



Language and Poverty; Closing the Achievement Gap in America

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LEAP LEARNING SYSTEMS

- Founded in 1988 by Catherine H. Gottfred, Ph.D. to help individuals increase their **speech, language, literacy, and communication** skills
- Our staff is comprised of speech/language pathologists and educators
- We develop and deliver programming for teachers and students that enhance spoken communication and vocabulary in the classroom
- Our programs are proven to accelerate academic and social success while creating self-confidence and fulfillment in children, parents and teachers

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

- The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association is the professional, scientific, and credentialing association for more than 130,000 members and affiliates who are speech-language pathologists, audiologists and speech, language, and hearing scientists in the United States and internationally.
- Vision; Making communication, a human right, accessible and achievable for all.

Who are you?

- Where does your family come from?
- Where do you come from?
- What schools and neighborhoods are you in this semester?
- What languages do you speak?
- What languages did your grandparents speak?
- What are some unique terms that your family/grandparents used that you no longer use?

Objectives

1. To understand language and poverty in America: Is it about race, dialect, or which language?
2. To understand the basis of literacy which is language; effects of being bilingual or bi-dialectal.
3. To learn the teacher's role in closing the achievement gap.
4. To take home specific language techniques.

African American English

- ◆ Over the past 50 years, linguists have conducted a great deal of scientific research on AAE, but the public has not been well informed about what language features characterize this dialect and where it came from.
- ◆ AAE or AAVE must be distinguished from hip-hop, popularly used by young people, refers to the mode of speaking associated with hip-hop culture—not the same thing as AAE.
- ◆ AAE has been spoken in America for centuries. AAE is spoken by a wide range of people throughout the United States, while hip-hop vocabulary tends to be specialized and used only among distinct social groups.

Race, Poverty, and Prejudice

- ◆ Video Clip: Do You Speak American? “AAE/Black English History”



Race, Poverty and Prejudice

- There is debate about some aspects of the history of AAE, but researchers agree that its roots are as deep as those of other social and regional varieties of American English.
- Despite this history and linguistic standing, there are often negative social consequences to speaking AAE. Speakers of AAE face discrimination because of persistent false stereotypes, for instance about the relation between academic ability and ways of speaking. Speakers may face discrimination via language profiling, which can occur during phone conversations.
- Not all African Americans speak AAE, and not all speakers of AAE are African Americans. Some African Americans may speak Mainstream (Standard) American English, and some non-African Americans may choose to incorporate AAE features into their speech.



Race, Poverty and Prejudice

- The original Ebonics construct was intended to reflect the multinational linguistic results of the African slave trade. Prior to its coining, no single term described the linguistic consequences of this period in history.
- After slavery was abolished in the U.S., a recurrent combination of racial segregation and inferior educational opportunities prevented many African Americans from adopting speech patterns associated with Americans of European ancestry.
- As a result, generations of white citizens maligned or mocked speakers of AAE, casting doubt on their intelligence and making their distinctive speaking patterns the object of racist ridicule.



Race, Poverty, and Prejudice

- ◆ Video Clip: Do You Speak American? “Ann Arbor Case.”



Moving Forward

- ◆ The pattern of persistent segregation in American society served as a fertile social environment for developing and maintaining a distinct ethnic variety.
- ◆ Many urban areas are, in fact, more densely populated by African Americans today than they were several decades ago, and the informal social networks of many urban African Americans remain highly segregated.
- ◆ Over the past half-century, there has been a growing sense of ethnic identity associated with AAE, supported through a variety of social mechanisms that range from community-based social networks to stereotypical media projections of African American speech.
- ◆ Standard English—have become associated with “white speech.” The development of “oppositional identity,” in which behavior with strong associations with white norms is avoided, became an important part of the ethnic divide.

