

ATTAINMENT'S

# Early Literacy

# SKILLS BUILDER

for OLDER STUDENTS

## Teacher's GUIDE



Diane Browder  
Susan Gibbs • Lynn Ahlgrim-Delzell  
Ginevra Courtade • Angel Lee

### **Early Literacy Skills Builder for Older Students Flash Drive**

The flash drive contains printable PDF files of resources and a file for creating cards. PDF Reader and Word software are required to view and use these files.



# **Early Literacy Skills Builder for Older Students**

## **Sam Stories**

### **Teacher's Guide**

**Diane Browder • Susan Gibbs • Lynn Ahlgrim-Delzell • Ginevra Courtade • Angel Lee**

**Editing** Linda Schreiber

**Graphic design** Elizabeth Ragsdale

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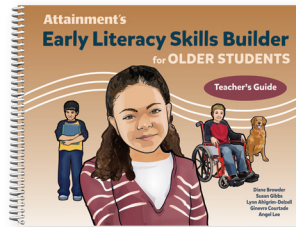
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# ELSB for Older Students: Sam Stories Inventory

**Early Literacy Skills Builder (ELSB) for Older Students: Sam Stories** is a software-based curriculum. You will have everything you need to get started developing early literacy skills for your older students who have not yet developed them.

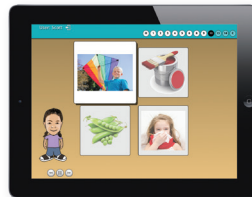
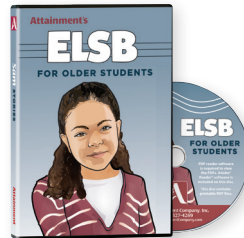
## Teacher's Guide

The **Teacher's Guide** describes the underlying principles of the curriculum, the scope and sequence of *ELSB for Older Students*, how to use the curriculum, and the background and research supporting the curriculum. It also includes samples of the scripts used to teach objectives and includes reproducible pages for extension activities.



## ELSB Software/iPad app

The Sounds and Symbols component of *ELSB for Older Students: Sam Stories* is presented via software and/or use of an iPad app. The software provided is Win/Mac compatible. For iPad users, a redemption code is provided to allow downloading of the *ELSB for Older Students: Sam Stories* app from the App Store. A printable User Guide is included in the software and the iPad app and should be reviewed for best use of these electronic programs.



## Electronic Files on Flash Drive

Several teaching resources are provided on the flash drive included with this *Teacher's Guide*.



- PDF files of the **Sam Stories** book and the appendixes in this *Teacher's Guide* are provided. The files come with a Classroom License for printouts and are provided for easy and convenient printing.
- PNG files of original art from the book **Sam Stories** are also included on the flash drive. The illustrations can be printed and used for multiple purposes: decorating bulletin boards, adding to letters for families, making mini "Sam" books, creating activity pages, designing scrapbooks about Sam, etc. They can also be used to add images to a student's AAC device. An index is provided on the flash drive to help you choose the best illustration for your purposes.
- A blank card template (Blank Card Template.docx) is provided for creating response options if you choose to complete some activities in print form. This document is provided as a Word document (you must have Word to read and use this file).
- PDF files of the response options included in the software/app if you choose to complete some activities in print form (Level X Print Cards.pdf). These files will print as full pages of response options found in the software/app.



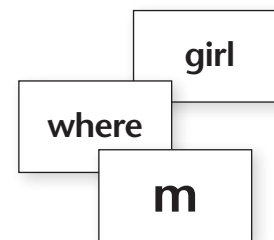
## Spiralbound Book, *Sam Stories*

The spiralbound book—*Sam Stories*—includes 14 stories, two stories per level. *Sam Stories* are an integral part of lessons in all levels. The stories are read to the student online, followed by comprehension and print awareness activities. However, at times, students may want to hear you read the print version or may want to follow along in the print version as a story is read in the software/iPad app.



## Sight Word and Letter-Sound Cards

Cards for 15 sight words and 13 lower-case alphabet letters (*a, i, o, u, h, t, s, m, g, r, f, l, and d*) are provided. Though the sight words and letter-sounds are practiced in the software/iPad app, the cards are provided in the event you would like to conduct additional practice using a print version.



# Overview of ELSB for Older Students: Sam Stories

*Early Literacy Skills Builder (ELSB) for Older Students: Sam Stories* is a preliteracy curriculum written for upper elementary or secondary students with significant developmental disabilities who have not yet acquired foundational literacy skills such as conventions of print, early stages of phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and some sight word vocabulary. *ELSB for Older Students* is appropriate for students who have a moderate-to-severe intellectual disability or multiple disabilities, and for some students who have autism.

