



Promoting Communication Development Through Literacy Activities

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What is literacy?

- Traditional literacy refers to being able to read and write
- Traditional literacy is achieved after one develops language (is linguistic), although receptive experiences with literacy begin early
- Literacy lessons are an important context for communication to occur
- Need expanded view of literacy that engages the prelinguistic learner and that builds communication and language through interactions with literacy materials-EMERGENT LITERACY





Goals of Emergent Literacy Lessons



- Building relationships over literacy
- Building shared attention and emotions
- Expanding communication skills- including key vocabulary, learning representations, sequencing, turn-taking skills
- Building literacy skills-including main idea, sequencing
- Providing reading and writing experiences to prelinguistic learners
- Building book handling skills-top/bottom, page turning...
- Providing active roles for the child (think self-determination)

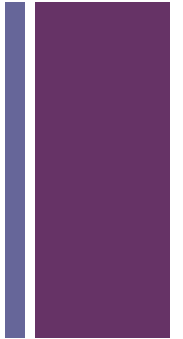


Classic Emergent Literacy Lessons

- Daily schedule and calendar system
- Story Boxes*
- Experience Books*
- Shared Reading*
- Read Alouds
- Interactive Journals
- Authentic choice making

*Lessons addressed in this presentation

(Bruce & Borders, 2015)





Literacy Rich Environments (1 of 2)

- Home and school environments that are rich in a variety of literacy materials that can be accessed through different modalities
 - Think hearing, vision, motor skills, assistive technologies
- Create opportunities for child to share literacy materials with more knowledgeable others, including other children
- Create literacy centers or locations that are known to the child and that the child can access independently, if possible.



+ Literacy Rich Environments (2 of 2)

- Literacy rich environments are more than rich in materials. They are rich in literacy activities. Help child/youth to know when we engage in literacy activities.
- Evidence-based practice: Provide a literacy rich environment with hands on experiences to conceptually ground the literacy experiences.

(Ferrell, et al., 2014; Luckner, et al., 2016; McKenzie & Davidson, 2007; Nelson & Bruce, 2019)





Importance of Experiences



- Experiences ground communication and literacy
- Need to be mindful of reduction in **observational learning** and **incidental learning** due to deafness/hard of hearing, visual impairment/blindness or motor challenges
- Experiences ground concept development and the acquisition of meaningful vocabulary



Individualized and Personalized Literacy (1 of 2)



- Individualizing Literacy Lessons
 - Provide all of the modifications to the curriculum
 - Provide all accommodations required to engage in the lesson, including any assistive technologies
 - Included in the IEP

+ Individualized and Personalized Literacy (2 of 2)

- Personalizing Literacy Lessons
 - Personalized literacy stems from early childhood literature
 - Literacy lessons about the child or adult's life
 - **LIVED EXPERIENCES**
 - Critical to individuals with multiple disabilities due to reduced observational and incidental learning
 - Builds memories
 - Experience undergirds meaning-making
 - Personalized literacy is a culturally sustaining practice

(Bruce, et al., 2016; Bruce & Borders, 2021)





Key Concepts to Keep in Mind



- Importance of experience to ground literacy
- Emotions during experiences and during shared memories that occur in shared reading
- Saliency-selecting representations for what the individual
 - What was most important to them?
 - What drew an emotional reaction?
 - What held the individual's attention?
 - How did the learner define the experience?



Story Boxes (1 of 2)

- Collection of objects used with either a commercially produced book or
- Collection of objects used to retell a shared experience
 - Birthday party, trip to the park
 - Can be a frequent experience
- Best if objects are collected with child.
- Importance of **saliency**-what objects best represent what is salient-most important/memorable to the child-watch for the child's emotional reactions.



+ Story Boxes (2 of 2)

- Selected objects are substitutions for illustrations
- The objects support engagement
- Story boxes support comprehension of the book
- Story boxes can support oral retelling of an experience

(Bruce, et al., 2008; Cushman, 2016)





Implementing Story Box Without Book

- Call up the memory: “Remember X?” (the name of the story box-which you can have in print, braille, or picture on the box)
- Allow time for learner to handle objects or pictures
- Consider sequencing them, using language like, “first” ...
- Discuss what child liked and didn’t like-remember the power of emotion to memory
- You may integrate motor-reenactments
- Support child to put objects in “all done; finished bin”
- You might support other types of literacy-such as drawing about the experience