Race, Poverty, and Prejudice

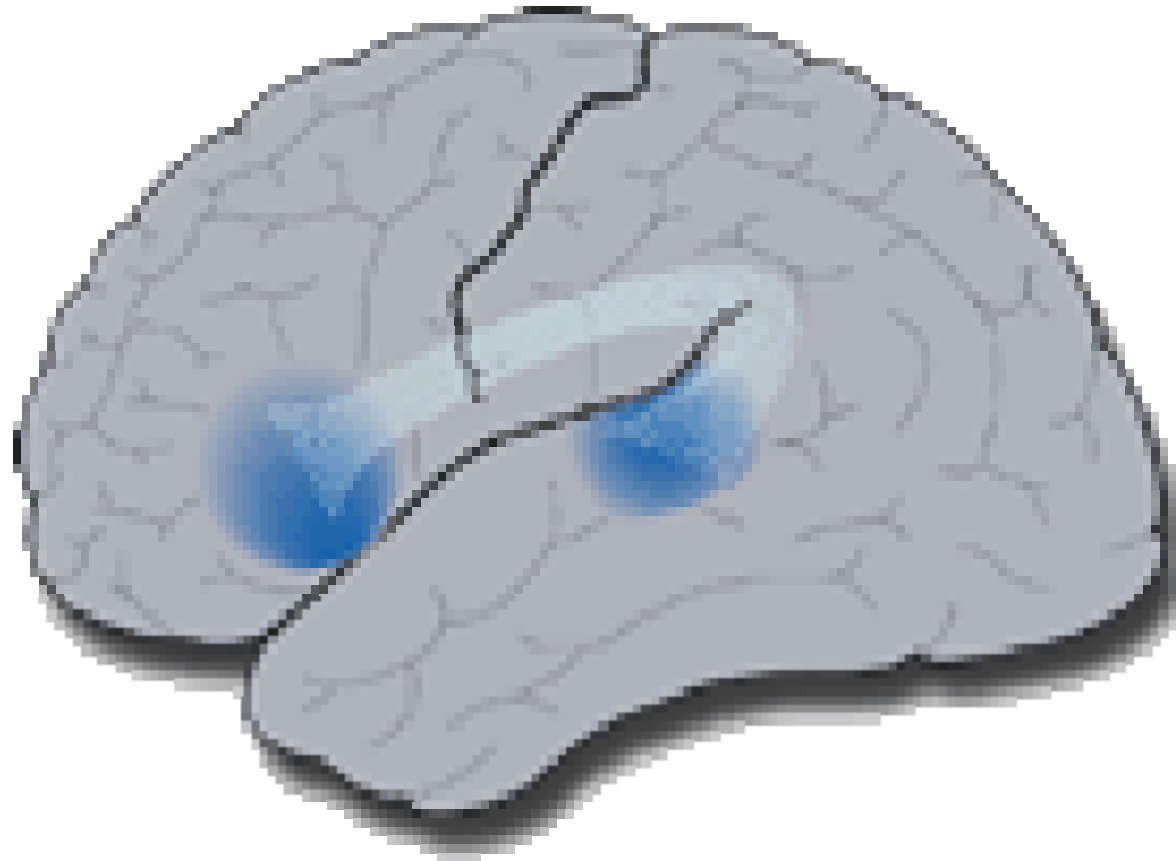
- ◆ Video Clip: Do You Speak American? “LA School District.”

Why Speech and Language?

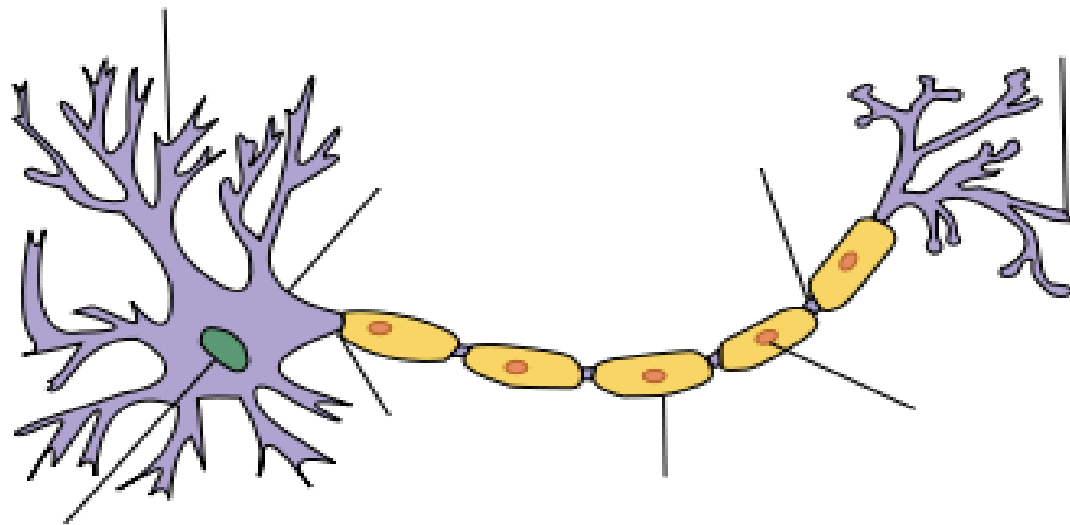
Why Speech and Language?????????

