

SWEET 16 AND NEVER LEARNED TO READ!

Creating / Locating Early Reading Materials for Older Students ***(Musselwhite, 2004)***

Why Not??

Students with disabilities may not learn to read for a variety of reasons, including:

- Language / learning / cognitive disabilities
- Environmental issues (home or school)
- Lack of materials appropriate for older students who are emergent / beginning readers

Do-It-Yourself, or S.C.R.A.T.C.H.: Starting to Create Reading Activities takes Time, Creativity, & Help!

Two approaches for creating age-appropriate reading materials. Each requires the writers to determine text, graphics, and pattern:

Plan A: Teamwork - Creating Stories Based on Rules:

Use readability guidelines (go to www.ira.org, association, special interest groups; look at Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, Chapter 9) or use the Books for Learning Checklist in *Emergent Literacy Success* (Musselwhite & King-DeBaun, 1997, p. 356). Look at the Beginning Literacy Framework (www.donjohnston.com). The R.A.P.S. series was developed using themes that are developmentally appropriate for students ages 8 - 13 (Musselwhite, www.aacintervention.com).

Repeatable Lines: permits ease of learning and insertion of lines via devices.

Rhythm, Rhyme, and Predictability: Consider using a rap style of rhythm, instead of a 'little kid' rhythm. (ex: "Recycle, recycle, do it now!" from *Cash for Trash*). Predictability includes both the language forms (ex: SLOT-FILLER FORMAT, such as "How about peas?" from *Pizza Today*), ACTIONS (ex: each student got ready in a different way in *Looking Great*), and SEQUENCES (ex: a different chore for each day of the week in *Show Time*).

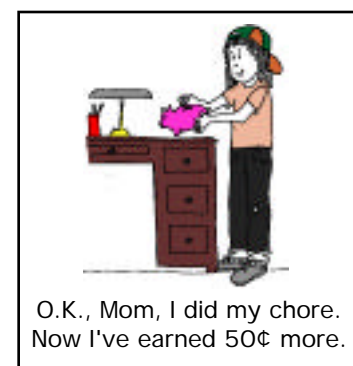
Motivating Theme: This includes funny, surprising, clever elements, such as a "punch line" or "kid's triumph" (ex: at the end of *Too Bad for Dad*, procrastination catches up with Tess "Time to buy the present for Dad. Oh no! My money is gone. Mom's gonna be mad!")

Age Appropriate and Functional: Thus, instead of stories about animals, write stories about sports, hanging out, & video games.

Rich: Write stories that support students in generating extension activities, role-playing, classroom, and community activities.

Incorporate a Plan-Do-Review Structure, helping students with sequencing and planning.

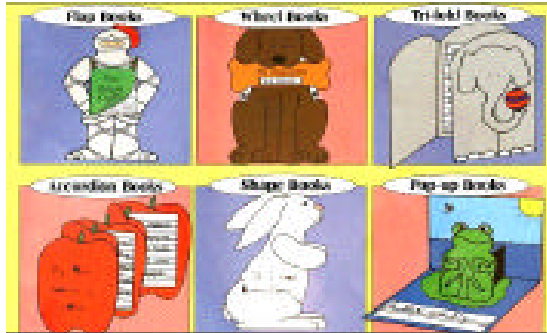
Emphasize Choices, Consequences, & Problem-Solving, important goals for teens!



Plan B: Engage the Students: Create Big Books for Younger Students:

Have your students older students with disabilities create simple story lines that are used with patterned books for preschoolers, kindergartners, or primary special ed students. Why?

- engages students
- authentic writing activity
- reading / writing link (Adams, 1990) as students write books, then read them to youngsters
- modification of "language experience" approach
- puts the 'fun' back in 'functional!'