+ Story Box with Commercially Produced Book

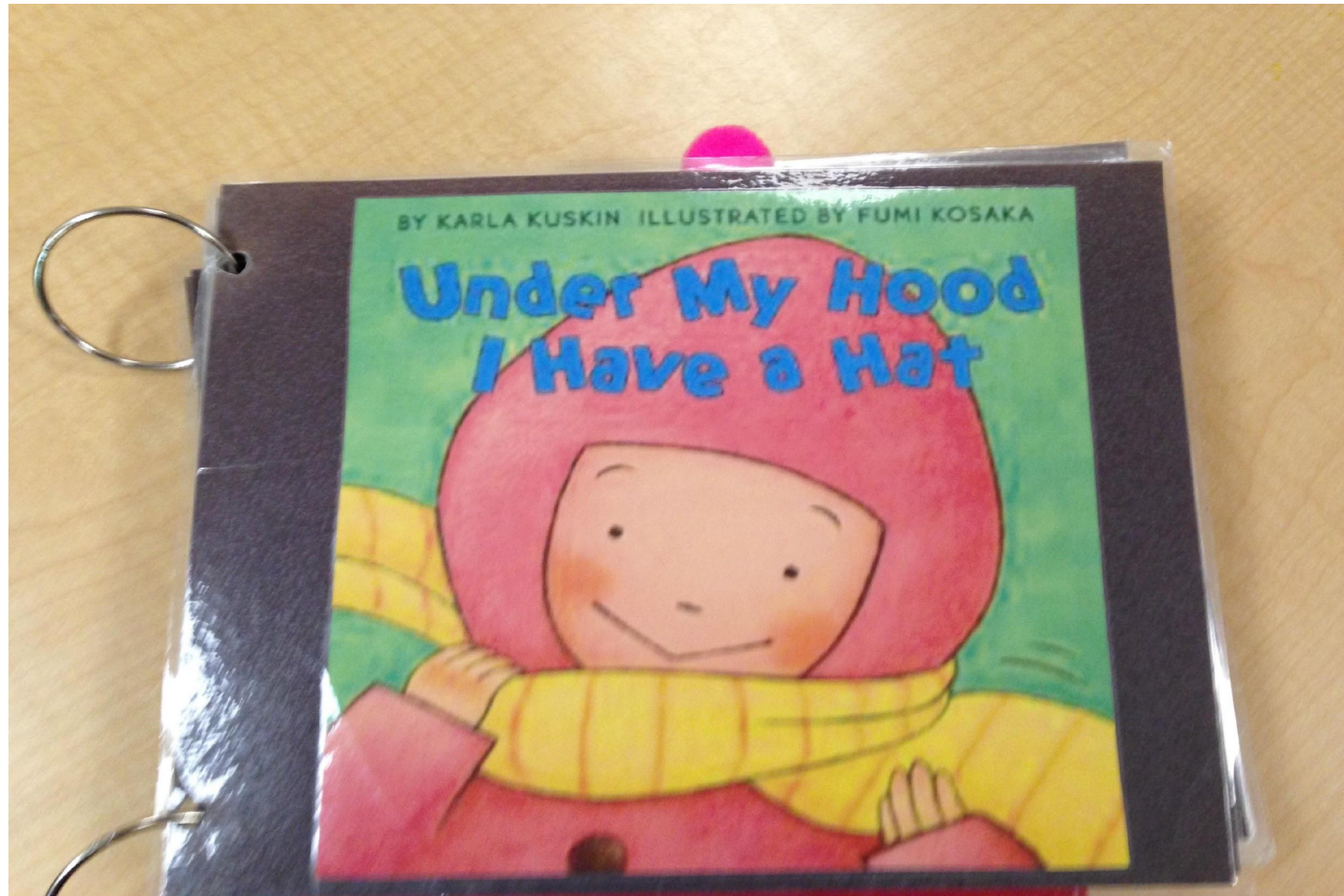


+ Story Box Photo Description #1

- This photo displays materials associated with the book, The Hungry Caterpillar. The photo features the book, a stuffed caterpillar, and fruits that the caterpillar eats in the story.

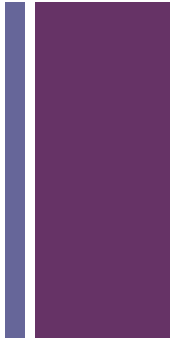


+ Book Cover for Story Box Book



+ Story Box Photo Description #2

- The photo is of the cover page from the book, Under My Hood I Have a Hat. The cover page has been removed from the book and mounted on a black background page. The photo shows a young child dressed in a red hooded coat with a yellow scarf. The child is smiling. The page has been laminated. Looseleaf rings are used to attach it to subsequent pages of the book.



