

“He Reads but He Doesn’t Understand”

Supporting the Reading Comprehension of Students with Autism

We are giving everyone a few moments to join us and will start the presentation just after the hour.

You’ll need to dial in to hear the audio portion of the presentation.

Call 1-877-241-4280, enter Access Code 551 763 94#

To download a copy of today’s slides, go to
www.brookespublishing.com/autism/webinar

Welcome Webinar Attendees!

To dial in, call toll-free 877-241-4280 and enter Access Code 551 763 94#
(Callers outside of North America dial 617-213-4154)

You should hear music while you're waiting. (If you dial in and hear silence, don't worry—that means the presenters have arrived but have not yet started their presentation. We will be starting shortly.)

If, for any reason, you are unable to connect, e-mail events@brookespublishing.com to request a link to a recording of today's presentation that you will be able to access afterward at your convenience!

Who is in our audience today?

Please take a look at the options on your screen and select the one that most closely describes you:

- I am the family member of someone diagnosed with ASD.**
- I am a community member who knows someone with ASD.**
- I am a professional who works with someone who has ASD.**
- I am an educator who trains people who work with someone with ASD.**
- I am an administrator of a program that provides services to someone with ASD.**

“He Reads but He Doesn’t Understand”

Supporting the Reading Comprehension
of Students with Autism

Featuring

Dr. Paula Kluth

Moderator: Anastasia Worcester



Today's Presentation

- ❖ What do we know about reading for students with autism?
- ❖ How do we improve comprehension?
- ❖ Five ideas of comprehension
 - Boost Background Knowledge
 - Set Them Up for Success
 - Think Aloud
 - Retelling
 - Say Something
- ❖ Indirect Communication
- ❖ Reciprocal Teaching
- ❖ Literacy & Disability Resources
- ❖ Questions from the audience

Today's Speaker



Paula Kluth, Ph.D., is an independent educational consultant and an adjunct instructor at National-Louis University in Chicago, Illinois. She has an M.Ed. in Educational Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Wisconsin. A former special educator who has served as a classroom teacher, consulting teacher, and vocational educator, Dr. Kluth has taught in and engages in research in both elementary and secondary schools. Her professional and research interests center on differentiating instruction and on including students with significant disabilities in inclusive classrooms. She is currently conducting research on how teachers support children with autism in inclusive classrooms. Dr. Kluth is indebted to people with disabilities and her former students for teaching her about autism, dis/ability and inclusive schooling.

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Supporting the Reading
Comprehension of Students with
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What do we know about reading for students with autism?

- communication differences
- movement differences
- sensory differences
- social differences
- passions/fascinations



Colasent & Griffith (1998)



3 students: Speech was largely echolalic & test scores were low (from “un-testable” to a high of Grade 3)

Intervention:

Teacher read three fiction books & used whole language strategies

Results:

Students bloomed when given opportunities to listen to and discuss thematic lit—all of them demonstrated the ability to “state a title, state their favorite character, and describe their personal feelings” after listening to the target texts

All three wrote longer passages and longer sentences, using more sophisticated vocabulary, after interacting with the three stories than they had in the context of their past (functional skill) instruction.

I remember being infuriated at one of those assignments in fifth grade because it was entitled, “How the Earth Was Formed.” I knew how the earth was formed. Astronomy was my current special interest and I spent many hours reading astronomy books and copying the pictures and diagrams onto pieces of paper. The explanation in the reading assignment about the earth being part of the back of a large turtle seemed so stupid that it infuriated me. Why should I spend time on such stupidity? Now that I am older, I can appreciate the story for what it is—an American Indian legend.

