Literacy Strategies for all Students

Accessing the General Education Curriculum
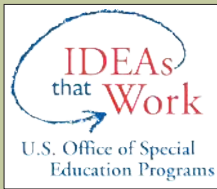
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Accessing the General Education Curriculum

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The PEAL Center
Helping Families of Children with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs

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http://pealcenter.org/

ABOUT THE PEAL CENTER
Mission Statement
Reflecting the Common Bonds of Community: The mission of the PEAL Center is to ensure that children, youth, and adults with disabilities and special health care needs lead rich, active lives and participate as full members of their schools and communities by providing training, information, parent leadership, and technical assistance based on best practices to individuals and families and all people who support them.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS BOOKLET:
- A broad definition of literacy
- Literacy acquisition strategies
- Reaching the literacy goals for students with complex instructional needs

The purpose of this booklet is to offer information pertaining to literacy acquisition focusing on students with complex instructional needs. Multiple ideas are presented to show how all students can have access to rich, engaging literacy instruction and activities utilizing the general education curriculum and can be supported in the home. For further information see these other related publications: Foundational Literacy Instruction for Students with Complex Support Needs (available at http://www.pattan.net/) and Creating a Literacy-Rich Environment (available at http://pealcenter.org/).

WHAT IS LITERACY?

For many people, literacy is considered reading and writing. However, there are other pieces to literacy development that should be considered for students with complex needs. According to Keefe and Copeland (2011) in their article, What is Literacy? The Power of a Definition,

- Literacy involves contact with other people.
- Contact with other people is social, so literacy is social.
- Beyond contact, interacting with others is also an important part of the literacy puzzle.

To be sure, though, "literacy development is best fostered when reading and writing are functional, purposeful, and goal-directed" (Koppenhaver, et al., 1991, p. 40). Reading is considered functional when the methods used to grow literacy skills are actually known to work. Purposeful refers to the intention and reason for developing literacy. Goal-directed means that instruction is focused toward the goals we seek to reach and the steps we take to reach them.

"Literacy development is best fostered when reading and writing are functional, purposeful, and goal-directed." Koppenhaver et al., 1991
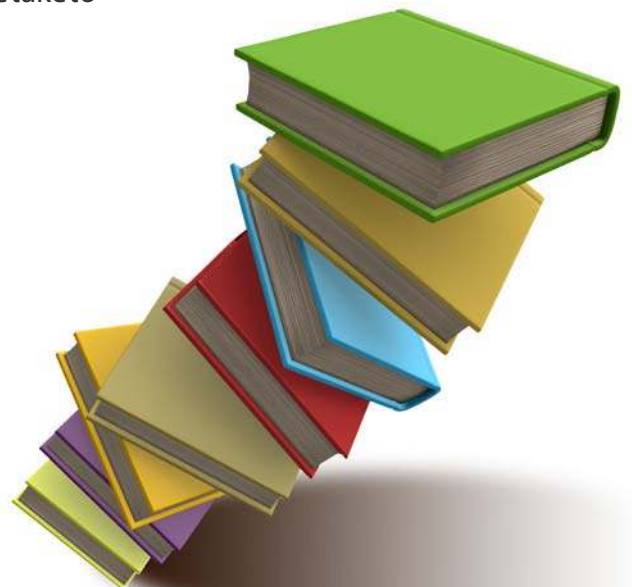
Least Dangerous Assumption

There is a larger focus in the research toward literacy learning in typically developing students (students without known disabilities) than there is for students with disabilities and even less for students with complex instructional needs. Nevertheless, the belief that literacy skills can be achieved by all students, regardless of disability, is central to the idea of "least dangerous assumption."

The least dangerous assumption means that if, in spite of our best efforts to support learning for students, some students are still not able to gain literacy skills, the students have not been harmed (Donnellan, 1984).

In fact, by simply having high expectations for all students there are gains to be made. For example, a student whose teacher has high expectations of him comes to understand that: she believes in him, she considers him to be capable of learning, and he is not so different from the other kids as he thought he was. Those are great gains!

Holding high expectations for all students goes hand in hand with holding high expectations for teachers with regard to accessing the general education curriculum. Parents can be aware of the opportunities to practice literacy skills at home and in the community. For students with complex instructional needs this means that teachers and parents can be relied upon to apply the same ideas about providing access to the general education curriculum as teachers and parents do for students who are typically developing.