- What is Language?
- What is Speech?
- How do we organize our thoughts?
- What does the brain do?
- How do we learn?

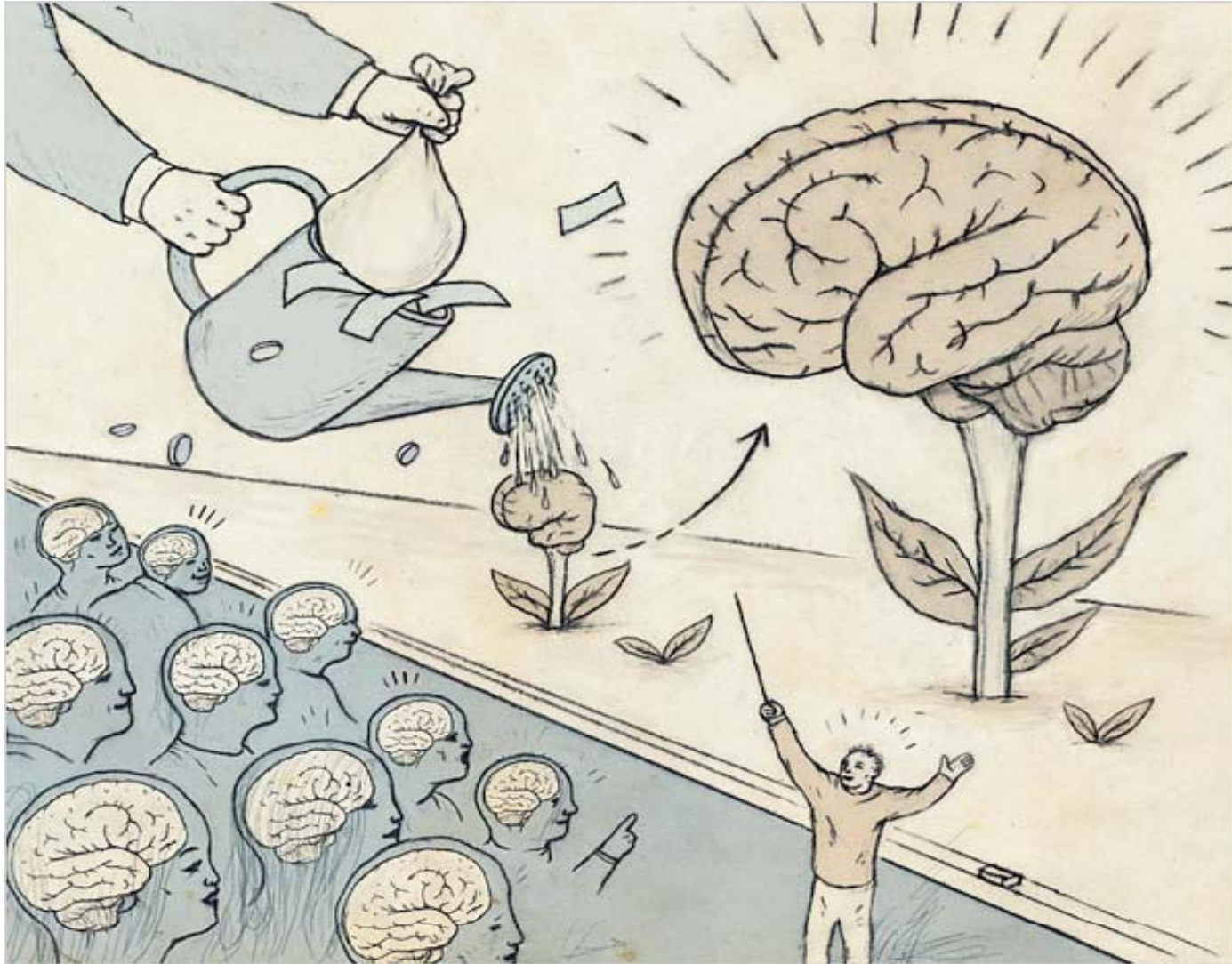
The Brain and Language simplified



Dendrites Are Vital



Education is all in your mind!