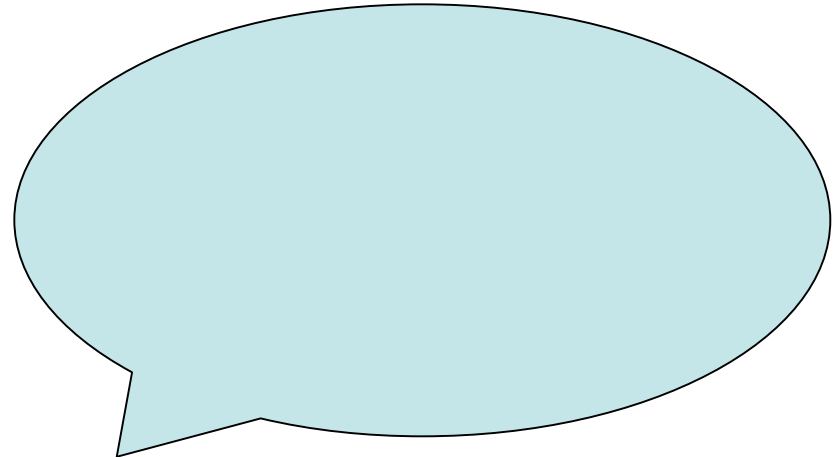
(Shore, *Beyond the Wall*, p. 57)





In fifth grade my son was assigned to write a paper on Benedict Arnold. When I looked at his rough draft, I noticed that he had included all of the important facts about Arnold's life except for one—the fact that he had betrayed the Revolutionary Army to the British for 10,000 pounds and a commission in the Royal Navy! I asked him whether he hadn't left out something important, to which he replied, “But all of it is important!” (Rosinski, 2002, p. 1)

When I was not watching the movies on television, looking thorough my vast collection of movie magazines or one of the dozens of books I had on the history of film, I was usually turning the pages of every fiction and non-fiction book I could find on cowboys and train robbers and American Indians and pioneers and western settlers. (Lianne Holiday Willey 1995, p. 40)



Why are students with autism framed as poor comprehenders?

- Not enough literacy instruction?
- Inferences, symbols, etc. are difficult?
- Not enough experience with related tasks?
- Not enough information?
- Not enough opportunity to hear/see others during literacy lessons?
- No appropriate assessment?



How can we provide better literacy instruction to our students with autism and other disabilities?



Questions?

How to Ask a Question:

- You can type in questions throughout the webinar.
- To type your question, find the Question & Answer area of the control panel to the right side of your screen, type your question, then click the Send button.

To improve comprehension

- Allow ample time for text reading
- Teacher directed instruction
 - explicit modeling and guided practice are needed
- Time to talk about reading
 - changing teacher-student interaction patterns to student centered discussions



To improve comprehension (Cont'd)

- peer and collaborative learning
 - social influences facilitate cognitive outcomes
 - students gain access to one another's thinking processes

This is why inclusive classrooms are ideal places to provide literacy instruction!!!



Fielding, L.G. & Pearson, P.D. (1994).
Synthesis of research reading comprehension:
What works. Educational Leadership, 51 (5),
62-68.

Comprehension:
5 Ideas



#1-Boost Background Knowledge

- tell students what you know
- ask questions about experiences they have had and media texts they may know
- show them a movie clip or related illustrations
- help students create connections by using a graphic organizer (e.g., KWL)
- share other books related to the topic
- make explicit connections between the topic and students' **special interests**
- ask parents to share experiences and to connect past family experiences to the new text or unit

Boost Background Knowledge (cont'd)

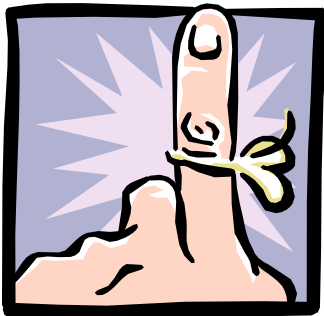
Oftentimes, teachers make the erroneous assumption that reading skills are honed only during the literacy block when, in fact, students learn these skills and acquire these competencies all day long

Students will build background knowledge daily when they are included in the social (e.g., recess, art class, locker routines) and academic life of the school (e.g., math class, orchestra, academic clubs).

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#2- Set Them Up for Success (Give a Clear Purpose for Reading)

- “Listen for all of the ways Will tries to get up the tree.”
- “See if you can find one cause of the American Civil War.”
- “Try and identify why Peter gets so frustrated with Fudge.”



