

“Emergent Literacy” Presentation Summary **based on presentation by Danny Brassell, Ph.D.**

What is language?

Six Basic Principles of Language

1. Language is a social phenomenon.
2. Children acquire language without direct instruction in a short span of time (by age 7, children know about 90% of adult language structures).
3. All languages are symbol systems with socially constructed rules for combining sounds into words, for making meaning with words, and for arranging words into sentences.
4. The complexity of language disallows it from being learned all at once.
5. Language is linked to identity (developing a sense of self: I, me, mine).
6. Language abilities grow by using language in meaningful context (real-life contexts motivate communication...children need authentic reasons in personally meaningful social situations to speak and write).

What is emergent literacy?

Six Basic Principles of Emergent Literacy

1. Children gradually acquire literacy via formal and informal mechanisms from infancy to school age
2. Emergent literacy skills are the basic building blocks for learning to read and write
3. Literacy development begins LONG before children start formal instruction...with family and in community
4. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing develop concurrently & interact, not sequentially
5. Literacy develops through real life activities to GET THINGS done (a “need to know” basis)
6. EMERGENT literacy does not yet resemble CONVENTIONAL literacy

When does emergent literacy occur?

Emergent literacy begins in infancy. The moment you began speaking to your child, you became your child’s first reading teacher (*motherese*).

Why is emergent literacy important?

- The evidence suggests that children who are slow to acquire speech and language skills are at significant risk for problems in reading. - *Marc E. Fey, Ph.D., University of Kansas Medical Center*
- *If students don't learn to read by 3rd grade there is less than a 25% chance of them catching up.*
- What puts children at risk BEFORE formal reading instruction begins?
- “Meaningful Differences,” study available for free download on Internet by Hart & Risley (1995)
 1. Children enter school with “meaningful differences” in vocabulary knowledge.
 2. What doesn't matter:
 - * race/ethnicity
 - * gender
 - * birth orderWhat does matter:
 - * relative economic advantage
- + early language exposure = + early reading achievement
- Regardless of the reasons that place a child at risk, the BEST prevention of future reading problems is to establish a solid preschool foundation of literacy skills and attitudes that enable a child to begin formal schooling on a par with classmates. - *Catherine Snow, 1999*
- translation: *With preventive intervention we can.....catch them before they fall!*

So how can we develop students' emergent literacy?

I. Oral Language

- Children learn new words by hearing them read (receptive vocabulary).
- When an adult explains the word to the child he/she begins to internalize the meaning and will use the word in his/her speech (expressive vocabulary).
- Some Simple Suggestions for Building Students' Oral Language
 1. Storytelling
 2. Story, Story
 3. Act Out Stories
 4. Personal Narratives
 5. 20 Questions
 6. Show & Tell
 7. Nursery Rhymes
 8. Slug Bug/License Plates
 9. I Spy!
 10. Dinner Together

So how can we develop students' emergent literacy? (CONT.)

II. Phonological Awareness

- Is the ability to distinguish between units of sound or to identify rhyming words.
- Songs, rhyming games, and word play support children's phonological development.
- These activities also support children's social-emotional development.
- *English isn't easy! Letters lack one to one correspondence with sounds*
/f/ and /ph/
/gh/ and /f/
/c/ and /k/
/c/ and /s/
- *One sound can make all the difference*
/b/at
/c/at
/s/at
/m/at
- Some Simple Suggestions for Building Students' Phonological Awareness
 1. Blocks & Claps
 2. Replication
 3. Rhyming
 4. Phoneme Blending
 5. Phoneme Isolation
 6. Phoneme Segmentation
 7. Phoneme Manipulation
 8. Songs & Chants

III. Print Knowledge

- *"a learner's growing recognition of conventions and characteristics of a written language"*
- *Alphabetic principle*: The alphabet/Relationship between letters and sounds
- *Concepts about print*: Reading left to right/Print on a page corresponds to words in a sentence/Language related to books - *title, author, illustrator*
- Some Simple Suggestions for Building Students' Print Knowledge
 1. Shared Reading
 2. Dialogic Reading
 3. Language Experience
 4. Interactive Writing
 5. Environmental Print
 6. Class Labels
 7. Post Office
 8. Books on Tape
 9. PEER Sequence
 10. CROWD Questions
 11. Reread Child Text
 12. Written Narratives

Reading Is Key!

- Children who learn to read early and well experience more exposure to print, which solidifies reading and writing skill
- Reading provides the foundation for much of other learning in school (content areas)
- Much of the vocabulary and language skill children and adults acquire comes from reading

How do emergent readers read?

- *The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.* Source: R. Anderson, E. Hiebert, J. Scott & I. Wilkinson, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, p. 23 (1985)
- How do I select what to read aloud?
 1. Engaging theme
 2. Connections to children's lives
 - people that look like them
 - events that they relate to
 - cultural issues
 3. Language at children's receptive language level
 4. Age appropriateness
 5. Rhyme
 6. Repetitive pattern
 7. Opportunities to practice through oral participation
 8. Quality and size of illustrations

What are some Internet resources for teachers of emergent readers?

1. www.discoveryschool.com
2. www.pbskids.org
3. <http://www.starfall.com/>
4. <http://colorincolorado.com/>
5. <http://readingrockets.org/>
6. <http://www.kididdles.com/mouseum/>
7. <http://mothergoose.com/>
8. www.hubbardscupboard.com
9. www.mrsbonthuisclass.com
10. <http://www.teachingheart.net/>

Some Songs & Chants (Bonus Materials)

The Dollar Song (to the tune of "Ten Little Indians")

10 little, 20 little, 30 little pennies.

40 little, 50 little, 60 little pennies.

70 little, 80 little, 90 little pennies.

100 pennies make a dollar!

2 small, 4 small, 6 small nickels.

8 small, 10 small, 12 small nickels.

14 small, 16 small, 18 small nickels.

20 nickels make a dollar!

1 tiny, 2 tiny, 3 tiny dimes.

4 tiny, 5 tiny, 6 tiny dimes.

7 tiny, 8 tiny, 9 tiny dimes.

10 dimes make a dollar!

1 big, 2 big, 3 big quarters.

4 big, 4 big, 4 big quarters.

1 big, 2 big, 3 big quarters.

4 quarters make a dollar!

The Clock Song (to the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus")

The hands on the clock go round and round,

Round and round, round and round.

The hands on the clock go round and round.

To tell us the time.

The short hand on the clock

Goes from number to number,

Number to number, number to number.

The short hand on the clock

Goes from number to number.

To tell us the time.

The long hand on the clock

Goes around by fives,

Around by fives, around by fives.

The long hand on the clock

Goes around by fives.

To tell us the minutes.

The hands on the clock go round and round,

Round and round, round and round.

The hands on the clock go round and round.

To tell us the time.

The Digital Clock Song (to the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus")

The digital clock alarm makes a sound,
Makes a sound, makes a sound.
The digital clock alarm makes a sound.
And shows us the time.

I hope you enjoyed my presentation on emergent literacy. It is my goal to constantly improve my presentations, and I would appreciate any feedback you could offer. Please think of me if your school, district or organization ever needs training, as I strive to present highly engaging, fun and informative workshops. You may contact me via my website at www.lazyreaders.com. All the best! – Danny ☺