagine. Visual learners are motivated to read the directions to discover how to create all sorts of shadow silhouettes—from the simple “deer roaming the forest” (even I can do this one) to “kicking donkey” and “the big elephant.” There are even directions for portraying historical figures (e.g., George Washington) and celebrities (e.g., Jay Leno). This book quickly engages most children. However, if you really

want to get kids motivated, haul out a desk lamp, free up some wall space, and let your visual learners show off their skills.

Zoom (Marvin Terban) – This book actually fits into both the “wordless book” and “books that fascinate visual learners” categories. It starts with a close-up of a colorful, roughly-triangular object that could be any number of things. On the next page, the perspective recedes, as if the viewer has taken two steps back (or the camera has “zoomed out”), so that more of the illustration is revealed. The change in perspective typically then requires readers to change their *own* perspective as surprising new visual elements are revealed. Typically, visual learners are hooked immediately and can’t wait to see what is going to “happen” next. There are also multiple opportunities for predicting and critical thinking. Students who are intrigued by *Zoom* will probably also like *Re-Zoom* by the same author.

Cross Sections Series (Steven Biesty) – In this series, aimed at older readers such as those aged 10 or above, cut-away illustrations reveal the inner workings and infrastructure of buildings, machines, vehicles, places, and even the human body. Locomotives, helicopters, ocean liners, Spanish galleons, subway stations, jets —each is revealed from the inside out with incredible detail. But this isn’t merely an intricate picture book. It is also absolutely packed with details, explanations, and facts about each object. So, as they peruse the details of an observatory, readers also learn about how reflected light forms an image at the Cassegrain focus point, that the massive telescope rides on bearings that must be supported by pressurized oil, and that observatory workers eat their main meals in the middle of the night. This series is a literacy “candy store” for visual learners.

Reading Aloud

Reading aloud, either to a group or individually, has been shown to be a factor in motivating students to read on their own as well as to promote deeper understanding of the text (McGee & Richgels, 2003). Books that encourage active engagement and group discussion, such as the examples provided below, can be particularly effective in helping children learn to value and enjoy the written word.

Dos and Don’ts (Todd Parr) – This is an elegantly simple little book that can be read aloud with students from kindergarten through the upper grades to encourage active engagement.

On one page is a “Do” and on the facing page is a matching “Don’t.” For instance:

DO...pick up your socks, but DON’T...make anyone smell them.

Students typically become very engaged when the book is read aloud, pausing after the “do” page and encouraging them to brainstorm a matching “don’t.”

Students need not guess what the author said to be “right.” They only need to come up with something that is somehow related. For instance (these examples were provided by students):

DO...help clean up the house, but DON'T...

- Scrub the paint off the walls
- Mess the house back up
- Build a mountain out of the dust-fluffies
- Put soap in the toilet

(The author’s suggestion? “Don’t vacuum up the cat.”)

The Stinky Cheeseman and Other Fairly Stupid Tales (Jon Scieszak) – Aimed squarely at upper-elementary and middle-school students, this is a collection of “fractured” fairy tales very loosely based on well-known tales such as the Ugly Duckling (in this version, he doesn’t grow to be a swan, just a really ugly duck) and the princess who kissed a frog (but here she ends up without a prince, only slimy frog lips). The stories themselves are quite short – helping to keep the interest of even the most reluctant of readers – and there is plenty of fodder for discussion after each story is read aloud. In addition, the author also plays with the whole concept of a “book” and the characters show up in each other’s stories seemingly at will. No page is safe from his wackiness – the table of contents is mixed up and even the copyright page doesn’t follow the “rules.”

Humor

Laughing and learning are not mutually exclusive. In fact, humor, at its core, is a highly linguistic construct. Puns, double meanings, and word play often are the crux of making something “funny,” so children who learn about humor are building language, vocabulary, and comprehension as well. For instance, children who don’t understand ambiguity don’t laugh when someone is admiring a new baby and says to the mother, “I didn’t know you had it in you!”

A perfectly good purpose to read is to be *entertained*. Consequently, we can use funny books to engage students and help reinforce that reading can be a pleasurable experience. If students think of reading as work – it *is* work. So, if we truly want to build a *reader*, we can help students capture the joy of reading by showing them that turning a page might just bring a laugh or an unexpected giggle.

