Instructional Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary to Diverse Learners: From Research to Practice

Reading First
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Literacy Changes Lives!
Feldman’s Biased Literacy Listserv

e.g. *3 Cups of Tea*
by Greg Mortenson

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QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.
GOALS for Today

1.) Validation/Motivation
2.) Clarify key understandings related to effective vocabulary development in K-3
3.) Information to Investigate/Inquire/Explore Beyond Today
# A Heuristic for Literacy


**MOTIVATION** (pleasure, purpose, joy, success)

## DECODING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Recognition</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Comprehension Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* 44 phonemes (blend/segment)</td>
<td>*Rate WCPM 1st: 50-60&lt;br&gt;2nd: 90-100&lt;br&gt;3rd: 115-120&lt;br&gt;4th: 120-130&lt;br&gt;5th: 130-140&lt;br&gt;6-8: 150+</td>
<td>* Active Reading&lt;br&gt;* Strategic Reading (e.g. summarizing)&lt;br&gt;* Self Monitoring&lt;br&gt;* Fix Up Strategies&lt;br&gt;* Flexible - adjust to text/purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 26 letters</td>
<td>* Accuracy (95%+)</td>
<td>* Vocabulary &amp; Content Area Knowledge&lt;br&gt;* Syntax &amp; text structure&lt;br&gt;* Grammar&lt;br&gt;  • ELD as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Decode single &amp; Multi-syllable words</td>
<td>* Prosody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Strategies to apply in texts</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

## COMPREHENSION

**Academic Language**

- Vocabulary & Content Area Knowledge
- Syntax & text structure
- Grammar
  - ELD as appropriate

**Comprehension Strategies**

- Active Reading
- Strategic Reading (e.g. summarizing)
- Self Monitoring
- Fix Up Strategies
- Flexible - adjust to text/purpose

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* Writing, Listening, Speaking Skills*
To solve the many complex literacy issues facing today’s schools educators need a powerful ________.
Why Focus on Vocabulary?

The Need?
Why Focus on Vocabulary Instruction?

Of the many compelling reasons for providing students with instruction to build vocabulary, none is more important than the contribution of vocabulary knowledge to reading comprehension. Indeed, one of the most enduring findings in reading research is the extent to which students’ vocabulary knowledge relates to their reading comprehension (e.g., Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003; Becker, 1977; Davis, 1942; Whipple, 1925).

A Focus on Vocabulary
PREL, 2004
Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children

Betty Hart & Todd R. Risley

"...a detective story of the most serious academic kind."
—Lois Bloom, Ph.D.

"The Bell Curve and similar arguments notwithstanding, ... this book represents ... a counterpunch to those who would have us believe that a child’s destiny is mostly in his or her genes."
—Steven E. Warren, Ph.D.

"Lucky the children whose parents read Meaningful Differences and take the findings to heart."
—Laura Walther Nathanson, M.D.

"Hart and Risley build upon—but avoid the failures of—the ‘War on Poverty’. ... [in] this trailblazing demonstration ... for helping children to achieve levels of intellectual performance requisite for success in later life."
—Robert Perloff, Ph.D.
Emergence of the Problem

Actual Differences in Quantity of Words Heard

In a typical hour, the average child would hear:

- Welfare: 616 words
- Working Class: 1,251 words
- Professional: 2,153 words

More than a 300% differential!

Actual Differences in Quality of Words Heard

- Professional: 32 affirmations; 5 prohibitions
- Working Class: 12 affirmations; 7 prohibitions
- Welfare: 5 affirmations; 11 prohibitions


(c) 2000 by Edward J. Kame`enui and Deborah C. Simmons
The Effects of Weaknesses in Oral Language on Reading Growth/Academic Achievement  
(Hirsch, 1996)

- **Reading Age Level**
- **Chronological Age**

The Gap is Driven By “Word Poverty”

High Oral Language in Kindergarten

Low Oral Language in Kindergarten

5.2 years difference

What Can We Do To INTENTIONALLY Narrow This Gap?
Because poor readers tend to read considerably less than better readers, the gap between good and poor readers in **number of words** read, and both **receptive** and **expressive vocabulary**, becomes progressively greater as the child advances through school.

“The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.”

On the Need to Increase Language Practice w/Diverse Learners

Only 4% of English Language Learners’ day was spent engaging in “student talk”

Only 2% of ELs’ day was spent engaging in “academic talk” (WestED, ELLA Project 2006)

Virtually identical to data reported by Vaughn/Moody et al in 1998 re: engagement of students w/learning disabilities.
Recent Synthesis re: ELLs

Recommendations:
1) Screening for reading problems/supports K-6 (8)
2) Provide intensive small group reading intervention
3) Provide extensive and varied vocabulary instruction
4) Develop Academic English
5) Schedule regular peer assisted learning opportunities

www.centeroninstruction.org
Job #1 for teaching vocabulary - increase:

Engagement
It IS how Responsive you get the STUDENTS to Be!

I do it

We do it

You do it

Ask Anita Archer!

