

Erickson, K. (2003). Reading comprehension in AAC. *The ASHA Leader*, 8(12), 6-9.

Purpose of the Article: Improving silent reading comprehension has positive impact on all students' success in school, employability, independence, and sets a foundation for lifelong learning. For AAC users, improving silent reading comprehension also enhances participation in asynchronous communication and face-to-face communication.

Background Information:

- 10% or less of all AAC users can read with comprehension above a second-grade level.
- Successful silent reading comprehension (SRC) requires the integration of knowledge in the areas of word identification, whole-text print processing, and written language.
- The combination of automatic word identification and phonics skills is required for successful SRC for people using AAC. As they read they must be able to recognize a majority of the words in addition to having the ability to decode unfamiliar words.
- The three most challenging parts of whole-text processing for AAC users are inner voice, eye movements, and projecting prosody, which means incorporating the patterns of stress and intonation in language.
- Written Language comprehension is the central component that determines successful SRC. However, it is an area that is often given the least amount of instruction and attention.

Key Findings:

- The key to developing whole-text print processing skills is through delivering meaningful, connected text that is appropriately leveled.
- Language comprehension instruction should incorporate evidence-based reading strategies such as Anchor-Read-Apply.

The following evidence based strategy helps all students develop reading comprehension.

- *Anchor activity before reading*
 - Activate background knowledge that is directly related to the text.
 - Provide opportunities to make connections to the text.
 - This can be difficult for AAC users. It is important to provide opportunities for these users to easily access background knowledge.
- *Text-specific vocabulary*
 - Choose academic high-utility vocabulary words that students are likely to generalize and use regularly.
 - Provide students with opportunities to connect new words with their existing vocabulary.
- *During reading*
 - Set a purpose for reading or listening to that will focus the student during reading.
 - Reading can be delivered through any mode: out loud, shared reading, independent reading, etc.
- *Apply activity after reading*
 - Present readers with tasks that are directly related to the purpose that was set for reading.
 - Provide students with informative feedback to let them know what they were successful with and what might be done next time to ensure success.

Application of Key Findings to Boardmaker Instructional Solutions

- **All Boardmaker Instructional Solutions incorporate the evidence-based Anchor-Read-Apply strategy.**
 - Lessons include on-screen activities that activate prior knowledge, setting a purpose for reading, and engage students in an applied writing activity after reading that is directly related to text read.
- **All Boardmaker Instructional Solutions deliver an evidence-based vocabulary routine.**
 - Each solution follows the same vocabulary routine that incorporates carefully selected academic high-utility vocabulary words.
 - Students are given multiple opportunities to engage with, use, and make connections to vocabulary.

Article at a Glance

Boardmaker® Online

- All Boardmaker Instructional Solutions provide levels of support at the activity level.
 - Applied writing activities have three levels of support that facilitate writing.
 - All levels are accessible for AAC users.
- Boardmaker Instructional Solutions are accessible for all students.
 - Utilizing the power of Boardmaker Online and our tiers of support, no student is too low to meaningfully engage and learn from our curriculum.