"Language systems develop at the same time and in interaction with one another, each strengthening the other."

(Kliewer, p. 1).
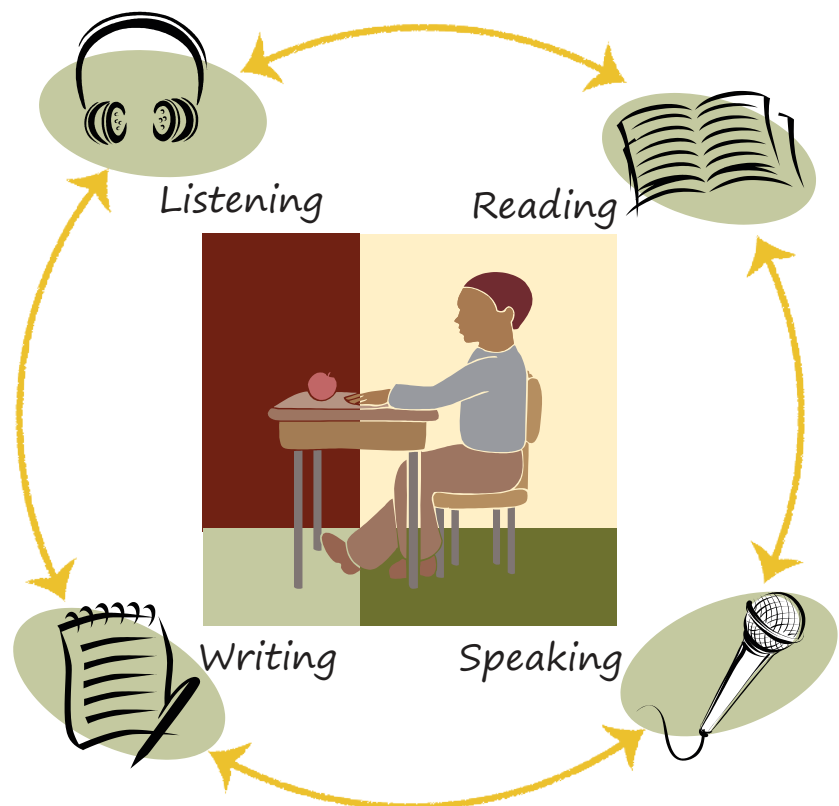
Concurrent Model of Literacy/Language Development

ACCESSING THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

So that all students across the U.S. learn the same knowledge and skills at each grade level some states have begun to use a single set of standards known as the Common Core. Pennsylvania examined the Common Core standards and aligned them to the PA State Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts that already existed. The resulting standards are known as Pennsylvania Core Standards. If you would like to examine PA Core Standards by grade level and subject, visit PA's Standard Aligned System at http://www.pdesas.org.

Educational standards do not dictate how skills are taught, but they do provide rules for what skills must be taught at each grade level. All students should be provided access to the general education curriculum regardless of perceived ability.

How will the activities I create work to help all students gain access to literacy?

What You Need To Know

When providing access to the general education curriculum, teachers should ask, "How will the activities I create work to help all students gain access to literacy?" Parents, offering learning opportunities outside the classroom, should ask, "How do the activities support literacy learning specifically?"

Keep in mind, also, that for students with disabilities, Individual Education Programs (IEPs) should have clear goals for literacy learning. When considering the activities in this booklet ask yourself how an activity or what kind of activities can be used to reinforce these goals.

The strategies that address access to the general education curriculum in this booklet are:
1. Vocabulary Cards
2. Wordless Picture Books
3. Photo Analysis
4. Poetry

For convenience, each set of strategies and activities have been separated into those for elementary school, middle and high school, and home and community. However, many of the activities can be used with any age group and across subjects and units of instruction. Keep in mind that activities should be age-appropriate (e.g. middle school students should not be learning about community helpers which is an early elementary topic).

STRATEGY:
VocabularyDevelopment–FlashcardsandBeyond

What is vocabulary and how can we make it meaningful and important for all students?

Keefe and Copeland (2011) identify vocabulary as, "being comprised of the words we listen to, speak, read, and write."

For most of us, we hear and understand many more words than we speak, read, or write. Research supports that early vocabulary instruction works to improve students' reading comprehension, writing skills, and listening and speaking vocabularies (Browder, Courtade-Little, Wakeman, & Rickelman, 2006).

