Importance of Reading Meaningful Texts in Early Childhood

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Introduction

- **Children's Literature**: Good-quality trade books for children from birth through early adolescence covering topics of relevance and interest to children through prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction
  - **Good quality:** Including the story, pictures, and language
  - **Trade books:** Designed for enjoyment and information
  - **Birth through early adolescence:** Age criteria
  - **Topics of relevance and interest:** Reflect children's life experiences, understandings, and emotions
  - **Prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction:** Cover a range of genres

Introduction

- **Textbook:** Designed for the purpose of instruction
- **Trade book:** Designed for the purpose of entertainment and information (e.g., *storybook)*
  - Note: this class will only cover trade books
- **Genre:** A style or category of art, music, or literature
- **Authentic literacy**: Reading for real-life purposes outside of school
  - Reading authentic texts increases students' motivation to read
- **Aliterate**: A person who can read, but chooses not to
  - Exposure to authentic children's books can help prevent an aliterate society

Foundational Skills for Successful Reading

- **Oral language:** Ability to listen and speak
- **Print awareness:** Understand the nature of print (e.g., title of a book, read left to right)
- **Interest in Reading:** Value and enjoy reading
- **Vocabulary knowledge:** Understand the meaning of words
- **Comprehension strategies:** Understand the meaning of a text
- **Reading Fluency:** Read a text quickly and accurately
- **Phonemic awareness:** Ability to recognize sounds (phonemes) in spoken words
- **Phonics:** Identify the relationship between letters and sounds

Benefits of Reading Meaningful Texts:
Develops Language and Literacy Skills

- **Oral Language**: Helps children learn language structures (e.g., grammar)
- **Print awareness:** Teaches children the nature of print and books
- **Interest in Reading:** Fosters a love for reading
- **Vocabulary knowledge:** Helps develop understanding of new words
- **Comprehension strategies:** Discussions of a story help children understand the plot, theme, etc.
- **Reading Fluency:** Practice reading storybooks increases reading fluency

Benefits of Reading Meaningful Texts:
Improved Knowledge and Academic Performance

- Higher performance on exams
- Higher academic achievement in all academic courses
- Increased knowledge of various topics
  - *The more you read, the more you know*
- Develops children's imagination
- Fosters children's brain development

Benefits of Reading Meaningful Texts:
Fosters Social and Emotional Development

- Shared storybook reading develops relationships between the child and the reader (teacher, parent, relative)
- Better awareness of self and others
- Better understanding of human nature
- Better understanding of other cultures

Cultural Relevance Rubric
Modified from Freeman and Freeman (2007)

1. Are the characters in the story like you and your family?			
Just like us			Not like us
4	3	2	1
2. Have you ever had experiences like the ones described in the story?			
Yes			No
4	3	2	1
3. Have you lived in or visited places like those in the story?			
Yes			No
4	3	2	1
4. Do the characters in the story talk like you and your family do?			
Yes			No
4	3	2	1