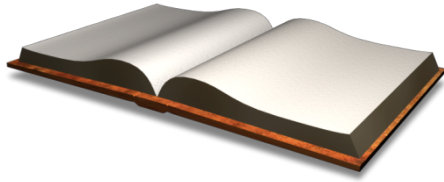
Don't forget to stop one or two times to remind students what they are listening for!

#3- Think Aloud

The think aloud (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Tovani, 2000) is one of the best ways for teachers to help students learn to control particular reading strategies as well as monitor their overall comprehension.

This approach requires readers “to stop periodically, reflect on how a text is being processed and understood, and relate orally what reading strategies are being employed”. (Baumann et al., 1993, p. 192).

The title of the book is *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* so I think it will be about a kid in the fourth grade. When I look at the picture on the cover, I think maybe the main characters will be a boy and a girl. The cover has a picture of a classroom, so I think a lot of this book will take place in a school.



How students can use the think aloud...

Students can take turns performing think-alouds in front of each other, stopping as needed to ask or answer questions & record strategy-focused notes

Adaptations:

- Students who don't speak: use cards with symbols to indicate that they are using particular strategies at different points in the text (e.g., an eye to represent creating a visual image).
- Students using AAC: program strategy names into devices so all students can name strategies they are using or request that others use them (e.g., "Does someone have a prediction to share?")

#4-Retelling

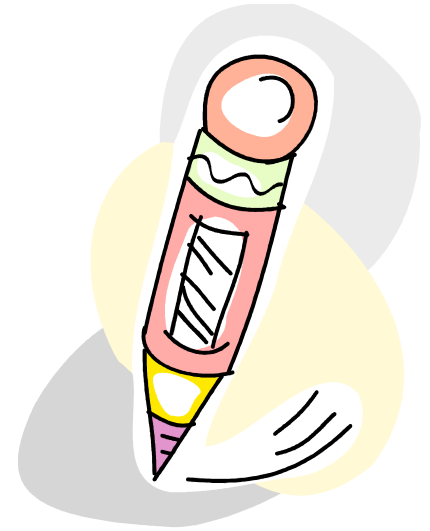


- A retelling is done by the reader after he or she has read or heard a text. The student is asked to “tell everything” he or she can about what has been read (after having the approach modeled by the teacher).
- Do not assume that this behavior comes naturally; students need to be taught explicitly how to sequence their retellings as well as how to include essential information in them. Consider props, visuals, etc.

Retelling: Adaptations

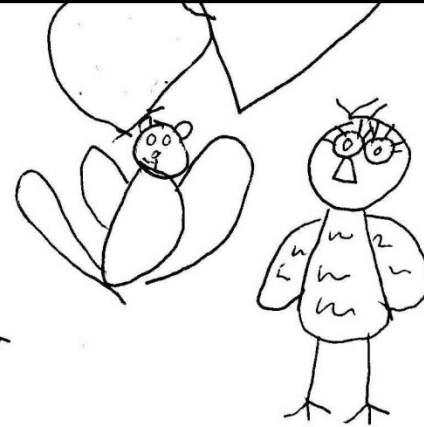
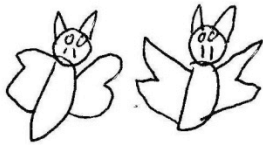
For those who communicate better visually (or for those who have unreliable speech) a graphic retelling might work better.

Students can be taught a story mapping strategy (Boulineau, Fore, Hagan-Burke, & Burke, 2004; Sorrell, 1990) that can help them capture information as they read or right after they finish a piece of text. Students can be taught to map out the events in an artistic and symbolic way by literally drawing a path or trail and inserting images as they move through the story.



4 Corners Comprehension

1



HI

BAT

LET'S GET MARRIED

3



WHERE IS FS

?

4



GO TO JAIL

#5- Say Something (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996)

Say Something is a paired reading strategy for constructing meaning from text-based information. Through structured exchanges, participants develop relationships between new information and what they all ready know or believe.



