COMPETENCY 1
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

SKILL 1.1 Knowledge of oral language development and its role in literacy development

Learning Approach

Early theories of language development were formulated from learning theory research. The assumption was that language development evolved from learning the rules of language structures and applying them through imitation and reinforcement. The **LEARNING APPROACH** also assumed that linguistic, cognitive, and social developments were independent of each other. Thus, children were expected to learn language from patterning after adults who spoke and wrote Standard English. No allowance was made for communication through child jargon, idiomatic expressions, or grammatical and mechanical errors resulting from too strict adherence to the rules of inflection (*childs* instead of *children*) or conjugation (*runned* instead of *ran*). No association was made between physical and operational development and language mastery.

Linguistic Approach

Studies spearheaded by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s formulated the theory that language ability is innate and develops through natural human maturation as environmental stimuli trigger the acquisition of syntactical structures appropriate to each exposure level. This is known as the **LINGUISTIC APPROACH**. The assumption of a hierarchy of syntax downplayed the significance of semantics. Because of the complexity of syntax and the relative speed with which children acquire language, linguists attributed language development to biological rather than cognitive or social influences.

Cognitive Approach

Researchers in the 1970s proposed that language knowledge derives from both syntactic and semantic structures. Drawing on the studies of Piaget and other cognitive learning theorists, supporters of the **COGNITIVE APPROACH** maintained that children acquire knowledge of linguistic structures after they have acquired the cognitive structures necessary to process language.

LEARNING APPROACH: a language acquisition theory that assumed that language development evolved from learning the rules of language structures and applying them through imitation and reinforcement

LINGUISTIC APPROACH: a language acquisition theory that states that language ability is innate and develops through natural human maturation as environmental stimuli trigger the acquisition of syntactical structures appropriate to each exposure level

COGNITIVE APPROACH: a language acquisition theory that states that children acquire knowledge of linguistic structures after they have acquired the cognitive structures necessary to process language

For example, joining words for specific meaning necessitates sensorimotor intelligence. The child must be able to coordinate movement and recognize objects before he or she can identify words to name the objects or word groups to describe the actions of these objects. Children must have developed the mental abilities for organizing concepts as well as performing concrete operations, predicting outcomes, and theorizing before they can assimilate and verbalize complex sentence structures, choose vocabulary for particular nuances of meaning, and examine semantic structures for tone and manipulative effect.

Sociocognitive Approach

Other theorists in the 1970s proposed that language development results from sociolinguistic competence. This theory finds that the different aspects of linguistic, cognitive, and social knowledge are interactive elements of total human development. Emphasis on verbal communication as the medium for language expression resulted in the inclusion of speech activities in most language arts curricula.

SOCIOCOGNITIVE APPROACH: a language acquisition theory that states that the different aspects of linguistic, cognitive, and social knowledge are interactive elements of total human development

Unlike previous approaches, the **SOCIOCOGNITIVE APPROACH** allows that determining the appropriateness of language in given situations for specific listeners is as important as understanding semantic and syntactic structures. By engaging in conversation, children at all stages of development have opportunities to test their language skills, receive feedback, and make modifications. As a social activity, conversation is as structured by social order as grammar is structured by the rules of syntax. Conversation satisfies the learner's need to be heard, to be understood, and to influence others. Thus, his or her choices of vocabulary, tone, and content are dictated by the ability to assess the linguistic knowledge of his or her listeners. The learner is constantly applying cognitive skills in using language as a form of social interaction. Although the capacity to acquire language is inborn, a child would not pass beyond grunts and gestures without an environment in which to practice language.

Of course, the varying degrees of environmental stimuli to which children are exposed at all age levels result in a slower or faster development of language. Some children are prepared to articulate concepts and recognize symbolism by the time they enter fifth grade, because they have been exposed to challenging reading and conversations, either with well-spoken adults at home or in their social groups. Others are still trying to master the sight recognition skills and are not yet ready to combine words in complex patterns.

When students practice fluency, they practice reading connected pieces of text. In other words, instead of looking at a word as just a word, they might read a sentence straight through. The best way to test for fluency, in fact, is to have a student read something out loud, preferably a few sentences in a row—or more.