We often make incorrect assumptions about the vocabulary knowledge of persons with disabilities. A person who does not use spoken language may have many words that he understands. As parents and teachers, we must be careful not to assume that a person of any age is less able to learn vocabulary.

Vocabulary Development in Elementary School
Use vocabulary from common classroom activities and units of study for all students in the general education classroom community.

Word Exploration. Present a vocabulary word or have students choose a word they are not familiar with from a class activity. Discuss the word and its meaning. Show a picture of the word and have students make a sentence, tell a story, or make a statement using the word. Write the word on a vocabulary card. Sound out the vocabulary word together with repeated responses to build oral language skills, if appropriate. Vocabulary cards can be collected, displayed and practiced daily in a variety of ways including word sorting activities, an exploration of synonyms and antonyms, story building, etc. Students can also create their own pictures or models of the words, label classroom items, or make word mobiles.

Use Technology. Load a sequence of words that a student is learning onto an iPad or Smartphone. Apps are available that allow the words to cycle through a rotation for practice and many other activities. Use an online picture dictionary to practice word meaning and to reinforce the sounds created by the letter pattern.

Vocabulary Activities and Choices for Middle and High School

Activities and games offered in small groups are helpful to all students when learning new words. There are many websites that can help to make vocabulary learning fun. The website for the National Writing Project has an article with ideas for creating vocabulary cards for high school students at http://www. nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/403.

Websites such as Reading Rockets offer the critical components of vocabulary instruction at http://www.readingrockets. org/article/teaching-vocabulary as well as Kids.gov at http://kids.usa.gov/teens/ reading-and-writing/index.shtml. Also check out http://www.pattan.net for information pertaining to instruction in reading and writing.

Group Stories.
Divide students into small groups. Ask students to write a story or informational article using the vocabulary words from the day's lesson. A word bank can be provided to help with word choice and spelling. Alternative: The writing piece is started by one student then passed to the next. Each person adds one more sentence to the paragraph after first reading what others have already written. This will help create cohesion in paragraph writing and using th vocabulary in a meaningful way.

Learning new vocabulary words is something all students can do. Group work is really helpful for many students learning new words.

Vocabulary Cards and Theme Boxes.
Using vocabulary in themed ways is a method suggested in the National Writing Project article mentioned above. The author, Eileen Simmons, suggests that new vocabulary words be written on index cards. Then, students brainstorm in small groups to come up with words that relate to the new vocabulary word. The related words are written down. Consider attaching the new word card to the center of a larger sheet of paper and writing the related words around it, making a web, or map.

For example, in a science class, the word energy might have the words solar, electric, wind, and running around it. Alternatively, students could create a vocabulary theme box which contains actual objects that are all related to a focus vocabulary word. Objects, pictures, and symbols make a word real. Students with complex instructional needs could be paired with another student and be given the opportunity to choose from several words, pictures, or objects to add to the group discussion.

There is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Students need to understand the meaning of critical words they will be reading or they will not understand the bigger meaning in stories and other reading material.

Words from the World. Create an "Interesting Words I've Learned" board located in a visible place in the room. Encourage students to add to this board often. A daily review of the words posted can reinforce the awareness of new words.

Making Words. Play Making Words with some of the new vocabulary words students have learned. Make sets of letter grapheme cards, by cutting colored index cards in half and writing a grapheme (i.e. spelling pattern such as –igh or s) on each piece. Provide a set of cards for the day's words in an envelope for each student. For reinforcement, call out the letter patterns and their sounds before the game starts.

For example, the teacher pulls a card, shows it to students and asks, "What sound is made by this letter pattern?" The students should respond chorally with the sound represented on the card.

Here is an example of an additional game that can be played with the letter cards. Provide a clue that relates to the word's meaning to solve for one of the words. Students move the letters around and either raise their hand, or go to the board when they have solved the clue. All students record the word. Students should say the sounds of the graphemes (letter/letter patterns) as they record the word. Move onto the next clue. Be sure to provide appropriate supports so that all students can participate. This game builds skills in several areas: spelling, vocabulary development, and listening.

Vocabulary Activities for Home and Community

Work Vocabulary. Help youth become familiar with the terms used at places they are working or hope to work in the future. Create vocabulary cards (with or without pictures). Discuss the meaning of each word. Read a story or workplace brochure with the vocabulary words in it. Keep a collection of vocabulary words and display them in a creative way (word wall, word mobile). The vocabulary words should be practiced often, leading to word mastery.

