

Comprehensive Beginning Reading

*Chapter 6: More Language Arts, Math, and Science for
Students with Severe Disabilities*

Research says that instruction that works for struggling readers will also work for students with significant disabilities, however it is NOT enough. Modifications in pacing is a must (p. 110).

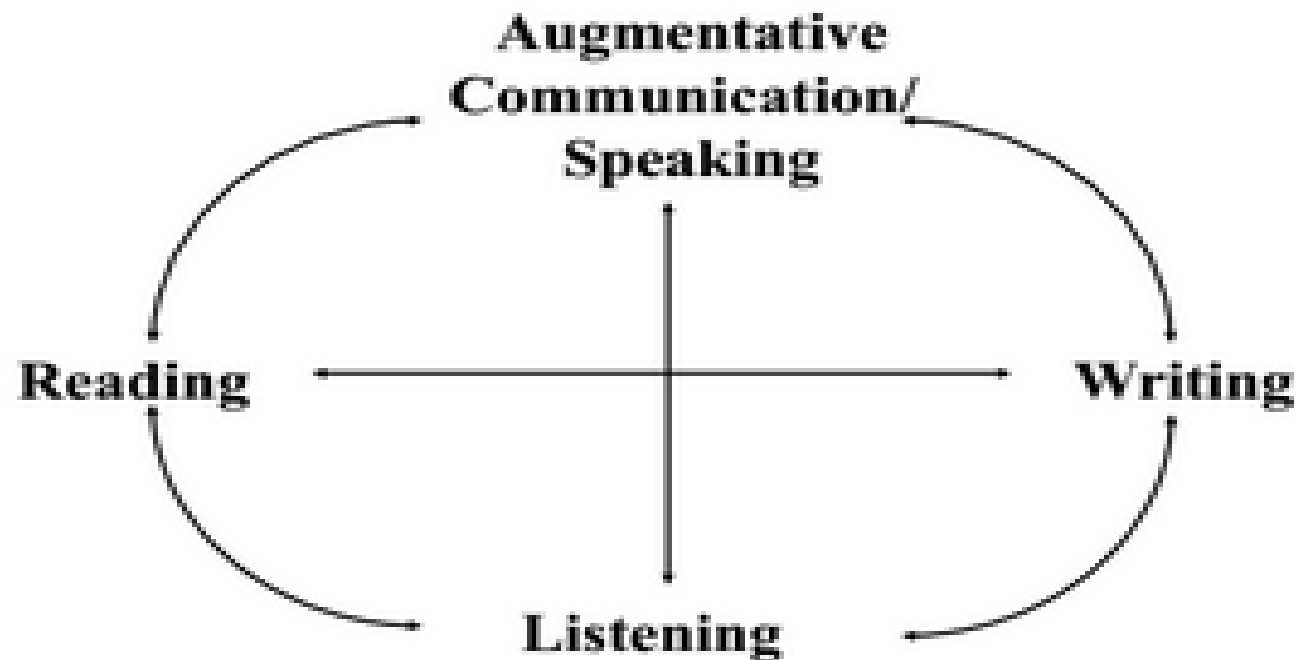
There are five major components to beginning reading instruction:

1. vocabulary (and oral language)
2. comprehension
3. phonological awareness
4. phonics
5. fluency

Students with significant disabilities
need **EXPLICIT** and **INTENSIVE**
instruction in all of these components.
They can learn a far wider range of
literacy skills than just **SIGHT WORDS!**