+ Pages-Adding Tactile Features



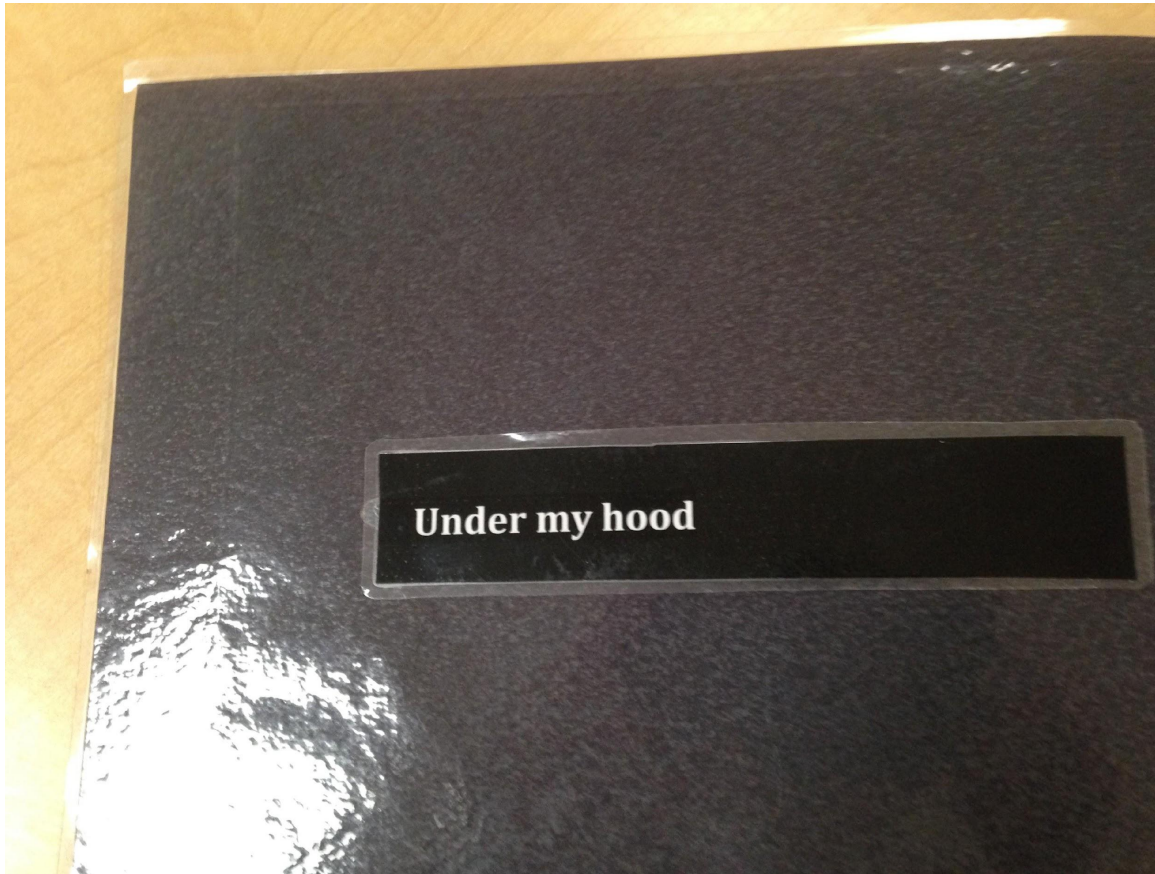


Story Box Photo Description #3



- This photo displays a page from the book, Under My Hood I Have a Hat. It is of a young child in a red cape with a bow. This page has been detached and then mounted on a black background. Textural elements have been added, including a felt red cape and a ribbon that is tied into a bow to represent the scarf.

+ Pages-Separating Text and Pictures





Story Box Photo Description #4



- This photo is of a page that was teacher created for the Under My Hood I Have a Hat book. The text has been word processed in white ink and mounted on a black strip that has been attached to a black page. The page is laminated.