At Home. Use everyday opportunities to teach new words. Cooking dinner? Teach the name of a cooking tool or an ingredient. Watering the garden? There are many garden tools to learn, and many plant names. A fun activity for a family game night is Balderdash (available for purchase in many stores or online). In this game, players make up false definitions for words, while one player has the real definition. Players guess which definition is correct.

More Vocabulary Ideas for Persons with Specific Disabilities in any Setting:

- For students with hearing impairments, record audio vocabulary sounds. For example, cars honking (for traffic), rustling leaves (for breeze), or thunder.

- Students with visual impairments learn much by using their other senses. Teach "sensory vocabulary" words. For example, highly scented items could be placed in a bag and sniffed. Items can be touched, heard, and tasted as well.

Vocabulary knowledge is important because it represents all the words we must know to access our background knowledge, express our ideas, communicate effectively, and learn about new concepts.

STRATEGY:
Wordless Books

Why use a wordless book to teach literacy if we are trying to develop reading and writing skills?

Books that tell stories without words are a way to help students "see" meaning. The students' life experiences can be used for background knowledge. The pictures themselves are story cues. Life experiences and pictures along with students' own imaginations can work together to create stories. Some ideas for using wordless books follow.

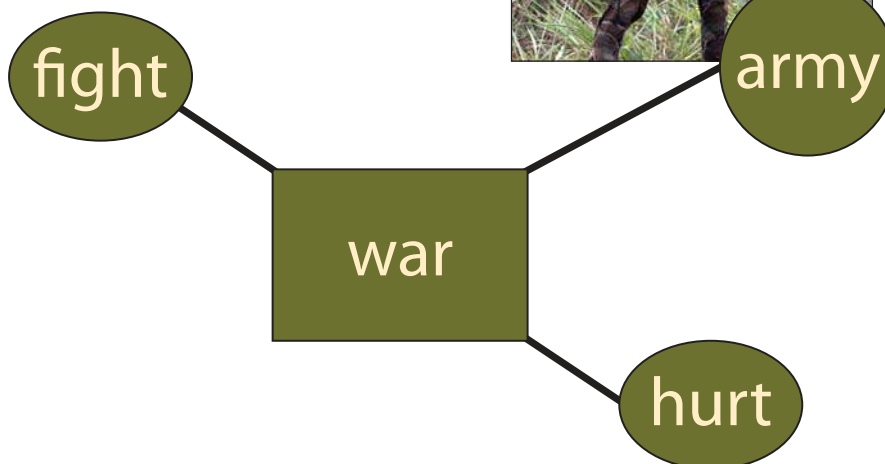### Use of a Concept Map with Visual Support

Wordless Books in Elementary School
It is natural for children to make up a story using only the pictures in a book before they know how to read the words. Using wordless books as a tool to promote literacy development feeds this natural tendency.

Creating the Text. In this activity the teacher shares a wordless book with the students (for example, in morning circle or other group time). After viewing the book the teacher encourages the students to discuss the pictures, topics, or themes in the story. The students then take turns "reading" the still-wordless story to one another.

Concept Maps. Have students build a concept map from a wordless book. A concept map is a worksheet that labels the different areas of a story. For example, the story's setting, common themes, characters, topics, or lessons (morals) learned in the book. Concept maps can be used to connect the story to a larger class unit, create meaning, and it's a fun literacy activity.

Create Your Own Book. Have students create their own wordless books with pictures. This activity works well for groups of students. Students could use disposable cameras to take photos or obtain images from other sources. Have students work together to publish and present the books. The books can be used during self-selection or silent reading time.

## Wordless Picture Book Activities in Middle and High School

Pictures are both an important tool toward literacy and they give the viewer a chance to be creative and let their imaginations soar. YALSA, Young Adult Library Services Association, (ala.org/yalsa) offers a comprehensive list of wordless books for teens (see useful resources list).

Start with the Cover.
It's always a good idea to begin any book with a discussion about its cover. Brainstorm a list of what students see on the cover. Have students place sticky notes on the cover's pictures, labeling each one.