Language: receptive and expressive

adapted from ASHA website

Language is made up of socially shared rules that include the following:

- ◆ *What words mean. Semantics*
- ◆ *How to make new words. Phonology & Morphology*
- ◆ *How to put words together. Syntax & Morphology*
- ◆ *What word combinations are best in what situations. Pragmatics*

ORAL means of communicating.

- ◆ *Articulation: How speech sounds are made.*
- ◆ *Voice: Use of the vocal folds and breathing to produce sound.*
- ◆ *Fluency: The rhythm of speech.*

Language and Dialect

- ◆ Dialect... “a particular form of a language that is peculiar to a region or a social group.”
- ◆ Dialect.. By definition is understandable by other speakers of the language.
- ◆ Has its own pronunciation, usage, and vocabulary.
- ◆ Cant/Argot/Slang/Jargon

Working on articulation

- General Approaches
 - Begin by emphasizing sound precision at the beginning of words – p,b,t,d,k,g,ch,sh sounds are particularly useful
 - Move on to sounds at the end of words
 - At the start, overdo your effort – emphasize movement of the tongue, lips, and jaw
 - Then reduce your loudness, but make sounds precisely – see how your voice carries
- Activities:
 - “Count to 10”
 - “I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag”
 - “Across a Crowded Room”
 - “Plurals, Possessives and I Did It!”
- Cues you can use:
 - “Move your tongue, lips – at the end”
 - “Let’s hear the [t] etc. sound!”
 - Play on words

Huh???



Jeff Foxworthy

- ◆ Video Clip: Do You Speak American? “Jeff Foxworthy.”

Dialect



Wade in the Water,
An American Crisis Through
Children's Eyes

<http://www.wadeinthewaterdoc.com>

Social Dialect

- ◆ African American Vernacular
- ◆ African American English
- ◆ Ebonics
- ◆ Black English

What is it? What is it not?

African American English

- ◆ “AAE is a systematic rule-governed variation of English, spoken by descendants of former slaves in the United States.”
- ◆ Craig and Washington, 2004

Characteristics of AAE

- ◆ He ___ dead. ---- zero copula
- ◆ The boy is scream_____ help.-----zero-ing
- ◆ He left somebody book on a step.--- Zero possessive
- ◆ He might _____ been in the car. --- zero modal auxiliary
- ◆ You *ain't* know that. Negative auxiliary
- ◆ And the other people *they* wasn't. Appositive pronoun

Teacher Expectations of AAE Speakers

- ◆ Teachers expect lower academic achievement, reading success, and intelligence from African American speakers of AAE compared to a peer group of African American speakers of SAE. (Cecil 1988)

Dialect and Reading: Future Research

Craig and Washington

- ◆ What are the relationships between a child speaker of AAE speaker and the production and comprehension skills in reading, writing, and spelling?
- ◆ How can early prevention programs bridge a student's heritage, language and cultural approaches to literacy, and the expectations of schools and the curriculum?

Implications of Research on English Language Learners

Stephanie M. Nixon

Peggy McCardle

National Institute of Child Health and Human
Development, Rockville, MD

Kathleen Leos/ now retired

Office of English Language Acquisition, U.S.
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ELL's Increasing % in Schools

- ◆ Children who are English Language Learners (ELLs) comprise an increasingly substantial portion of America's schoolchildren.
- ◆ 2000-2001, ELLs represented nearly 10% of students in the U.S. public school system,
- ◆ 4.5 million pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade students.
- ◆ (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2002).

English Language Learner and Literacy

- ◆ 67% are in the elementary grades,
- ◆ The ELL student population is relatively young and is attending school when reading instruction is a primary academic focus.

Is it a problem???

- ◆ Current demographic trends in the United States indicate a significant increase in the number of children who are bilingual by 10% per year.
- ◆ Mainly Spanish
- ◆ Assessment tools are not normed for this population (Gutiérrez-Clellen, 1996).