Humorous books challenge readers to think about *why* they are funny. Look for books with unexpected story lines, funny pictures, a tempting “gimmick,” or wholesome zaniness – in a nutshell, books that that are just plain fun to read.

Here are a few of my laugh-out-loud favorites with proven track records of getting noses into books (and they work well as read-alouds too). You can find more in the Resources.

Shark vs Train (Chris Barton) – In this fabulous, fun romp through imagination, two boys run for the toy box. One pulls out a toy shark and the other a train. In the grand tradition of boys, they decide to have a competition to see which one will win. But, of course that depends on the competition. Underwater—it’s a shark (fins down). On a see-saw, train sends shark flying. Train wins the belching contest; but shark prevails in the pie-eating race. But who wins if they are playing hide and seek, or facing off in a video game, or exploring distant galaxies? Students can let their imaginations run wild and, of course, create many new scenarios for shark and train—as well as other “toy box” match-ups.

The Diary of a Wombat (Jackie French) – Who knew that wombats kept diaries? (Actually, who knew that a wombat was a creature that is a little smaller than a bear who lives in Australia in a hole in the ground, sleeps most of the day, and likes the “occasional treat?”)

The diary starts simply enough with the day of the week at the top and entries like:

MORNING: Slept
AFTERNOON: Slept
EVENING: Slept.
NIGHT: Ate grass.

This soon changes when a family moves into the wombat’s neighborhood and she discovers the joys of having a human clan nearby. Her encounters with “flat dusty objects” (their welcome mat), “large metal objects” (trash cans), and “delicious treats” (carrots out of their garden and, eventually, the grocery bag) will keep readers giggling and thinking about how everyday objects might look different to a wombat. There are several other books in the series that mixes fiction and non-fiction, providing both “facts” and stories.

Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed (Mo Willems) – With a story written about a society of Naked Mole Rats (yes, there is such a creature), how can the book be anything but funny? When a young naked mole rat suddenly gets a hankering to wear clothes, the colony is perplexed, appalled, and sarcastic—especially when he tries to open a clothing store. Finally, with the simple question “why not?” the colony of naked mole rats embraces the possibilities of fashion as an outlet for personal expression.

The Night I Followed My Dog (Nina Laden) – A seemingly ordinary dog who does what most dogs do (e.g., fetch, roll over, sleep, eat) is suddenly not so ordinary the night his owner sees him jump into a limousine. What follows is a fun romp

through glamorous doggy nightlife. A sure hit with anyone who has ever wondered what dogs do when no one is watching.

Reading Circles

Anyone who has ever tried to reach a goal – such as losing weight or learning a new language – knows that you become *much* more motivated to work toward that goal when held accountable by others. Reading circles work the same way. They harness the proven power of group energy to encourage students to become, and remain, engaged and motivated to read.

Reading Circles are an effective way to help counteract the learned helplessness that is so often seen in middle and high school students who struggle with language and learning. Rather than teaching them to rely on an adult, students engaged in Reading Circles learn to rely on themselves and each other to learn and grow. As a group, students are encouraged to take control over their reading by choosing what they read, how many pages they will read each day, and how they will respond individually to the selection. They then meet as a group to discuss their personal responses. The teacher or SLP is not a part of the reading circle. They merely function as an observer and occasional advisor. It is up to the group to keep each other motivated and engaged.

The best way to support success is to provide students with some basic tools – such as guidelines for participation, a list of questions to guide a discussion, tasks to extend reading, and sample reading contracts. The group can choose to use what you provide, modify it, or create their own. There are a number of quality websites devoted to reading circles that can provide more extensive background related to reading circles as well as suggested literacy activities and books broken down by grade level. Several of these are provided in the Resources.

CONCLUSION

Communication, in both the oral and written modes, is a critical key to success. SLPs know, via a well-established literature base, that children who are constrained in terms of oral communication are at a distinct disadvantage in and out of school. Similarly, children who do not establish the ability to read and write effectively are at substantial risk of failure in academic, social, and vocational settings.

The report of the National Reading Panel (2000) and subsequent related research point to the importance of establishing a set of specific skills to maximize the potential for positive outcomes related to reading and writing. Not surprisingly, these skills have also been incorporated into Common Core Standards that are currently used in many states to monitor expected progress at each grade level.

