USSAAC
Webinar Series

From Problem to Practice: One Example of an AAC Implementation Process in a Complex Educational System

April 30, 2025
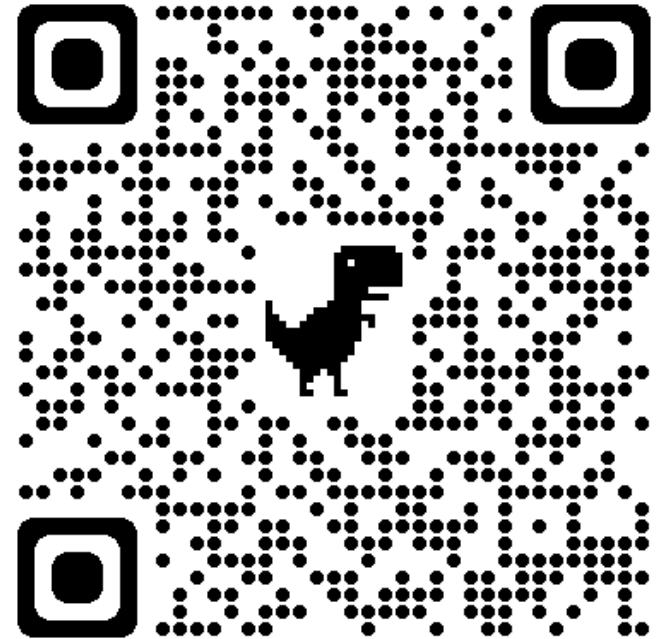
PRESENTED BY:
Lisa Erwin-Davidson, Ph.D.
Facilitator: Nicole Gallagher

2024-2025 USSAAC Webinars are FREE

Please consider joining USSAAC!

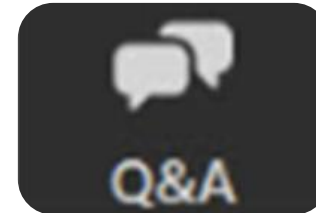Visit https://ussaac.org/membership for a complete list of benefits!

Webinar Logistics

Chat box and microphones are disabled for attendees

Enter questions in the Q&A box at the bottom of the screen (we will answer as time permits)

ASHA CEU form will be shared at the end of the webinar

Partners4Literacy:
A 5-Year Community-Engaged Implementation Project
Bridging the Gap between Research & Practice

Higher Ed

Local Ed

Collaborations

Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the implementation model, process, and scaling up of a three-pronged literacy-language intervention designed to enhance learner engagement across special education classrooms that led to full district adoption;

2. Examine the district and school-wide contextual factors impacting implementation;

3. Identify barriers and facilitators to adoption of the intervention package in multiple special education classrooms.

"…the academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing community needs…" (Boyer, 1996)

Alonzo, Komesidou, Wolter, Curran, Ricketts, & Hogan. (2022). Building sustainable models of research-practice partnerships within educational systems.
Komesidoua & Hogan. (2023). A generic framework for School-Based Research & Practice

Research-Practice Partnerships (RPP): School District Level

Long-Term

Focus on Practice Problems

Committed to Mutualism

Use Intentional Strategies

Produce Original Analyses

Alonzo, Komesidou, Wolter, Curran, Ricketts, & Hogan (2021). Building sustainable models of RPP within educational systems; Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, (January 2013). Research-Practice Partnerships: A Strategy for Leveraging Research for Educational Improvement in School Districts. William T. Grant Foundation, New York, NY.

Followed *Project Core* Guidance Document for School or Program Administrators:

UNC-CH CLDS Project Core Guidance Docs

- Project Goals
- Financial Commitment
- Personnel Commitment
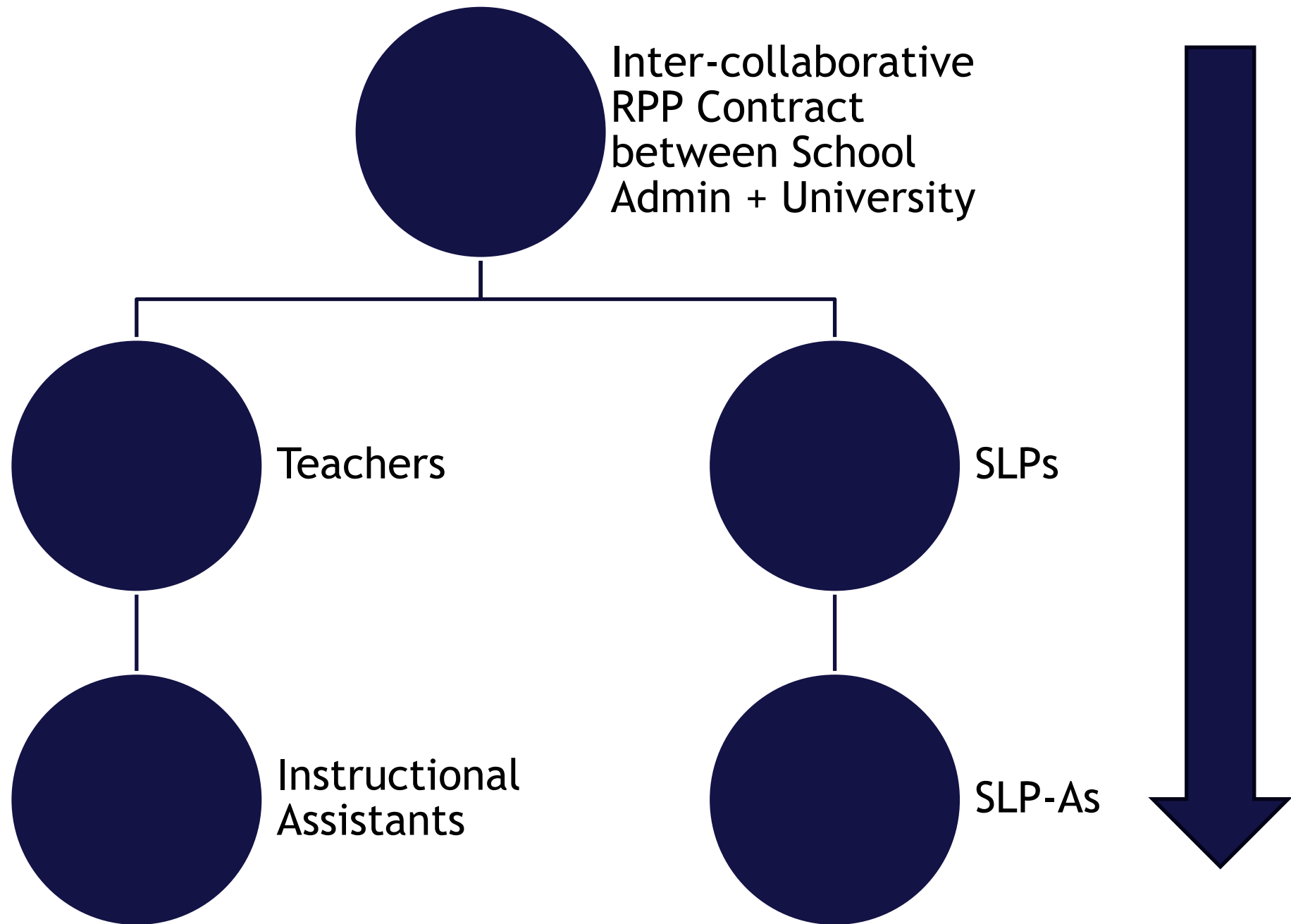- How do we determine school readiness?
- What do we need to get started?
- Professional Development
- Action Plan
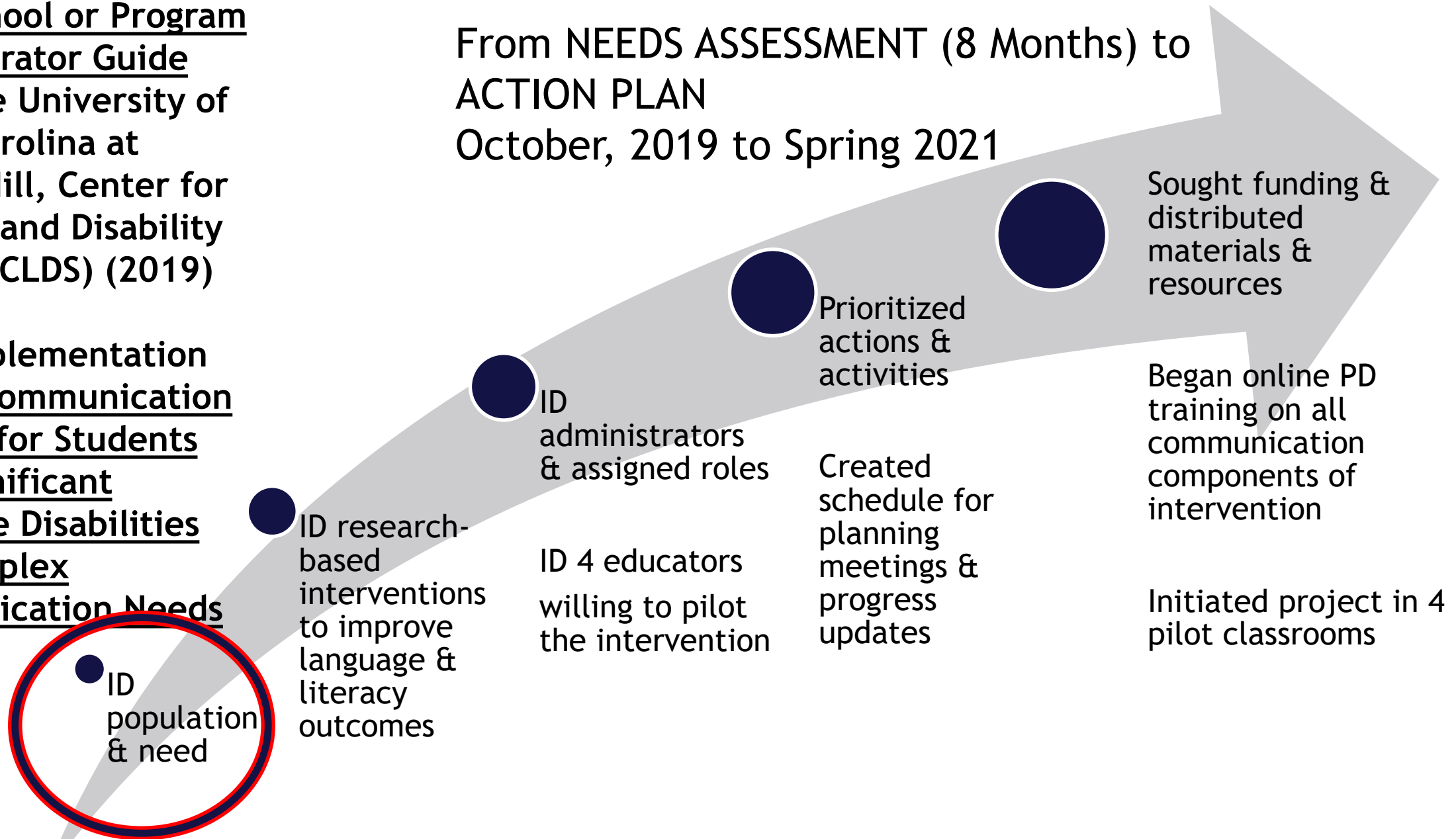- How Do we Evaluate Effectiveness?
- Plan for Project Closure

- **Used <u>School or Program Administrator Guide</u> from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Center for Literacy and Disability Studies (CLDS) (2019)**

- **Used Implementation Guide: <u>Communication Support for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities and Complex Communication Needs</u>**

From NEEDS ASSESSMENT (8 Months) to ACTION PLAN
October, 2019 to Spring 2021

ID population & need

ID research-based interventions to improve language & literacy outcomes

ID administrators & assigned roles

ID 4 educators willing to pilot the intervention

Prioritized actions & activities

Created schedule for planning meetings & progress updates

Sought funding & distributed materials & resources

Began online PD training on all communication components of intervention

Initiated project in 4 pilot classrooms

UNC-CH CLDS Project Core Guidance Docs

ID'd **Profiles of Student Population** Enrolled in Upper Elementary, Middle-High School, and Adult Transition Classrooms

- Scored at or below the first percentile on standardized language and academic assessments
- Determined eligible for IEP services under: ASD, IDD, Global DD, TBI, MU, and various OHI - genetic syndromes with/without single or dual sensory impairments; or determined "medically fragile"
- High-intensity learning needs, complex communication needs
- Labeled as "nonverbal" and placed in self-contained classrooms
- Students had access to varied forms aided AAC systems (nonelectronic or electronic) or used basic forms of unaided AAC (e.g., limited manual signs, gestures, body language)

Personnel Commitment with Pre-Implementation PD

- Identified Personnel: **Educational Specialists & SLPs willing to collaborate for a shared purpose**

- **Principal Investigator (PI)** Observed Classrooms and **Listened** to Administrator & Educator Instructional Needs and Concerns

- PI and Administrators FIRST Identified Mindset Re-Training: Set up series of presentations to school educators (teachers & SLPs) entitled:
    Reframing What is "Functional"

Gathered List of Pre-Implementation Barriers:

- Misinterpretation of "individualized" VS "differentiated" instruction in classrooms

- Outdated understanding of what is included as "functional" instruction, i.e., "literacy is not functional for "my kids"

- System stuck on classroom and student labels that were unhelpful, e.g., "mod-severe kids" "I work in mod-severe classrooms."