Most students just learning to read will probably not be very fluent right away; but this will increase with practice. Even though fluency is not the same as comprehension, it is said that fluency is a good predictor of comprehension.

During the preschool years, children acquire cognitive skills in oral language that they apply later on to reading comprehension. Reading aloud to young children is one of the most important things that an adult can do because it teaches children how to monitor, question, predict, and confirm what they hear in the stories. Reid (1988, p. 165) described four metalinguistic abilities that young children acquire through early involvement in reading activities:

1. **Word consciousness.** Children who have access to books first can tell the story through the pictures. Gradually they begin to realize the connection between the spoken words and the printed words. The beginning of letter and word discrimination begins in the early years.

2. **Language and conventions of print.** During this stage, children learn the correct way to hold a book, where to begin reading, the left to right motion, and how to continue from one line to another.

3. **Functions of print.** Children discover that print can be used for a variety of purposes and functions, including entertainment and information.

4. **Fluency.** Through listening to adult models, children learn to read in phrases and use intonation.

WORD RECOGNITION	WORD AND IDEA COMPREHENSION
Configuration	Vocabulary Development
Content Analysis	Literal Comprehension
Sight Words	Inferential Comprehension
Phonics Analysis	Evaluation or Critical Reading
Syllabication	Appreciation
Structural Analysis	
Dictionary Analysis	

SKILL 1.2 Phonetics, including phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics

Knowledge of Phonemes

A **PHONEME** is the smallest contrastive unit in a language system, the representation of a sound. The phoneme is said to have mental, physiological, and physical substance: our brains process the sounds, the sounds are produced by the human speech organs, and the sounds are physical entities that can be recorded and measured. Consider the English words "pat" and "sat," which appear to differ only in their initial consonants. This difference, known as contrastiveness or opposition, is adequate to distinguish these words, and therefore the P and S sounds are said to be different phonemes in English. A pair of words that are identical except for such a sound is known as a **MINIMAL PAIR**, and the two sounds are separate phonemes.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS is an awareness of the phonological structure, or sound structure, of language. It is a listening skill that includes the ability to distinguish units of speech, such as rhymes, syllables in words, and individual phonemes in syllables. The ability to segment and blend phonemes is critical for the development of reading skills, including decoding and fluency. Phonological awareness is an important and reliable predictor of later reading ability and has, therefore, been the focus of much research.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS is a subset of phonological awareness that focuses on recognizing and manipulating phonemes, the smallest units of sound. Phonemic awareness is the acknowledgement of sounds and words—for example, a child's realization that some words rhyme. Onset and rhyme, for example, are skills that might help students learn that the sound of the first letter "b" in the word "bad" can be exchanged with the sound "d" to make it "dad." The key in phonemic awareness is that when you teach it to children, it can be taught with the students' eyes closed. In other words, it's all about sounds, not about ascribing written letters to sounds.

Since the ability to distinguish between individual sounds, or phonemes, within words, is a prerequisite to association of sounds with letters and manipulating sounds to blend words (a fancy way of saying "reading"), the teaching of phonemic awareness is crucial to emergent literacy K-2 reading instruction. Children need a strong background in phonemic awareness in order for phonics instruction to be effective.

PHONEME: the smallest contrastive unit in a language system, the representation of a sound

MINIMAL PAIR: a pair of words that are identical except for the sound represented by a single phoneme

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS: an awareness of the phonological structure, or sound structure, of language

PHONEMIC AWARENESS: a subset of phonological awareness that focuses on recognizing and manipulating phonemes, the smallest units of sound

PHONICS focuses on the connection between the sounds and letters on a page. In other words, students learning phonics might see the word "bad" and sound each letter out slowly until they recognize that they just said the word.

By age 5 or 6, children can typically begin to use phonics to understand the connections between letters, their patterns, vowel sounds (e.g., short vowels, long vowels), and the collective sounds they all make.

Phonemic awareness can be developed through a number of activities that include:

- Identifying phonemes
- Categorizing phonemes
- Blending phonemes to form words
- Deleting or adding phonemes to form new words

Theorist Marilyn Jager Adams, who researches early reading, has outlined five basic types of phonemic awareness tasks.