Speech-Language Pathologists, with their background related to oral language development, are uniquely qualified to provide learning experiences that facilitate the development of literacy for students with and without communication disorders. However, incorporating activities into intervention does not require that IEP goals be abandoned or minimized in any way. Rather, many strategies that support the development of written language (literacy) also enhance the learning of oral language. In this way, SLPs who know the literature base related to reading and writing are able to take the lead in facilitating the development of language in both domains (oral and written).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The materials listed here are meant to provide suggestions for addressing each of the areas identified by the National Reading Panel as critical for reading success. The list is not exhaustive and other books/materials may be substituted. However, the materials presented here have been used extensively in clinical settings with good results.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Phoneme Isolation and Identification		
<i>Bats at the Ballgame</i>	Brian Lies	HMH Books
<i>Capering Cows</i>	Shari Robertson	Dynamic Resources
<i>Chugga-Chugga-Choo Choo</i>	Kevin Lewis	Disney-Hyperion
<i>Faint Frog Feeling Feverish and other Tantalizing Tongue Twisters</i>	Lillian Obligato	Puffin
<i>Alpha Tales (e.g., The Lamb Who Loved to Laugh)</i>	Carol Puglianon-Martin	Teaching Resources
<i>Piggie Pie Po</i>	Audrey Wood	HMH Books
<i>Run, Turkey, Run!</i>	Peggy Agee	Dynamic Resources
<i>Shivering Sheep</i>	Shari Robertson	Dynamic Resources
<i>Some Smug Slug</i>	Pamela Duncan Edwards	Karen Tegen Books
Sound Play, Phoneme Manipulation, Phoneme Addition and Subtraction		
<i>The Bark Park</i>	Elizabeth Redhead Kriston	Dynamic Resources
<i>The Bus for Us</i>	Suzanne Bloom	Boyd Mills Press
<i>The Cat Who Wore a Pot on her Head (Bendomelina)</i>	Jan Slepian	Scholastic
<i>Cock-A-Doodle-Moo</i>	Bernard Most	Harcourt
<i>Go By Goat</i>	Elizabeth Redhead Kriston	Dynamic Resources
<i>The Hungry Thing</i>	Jan Slepian	Scholastic
<i>Miles of Smiles</i>	Elizabeth Redhead Kriston	Dynamic Resources
<i>My Cow Can Bow</i>	Shari Robertson	Dynamic Resources
<i>Ook the Book and other Silly Rhymes</i>	Lisa Rovetch	Chronicle Books
<i>Pants on Ants</i>	Elizabeth Redhead Kriston	Dynamic Resources
<i>Sail By Tail</i>	Elizabeth Redhead Kriston	Dynamic Resources
<i>Runny Babbit: A Billy Sook (best for slightly older students)</i>	Shel Silverstein	Harper Collins
<i>The Story of Mable at the Table with a Ladle</i>	Lavelle Carlson	Children's Publishing
<i>There's a Wocket in My Pocket</i>	Dr. Suess	Random House

PHONICS

<i>A is for Angry: An Animal and Adjective Alphabet</i>	Sandra Boynton	Workman Publishing
<i>Alpha Oops! The Day Z Went First</i>	Althea Kontis	Candlewick
<i>Alphabet City</i>	Stephen Johnson	Puffin Books
<i>Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables</i>	Lois Ehlert	HMH Books
<i>Q is for Duck</i>	Mary Elting	HMH Books
<i>Tomorrow's Alphabet</i>	George Shannon	Greenwillow Books
<i>The Z was Zapped: A Play in Twenty-Six Acts</i>	Chris Van Allsburg	HMH Books

READING FLUENCY

(Note that Echo and Paired Reading books are also appropriate for indirect vocabulary development)