This curriculum is primarily a software-delivered curriculum; however, sample scripts and some print components are also provided, so if desired, students can participate in portions of the curriculum using print materials. In addition to the skills being taught via software/iPad app, teachers are encouraged to conduct “Read Aloud” lessons using grade-appropriate adapted text to help students apply newly learned skills.

A unique feature of *ELSB for Older Students* is that the star of the program is an adolescent girl, named Sam. Older students will relate to Sam and her friends and the related stories. Portions of the curriculum are delivered via software or iPad, which is also age appropriate and motivating for older students. All responses have been developed for students whether they are verbal or nonverbal. For example, nonverbal students may use pointing, touch screen technology, switch activation, or eye gaze to make responses. Guidelines are offered for promoting active student participation in “reading” (e.g., saying a repeated story line) and understanding the story.

*ELSB for Older Students* includes two components: (1) Building with Sounds and Symbols, and (2) Building with Read Alouds. Building with Sounds and Symbols focuses on 14 objectives in 7 levels. The software/app provides the instruction and the assessment for these 14 objectives.

*ELSB for Older Students* is developed to shape mastery of 14 objectives through an easy-to-hard sequence. Objectives reappear and are progressively more difficult at each level. A few easier objectives are dropped at the upper levels and a few harder objectives are not introduced in the first level. Table 1 (which begins on page 4) provides an overview of the Scope and Sequence for the seven levels of the Building with Sounds and Symbols component. Note that a detailed listing of content by level and lesson is provided in Appendix A.

The second component, Building with Read Alouds, is a teacher-created lesson using grade-appropriate text. Example lesson plans are provided later in this Teacher’s Guide.

Students who complete *ELSB for Older Students* are ready for instruction in a beginning reading curriculum, such as *Early Reading Skills Builder* (Browder, Ahlgrim-Dezell, & Wood, 2015). The *ELSB* curriculum is developed so that students who do not master all levels still acquire literacy skills for lifelong use, such as gaining meaning from stories that are read, acquiring new vocabulary, and recognizing words and phrases in text.

**Table 1: ELSB for Older Students Scope and Sequence Overview**

	LEVEL						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Read sight words using time-delay instruction <b>Activity:</b> Read Sight Words	girl, friend, boy	me, is, friend	want, he, is, boy	my, are, is, me, want	like, give, are, friend, he	where, have, give, my, girl	was, does, have, where, like
	Formula for introducing frequently used vocabulary words in K–1 reading curricula: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New words are introduced and maintained for a complete level.</li> <li>• Words are added back in for 1–2 successive lessons in subsequent levels.</li> <li>• Words are dropped again for 2–3 lessons.</li> </ul> Words are added back in for at least 1 additional lesson.						
2. Point to sight words to complete sentences <b>Activity:</b> Use Sight Words	Correct answer/ 1 distractor	Correct answer/ 1 distractor	Correct answer/ 2 distractors	Correct answer/ 2 distractors	Correct answer/ 3 distractors	Correct answer/ 3 distractors	Correct answer/ 3 distractors
3. Point to text as it is read <b>Activity:</b> Point to Text	1–2 lines of text using left-to-right and top-to-bottom movement	2–3 lines of text using left-to-right and top-to-bottom movement	3–5 lines of text using left-to-right and top-to-bottom movement	1 line of text word-by-word pointing	2 lines of text word-by-word pointing	2 lines of text word-by-word pointing	2 lines of text word-by-word pointing
4. Say and/or point to a word to complete a repeated story line <b>Activity:</b> Read Hidden Words	Correct answer/ 1 distractor with picture cues	Correct answer/ 1 distractor with picture cues	Correct answer/ 2 distractors with picture cues	Intermittent (in 2 lessons for review). Correct answer/ 2 distractors with picture cues	Intermittent (in 1 lesson for review). Correct answer/ 3 distractors without picture cues	Intermittent (in 1 lesson for review). Correct answer/ 3 distractors without picture cues	Intermittent (in 1 lesson for review). Correct answer/ 3 distractors without picture cues

(continues)

