You Can’t Read With the Lights Out:
Teaching Children How to Use Visual Information When Reading & Writing
Clifford J. Johnson
Floretta Thornton-Reid
http://education.gsu.edu/RR/

We have a problem…!
End of Program Status
National Report 2001-2002
60% Discontinued
17% Recommended
16% Incomplete

“Visual perception is hard to think about because it occurs very fast, and it is hidden from sight!”
*Clay, 2001, CBD p.148

“The visual analysis carried out by a reader is one kind of inner control that seems to be either hard for teachers to observe, or easy for them to ignore.”
*Clay, 1991. BL p.258
“Teachers are not trying to develop visual perception; that began in infancy.”
Clay, 2001, COT p. 149

“Where to look and what to look for, how to fixate and move the eyes across print are among the first things a novice reader learns.”

Using the Guidebook

- Where would you go in the Guidebook for a child who only has a few items and no process on the way?
Clay stresses how important it is:

- Not to overlook important behaviors when they occur;
- Not to misinterpret them;
- Not to deny their existence.

-Clay, 1991, p. 156

Children who are learning to look at print (novice readers):

- frequently must be made aware that they have made the error; and
- need to be taught how to solve problems, once they know they are at difficulty.

-Phillips & Smith, 1997 p. 10

Learning to Look at Print

It is important to remember that children may be having difficulties for two reasons:
- They may be paying superficial attention to print; or,
- They may be paying devoted attention to print blotting out access to other necessary information.

- Clay 2001, COT p. 163
Learning to Look at Print

- 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 (emphasis added).

  - Clay 1995, IS p. 21

Principle I: 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, IS p. 22

Directionality

1. Start
2. Move to right
3. Return down left
4. Move to right
5. - Clay 1991, p. 115
Observing for Directionality

nac
3 2 1

Orientation

α α α α α α Α Α Α Α

Sequence

• Letter level: you can put th together but you can put hit together at the beginning of a word.
• Word level: you can say or write the red barn but you can’t write barn the red and be understood in English.
• Story level:
Learning to Look at Print

Teachers confuse… sequence with direction; and the
• difference that exists between sequence and direction since sequence and direction are different at the book, page, and line level.

How do we teach for DOS?

• Use consistent instructional language;
• Evaluate the task and not the child;
• Foster the child taking the action or making the decision.

Teddy
Learning to Look at Print

- The child’s learning will be more powerful if you are consistent with your language of instruction…

- Example: I can jump.
"I can jump," said the grasshopper.

"I can’t jump," said the snail.

"I can run," said the spider.

"I can’t run," said the snail.

"I can fly," said the butterfly.

"I can’t fly," said the snail.
Learning to Look at Print

Evaluate the task, not the child!

• Using magnetic letters the teacher demonstrates making can with the text visible to the child; then, the teacher asks the child to make can (with the text still visible); once the child can put can together correctly, then, the teacher can scramble the word and say “make the word can.”

• Here are some possible behaviors that may occur:

Child 1

• Child 1 puts the n first. The teacher immediately stops the child and says:

  “You put the n first.”
  (This tells the child what he did.)

  “Does the n come first?”
  (This causes the child to look.)
Child 2

- Child puts the letters down in this order:

  \[
  \text{c n} \\
  1 \ 2
  \]

  Teacher immediately stops the child and says:

  - "You put the \text{n} next."
    (Tells the child what he did.)
  - "Does the \text{n} come next?"
    (Causes the child to look.)

Child 3

- Child puts the letters down in this order:

  \[
  \text{c a n} \\
  1 \ 2 \ 3
  \]

  Teacher says:

  - "You put the \text{n} last."
    (Tells the child what he did.)
  - "Does the \text{n} come last?"
    (Causes the child to look.)

Child 4

- Child puts the letters down in this order:

  Child puts the letters down in this order:

  \[
  \text{c n} \\
  \]

  Teacher stops the child and says:

  - "You put the \text{stick} on this side."
    (Tells the child what he did.)
  - "Does the \text{stick} go on this side?"
    (Causes the child to look.)
Relating DOS to Writing

- “Most people find it difficult to think of writing and reading as two different ways of learning about the same thing—written language.”
- “What you know in writing can be helpful in your reading and vice versa…”

— Clay 2003, OS p. 22

Relating DOS to writing

Quantity and quality of writing opportunities provided in the lesson contribute to the progress in writing, particularly increasing and maintaining writing vocabulary.