Books for Echo Reading		
<i>Bears in Pairs</i>	Niki Yekai	Aladdin
<i>Capering Cows</i>	Shari Robertson	Dynamic Resources
<i>Dinosaur Roar!</i>	Paul and Henrietta Strickland	Dulton Books
<i>I Went Walking</i>	Sue Williams	MHM Books
<i>Quick as a Cricket</i>	Audrey Wood	Child's Play Books
Books for Paired Reading		
<i>Bear on a Bike</i>	Stella Blackstone	Barefoot Books
<i>Each Peach Pear Plum</i>	Janet and Allan Ahlberg	Viking Books
<i>One Duck Stuck</i>	Phyllis Root	Candlewick
<i>Where is the Green Sheep?</i>	Mem Fox	HMH Books
Progressive Stories		
<i>The Cake that Mack Ate</i>	Rose Robart	Little, Brown Books
<i>Drummer Hoff</i>	Barbara Emberly	Aladdin
<i>Fat Frogs on a Skinny Log</i>	Barbara Emberly	Scholastic
<i>The Jacket I Wear in the Snow</i>	Shirley Neitzel	Greenwillow Books
<i>Jump, Frog, Jump!</i>	Robert Kalan	Greenwillow Books
Poetry		
<i>Antarctic Antics: A Book of Penguin Poetry</i>	Judy Sierra	HMH Books
<i>Behold the Bold Umprellaphant: and Other Poems</i>	Jack Pretluski	Greenwillow

<i>Fast and Slow: Poems for Advanced Children and Beginning Parents</i>	John Ciardi	Houghton Mifflin
<i>The Llama Who Had no Pajama: 100 Favorite Poems</i>	Mary Ann Hoberman	MHM Books
<i>Where the Sidewalk Ends</i>	Shel Silverstein	Random House
Songs and Chants		
<i>Down By The Bay</i>	Raffi	Knopf Books
<i>I Ain't Gonna Paint No More</i>	Karen Beaumont	HMH Books
<i>I Can Play That!</i>	Suzy Lederer	Dynamic Resources
<i>King Bidgood's in the Bathtub</i>	Audrey Wood	Child's Play Books
<i>Take Me Out of the Bathtub and Other Silly Dilly Songs</i>	Alan Katz	Margaret Elderry Book
<i>The Seals on the Bus</i>	Lenny Hort	Owlet Books

Sources of Free Audio Books

www.audiobooktreasury.com/free-audiobooks/childrens/
www.stornory.com
www.loyalbooks.com/genre/children
www.lightupyourbrain.com

VOCABULARY

Interactive Reading Strategies

Books for Echo and Paired Reading*		
*See Reading Fluency Resources above		
Books that Encourage Friendly Questions		
<i>Mary Wore her Red Dress</i>	Merle Peek	HMH Books
<i>Raincoats and Rainbows</i>	Elizabeth Redhead Kriston	Dynamic Resources
<i>The Little Mouse, the Red, Ripe Strawberry, and the Big, Hungry Bear</i>	Don and Audrey Wood	Child's Play
Books that Encourage Predicting		
<i>The Adventures of Sadie and Sam</i>	Peggy Agee	Dynamic Resources
<i>The Doorbell Rang</i>	Pat Hutchins	Greenwillow Books
<i>Is Your Mama a Llama?</i>	Deborah Guarino	Scholastic
<i>Look! Look! Look! (and) The Look Book</i>	Tana Hoban	Greenwillow Books
<i>Rosie's Walk</i>	Pat Hutchins	Aladdin Books
<i>Who is Driving?</i>	Leo Timmers	Bloomsbury Children's Books

Wordless Books*		
*See Comprehension Resources below		
Books for Reader's Theatre		
<i>Clap your Hands</i>	Pat Hutchins	Putnam
<i>From Head to Toe</i>	Eric Carle	Harper Festival
<i>I Can Do That!</i>	Suzy Lederer	Dynamic Resources
<i>I Love My White Shoes</i>	Eric Litwin	Harper Collins
<i>Run, Turkey, Run!</i>	Peggy Agee	Dynamic Resources
<i>We're Going on a Bear Hunt</i>	Helen Oxenbury & Michael Rosen	Little Simon
<i>The Wide Mouthed Frog</i>	Kevin Faulkner	Dial Books

See Robertson (2015) *Read with Me! Stress-Free Strategies for Building Early Language and Literacy Skills* for expanded interactive reading book lists.