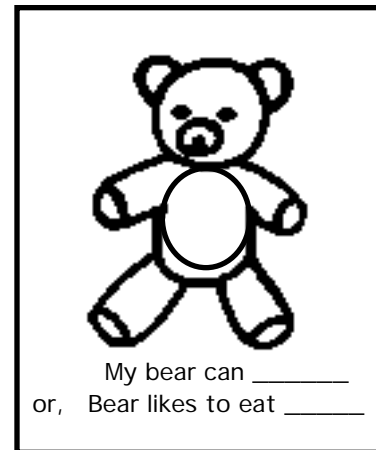


Materials:

Many simple pattern books are available, such as *Making Big Books with Children* (Evans, Morgan, & Moore, 1989, ISBN 1-55799-165-0). See ideas for adapting these flap books for students with disabilities (Musselwhite & King-DeBaun, p. 52-53.)

For students with disabilities, use battery-operated scissors.

Slot-Filler Big Book



Old Words / New Images:

Turn a Favorite Song or Poem into a Story

This approach provides the text, and the bookmaker just needs to devise illustrations that will match. A number of sources for illustration are available, such as: clip art, symbols (Boardmaker software from Mayer Johnson Co./www.mayerjohnson.com/ is especially useful), tear-art, and finding someone who can draw! See ideas for illustrating home-made stories in Musselwhite & King-DeBaun, 1997, pp. 46-47. For photographs, look for webshots. Go to www.excite.com then select photos.

a) Use Song Lyrics: Song lyrics provide motivating text for adolescents and teens. Students will already have developed an 'ear print' for their favorite songs, so will enjoy having those songs illustrated, or just putting the songs into a talking word processor. Consider using IntelliPics also, so you can present the words in digitized speech. The rhythm, rhyme, and repetition inherent in many songs and poems can support emerging literacy. For lyrics websites, go to www.aacintervention.com and look for links!



b) Turn Your Favorite Poem Into a Story!

Poetry books that are especially suited to this approach include books by: Shel Silverstein (e.g., *Where the Sidewalk Ends*) and Jack Prelutsky (e.g., *New Kid on the Block*).

www.gigglepoetry.com - offers numerous fun poems, a section to rate poems, school poems, poetry contest, and poetry writing tips for students and teachers

www.nesbitt.com - presents 40 fun poems by Ken Nesbitt, such as Don't Rat on a Mouse For more poetry websites, use Linda Burkhart's website: go to www.lburkhart.com, then link to Elementary / Student Start Pages / Poetry resources



gigglepoetry.com

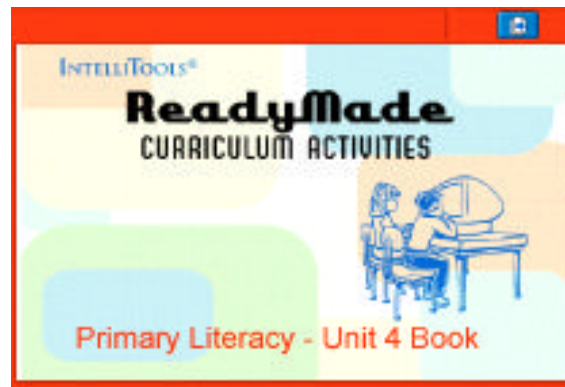
Old Images / New Words:

High Tech Story Starters!

Animated Stories!!



Ann Brundige & Patti Rea - www.intellitools.com



Frog Book Series

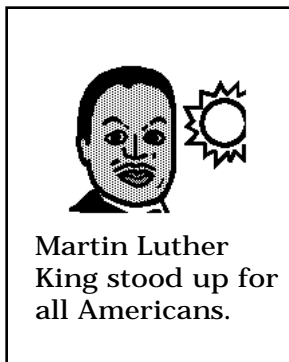


Wordless Picture Books / Wordy Picture Books:

If developing illustrations seems overwhelming, use a wordless picture book (see Maehr, 1991 for an extensive listing). Samples are: Mercer Meyer's "frog series" such as *A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog* and *Frog Goes to Dinner* (Dial). Picture books with great illustrations but too much text can also be used — simply tape "replacement text" over the original text on each page. Go to the local library, or look for suggestions in *Picture Books* by Ruth Culham (NWREL) or *Let's Read About* by Bernice Cullinan (Scholastic).

Calendars to Books!