Implementing Story Box with Book



- Introduce the title of the book while showing book to learner
- Provide ample time for child to explore the related objects before reading-naming/signing object
- Read book and possibly offer opportunities to handle objects and relate object to book, but consider the impact of breaking up story
- Have child place objects and book in "all done/finished bin"-possibly naming objects again.

+ Resource: Paths to Literacy



PATHS TO LITERACY
for students who are blind or visually impaired

Perkins SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Find strategies and resources for teachers and parents at
PathsToLiteracy.org

+ Paths to Literacy Photo Description

- This photo features the Paths to Literacy website. It includes an image of a girl sitting with an adult in front of a tangible schedule.





Experience Books (1 of 3)



- Individualized and personalized (about the child's lived experiences)
- Best if created with the child
- May use objects, preferably collected with the child during the experience (ex: candle from birthday cake)
- Think SALIENCY-what is most important, what stands out about this experience-from the child's perspective. Watch child's affective responses. What what they touch and engage with.

+ Experience Books (2 of 3)

- Think about key vocabulary to feature in experience book
- Label in print or braille-to support adults to say the same things when reading the book with the child
- Can use pictures and line drawings
- These personalized books will trigger memories.
- Sharing in environments other than where the experience occurred will support distancing.



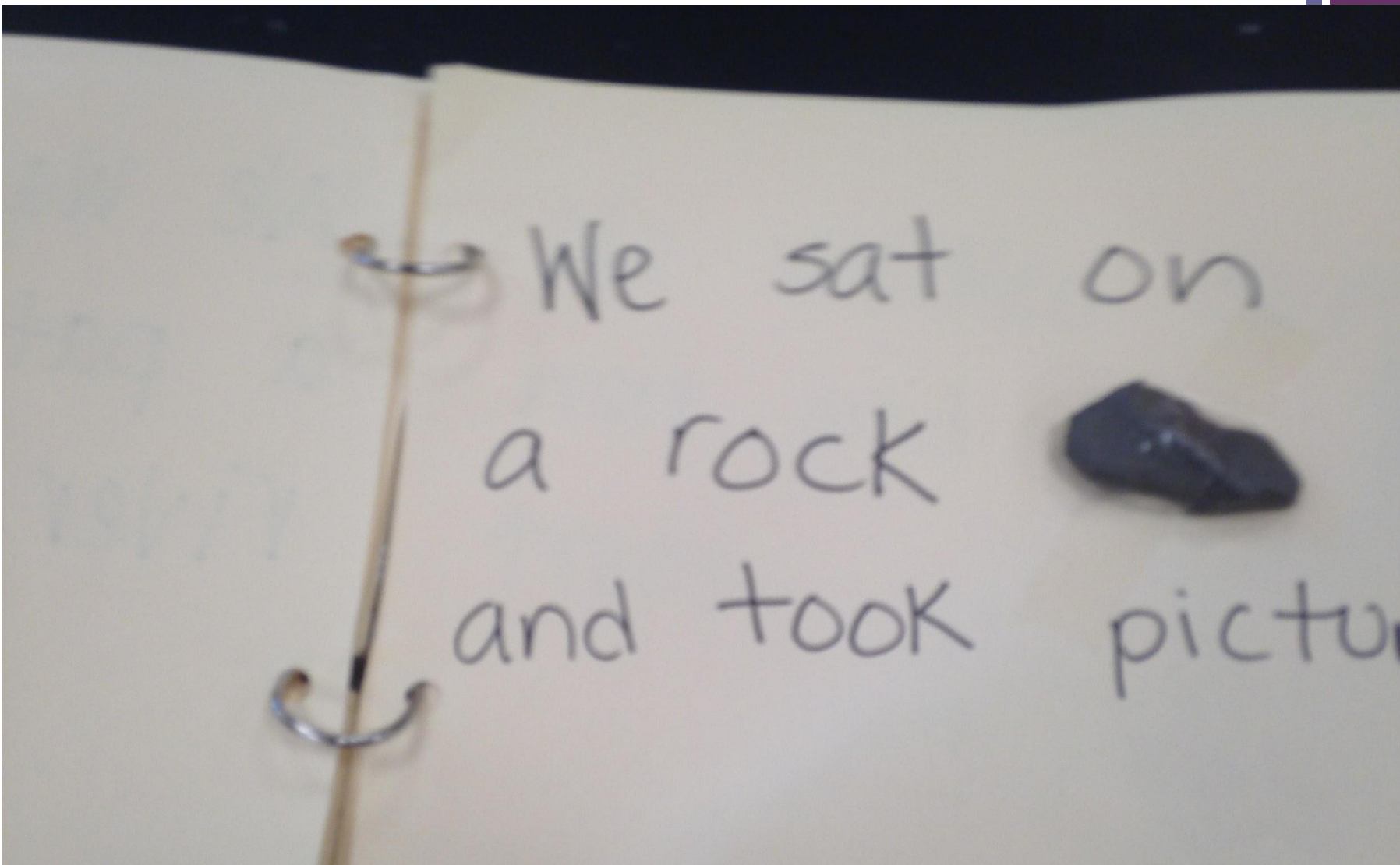
+ Experience Books (3 of 3)