**Table 1: ELSB for Older Students Scope and Sequence Overview (continued)**

	LEVEL						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Respond to questions about a story <b>Activity:</b> Answer Questions	What, who, and yes/no questions (answer on page). 1 distractor with picture cues	What, where, yes/no, and who questions (answer on page). 1 distractor with picture cues	What, who, whose, where, yes/no, and when questions. 2 distractors with picture cues	What, who, where, how, and which questions. 2 distractors without picture cues	What, who, where, how, and prediction questions. 3 distractors without picture cues	What, who, where, how, and sequence questions. 3 distractors without picture cues	Same types of questions. Add two why questions at the end (not literal). 3 distractors without picture cues3
6. Demonstrate understanding of syllable segmentation by clapping out syllables in words <b>Activity:</b> Segment Syllables		2–3 syllable words (not 1 syllable)	1–4 syllable words	1–5 syllable words  Intermittent (in 1 lesson for review)	2–5 syllable words  Intermittent (in 1 lesson for review)	1–3 syllable words  Intermittent (in 1 lesson for review)	1–5 syllable words  Intermittent (in 1 lesson for review)
7. Demonstrate understanding of phoneme segmentation by tapping out sounds in VC and CVC words <b>Activity:</b> Segment Sounds in Words				4 VC and CVC words	4 CVC words	4 CVC words	4 CVC words
8. Identify letter-sound correspondences <b>Activity:</b> Learn Letters and Sounds	New sound: /m/, 1 (nonletter) distractor	New sounds: /a/, /s/	New sounds: /r/, /t/	New sounds: /f/, /o/	New sounds: /l/, /g/	New sounds: /d/, /u/	New sounds: /i/, /h/

(continues)



**Table 1: ELSB for Older Students Scope and Sequence Overview (continued)**

	LEVEL						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Point to and/or say the first/last sounds in words  <b>Activity:</b> Find First/Last Sounds		Point to/say the first sound in words beginning with continuous sounds (e.g., /a/, /m/)	Point to/say the first sound in words	Point to/say the first sound in words	Point to/say the first sound in words	Point to/say the first and last sounds in words	Point to/say the first and last sounds in words
10. Identify pictures that begin/end with given sounds  <b>Activity:</b> Match Sounds to Pictures		Beginning sounds (no text)	Beginning sounds (no text)	Beginning sounds (no text)	Beginning sounds (no text)	Beginning and ending sounds (no text)	Beginning and ending sounds (no text)
11. Point to letter sounds in words  <b>Activity:</b> Segment Sounds				4 CVC words	4 CVC words	4 CVC words	4 CVC words
12. Blend sounds to identify pictures  <b>Activity:</b> Blend Sounds				Pictures of 4 CVC words (no text)	Pictures of 4 CVC words (no text)	Pictures of 4 CVC words (no text)	Pictures of 4 CVC words (no text)

(continues)

**Table 1: ELSB for Older Students Scope and Sequence Overview (continued)**

	LEVEL						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Point to pictures/words representing new vocabulary  <b>Activity:</b> Learn New Words	People: boy, girl, friend	Feelings: funny, sad, helpful, excited, angry	School: class, teacher, lunch, play, read	Activities: cooking, running, swimming, talking, working	Places: school, store, outside, inside, mall	Party: food, party, dance, snack, song	Sports: sport, practice, cheer, team, game
14. Use new vocabulary words and personal information to create a story  <b>Activity:</b> Create a Story	People: boy, girl, friend	Feelings: funny, sad, helpful, excited, angry	School: class, teacher, lunch, play, read	Activities: cooking, running, swimming, talking, working	Places: school, store, outside, inside, mall	Party: food, party, dance, snack, song	Sports: sport, practice, cheer, team, game

# Content of ELSB for Older Students

## Starting with Sight Words

In a comprehensive review of the experimental research on teaching early reading to students with significant disabilities, Browder, Wakeman, Spooner, Ahlgrim-Delzell, and Algozzine (2006) found that most research with this population had focused on the acquisition of sight words through massed trial training with systematic prompting and fading. This systematic instruction approach is strongly supported through both the quality and quantity of research studies and through the large effect sizes evident in the studies, showing that students with significant cognitive disabilities can acquire sight words through this method of intervention. *ELSB for Older Students* capitalizes on Browder, Wakeman, et al.'s (2006) findings and uses a "sight word game" based on the constant time-delay procedure described by Collins (2007, 2012). In the first round, the software prompts the correct response by having Sam, the main character, point to the word as it is requested (with 0-second time delay). In the next round, a 5-second delay is used; that is, Sam waits up to 5 seconds for the student to respond before pointing as a prompt. For motivation, Sam helps the students as needed (prompts the correct response). As students acquire sight words, the 0-second time-delay round is dropped.

Browder, Wakeman, et al. (2006) also note the importance of comprehension. To promote understanding of the words, the students are asked to perform a second response in which they select between two or more of the sight words to complete a sentence. Because the students have just reviewed the words, this round provides a 5-second wait time before prompting. The 15 sight words were chosen because of their high utility. When possible, words were also selected that have utility in functional activities (e.g., girl, boy, friend).