Using the Strategy

- 1. Partners look over a piece of text and decide together how far they will read silently before stopping to “say something”. *The “something” might be a question, a brief summary, a key point, an interesting new idea or a new connection.***
- 2. Once they have reached the chosen stopping point, both partners say something.**
- 3. Partners continue the process until the selection is completed.**
- 4. The whole group engages in a discussion of the text.**

Adaptations to *Say Something*

(from: *Udvari-Solner & Kluth, 2007*)

- *Say Something* can be used with non-text material. Students may be partnered with one student examining text on a topic and the other examining visual media (photos, pictures). At an agreed upon time frame (e.g., after examining the materials for 3 minutes) students can stop and “say something”.
- Students may also be paired with readings on the same topic but at different reading levels. At the stopping points students share what they have gained from their own specific reading.
- *Say Something* can be implemented with one person in the partnership reading aloud.
- For students who read at a different pace, the student who completes the reading first can write down her say-something comment while her partner completes the reading.
- If a student uses a communication board, pictures, or symbols to communicate, that individual can select a picture or response to share at the end of the section (e.g., “That was interesting”; “I didn’t understand that”; “That was silly”). To teach and reinforce the new communication system, the peer might be encouraged to use the system as well.

In general, which age group best describes the students you have taught or worked with?

Pre–K

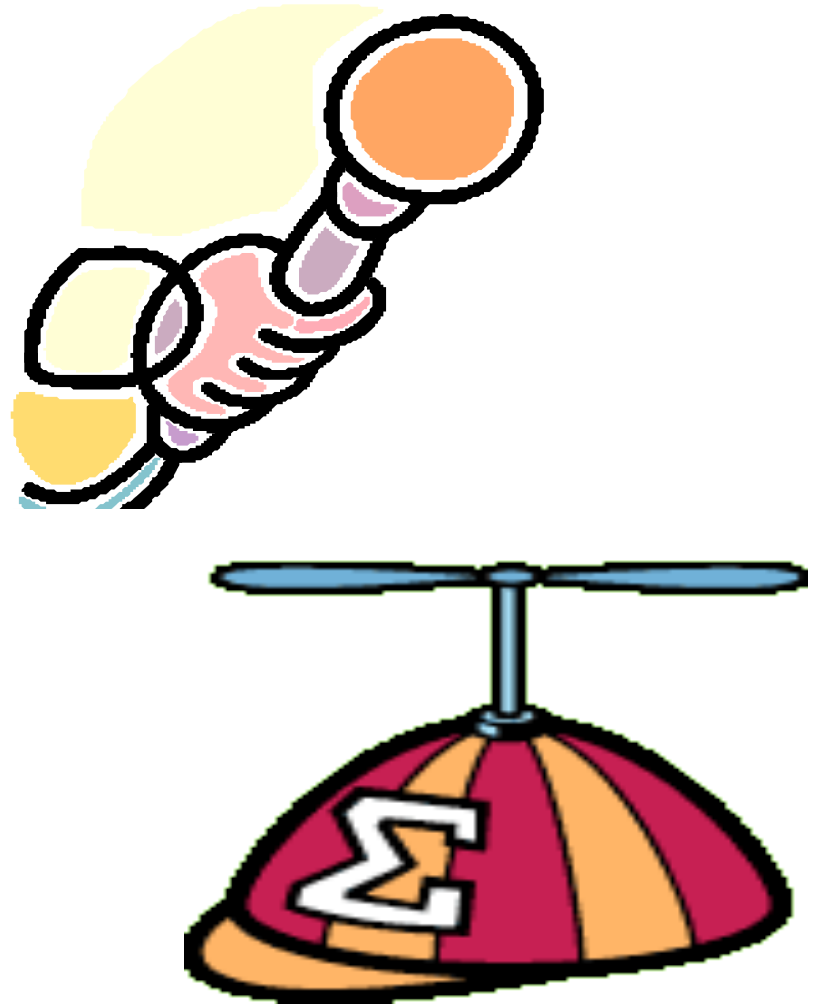
Elementary school

Middle school

High school

Indirect communication- a tool for assessing comprehension

- singing or using rhythmic language
- toy microphone or megaphone
- costumes or hats
- puppets
- gestures instead of words
- foreign languages instead of English



What is the Purpose of Reciprocal Teaching?

