



# Session 10

*Even very young children, as participants in a highly literate society, can benefit from and enjoy the challenges of thinking and talking about print.*

*-Laura Justice & Helen Ezell (2004)*

## Teaching Print Knowledge Using the Predicting Strategy

### Learning Objectives

- ◇ **Review** the terms low-support strategy, print knowledge, and alphabet knowledge, and **define** the term predicting strategy.
- ◇ **Demonstrate** use of the predicting strategy.
- ◇ **Analyze** children's responses to the predicting strategy when teaching print knowledge.
- ◇ **Reflect** on how the predicting strategy can be used in your classroom to improve children's print knowledge.
- ◇ **Describe** how the predicting strategy can be used to address all four *Read It Again–PreK!* domains.

### Overview

Children's knowledge about print is one of the most important areas of literacy development for young children. We discussed in Session 2 the following points about print knowledge:

1. Children's knowledge about print is a critical foundational skill for young children on the pathway to being fluent and skilled readers, and
2. Print knowledge encompasses skills in the following five areas: print interest, print terms, print concepts, concept of word, and alphabet knowledge.
  - **Print interest:** Children's interest in, and motivation to learn about, print
  - **Print terms:** Children's knowledge of different print forms, such as letter, word, title, and author
  - **Print concepts:** Children's knowledge of how print is organized in books and other genre, such as where to start reading on a page and where the title is located

- **Concept of word:** Children’s knowledge of what a word is in written language, that a word is made up of letters and that written words correspond to spoken words
- **Alphabet knowledge:** Children’s knowledge of the names of the alphabet letters, including upper- and lower-case forms.

In this session, you will read and learn about how to use the low-support strategy of **predicting** to target children’s skills across different dimensions of print knowledge. Remember, low-support strategies are used when a child can complete a task with relative ease; a task that he or she is close to being able to do on his or her own. The predicting strategy provides the teacher a way to challenge children for whom the lesson is fairly easy. Other types of strategies (high-support strategies) may be used for children who find the lesson more difficult. The predicting strategy helps children who have well-developed knowledge about print to continue to climb the learning ladder and to progress towards reading success.

### The Predicting Strategy

The low-support strategy we describe in this session is **predicting**.

**The predicting strategy asks children to describe what might happen next, or to make hypotheses about the outcome of an event/activity.**

The act of predicting is a fairly sophisticated cognitive skill. It is considered a higher-order function of the human brain. Other higher-order functions include planning, reasoning, and imagining. Predicting is an important aspect of literacy development because the act of reading often involves predicting what will happen next as one reads, and then checking the accuracy of one’s predictions.

For children who have well-developed print knowledge, teachers can couple tasks that focus on learning about print with predicting in order to challenge and engage them. When asking children to make a prediction regarding print knowledge, the teacher is encouraging them to recall and to make use of information they have seen before. Here is an example:

**Teacher:** How do you think this boy feels (teacher asks before reading)? Does the way this word is written (points to the word **excited**) make you think of how he feels?

**Children** produce a variety of responses: “Happy... Surprised.... Excited!”

**Teacher:** I think he is excited, too. I think he’s more than happy since the letters in this word “excited” seem to be jumping right off the page!

In this example, the teacher first calls attention to the word *excited* and how it looks on the page. Then she teaches the children about this word concept, embedding the opportunity to predict. She allows the children to share a number of opinions about how the boy might be feeling, including “happy,” “surprised,” and “excited.” When the children produce *excited*, which maps onto the word in the text, the teacher links their prediction to a discussion of the way the letters seem to be *jumping off the page*.

Let’s look at another example:

**Teacher:** Here I am on the first page of the story. **If I want to know how the story ends without reading it, what could I do?**

**Child:** This way to peek (turns to the end of the book).

**Teacher:** Now I can peek at the end of the story!

With the predicting strategy, it is fun to turn a print lesson into a game! Here the teacher couples a discussion about print concepts (how books are organized from front to back) with the opportunity for children to predict what she would have to do to get to the end of the story. She cues the children to predict by using the phrase “If I want to...” which provides an opening for children to produce a range of possible hypotheses.