The five types of phonemic awareness:

Task 1: Ability to hear rhymes and alliteration. Children would listen to a poem, rhyming picture book, or song and identify the rhyming words heard, while the teacher records or lists them on an experiential chart.

Task 2: Ability to do oddity tasks (recognize the member of a set that is different [odd] among the group). The children would look at the pictures of a blade of grass, a garden, and a rose and be able to tell which starts with a different sound.

Task 3: The ability to orally blend words and split syllables. The children can say the first sound of a word and then the rest of the word and put it together as a single word.

Task 4: The ability to orally segment words. This is the ability to count sounds. The children would be asked as a group to count the sounds in "hamburger."

Task 5: The ability to do phonics manipulation tasks. The children would replace the "r" sound in "rose" with a "p" sound to get the word "pose."

> **PHONICS:** the connection between the sounds and letters on a page

APPLIED EXAMPLES OF COMMON PHONEMES:			
Phoneme	**Uses**	**Phoneme**	**Uses**
/A/	a (table), a_e (bake), ai (train), ay (say)	/O/	o (okay), o_e (bone), oa (soap), ow (low)
/a/	a (flat)	/o/	o (hot)
/b/	b (ball)	/p/	p (pie)
/k/	c (cake), k (key), ck (back)	/kw/	qu (quick)
/d/	d (door)	/r/	r (road), wr (wrong), er (her), ir (sir), ur (fur)
/E/	e (me), ee (feet), ea (leap), y (baby)	/s/	s (say), c (cent)
/e/	e (pet), ea (head)	/t/	t (time)
/f/	f (fix), ph (phone)	/U/	u (future), u_e (use), ew (few)
/g/	g (gas)	/u/	u (thumb), a (about)
/h/	h (hot)	/v/	v (voice)
/I/	i (I), i_e (bite), igh (light), y (sky)	/w/	w (wash)
/i/	i (sit)	/gz/	x (exam)
/j/	j (jet), dge (edge), g (gem)	/ks/	x (box)
/l/	l (lamp)	/y/	y (yes)
/m/	m (map)	/z/	z (zoo), s (nose)
/n/	n (no), kn (knock)	/OO/	oo (boot), u (truth), u_e (rude), ew (chew)
/oo/	oo (book), u (put)	/hw/	wh (white)

Table continued on next page

Phoneme	Uses	Phoneme	Uses
/oi/	oi (soil), oy (toy)	/ch/	ch (chest), tch (catch)
/ou/	ou (out), ow (cow)	/th/	th (thick)
/aw/	aw (saw), au (caught), al (tall)	/th/	th (this)
/ar/	ar (car)	/ng/	ng (sing)
/sh/	sh (ship), ti (nation), ci (special)	/zh/	s (measure)

Instructional methods that may be effective for teaching phonemic awareness can include:

- Clapping syllables in words

- Distinguishing between a word and a sound

- Using visual cues and movements to help children understand when the speaker goes from one sound to another

- Oral segmentation activities that focus on easily distinguished syllables rather than sounds

- Singing familiar songs (e.g., Happy Birthday, Knick Knack Paddy Wack) and replacing key words in the song with words having a different ending or middle sound (oral segmentation)

- Dealing children a deck of picture cards and having them sound out the words for the pictures on their cards or calling for a picture by asking for its first and second sound.

Language games that encourage phonological and phonemic awareness have a practical use in the classroom:

- Listening games sharpen a student's ability to hear selective sounds.

- Counting syllables games help students discover that many words are made of smaller chunks.

- Rhyming games draw a student's attention to the sound structure of words.

- Word and sentence building games help students to understand that language consists of words connect to form sentences.

Structured computer programs can also help teach or reinforce these skills.

Daily reading sessions with the students (one-on-one or in groups) help develop their understanding of print concepts.

SKILL 1.3 | The development of knowledge of pragmatic uses of language, syntax, and prose structure

Morphology

MORPHOLOGY: the study of word structure

MORPHOLOGY is the study of word structure. When readers develop morphemic skills, they are developing an understanding of patterns they see in words. For example, English speakers realize that cat, cats, and caterpillar share some similarities in structure. This understanding helps readers recognize words more quickly and easily since each word doesn't need individual decoding.

