

# Summit 2009: Notes from a Conversation with Susan Easterbrooks and Patricia Spencer

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*These notes were taken by Carol Massanari during a conversation between Susan Easterbrooks and Patricia Spencer with the audience, including teams connected remotely using web-based technology. There were other comments that may not have gotten recorded, but these were the key points of the discussion. For additional comments and information, see the captioning record for May 1, 2009.*

## **What are the primary child outcomes that you want to improve?**

- Early language development – the ability to see that a child's development in language is improving in accordance with milestones or some standard way of measuring what is expected in normal growth.
- Language proficiency
- Literacy skills – both reading and writing
- Effective post school outcomes. I think we need to start employment goals at age 3.
- One of the outcomes we have really been working on is making our students be employable when they leave our school. We have really been working on our post high school, after school, after that, senior year, how can we help our kids be life-ready. We have done a really good job, I think, so far. We are still building on it, working on a transition program to make our students be more ready to take on employment and know what they need to be successful citizens in a community. That's one of our big goals.
- I am a parent leader from California. The idea of tracking, starting an employment plan for three-year-olds, I want to caution there's some danger in -- the idea -- language development, we don't want to influence other factors by determining our child's future employment plan or preferences by focusing too early on what they might be rather than on language development. We want to give them the highest potential, whether that child will be able to achieve, first focusing on that.

## **What are you doing to improve language in children? Programs? Assessment tools? (Also programming for transition)**

- Therapy program that is ASL and English development. Using it in middle school. Looks at multiple meaning words and Dolch words - multiple meaning words might have 15 different ASL signs.
- Assessment - McCarther for spoken language and kids who use sign for spoken language. Anderson (the researcher) is having trouble finding children to norm the

assessment. (Contact Hands and Voices to contact parents to help identify students who could be used in research on the assessment tool.)

- In LA we use the Kendall for assessing sign language in children.
- There is a K12 curriculum developed by a province in Ontario. They are very interested in coming and presenting their curriculum in the US.
- Ohio has two curricula, one for ASL foreign language program and one for OSD students.
- A visual fluency screener has been developed.
- The Kendall Communication Proficiency Scale is good to evaluate through the air communication but more at a pragmatic level. We need a "Bloom and Lahey" model for ASL.
- OSD has two curricula--one for our ASL foreign language program and one for OSD students.
- OSD has been using visual phonics for reading instruction in some elementary classrooms.
- Florida has several districts that are using Visual Phonics with their reading programs.
- Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton is using Visual Phonics as well as many school divisions in VA.
- We've also found that some educational interpreters are using VP for foreign language classes.
- VFS is more about reading fluency than ASL.
- In VA we are using the *I'm Determined* project - see [www.imdetermined.org](http://www.imdetermined.org). There is great info - for student led IEPs - again, they're using it a lot at VSDB and we will feature it at our summer conference for teachers of the deaf and related service providers.
- Gallaudet has a 14 page curriculum for transition that starts at age 3 and goes through HS.
- Florida School Deaf Blind (FSDB) has a transition and independent living skills program including a database to collect related data. This "report" is shared at quarterly report card dates and at IEP meetings.
- FSDB has an annual career and college day in the Fall for some awareness and planning and then a Career and College Expo in the spring to make sure students are supported in applying any plan they have developed.
- Ohio is implementing a program called "4 Plus" which is 4 years in high school plus 1 or 2 more years focusing on transition skills here's a link.  
<http://www.ohioschoolforthe deaf.org/resources/6/4PlusProgram.pdf>
- Here's a link to Using Visual Phonics to Supplement Beginning Reading Instruction for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Beverly J. Trezek  
<http://jdsde.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/12/3/373>.
- Visual Phonics research -- <http://www.seethesound.org/research.html>
- I wonder if there's a way to use indicators for part C, part C indicators to track from the newborn screening. It would be good to be able to track those infants and monitor them in relation to the intervention part into the future. It would be good to identify what was given to that deaf and hard of hearing child as far as whole language experiences that would really allow them to read and write, to sign, at age-appropriate

levels. What about starting a campaign so in a collaborative way we are looking at each of those Deaf and hard of hearing children, meeting pre-K standards. (See SPP/APR Indicator C-3. Work with Part C to interpret and use data collected and reported for Part C, Indicator 3.)

### **What kind of data is being kept to document what is working?**

- Classroom teacher and speech are collecting that data.
- How many here are using visual phonics and are you documenting progress? (About three raised their hands.) That is something that is of interest to people so it would be good to document.
- GA - we are actually using a lot of these and we document and put all the information together at the end of the year. But we cannot separate out the individual programs to see which is the most effective.
- That is the difference between research and data collection. What we have to do is to document that which is used and then say we have used all of these three, for example. We may not be able to tell which one is having more effect than another. If we know a combination is having success, we go ahead and use it. Then perhaps a research study can be done.
- Many of the teachers in MN are using CBM measures for monitoring student progress. I would invite folks in the future to join us in the AVE progress monitoring system next fall to monitor students' progress in reading, writing and sign. Contact me at [srose@umn.edu](mailto:srose@umn.edu).
- VA School for the Deaf and the Blind is collecting data from PALs assessment to document how their use of visual phonics has influenced phonemic awareness - for 5 years now.
- From what I understand, there is anecdotal information about Visual Phonics, but not scientifically-based evidence (at least the last time I heard).
- All states are collecting post-school outcome data as part of the APR for Indicator 14. Some states (e.g., UT) are able to disaggregate this data by disability and are beginning to use it to see how students are doing and to guide the transition planning process.
- We have been talking a lot about this. The first thing we have to do is get all of our data together. What we recently did was take our state plan, the SPP indicators, and the national agenda goals and align them all. Now we will start to look at our data, which will take us a while. You see how long it took Iowa to get theirs together. Then we will start to project some outcomes as related to the national agenda goal. So all we have done is think about it and start planning for it. (TX)

**We'd like to know what "it's working" means.**

- Real world research and the gold standard do not always align.
- When asking what works - ask what was the goal? What will show you that this approach meets the specific goals? Remember, it does not necessarily mean that we must use standardized tests.

**Leave with this question:**

- Do you have practices in place to measure progress using the techniques in the classroom? How do you know that the teacher is using the practices that we know are effective?

**An Additional Resource**

- Outcomes for Graduates of Baccalaureate Interpreter Preparation Programs Specializing in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade Settings by Carol Patrie & Marty Taylor – [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)