

LITERACY WORKSHOPS

The Balanced Literacy Club

The prospect of teaching students with significant disabilities to read and write may seem daunting. We chose to start a Balanced Literacy Club, working as a team to support all teachers, therapists, and paras. This project included: a full-day presentation, short monthly presentations including make-it projects, in-class modeling and coaching, and team celebration of successes. So far, the clubs have spanned seven school districts and 39 classrooms, and include a range of students (with cognitive impairments, autism spectrum disorders, physical impairments, and using AAC devices). I will share: assessment ideas, videos, data, specific strategies for all parts of balanced literacy (word study, guided reading, writing, and self-selected reading), and tips for getting EVERYONE onboard and excited about pushing for quality, research-based literacy instruction.

Agenda Topics

INTRO

- What Is the Balanced Literacy Club?
- 6 Conditions for Literacy

GUIDED READING

- Before / During / After Approach
- Supporting Reading Comprehension

WRITING

- Vocabulary to Support Writing
- Writing Tips and Tricks

SELF-SELECTED READING

- Choosing Appropriate Texts
- Finding Accessible Texts

PHONICS

- Research
- Word Walls

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

- Research
- Strategies

SUMMARY

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Note: Materials fees are optional!

**WRITE TO TALK = TALK TO WRITE:
Using AAC Devices as Pencils!**

When you ask to see students who are writing, do you observe students who are: practicing handwriting? copying? filling in worksheets? doing nothing? Too often, students who are AAC users have minimal opportunities to engage in writing. This workshop will focus on the integral relationship between communication and the writing process . . . and how easily that is overlooked for AAC users. This workshop will begin with structured writing (ex: using slot fillers with predetermined choices) and move quickly to generative writing (ex: generating novel thought and translating it into text, using the alphabet, word prediction, abbreviation-expansion, device dictionaries, word banks, etc.) Various writing frameworks will be demonstrated. A wide range of student writing samples will be shared. The workshop incorporates high-success, daily writing activities across curriculum areas that are meaningful and motivating.

Materials Fee: Participants will receive the *Write to Talk* book and CD for a \$15 materials fee (or CD only for \$10).

THE POWER OF WORDS: Creative Expression and Poetry

We all want to share our inner selves, but this is very difficult for students who struggle with communication. Come explore poetry, storytelling, and simple plays as vehicles for sharing . . . and changing perceptions! Poetry can help students express themselves with only a few powerful words. It is an excellent opportunity for emergent writing, especially for individuals with limited vocabulary. Through listening to poetry, poetry performance, and poetry writing, students can learn about word choices to help express their emotions, look at the world a new way, and share their wishes and dreams. Poetry and storytelling can be used to support students emotionally, to inspire them, to bring them joy . . . and to help them be successful readers and writers. This session will discuss vocabulary selection approaches, PLUS offer a number of activities to support face-to-face and written communication goals, PLUS show scores of student writing samples.

Materials Fee: Participants will receive the *Poetry Power* book and CD for a \$15 materials fee (or CD only for \$10).

WRITE ON RIGHT NOW: Emergent Writing

“Oh, they’re ‘not ready’ for writing” . . . WRONG! This workshop will cover emergent writing for students who use symbols, words, or developmental spelling approaches. Participants will learn to use templates to help students with structured writing activities (e.g., story retelling, story construction, a variety of poems, charting and graphing for math) and language experience

activities (e.g., journalling, making lists, describing). The emphasis will be on adapting everyday activities from regular ed curriculums, adding ease of access and fun to the events. This workshop supports beginning writers of all ages.

Materials Fee: Participants will receive the *Write to Talk* book and CD for a \$15 materials fee (or CD only for \$10).

WRITE ON: Developmental Spelling to Persuasive Essays – Supporting Conventional Writing!

This workshop is for those working with students who are beginning to use the alphabet to create meaning; supporting text production from invented spelling and simple sentences to persuasive essays. We will go beyond using symbols / words / phrases, produced traditionally or with technology, to impact writing with the alphabet. We will explore the full writing process, covering prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, including specific **strategies** for struggling students at each phase (e.g., using T.I.E. - Topic / Ideas / Ending to develop a paragraph). Multiple student writing samples (pre- and post-) will be shared and participants will engage in brainstorming activities to customize materials for their students and curriculum. Targeted students are beginning to spell, but struggling to keep up with content-based writing.

Materials Fee: The \$10 fee includes a CD with light tech and high tech **scaffolds**, including sample graphic organizers in Word, Classroom Suite, Clicker, and Inspiration.

Shared Writing: Get Going!