## Terms and Background Knowledge

### Vocabulary

**Print knowledge** – Refers to children’s early understandings of the forms and functions of print.

**Low-support strategy** – A strategy used for tasks that are too easy for a child; these are tasks that he or she is close to being able to do on his or her own.

**Predicting strategy** – A low-support strategy in which the teacher asks children to describe what might happen next or to hypothesize the outcome of an event/activity.



## Activity 1. Teacher Implementation of the Predicting Strategy

As we think about using the predicting strategy, let's consider how to support children's development of print knowledge by asking them to reach beyond their current level of understanding. One way to do this is by using the predicting strategy in your classroom during a print knowledge activity. Read this transcript of a classroom conversation:

**Teacher:** What letters do you think we'll see in this book? I see the first letter here is A.

**Cecilia:** ABC! It's on the front of the book!

**Teacher:** Let's see! I see lots of different letters in this book. I bet we'll see different letters. You said we'll see A, B, and C, and that's right. What other letters might we see?

**Cecilia:** (Begins to recite all the letters that she knows.)

**Teacher:** What if I say I think we'll see the number 9 in here?

**Cecilia:** No! That's a number, not a letter!

Answer the following questions based on the above exchange.

The teacher started the activity by focusing children on a specific task. What is the children's task?

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The teacher used a predicting strategy several times in this exchange. Identify these instances.

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## Activity 1. Teacher Implementation of the Predicting Strategy

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Describe children's responses to the teacher's use of the predicting strategy.

Instead of using the predicting strategy, the teacher could have simply pointed to the letters on the cover of the book and asked the children to identify them. This would have been a good approach if her goal was to have the children name letters of the alphabet. Why was the predicting strategy perhaps a better approach in this instance?



## Activity 2. Learners' Ladders

Review the strategy of predicting addressed in four *Read It Again—PreK!* Learners' Ladder Print Knowledge Lessons. These lessons are:

- Learners' Ladder Lesson 11
- Learners' Ladder Lesson 23
- Learners' Ladder Lesson 43
- Learners' Ladder Lesson 47

Of these examples, which ones do you feel you use often in your daily instruction?

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## Activity 2. Learners' Ladders

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Next, review these two examples taken from Learners' Ladder Lesson 43.

Example 1:

**Teacher:** When I open up our story *Bunny Cakes*, I'm going to find words on the pages. What do you think the words will be made out of?

Example 2:

**Teacher:** Our book today is called *Bunny Cakes*. Think about the words "bunny" and "cakes." What other words might we find in a book about a bunny and a cake?

Reflect on these questions:

Both of these are applications of the predicting strategy. If the teacher uses these with children who don't know very much about print, they may not be able to respond or may provide incorrect answers. What should the teacher do in such instances?

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Rewrite each of these examples so that the teacher does not use the predicting strategy. How might a child with extensive knowledge of print concepts perform given these revised examples?

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# Listen and Learn



## Activity 3.

Turn on your DVD player and select **Session 10, Activity 3** from the RIA DVD menu. You will see a teacher reading a book to a group of children. Complete the activity as described below.

Watch this teacher use the predicting strategy to promote children's development of print knowledge while reading *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain.

Now, answer these questions about the reading activity:

Which print knowledge concept was the teacher trying to target?

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Describe the teacher's use of the predicting strategy. Did she implement this in a high-quality way, in your opinion? Why or why not?

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Describe how the children responded to this strategy. Would a different strategy have been more effective, in your opinion? Why or why not?

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Now, listen to what we have to say.

Turn on your DVD player and select **Session 10, Activity 3 Discussion** from the RIA DVD menu.

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## Activity 3.

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## Activity 4.

Turn on your DVD player and select **Session 10, Activity 4** from the RIA DVD menu. You will see a teacher reading a book to a group of children. Complete the activity as described below.

