







Alternate Pencils: Why Bother??






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Writing is Important

- Writing is a window into a child’s current understandings.
- Students who write become better readers, writers, and thinkers
- Some children may learn to access written communication via writing where others may learn to access spoken communication via writing.
- Writing is a form of communication
- Children with significant disabilities benefit from the SAME literacy experiences and instructional approaches use with typ. dev. children

What do we do with typically developing children to support literacy

Conditions of Literacy Learning (Cambourne 1993, 2003)

- High Expectations
- Active engagement: Freedom to experiment in order to become problem solvers
- Approximations/errors are accepted and celebrated
- Load of modeling – 24/7 immersion
- More knowledgeable other
- Foster rich social interactions (lots of talk and fun!)
- Attribute meaning to ALL attempts
- Celebration of attempts

We need to recognize what we are doing so we can create the same interactions and experiences for OUR students

Writing Is NOT....

- **Copying** – this is a fine motor task that does not facilitate the process of writing
 - Copying is about forming letters
 - Copying does NOT
 - Teach that print has meaning
 - Teach WHY people write
 - Teach what it means to be a writer
 - Teach a student how to think like a writer
- **Tracing** – this is another fine motor task that does not facilitate the process of writing
- **Chunked messages** – using a name stamp is a matching task, pressing a button to reveal a pre-stored message is a starting place not a product of writing.

Writing Involves

- Active construction of print
- Independent attempts
- Mental engagement

Goal of Writing Instruction

- Construction of meaning through text is the ultimate goal of writing instruction
- Subskills such as spelling, handwriting or typing, punctuation, and grammar usage are important but their importance is determined by how much they assist the writer in composing meaningful text.

Writing Instruction

- Should include opportunities for every child to observe someone modeling the use of THEIR pencil within the context of meaningful social interactions.
- Should include some systematic instruction
- Should include opportunities every day for each child to construct their own writing (exploration and active construction)– independent of prompts, support, and assistance and without standards.

Alternative Pencils

- For students who can not independently access traditional writing utensils, we must consider alternatives.
- Anything that provides the student with access to **ALL 26** letters of the alphabet
- Pick a “pencil” that has the least brainpower going to form so you can focus on the function of writing.
 - With limited, unreliable movements, pick one that has the most potential to develop
- Students **do not** need to demonstrate the physical ability to use an alternative pencil in order to get one.
- Students **do not** need to know their letters or colors to start using an alternative pencil (even the color coded eye gaze frame!)
- Students learn about pencils and letters **BY WRITING**. Early writing is a PERFECT way to work on motor skills and letter knowledge

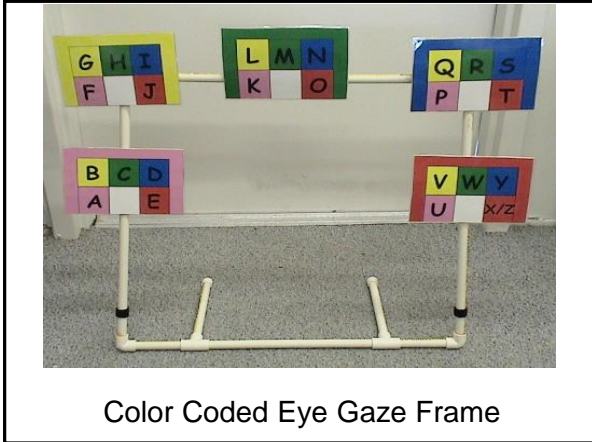
Alternative Access

- Alternative Access should not change the fundamental nature of the activity
- Alternative Access should not make the activity more difficult
- Alternative Access should not make the activity less desirable for the child to achieve the desired opportunities.
- Ask yourself, “What is the **opportunity** I am trying to provide? NOT “What is the **skill** I want the child to practice.”

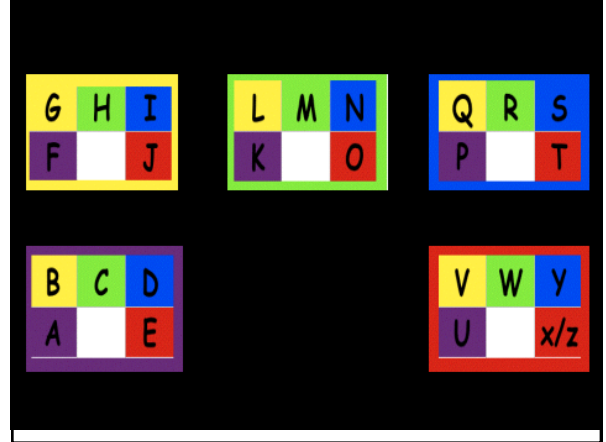
Who does NOT need an Alternative Pencil?

- The “can but won’t”
- These students need more motivating, real world – REASONS to engage in writing.
- Also, it is important to realize that although some children MIGHT be able to physically hold a pencil – this might not be the best solution for them (for many reasons).

Which One Do I choose?