Vocabulary Development

<i>Analogies for Beginners</i>	Diane Draze & Lynne Chatham	Prufrock Press
<i>Beach is to Fun: A Book of Relationships</i>	Pat Brisson	Henry Holt
<i>Biggest, Strongest, Fastest</i>	Steven Jenkins	HMH Books
<i>Eight Ate: A Feast of Homonym Riddles</i>	Paul Brett Johnson	HMH Books
<i>Falling for Rapunzel</i>	Leah Wilcox	Puffin
<i>Herd of Cows! Flock of Sheep!</i>	Rick Walton	Gibbs Smith
<i>If you were a Prefix</i>	Aboff	Picture Window Books
<i>Painless Vocabulary Series (particularly good for Middle and High School)</i>	Michael Greenberg	Barron's Educational Series
<i>Things that are Most in the World</i>	Judi Barrett	Atheneum Books
<i>Words are CATegorical (series)</i>	Brian Cleary	First Adventure

Web-based Vocabulary Resources

www.briancleary.com

Packed with fun, interactive vocabulary-building activities. Most are centered around semantic categorization.

www.enchantedlearning.com

Word ladders

www.thinkablepuzzles.com

Lots of vocabulary/word consciousness activities here. Commonyms, hink-pinks, mad glibs, and more

www.guidoo.com

Hink-pinks, commonyms, and other word-building activities.

Text-Based Vocabulary Resources

Beck, I., McKeown, M, & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing Words to Life*. New York: NY. The Guilford Press

Gustafson, M. (2015). *Very Vivid Vocabulary*. Dynamic Resources

Marzano, J. & Pickering, D. (2005). *Building Academic Vocabulary*. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development

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COMPREHENSION

Wordless Books		
<i>A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog (series)</i>	Mercer Mayer	Dial Books
<i>Changes, Changes</i>	Pat Hutchins	Aladdin
<i>Good Dog, Carl</i>	Alexandra day	Little Simon Books
<i>Goodnight Gorilla</i>	Emily Arnold McCullah	Putnam
<i>Museum Trip</i>	Barbara Lehman	HMH Books
<i>Spotless Spot</i>	Alexandra Crouse	Dynamic Resources
<i>Thunderstorm!</i>	Shelley Davis	Dynamic Resources

MOTIVATION

Books for Visual Learners		
<i>Beautiful, Oops!</i>	Jamie Curtis	Workman Publishing
<i>Cross Section (series)</i>	Steven Bietsy & Richard Platt	Alfred A. Knopf
<i>Duck! Rabbit!</i>	Amy Krouse Rosenthal	Chronicle
<i>Look Alikes (series)</i>	Joan Steiner	Little Brown Books
<i>How are you Peeling? Foods with Moods</i>	Saxton Freeman	Scholastic

<i>Round Trip</i>	Ana Jonas	Harcourt
<i>Shadows and Reflections</i>	Tana Hoban	Greenwillow
<i>Zoom</i>	Islvan Banyai	Puffin
Just For Fun Books		
<i>Diary of a Spider</i>	Doreen Cronin	Harper Collins
<i>Diary of a Wombat</i>	Jackie French	HMH Books
<i>Dos and Don'ts</i>	Todd Parr	LB Kids
<i>Interrupting Chicken</i>	David Ezra Stein	Candlewick
<i>Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed</i>	Mo Willimas	Disney-Hyperion
<i>The Night I Followed my Dog</i>	Nina Laden	Chronicle Books
<i>Olive My Love</i>	J. Otto Seibolt	Harcourt Books
<i>Parts</i>	Todd Arnold	Puffin
<i>Rhyming Dust Bunnies</i>	Jan Thomas	Beach Lane Books
<i>Shark Versus Train</i>	Chris Barton	Little, Brown Books

Web-Based Motivation Resources

<https://www.speakaboos.com/>

Free library of interactive stories and songs designed to help children learn to love to read.

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Oral & Written Language Development: Knowledge, Skills, & Strategies
5 CE Hours / .5 CEUs

FINAL EXAM

1. Hoover & Gough's (1990) "simple view of reading" _____.
 - a. Describes reading from a more holistic conceptual framework: both Word Recognition and Language Comprehension are considered to be necessary components of literacy.
 - b. Presents reading instruction as either/or choice between Word Recognition and Language Comprehension, and presents evidence that combining the two is detrimental to the process
 - c. Suggests that Language Comprehension is the most critical skill for the development of literacy
 - d. Suggests that Word Recognition is the most critical skill for the development of literacy

2. The relationship between oral language, written language, and academic success has been clearly established. For example, _____.
 - a. Children who have developed a strong oral language base are just as likely to struggle with reading as students whose oral language skills are constrained
 - b. Children with weak language skills at 5½ were found to have average reading comprehension at 8½ and 15½
 - c. Early deficits in oral language are not indicative of future constraints in reading and academic achievement
 - d. Early deficits in oral language persist and are durable