- Little knowledge or skill of the full range of (a) aided AAC systems, and (b) the type of words needed on AAC systems to address a variety of communication functions in school

- Outdated understanding of how to teach aided language, and how much aided language input must be provided by *all adults in classrooms* for the student to learn language for learning and socializing

Observed a programmatic and outdated focus on "Functional Skills" curriculum

Observed limited time on academic instruction; limited reference to grade-level academic standards in students' IEPs that demonstrated work *toward* achieving grade-level standards

Observed a restricted range of vocabulary for restricted purposes on Aided AAC systems with widespread limited access to alphabet letters

Observed piecemeal use of ULS phonics program that was not useful for nonspeakers; many teachers using N2Y text with symbolated text that does not support reading comprehension

Observed lack of access to 'question words' that provided opportunity for initiating and seeking information ("who, what, where, when, why"**)**

"Literacy is the most functional skill of ALL"

Evidence suggests students with significant disabilities and *complex communication needs* **can advance their literacy skills** to learn if taught new vocabulary, taught spelling-based approaches to decode text, and taught letters & sounds before whole word recognition. (Erickson, 2017; Erickson & Building Wings LLC White Paper, 2023; Erickson & Koppenhaver, 2020; Spooner, Browder, & Smith, 2012; Smith, Spooner, Jimenez, & Browder, 2013)

Students (as beginning communicators and language learners) **needed access to more useful cross-contextual concept words** and **more opportunities to learn academic content vocabular**y – needed to move beyond "eat", "more" "want" "finished"

Needs Assessment Revealed Community of Practice Problems:

✓ Students at risk

✓ Lack of AAC Knowledge & Skills

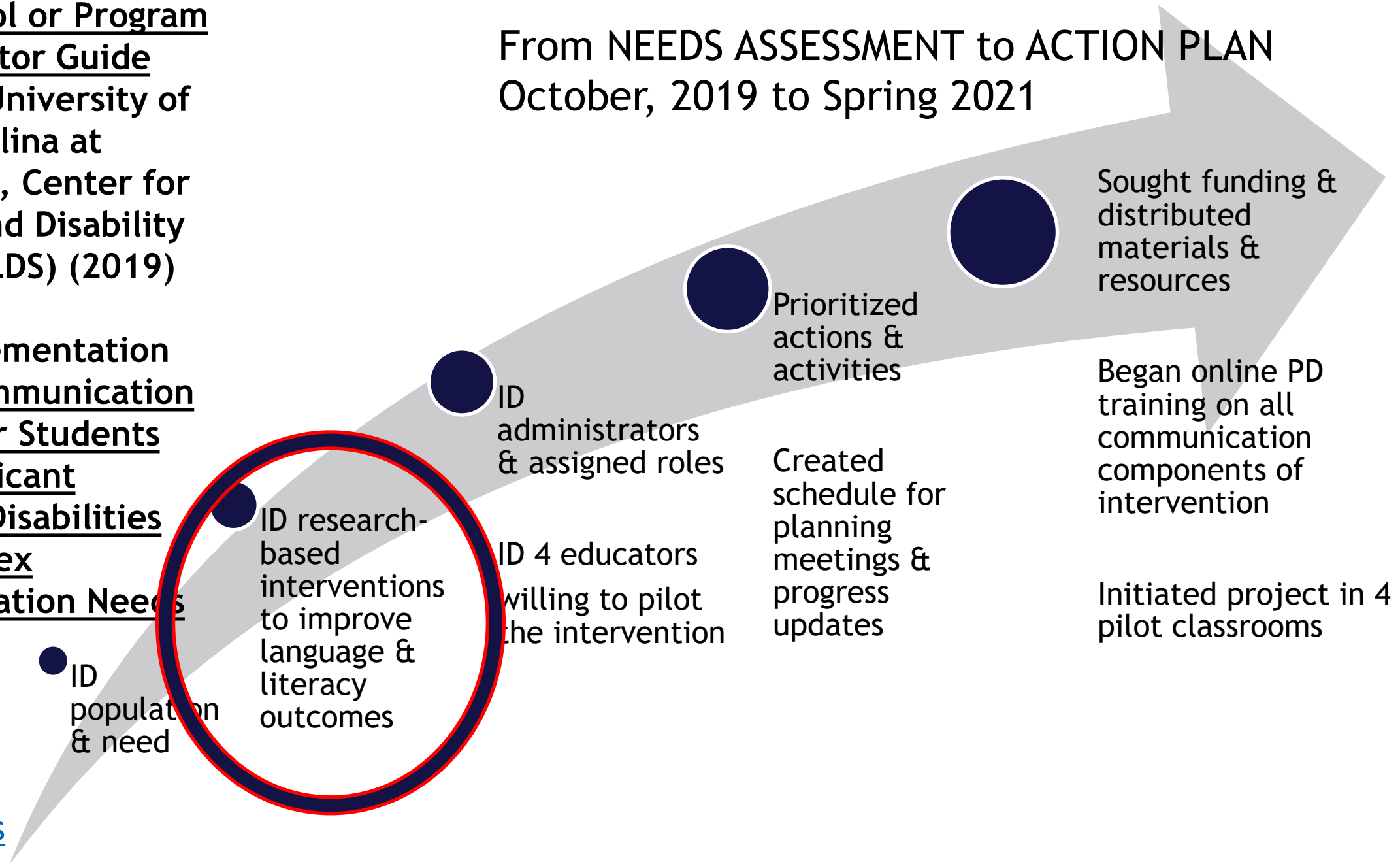✓ Lack of Sensitive & Specific Language-Literacy Measurement Tools
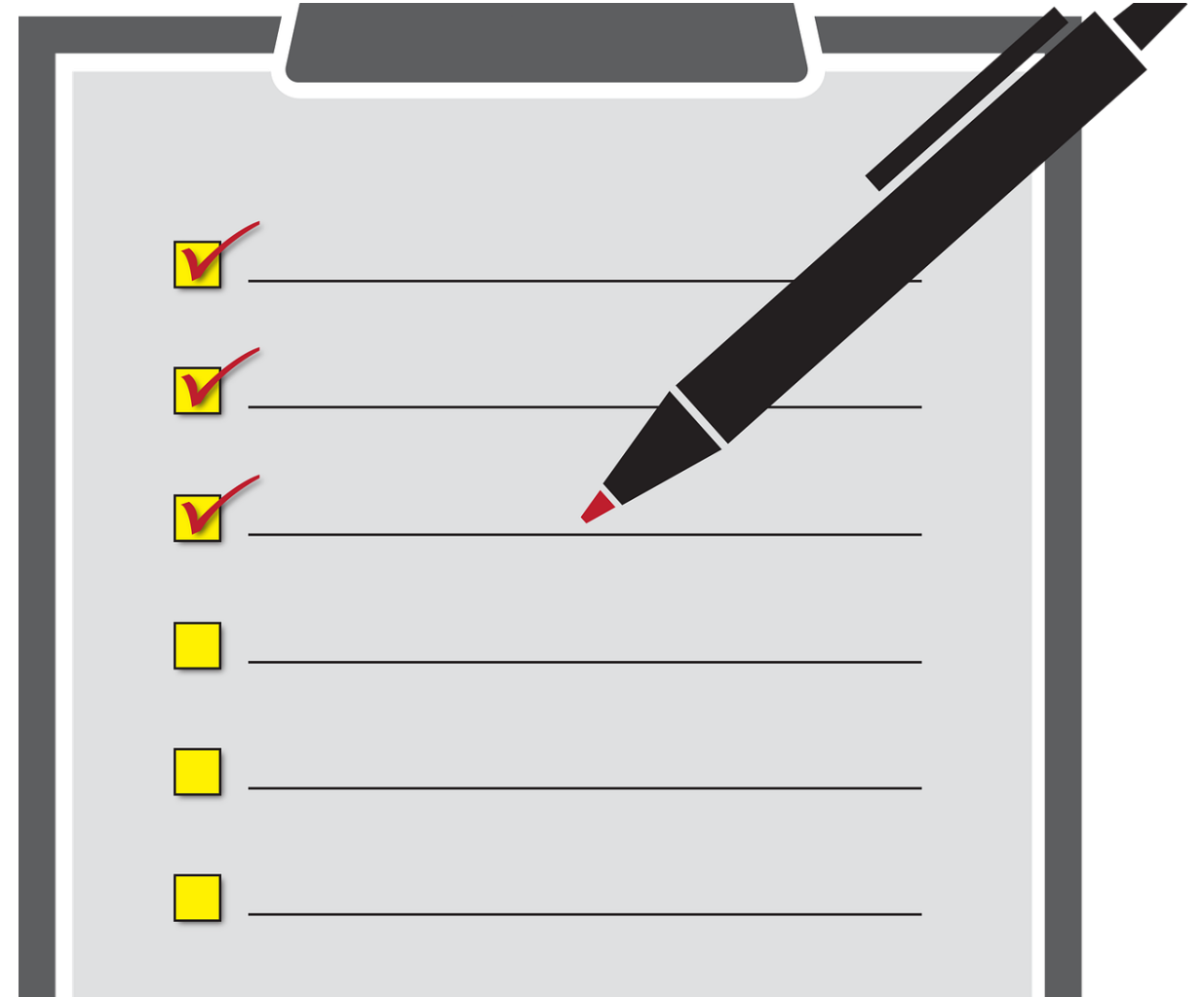
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Project Core Guidance Docs

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Administrators & PI Compared Observations & Needs with the District Mission Statement:

"We hold high expectations for all students through rigorous and relevant educational experiences that challenge them to become responsible, ethical, and engaged citizens".

Identified the Literacy-Language Intervention with the best evidence to meet teacher & student needs

A comprehensive evidence-based literacy curriculum (Readtopia)

(Erickson, K.A. & Building Wings, Inc)

https://myreadtopia.com/resources/research/

A (MTSS-Tier 1/Universal) starter set of 36 highly useful words (36 UC Vocabulary) + Readtopia Content Vocabulary as a base for shared classroom communication

Project-core.com for Universal Core Vocabulary

UPPER ELEMENTARY

Be the Light | Amanda Gorman: A Poet for the Country

MIDDLE / HIGH +

Bodies that Work | Jane Goodall

MIDDLE / HIGH +

Ancient Mayans / The Solar System | The Secret of Old Mexico

Intervention

An evidence-based communication partner strategy for teaching & modeling symbolic communication

(Aided Language Input)

https://www.project-core.com/aided-language-input

Identified Pilot Classrooms, Co-Created Project Goals & Scheduled out Bi-weekly, Monthly, Quarterly Progress Meetings:

• Determined ways to best measure literacy change using student assessments built into *Readtopia &* created project action plans sharing accountability and;

• Used *Communication Matrix (CM)* to observe & assess students' communication baselines before implementing the 3-pronged intervention; SLPs used CM findings to drive communication intervention;

• Determined how to track **educator (teacher, SLP, IAs)** learning outcomes using aided language systems, and learning how to use Aided Language Input;

• Determined how to track classroom context and instructional changes as students and teachers learned together 6 hours/day.

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[Project Core Guidance Docs](#)

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A Transformative Framework (Russell et al., 2011)
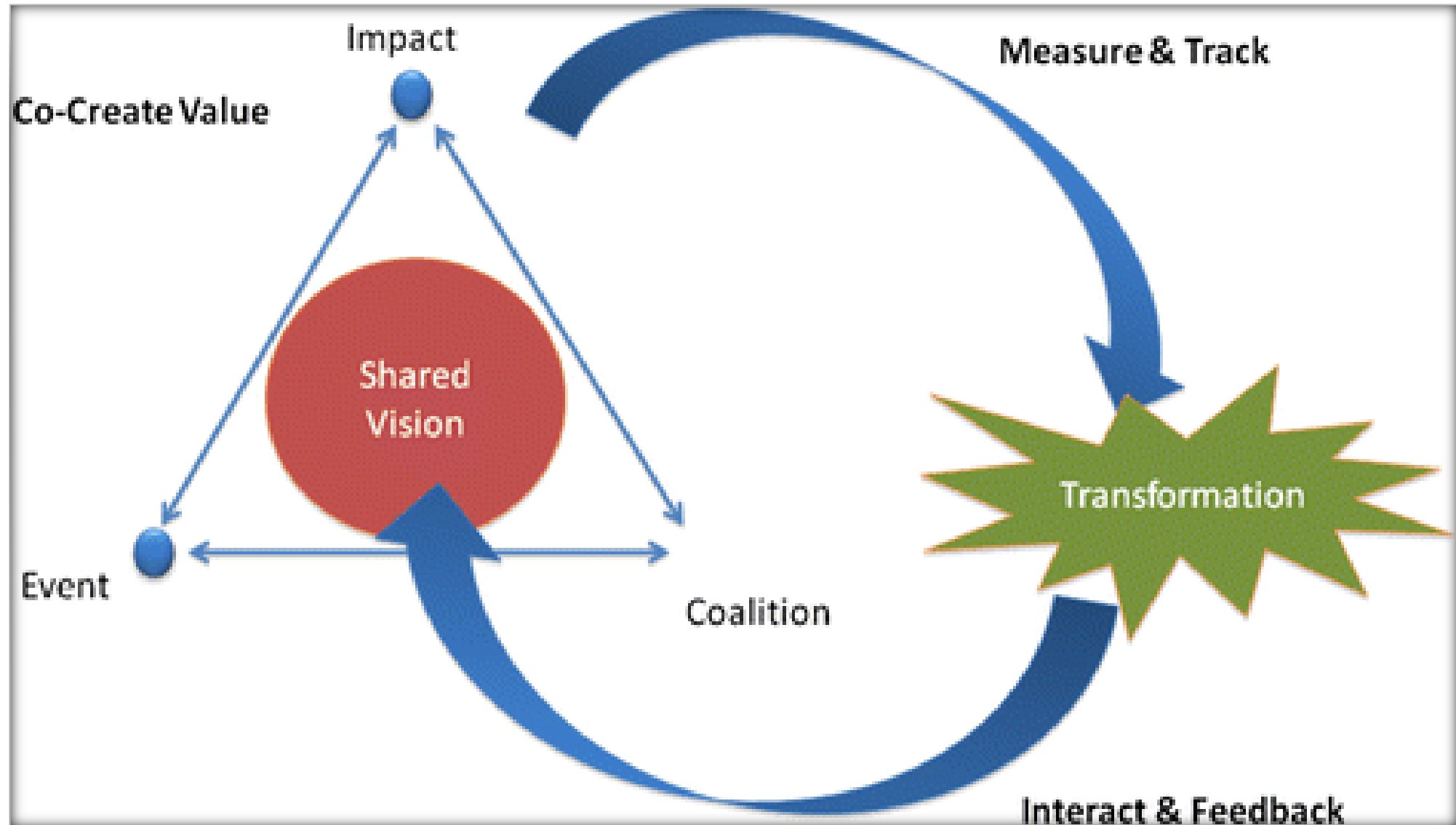
Choose an Implementation Process Model to Examine the "Spread and Scale of an **Evidence-Based Intervention**"

(Liu, 2020, Center for Implementation)

- Used & Adapted for this setting the <u>school administrator</u> and <u>program implementation guide</u> available through **project-core.com** (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, 2019)

- Top-Down, not Bottom-Up Approach: Comm Sci & Disorders Dept at CSUF signed a 5-year IC-RPP contract with school administrators to implement a mutually agreeable intervention to increase special education student's literacy-language outcomes in classrooms Sept 2020 through June 2025.

What we KNOW

WHAT WE DO

Alonzo, Komesidou, Wolter, Curran, Ricketts, & Hogan, 2021; Benson-Goldberg, Geist, & Erickson, 2022; Douglas & Burshnic, 2018; Implementation Model, Geist, Erickson, Greer, Hatch, 2021; Evaluation Framework, Per Nilsen, 2015

Central Aims of a Process Model

1. Evaluate HOW educators (teachers, SLPs, aides) implemented an evidence-based **3-pronged instructional package** over 5-years:

   - (a) HOW was Readtopia, (BuildingWings, Inc.) as a novel comprehensive literacy curriculum adopted into elementary, middle, high school, and adult transition classrooms?

   - (b) WHAT HAPPENED in classrooms when core and curricular-content vocabulary were adopted as a universal (class-wide) language-learning support, and

   - (c) HOW was aided language input learned by adult educators

2. Compare and examine an assemblage of classroom-generated data and measure student literacy & language outcomes.

Research Questions
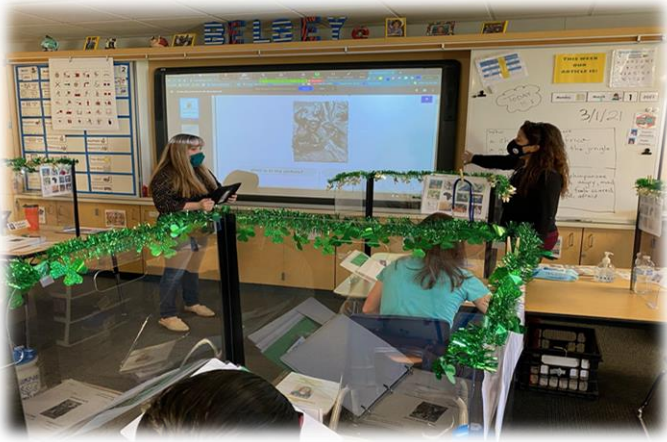
1. How does implementation happen in a complex system?