Prompting the Story.
To begin ask students to describe pictures using adjectives or adverbs. As a next step, ask recall questions such as how a story begins, and continues. Offer simple prompts as you move through the story. For example, One day…, all of a sudden…, after that…, then…, next…, and finally, are all words and phrases that take us through a story. Finally, consider asking questions about character development, setting, and or lessons learned.

Reading the Story.
Students can read stories to you or to a partner in the classroom. Recording the student's reading of the story is also a good idea. The story can be played back at a slower speed, and the student can read along with his own voice, making the connection between how the words sound, and what the words look like.

Sometimes the words that carry the most meaning are those that come directly from the person viewing the picture.
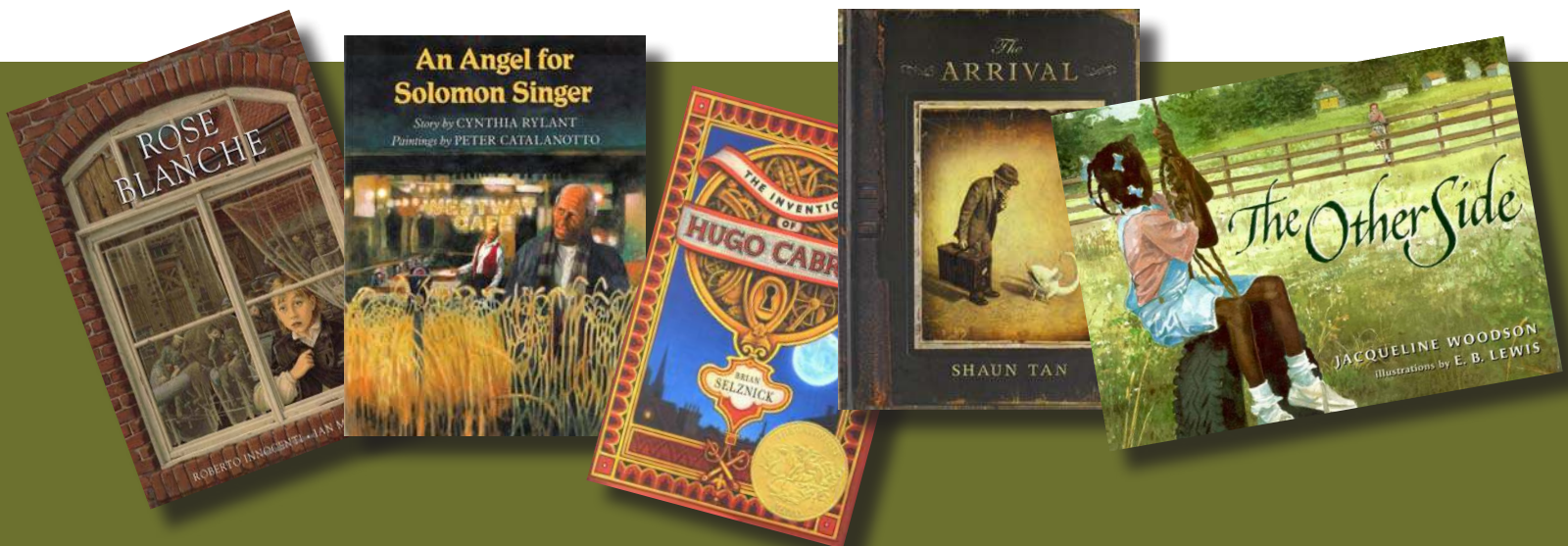
Wordless picture books help to draw connections between pictures and words.

Teaching Phonological Awareness and Phonics. Select pictures from the wordless book and ask students to sort them by initial, medial and final sounds. To extend this activity ask students to name or point to the letter representing each sound. Or flip the activity and show students a picture from the book and ask them to point to a picture that begins with a sound (practice with initial, medial, and final sounds). Select a word representing a picture in the book and work with students to substitute initial sounds to make different words (man to can to pan).

You can also ask students to find pictures whose names include long versus short vowel sounds. Or have students create an alphabet book using pictures of things in the wordless book. They can practice 'reading' their book and share it with students in a preschool or kindergarten class.

Wordless Books for Home or Community

Guided Storytelling. Engage children of all ages in guided storytelling using wordless books. First, have the child select a wordless book. Next, encourage him or her to create his or her own explanation of the pictures and story. Use sticky notes to record the dialogue for the story pictures suggested by the child. Offer prompts such as those suggested above in Prompting the Story. An example of guided storytelling for wordless books can be found in The "Solved" Mysteries of Harris Burdick, by Chris Van Allsburg (See resource page for website). On this site, children can write and submit their own stories pertaining to the mysteries.

