

Circle Time Literacy: 12 Texts a Day + (Musselwhite, 2008)

12 Texts A Day: Background Information

Did you know . . . 'good kindergarten teachers' (nominated-effective teachers) read from at least 12 different texts a day!! (Pressley et al, 2001). This is often NOT true in self-contained special education classrooms. This tip will suggest several quick and painless ways integrate text into classrooms for students with significant disabilities.

The Importance of Instructional Time

One concern for students with complex communication behaviors (CCN) is that less time is available for literacy instruction. Instructional time is frequently lost to other activities such as repairing technology, moving in and between classrooms, toileting, eating, and attending therapies (Koppenhaver & Yoder, 1993). For example, Koppenhaver and Yoder found that three boys aged 10 - 14 years with CCN and found that, during instructional time, the students spent more time involved in off-task activities (34-38%) than they did participating in any single literacy activity (augmentative and alternative communication, 6-9%; writing, 10-16%; listening, 15-22%; reading 23-39%). We must ensure that more time is spent on instructional tasks, while also maximizing 'down time' as much feasible.

Integrating Literacy Into Circle Time / Morning Meeting

Circle time or morning meeting often uses a significant amount of teaching time in a self-contained classroom. Consider how to maximize literacy opportunities, including providing students with repeated readings of the same story, as well as reading of multiple text types. Following are several ideas for embedding literacy opportunities into circle time. Clearly, these will have to be matched to the ages, interests, and literacy goals for your students.

Plan for Literacy: Circle Time Checklists

It will help if you plan ahead to incorporate more opportunities to support literacy in your circle time activities. Here is a sample blank form, plus an example for one classroom. Make it your own, with goals appropriate to your students! Tip, May, 2008

Circle Time Checklist - Focus on Literacy!

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Names 1 st Letter Clap Beats Rhyming					
Day Date Weather					
Song Leader Writing Opps Other					
Story Repetition Comprehension Vocabulary Guided Reading					
Other					
Other					

Circle Time Checklist - Focus on Literacy! 1st - 3rd grade

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Names 1 st Letter Clap Beats Rhyming	Jen Al Mark ✓	R Ellie Marika ✓	Jesus Lil AJ Name Game	Ken Maria KC Giggley	Surprise ✓
Day Date Weather	Jesus Maria Ellie	Randy Ken Jen	KC AJ Al	Marika Lil Mark	
Song/ Poem Leader Writing Opps Other	On Walk Jen animals	On Walk Mark Other critters	Wheels on Bus Jesus Walk animals ABC Song	A Hunting Jesus Walk animals	Kid's Choice KC Valentine Song
Story Repetition Comprehension Vocabulary Guided Reading	On Walk Repeated line Listen for critters	On Walk Echo Listen for critters Caterpillar	On Walk Choral Listen for critters butterfly	On Walk Clap syllables Like - don't like chart mosquito	On Walk Act Out Favorite animals bumblebee
Other					

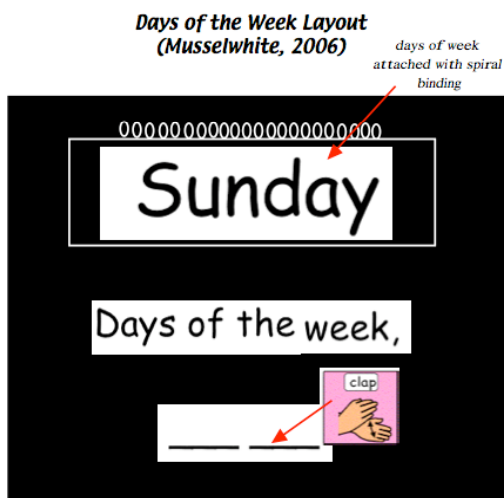
Sample Circle Time Checklist – Tip, May, 2008

Songboards – Symbol Support Text Support

For many classrooms, singing is an important part of circle time. For students who use AAC, or for students with auditory processing difficulties, typical songs may not provide optimal learning. Carol Goossens' developed a range of delightful songboards, providing visual supports for traditional songs (Old MacDonal's Farm, I'm a Little Teapot, etc.). Songboards have become a staple of many early childhood and primary classrooms, providing support for:

- language development
- concept development
- literacy learning

The songboards shown below are from *Singing to Learn* (Musselwhite, 2006). They can support a wide range of learning objectives.



Songboard shows large text for each day of the week



Students choose actions to perform at end of chant

clap	shake	high five
stomp	pat	meow
wink	stop	knit

Goossens' suggests the 'literacy flip.' This means that symbols such as 'clap' and 'pat' have large text on the reverse. For example, Ms. Hendricks notes that Evan has learned all of the symbols for this activity. Today, Evan chooses 'stomp' - Ms. Hendricks quickly puts three words on a choice board, and has Evan find the word 'stomp' in a highly purposeful symbol to word matching activity.

Syllable Awareness Song

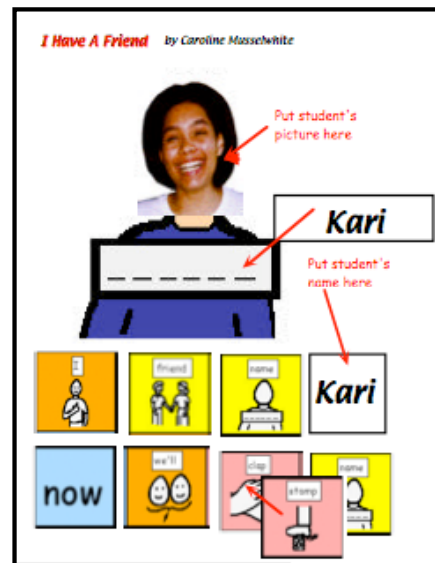
This song supports students in easily learning syllable awareness through personally meaningful text - their names! Students see their names, then get to pick how names will be chanted (stomp / clap / slap).

Ex:

Ke - ri (2 beats)

E - ri - ca (3 beats)

An - gel - i - ca (4 beats)



Name Song

The Name Song (a)
 (arranged by Mary Keene)

clap 	tap 	stretch
growl 	howl 	sing
spell 	tell 	cheer

The name song allows the 'student-of-the-day' to hear their name produced in multiple ways, highlighting:

- syllables
- sound blending
- spelling

Resources & References

Hall, D., & Cunningham, P. (2007). *Month-by-month Reading, Writing, and Phonics for Kindergarten: Systematic, Multilevel Instruction for Kindergarten*. Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa.
www.carsondellosa.com

Koppenhaver, D. & Yoder, D. (1993). Classroom literacy instruction for children with severe speech and physical impairments (SSPI). What is and what might be. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 13(2), 1-15.

Musselwhite, C. (2006). *Singing to Learn CD*. Litchfield Park, AZ: AAC Intervention. www.aacintervention.com

Musselwhite, C. & King-DeBaun, P. (1997). *Emergent Literacy Success: Merging technology and whole language for students with disabilities*. Park City, UT: Creative Communicating.

Pressley, M., Allington, R., Wharton-McDonald, Block, C., & Morrow, L. (2001). *Learning to Read: Lessons from Exemplary First-Grade Classrooms*. New York: Guilford Press.