2. What are the classroom aggregated effects on student learning?
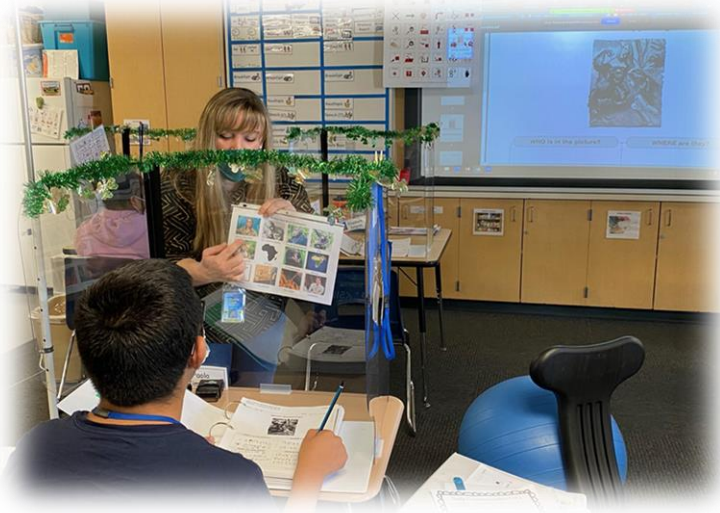
Methods

Design: Nonexperimental, longitudinal cohort study employing a Cross-Classroom Analysis using Repeated Measures

Data Collection: Scheduled direct observations & video recordings, Readtopia assessment & lesson data, educator anecdotes, minutes from action planning & progress meetings, Communication Matrix Observational Assessment results by trained SLPs. Ends June 2025.

Different Analyses began as teachers & SLPs submitted the raw QUANT & QUAL data, which was organized, cleaned, transformed, explored, & analyzed to answer specific questions. Main task of Summer 2025.

An Assemblage of Data Collected

Teacher and SLP Supplied end of quarter and/or BOY-EOY

- Readtopia Reading Placement Screens per student, once to two times per year (BOY or EOY)

- Readtopia Student Progress Assessments

- Communication Matrix Observational Tool Assessment

- Direct Classroom Observations

- teacher & SLP supplied anecdotes & video clips

Setting & Participants

- First two years 100 students enrolled:
  from 4 pilot Special Day Classrooms to 6 classrooms
  adopting intervention situated in a large SoCal urban school

- Year 3-5 = up to 13 consented classrooms, stabilized at 9 at start of Year 4

- 2024-2025 = special education administration mandated *Readtopia* in 17 SDCs

- To date, about 255-260 students situated in self-contained Special Day Classrooms were impacted by Project P4L

What was measured over time? (Evaluation of Effectiveness)

Readtopia Measures:

Reading Assessments

- Formative Assessment / Progress Monitoring

- Cumulative Assessment / Content Knowledge

- Fluency Assessments

- Emergent Literacy Measures

Readtopia® READING LEVELS CORRELATION CHART

LEVEL	STAGE	GRADE EQUIVALENCY	LEXILE LEVEL	FOUNTAS AND PINNELL	ACCELERATED READER
1	Early Emergent	Pre-K			
2	Emergent	Pre-K — K			
3	Early Transitional	K — 1.0			
4	Transitional	1.0 — 2.0			
5	Early Conventional	2.0 — 2.5			
6	Conventional	2.5 — 3.0			
7	Conventional	3.0 — 4.0			

This chart illustrates how familiar leveling systems correlat
this correlation according to their personal evaluation and professional judgment.

Results

Does the student use speech, signs or symbols to engage in sustained interactions with others? No

Does the student use speech, signs or symbols to respond to direct requests? Yes

Can the student identify most of the letters most of the time? No

Is the student interested and engaged during book sharing? No

Final Student Assessment

Level E1

Readtopia's ELMs captured nuanced changes over time

ELMs examined what was present or missing on the 6 essential components for becoming literate:
 - Communication
 - Print has Meaning
 - Concepts about Print
 - Alphabetic Principle
 - Phonological Awareness
 - Language Comprehension

Emergent Literacy Measures

Learner Name _____ Profile Start _____ Profile End _____

Communication ————————————————————————➤ **Interaction**

LEVEL 1 — EARLY EMERGENT (E) — Learner Profile

- ☒ Uses behaviors (e.g., arm movements, facial expressions, vocalizations) to communicate with others
- ☒ Makes choices regarding personal preferences from arrays of 2 or 3 items
- ☒ Use single words, signs or symbols for a restricted range of purposes (e.g., express wants or needs)

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Interventions
- Attribute meaning to all communication behaviors by naming the behavior (*I see you reaching*) and the perceived intent (*I'll bet you WANT that.*)
- Wait for the learner to attend to you before you start communicating
- Provide adequate wait time throughout interactions to encourage responses
- Provide opportunities for choice making from throughout the day
  - Using real objects
  - Using symbols and/or photos

LEVEL 2 — EMERGENT (E) — Learner Profile

- ☐ Names, labels, and/or identifies objects, people actions in academic contexts
- ☐ Spontaneously comments
- ☐ Responds to direct questions by choosing from options or communicating with single words (or phrases on a communication device)
- ☐ Responds to yes/no questions about curriculum

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Interventions
- Using photographs and other images, ask learners to:
  - Point to things you name
  - Name the things they see in the image
- During shared reading:
  - Read the page and wait while saying nothing to encourage the learner to comment
  - Ask questions that can be answered by pointing to images in the book and/or other means available to the learner
- While watching a video, ask learners to indicate when they see a specified object, person, or action
- Teach a conventional gesture (e.g., head nod/shake) or other unaided response for yes/no

LEVEL 3 — EARLY TRANSITIONAL (T) — Learner Profile

- ☐ Offers extended responses to direct questions or requests
- ☐ Initiates and maintains an interaction taking two or more turns
- ☐ Relates the current topic to a prior experience or prior knowledge by combining 3 or more words

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Interventions
- Encourage learner to turn and talk to a peer before engaging the group in a discussion then:
  - Ask learners to share their ideas with the group
  - Ask learners to report what their peer said
- Using photographs and other images, ask learners to:
  - Tell what the image makes them think about
  - Tell what else they know that could be in the image
- During shared reading, ask learners to tell how the text:
  - Is like something from their own experience
  - Relates to something they knew before reading

❶

Communication Matrix (Rowland, 2011)

SLPs responsible for getting baseline measures of communication functions from presymbolic communicators, then yearly measures

"I use the CM for most of my SDC student assessments...it's been such a useful tool for me in communicating LEVELS with parents and teams"
~Alexa Levy, M.A., CCC, SLP

Social Validity & Practical Value

- Self-Evaluations Provided at Professional Development Sessions

- Standardized Observation Forms used by trained RAs

- IEP Goal restructuring and outcomes

- Classroom Characteristics

Who was measured over time?

Cohort 1 High School	• 39 Students Consented
C1 Middle School	• 22 Students Consented
C1 Middle School	• 13 Students Consented
Cohort 2 Upper Elementary	• 8 Students Consented
C2 Middle School	• 10 students Consented
C2 High School	• 8 Students Consented

Year 1 & 2 example

Teachers Partnering with SLPs & Instructional Aides in Classrooms

Middle/Highschool **Admin Walkthroughs** *during:*

- Video Lessons
- Literature Comprehension Lessons
- Close Reading Lessons

Upper Elementary & All Emergent **Admin Walkthroughs** *during:*

- Interactive Class Read Aloud Lessons
- Predictable Chart Writing Lessons
- Shared Reading Lessons
- Close Reading Lessons
- Video Lessons

Classroom-Level Barriers to Intervention Implementation

Symbols for Communication

Text for Reading

Symbols for Communication

(Benson-Goldberg, 2025; Benson-Goldberg & Erickson, 2020; Donnelly, 2024; Erickson, Hatch, & Clendon, 2010; Freyhoff et al, 1998; Hurtado, Jones, & Burniston, 2014; Mayer & Moreno, 1998; Poncelas & Murphy, 2007; Pufpaff et al., 2000; Singh & Solman, 1990)
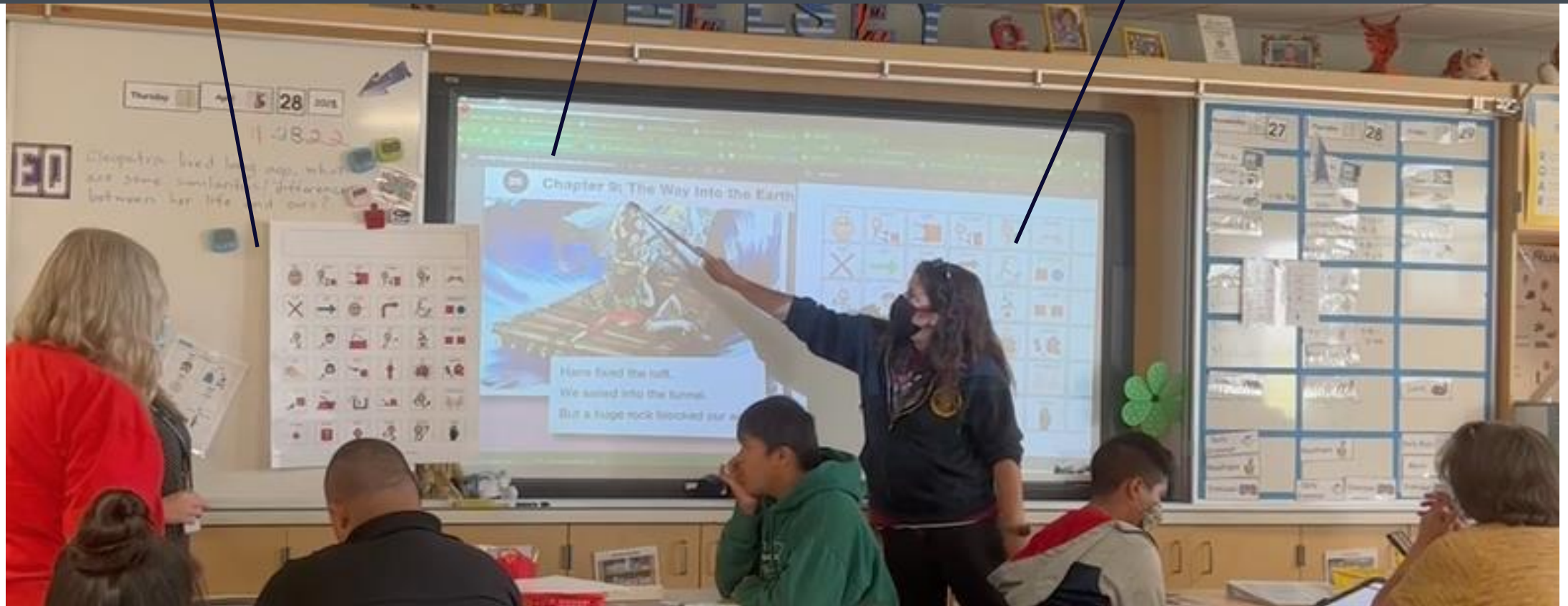
"Symbolated text" neither teaches reading of text, nor writing of text

Writing With Symbols

Do you   want to   write   with   symbols?   Widgit   can   help.

- Not all teachers followed the Teacher's Guide that was designed to be opened and book-marked during instruction; fidelity of implementation was challenging *for some teachers*.

- *Some teachers* selected lessons based on instructional comfort, "it's what I've always done (e.g., using Edmark Reading Program), or what they valued (wide use of videos), or what they "thought" was better (e.g., "functional skills" programming only).

- *Some teachers* had trouble shifting away from daily habits and routines that did not directly impact literacy learning (e.g., coffee delivery services to staff)

- It was challenging *for all teachers* to reach 90 min/day of explicit literacy instruction, *despite* research evidence (Erickson &Koppenhaver, 2020, for minimum **90-135 min/day;** National Reading Panel, recommended minimum 90 min/day; Education Northwest (2017) recommended an uninterrupted, 90-minute block of Tier I literacy instruction).

- Not all teachers sustained a strong co-teaching model (Heisler & Thousand, 2019) for a variety of reasons

**BARRIERS** to the adoption of aided language systems included (per observation & report):

- Infrequent Aided Language Input provided by aides across classrooms; frequent aide turnover: countered by paying aides for time completing Project Core modules; PD, and ongoing SLP coaching in classrooms
- Most evidence of ALI occurred during SLP & teacher **co-teaching.**
- Before specifically addressed in project update meetings, teachers were asking a much higher ratio of closed-ended questions to open-ended; with few instances of **students** being shown HOW and WHEN to ask questions
- Not all teachers frequently pointed to core and content vocabulary on Smartboards or Poster boards during their instruction.

Classroom-Level Facilitators to Intervention Implementation

Members of project changed how students were labeled.