## Going Beyond Sight Words

*ELSB for Older Students* provides instruction in four components of early reading: (1) vocabulary, (2) comprehension, (3) phonemic awareness, and (4) alphabetic understanding (phonics). As Browder, Courtade-Little, Wakeman, and Rickelman (2006) and Browder, Ahlgrim-Delzell, Flowers, and Baker (2012) note, identification of sight words are only one component of reading. In fact, students would not be expected to become readers through sight word instruction alone, based on the research compiled by the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000). The NRP selected 38 experimental and quasi-experimental (meaning a plausibly close approximation to experimental) research studies on reading instruction. Based on a quantitative averaging of the outcomes from these 38 studies, the NRP concluded that there is compelling evidence that systematic, explicit phonics instruction makes a more significant contribution to children's growth in reading than do alternative programs providing unsystematic or no phonics instruction. The NRP report established consensus on the following foundational skills as critical components of beginning reading instruction:

- Phonemic awareness
- Alphabetic understanding (phonics)
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Accuracy and fluency with connected text

The purpose of *ELSB for Older Students* is to provide a curriculum that promotes new opportunities for this population to learn to read by building on the science of reading found effective for students without disabilities or who have mild disabilities.

The importance of reading success prompted researchers to examine the characteristics of children entering first grade who become successful readers. Research suggests that children entering first grade with phonemic awareness skills will experience more success in learning to read than their peers who enter first grade with little or no phonemic awareness (e.g., Hiebert & Pearson, 2000; Lyon, 1998; Perfetti, Beck, Bell, & Hughes, 1987).

However, most students with moderate-to-severe disabilities will need instruction to develop phonemic awareness due to their developmental delay. *ELSB for Older Students* is based on the premise that it is not too late to begin promoting phonemic awareness skills for these students at ages 10 or older. Although the early elementary grades may be an optimal time to promote these skills, it is still possible to promote these skills for older students who have not been exposed to them; students will have the opportunity to learn skills that then bridge to reading by later grades.

Phonemic awareness is a conscious understanding that words are made up of sounds, along with the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in words (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarver, 2004). The NRP (2000) reported that correlational studies identified phonemic awareness and letter knowledge as the two best predictors at school entry of how well children will learn to read during the first two years of school. Phonemic awareness becomes phonics instruction when children begin to use graphemes (letters) or are taught to blend or segment the sounds in words using letters (Carnine et al., 2004).

Phonemic awareness instruction in *ELSB for Older Students* includes identifying pictures that begin with particular sounds. Students also learn to clap out the syllables in words (phonological awareness that precedes phonemic awareness) and, later, to tap out individual phonemes in words. One alternative would have been to teach one of these skills to mastery with many trials and

then introduce the next skill, but this linear sequence could result in a student becoming stuck on a skill. Instead, *ELSB for Older Students* introduces multiple phonological (including phonemic) awareness skills with many repetitions across days, lessons, and units. In the ongoing research of *ELSB* as it is implemented, students sometimes acquire skills earlier than expected and other skills come more slowly, but the specific order of acquisition of skills like identifying the sound or clapping out syllables varies across students.

In addition, some students with moderate-to-severe disabilities do not yet have even the concept of word, which is the ability to match spoken sounds with words in text (Bear & Barone, 1989). Morris's (1993) longitudinal research illustrates the contribution of the concept of word to learning to read. In *ELSB for Older Students*, the concept of word is taught through having the student supply the missing word in a sentence (e.g., "Sam is a \_\_\_\_\_") and by having students point to lines of text and words in lines of text as it is read.

*ELSB for Older Students* addresses these skills in Component 1 of the curriculum—the Building with Sounds and Symbols component. There are 7 levels with 5 lessons each in Building with Sounds and Symbols. The 14 objectives in the Building with Sounds and Symbols component address the key literacy components supported by the NRP (2000).

### ***Making Early Reading Skills Meaningful***

To encourage meaningful use of the skills developed in the Building with Sounds and Symbols component, Component 2, Building with Read Alouds, is included. Stories are what make early reading skills fun and functional for students. In the first part of *ELSB for Older Students*, the character Sam helps students learn to read through participating with them in learning specific skills (Sam prompts correct answers) and by having the starring role in



the stories read. The stories have been developed with carefully controlled text and are read repeatedly so that students can build listening comprehension skills. Students also practice their phonemic awareness skills using these simple stories.

