

Reading is inherently a visual act as Frank Smith said " You can't read with the lights out"

"Adequate learning must proceed in the direction of more and more receptiveness to visual cues which must eventually be a critical component of the reading process."

Becoming Literate, p256

Children have been developing visual perception from birth. However the visual perception required for reading is often not well developed when children begin to learn to read.

### **Visual perception of print:**

- A special task
- Involves much new learning
- Takes time and opportunity to master
- Improves with practice
- Challenging when stimuli are new

### **The child has:**

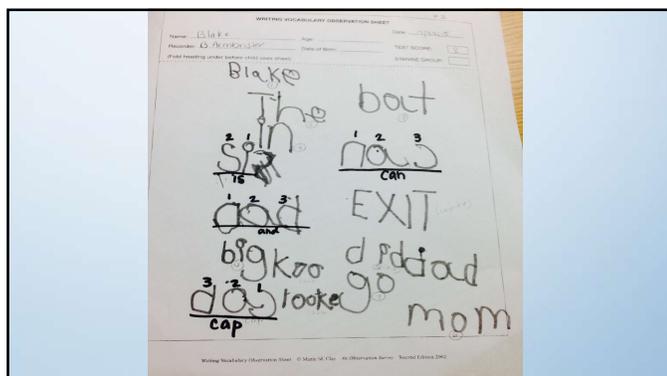
- to discover what information exists in print
- to learn how to search for that information
- to handle multiple sources of information and make decisions
- to work sequentially with sets of information

Becoming Literate p261

### The visual side of literacy

- Locating responses
- Learning to look at print
- Monitoring on the visual information
- Searching for and using visual information while reading

### Learning to look at print



"The eye does not photograph the detail of print and transfer it to the brain. The child must learn to attend to the details in print, respecting the rules of direction, the order or sequences of letters, and the order of words."

Guidebook, p23

### DOS

- ✓ Written language must be read in a certain direction (D)
- ✓ Symbols or letters have a particular orientation (O);
- ✓ Readers must attend to print in a particular sequence (S).

Clay 2002, OS, p. 22

### Direction

An arbitrary but required way of dealing with print;

- at the book level
- at the page level
- at the sentence level
- and at the word level

## Orientation

"One simply has to learn that in the world of print, orientation is of critical importance."

*Clay, 2001, COT, p. 169*

## Sequence

"Visual information is stored in print in a particular order and going in search of helpful information must somehow take account of order."

*Clay, 2001, COT, p. 168*

## Locating responses



Some critical arbitrary learning must occur in relation to direction

- Left to right
- Return sweep

## One-to-one matching

- Clear crisp pointing is the goal
- A principle to be learned- I must see what I say

Children need "to establish one-to-one matching of 'saying' and 'seeing'"

- What would be evidence of this?
  - Not pointing on top of the word
  - Not pointing to the side of the word
  - Not pointing way below the word

Children make the print-to-language link only when they have learned how to work on the visual features of printed text.

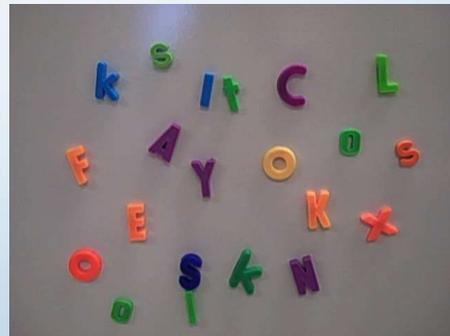
Literacy Lessons, Part 1, p 32

Critical early learning also involves

- Extending letter identification
- Expanding a meagre knowledge of words

### Extending Letter identification

- Things to think about:
- Fast visual perception is key
- A clear board with letters at child's eye level
- It is not about sorting by characteristic e.g sticks, circles



“Show me the stick”



**c a**

### **Expanding a meagre knowledge of words**

- “A glimmer of recognition” is a starting place
- May come from reading or writing early on
- Echoes from one part of the lesson to the other

“Because the child is moving his eyes and fingers across a line of print does not necessarily mean the child is *attending left to right to the letters that make up words*”

Literacy lessons, Part 1, p 12

### Breaking letters out of words

- This should not take long- a few days
- But you will continue to provide models of left-to-right construction for a while before you ask him to make a word for himself
- Using words he knows

**Monitoring using visual information**



We have to get this going early.

