

Complexity Approach

The complexity approach advocates teaching complex, later-developing sounds (Gierut, 2007). Research over the past 25 years has demonstrated its effectiveness. Children who are taught complex sounds often learn treated and untreated sounds due to the relationships amongst sounds. For example, if a child is missing many sounds and is taught a three-element cluster (e.g., /str-/), it is predicted that he or she will also learn some missing two-element clusters, affricates, fricatives and stops. Conversely, if a child is missing many sounds and is taught a stop (e.g., /k/ or /g/), it is predicted that /k/ or /g/ will likely change, but not other sounds. Teaching complex sounds leads to rapid change and gains in intelligibility.

Clusters

Three-Element Clusters

/str-/ /spr-/ /skr-/ /spl-/ /skw-/

Two-Element Clusters

/sl-/ /fl-/ /fr-/ /shr-/ /thr-/
/bl-/ /gl-/ /br-/ /dr-/ /gr-/ /sw-/
/pl-/ /kl-/ /pr-/ /tr-/ /kr-/
/kw-/ /tw-/
(Avoid /sp-/, /sk-/, /st-/, /sm-/, /sn-/ may inhibit generalization to other clusters)

Liquids /l r/ → Nasals /m n ng/

Affricates

/j/ (Voiced → Voiceless)
/ch/

Velars /k g ng/ → Coronals /t d th (voiceless) th (voiced) s z sh zh ch j l n/

Fricatives

/v//th/ (voiced) /z/ /zh/ (Voiced → Voiceless)
/f/ /th/(voiceless) /s/ /sh/

Stops

/b/ /d/ /g/
/p/ /t/ /k/