3. The base of the Language/Literacy Hierarchy is _____.
 - a. Expressive oral language (speaking)
 - b. Expressive written language (writing)
 - c. Receptive oral language (comprehension)
 - d. Receptive written language (reading)

4. Language form involves the rules we use to combine and manipulate sounds, words, and sentences to communicate our thoughts, needs, feelings, wants, and ideas. Its three sub-categories: _____.
 - a. Morphology, semantics, and pragmatics
 - b. Phonology, morphology, and syntax
 - c. Syntax, content, and use
 - d. None of the above

5. _____ deals with the meaning of language in both the oral and written modes.
 - a. Form
 - b. Semantics
 - c. Syntax
 - d. Use

6. An aspect of _____ that is critical to both oral and written comprehension is an individual's understanding of figurative language.
- Form
 - Morphology
 - Pragmatics
 - Semantics
7. Per the National Reading Panel (2000), the five skills identified as being the most critical in developing strong literacy skills include _____.
- Memorization strategies
 - Reading speed
 - Spelling awareness
 - Text comprehension
8. _____ is defined as the ability to hear and understand how the individual sounds of spoken language work together to make words.
- Phonemic awareness
 - Phonological awareness
 - Syllable awareness
 - Vocabulary awareness
9. Tasks typically associated with proficiency in phonemic awareness include _____.
- Phoneme identity
 - Phoneme isolation
 - Phoneme segmentation
 - All of the above
10. _____ is the ability to hear and match sounds in different words.
- Phoneme identity
 - Phoneme isolation
 - Phoneme substitution
 - Phoneme segmentation
11. Head or Toe? is an example of a _____ activity.
- Phoneme addition and deletion
 - Phoneme identity
 - Phoneme isolation
 - Phoneme segmentation and phoneme blending
12. Picture Pieces and Elkonin Boxes are examples of _____ activities.
- Phoneme addition and deletion
 - Phoneme identity
 - Phoneme isolation

d. Phoneme segmentation and phoneme blending

13. The following activity provides practice with_____.

Old MacDonald Had a Farm – The song is sung in the typical fashion until the chorus. Then, add a sound at the beginning of the chorus syllables that matches the initial sound of name of the animal.

Old McDonald had a farm. Ee-i-ee-i-oh!

...and on that farm he had a Dog. Dee-Di-Dee-Di-Doh!

...and on that farm he had a Cow. Kee-Ki-Kee-Ki-Koh!

...and on that farm he had a Goose. Gee-Gi-Gee-Gi-Goh!

- a. Phoneme addition and deletion
- b. Phoneme identity
- c. Phoneme isolation
- d. Phoneme segmentation and phoneme blending

14. Understanding the _____ principle – that words are made up of letters and that letters represent sounds – is a critical step in learning to read. Phonics is the instructional method used to facilitate this principle.

- a. Academic
- b. Alphabetic
- c. Correlation
- d. Symbolic

15. An excellent way to fold practice with phonics into intervention is to _____.

- a. Incorporate into therapy books that target language based constructs and include opportunities for matching sounds and symbols
- b. Provide direct phonics instruction to students
- c. Use it to measure progress: once all of the relationships between phonemes and graphemes have been mastered and memorized, intervention is essentially complete.
- d. All of the above

16. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of reading fluency?

- a. Accuracy
- b. Content
- c. Prosody
- d. Speed

17. "Non-fluent readers may miss, or misunderstand, the humor, figurative language, imagination, and drama intended by the author. Consequently, they fail to use appropriate stress, intonation, and phrasing with potential negative consequences on both sides of the communicative attempt." This statement is relevant to _____.

- a. Accuracy
- b. Content
- c. Prosody
- d. Speed

18. The end goal for the development of literacy is _____.

- a. Comprehension of the written text
- b. Reading accuracy
- c. Reading fluency
- d. Reading speed

19. Per the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Oral Reading Fluency Scale, "Reads primarily in two-word phrase groups with some three- or four-word groupings. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings may seem awkward and unrelated to larger context of sentence or passage. A small portion of the text is read with expressive interpretation. Reads significant sections of the text excessively slow or fast," is a score of _____.