In the Read Aloud lessons, teachers use the **books typical of the students' grade levels** to practice additional listening comprehension, and to learn the conventions of print, like identifying the title and author. An important trend in supporting young children in developing literacy is the use of high-quality literature, including both narrative and expository works as core instructional materials (Morrow & Gambrell, 2002). Important characteristics of this approach include reading to children daily and giving students the opportunity for both independent and collaborative book sharing (Allor & McCathren, 2003). Discussion of the literature is also commonplace. Children who are read to daily tend to score higher on measures of vocabulary, comprehension, and decoding (Bus, van IJzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Senechal, Thomas, & Monker, 1995). The primary purpose of this read-aloud activity is the construction of meaning from the interactive event between the adult and child (Vygotsky, 1978).

Although research does not yet exist on the potential benefits of daily reading with school-aged students who have significant developmental disabilities, making this the core of literacy instruction promotes meaningful access to inclusive communities in several ways (Browder, Mims, Spooner, Ahlgrim-Delzell, & Lee, 2008). First, shared stories can promote social interactions with peers who are nondisabled, and with families and teachers. Most experts list social inclusion with peers and family involvement as strong values for the education of this population (Hamre-Nietupski, Nietupski, & Strathe, 1992; Logan et al., 1998; Stainback & Stainback, 1987; Trivette, Dunst, Boyd, & Hamby, 1995). Shared stories may also become a vehicle for promoting self-determination. Students can choose the stories to be shared and their reading partners, they can view books alone, or they can take the lead in reading if they receive instruction in specific book-

sharing skills (this will be described later). Hudson and Test (2016) showed a moderate level of evidence for using shared story reading to promote the literacy of students with extensive support needs.

## Objectives Taught

*ELSB for Older Students* shapes mastery of the 14 objectives listed in Table 1 (see p. 4). Each objective selected for instruction and the method by which it is taught is adapted from current research. While there is little to no research on teaching phonemic awareness and phonics to this population (Browder, Wakeman, et al., 2006), the authors have adapted research with other populations and the instructional strategies used effectively for other types of literacy skills (e.g., direct instruction and systematic prompting and feedback procedures). Table 2 on lists each objective, the rationale for its inclusion, and the method used to teach it.

## Teaching Procedures

*ELSB* is based on the principles of direct and systematic instruction. Direct instruction is a teaching model that facilitates development of skills in the most effective and efficient manner possible. It involves teaching in small steps with student practice after each step, guiding students during initial practice, and ensuring that students experience a high level of successful practice. Research has shown this model to be effective when used to teach reading to various student populations, including students with learning disabilities (Carnine et al., 2004).

Systematic instruction is based on applied behavior analysis (Wolery et al., 1988). Systematic instruction involves planning for instruction by identifying specific educational goals, outlining specific procedures for instruction, implementing the procedures, evaluating the effectiveness of the instruction, and modifying the instruction based on data (Westling & Fox, 2004).

**Table 2. Rationale for the 14 Objectives in Levels 1 to 7**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Rationale/NRP Component</b>	<b>Increasing Difficulty Across Lessons and Levels</b>	<b>Method Used to Teach Objective</b>
<b>1</b> Read sight words using time-delay instruction	Some words are irregular and must be learned on sight; students benefit from early word mastery so they can participate in reading the stories. NRP Vocabulary	New words are introduced across lessons and levels.	Flashcard drill using the constant time-delay procedure (one round at 0-second time delay; one at 5-second time delay)
<b>2</b> Point to sight words to complete sentences	Students use sight words from Objective 1 to fill in a blank in a sentence; promotes comprehension of the sight words. NRP Vocabulary	Students are given more distractors in answer choices as levels progress.	System of least prompts: (a) wait for the student to choose a response without help; (b) model making the correct choice and have the student imitate; and (c) if needed, guide the student to make the correct choice.
<b>3</b> Point to text as it is read	Text pointing is used to promote the concept of word. It teaches that text moves from left-to-right and top-to-bottom and that each printed word can be spoken. For nonverbal students, it may build toward the use of technology support to read text aloud. Concept of Print	Students progress from pointing left-to-right to a line of text, to a sentence, to moving down the page to a second line of text, as the text is read. In the upper levels, students point to each word individually within the sentence as the text is read.	System of least prompts (same as above).
<b>4</b> Say and/or point to a word to complete a repeated story line	This skill promotes the concept of word and listening comprehension as students fill in words that are covered and then complete a repeated story line. NRP Comprehension Concept of Print	Placement of the covered word in the sentence varies (last word, beginning word, middle word). At the early levels, the covered word is highlighted. In later levels, words change across lessons and levels.	System of least prompts (same as above).