Semantics

SEMANTICS: refers to the meaning expressed when words are arranged in a specific way

SEMANTICS refers to the meaning expressed when words are arranged in a specific way. This is where connotation and denotation of words play a role in reading.

All of these skill sets are important for developing effective word recognition skills, which help emerging readers develop fluency.

Prompts that teachers can use to alert children to semantic cues include:

- You said _____ (the child's statement and incorrect attempt). Does that make sense to you?

- If someone said _____ (repeat the child's attempt), would you know what he or she meant?

- You said _____ (child's incorrect attempt). Would you write that?

Children need to use meaning to predict what the text says so the relevant information can prompt the correct words to surface as they identify the words.

If children come to a word they can't immediately recognize, they need to try to figure it out using their past reading experiences, background knowledge, and what they can deduce from the text itself.

Syntax

SYNTAX: refers to the rules or patterned relationships that correctly create phrases and sentences from words

SYNTAX refers to the rules or patterned relationships that correctly create phrases and sentences from words. When readers develop an understanding of syntax, they begin to understand the structure of how sentences are built, and eventually the beginning of grammar.

"I am going to the movies."

This statement is syntactically and grammatically correct.

> *"They am going to the movies."*

This statement is syntactically correct since all the words are in their correct place, but the use of the word *They* rather than *I* makes it grammatically incorrect.

Pragmatics

PRAGMATICS concerns the difference between the writer's meaning and the literal meaning of the sentence based on social context. When someone is competent in pragmatics, he or she is able to understand what the writer is trying to convey.

For example, a child sitting beside her mother at a fancy restaurant after her great-grandmother's funeral looks over to the table next to them. She sees a very elderly woman eating her dessert. "Mom?" she asks, patiently waiting for a response. When her mother addresses her, she states loudly, "That woman is old like Grandma. Is she going to die soon too?" Embarrassed, the mother hushes her child. This exchange is a simple example of immature pragmatics. The child has the vocabulary, the patience to wait her turn, and some knowledge of conversational rules; however, she is not aware that certain topics are socially inappropriate and therefore does not adapt her language to the situation.

> **PRAGMATICS:** the difference between the writer's meaning and the literal meaning of the sentence based on social context

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SKILL 1.4 **The processes of oral language development, including production and comprehension of language and the relationship between oral language development, reading and writing skills, and children's thinking and learning**

Literacy skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing develop concurrently (together) rather than sequentially (one after the other). They are social skills that develop because the child wants to interact and communicate with others. Development of these skills occurs during meaningful interactions, experiences, and activities as well as during explicit instruction from observant and sensitive adults.

Reading and writing skill development basically follows two strands – language comprehension and decoding. These strands are complex, involving all the aspects of literacy development. Language comprehension has two major strands under its umbrella: background knowledge and linguistic knowledge. Linguistic

knowledge encompasses phonology, syntactic, and semantic proficiency. Decoding involves both cipher knowledge (based on letter/sound) and lexical knowledge (based on recognition by sight, not sound). This requires proficiency in letter knowledge, phoneme awareness, and the alphabetic principle.

Reading comprehension depends upon two equally important skills:

- The ability to decode the words in the text
- The ability to understand the language the text is written in

Understanding spoken language and being fluent in word decoding are necessary for reading comprehension, which is what reading is about.

Knowing how the everyday world works is a crucial component of language development, thinking and learning, as well as reading and writing development. Comprehension of language and subsequent reading comprehension is based on both being able to use the language and being able to understand the substance of what is communicated. For example, having a schema for shopping in a store enables a child to communicate orally and later in writing about that event. Reading about that event will "make sense" because the child has a schema for it. The same child, with no schema for using a computer, would not be able to converse or write about it and would have difficulty understanding a passage about it.