❖ The purpose is to facilitate a group effort between teacher and students as well as among students in order to bring meaning to the text

❖ Four Strategies:

- Summarizing
- Question generating
- Clarifying
- Predicting

Questions?

- ❖ *Remember* you can continue to type your questions in for our presenters and submit your questions for the Q&A *at any time*.
- ❖ To type your question, find the Question & Answer area of the control panel to the right side of your screen, type your question, then click the Send button.

Literacy & Disability Resources

Books

Copeland, S. R., & Keefe, E. B. (2006). Effective literacy instruction for students with moderate or severe disabilities. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

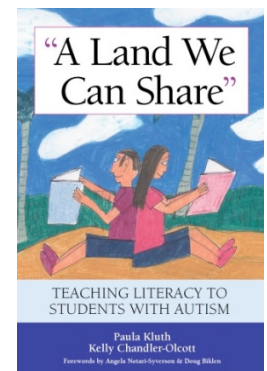
Downing, J. (2005). Teaching literacy to students with significant disabilities. Corwin Press.

Kliewer, C. (1998). Schooling children with Down syndrome. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kluth, P. & Chandler-Olcott, K. (2007). A land we can share. Baltimore: Brookes.

Moline, S. (1995). I see what you mean: Children at work with visual information. York, Maine: Stenhouse.

Parker, K. (1997). Jamie: A literacy story. York, Maine: Stenhouse.



Literacy & Disability Resources



Useful Websites

The Center for Literacy and Disability Studies

<http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/index.html>

David Koppenhaver's Personal Website

<http://www.gac.edu/~dkoppenh>

David Koppenhaver, an education professor at [Gustavus Adolphus College](#) in Minnesota is a pioneer in the area of literacy and disability. His website includes several useful links to articles, resources, and research.

Currents in Literacy

http://www.lesley.edu/academic_centers/hood/currentshome.html

The Center's mission is to promote literacy learning and use for individuals of all ages with disabilities. It is the belief of the CLDS that disabilities are only one of many factors that influence an individual's ability to learn to read and write and to use print throughout their life and across their living environments.

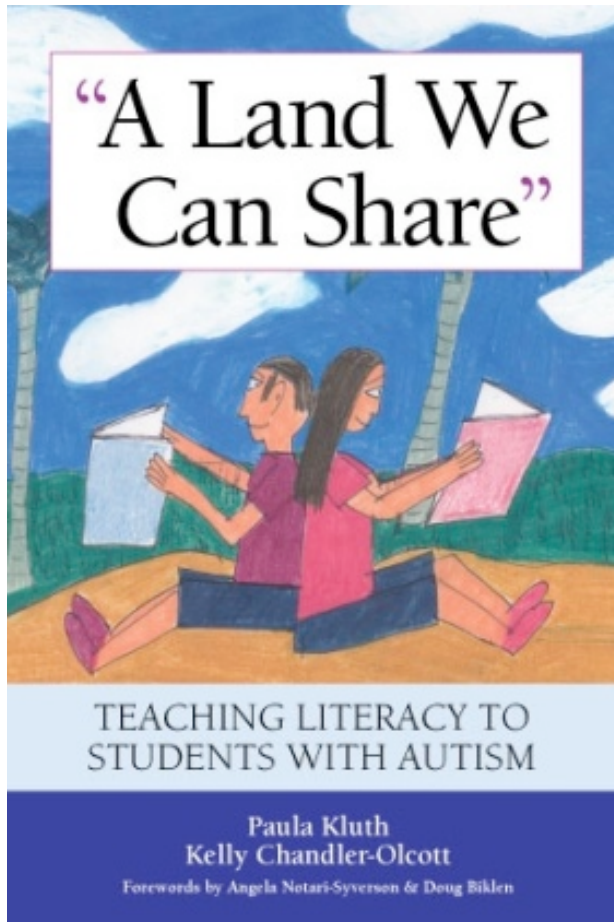
******* Paula Kluth's Personal Website**

www.paulakluth.com

Visit <http://www.paulakluth.com/literacy.html> for articles on adapting the read aloud, teaching literacy to students with autism, using visual supports in the teaching of reading and many others