- Child increasingly assumes more responsibility for writing and reading
- Store them where the child may locate them (for independent reading time), although you may save some for shared reading only

(Bruce, et al., 2008)



+ Sample Page About a Walk Outdoors (1 of 2)

A photograph of a spiral-bound notebook with a rock and a stick on it. The notebook is open, and the right page is visible. The text on the page is handwritten in pencil. A small, dark, irregularly shaped rock is placed on the page to the right of the word "rock". A wooden stick is placed vertically on the left side of the page, with two metal spiral rings visible. The background is dark.

We sat on
a rock
and took pictures



Photo Description of Sample Page of Walk Outdoors (1 of 2)



- This photo features handwritten enlarged print and a small rock glued to a white page. A looseleaf ring is used to bind it to other pages.

+ Sample Page About a Walk Outdoors (2 of 2)

We walked some
more and saw
trees

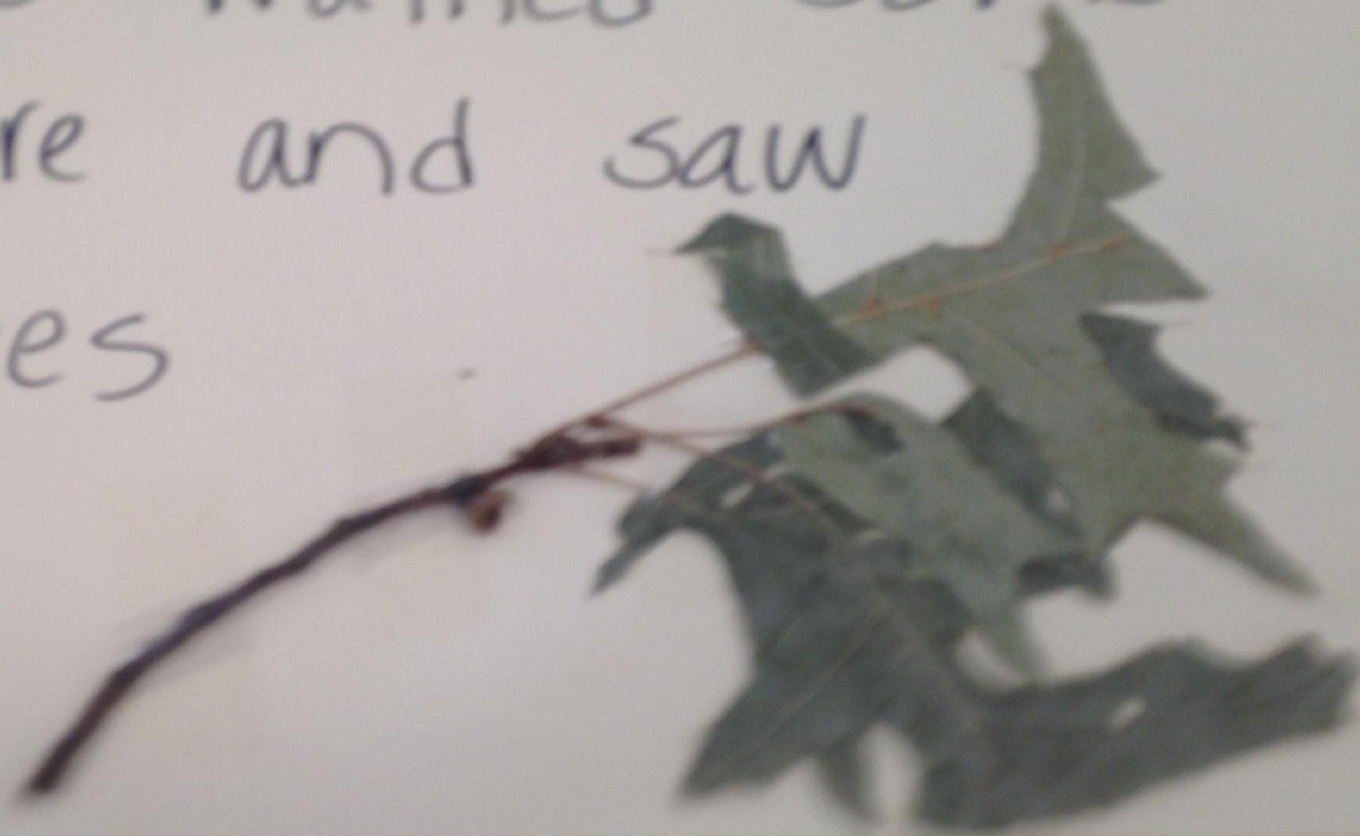




Photo Description of Sample Page of Walk Outdoors (2 of 2)

- This photo features handwritten enlarged print and a small branch with leaves on it.



+ Sample Page from Celebrations Book

I celebrate my birthday,





Photo Description of Sample Page of Celebrations Book



- This photo features a page from the Celebrations Book. The background of the page is pink. A label with enlarged print reads, I celebrate my birthday. Under this print appears a birthday candle glued to black mounting and this is attached to the page.

+ Covid Experience Book



+ Photo Description of Covid Book

- This photo show two pages from an experience book about Covid. The left page shows a girl wearing a mask while seated. The right page has a Covid mask attached to the page. This page is labeled with text, Tania wore a mask.





Implementing Experience Books



- Use in context of shared reading-taking turns reading in whatever way the learner expressively communicates
- Consider pre-teaching and reviewing vocabulary in the book
- Take your time-the learner needs to look and touch the representations on the page and think about the content
- Read the labels/narrative on the page-these ensure that adults will say/sign the same things. Give opportunities for child to do same.
- Teach book handling skills-being careful with books, turning pages, putting them away appropriately



Shared Reading Defined



- Adult and child take turns- as opposed to adult always being in control of reading the book