Color Coded Eye Gaze Frame



Tactile Intellikeys Overlay

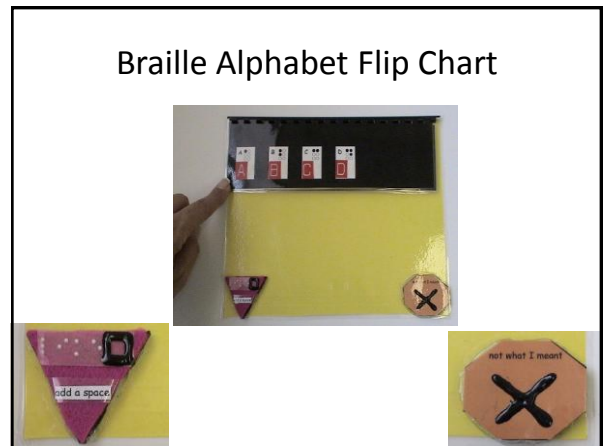
Tactual Symbol Set

(By Hanser, 2004, Adapted from Texas School of the Blind, Maryland School for the Blind and Goosens and Crain)

Function	Shape	Texture	Color
Pronouns/WH words	Hexagon	Laminate	Orange
Verbs	Triangle	Felt	Pink
Adjectives	Heart	Bumpy	Blue
Nouns	Square	Smooth	Yellow



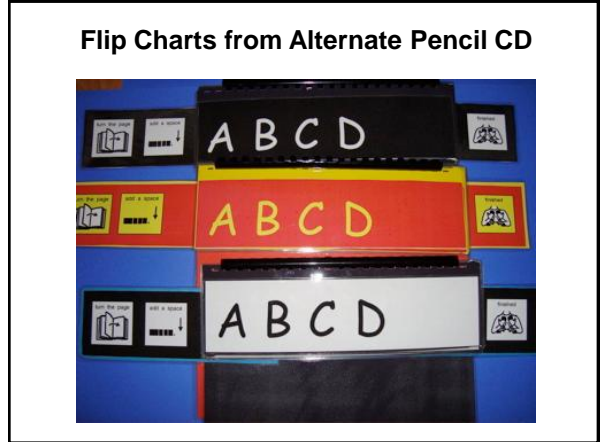
Print Alphabet Flip Chart



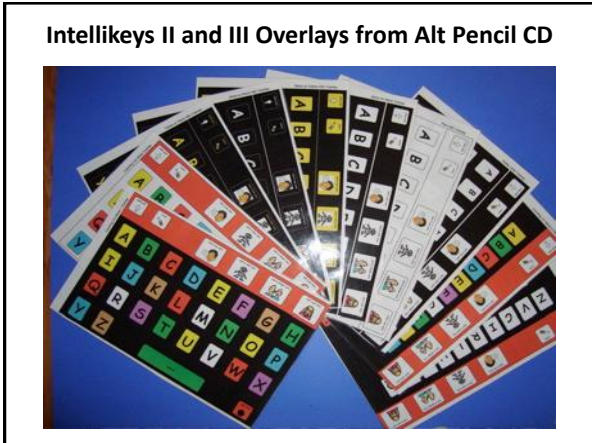
Braille Alphabet Flip Chart



Braille Alphabet IntelliKeys Overlay



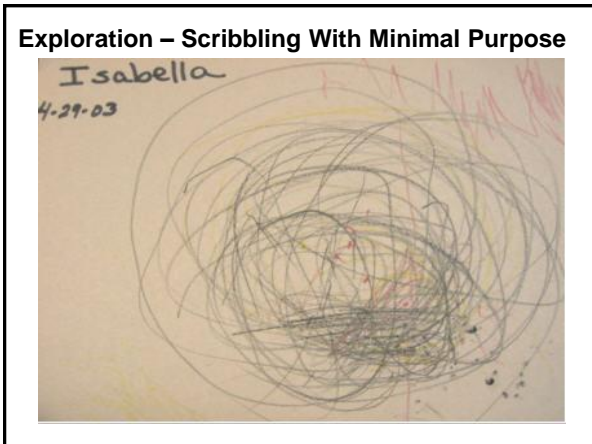
Flip Charts from Alternate Pencil CD



Intellikeys II and III Overlays from Alt Pencil CD

Knowing the Next Step helps to move just One Step Closer

- It's important to recognize early proto-types of reading/writing/communicating so that you can begin to foster the "next" step.
- Bridge – alternative portfolio assessment
 - Pierce, Summer, O'DeKirk, in progress
 - Writing
 - Exploration
 - Uses with beginning purpose
 - Explores with greater purpose
 - Looks different from drawing
 - Letter-like
 - Disconnected scribble with letter-like forms
 - Recognizable letters
 - Invented spelling
 - Groups of words/single sentences
 - Two or more sentences
 - Narratives