— Phillips & Smith, 1997

Some things learned about printed language shared by reading & writing

- Moving in a left to right direction and controlling serial order
- Drawing on language information stored in memory
- Making & recognizing visual symbols
- Using visual & sound information together
- Holding the message so far in mind
- Drawing on the known words & structures of language
- Searching, checking & correcting, and…

— Managing to bring these different aspects together is a key aspect in comprehension. — Clay 2003, OS p.20
**Principle II  Saying & Seeing**

- What I see I must say: and, what I say, I must see.
- A child can have the coordination of one-to-one but not have the concept that what you see you must say and what you say you must see.
  - Example: I can jump.
- Unless you have coordination and the concept that what you see you must say and what you say you must see you do not have one-to-one.

**Principle III**

The child must have the understanding, early on, that when you read someone is talking to someone.

- It is important that the child’s first books are books in which someone is talking to the reader.
- Always ask “who is talking?” when choosing a level 1 book. This helps the child control the language and language structure of the book.
- At lower levels we are getting the child to understand the structure of the sentence; at the upper levels, we are getting the child to understand the structure of the story.

**Who is Talking to Whom?**

- Your orientation at lower levels is for the purpose of establishing who is talking to whom.
- Use books that have quotation marks and for flexibility, those that do not.
- Set your orientation up so that it is clear that someone is talking to someone.
Old Tuatara sat in the sun.

He sat and sat and sat.

“Asleep,” said the fantail.

“Asleep,” said the gull.
“Asleep,” said the frog.

“Asleep,” said the fly.

“Not asleep,” said Old Tuatara.

Book Selection

- Be critical selectors of books because book selection is crucial for the novice reader.
- Check whether the language of the book fits the world, the plot, and the story it is presenting to the reader.
- If the pictures or illustrations of the early levels do not match the story, you have got to give the meaning to the child.
Spring is here.
Baby Lamb is here.

Mother Sheep is here.
“Here I am,
Baby Lamb.”
Baby Lamb is up.
Baby Lamb is looking for milk.

Here is the milk.
Here is the milk for Baby Lamb.
Look at Baby Lamb’s tail!
Teaching for Strategies

- The teacher’s task is to teach the child how to solve the problem for himself.
- It is not for us to “fix” things for the child.
- It is important for the child to know:
  - That he is right…
  - That he doesn’t know something…
  - That he is wrong…

Using the Guidebook

- You can examine the Guidebook procedures along these lines:
- Does the procedure require the task of
  - Becoming aware?
  - Finding something?
  - Solving or fixing something?
Monitoring Your Teaching

Ask yourself:

- Am I teaching the child to fix, find or solve a problem at the point of error?
- Am I chatting/talking too much?
- Am I using the prompts in the Guidebook or am I making them up?

Selecting Your Prompt

Remember:

- The prompt will have no meaning if the task is not related to the prompt.
- Which should I choose?

- For example: If you are asking the child to find an error (monitor) which of these prompts in Section 9 of the Guidebook would you use?

Using the prompts

The actions of the teacher must not rob the prompt of its power to have the child detect the error, search and eventually problem-solve.

- Phillips & Smith, 1997
Checking Your Talking
The less chat the better!

Using the Language of the Guidebook
The language of the Guidebook is...

- Distinct and clear based upon best practices during many research trials;
- Prompts action from the child;
- Specific to the child finding, fixing, or problem solving.

Summary Slide
- There can be no reading without attention to visual information. [Having the meaning and the structure isn’t enough. You must pay attention to whether or not what you are reading is what you are seeing.]
- The reader must be aware of who is talking to whom.
- Teachers must facilitate action on the part of the child through the language of instruction. In RR this occurs through careful selection of books, the orientation to the new book, and the appropriate choice of prompts.
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References