### Saying and seeing

- At the text/squiggle level- one-to-one matching
- At the word level- known/unknown
- At the letter level- checking that what you say is what you see in terms of letters

### At the word level:

The child must learn to use known words.

Text: We went to the park

Child: l  
We

What could you say?  
When would you choose to do that?

### At the letter level

Early

Child: Mother bird sees the worm?

What could you say?  
When would you choose to do this?

The learning in writing is a very important contributor to this learning.

Later

- Child: the car  
van

- What could you say?
- When would you choose to do this?

### Cross checking

- An important early behavior
- Involves checking one source of information against another

Child: Father Bear went down to the  
lake  
 river

What could you say?



Searching for and  
 using visual  
 information

### Breaking words apart

- You can break words letter by letter
- You can break words at an inflection
- You can break words into onset and rhyme or possibly in other ways

“The learner who is very familiar with taking words apart *in more than one way* is very likely to show this competence during reading.”

Literacy lessons, Pt 1, p126

Onset and rime is only one way of analyzing a word.

“The aim is to have the child bring what he knows to bear on his attempts to read”

Literacy lessons , Pt 1 , p128

### Taking Words Apart While Reading

- Might be used at any time in any lesson
- Begins **early** and extends, see page 129-131

### Taking words apart early

- What is this about?

### Noticing relationships

Draw attention to first letters:

- Some words start the same way- here, he
- Some words are the same but look a little different- Go, go
- And go beyond first letters to look at confusing words- and/am, this/the

Draw attention to final letters:

- Plurals- cat, cats
- Final letters in similar words- it,in,is

**I think we neglect this work!**

### Taking words apart later

- Adding- look, looks, looking
- Taking parts away (more difficult)- Sam, am
- Adding letters in front- and, hand
- Substituting initial consonants

When a child needs to search for an use information to solve a word saying "break it" is probably unhelpful!

A child was stuck on the word river in the running record

He stopped and then said it is like 'live' but went no further. The teacher told.

After the reading the teacher got out magnetic letters and made 'river' and told the child to break it

He said 'r' and stopped

What could have been another way you could have worked?

"Break it" is problematic.

It leads to dependence on the teacher

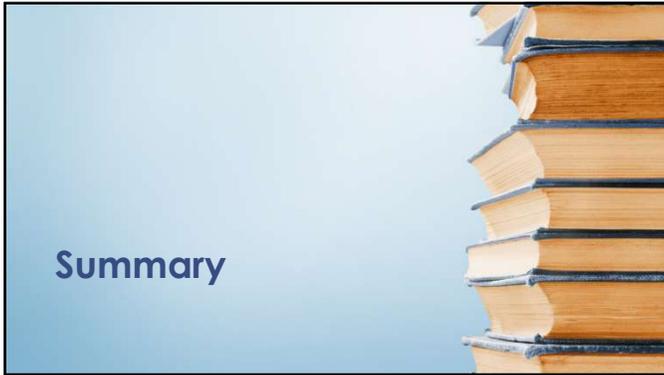
It leads to a focus on the parts and not the problem-solving

It leads child to not search in flexible ways, to think or link or to use what they know to solve

There are many more useful prompts in the book on page 132

### **More about attending to words in isolation**

- Clay indicated this section is not necessary for all children. She said if the child is doing something odd or having real difficulty come here.
- Many useful things in here but much more detailed and specific so takes time



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Becoming Literate, p256

**DON'T FORGET**

**the power of writing**

- Locating responses- where to look, which way to look and what to look at
- We need to build a strong core of known, letters and words that children can access and use easily and fast
- We need to foster the use of visual information as children read, to monitor and search in conjunction with meaning and structure