

This learning guide is designed for use by Professional Learning Communities, learning coaches and teacher leaders, or as a self-paced study to enhance and support teacher practice in the area of literacy for students with significant disabilities.

## Literacy for All:

*In Conversation with  
Dr. Caroline Musselwhite*



This conversation guide is intended to be used after viewing the video clip, **Importance of Building Background Knowledge**.



### General synopsis

In this short video clip, Dr. Caroline Musselwhite discusses the importance of helping students with significant disabilities build background knowledge related to reading a text.

### Key understandings

- Students with significant disabilities may have gaps in their background experience.
- Talk-alouds are a useful strategy that teachers can use to help students build background knowledge and make vocabulary connections.

### Questions for discussion

- Think about Dr. Musselwhite's example of how a teacher might build background knowledge for a story about feelings. What are some of the strategies she suggests?
- Thinking about the students you work with, what are some of the strategies you use to build their background knowledge?
- What is one new way you could use to build the background knowledge of your students? Why are you choosing this strategy?

### For more information

- Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium. *Literacy for All*. Retrieved from <http://abliteracyforall.wikispaces.com/>
- Erickson, K., and Koppenhaver, D. (2007). *Children with Disabilities: Reading and Writing the Four Blocks® Way* Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa. 66–68.
- Musselwhite, C. *AAC intervention*. Retrieved from <http://aacintervention.com/>

#### Acknowledgement:

This guide was developed through a collaboration between Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium and Alberta Education. It is freely provided in support of improved teaching and learning under the following Creative Commons licence. 

Link to the Inclusive Education: Support for Implementation website at <http://inclusiveeducationpdresources.ca/> for Professional Development Resources.

For further information on learning opportunities to support inclusion, visit <http://www.arpdc.ab.ca/>.