- ◆ Typical language assessments rely heavily on previous language experience (Umbel, Pearson, Fernandez, & Oller, 1992)
- ◆ Recent studies with culturally and dialectally diverse groups indicate that processing measures may be less biased than traditional language-assessment tasks because they are assumed to rely less on previous language experience (Campbell, Dollaghan, Needleham, & Janosky, 1997; Ellis Weismer & Evans, 2002; Ellis Weismer, Tomblin, Zhang, Chynoweth, & Jones, 2000).

What should a teacher do?

Laura Justice, Ph.D. CCC-SLP

- ◆ When reading texts, engage students actively in the reading process by using such interactive techniques as open-ended questioning, repeating and expanding what students say, and pausing expectedly to invite active involvement.
- ◆ When reading texts, engage students in *meta-linguistic examinations* of specific words and concepts which may be unfamiliar.
- ◆ Integrate instruction focused on the units of orthography (e.g., letters, words), phonology (e.g., rime units, beginning sounds), and grapheme-phoneme relationships (e.g., phonics.)

Language and Poverty in America

- Language is the basis of literacy.
- Children in poverty often have had fewer words spoken to them, with shorter utterances, and greater numbers of discouragements.
- May not have had the opportunity to learn the school language of negotiation, self advocacy, and prediction.
- May not have had the language underpinnings of math and science.

Language of Poverty; Poverty of Language

- ability to Problem Solve
- ability to Get along with others
- ability to Future
- ability to Self advocate
- ability to Understand
- ability to Negotiate
- ability to Read

The readiness gap of high needs children

Number of words heard

By age 5, the child of a parent who is language focused has heard 50,000,000 words spoken as opposed to the child of a parent who is not language focused. That child has only heard 10,000,000 words (Hart and Risley, 1995).

Which language or how much language?

Children from CLD backgrounds may perform more poorly on standardized measures relative to mainstream children because of variations in life experience, socialization practices, and early literacy experiences (Stockman, 2000).

It is a World of Words

Variety of words heard

- Children from low language resource backgrounds hear only the most commonly occurring words. (Wietz,2001).
- All children need exposure to high-interest, less frequent words.

What is smart?

Content bias occurs;

✓ when test stimuli, methods, or procedures reflect the assumption that all children have been exposed to the same concepts and vocabulary or have had similar life experiences. (Washington, 1996)

✓ familiar interaction patterns in mainstream culture are not the same in minority culture.

(Boykin, 1977; van Kleeck, 1994; Wyatt, 1995)

- ◆ <http://www.coolopticalillusions.com/eye-tricks/optic-pictures/people-columns-pic.jpg>

The Readiness Gap

Listening to language is not always a positive experience

Children from low language resource backgrounds hear 75% fewer encouragements than high language resource background children do. (Hart and Risley, 1995)

Time spent with reading experiences

Prior to kindergarten a child from a low reading resource background averages a total of 25 home hours spent in reading experiences as opposed to high language resource background children who average 1,000 home hours. (Whitehurst, 1997)

To Be A Skilled Reader

1. You can decode and assemble words from their constituent parts.
2. You can do so fluently enough that your reading speed does not tax your working memory.
3. You can rely on your knowledge of word roots, prefixes, grammar (i.e. a preposition is unlikely to precede a verb, an adjective nearly always precedes a noun, and always refers to a noun, etc.), possible alternative word meanings, homonyms and homophones,

To Be A Skilled Reader

4. You can determine the immediate context of the sentence (i.e. Chinese head seeks arms).
5. You can determine the intentional context of the sentence (what the writer is referring to immediately).
6. You can determine intention of the writer (i.e. what they want you to think about the context they chose).
7. You can evaluate the context chosen by the writer.

Academic effects of reduced language engagement

- Little prior knowledge of sound/letter relationships.
- Decreased alphabet knowledge, print awareness, the purposes of reading, and general verbal skills (vocabulary conversation). (Whitehurst et al, 2006. Follow up: Chicago Early Childhood Centers)
- 80% of kids entering the system at risk never catch up
 - More than 25% referred to special education
 - More than 50% drop out of high school
 - In Chicago, only 6 of 100 high schoolers that graduate will receive a college degree

More basic vocabulary facts

- In exciting, stimulating classrooms and homes, children can learn up to 8 new words per day.
- Children in many settings hear only the most commonly occurring words (Wiezman, 2001), yet we know that children need exposure to high-interest, less frequent words.
- High quality preschools, where teachers dialogue with children, are crucial.
- Vocabulary assessed in first grade, predicted over 30% of reading comprehension variance in 11th grade (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1977).