From the very start, writing is an essential, unquestioned component of literacy development for typically developing children. For students with significant disabilities who cannot hold a pencil, writing may be laborious and frustrating, and may not even be on the radar. This workshop will change that so that students engage in writing EVERY day! A wide range of meaningful classroom writing activities and strategies will be demonstrated with tools to support student success, such as alternative pencils, augmentative and alternative communication devices and other forms of assistive technology. Videos and writing samples will be shown of real students with the most significant disabilities in elementary to high school classrooms. Sample goals and ways of assessing writing will be shared. Suggestions for using the same activities with students with mild disabilities will be discussed.

PHONICS PHUN, or

Today Is NOT Brought to You by the Short Vowel “O”

This presentation focuses on the current controversy surrounding whole language instruction and the omission or inclusion of phonics instruction. A sub-theme is a review of phonics awareness and instruction for students who use augmentative communication. What does the literature tell us about the role of phonics in literacy and language learning? And why do assistive technology specialists and parents need to know this stuff, anyway? And if we do understand it, and do want to support phonics learning, HOW do we assess and teach phonics, particularly for students with severe disabilities? In summary, this presentation covers the why, what, how, where, and who of supporting students in learning and applying phonics. Strategies presented are fun, functional, and integrated into daily life!

WHAT’S TO READ? Locating, Analyzing, and Adapting Appropriate Literacy Materials for Older Students Who Are Emergent Readers

Trying to find materials that are truly EASY enough for your emergent readers age 9 and up, but truly HIGH INTEREST? This workshop focuses on interactive literacy learning for upper elementary, middle school, and secondary students with severe disabilities, including students who use augmentative and alternative communication. Participants will see and try strategies for adapting or developing appropriate reading materials.

Materials Fee: Includes the RAPS CD Suite 06 - \$10 per participant

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Note: Materials fees are optional!

Sample Workshops by Dr. Caroline Ramsey Musselwhite

POETRY POWER! Using Poetry to Support Language & Literacy

Poetry can be used to support students emotionally, to inspire them, to bring them joy . . . and to help them be successful communicators.

Poetry Immersion: Shares strategies to support phonemic awareness, language, and literacy development.

Poetry Production: Struggling writers CAN write creative, innovative, highly meaningful poems, with proper scaffolding and technical support.

Sample poetryforms include:

- Wordsmithing (3 word sets, Add-a-Word, List Poems)
- Poetry Starters (Wishes, Lies, Dreams)
- Comparison Poems (I Used to Be / But Now; I Seem to Be / But Really)

Materials Fee: This workshop includes the *Poetry Power* book and CD for a \$15 materials fee, or the CD only for a \$10 fee.

EMERGENT TO TRANSITIONAL TO CONVENTIONAL LITERACY: Moving Through The Beginning Literacy Framework

Are you frustrated because your older students are still at the emergent literacy level, while other students are using reading and writing to mediate learning? This workshop uses the Don Johnston Beginning Literacy Framework™ to support literacy development for upper elementary, middle school, and secondary students with severe disabilities, including students who use augmentative and alternative communication. Part 1 summarizes text features for three text types during early literacy (enrichment, transitional, conventional). Part 2 offers models of text across levels, and Part 3 provides a Try It for using ready-made photos to create text appropriate for older students. Part 4 supports participants in learning strategies to scaffold student learning such as guided readings, repeated readings, and word study.

**EMERGENT LITERACY FOR OLDER STUDENTS:
A Project-Based Approach**

Do you feel overwhelmed with the literacy needs of your older students with severe disabilities, including students who use augmentative and alternative communication? This workshop addresses the needs of upper elementary through high school students with significant cognitive impairments. A primary focus will be locating appropriate reading materials, then helping students access them through a Project based approach. For examples, students can work on a recycling project, with related literacy materials for supporting language and literacy.

Materials Fee - Includes *What's Cooking, Sports, or Garden Set* CD with two stories and scores of support activities for \$10 per participant

**Language, Literacy & Learning: Putting it All Together for Students
with Disabilities**

Phonemic awareness . . . repeated-line stories . . . emergent writing . . . where to begin? What does the literature tell us about the role of phonemic awareness in literacy and language learning? And why do teachers, therapists, and parents need to know this stuff, anyway? This presentation focuses on creative, interactive ways to use stories, music, and phonemic awareness activities to jump-start literacy and language learning for individuals, who need extra support, including AAC users. This workshop supports students who are at the emergent literacy level, regardless of age. In summary, this course covers the why, what, how, where, and who of supporting students in learning and applying emergent literacy in classrooms and homes. Strategies presented are fun, functional, and integrated into daily life!