Students as "learners" & Educators as working in a "community of learners" who shared an accessible visual language with many words available to combine for different purposes sharing meaningful content to talk about.
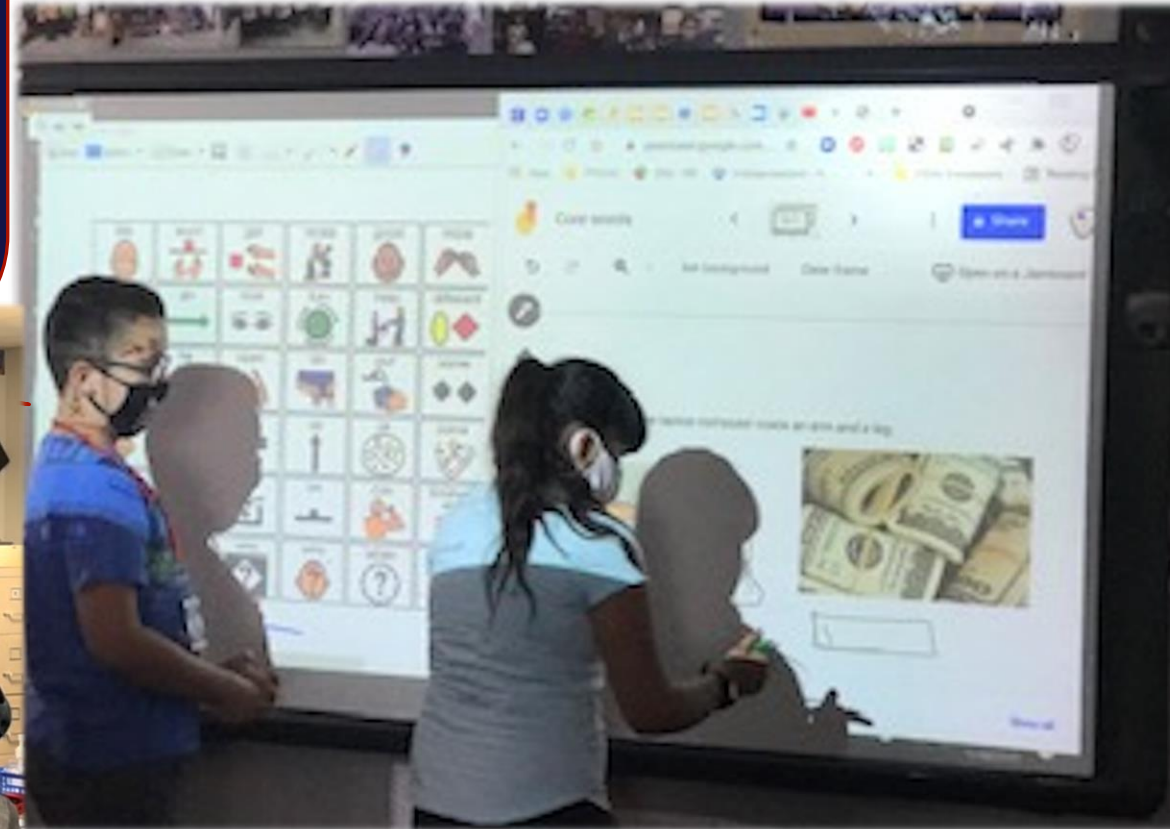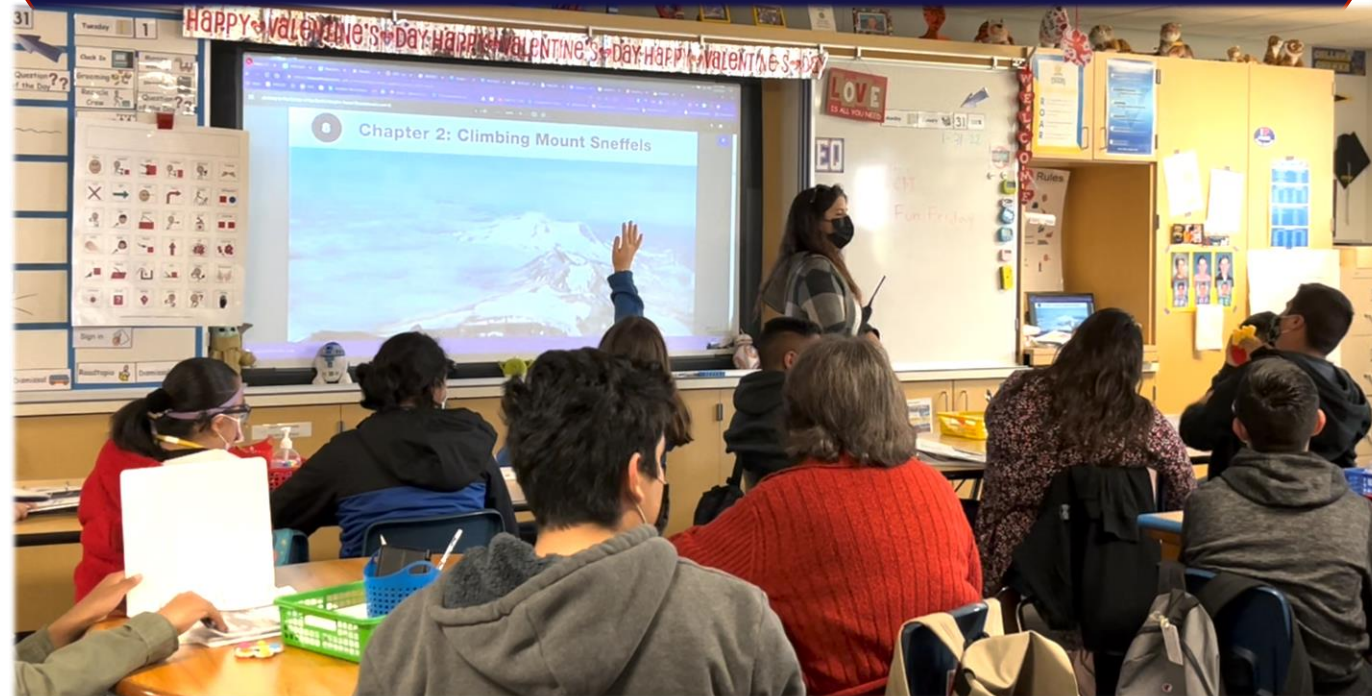
Readtopia Content Vocabulary readily available as book illustrations and text labels that facilitated understanding of lesson content

In real-time, SLPs could coach instructional aides on how to combine core+fringe vocabulary, and do so naturally, showing how students could respond or initiate; increasing cognitive and communicative engagement

SLP's modeling core vocabulary was associated with lead teacher's instruction during whole-class lessons (complementary co-teaching model)
(Heisler & Thousand, 2022)
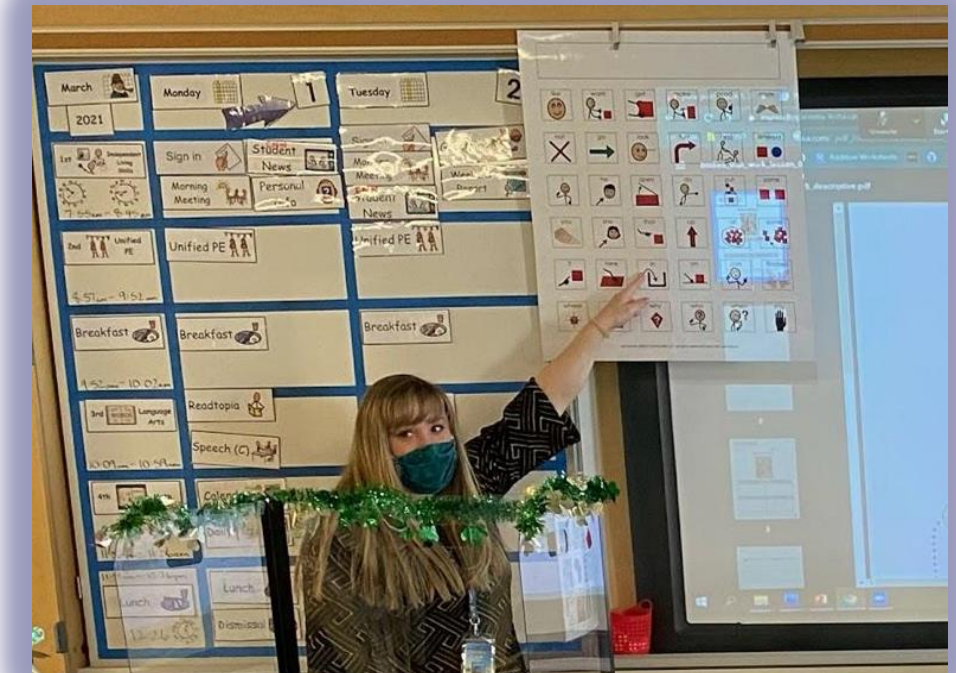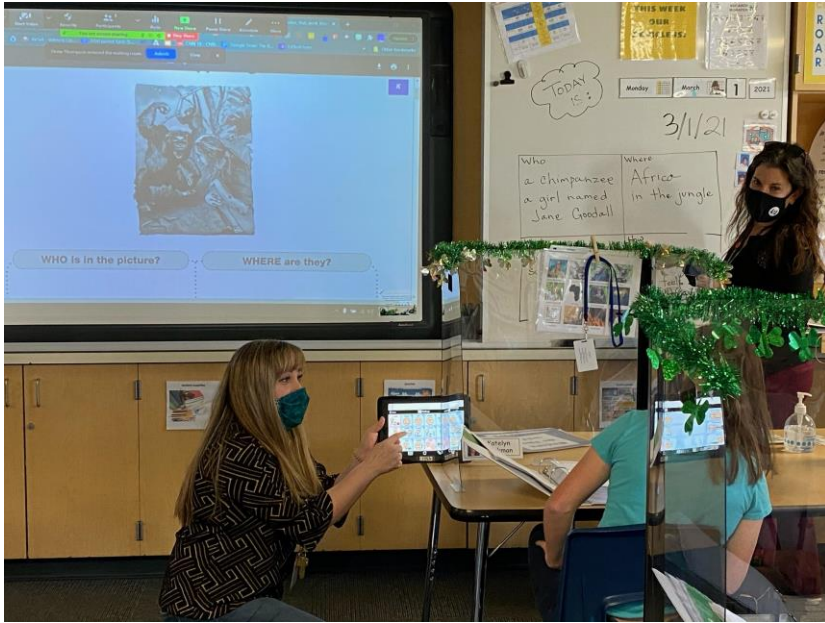
- SLP provided classroom-based aided language input (ALI) on student's aided language iPad application – associated with words the teacher used during instruction.

- Students/learners had increased opportunity to associate spoken words with graphic symbols & printed words

- SLP adjusted her schedule for more push-in services

- SLP addressed students' IEP goals for expressive and receptive language for both spoken AND written language in individual, small group, large group sessions

- Teacher gained insights & stated she "finally realized what it meant to 'infuse language into the curriculum"; SLP stated a realization about the variety of language functions needed for students to participate in an academic curriculum

- When the teacher opened the Readtopia Guide, fidelity of instruction improved for aided AAC users, teachers given recommendations on how to replace "closed-ended" with "open-ended" questions – invited participation!

- Students began to initiate comments and respond to teacher's questions using accessible both core and content vocabulary

- Students had more opportunities to combine words to formulate language for different reasons (based on
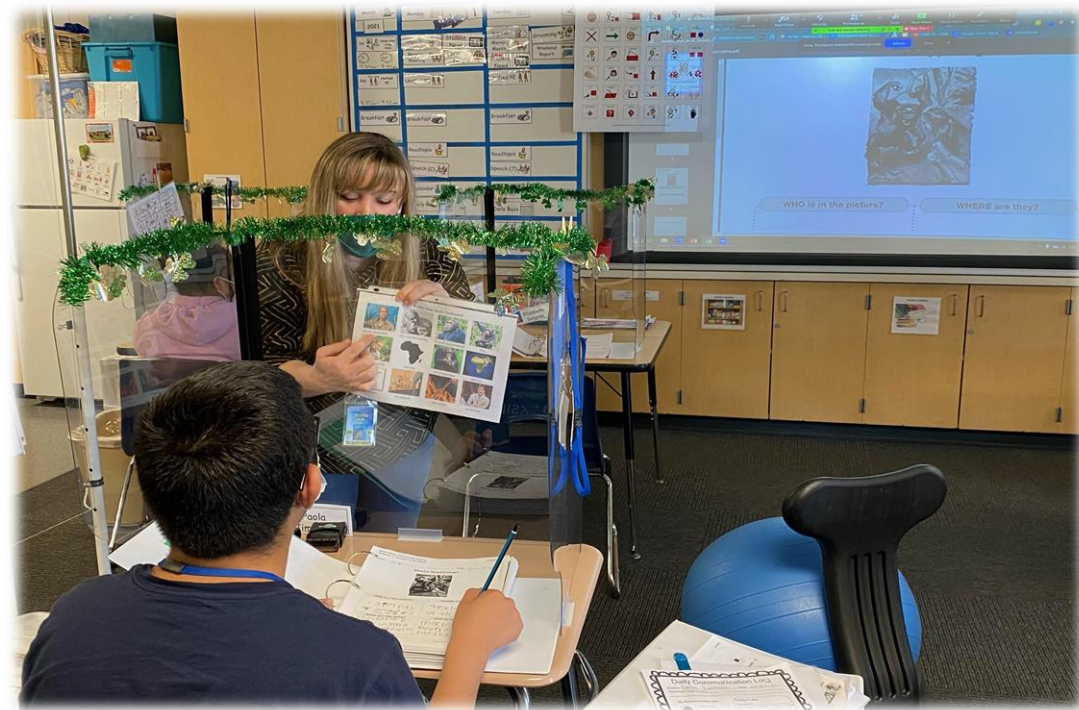
At Year 2, a New & Improved Community Mission Statement was written given observational data:

*To build a community of learners in which each beautifully complex student has multiple opportunities to **combine and exchange their own words** in an accessible symbolic form with peers and adults, **without judgement**, and with meaningful educational content that builds world knowledge.*

Becoming Literate means...
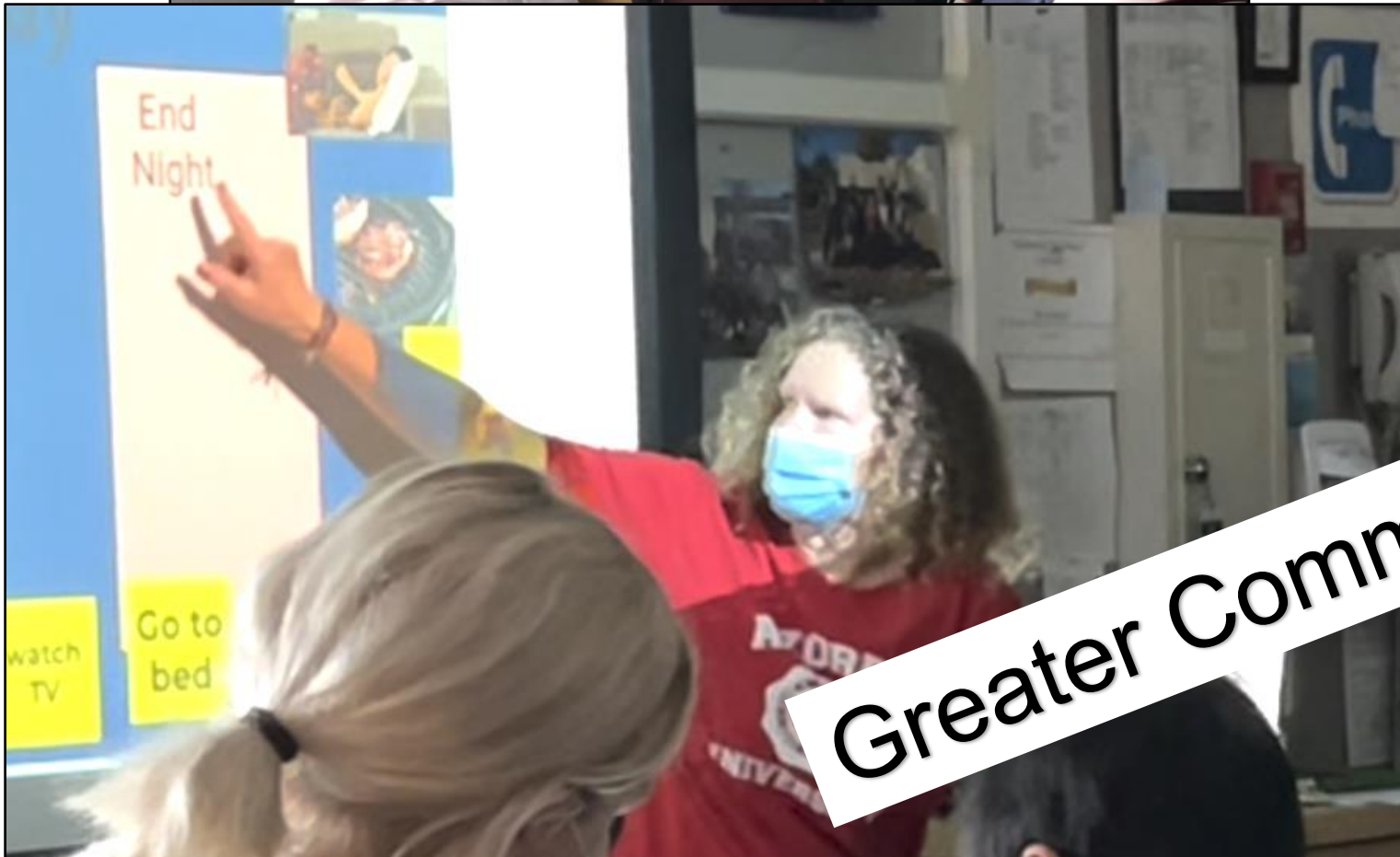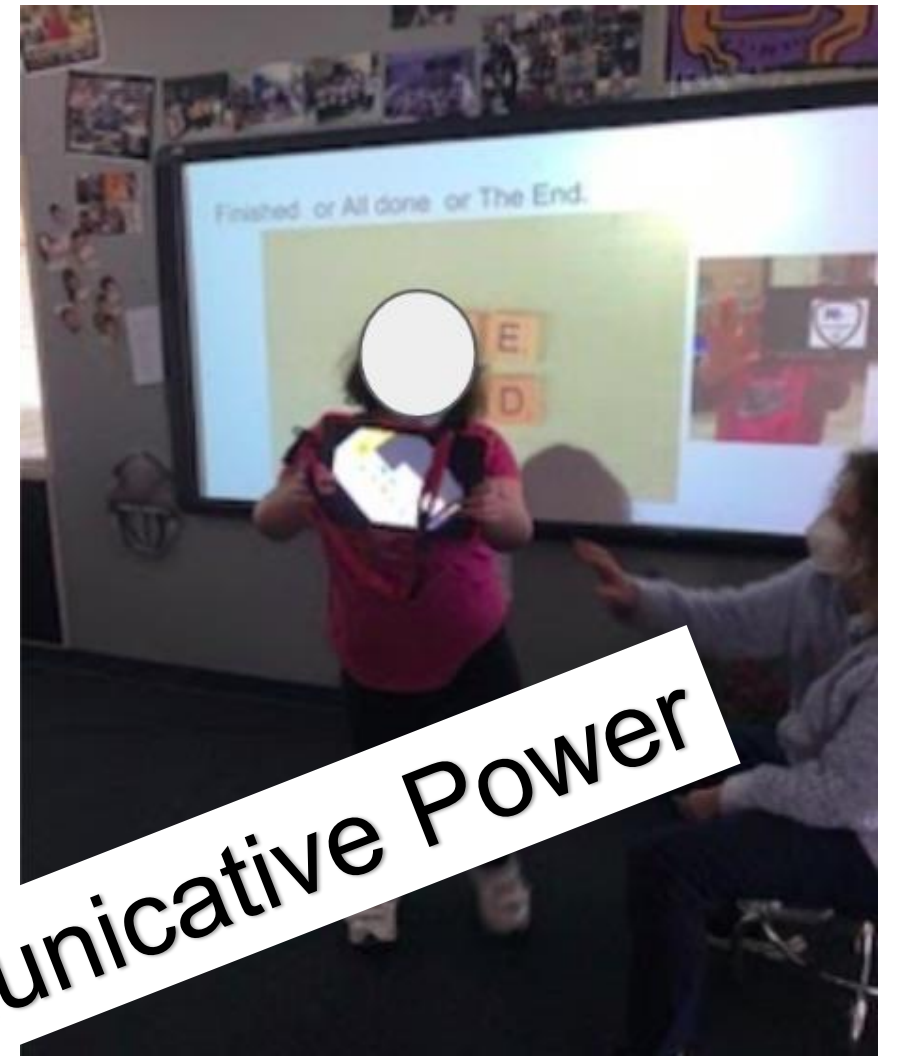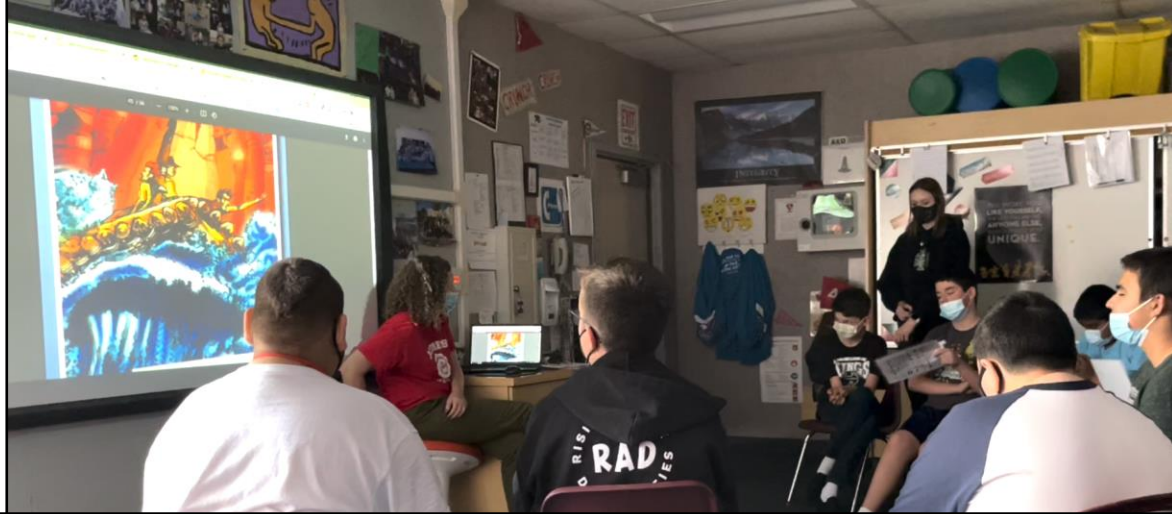
Greater Communicative Power