Story maps help to organize the events and themes in a story.

Story Maps. Children can complete story maps after reading wordless books. Story maps help to organize the events and themes in a story. This activity can help with language, writing, reading and comprehension skills. This activity can also be used to depict events occurring within history, in the home or in the community (e.g. a graduation ceremony or the election of a new president.)

More Wordless Picture Book Ideas for Persons with Specific Disabilities in any Setting

- Consider using a communication device, picture symbols, or other communication supports during group discussions or work activities.

- Students who require supports for writing can use a computer with an adaptive keyboard or can dictate their thoughts to someone who will serve as a scribe.

- To make a book more accessible to students with visual impairments outline the pictures with glow-in-the-dark paint. The paint will make the picture more visible, and "touchable," because it dries hard and "rises" off the page.

- For students who have trouble turning pages, attach a Velcro tab, or a Popsicle-type stick at the end of each page.

- Offer choices for story words for students who do not use spoken language. Students can indicate their choices by eye movement, a yes/no button, or other modes of assistance.

- For students with visual impairments, use a document camera or scanner to enlarge and then project photos onto a wall. Enlarged photos can be labeled.

- Remember that informational text should be 50% of books shared.

Wordless picture books convey meaning through the illustrations.

STRATEGY:
Photo Analysis

What stories do photos "tell" and are they the same for everyone? How can photo analysis be used as a literacy tool?

Photos tell stories. They are in books, magazines, and on the Internet. People of all ages are interested in photos of celebrities, professional athletes, nature, or friends doing activities they all enjoy. By explaining images in photos with words, students can work to increase verbal, reading and writing skills.

Activities in Elementary School

It is natural for children to look at pictures and make up their own stories. Photo analysis fits well with what children are doing naturally.

Beginning the Process. Have students choose a photograph from a teacher-selected group of photos. Next, ask the students to generate one or two sentences that describe the photo. Then, read or recite the sentences the students have created. Finally, ask groups to identify the photographs of the other groups based upon the students' descriptions.

Sorting Photographs. Individually or with a partner, have students sort a group of chosen pictures into categories. For example, students could sort the pictures by people (e.g., boys, older people, and babies), specific colors, animals, details, etc.

Photos in a Process or Timeline. Have groups of students choose a pre-made stack of photos that represent a step-by-step process or obvious timeline of events. Have students lay out the photographs in the correct sequence. This activity can improve language, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary skills.

SAMPLE EXERCISE (for beginning literacy learners): MATCHING WORDS AND PICTURES

Making the connection between words and the pictures that represent them is a great tool in literacy learning. Draw a line from the word on the left to the picture it describes on the right. Each of the words is the name of an animal. After you have matched the words and pictures, circle the pictures of the animals that might live in your house. Finally, fill in the blanks on the short story at the bottom of the page.

White Dog

Giraffe

Gorilla

Dog with Reindeer Antlers

Elephant

Polar Bear

The Animals I Saw

One fine day, I went to the zoo. I saw a _____ bear that was white and could swim. The _____ had a very long neck. The elephant had a long _____ that could spray water! The gorilla had dark _____ all over his body. When I got home from the zoo, I noticed that my white _____ looks like a polar bear, and my brown dog *thinks* he's one of Santa's _____, with his antlers!

Photo Analysis Activities in Middle and High School

Older students in the early stages of literacy can give one-word labels to what they see. More advanced literacy activities might include asking a student to describe a photo's mood. Some ideas for photo analysis are offered below. Use them as suggested, or change them to meet the specific needs of your instruction or student.

Captions. Captions are the words under a picture that explain or comment on the picture's content. Begin by choosing a photo of interest to the student. Many students find it easier to begin if questions are asked directly. A simple question for a single photo might be: "What do you see in the picture?" A more complex question could be: "Why do you think the girl looks sad?" The Library of Congress offers a guide (See resources) with suggestions for questioning using photographs and prints. The questions require students to observe, reflect, and question. There are also suggestions for further investigation.

Compare and Contrast. A pair of photos can be used for a comparing and contrasting activity in which the student finds aspects of the photos that are alike or different.

Finding Themes. Ask students to group photos by type of sports, popular singers or movie stars, U.S. Presidents, mammals, etc.