Reading Predictors

- Phonological competence
- Quality of adult/child word play
- Well developed oral language base
- Availability of print/print knowledge
- Explicit connections between print and experiences
- Adult reading models/adult/child reading experiences

(Senechal, Tomblin, Snow, Storch and Whitehurst)

Five Pillars of Literacy Instruction

An independent reader

Comprehension

Vocabulary

Fluency

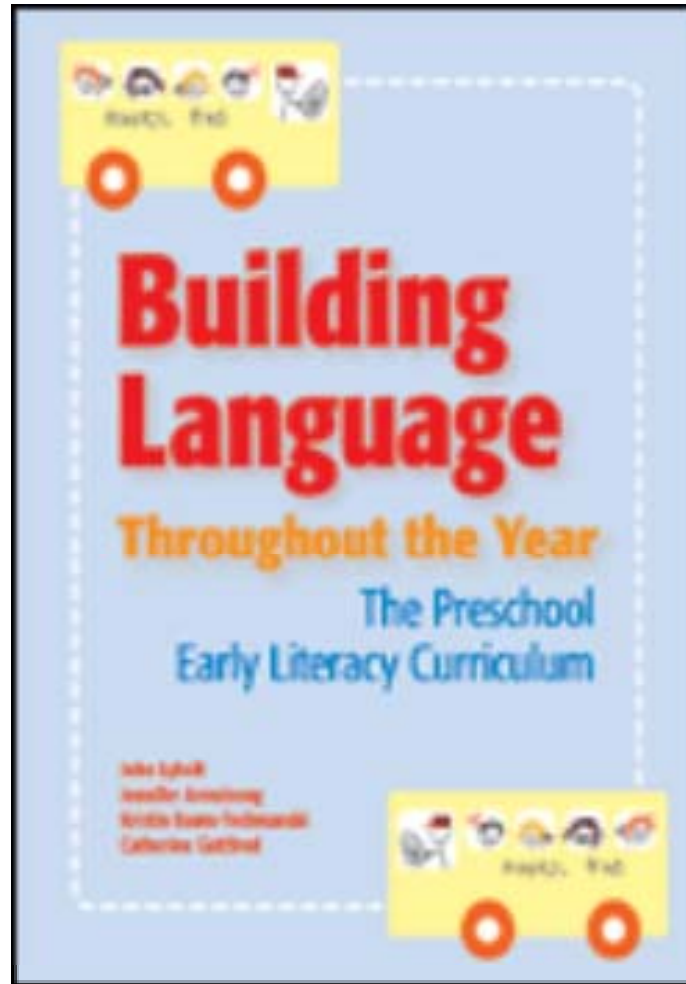
Phonemic
Awareness

Phonics

Language Techniques that: Support the Five “Pillars” of Literacy

- Build associations among concepts and content
- Use open-ended questions in conversation
- Build new hands-on vocabulary and concepts
- Engage prior knowledge
- Use talk-alongs and think-alouds
- Repeat/Model/Expand
- Rhyme, Rhythm, Repetition

PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS



LEAP Language Techniques

- Repeat Model Expand
- Talk Alongs
- Think Alouds
- Open Ended Sentences
- Ands, Ifs AND Buts
- Rhyme, Rhythm, and Repetition