See also Skill 1.1

SKILL 1.5 The ways in which English language learners, bilingual children, and children with English-language dialectal differences develop and use language

One of the most important things to know about the differences between L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) acquisition is that people usually will master L1, but they will almost never be fully proficient in L2. However, if children can be trained in L2 before about the age of seven, their chances at full mastery will be much higher. Children learn language with little effort, which is why they can be babbling one year and speaking with complete, complex ideas just a few years later. It is important to know that language is innate, meaning that our brains are ready to learn a language from birth. Yet a lot of language learning is behavioral, meaning that children imitate adults' speech.

Stages of Language Acquisition

There is wide agreement that there are generally five stages of second language development. The first stage is "pre-production." While students may actually understand what someone says to them (for the most part), they have a much harder time talking back in the target language. Teachers must realize that if a student cannot "produce" the target language, it does not mean that they aren't learning. Most likely, they are. They are taking it in and their brains are trying to figure out what to do with all the new language.

The second phase is "early production." This is where the student can actually start to produce the target language. It is quite limited, and teachers most likely should not expect students to produce eloquent speeches during this time.

The third phase is "emergent speech" or "speech emergence." Longer, more complex sentences are used, particularly in speech—and in social situations. But students aren't fully fluent in this stage, and they cannot handle complex academic language tasks.

The fourth phase is "intermediate fluency." This is where more complex language is produced. Grammatical errors are common.

The fifth stage is "advanced fluency." While students may appear to be completely fluent, they will still need academic and language support from teachers.

Many people say that there are prescribed amounts of time by which students should reach each stage. However, teachers must keep in mind that it depends on the level at which students are exposed to the language. For example, students who get opportunities to practice with the target language outside of school may have greater ease in reaching the fifth stage. In general, though, it does take years to reach the fifth stage and students should never be expected to have complete mastery within one school year.

Theories of Language Acquisition

L2 acquisition is much harder for adults. Multiple theories of L2 acquisition have been proposed with the more notable ones coming from Jim Cummins. Cummins argues that there are two types of language that usually need to be acquired by students learning English as a second language: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS is general, everyday language used to communicate simple thoughts, whereas CALP is the more complex, academic language used in school. It is harder for students to acquire CALP, and many teachers mistakenly assume that students can learn complex academic concepts in English if they have already mastered BICS. The truth is that CALP takes much longer to master, and in some cases, particularly with little exposure in certain subjects, it may never be mastered.

Another set of theories is based on Stephen Krashen's research in L2 acquisition, which is based on the following five principles:

1. The acquisition-learning hypothesis: This states that there is a difference between learning a language and acquiring it. Children "acquire" a first language easily—it's natural. But adults often have to "learn" a language through coursework, studying, and memorizing. One can acquire a second language, but often it requires more deliberate and natural interaction within that language.

2. The monitor hypothesis: This is when the learned language "monitors" the acquired language. In other words, this is when a person's "grammar check" kicks in and keeps awkward, incorrect language out of the L2 communication.

3. The natural order hypothesis: This suggests that the learning of grammatical structures is predictable and follows a "natural order."

4. The input hypothesis: Some people call this "comprehensible input." This means that a language learner will learn best when the instruction or conversation is just above the learner's ability. That way, the learner has the foundation to understand most of the language, but still will have to figure out, often in context, what that extra, more difficult element means.

5. The affective filter hypothesis: This suggests that people will learn a second language when they are relaxed, have high levels of motivation, and have a decent level of self-confidence.

Teaching students who are learning English as a second language poses some unique challenges, particularly in a standards-based environment. The key is realizing that no matter how little English a student knows, the teacher should teach with the student's developmental level in mind. This means that instruction should not be "dumbed-down" for ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) students. Different approaches should be used, however, to ensure that these students get multiple opportunities to learn and practice English and still learn content.

Many ESOL approaches are based on social learning methods. By being placed in mixed level groups or by being paired with a student of another ability level, students will get a chance to practice English in a natural, non-threatening environment. Students should not be pushed in these groups to use complex language or to experiment with words that are too difficult. They should simply get a chance to practice with simple words and phrases.

In teacher-directed instructional situations, visual aids—such as pictures, objects, and video—are particularly effective at helping students make connections between words and items with which they are already familiar.