Now watch this teacher use the predicting strategy to promote children's development of print knowledge while reading the book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault. After watching the video, look at your copy of the book and complete the following activities.

Choose another print target from the book that will be relatively new to the children in your class.

Give an example of how you might address this target using the predicting strategy in the space below, and identify a child in your classroom for whom this might be a particularly effective way to engage him or her.

Now, listen to what we have to say.

Turn on your DVD player and select **Session 10, Activity 4 Discussion** from the RIA DVD menu.



## Activity 4.



## Activity 5.

Turn on your DVD player and select **Session 10, Activity 5** from the RIA DVD menu. You will see a teacher reading a book to a group of children. Complete the activity as described below.

Watch this teacher use the strategy of predicting to discuss a different domain than that of print knowledge, namely phonological awareness. She is using this strategy with her students while she is reading the book *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain. Answer these questions:

Which phonological awareness skill was the teacher targeting?

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When, specifically, did the teacher use the predicting strategy? What words did she use that signaled she was asking the children to predict?

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How did the children respond to this strategy?

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Now, listen to what we have to say.

Turn on your DVD player and select **Session 10, Activity 5 Discussion** from the RIA DVD menu.

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## Activity 5.

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# Reflect and Apply

## Reflect

1. Think about a child in your classroom who has a great deal of knowledge about print. Write that child's name here:

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How often do you use the predicting strategy with this child when engaging in print knowledge instruction?

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To what extent would this child benefit from more exposure to this strategy?

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2. Generally speaking, how often do you use the predicting strategy in your classroom during a typical day? If you were to increase your use of this strategy, during which classroom activity would you specifically try to use it more often?

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3. Read over this excerpt from the book *Rumble in the Jungle* by Giles Andreae and David Wojtowycz.

TIGER

Beware of the terrible tiger,  
You don't always know when he's near,  
But his eyes shine like lights  
In the blackest of nights,  
And his growl makes you tremble with fear.  
Grrr

If you were to use this excerpt to teach children about the concept of word, give an example of what you might say or do to teach this concept using the low-support strategy of predicting.

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Are there children in your classroom who would have difficulty with the predicting strategy as described above? If so, indicate some high-support strategies that might better meet the needs of these children.

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## Apply

1. Practice using the predicting strategy in a variety of activities within your classroom this week. For instance, you might use it during an art activity, circle, or even during transition time. Consider how often children are able to successfully respond to your requests for prediction. Are there some children who have an easier time predicting than others? Why might this be so?

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2. Use the predicting strategy this week during a book reading session with a small group of children. Ask the children to predict some words that they might see in the book after you show them the book's cover. Write down the children's predictions. Ask the children to tell you if they see any of those words in the book as you read. Check off words from the list as children point them out to you. After reading, revisit your predictions and let the children see how often their predictions were correct!

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3. Each day of this week, serve as a model to the children in your classroom as to how we predict things. For example, on Monday you may predict what the weather is going to be like on Tuesday and subsequent days of the week. Put your predictions on the board. Check every day to see whether or not your predictions were correct.

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## Resources

Andreae, G., & Wojtowycz, D. (1996). *Rumble in the jungle*. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Cain, J. (2000). *The way I feel*. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, Inc.

Hammill, D. D. (2004). *What we know about correlates of reading*. *Exceptional Children*, 70, 453-468.

Justice, L. M., & Ezell, H. K. (2004). *An emergent literacy enhancement strategy and its clinical applications*. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 35, 185-193.

Martin, B. Jr., & Archambault, J. (1989). *Chicka chicka boom boom*. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

McGee, L. (2007). *Transforming literacy practices in preschool: Research-based practices that give all children the opportunity to reach their potential as learners*. NY: Scholastic.

McGill-Franzen, A., Lanford, C., & Adams, E. (2002). *Learning to be literate: A comparison of five urban early childhood programs*. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94, 443-464.

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