Outside the Photo. To develop critical thinking skills, students might be asked what they believe is just beyond the photo's edge, outside of what can be seen in the photo. For example, a photo of people in a wagon full of hay on a country road probably has something pulling it along. Ask, "What is pulling the wagon?"

Photos can be a starting point for literacy, vocabulary, storytelling, and many other word activities.

SAMPLE EXERCISE (for intermediate/advanced literacy learners): PHOTO ANALYSIS

Look at the two photographs below and answer the questions that follow. These questions are just a few of the examples of the ways you can use photographs to prompt literacy-related activities. You should also consider the clues that the captions (written descriptions below the photos) might provide in these and other photographs you look at.

Boats in the Harbor

Colorful Trees

Please answer the questions in sentence form.

1. What do you think the weather is like in the photo called "Boats in the Harbor?"
_____.

2. What clues were in the picture that helped you answer the weather question?
_____.

3. What season of the year do you think it is in the photo called "Colorful Trees?"
_____.

4. What clues were there in the picture that helped you know the season in question 2?
_____.

5. In which photo does it look like it may rain, and why does it look like it may rain?
_____
_____.

Photo Analysis Activities for the Home and Community

A growing body of research (Browder et al., 2008), shows that shared stories can promote literacy skills for older students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities.

Dialogue Balloons. Use photographs of people in home and community settings with blank dialogue balloons. Creating dialogue inside the balloons can support teaching social cues. For home and community, the pictures can be related to work duties, leisure activities, or common transactions such as shopping or ordering in a restaurant.

Shared Photo Stories. Create a photo-story to share with others using photos or images from public sources. Discuss alternate endings or plotlines by rearranging the photos.

Photo analysis is a strategy to teach oral language, literacy, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing skills. Activities are easily individualized.

More Photo Analysis Ideas for Persons with Specific Disabilities in Any Setting:

- For students needing support and skill development in the area of communication and social skills, have the photos represent specific social situations. Students can analyze the images and create dialogue for the pictures, then use the photos to practice socially appropriate behaviors.

- Pair a nonverbal student with a verbal student. Offer the students a list of specifically chosen words. Ask the students to take turns offering titles or labels for the photo and explain why they chose such a title or label.

As students engage in viewing pictures, retelling stories, scribbling, and building vocabulary, they are on the path to reading!

STRATEGY:
Poetry at all Grade Levels

How can poetry make understanding general literacy concepts easier?

Poetry is a form of literacy that uses rhythm and sometimes rhyme. Using poetry activities and games can help students access the educational standard phonemic awareness (awareness of sounds in words), language, and literacy development. Poetry activities can be adapted to support any level of learner. The website, Poetry Soup (see resources), has many poetry lessons and activities. Also, YouTube (see resources) has videos that support the teaching of poetry.

Poetry Activities for Students in Elementary School

Poetry's qualities serve to help children remember words because the words are a part of something fun, and not just words alone on a card. The website Poetry Soup (see resources) has many poems for any school content area or grade level. You may also consider using poems written by the students themselves

Simple Poems. Prepare simple poems with words omitted that students can fill in on their own (e.g. Mad Libs). Students can choose from a word bank to fill in words that rhyme. Use sight words in this activity to create more connections for students.

Poetry Reading with a Group, 3 Ideas. (1) Poetry is read to students in full group instruction; (2) students engage in choral readings (where everyone reads aloud and together); (3) students act out the words (like pantomime) as the poem is read. Getting students engaged in the poem can increase understanding, motivation, and can be a lot of fun!

Wish Poems. Provide students with a few examples of wish poems. Individually or in a group have students write their own wish poem. Each line of the poem begins with "I wish." Students can use sight word banks to help them choose words for their poem. For more information about creating a wish poem, visit the website, Recreation Therapy (see resources).

Poetry Activities in Middle and High School

Poetry can be used to support students emotionally, to inspire, to explore creativity, to bring joy, and to help them be successful readers and writers!