A third option is to get a wall calendar (preferably on sale after the new year!) and add captions. This is a great way to create nonfiction stories around ideas of interest to your students. Topics might include sports, horses, African-American history, etc. An added bonus is the small versions of pages that can be used on communication devices or alternate keyboards



Magazine to Books!

Magazines often have picture montages that can be used to create quick books. Sample magazine topics include:

- sports (wrestling, baseball, basketball, racing, etc.)
- music (country / pop / rap)
- stars (teen magazines, soap opera magazines)

Websites to Books!

Pick a website with photos of interest to YOUR students. Ex: sports / stars / collections

Just Buy It! Off-the Shelf Books for Older Emergent Readers

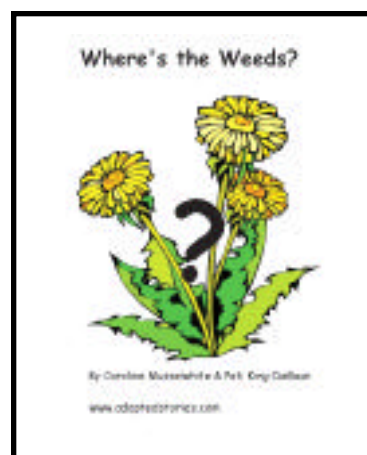
Two series developed for this population are: RAPS, with 10 stories that are developmentally appropriate for students ages 8-13 (Musselwhite, carmussel@cox.net). A second series is Adapted Stories for Older Students by Musselwhite & King-DeBaun (www.adaptedstories.com) A few features of these stories include: **Repeatable Lines:** permits ease of learning and insertion of lines via devices (e.g., "Recycle, recycle, do it now!" from *Cash for Trash*). **Rhythm, Rhyme, and Predictability:** The type of rhythm used in this series is that found in rap music, due to age appropriateness (ex: "O.K., Mom, I did my chore. Now I've earned 50¢ more" from *Show Time*). Predictability includes both the language forms (ex: SLOT-FILLER FORMAT, such as "I like oldies / rap / country" from *On the Radio*), ACTIONS (ex: each student got ready in a different way in *Looking Great*), and SEQUENCES (ex: a different chore for each day of the week in *Show Time*).

Motivating Theme: This includes funny, surprising, clever elements, such as a "punch line" or a "kid's triumph" approach (ex: at the end of *Too Bad for Dad*, procrastination catches up with Tess "Time to buy the present for Dad. Oh no! My money is gone. Mom's gonna be mad!")

Age Appropriate and Functional: Thus, instead of trips to the farm, this older group is going to the mall (*Too Bad for Dad*), grocery store (*Pizza Today*), and an Italian restaurant (*Out to Lunch*).

Rich: with the ability to generate many extensions and applications. For each story, it was determined in advance that a functional symbol display would be generated; for example, the Role Play display for *Pizza Today* could actually be used for shopping for pizza ingredients as well as engaging in role play about that story. Both classroom-based and community-based extension activities were also intended for each story.

Add your own list of emergent stories for older students here!



Just Read It! Reading Children's Stories to . . . Children!

This approach is the easiest. Use whatever stories are appropriate to your student's literacy level, ignoring age-appropriateness for the moment. Ask the student to be a reader to young children, to help them become better readers. This approach can have a positive impact on:

Motivation: students who are struggling readers often feel like they are failing. This approach permits them to help someone else.

Repeated Readings: Students will have to practice reading the story (orally or using a communication device) multiple times to ensure success. The research is clear that repeated readings support fluency, comprehension, and word-solving skills. As Adams says, ". . . rereading [is] a superlative way of refining and reinforcing both word recognition and comprehension skills (Adams, 1990, p. 419).

Reading All Words in a Text: For performance reading, students cannot engage in word skipping, "mumble reading," or other practices that are common to struggling readers. They must really study each word in a sentence, which will support their orthographic processing.

For a listing of storybooks with repeated lines, predictability, etc., go to Julie Maro & Caroline Musselwhite's website, www.aacintervention.com.