Ands, Ifs, AND Buts

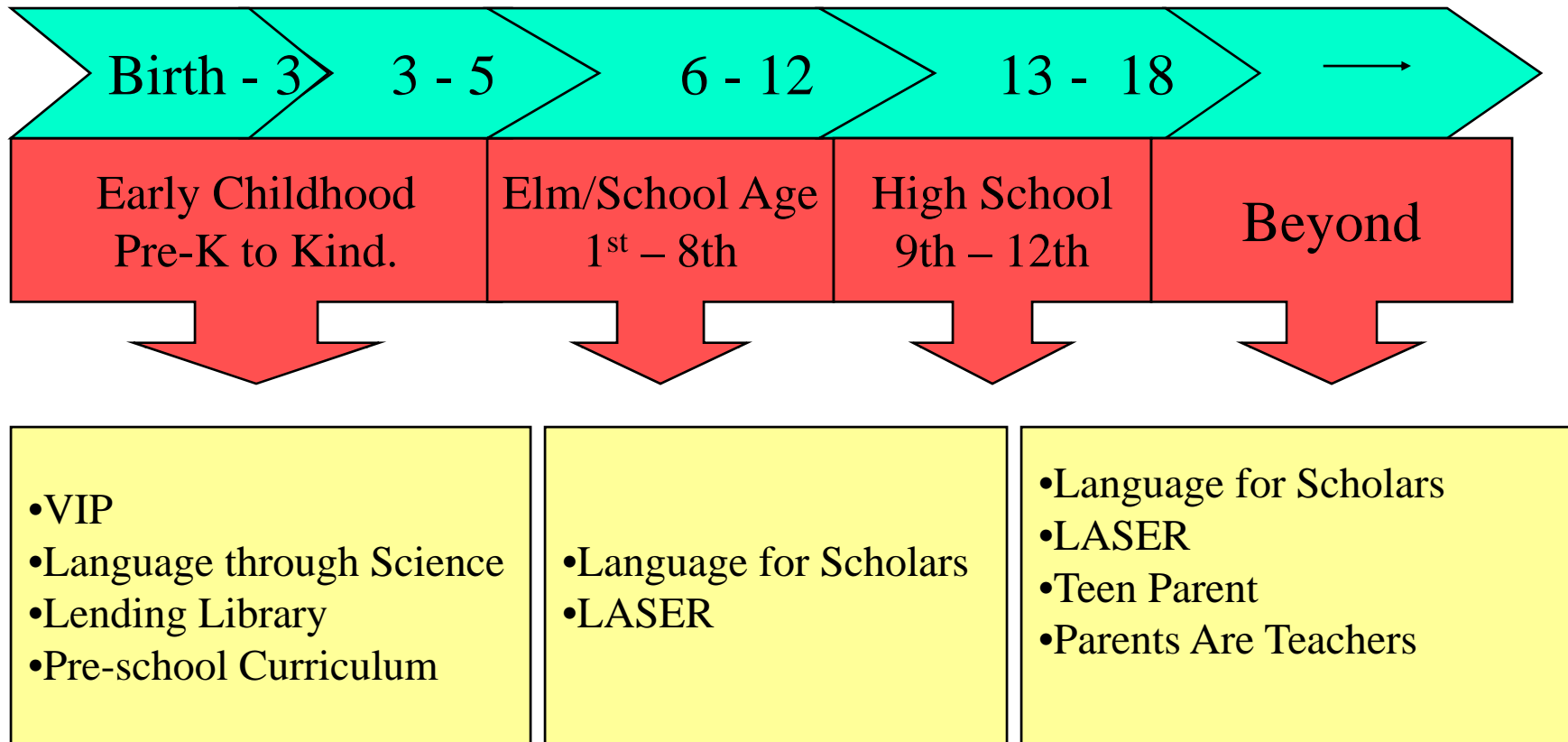
- Complex Sentences; Use them!!
 - And
 - If
 - But
 - Because
 - Then
 - When

The “Scientific Process” as found in the preschool classroom

Scientific process check list:

- Observing, (watching)
- Hypothesizing, (wondering)
- Gathering data, (exploring)
- Analyzing, (think/talk about what happened)
- Conclusions, (why or how did it work?)
- Publishing, (show and tell)
- Replicating an experience, (Yahoo! I did it. Do it again.)
- Predicting future outcomes, (what will happen if I change it? Will it happen again?)

LEAP Programs



Filling in the Blanks

- Chinese Head seeks arms. -ambiguity; background information
- Colorless green ideas sleep furiously. -ideas and relationships, not grammar
- The witness reported seeing the argument between two parked cars. -context
 - He gave the girl that he met in Chicago while visiting his parents for ten days around Christmas the candy. –memory, phrase and word relationships, (unwillingly) uh –oh, a brain wave trace.
- *He gave candy to the girl that he met in Chicago while visiting his parents for ten days around Christmas.*

Words are Tools©



Words to leave with you

“Children learn best when they are allowed to sift life’s experiences through their fingers.”

J.T. Lybolt (2007)



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Questions?



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