** the “WE Do It” is essentially left out of our curricula - we must add it - Daily!
Structured Engagement “tool kit”: Ensure **ALL** Are Responding

1) **Choral Responses** - pronounce it together
   - teacher cues students to respond (e.g. hand signal, voice, eyes)
   - physical responses too; fingers under the word, chart, picture
   - “thumbs up when you know” (think time)

2) **Partner Responses**
   - teacher assigns - provide a label/role “1’s tell 2’s”
   - alternate ranking (high with middle, middle with lower)
   - thoughtful questions/prompts/up & down Bloom’s taxonomy

3) **Written Responses**
   - focused prompts increase thinking, accountability, focus
   - structure academic language (e.g. sentence starters)

4) **Individual Responses** (AFTER rehearsal/practice)
   - randomly call on individuals, use “public voices”
   - complete sentences, using new vocabulary
Dr. Anita Archer Instructional Video Series

FREE in 3 User Friendly Formats

- View on the internet - streaming video
- Download to your desk top in QuickTime
- Download from iTunes & play as a video podcast on your MP3 player (iPod and such)

www.scoe.org/reading
Reading Aloud & Vocabulary Development

Most vocabulary in K-3 is learned incidentally from reading & listening

Yes - No - WHY?
The Effects of Reading Aloud on Vocabulary Learning (Beck et al., 2003)

**Effects Varied Widely**

- 4-15% learned/retained if not explained
- 20-40% IF words were explained (robust teaching)

Greater effects found if:
1) word is repeated in the text
2) word is pictured in the text
2) word is a noun (25% vs. verb/adj. 6%)
Students provided with additional review/practice/play more than doubled their rate of retention of word meanings!!
QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.
Incidental Instruction

No Appreciable Impact!!
The Key is...

Read Aloud

PLUS
Plus What?

- Explicitly teaching *critical* academic vocabulary
- Routinely stopping* to engage ALL students in using comprehension strategies - “strategic discussion” (miles on the tongue!)
- Checking for understanding

* can be done on a 2nd reading w/very young children if stopping disturbs the “flow”, but be clear - it is not about simply listening - it is about stretching their minds and using emerging academic language skills in context
Recent Research re: Read Alouds & Comprehension

Incorporating comprehension instruction and read-alouds appears to be a promising way to boost student comprehension. There are certainly times when read-alouds can simply focus on the enjoyment of books; however, read-alouds must be carefully planned if they are to affect students’ comprehension. Making the very most of read-aloud time requires teaching students to recognize the differences between narrative and information text structure, to know the meanings of target vocabulary, and to become in purposeful discussions about texts.

Table 4
Comprehension Strategy Focus for the Before, During, and After Lesson Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before reading</th>
<th>During reading</th>
<th>After reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the purpose for reading (e.g., information or story)</td>
<td>Using a consistent framework to discuss the text (e.g., story elements, K-W-L with focus questions)</td>
<td>Retelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previewing (title, author, illustrator)</td>
<td>Using question-asking strategies</td>
<td>Introducing, reviewing, and extending vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting/priming</td>
<td>Making connections (text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining critical vocabulary</td>
<td>Making inferences</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-monitoring</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
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</table>
Informational Text Available to First Grade Students in Classroom Libraries, First Visits

What is read aloud makes a BIG difference as well...

Huge Imbalance of Text Types in Primary Grades!

(from Duke, 2000)
Infuse More Informational Texts & Related Activities In Language Arts

http://www.aft.org/

It is “language arts” NOT “literature arts”!!
“During the elementary years new root words are learned primarily from explanations by others.”

- Andrew Biemiller  Teaching Vocabulary in the Primary Grades
Common Practices That Do Not Reliably Build Long Term Vocabulary Knowledge

1. Asking students, “does anyone know what ___ means?”
2. Various independent activities (e.g. crosswords, puzzles, matching, etc.) w/no guidance, feedback, modeling, oral language …
3. Directing students to “look it up” in a typical classroom dictionary - use it in a sentence.
4. Incidental teaching of a word “on the fly”
5. Rote memorization of lists of words w/no context
6. Relying on context based guessing as a primary strategy
How Can This Be? What is Going On Here?

CONFUSION

Instruction
- Teacher directed
- Clear explanations
- Guide student use
  - “I do it, we do it, you do it”
- Precedes application activities

or

Activity
- Students on their own
- Definitions not explanations
- Little guidance or feedback
- No expressive use of new vocabulary (oral/written)
Research Conclusions: How Do We Build Vocabulary?

1. Engaging in Fluent Wide Reading – Esp Non-Fiction
2. Direct Teaching & Accountable Use of New Words; Oral/Written
3. Teaching Word Learning Strategies, e.g. context/affixes, roots
4. Fostering Word Consciousness e.g. etymology, word play, word choice in writing, etc.

Increased lexical power & reading comprehension
The Bottom Line Rationale for \textbf{DIRECTLY} Teaching Vocabulary?

