

THE GROVE EDUCATION CENTRE



PEDAGOGICAL AGREEMENTS

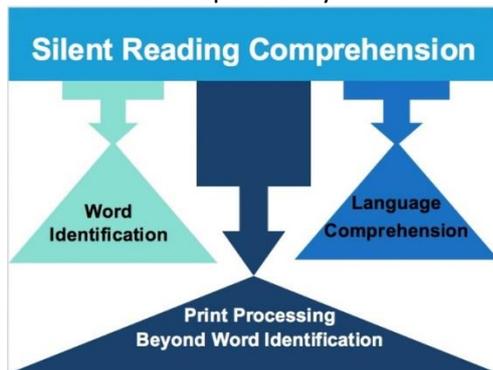
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Conventional Literacy Assessment at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre uses a balanced approach to literacy teaching in all classrooms. At The Grove there are a mix of students who are emergent or conventional literacy learners.

The goal of all conventional literacy instruction is for students to read silently with comprehension and to write independently.



Cunningham's model of silent reading with comprehension tells us that there are three main skills involved in reading.

We use a Whole-to-Part Assessment model at The Grove. This model uses a reading inventory (Basic Reading Inventory by Jerry Johns) to determine which of the three skills is holding a student back from reading with comprehension at one grade level higher.

The skills are:

Word identification - students need to recognise words automatically but also have some decoding skills to figure out an unfamiliar word. The WTP assessment model assesses whether word identification is automatic or mediated.

Print processing – we use a range of print processing skills, like inner voice and eye movements when we read to enable us to make meaning from text

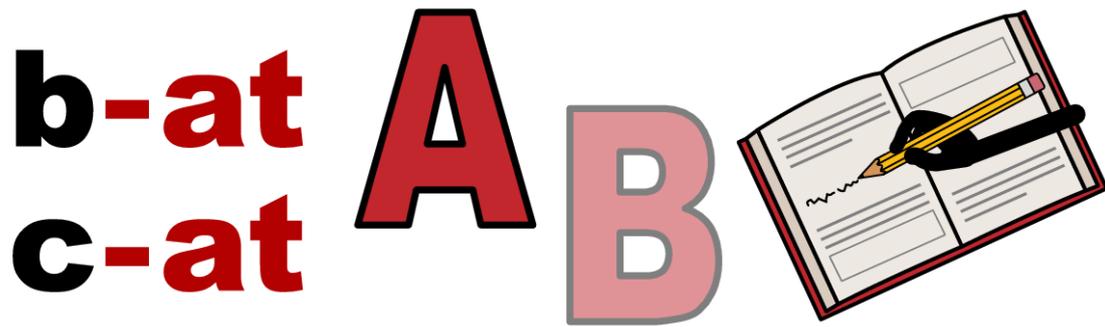
Language comprehension – to read with comprehension requires language
In the WTP assessment, we assess word identification, reading comprehension and listening comprehension.

Assessing word identification is the most obvious – we know that if a student struggles in this area that this is the area in the model above that needs more work. This equates to the working with words block in our conventional literacy teaching.

Assessing listening comprehension enables us to determine which grade level passages a student is able to understand. If they struggle to understand them when we read to them then we know that language is the area in the model above that needs more work. This equates to guided reading in our conventional literacy teaching.

Assessing reading comprehension enables us to determine which grade level passages a student is able to read with comprehension. If they are unable to read it for themselves, but can understand the same passage when we read it aloud to them, then we know that print processing is the area in the model above that needs more work. This equates to self-selected reading in our conventional literacy teaching.

Finally, we use the Developmental Writing Scale (Sturm et al 2012) to assess a students' progress in writing.



Emergent Literacy Assessment at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre uses a balanced approach to literacy teaching in all classrooms. At The Grove there are a mix of students who are emergent or conventional literacy learners.

Within emergent literacy teaching and learning there are certain skills that lead to literacy success for conventional learners (Cabell, 2015)

These are:

- Alphabet knowledge
- Phonological awareness
- Print Concepts
- Emergent Writing

The emergent literacy assessment at The Grove collects data in each of these areas to measure student progress.

If students are unable to participate in formal assessment, then an observational assessment is used.



Balanced Literacy at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre uses a balanced literacy approach to literacy teaching in all classrooms, based on information outlined in "Research-Based Practices for Creating Access to the General Curriculum in Reading and Literacy for Students with Significant Intellectual Disabilities" Erickson, Hanser, Hatch and Sanders (2009).

At The Grove there are a mix of students who are emergent or conventional literacy learners.