Educators took the time to connect literacy & language across the curriculum

A FACILITATOR to adoption of 3-pronged intervention:

When lead teachers modeled text for reading and graphic symbols for communicating
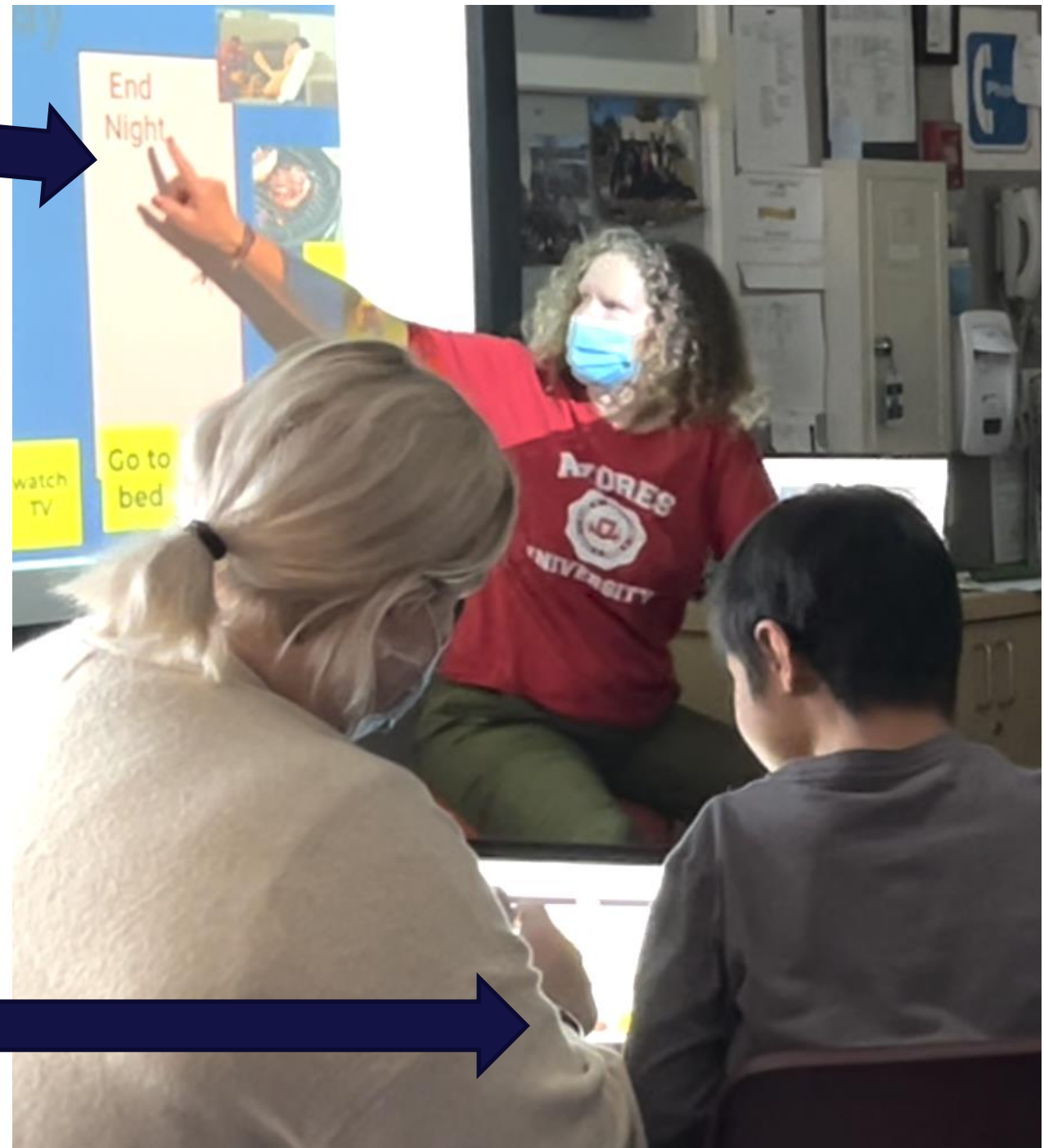
…the learner was given Age Respectful, Grade Relevant, interesting and engaging Reading material **without symbolated text**; Educators **connected** Academic & Functional Life Skills offering multiple opportunities to build world knowledge
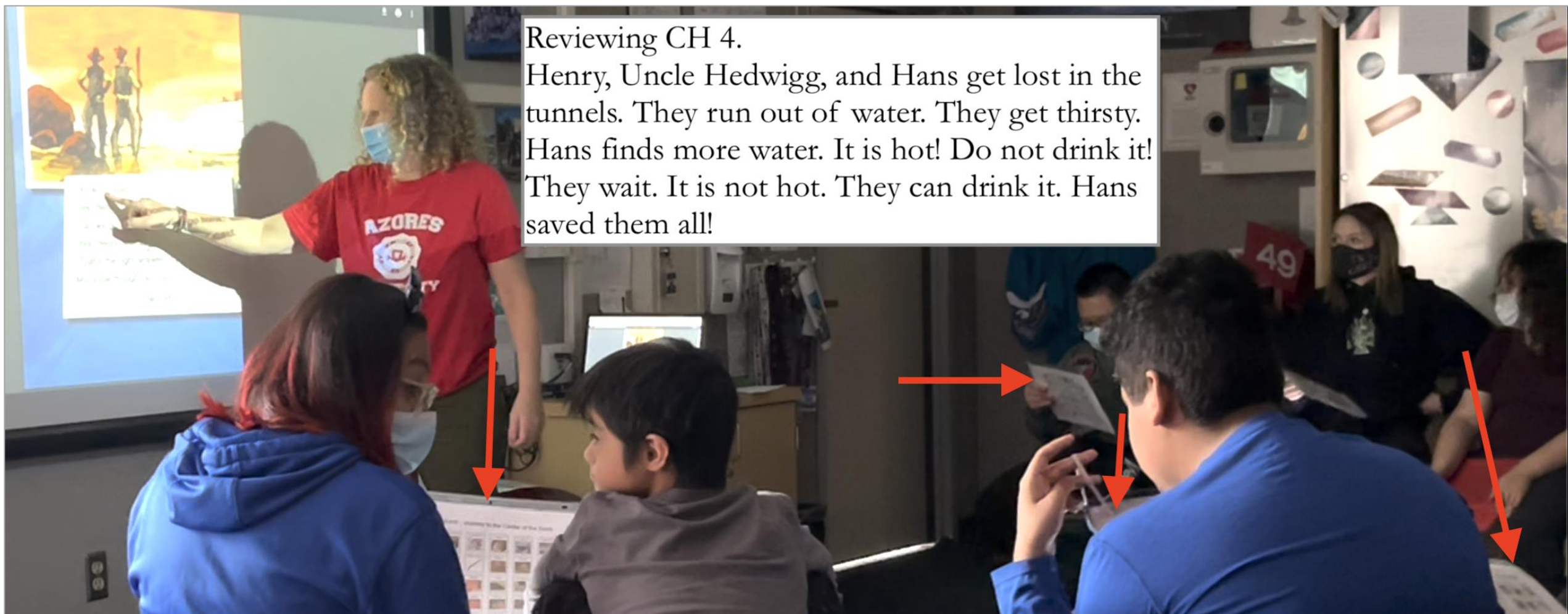
Reviewing CH 4.
Henry, Uncle Hedwigg, and Hans get lost in the tunnels. They run out of water. They get thirsty. Hans finds more water. It is hot! Do not drink it! They wait. It is not hot. They can drink it. Hans saved them all!