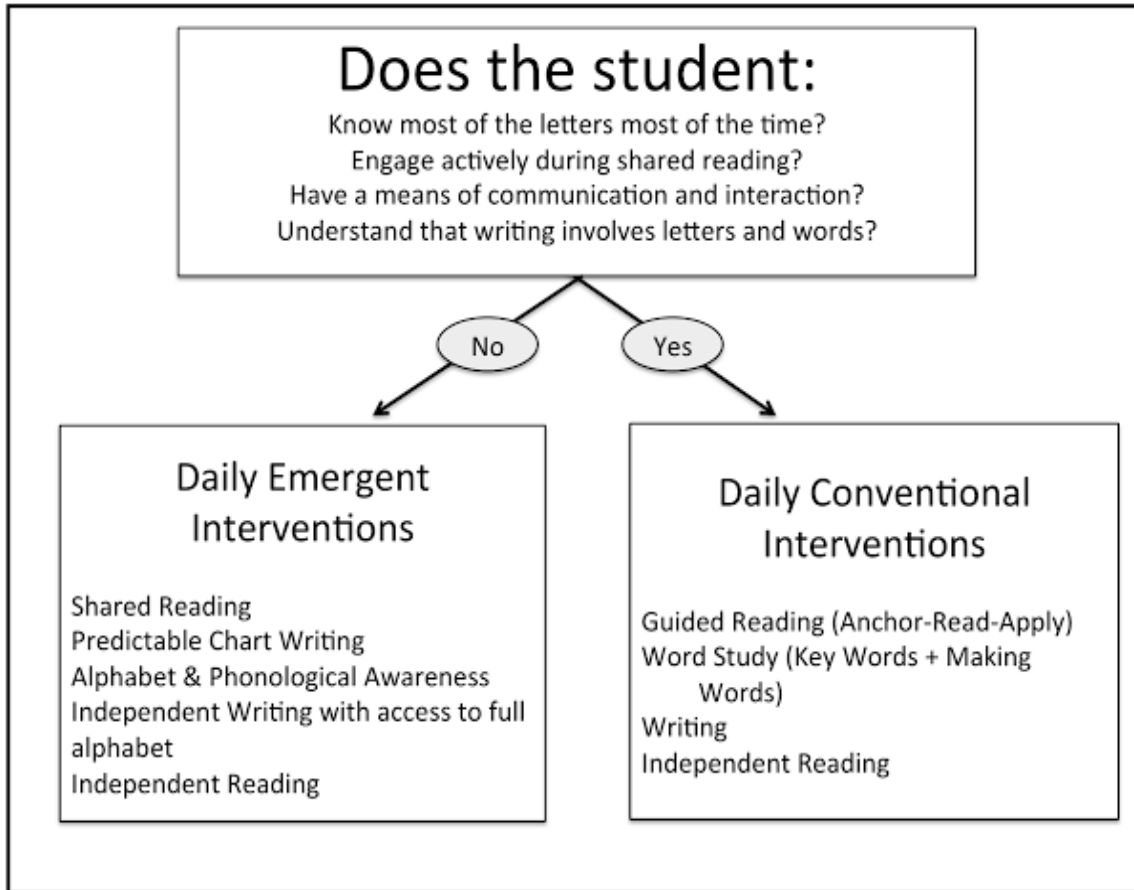
Oral Language, Vocabulary and Comprehension

This is the knowledge of the meaning of word meanings (both expressive and receptive). This knowledge of words is an indicator of future reading success in beginning readers.



Oral and Written Language Development
(Koppenhaver, Coleman, Kalman & Yoder, 1991
adapted from Teale & Sulzby, 1989)

Emergent to Conventional Literacy Interventions



- Karen Erickson & David Koppenhaver
- [Center for Literacy and Disability Studies](#)
- <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/content/professional-development>

Phonological Awareness and Phonics

Students must be able to recognize words.

They must understand the alphabetic code.

Phonological awareness includes understanding and awareness of sounds in oral language (syllables, sounds, phonemes, etc).

In addition to explicitly teaching phonological awareness, **phonics and word recognition** are critical to learning how to read. Students need to master letter-sound correspondences as well as sight words (those irregular words).

Fluency

This is the correct reading of connected text at a conversational rate with appropriate expression.

Early Reading Research- Based Practice

Historically, we have focused on learning sight words only. Now, students are being taught to process the makeup of words and to integrate these skills to accomplish the act of comprehension in reading.

TIME

It is important to note that while these are the goals, we must remember that students with significant disabilities will require **MORE TIME** to reach their full potential; meaning we must give ***more*** literacy instruction to make gains. This will result in a generalization of learned skills.

Challenges

General education instruction usually includes inadequate levels of practice, insufficient focus on key skills, pacing that is too fast, programs and procedures that lack alignment, and limited opportunities to collaborate as a team.

Students with severe disabilities require **SPECIFIC, EXPLICIT, and INDIVIDUALIZED** instruction in code-focused skills including phonological awareness, phonics, and sight word instruction.

(Be careful when teaching phonological awareness to not add extra sounds (e.g. bbb - at not babababa - at))

Getting Started

First - it is important to select target skills and goals.

Second - select curriculum and materials that will be the most effective in teaching these skills.

Third - develop specific lessons for individuals and/ or small groups.

Fourth - plan accommodations and adaptations for general instruction.

Once again, we need to remember this takes
TIME!

Some students can take two or more years to demonstrate clear progress, depending on their disability and the skill they are learning. They need plenty of **REPETITION** with variety!

AND LOTS OF PRACTICE!

Planning for Inclusion

Students with severe disabilities need both INTERVENTION and INCLUSION. Access to general education must be functional and meaningful. Team planning is key to the success of a student included in general education, including the development of *positive behaviour supports*.

Instructional Support

Can take the form of peer supports, cooperative learning groups, observational learning/modelling, and adult support.

Assistive Technology

- should be considered in multiple ways
- should include augmentative and alternative communication as needed
- can be on a tablet or mobile phone or computer
- can be a reward for reaching a goal

FINALLY...

We need to presume students are capable of learning.

Research has demonstrated students with severe disabilities be given the opportunity to learn basic literacy skills.

It is imperative that we learn ways to meet these needs.