<p>For emergent literacy learners we understand that there is a set of skills which lead to later literacy success. Our emergent literacy instruction specifically targets these skill areas. A typical emergent literacy program will include these components, based on the Building Blocks model, Hall & Williams (2001):</p>	<p>The diagram shows a central circle labeled "Literacy & Language" surrounded by six smaller circles: "Working with Letters and Sounds", "Shared Reading", "Writing with Shared Writing", "Writing by myself Independent Writing", "Writing for Teacher writes for students", and "Self-Selected Reading".</p>
<p>For conventional literacy learners, we understand that there are different areas of literacy instruction which may prevent them from reading with comprehension at one level higher. Our conventional balanced literacy instruction works to ensure that each student gets input in each of these areas based on the Four Blocks approach, Cunningham, Hall and Sigmon, (1999):</p>	<p>The diagram shows a central circle labeled "Literacy & Language" surrounded by four smaller circles: "Reading Comprehension (anchor, read, apply)", "Self-Selected Reading", "Independent Writing", and "Working with Words".</p>

We recognise that the 'Big Six' components of reading are an important model of balanced literacy instruction for conventional readers and writers and that many aspects of the Big Six are also appropriate for emergent readers and writers.

The Big Six are:

Oral Language – this is targeted explicitly every day with our Priority of Effective Communicators and our communication interventions.

Phonological Awareness – this is targeted explicitly for emergent literacy learners in the letters and sounds block and for conventional literacy learners in the working with words block. It is also targeted incidentally through many other literacy and

language activities as we are aware that this is often an area that students with complex communication needs struggle with.

Phonics – this is targeted explicitly for conventional literacy learners in the working with words block.

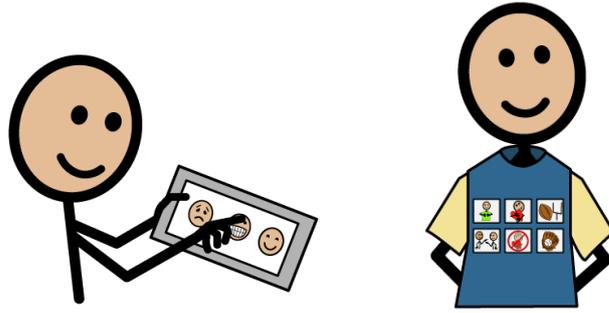
Vocabulary – again this is targeted as part of the school's priority of Effective Communicators. It is also targeted explicitly in shared reading and incidentally in all other literacy blocks for both emergent and conventional literacy learners.

Fluency – this is targeted explicitly for conventional literacy learners in the self-selected reading block.

Comprehension – this is targeted explicitly for conventional literacy learners in the reading comprehension block.

We also conduct annual literacy assessments which help guide our teaching. We have deliberately included both literacy and language on the diagrams above as we recognise that good literacy instruction has a positive outcome on language development – and that language development has a positive outcome on literacy development.

Please note: some students are transitional in their skill level which means they have consolidated most of their emergent literacy understandings and are ready for conventional instruction.



High Tech and Low Tech AAC at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre uses aided language input and output in all classrooms.

We believe that every individual with complex communication needs is entitled to both low and high tech AAC to give them a voice in all environments.

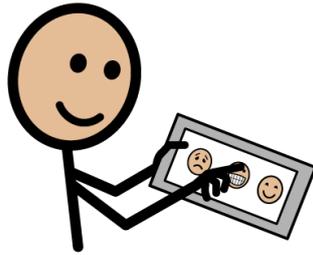
Many classrooms at The Grove use Proloquo2Go. Proloquo2Go is available as an iPad app. There are also some low tech resources available to support its use, such as the Core Board and posters. These are also in common use in the school.

We also model the use of PODD in many classrooms. PODD is available both as a low tech communication book and also as an iPad app.

It is important that each student (and staff member) has access to both low and high tech AAC for a range of reasons. For example, there are times in every day when an iPad might not be available for modelling. This could be due to lack of battery, the environment e.g. during a water play activity, or just because it is out of reach. The low tech boards ensure we still have AAC available at all times without having to worry about these factors. They also have the advantage of being wearable so they are with us at all times.

We also understand the importance of high tech as it produces voice output, enables access to features such as text-to-speech and offers more just-in-time AAC features that let us add vocabulary on the go.

Please note: The Grove recognises that there are a range of AAC options and that different individuals may require different options. We are happy to support any comprehensive AAC system recommended by a speech pathologist for an individual student.



Using Proloquo2Go at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre uses Proloquo2Go as a system for aided language input and output in all classrooms.*

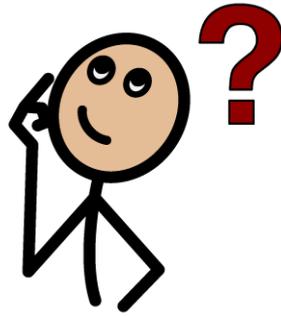
We recognise that many students attending The Grove have complex communication needs. This means that their speech isn't sufficient to meet their daily needs. We also recognise that many students at our school need to build their understanding of language (receptive language) and their knowledge of how language works.