*(continues)*

**Table 2. Rationale for the 14 Objectives in Levels 1 to 7 (continued)**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Rationale/NRP Component</b>	<b>Increasing Difficulty Across Lessons and Levels</b>	<b>Method Used to Teach Objective</b>
<b>5</b> Respond to literal, inferential, predictive, and summative questions about a story	This builds listening and reading comprehension. NRP Comprehension	At first, literal questions that relate directly to the text are asked. Later, students are asked harder questions (prediction, main idea, sequencing) and must make inferences from what has been read. In later lessons, they answer questions using words versus pictures.	Scaffolding (e.g., find the answer in the sentence) using the system of least prompts if needed.
<b>6</b> Demonstrate understanding of syllable segmentation by clapping out syllables in words  <b>7</b> Demonstrate understanding of phoneme segmentation by tapping out phonemes in CVC words	Segmenting is one of the critical components of phonemic awareness. Segmenting words into syllables is the beginning point because it teaches distinguishing by auditory cues including rhythm and stress. Auditorially segmenting phonemes (sounds) in words is the primary precursor to learning to read CVC words. NRP Phonemic (Phonological) Awareness	Early lessons use two- and three-syllable words; words increase to five syllables and decrease to one syllable; CVC words are used for phoneme segmentation.	Direct instruction with model, lead, test strategy. Students indicate the number of syllables via tapping. Tapping is adapted to the student's needs and response ability by not moving on until the correct number of taps is made.
<b>8</b> Identify letter-sound correspondences	Students who are nonverbal (and some with autism) will need a visual referent to indicate letter sounds. Use of letters themselves may be more efficient than some other concrete referent. NRP Alphabetic Principle (Phonics)	Thirteen letters and their sounds are introduced across lessons and levels. In the first levels, the distractors are nonletters. Later, students are given multiple letters from which to choose.	Easy-to-hard discrimination with increasingly more difficult distractors. Given an incorrect response, the system of least prompts is used.

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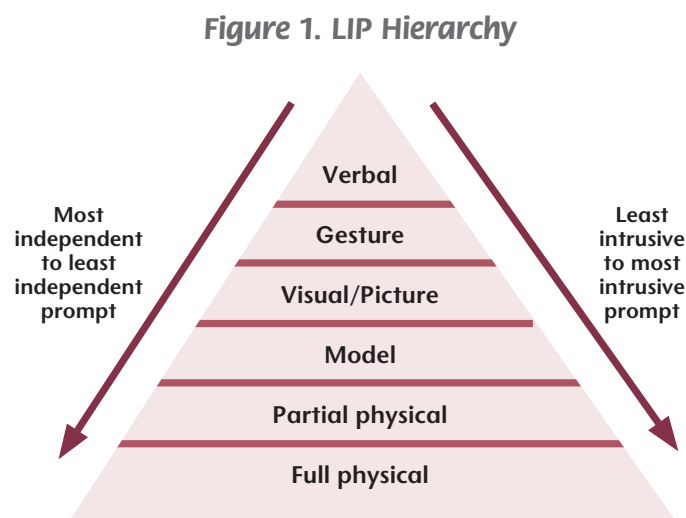
**Table 2. Rationale for the 14 Objectives in Levels 1 to 7 (continued)**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Rationale/NRP Component</b>	<b>Increasing Difficulty Across Lessons and Levels</b>	<b>Method Used to Teach Objective</b>
<p><b>9</b> Point to and/or say first and last sounds in words</p> <p><b>10</b> Identify pictures that begin/end with given sounds</p>	<p>Isolating beginning and ending sounds is a critical phonemic awareness skill and a precursor to beginning reading.</p> <p>NRP Phonemic Awareness</p>	<p>Sounds change across lessons and levels. Consideration is given to the order of phonemes from easy to hard (i.e., those that are continuants and easily visible are introduced first).</p>	<p>Direct instruction with model, lead, test strategy. Given an incorrect response, the system of least prompts is used. First and last sounds are also graphically highlighted for Objective 9.</p>
<p><b>11</b> Point to letter sounds in words</p> <p><b>12</b> Blend sounds to identify pictures</p>	<p>Blending sounds to form words is one of the most difficult skills to translate for nonverbal students. Although AAC devices can produce the word, they do not require the student to think about the blending itself. If students can hear a word segmented into its sounds, and identify a picture of the word that was said, it demonstrates having internally blended the sounds. While more difficult than simple verbal blending of sounds to form a word, it ensures students are not just hitting a switch to say a word.</p> <p>NRP Phonemic Awareness</p>	<p>Sounds to be blended change over lessons and levels concurrent with those introduced in Objective 8.</p>	<p>Direct instruction with model, lead, test strategy. Given an incorrect response, the system of least prompts is used.</p>
<p><b>13</b> Point to pictures/words representing new vocabulary</p> <p><b>14</b> Use new vocabulary words and personal information to create a story</p>	<p>This builds conceptual understanding of vocabulary by using a variety of pictures for the same spoken word.</p> <p>Students use the new word in a story.</p> <p>NRP Vocabulary</p>	<p>First vocabulary words are people-related. Less concrete words are introduced next and include feelings. Each level has a theme that is meaningful to older students (e.g., school, activities, places, parties, and sports). In early levels, students are asked to identify multiple picture representations, combined with the new written word. In later levels, students are asked to identify the written word and to match the written word to the pictures to demonstrate comprehension.</p>	<p>System of least prompts (same as above) for error correction.</p>