…educators enjoyed **teaching** new and interesting content while encouraging all forms of AAC and students became more engaged in lessons **using** all forms of AAC.
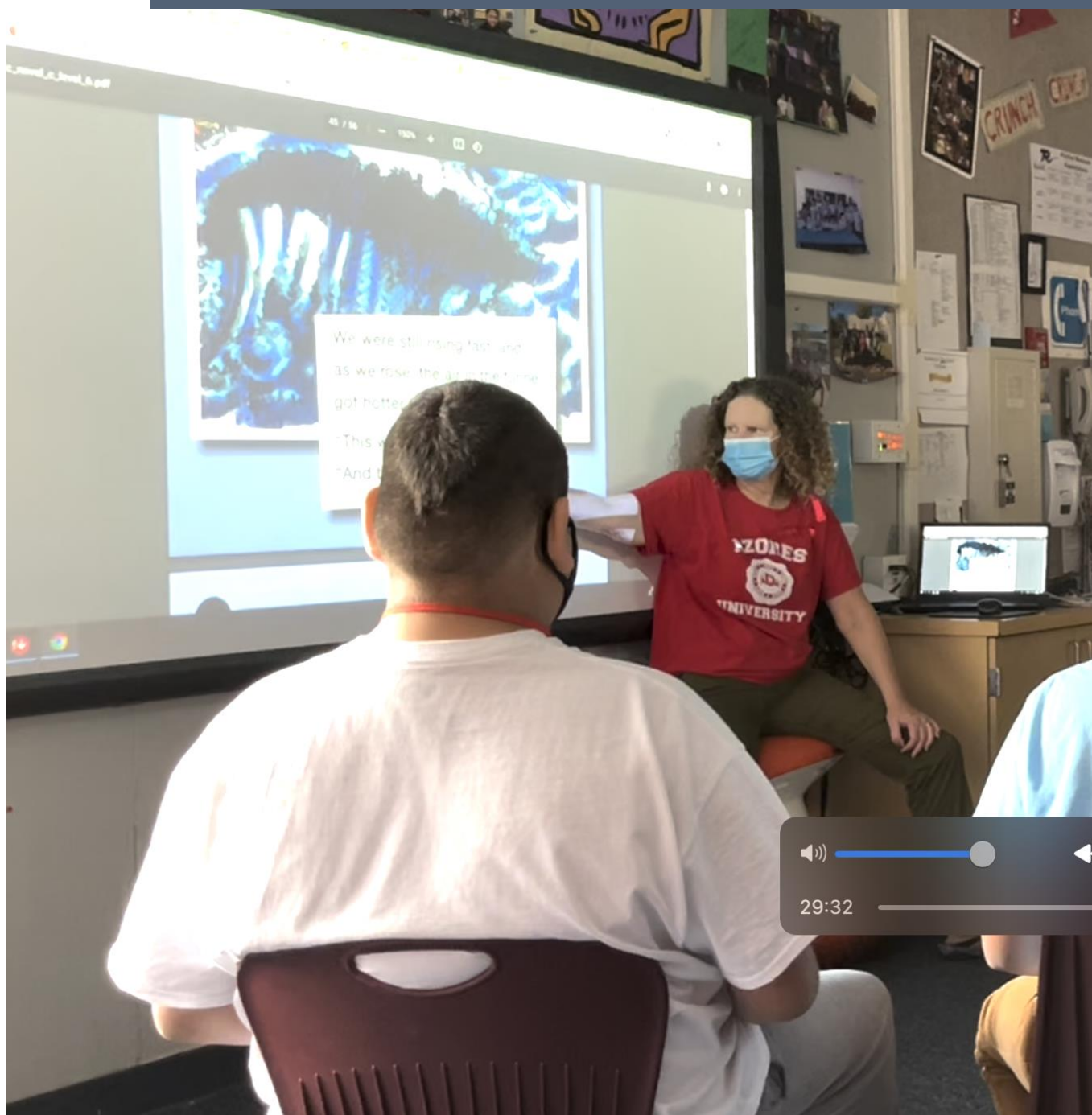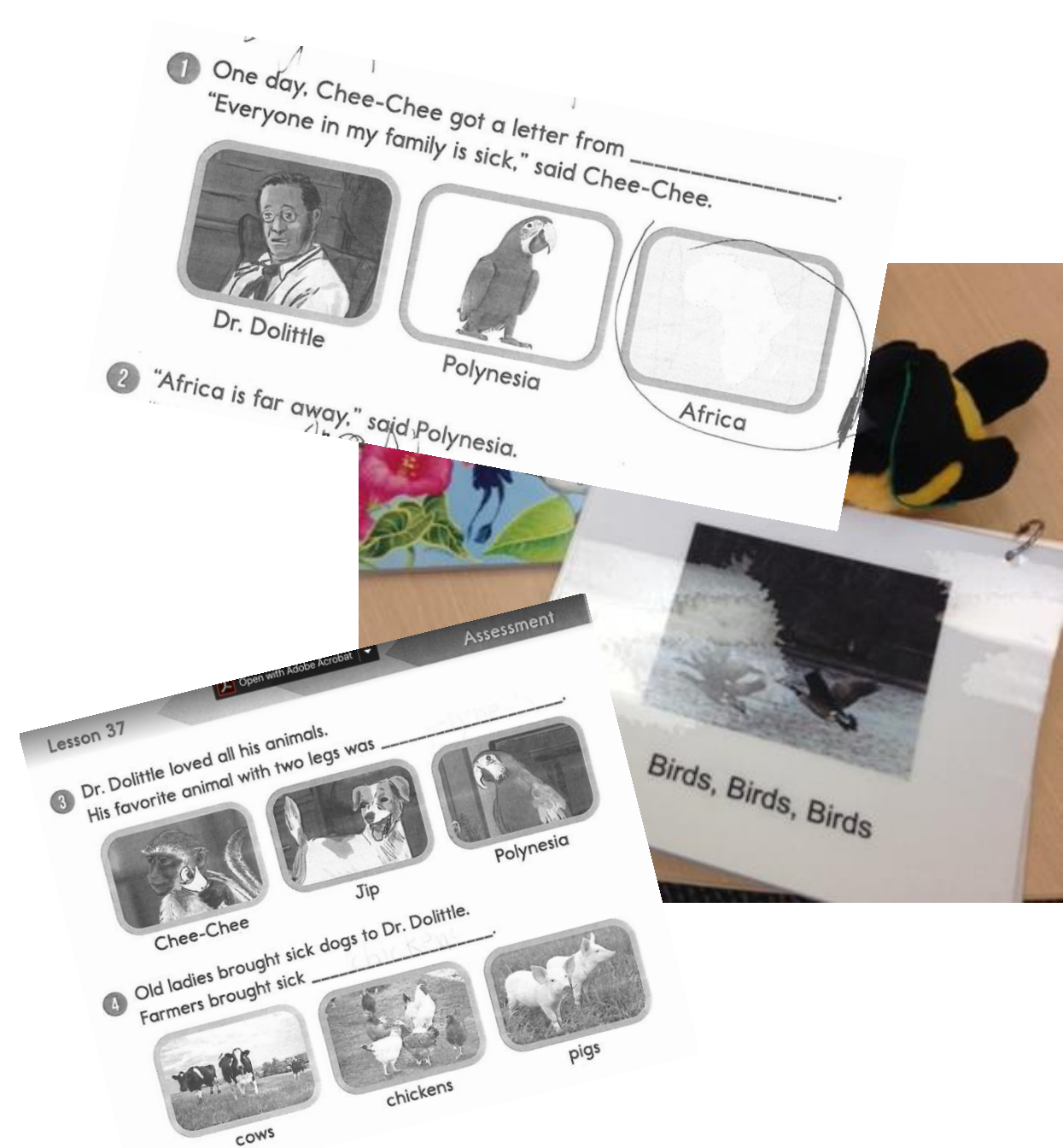
A FACILITATOR of Literacy+Language Learning: was teacher excitement with increased student engagement in the topical content.

Teachers "bought in".

Teachers could present topical content in a variety of ways over a 10-week quarter & keep student interest.

Teachers saw that "drill" was not necessary for students to demonstrate learning!

FACILITATOR OF INTERVENTION ADOPTION:
Teachers reported feeling more like **literacy** Instructors than behavior managers!

15 min/week of *independent reading* in class

90 min/week of *independent reading* in class
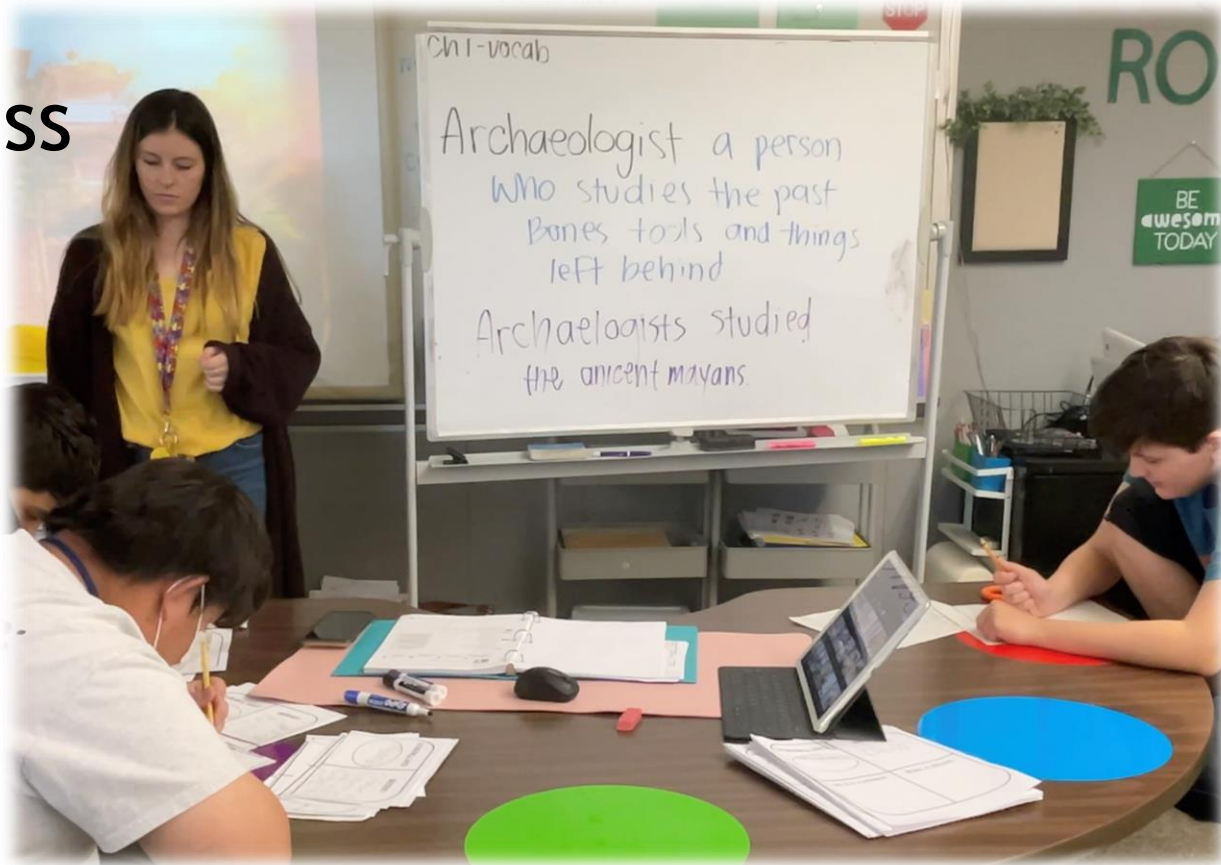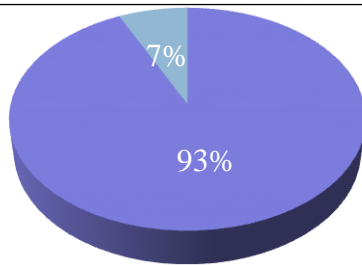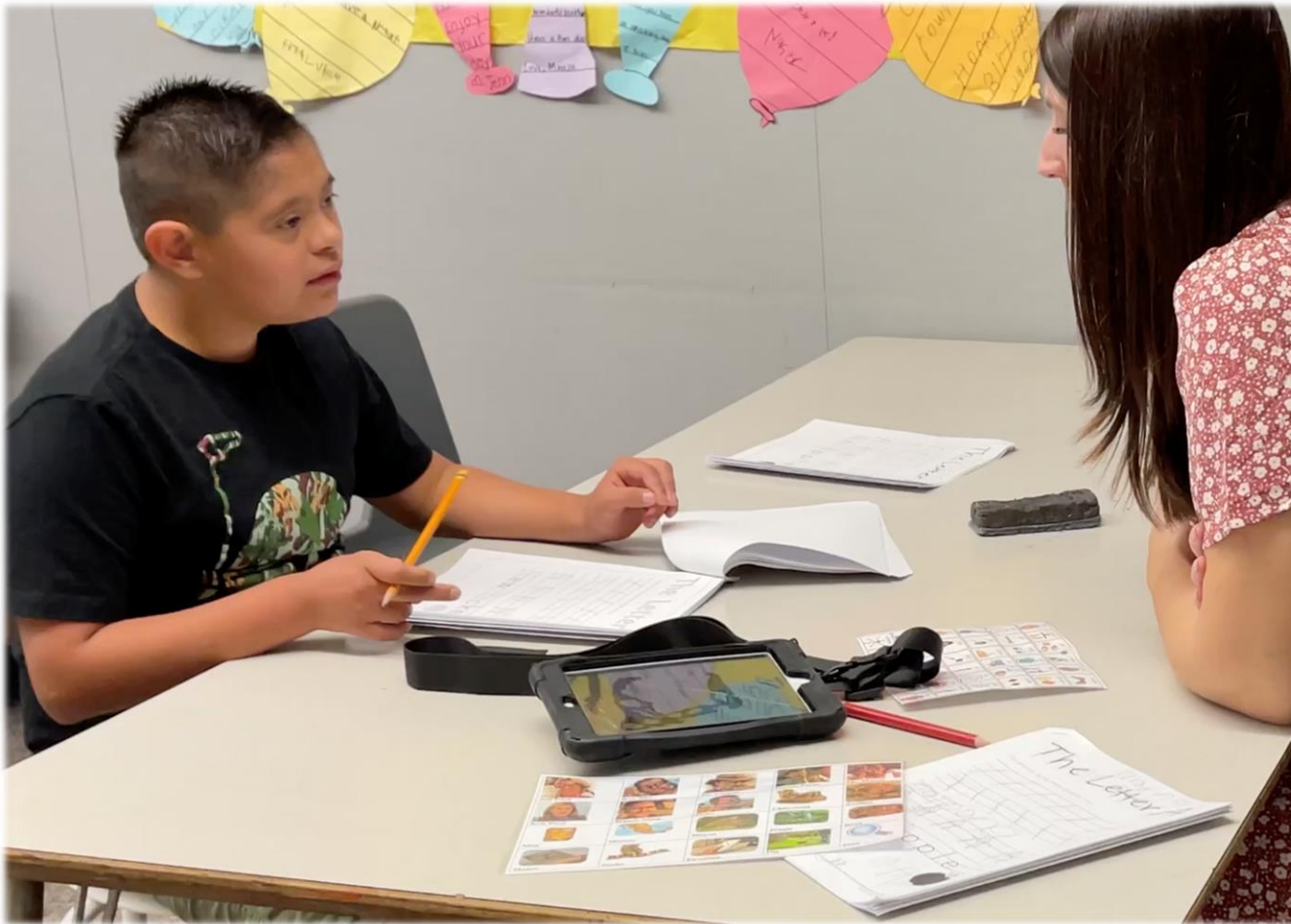
- Teacher & SLP had better ways to differentiate instruction and set up literacy learning groups at students reading levels
- SLP could focus on emergent learners during push-in services

7%

93%

■ Emergent ■ Conventional

50% 50%
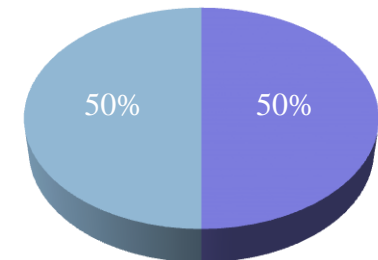
■ Emergent ■ Conventional
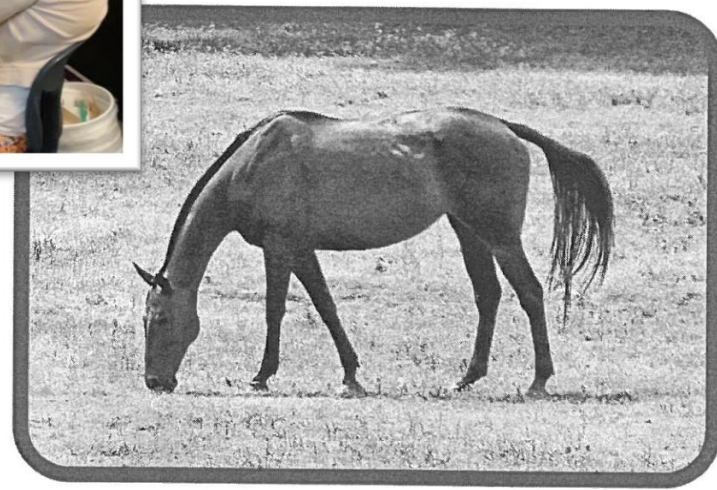
Emergent writing was addressed more frequently because it was part of the comprehensive instructional package important for preliterate communication

Horses K-W-L Chart

K	W	L
What do we <u>K</u>now about horses?	What do we <u>W</u>ant to know about horses?	What did we <u>L</u>earn about horses?
✓	✓	1. A baby horse is called a foal. 2. Horses are really fast.