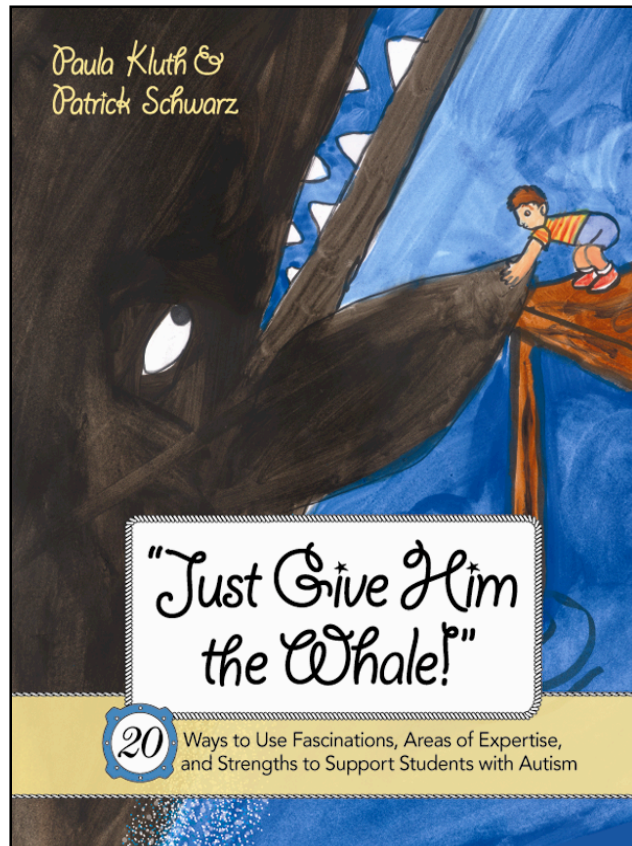
A Land We Can Share



Learn much more about the topics discussed in today's webinar in Dr. Kluth's new book "*A Land We Can Share*": *Teaching Literacy to Students with Autism*

For more information, go to www.brookespublishing.com

Please be sure to check out Dr. Kluth's other books on autism published by Brookes



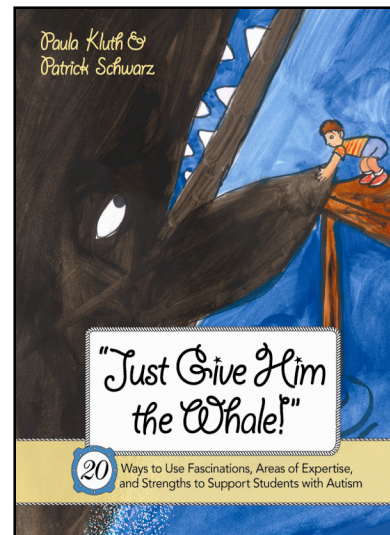
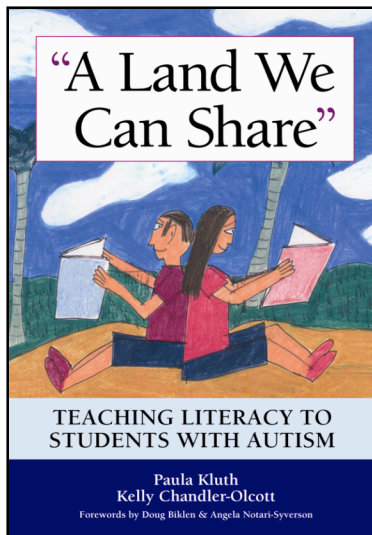
Turn students' fascinations into great teaching tools



Give educators new ways to understand students with autism

A Special Thank You...

As a thank you to all of our webinar participants,
Brookes is offering **20% off** all three books
by Dr. Paula Kluth.



Thanks for attending!

- Check your e-mail in the next day or two for a link to a recording of this webinar that you can access any time
- You can find a copy of today's slides at www.brookespublishing.com/autism/webinar
- If you would like to receive an e-mail confirming your attendance at today's webinar, please send a request to events@brookespublishing.com