An Integrated Literacy Program for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities

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Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed:

- What specific instructional strategies can be used to teach visual literacy, including (1) instruction of reading individual pictures and sequences of pictures, and (2) contribute to the research base for instruction of log reading?
- For the sight-word instruction: what is a basis for (1) use of simultaneous prompting to instruction of connected text, and (2) instruction of sequence of pictures based on a strategy that will bridge sight-word instruction to phonics instruction?
- For phonics instruction: what is a basis for (1) use of simultaneous prompting to teaching decoding skills, (2) selecting appropriate phonics skills sequences (3) determining number of examples and levels of necessary and sufficient practice, and (4) determining automaticity and fluency requirements for successful blending of individual words and connected environmental text?

Participants and Setting

- Thirty-six students participated in the program with an attrition rate of an additional 11 students.
- Students were lost because of moving to new schools where the program was not available or because their teacher left the system.
- Participants included elementary and middle school students.
- Across each of the three components the primary criterion for inclusion was functioning at the moderate to severe level of intellectual disability (IQ range 40 to 55), and placement in a class for this population of students.
- Teachers recommended students based on students’ current reading performance and recent past educational experiences with reading. The research team then observed the students recommended by the teachers and assigned students to one of the three components.
- All research activities took place in the participants’ public school classrooms across five school districts. The activities were implemented by the participants’ regularly assigned classroom teachers.

Method

- This research used a changing criterion design and/or ABC design embedded in a multiple baseline design across groups or word sets.
- See curriculum below for content and sequence of instruction within each component.
- Regardless of component, students began each lesson with priming activities.
- For Visual Literacy, an antecedent-response strategy was used along with response prompting and correction procedures.
- For Visual Literacy, data were collected during instructional sessions.
- For Sight-Word instruction and Phonics instruction, simultaneous prompting was used along with correction procedures.
- In both Sight-Word and Phonics instruction, teachers collected data before each instructional session to determine student mastery of objectives.

Curriculum

Visual Literacy Sequence

Sight Word Sequence

Phonics Sequence

Results

Visual Literacy

Sight Word Instruction

Phonics Instruction