Exploration – Scribbling With Minimal Purpose



Scribbling With Greater Purpose

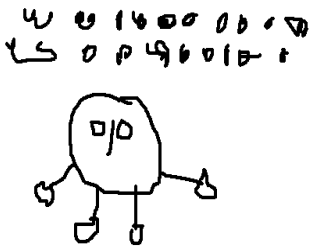
Drawing And Writing Are The Same



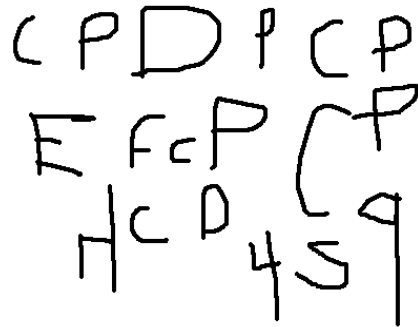
Looks Different From Drawing – Letter Like



Disconnected Scribble With Letter Like Forms

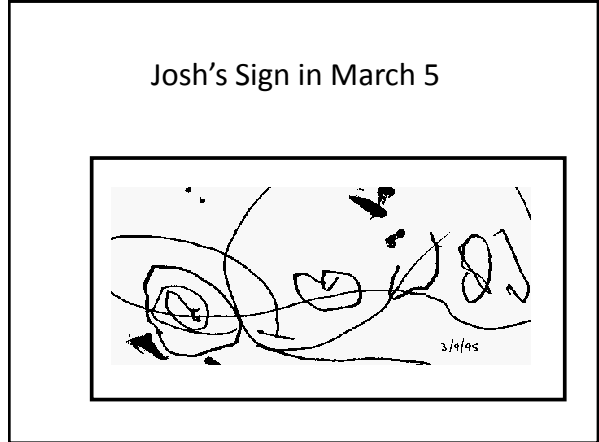
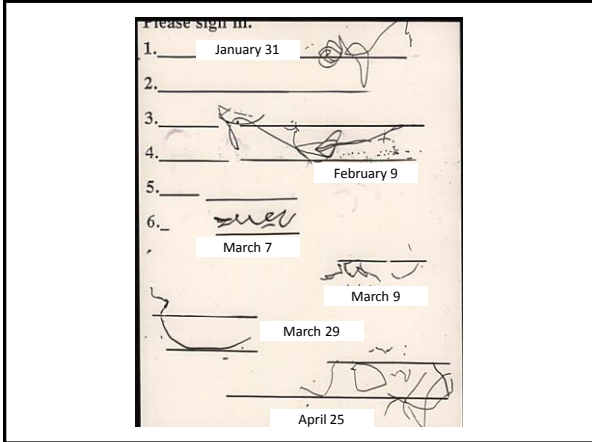


Letter Like And Recognizable Letters



What is the expectation?

- “Scribble” will look different when using an alternative pencil. It is not so much about how the actual letter is formed but more so how the student is interacting with the pencil-facilitator-activity and their attention to the task; as well as subtle changes in these two over time.



With Lots of Opportunity –
Change Occurs!

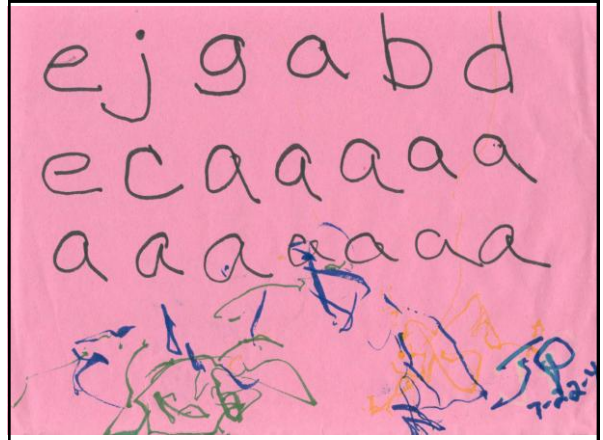
- Meet Jake**
- Began working with the CLDS through DB Project at 15 years of age
 - No formal means of communication
 - Efforts began with identifying a means of communication and a tool for writing.
 - Started with simple flip chart
 - Progressed to 2-switch partner assisted scanning

Jake's Remnant Journal:
Going to the Movies

aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaabbbbbbb
 cccccceeeeeeeeeeeeeee
 fgggggiiiijjkkmooqtxxxxx
 xxy

Jake and the Bug that Ruled Mom's Kitchen

aaaaabbbbbbbce
ggiiijklpppxz



Home Journal Entry: December, 2005
Topic: My New Remote Control Dinosaur

ac dad jk kk m m r r rs u u uwz
begh jj j m vv w

Opportunity Once Again Leads to
Meaningful Change!

Meet Matthew

Began working with the CLDS
through DB Project at 10
years of age

Minimal communication
system (15-20 crude signs,
single message device, and
frequently thrown 8-
location AAC device.

Efforts began with
identifying means for
writing!



Matthew explores his new pencil....

View at

<http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/projects/north-carolina-deaf-blind-project/db-case-studies/matthews-story-1/matthews-story>



June 2004

