Thinking About Literacy: Vocabulary and Spoken Word Knowledge in Preschool and Kindergarten

Hello!
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Self Identified SLP “Scientists”, striving to bring research informed practices into the doors of our schools

Learner Objectives
1. Understand how vocabulary and word knowledge relates to literacy acquisition
2. Determine considerations for selecting vocabulary targets
3. Explore and apply effective methods of intervention and measurement (review of the literature)

Science of Reading
1. National Reading Panel
2. Simple View of Reading
3. Reading Rope

National Reading Panel (2000)
5 Pillars of Literacy Instruction:
1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Fluency
4. Vocabulary
5. Comprehension
**Simple View of Reading**
Gough & Tunmer (1986)

\[ RC = D \times LC \]

Reading Comprehension (RC) is the product of Decoding (D) and Language Comprehension (LC) proficiencies.

**H. Scarborough’s Reading**
Rope (2001)

**Cognitive Foundations Framework**
Tunmer & Hoover (2019)

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**Science of Word Learning and Vocabulary Development**

What is vocabulary?
- Our store of words
- Vocabulary is the means by which we express mental representations: ideas, concepts, facts, memories
- Having more words corresponds with background knowledge

(Hirsch, 2003)

**How do we acquire vocabulary?**
- **Word Knowledge**
- **World Knowledge**
**Word Knowledge** involves several types of language:

1. Phonological
2. Orthographic
3. Semantic

And the linkages between these (Duff, 2019)

- Children first learn words through hearing speech sounds joined together to form words (phonological input) and having word meaning attached to those sounds (semantic association) (McLean, 2020)

**Word Knowledge & World knowledge:**

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When children learn to read, they map the spoken forms and meanings from the words they have heard onto written or orthographic forms. (Colenbrander et al. 2019)

As children learn to read, they are building their word knowledge and world knowledge.

**Fast Mapping**
- Quick, after a few exposures
- Meaning explained when word was not known
- Superficial
- Not likely to use word on their own

**Slow Mapping**
- Occurs over time
- Leads to very deep word learning and therefore increased comprehension
- Occurs after many exposures in many contexts

(adapted from McLean, 2020)

"Knowing a word is not an all or nothing proposition" (Beck et al. 2013)

**Word knowledge is incremental & gradient, not binary**

**Breadth**
Is this vocabulary item in their lexicon?

**Depth**
How much does the child know about the word?

(Duff, 2019)
Word Knowledge Continuum

Implicit vs. Explicit Learning

Implicit
- Farrow et al. (2020)
  Teachers who expose children to more complex syntax through instructional interactions positively impacted children’s vocabulary growth.

Explicit
- Peters-Sanders et al. (2019)
  Simple reading of stories is not sufficient to significantly impact the learning of challenging and more sophisticated vocabulary.

The average student knows around 45,000 words by high school graduation.
If a child enters grade 1 knowing about 6000 words, then they will learn 3000 new words per year.
This means learning 10 new words per day.
(Hogan, 2020)

Word Knowledge is essential to academic achievement...

Vocabulary knowledge is essential to spoken and written communication. All students can benefit from high quality vocabulary instruction. Children with language and reading disorders experience specific challenges learning new words.

(Ladefoged, 2010)

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There is a need to interpret the research to fit this population.

Adlof (2019) states: “given the pivotal role of vocabulary in literacy development and overall academic achievement, it is important to ensure children have adequate opportunities to build vocabulary knowledge...children with language, reading, and other learning disabilities exhibit poorer vocabulary knowledge than their typically developing peers”.

Collaboration with Teachers
How can we implement these ideas?

Consistent and intentional:

➔ Exposure to tier 1 words
➔ Opportunity for exposure and instruction to tier 2 vocabulary words

Universal Learning Strategies

➢ Explain the meaning using words the child knows
➢ Teach evaluative skills: Do I know this word?
➢ Generate interest in knowing words
➢ Plan for introduction of new vocabulary

MORNING Message

Today is Tuesday, it is a lovely day. I am delighted to be here. I insist we work hard on our listening today. We will have a class snack, it sure looks scrumptious!

Oral read-alouds

Choose books intentionally, with the goal to develop curriculum concepts and vocabulary

Examples of Curriculum Concepts:

- "Ideas and Opinions are important to share with one another"
- "People have connections to land and place"
- "Communities are diverse in a variety of ways"
- "Objects can be compared and ordered by length"

More whole class ideas……

Word Wizard (Beck et al. 2007)

- Teacher chooses 2-3 words to target in the week (guide curriculum concepts)
- Celebrate when students use target words
- Students share knowledge of target word with others

Word Search

- Students get sent home target words and parents can record in a voicewriter where the word was heard/in what context
- Home reading journal, there is a space for title of book, but also a space for logging vocabulary words discussed

Word Tree

More whole class ideas……

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Adding the layer of Spoken Word Knowledge and Vocabulary Learning to your speech motor learning treatment sessions.

How can we support parents at home?

When tier 2 or “juicy” words are used and highlighted outside of the classroom children will likely store these words in a permanent place (e.g. “cozy”)

- maintain attention to words that have been taught, when outside of the classroom
- parents could get a list for the month for tier 2 words targeted
- record books read AND vocab targeted during home reading

What does it mean to know a word?

Word knowledge is incremental and gradient and not binary; we need both- breadth and depth (Duff, 2019)

Measurement

Early word ideas:

Morphology

Multiple Meanings

Measurement
Measurement: Standardized Assessment

“Norm referenced tests of vocabulary are rarely adequate for measuring the effect of intervention” (Duff, 2019)

AND

“Norm referenced vocabulary measures, such as PPVT are not designed to measure incremental changes in knowledge of a word, usually only asking one question per word” (Duff, 2019)

Measurement

There is a need to think about the requirements of the task used to measure learning (Storkel, 2019)

“Clinically, the most immediate need is to establish if the child has gained knowledge in the words that were taught.” (Duff, 2019)

Measurement

Looking for students demonstrating their learning (visible learning)

Clusters of 4 Yes/No items
E.g., Shiny
➔ If you just went through a car wash, might your car be shiny?
➔ If your rubber boots are muddy, are they shiny?
➔ Does shiny mean very clean?
➔ Does shiny mean dark?

Measurement

Review

Learner outcomes

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**Summary of The Things:**

**Take away message from Science of Word Learning and Vocabulary development**
- Give intentional thought to Tier 2 words
- Targeting depth of knowledge to promote learning transfer
- Knowledge is incremental & gradient
- Dynamic evaluation

**Take away message from Practical Applications**
- Vocabulary is a foundational building block for reading comprehension
- Take away message from Measurement

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**References**


Colenbrander, D., Miles, K., Ricketts, J. (2019). To see or not to see: How does seeing spellings support vocabulary learning?. Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools (50), 609-628.


McKeown, M. G. (2019). Effective vocabulary instruction fosters knowing words, using words, and understanding how words work. Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools (50), 466-476.