AAC WORKSHOPS

AAC Language Learning: Make It Fun, Make It Interactive!

How often do you observe AAC users who perform beautifully in therapy, only to sit passively in classrooms and social situations? This quick-paced, interactive session will support students in using core vocabulary for authentic purposes, with peers, and using repetition with variation. Strategies include: barrier communication games, combining core vocabulary and literacy, and determining authentic purposes for all practice. Participants will engage in multiple 'try-it' activities to help learning generalize, just as we hope to make core vocabulary generalize for our AAC users! Participants will receive a CD with sample activities and forms.

COMMUNICATION CIRCLES: Supporting Communicative Competence for AAC Users

Janice Light (1989) defines communicative competence as “. . . the ability to communicate functionally in the natural environment and to adequately meet daily communication needs.” For students who use AAC and are in inclusive settings, this goal is very appropriate . . . and challenging! WHERE do we find the time to support students in learning the linguistic, operational, social, and strategic skills they need to engage in successful interactive communication? One approach is to form ‘Communication Circles’ or circles of peers who support AAC users in learning and practicing skills. These circles work with students weekly, keeping data and anecdotal notes. This seminar will include lecture, demonstration, brainstorming, and case studies. Participants will receive the *Communication Circles* book & CD for a \$15 materials fee (or CD only for \$10).

**WHO'S REALLY TALKING?
"Who's Cute", and Other Social Scripts for AAC Users**

In 1985, Arlene Kraat published a research-based summary of a number of problem areas in the growing field of AAC: 1) Communication displays / devices rarely used; 2) AAC users typically respondents, not initiators; 3) Limited range of functions, etc. Well, it's the new millennium . . . and most of those problems are still with us! Social Scripts ensure that augmented communicators - even those with limited access skills - can achieve interactions that are frequent, motivating, self-initiated, varied, ongoing, with multiple turns, and with a range of partners, including peers. Strategies will be provided for creating, programming, and teaching the use of social scripts to support accessing skills as well as conversational skills. This session will include brainstorming and opportunities for creating and evaluating social scripts.

Materials Fee: \$10 - Can We Chat book; OR \$20 - Chat Book + Social Scripts

CD (includes the book, 125 + sample scripts, script symbols, case examples).

**COMMUNICATION ALL DAY LONG:
Communication Circles, Topic Setting, and MORE!**

The literature on interactive use of AAC systems is quite clear. . . and discouraging. As a group, AAC partners continue to dominate communication, and AAC users continue to be passive and "speak only when spoken to." This workshop will address how to use a combination of discourse-based strategies, peer-based Communication Circles, and a communicative agenda

(instead of a testing agenda!) to support students who use AAC systems. Two focus areas will be how to help AAC users set topics, and how to support AAC users in inclusive settings. This will be done through lecture, demonstration, brainstorming, case studies, and "Try It" activities. Come prepared to have some fun while learning some new skills - and relearning some old ones!

SINGING THE STANDARDS: Using Music to Jump-Start Language, Literacy, and Learning! Learn It / Try It / Make It / Take It!!

We all know that music is a highly motivating medium for student learning. We also know that visual strategies support our struggling learners. Put this together, and we have songboards to scaffold learning across the curriculum. This workshop offers new strategies for accessing songs, and for using songs to support learning. The focus will be on: independence, interaction, and important goals. The areas covered will be: Language (supporting students in learning vocabulary, concepts, question forms, etc.); Literacy (reading, writing, phonics); and Learning Across the Curriculum (science, math, social studies) . This session includes lecture, demonstration, try it, and make it.

Materials Fee for Make It/Take It: Singing to Learn CD - \$10 (8 IntelliPics Activities, 28 songboards, etc.)

EXTENDING AAC LEARNING: Out & About Community Groups, Communication Circles, and EZ Camps!

What is our goal for AAC users? To talk to teachers and SLPs in schools only? NOT! This workshop will present ideas for supporting AAC users from age 3 – adult in using their devices in the community, while increasing their communicative competence in all settings. Come learn about supporting REAL AAC use in:

- community social groups
- field trips
- camps
- family retreats, and
- community-based instruction
- classroom communication circles

This workshop considers how to support AAC users in communicating with people across all Circles of Communication Partners (Blackstone & Berg, 2003), including family members, good friends, acquaintances, paid workers, and unfamiliar partners. Strategies are suggested for supporting communicative competence, as described by Light and Binger (1998), by supporting development of linguistic, social, operational, and strategic skills. *Materials Fee:* Participants will receive a book describing how to replicate our group, and a CD with materials, videos, forms, case examples, and tech tips (\$15).