ESOL students may need additional accommodations with assessments, assignments, and projects. For example, teachers may find that written tests provide little or no information about a student's understanding of the content. Therefore, an oral test may be better suited for ESOL students. When students are somewhat comfortable and capable with written tests, a shortened test may actually be preferable; take note that they will need extra time to translate.

> ### SKILL 1.6 The major indicators of common speech and language delays and disorders, such as articulation problems

Speech or language delays in children can be cause for concern or intervention. Understanding the development of language in young children can provide information on delays or differences. The efficiency of language for children develops in a pragmatic manner from the caregivers and social environment that they are exposed to during this crucial time of language acquisition. The focus during this period of development should not be on perceived problems such as a child's ability to pronounce certain vowels or consonants (for example, a child's pronunciation of /r/ that sounds like /w/, making the word "right" sound like "white".)

Parents and teachers must understand the difference between developmental speech, word development and language delays/differences that may interfere with potential oral language acquisition. The ability to differentiate between the natural ability of children's language patterns and the delayed development of those patterns should be the educated focus for the adult caregivers who provide environmental stimulus and language experience for children.

The mimic pattern of children developing patterns of language is learned from the vocal experiences of word and sentence usage that they hear on a daily basis. The constant exposure to language provides a virtual *Webster's Dictionary* of repetitive terms and word meanings that children will acquire as their word usage increases exponentially through the developmental years.

Speech intelligibility guidelines provide a tracking of a child's oral speech development. General researchers have shown that the following guidelines are recognizable indicators of age/language acquisition:

- Children at 2 years old should have speech patterns that are about 70% intelligible.

- Children at 3 years old should have an increased 10% speech pattern that is about 80% intelligible.

- Children at 4 years old should have a 20% speech pattern that is about 90% intelligible.

- Children at 5 years old should have a speech pattern that is 100% intelligible.

- Children older than 5 years old will develop speech patterns that continue at 100% intelligibility with increased vocabulary databases.

Given the speech intelligibility guidelines, parents, adult caregivers and teachers are able to track what is normal development versus language developmental delays or differences. If a child is not developing intelligible and recognizable speech patterns at age appropriate development levels, intervention and additional in-depth evaluations will provide the proper tools to address and correct language delays that could have long range impacts on a child's final development of speech pattern intelligibility of language.

Teachers and parents who have concerns about a child's language development should be proactive in addressing language delays. Contacting speech pathologists, auditory specialists to test for hearing disorders and pediatricians to test for motor functioning delays and utilizing other assessment resources for evaluation are effective steps for those concerned about a child's language delays or differences. Early intervention is the key to addressing children's language delays or differences.

COMPETENCY 2
READING AND LITERATURE

SKILL 2.1 The process of learning to read, reading strategies and skills, and the features of children's literature

In 2000, the National Reading Panel released its now well-known report on teaching children to read. In a way, this report slightly put to rest the debate between phonics and whole-language. It argued, essentially, that word–letter recognition was important, as was understanding the meaning of the text. The report's "big 5" critical areas of reading instruction are as follows:

- Phonemic Awareness

- Phonics

- Fluency

- Comprehension

- Vocabulary

Methods used to teach these skills are often featured in a "balanced literacy" curriculum that focuses on the use of skills in various instructional contexts. For example, with independent reading, students independently choose and read books that are at their reading levels; with guided reading, teachers work with small groups of students to help them with their particular reading problems; with whole group reading, the entire class will read the same text, and the teacher will incorporate activities to help students learn phonics, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. In addition to these components of balanced literacy, teachers incorporate writing so that students can learn the structures of communicating through text.

The typical variation in literacy backgrounds that children bring to reading can make teaching more difficult. Often a teacher has to choose between focusing on the learning needs of a few students at the expense of the group and focusing on the group at the risk of leaving some students behind academically. This situation is particularly critical for children who may be at risk in subsequent grades for becoming "diverse learners" because of gaps in their literary knowledge.