The components of direct instruction and specific procedures of systematic instructional methods were combined to create the scripted curriculum for the original *ELSB* and now carried over to the software/app. Two systematic instructional methods used were the system of least intrusive prompts and the constant time-delay procedure.

The system of least intrusive prompts (LIP) is a method of instruction that has been effective across a variety of skills with students who have moderate-to-severe disabilities (Doyle, Wolery, Ault, & Gast, 1988). This system involves using a prompt hierarchy to support a student during instruction. Refer to Figure 1.



In this system, the teacher begins by giving the student the chance to respond independently. If an independent response does not occur, the teacher then provides the least intrusive prompt (e.g., a verbal prompt) to elicit a response. The teacher proceeds through the prompt hierarchy, working from less intrusive to more intrusive prompts (e.g., gesturing, modeling, then physically directing) until the correct response is given (Collins, 2007, 2012).

A constant time-delay procedure has also been an effective instructional method for students with moderate-to-severe disabilities (Ault, Wolery, Doyle, & Gast, 1989). Using a constant time-delay procedure, a teacher points to the correct answer during initial teaching trials (0-second time-delay interval). When the student is able to provide the response at 0-second delay, the teacher then delays the prompt for a number of seconds (e.g., a 5-second-delay interval) to provide the student the opportunity to respond independently (Collins, 2007, 2012). Time delay has been found to be evidence-based practice for teaching literacy skills to students with moderate-to-severe developmental disabilities (Browder, Ahlgrim-Dezell, Spooner, Mims, & Baker, 2009).

# Planning Your Literacy Program

*ELSB for Older Students* can be the core component of a comprehensive literacy program for students with significant developmental disabilities. In planning this literacy program, additional consideration needs to be given to the context, instructional format, and time invested in the literacy program. This section provides guidance for planning the literacy program.

## Context for Teaching *ELSB for Older Students*

As mentioned earlier, the curriculum has two components: Building with Sounds and Symbols and Building with Read Alouds. The first component will require identifying one or two blocks of time when the software/app can be implemented. Because students with moderate-to-severe disabilities have traditionally had little literacy instruction beyond functional sight words, identifying time for these intensive literacy lessons may require some team planning.

Students in fully inclusive settings will need direct instructional time for the Building with Sounds and Symbols component. If your school is using a tiered system of reading interventions as part of a Response-to-Intervention (RtI) model, times may already be planned into the school and class schedule for some students to receive intensive interventions in reading. Building with Sounds and Symbols is similarly an intensive intervention option, but one developed for students with moderate-to-severe disabilities who may be at an early literacy level. Depending on whether the school provides these intensive reading interventions in the same classroom or another setting, a similar model could be followed for scheduling Building with Sounds and Symbols lessons.

In self-contained settings, you will need to create blocks of time in the day to implement the software/app lessons. The software

lessons are designed to be taught to a small group (2–4 students). While it can also be taught one-to-one, using small groups will make it more feasible to invest the daily time needed to implement the lessons.

The second component of *ELSB for Older Students*, Building with Read Alouds, can be taught in any context in which a book will be read aloud in a shared story format (i.e., one in which students will be actively engaged in discussing the story as it is read). In a self-contained class, you may schedule read-aloud times with a small group and plan ahead how to engage each student. For older students, the text chosen should be grade appropriate, meaning adapted fiction or nonfiction text from chapter books, poetry, or plays.