- Adult generates opportunities to:
 - Connect to child's experiences
 - Offer extension activities-building on an idea from the book
 - Do comprehension checks
 - Engage in conversation



Shared Reading Study



- Brum's study of Shared Reading with individuals who are deafblind-Surveys (84 participants-42 teachers, 36 parents, 6 interveners across 25 states); Interviews (10 participants)
- Types of literacy activities they engage in with child or young adult who is deafblind
- Specific strategies they use when engaged in literacy activities
- Findings relevant to other learners with multiple disabilities
- Inductive thematic analysis



Shared Reading: 8 Themes (1 of 3)



- **Theme #1: Gaining and holding attention**-close physical proximity, relating to background experience, pointing out aspects of text that were of greatest interest, labeling pictures, clarifying meaning, prediction, pause, showing emotion (especially enthusiasm), tying in music (including singing) and sound effects, reciprocity-taking turns
- **Theme #2: Child-guided strategies**-consider child's interests and preference (when selecting literacy materials and during the reading), lived experiences of child, remembering emotion and trust



Shared Reading Themes (2 of 3)

- **Theme #3: Applying principles of systematic instruction**-pacing, prompting, pauses, reinforcing, importance of repetition
- **Theme #4: Vocabulary acquisition strategies**-emphasizing key or core vocabulary; multi-forms/modal, use of pictures
- **Theme #5: Drawing/writing strategies**-drawing as writing, co-constructing experience books. Writing as sequencing objects...





Shared Reading Themes (3 of 3)



- **Theme #6: Touch and tactile strategies**-Textures in books; tactile tangible symbols; braille, coactive exploration of books
- **Theme #7: Comprehension strategies**-importance of repetition, pictures, highlighting big ideas, simplifying text, sequencing events in text
- **Theme #8: Communication forms** –connect with literacy-simultaneous use of multiple forms/modes-speech with tactile tangible symbols..., labeling in more than one language

(Brum and Bruce, 2022)



Final Thoughts



- Literacy is not something we wait to occur. We shape literacy through the activities and materials we provide across environments.
- All learners can engage in literacy.
- Literacy is a powerful context for developing communication.



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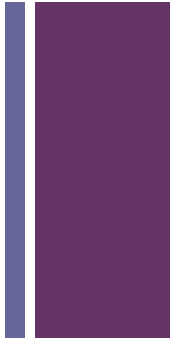
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