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4

20. Per the Multidimensional Fluency Scale, the parameter of _____ ranges from "1. Makes frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts," to "4. Generally reads smoothly with some breaks, but resolves word and structure difficulties quickly, usually through self-correction."

- a. Expression and Volume
- b. Pace
- c. Phrasing
- d. Smoothness

21. The National Reading Panel found that typical readers need to read a passage _____ to reach maximum fluency levels.

- a. Four times
- b. Once
- c. Quickly
- d. Slowly

22. In _____, the adult models appropriate phrasing, rate, and prosody and the child or student contributes by chiming in as he or she is able to complete the rhyme, sentence, or page.

- a. Contrastive stress
- b. Echo reading
- c. Paired reading
- d. Progressive stories

23. The goal of this activity is to have the student/s read a sentence multiple times in response to a specific question stressing a different word in the sentence each time to more accurately communicate meaning: _____.

- a. Contrastive stress
- b. Model fluent reading

- c. Poetry and punctuation
- d. Songs and chants

24. _____ can be particularly useful in regards to increasing fluency through repeated oral readings because they have repeated readings of the same material built right in.

- a. Duet readings
- b. Echo readings
- c. Paired readings
- d. Progressive stories

25. Use of recorded books is _____ to facilitate more fluent reading.

- a. An empirically-debunked way
- b. An empirically-supported way
- c. Contraindicated
- d. Not recommended

26. A meta-study undertaken by Scarborough (2001) identified _____ between kindergarten expressive and receptive oral vocabulary and later reading outcomes.

- a. No correlation
- b. Negative correlations
- c. Significant correlations
- d. Slight correlations

27. Per Nagy & Scott (2000), to derive meaning from the text, readers need to be able to understand the meaning of _____ of the words used.

- a. 20-25%
- b. 45-50%
- c. 65-70%
- d. 90-95%

28. When discussing strategies to increase vocabulary, it is important to keep in mind that, regardless of age, grade, or ability level, our primary goal is to help our students become word conscious. Which is NOT a characteristic of word conscious students?

- a. Eager to learn words and use them in everyday contexts
- b. Lack an awareness of, and interest in, words and their meanings
- c. Look for opportunities to expand their vocabularies
- d. Strive to understand and harness the power of words

29. By the end of second grade, typically developing children have a minimum of 6,000 distinct words in their vocabularies and add approximately _____ words each year they are in school.

- a. 1,000-1,500
- b. 2,000-2,500
- c. 3,000-3,500
- d. 4,000-4,500

30. Per Beck, McKeown, & Kucan's (2002) vocabulary classification system, _____ words are critically important to oral and written language competence, but they do not convey specific information - they are the building blocks of communication.

- a. Tier 1
- b. Tier 2
- c. Tier 3
- d. All of the above

31. Although we often divide vocabulary into oral and written categories, in actuality, we all have four different sets of vocabulary available for communication. The most comprehensive set is _____.

- a. Listening vocabulary
- b. Reading vocabulary
- c. Speaking vocabulary
- d. Writing vocabulary

32. Understanding that the word "bank" can mean a place to invest your money, the area along a river, a mound of snow, or a specific type of basketball shot is an example of _____ vocabulary development.

- a. Delayed
- b. Dysfunctional
- c. Horizontal
- d. Vertical

33. There are a number of reasons why students may not learn vocabulary at a pace that would allow them to succeed in academic and social settings. However, most often, students with special needs do not learn words because:

- a. They don't engage in conversation as often as their peers
- b. They don't read on their own
- c. They often don't – or don't know how to – listen carefully when they are read to
- d. All of the above

34. _____ are activities that deliberately facilitate vocabulary development via indirect learning.

- a. Dictionary Use and Vocabulary Quizzes
- b. Friendly Questions, Prediction, and Wordless Books
- c. Memorization of Words and Definitions
- d. Pick Six, Concept Maps, and Hink-Pinks

35. Stahl (1999) suggests that if a student reads one hour a day, five days a week, he or she will be exposed to approximately _____ words during the school year.

- a. 125,000
- b. 650,000
- c. 1,800,000

d. 2,250,000

36. Research regarding effective vocabulary instruction can be synthesized down to six overarching principles, including _____.

- a. Instruction should rely on looking up definitions
- b. Repeated exposure is detrimental
- c. Students must represent their knowledge of words in both linguistic and non-linguistic ways
- d. Teaching words parts delays learning

37. To complete _____, a student must know the meaning of both words and be able to critically compare the characteristics associated with each to make a determination regarding the relationship between the two.