“Given the importance of academic background knowledge, and the fact that vocabulary is such an essential aspect of it, one of the most crucial services that teachers can provide, particularly for students who do not come from academically advantaged backgrounds, is \textit{systematic instruction in important academic terms}.”

- Marzano & Pickering, 2005
Instructional Guidelines (another Heuristic) for Directly Teaching a New Term

1) Pronounce Chorally
2) Explain vs. Define
3) Provide Examples

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4) Deepen Understanding
5) Review & Coach Use

Quick Teach
Deepen Understanding in Wide Variety of Ways Depending on the Word, Kids, Context, etc.

Here’s a few of my favorites that also have empirical evidence supporting them:

- Examples vs. Non-examples
- Non-linguistic representations (e.g. images)
- Acting them out physically
- Quick story
- Graphic organizers
- Computer technology

** It’s all about connecting the New to the Known
Which words should we teach?
Of course the answer is...

Important words...
Words that matter today AND tomorrow...

1) Drive comprehension of key BIG ideas
2) Academic “tool kit” words, needed for long term academic proficiency (e.g. Coxhead AWL)
### Word Types: A Lens for Thinking About Vocabulary

(Beck et al., 2002) & Choosing Important Words to Teach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1: Basic</th>
<th>Tier 2: High Value Academic</th>
<th>Tier 3: Content Specific</th>
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<tr>
<td>home, dog, happy, see, come, again, find, go, look, boy</td>
<td>analyze, approach, predict, consist, major, require, significant, vary, interpret, respond, consequence</td>
<td>metaphor, photosynthesis, legislature, glacial, abdominal, chromosome, habitat, divide, terrain, dividend, habitat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**“Mortar” words**

Choose words that could be used in many academic contexts/areas.

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**“Brick” words**

Choose words that drive comprehension of BIG ideas.

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**Research:** Coxhead [http://language.massey.ac.nz/staff/awl/awlinfo.shtml](http://language.massey.ac.nz/staff/awl/awlinfo.shtml)
Vocabulary Words Called Out: Gr. 3 Basal Text in 1 wk.

Lexus? - Extended/Robust

Honda? - Embedded/Brief

Kia? - “Quick teach”

Academic Terms Used/Not Taught!
summarize, specific, convey, similar,
classify, categorize, selection, intensity,
emphasis, framing, contrast, strategies
Vocabulary Profiler - FREE

http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/r21270/textools/web_vp.html
Differentiate Instructional Focus Based on Word Type

√ Known concepts - new label = less time, fewer examples, less review, etc.  
  e.g. altercation - kids know fight  
  - tend to find words of this type in narratives, make it a game to use more precise, more descriptive language

√ Unknown concepts - more time, more examples coupled with non-examples, ex. more concrete, more review, etc.  
  e.g. region, magnetic, membrane  
  - tend to find these words in informational texts, where students may have little to no background knowledge
The notion that “drives” our choice of which words to teach - is not type (tier 2 or 3, “mortar” or brick”)… it IS, how important is this word to the lesson/reading today? & how important is this word in various academic pursuits in the future?

The reason why type is important, is simply to ensure that “mortar” or Tier 2 words are on our instructional radar screen - they are not called out by the publishers, and they are an essential aspect of academic language - We MUST have them on our teacher “radar screens”!!
Implications for Daily Instruction?

- Prioritize terms called out by your textbook & used in questions/directions/etc. in the TE
  - √ key lesson “bricks” that drive comprehension
  - √ useful “mortar” or academic tool kit terms

- Spend more time teaching, assessing, & structuring the usage of the more important terms

- Include words that may not be in the text, but are keys to thoughtful discourse re: the subject

- Discuss/share/reflect with colleagues until this understanding & practice is fluent - automatic
Review & Coach Use
Vocabulary Review & Games

- I am thinking of a word... (you supply the meaning)
  - framework -
- Deep processing questions - requiring application
  - Why are lexical skills so related to academic success?
  - Describe a type of heuristic you’ve used to solve a problem, tell how it helped you...
- An endless array of vocabulary word games
  - vocab hangman
  - vocab jeopardy
  - vocab memory (card matching)
  etc.
Challenge students to use “target words” (or whatever you call new words directly taught by the teacher) throughout the day - model this yourself!

Game - anyone who uses a “target word” correctly w/out being prompted earns a “word wizard point” for the class.

Keep track on the Word Wizard bulletin board/chalk board - some little recognition - popcorn for the read aloud on Friday if you we read 50 points (or
Make Vocabulary/Words a BIG Deal School Wide!
3 Key BIG Ideas:

Connect

Process

Practice

The new to the known, Explanations before Definitions

- synonyms/antonyms
- examples
- create images
- compare/contrast
- use in new contexts etc.

Receptive
* read
* listen

Expressive
* speak
* write
Powerful Academic Instruction is a Combination of:

- Art (movie clip to the right.)
- Heart (Picture of children to the right.)
- Stamina (Picture of a man holding up a trophy)
- Science (Picture of a large piece of doctor’s machinery.)
• The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it. Michelangelo