A FACILITATOR to adoption of 3-pronged intervention:

Creation of Literacy-Language Routines & Engineered Environments that Supported Literacy Learning

(see Chapter 2, Erickson & Koppenhaver, 2020)
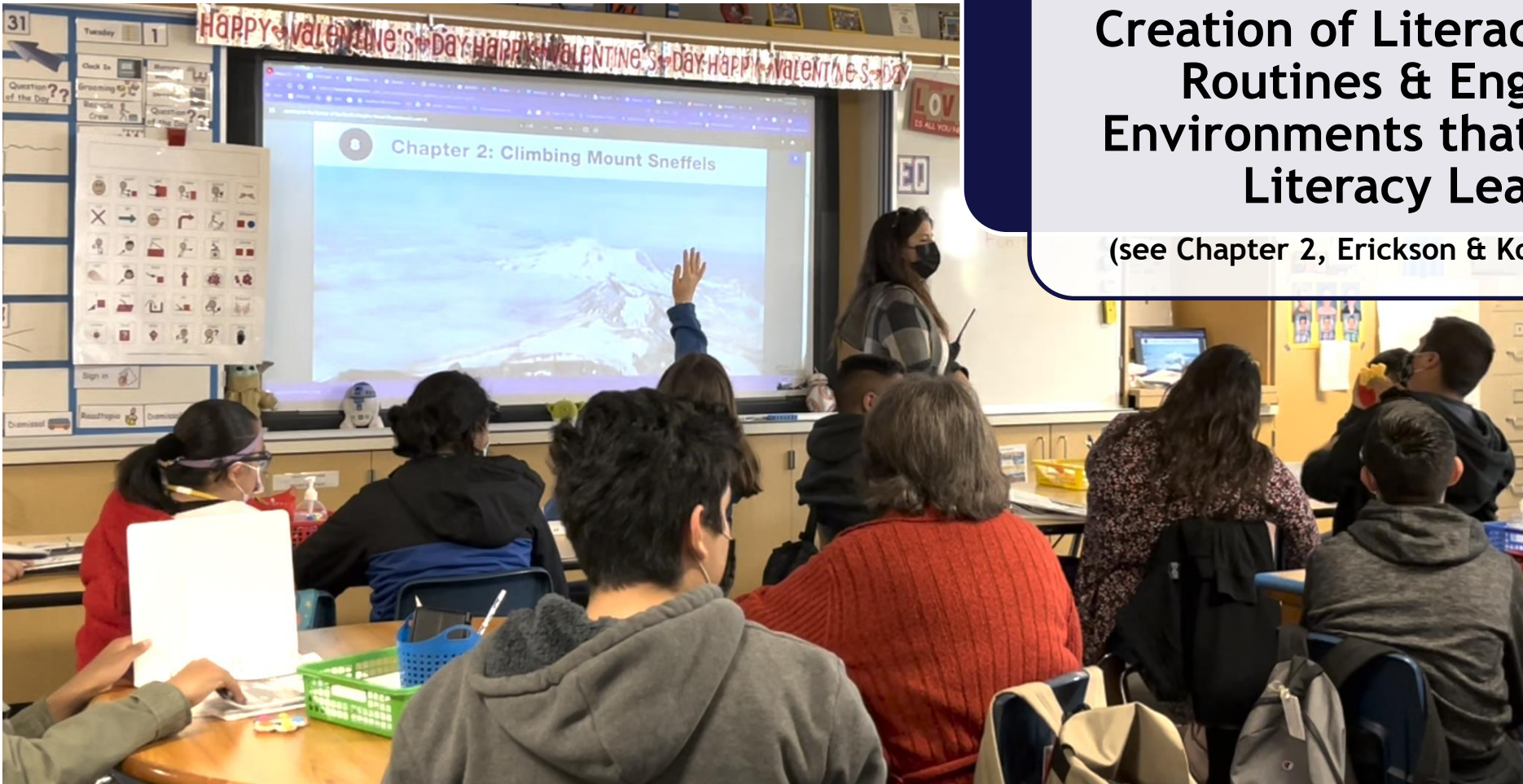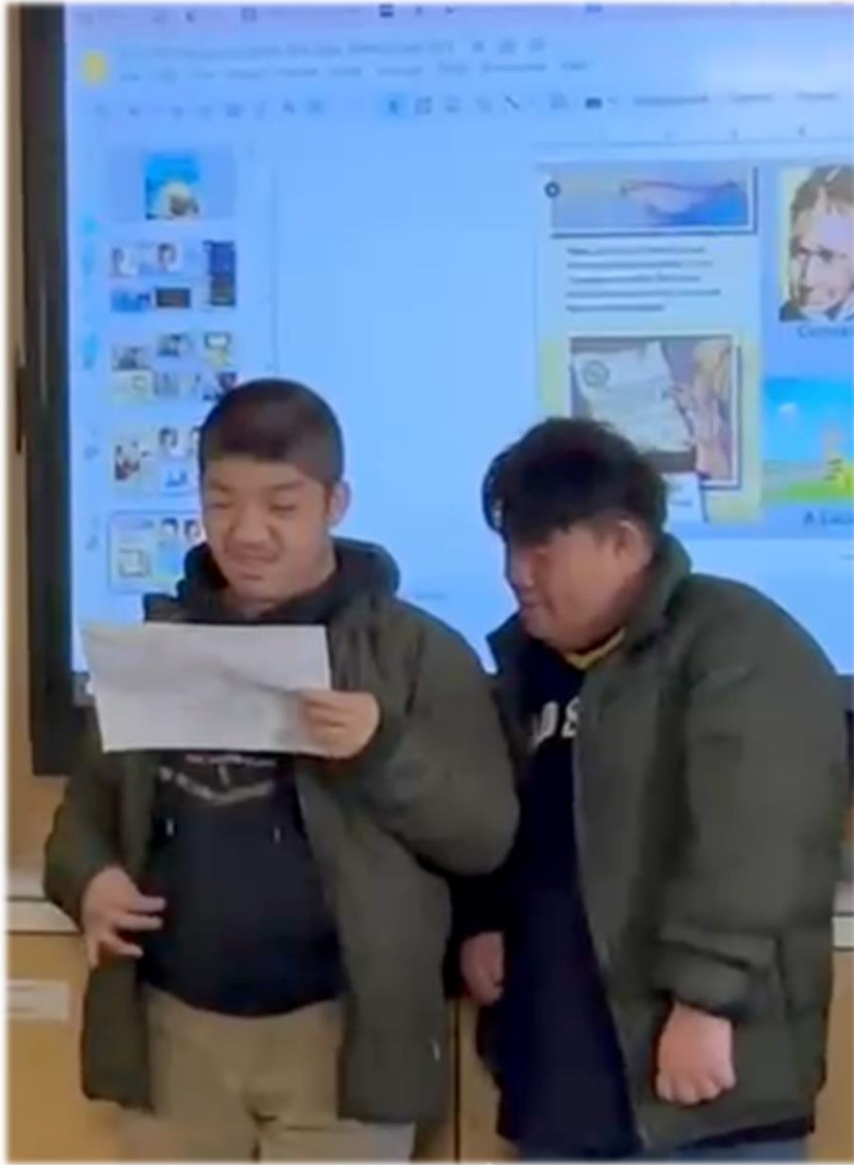
Example: One **high school** classroom followed since start of study:
   Avg. Fall 2020 = 30 min/week
   Avg. May 2021 = 225 min/week
   ==**Dramatic change in one year!**==
   Avg. 2022 = 225 min/week/**45 min/day**
   Avg. 2023 = 248 min/week
   using Readtopia 2x/day – *other high school SDCs began adopting curriculum, but not consented to study*

Ave. Dec. 2024 = evidence of 240-250 min/wk (50-60 min/day) all literacy instruction combined

Goal was at least 450 min/week (90-135 min/day)

A FACILITATOR TO Readtopia Implementation: *was the use of the Emergent Literacy Measures which gave teachers & SLPs a way* to **measure small changes** across 6 essential elements of emergent literacy:

- Communication
- Print Has Meaning
- Concepts about Print
- Alphabetic Principle
- Phonological Awareness
- Language Comprehension

Emergent Literacy Measures

Learner Name _____   Profile Start _____   Profile End _____

Communication ➔ **Interaction**

LEVEL 1 (E — EARLY EMERGENT) — Learner Profile

- ☒ Uses behaviors (e.g., arm movements, facial expressions, vocalizations) to communicate with others
- ☒ Makes choices regarding personal preferences from arrays of 2 or 3 items
- ☒ Use single words, signs or symbols for a restricted range of purposes (e.g., express wants or needs)

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Interventions
- Attribute meaning to all communication behaviors by naming the behavior (*I see you reaching*) and the perceived intent (*I'll bet you WANT that.*)
- Wait for the learner to attend to you before you start communicating
- Provide adequate wait time throughout interactions to encourage responses
- Provide opportunities for choice making from throughout the day
  - Using real objects
  - Using symbols and/or photos

LEVEL 2 (E — EMERGENT) — Learner Profile

- ☐ Names, labels, and/or identifies objects, people actions in academic contexts
- ☐ Spontaneously comments
- ☐ Responds to direct questions by choosing from options or communicating with single words (or phrases on a communication device)
- ☐ Responds to yes/no questions about curriculum

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Interventions
- Using photographs and other images, ask learners to:
  - Point to things you name
  - Name the things they see in the image
- During shared reading:
  - Read the page and wait while saying nothing to encourage the learner to comment
  - Ask questions that can be answered by pointing to images in the book and/or other means available to the learner
- While watching a video, ask learners to indicate when they see a specified object, person, or action
- Teach a conventional gesture (e.g., head nod/shake) or other unaided response for yes/no

LEVEL 3 (T — EARLY TRANSITIONAL) — Learner Profile

- ☐ Offers extended responses to direct questions or requests
- ☐ Initiates and maintains an interaction taking two or more turns
- ☐ Relates the current topic to a prior experience or prior knowledge by combining 3 or more words

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Interventions
- Encourage learner to turn and talk to a peer before engaging the group in a discussion then:
  - Ask learners to share their ideas with the group
  - Ask learners to report what their peer said
- Using photographs and other images, ask learners to:
  - Tell what the image makes them think about
  - Tell what else they know that could be in the image
- During shared reading, ask learners to tell how the text:
  - Is like something from their own experience
  - Relates to something they knew before reading

❶

A Facilitator of *Readtopia* adoption was **t**eachers having ways to measure and track change by quarter in the **foundational elements** of literacy learning, even for the adult transition students:

Alphabetic Principle

E1	Distinguishes letters from other shapes and symbols	Q1		Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
	Recognizes first letter of own first name	Q1		Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
	Identifies 8 or more upper or lower-case letters of the alphabet				Q1	Q1	Q1	
E2	Identifies all upper- and lower-case letters of the alphabet				Q1	Q1	Q1	
	Identifies 10 or more letter-sound relationships					Q1	Q1	
	Represents initial sounds in words when writing				Q1	Q1	Q1	
T3	Identifies all letter-sound relationships for consonants and short vowels							
	Represents initial and final sounds in words when writing							
	Reads 10 or more common sight words					Q1	Q1	
	Reads parts of familiar text word-by-word							

Print Has Meaning

E1	Makes marks on paper or selects letters from keyboard or alternate pencil when asked to writevocalizations) to communicate with others	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
	Writes recognizable letters or selects letters— not other characters—from keyboard or alternate pencil when asked to write			Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
	Demonstrates understanding that writing conveys a message that others can read			Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
E2	Generates text using letters grouped in word-like groupings with occasional real words that have not been copied					Q1		
	Demonstrates concept of word by using spaces between words (words are not spelled correctly)			Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
	Uses familiar patterns (I like; I want; I went) in writing					Q1	Q1	
T3	Generates own ideas for writing			Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
	Produces text with spaces between words	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
	Writes 1 or more complete sentences about curriculum-relevant topic without depending on repeated patterns (I like; I want; I went							

Opportunities arose to overcome the BARRIER to AIDED AAC ADOPTION:

Don't assume students are not paying attention, and "not motivated" to use aided AAC – *let's see what happens next!*
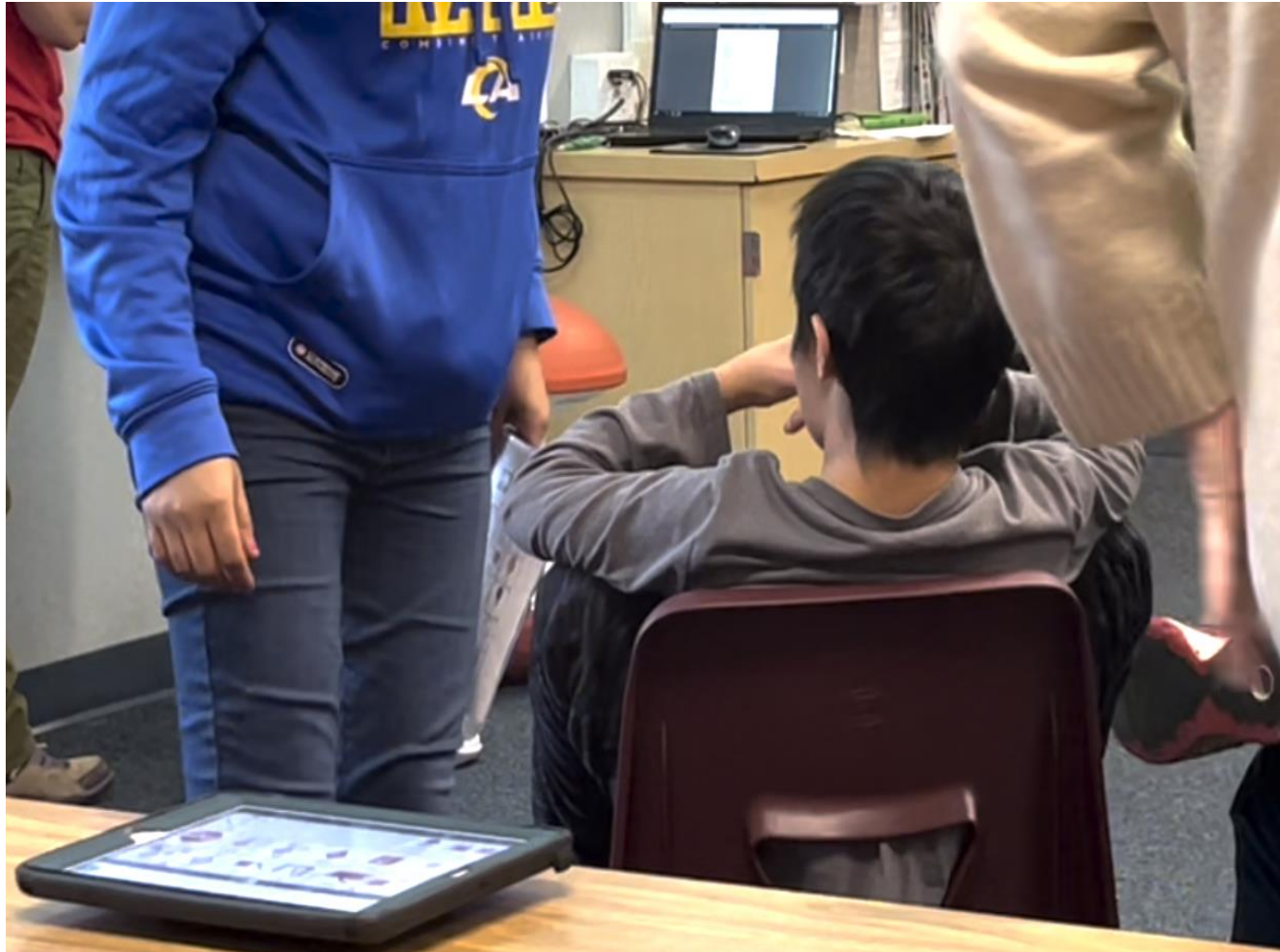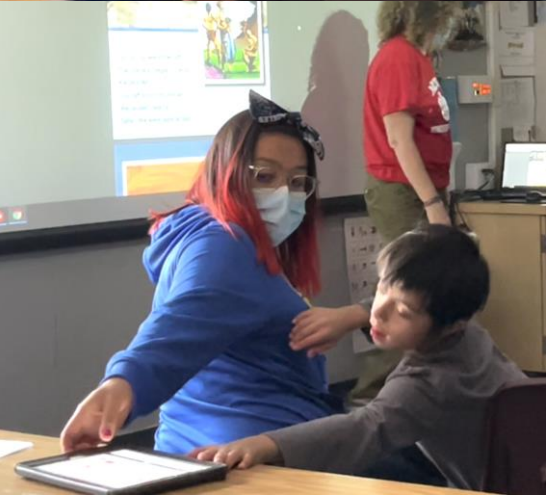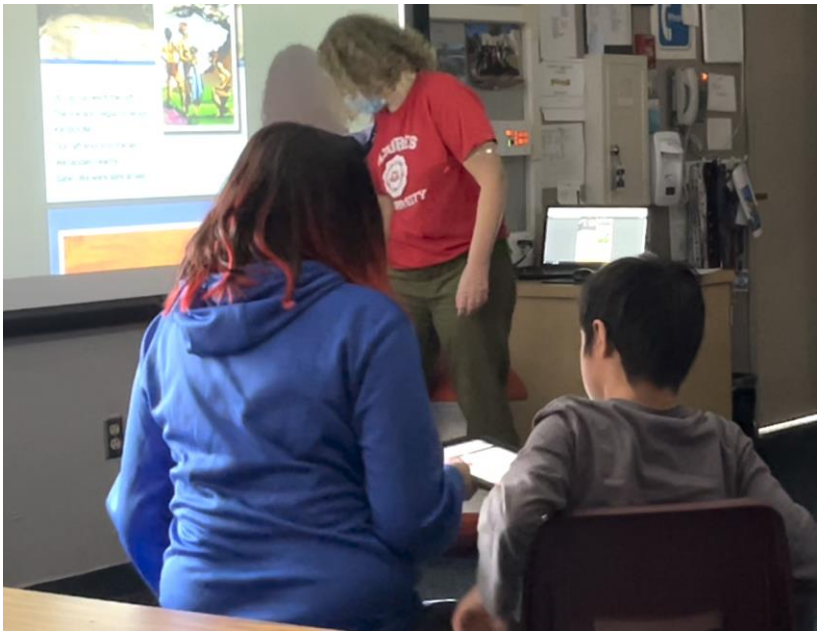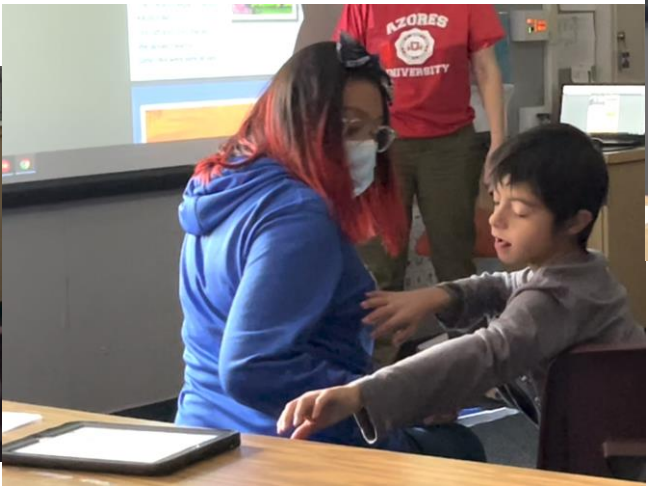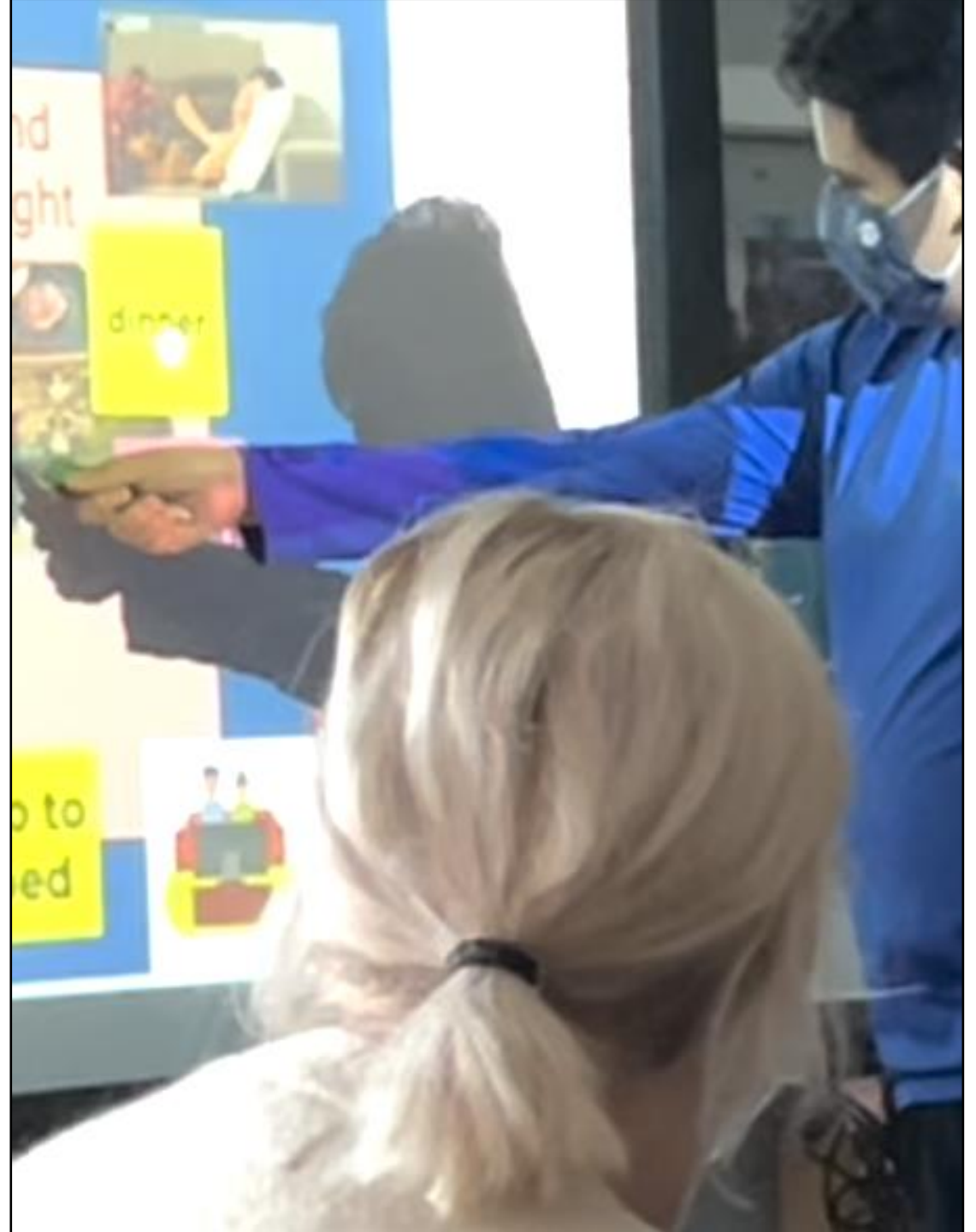
A Facilitator of *Readtopia* Adoption: Teachers appreciated lesson's explicit connection of thematic content to students' daily life:
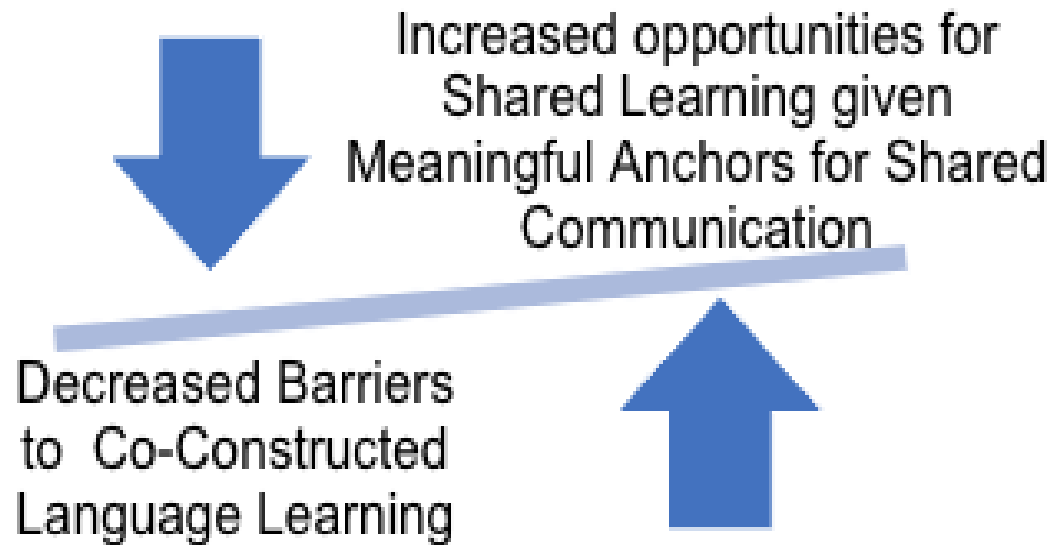
(e.g., *"a day has a **beginning, middle, and end** similar to how a story is organized from "beginning, middle, and end"*

Aides or SLPs added these concept words on aided AAC systems.

A Facilitator of improved student outcomes was most notable in classes that employed a Co-Teaching Model

Best Student Outcomes in one class was om Phonological Awareness & Communication

Increased opportunities for Shared Learning given Meaningful Anchors for Shared Communication

Decreased Barriers to Co-Constructed Language Learning

Experienced teacher and SLP had administrator support for co-teaching model: Parallel & Complementary Approaches
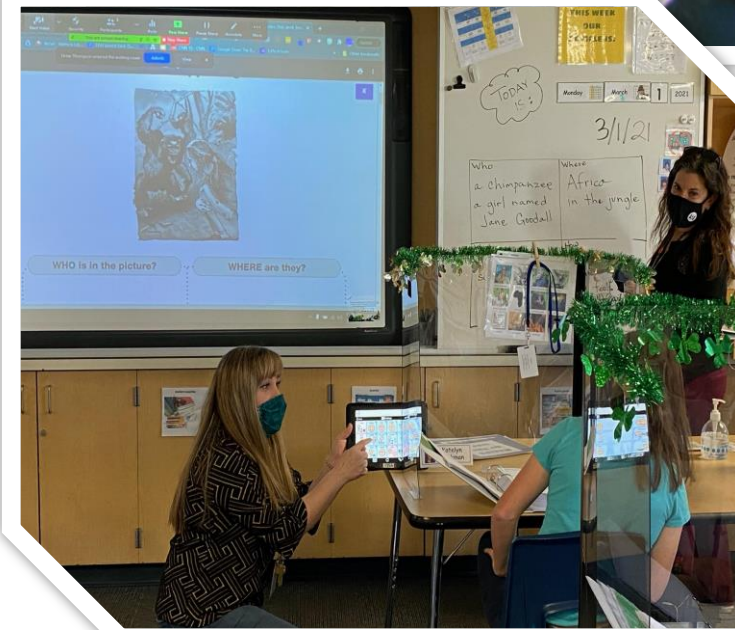
Collaborative Planning & Co-Treatment Model

Push-in during Readtopia Instruction

In sum, what were the comparative contributions of higher ed *to* local ed?

List of Higher Ed Contributions

Project Direction:
- Selected ImpSci Model
- Lead Research Methodology as Principal Investigator
- Contributed knowledge of Guidance Documents
- Recommended a packaged EB intervention *(Readtopia, Tier 1 Vocabulary, Aided Language Input)* based on district need
- **Financial** (Grant Support) for Seat Purchase of Pilot Literacy Curriculum/*Readtopia*, two-year support of color printing & laminating of reading materials & 36 Core Communication paper-based boards, purchase of 3-ring binders for guides and materials
- PD Training; Extensive Research Assistant training
- **Time & Expertise**

List of Local Ed Contributions

Educator Expertise and Student-Success Focused Administrators

- Educator's time & effort conducting *Readtopia* assessments and lessons; uploading to shared & secure raw data folder
- School Administrator effort & energy to schedule PD trainings & progress meetings; pay aides for time completing online Project Core Instructional Modules; collecting certificates of module completion & tracking hours.
- Volunteer classrooms: consented teachers, SLPs, aides and hundreds of students!
- District Purchase of: *Readtopia* seats, printed materials, online credits for using Communication Matrix assessments

ImpSci Formula for Success = Positive Outcomes for Students

Effective Interventions

Iterative & Ongoing Training on Readtopia + rationale for 36UCV + Aided Language Input

✖

Effective Implementation Methods

Classroom-driven instruction with iterative & ongoing support & training

✖

Enabling Contexts

Re-engineering of physical classroom context still matters; no-tech 36UCV as Tier 1 aided language

=
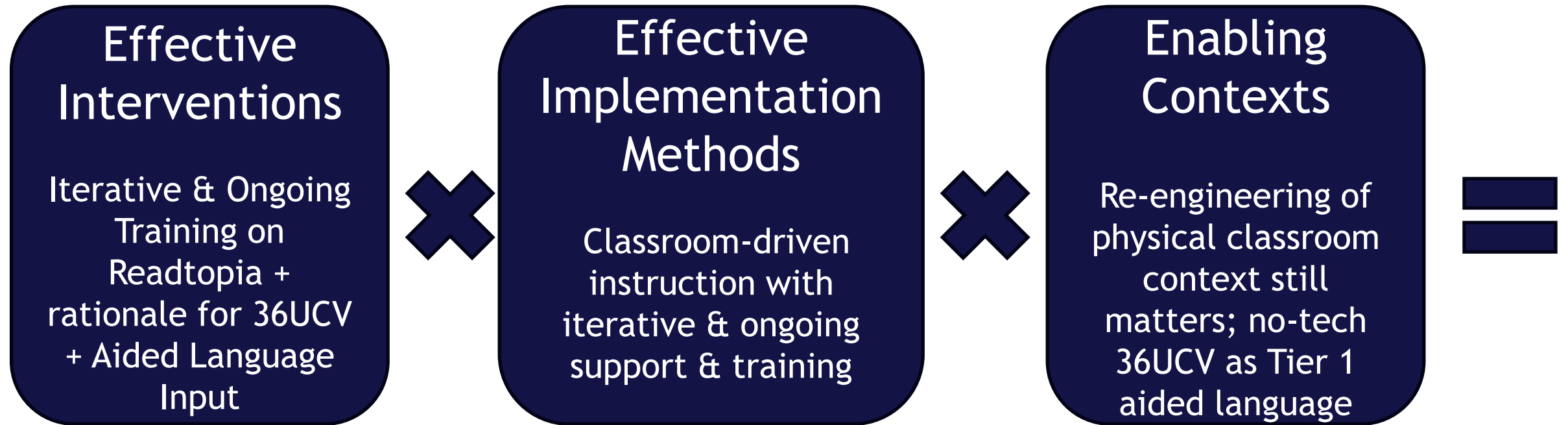
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Final Slide

Between 2020-2025

Over 250 Students Becoming Literate

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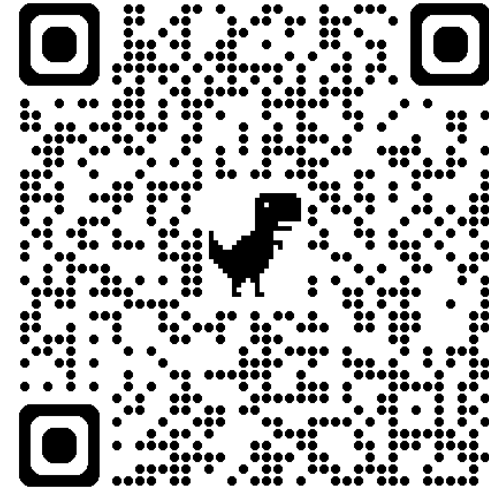
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Upcoming Webinars and Events

June 4   **Challenges to Gestalt Language Processing and Considerations for AAC**

E. Cheryl Fletcher, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCBA and Tiffany L. Hutchins, Ph.D.

September 17   **Using the Communication Matrix to Build Consensus on Communication Skills with all Members of a School Team**
Deirdre Galvin-McLaughlin and colleagues

October 28-29   **ISAAC Virtual Event: Voices in Action – Innovation, Inclusion, and Advocacy in AAC**

December TBA   **Including AAC Users in District Trainings**
Panel of AAC Users

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