Poems in Pieces. This activity lets students break down big ideas into smaller parts that are easier to understand. Start with a poem or a verse from a poem. Print or re-type the poem using a large font. Insert a blank space or two between each line. Cut poems into strips. Include the title, the author, and each line of the poem as a separate piece of paper. Mix up the strips and place into an envelope. Give students a blank piece of paper, a glue stick, and the envelope with poetry strips inside. Students remove the poem pieces from the envelope and place the strips on the paper in the order they think they belong. When students like the order, the strips can be glued onto the paper. Share the original poem with the students and conduct follow-up activities (for example, highlighting the words that rhyme, numbering the syllables, discussing the poem's meaning, or how changing the order of the lines changes the poem's meaning or tone).

YouTube. YouTube is useful for video examples of many types of poetry. Once at the YouTube website, click on the Education side bar, and enter a type of poem into the search box. To teach limericks, for example, type limerick song in the search box. There are YouTube videos for almost any poem type.

SAMPLE EXERCISE (for beginning/intermediate literacy learners): Poems that Rhyme

"Funny Santa Claus" is called a *rhyming poem* because the word at the end of one line sounds like the word at the end of the next line. The parts of the words that rhyme are underlined. Pictures can help a reader to "see" the words. Rhyming poems are great ways to help students to grow their *phonemic awareness*.

Santa Claus

I never knew that Santa Claus
Could not wear shoes on his four paws
Nor did I know his whiskers were
Brown and white and made of fur.
This Santa Claus talked funny too.
He barked as he went up the flue.
A sight like this was strange to see
This Santa Claus who yapped at me!

Phonemic Awareness is simply understanding the unique sounds formed by individual letters or letters in combination. Rhyming sounds are sometimes spelled alike (as in *bee* and *see*), but they are not always (as in the rhyming examples underlined in the poem above).

Poetry activities are fun and unique ways to help students to learn about word sounds, meanings, and spellings. The resource list at the end of this booklet includes information for the website *Poetry Soup* where you can find many different activities and games that use poetry.

The rhythm of poetry makes it a great tool for doing *choral reading* where everyone reads aloud and together, like a musical choir or chorus, which is where it gets its name.

Keep in mind that every song is a poem set to music. So by listening to music, and examining the words and phrases in the song, you are growing your literacy skills!

Songs are poetry too! When teaching older students more complicated concepts, using pop music can be a way to help increase understanding. For example, the concept of metaphor is done well in a YouTube video by Michael De Guzman. He plays song clips then follows up with a written explanation of how each clip was a metaphor or simile. Type "Metaphors in Music" in the search box, and Guzman's video will be in the list.

Note: as long as you remain on the Education side bar, videos found on YouTube should be child appropriate but always preview first.

Poetry for Home or Community

Poems to Music. Help your child develop a poem written to music. After playing a music selection ask him or her questions like, What colors did you see? What kind of a place did you think of? Was it a city? The mountains? Support your child in recording his or her responses. Or, help your child write a poem in this fashion: "I hear music, I see _____, I feel _____. It reminds me of _____."

More Poetry Activity Ideas for Persons with Specific Disabilities in any Setting:

- For students who use communication devices and are at the early stages of literacy, use pre-programmed words or phrases. This allows for active involvement in the activity.

- Use visual representations of words, phrases and vocabulary being used in the poetry activities.

- Create words or lines of poetry in magnetic form by adhering a printed poem onto magnetic backed paper. Once the poem has been adhered to the magnetic backed paper, cut it into desired pieces (i.e. words, phrases, or sentences). The magnetic pieces of the poem can be placed onto a cookie sheet. The student will be able to manipulate the magnetic pieces of the poem on the cookie sheet.

- For students with limited vision, use highlighter tape to focus on specific word groups or phrases within a poem.

- Also for students with limited vision, use a laptop or iPad to enlarge, highlight, or change the color of the letters.

- "Raise" the letters off the page with craft paint like Tulip brand (which also comes in glow-in-the-dark varieties).

Breaking a poem down to the verse, line, or even word level is a good way to teach and learn many literacy skills and topics!

USEFUL RESOURCES FOR LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Adler, R. (2014). Doing it differently: Tips for teaching vocabulary. An article that reflects on the old ways of teaching vocabulary and offers tips for changing instruction. http://www.edutopia.org/blog/vocabulary-instruction-teaching-tips-rebecca-alber

Library of Congress, Teacher's guide, Analyzing Photographs & Prints. Questions to start a conversation or to move it deeper when analyzing photographs. http://www.loc.gov/Analyzing_Photographs_and_Prints

PoetrySoup. Poetry examples for students of all ages across subject areas. http://www.poetrysoup.com

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