- a. A commonym
- b. A SEEP
- c. A word train
- d. An analogy

38. Based on Japanese haiku, a didactic _____ is a five-line, non-rhyming poem that specifies how particular types of words are used to create a theme. They provide students with practice using all four vocabulary sets as they create, edit, and read aloud their poems.

- a. Brace map
- b. Cinquain
- c. Concept map
- d. Word string

39. _____ help students move beyond memorization of definitions and cement the meaning of the word within their cognitive schemas. They include a student friendly definition, the semantic classification, antonyms, and synonyms.

- a. Concept maps
- b. Four Squares
- c. Hink-Pinks
- d. SEEPs

40. Strategies to encourage active and purposeful engagement in the reading process include all of the blow EXCEPT: _____.

- a. Name That Purpose
- b. Predict-It
- c. The House
- d. Listening to someone else read aloud

41. _____ are an excellent go-to resource for targeting many different skills related to literacy – including reading comprehension. As an added bonus, they also facilitate higher level skills such as critical thinking, sequencing, vocabulary development, and perspective-taking.

- a. Dictionaries

- b. Sense-o-grams
- c. Vocabulary tests
- d. Wordless books

42. "Can I summarize the key points or plot features?" and "Do I need to read other material or sections of the text to provide missing information?" are examples of _____.

- a. Self-Questions to ask AFTER reading
- b. Self-Questions to ask DURING reading
- c. Self-Questions to ask PRIOR TO reading
- d. None of the above

43. The answers to this type of question are not found in the text at all. They require the student to tap into their prior knowledge of the subject or some aspect of their life that relates to the text:

_____.

- a. "Right-There" questions
- b. "Think-About-It" questions
- c. "What-I-Know-and-Think-Matters" questions
- d. All of the above

44. Considering the SQR3 strategy for reading comprehension, which of the following is NOT one of the three Rs?

- a. Read
- b. Recall
- c. Recite
- d. Review

45. Among the ten self-activating reading success strategies highlighted in the "Top Ten Ways to Improve Your Reading" is _____.

- a. Avoid the distraction of headings and pictures
- b. Create a mental image
- c. Skip unknown words
- d. None of the above

46. "Good readers read more and become better readers resulting in a higher motivation to read even more." This is an example of a _____.

- a. Adversarial reading spiral
- b. False correlation
- c. Negative reading spiral
- d. Positive reading spiral

47. Ideally, students are _____ to read. In essence, they want to read because they value reading, they find it enjoyable, and they feel good about themselves when they are reading.

- a. Extrinsically motivated
- b. Intrinsically motivated
- c. Not motivated

d. Temporarily motivated

48. Numerous studies support the idea that providing students of all ages with access to a balanced library of reading materials, particularly in relation to leisure reading, _____ the likelihood that they will engage in more reading experiences and value reading as an activity.

- a. Decreases
- b. Increases
- c. Has no impact on
- d. Has variable impact on

49. Books that encourage active engagement and group discussion, such as *Dos and Don'ts* (Todd Parr), can be particularly effective in helping children learn to value and enjoy the written word. This is an example of the _____ strategy for motivating children to read.

- a. Choice
- b. Nonfiction
- c. Reading Aloud
- d. Visual Learners

50. As a group, students are encouraged to take control over their reading by choosing what they read, how many pages they will read each day, and how they will respond individually to the selection. This is an example of the _____ strategy for motivating children to read.

- a. Choice
- b. Humor
- c. Nonfiction
- d. Reading Circles



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Learner Name: _____

	Disagree					Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	
Orientation was thorough and clear	1	2	3	4	5	
Instructional personnel disclosures were readily available and clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5	
Learning objectives were clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5	
Completion requirements were clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5	
Content was well-organized	1	2	3	4	5	
Content was informative	1	2	3	4	5	
Content reflected stated learning objectives	1	2	3	4	5	
Exam assessed stated learning objectives	1	2	3	4	5	
Exam was graded promptly	1	2	3	4	5	
Satisfied with learning experience	1	2	3	4	5	
Satisfied with customer service (if applicable)	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

What suggestions do you have to improve this program, if any?

What educational needs do you currently have?

What other courses or topics are of interest to you?