In addition to the shared stories implemented in a resource setting, the student is likely to benefit from times in which peers who are nondisabled share in read aloud lessons. For example, peers may visit the class, pair up for stories in the media center, or support the student during reading time in the general curriculum class. In some cases, it might be helpful to recruit older peers for these shared readings (e.g., seventh graders to read to middle school students). These peers may need some training in the steps to engage the student with the story. After some preteaching of a book with peers or you, the student with disabilities may be able to participate in read-alouds of the text in the general education class.

For students who are already fully included in a general education classroom, the Read Aloud Lesson Plan can also be used to decide how the student will respond when the classroom teacher asks questions of the class. The student may also use a specially

adapted version of the book that includes a repeated story line (referred to as a read along line), highlighted text, and images of key vocabulary. Students in inclusive settings may also benefit from preteaching the story in one-to-one instruction prior to the class read aloud lesson.

### **Instructional Format and Pacing**

The Building with Sounds and Symbols component was developed for individual or group instruction. A good rule of thumb for groups is to select a group of students who have similar early literacy or communication skills (e.g., all use some pictures to communicate or all need objects for communication) and begin at Level 1, Lesson 1.

Pick a pace of instruction that helps students in the group keep pace. For example, a single lesson may be repeated for two days or for four days. Sometimes an individual student may need additional one-to-one tutoring on an objective for which no

progress is observed. The active responding in the software/app lessons will help keep students engaged. You may also need to praise students for watching other students take their turns. The software/app lessons have little to no downtime. Students are making responses almost every moment.

The Building with Read Aloud component is also a group instruction format. If the story or text is being shared with an entire class (e.g., in a general education classroom), the student with moderate-to-severe disabilities will probably need some one-to-one support to text point, find vocabulary words, and so on. When conducted with a small group, usually each person in the group can get a turn for most of the steps in the Read Aloud lesson.

The following sections describe how to use each component in more detail. **Remember, *ELSB for Older Students* has two components: Building with Sounds and Symbols and Building with Read Alouds.** You will want to be sure to **include both** as part of your daily literacy lessons.

# Using Component 1: Building with Sounds and Symbols

The **Building with Sounds and Symbols** component is implemented using the software/app. Lessons for teaching the 14 objectives across the 7 levels address reading and writing foundations. The Building with Sounds and Symbols lessons begin by teaching the concept of word (and general print awareness). More complex emergent literacy skills are introduced and taught in a spiraling manner (i.e., objectives are repeated across levels). Students learn to read repeated story lines (referred to as *read along lines*), point to text, read frequently used sight words, apply new vocabulary words, use syllabication, identify some letter-sound correspondences, identify initial and ending sounds in words, and begin to blend and segment consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words.

For students to learn to read, they need to recognize the individual units of sound in language and then to associate these sounds with printed symbols. Students for whom *ELSB for Older Students* was developed may or may not produce these sounds themselves. That is, they may have limited verbal production due to speech impairments and cognitive challenges. Some students may be verbal but not able to discriminate sounds. Whether or not students with moderate-to-severe disabilities have speech, they may use pictures or other symbols to augment their communication. For this reason, more emphasis needs to be placed on print awareness for this population than may be found in other early literacy curricula. For example, students need the option of using a printed symbol to indicate recognition of a letter sound as well as articulating the sound if they can.

The 7 levels have 5 lessons each in the Building with Sounds and Symbols component. Each lesson takes approximately 60 minutes of daily instruction depending on the level of the students; most

of the lesson will occur on the computer or iPad. As mentioned earlier, these lessons can be implemented in a small group or individually. Lessons can be broken up into 2, 30-minute sessions during the instructional day. Remember that a third lesson is devoted to the Building with Read Alouds component so that students get about 90 minutes of literacy instruction daily.

## Lesson Vocabulary

Each lesson of *ELSB for Older Students* has a focused set of new vocabulary words for students to learn. The rationale for the selection of vocabulary words is provided in Table 3. The new vocabulary words are emphasized in Objectives 13 and 14. In Objective 13, students learn multiple representations of the vocabulary. In Objective 14, students apply their understanding of the new vocabulary to a writing task.

## Lesson Themes

All lessons and themes are focused on stories about Samantha—Sam—in the book *Sam Stories*. Sam presents the instructional script in the electronic lessons. Sam is used to motivate the students, teach syllabication, and teach students to segment words into sounds and blend sounds into words. In Levels 1 to 4, Sam has a mysterious problem: She is unable to say words the fast way, but instead says words very slowly by stretching the sounds out (e.g., /mmm/ /uuu/ /d/ for mud). The students are engaged in helping Sam as she practices saying the words. At the end of each lesson, students work on writing another page to add to their book (“My Awesome Life”). The page is related to the theme of the level. Themes are also listed in Table 3 on page 18.