Areas of Emerging Evidence

1. Experiences with print (through reading and writing) help preschool children develop an understanding of the conventions, purpose, and functions of print. Children learn about print from a variety of sources and in the process come to realize that print carries the story. They also learn how text is structured visually (i.e., text begins at the top of the page, moves from left to right, and carries over to the next page when it is turned). While knowledge about the conventions of print enables children to understand the physical structure of language, the conceptual knowledge that printed words convey a message also helps children bridge the gap between oral and written language.

2. Phonological awareness and letter recognition contribute to initial reading acquisition by helping children develop efficient word recognition strategies (e.g., detecting pronunciations and storing associations in memory). Phonological awareness and knowledge of print–speech relations play an

important role in facilitating reading acquisition. Therefore, phonological awareness instruction should be an integral component of early reading programs. Within the emergent literacy research, viewpoints diverged on whether acquisition of phonological awareness and letter recognition are pre-conditions of literacy acquisition or whether they develop interdependently with literacy activities such as story reading and writing.

3. Storybook reading affects children's knowledge about, strategies for, and attitudes towards reading. Of all the strategies intended to promote growth in literacy acquisition, none is as commonly practiced, nor as strongly supported across the emergent literacy literature, as storybook reading. Children in different social and cultural groups have differing degrees of access to storybook reading. For example, it is not unusual for a teacher to have students in a group who have experienced thousands of hours of story reading time, along with other students who have had little or no such exposure.

Design Principles and Instructional Strategies for Emergent Literacy

Conspicuous strategies

As an instructional priority, conspicuous strategies are sequences of teaching events and teacher actions used to help students learn new literacy skills and relate them to their existing knowledge. Conspicuous strategies can be incorporated in beginning reading instruction to ensure that all learners have basic literacy concepts. For example, during storybook reading, teachers can show students how to recognize the fronts and backs of books, locate titles, or look at pictures and predict the story, rather than assume children will learn this through incidental exposure. Similarly, teachers can give students a strategy for holding a pencil appropriately or checking the form of their letters against an alphabet sheet on their desks or the classroom wall.

Mediated scaffolding

Mediated scaffolding can be accomplished in a number of ways to meet the needs of students with diverse literacy experiences. To link oral and written language, for example, teachers may use texts that simulate speech by incorporating oral language patterns or children's writing. Teachers can also use daily storybook reading to discuss book-handling skills and directionality—concepts that are particularly important for children who are unfamiliar with printed texts. Repeated readings will provide students with multiple exposures to unfamiliar words or extended opportunities to look at books with predictable patterns, as well as provide support by modeling the behaviors associated with reading. Teachers can act as

scaffolds during these storybook reading activities by adjusting their demands (e.g., asking increasingly complex questions or encouraging children to take on portions of the reading) or by reading more complex texts as students gain knowledge of beginning literacy components.

Strategic integration

In the classroom, strategic integration of old and new learning can be accomplished by providing access to literacy materials in classroom writing centers and libraries. Students should also have opportunities to integrate and extend their literacy skills by reading aloud, listening to other students read aloud, and listening to recordings in reading corners.

Many children have difficulty making connections between old and new information.

Primed background knowledge

All children bring some level of background knowledge (e.g., how to hold a book, awareness of directionality of print) to beginning reading. Teachers can utilize children's background knowledge to help them link their personal literacy experiences to beginning reading instruction, while also closing the gap between students with rich literacy experiences and those with impoverished literacy experiences. Activities that draw upon background knowledge include incorporating oral language activities (which discriminate between printed letters and words) into daily read-alouds, taking frequent opportunities to retell stories, looking at books with predictable patterns, writing messages with invented spelling, and responding to literature through drawing.

Emergent literacy

Emergent literacy research examines early literacy knowledge and the contexts and conditions that foster that knowledge. Despite differing viewpoints on the relationship between emerging literacy skills and reading acquisition, strong support exists in the literature for the important contribution that early childhood exposure to oral and written language makes to the facility with which children learn to read.

Reading for comprehension of factual material—content area textbooks, reference books, and newspapers—is closely related to study strategies in middle or junior high school. Organized study models, such as the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) method—a technique that makes it possible and feasible to learn the content of even large amounts of text—teach students to locate main ideas and supporting details, to recognize sequential order, to distinguish fact from opinion, and to determine cause and effect relationships.