Core vocabulary is an evidence based system for organizing, teaching and using vocabulary in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Systems.** Using a core vocabulary layout in AAC acknowledges that there are a relatively small number of words that make up a high percentage of what we say every day. These are words like “up, in, I, you, go”. Focusing on these words gives students access to vocabulary that they can use across multiple situations throughout the day.

Aided language stimulation is where we use a child's AAC system to talk to them. This is also an evidence based technique that is considered pivotal in teaching and learning AAC. We know that it helps to develop an individual's receptive language as well as teaching them how to use their AAC system to communicate themselves. We also recognise that some students may struggle to understand speech alone. By using symbols when WE talk, we help them to understand what we are saying as well teaching them language for the future.

Proloquo2Go contains two core vocabulary based page sets which can be used for communication – both for us to talk to the students and for the students to talk to us. The school has selected the Proloquo2Go Intermediate Core vocabulary to use both because it is evidence based and because it provides a good platform for using symbols to talk to students – which in turn helps to develop both their receptive and expressive language.

* Other AAC systems are also supported and used when recommended for individual students by a speech pathologist.** Beukelman, D., McGinnis, J., & Morrow, D. (1991). Vocabulary selection in augmentative and alternative communication. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 7, 171-185



Why we use SymbolStix as our preferred symbol system at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre uses Proloquo2Go as a system for aided language input and output in all classrooms.*

The symbol system used within Proloquo2Go is [SymbolStix](#). Research tells us that individuals need to see a symbol being used repeatedly in order to learn what the symbol means**. As we model using Proloquo2Go, and as the students use Proloquo2Go, they develop a greater understanding of the SymbolStix symbols. Therefore, SymbolStix is our preferred symbol system for all communication, visual supports and behavior supports within the school.

You can get more information about SymbolStix at <https://www.n2y.com/products/symbolstix>

* Other AAC systems are also supported and used when recommended for individual students by a speech pathologist** Porter, G. and Burkhart, L. (2010). Developing Habits for Communication Autonomy and Accessibility. Workshop Presentation. ISAAC Conference, Barcelona

http://www.lburkhart.com/hand_ISAAC_B/Habits_for_Autonomy_Accessibility_hand.pdf



Writing Implements at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre recognises that we all use different writing implements, throughout our day. We use different implements depending on the task e.g. email and our situation e.g. in the classroom or out and about.

Australian Curriculum v7.5 (2016)* recognises the need for students to become familiar with different writing implements. For beginning writers, Australian Curriculum gives equal recognition to handwriting and typing. The Grove, therefore, sees that handwriting and typing, or another alternative pencil, should be given at least equal emphasis during writing instruction.

Furthermore, The Grove recognises that writing is a very complex task, involving skills such as ideas, planning, language generation, word selection, spelling, revision, production and letter writing or selection. As writing skill levels develop, most of these writing skills need to occur simultaneously. For some students, it is extremely difficult for them meet the fine motor demands of handwriting when they are also learning the cognitive and language parts of writing. Therefore, where appropriate, handwriting will be addressed as a separate writing task and the student will focus on developing their writing skills with the easiest pencil available to them – which might be a flip chart, iPad, keyboard or other alternative pencil.



Comprehensive Communication at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre recognises that every individual has the right to communicate. * All staff at The Grove Education Centre receive extensive training in best practice in AAC and in being good communication partners, and an understanding that a comprehensive AAC system (e.g. Proloquo2Go or PODD) supports an individual to develop in the four areas of communicative competence.

The Participation Model (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2013) is the current model of best practice in AAC. This provides an overall framework of considerations associated with enabling people with complex communication needs to communicate as their peers do.

Working within the parameters of the Participation Model, we aim to support each individual to be the best communicator that they can with their current communication system. We also provide support for them to reach a higher level of communicative competence, including supporting a system that students will use in the future.

We recognise that there are many strategies good communication partners use. These include presuming competence and attributing meaning when interacting with emergent communicators. We also recognise that aided language stimulation throughout the day is an important technique and that a comprehensive AAC system is required for us to be able to do this throughout the school day.

Finally, we understand that all communication is multimodal and that all forms of communication are as valid as each other – this includes facial expression, natural gesture, signing, high and low tech aided AAC.

Beukelman, D., & Mirenda, P. (2013). *Augmentative and alternative communication: Supporting children and adults with complex communication needs* (4th ed.) Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.