Too Many Words, Too Little Time
Duke Energy Power of Reading Summit – Nov. 2018

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Just How Crazy is it?
- 50% of words are predictable by rule.
- 36% of words are predictable by rule with one error.
- 10% of words will be predictable with word origin and morphology taken into account.
- Fewer than 4% of words are true oddities.

-- From Hanna, Hanna, Hodges, and Rudorf (1966)

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What Does It Mean to Know a Word?
- It's a matter of degree – not an all-or-nothing proposition
  - The ‘gist’
  - Understanding it in text
  - Using it in speaking and writing
- Long-term process – not a one-time event

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Hart & Risley Study
Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Lives of Young American Children
- Observed 42 families monthly for 2 ½ years
- Audiotaped and took observation notes for 1 full hour
- Transcribed conversations
- Analyzed size of vocabulary and types of interactions
- Remarkable database

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Language Experience Over Time

by 3 Groups


The Gap Between Students with Large and Small Vocabularies

Low Language Students

4,000 root words

High Language Students

8,000 root words

Gap between High and Low Language Children

By the end of 2nd grade

Biemiller, Andrew (2004) - “Teaching Vocabulary in the Primary Grades”

Problem: Fourth Grade Slump

Especially an issue for low-income children

- Jeanne Chall and Vicki Jacobs wrote in American Educator about a study
- Low-income children in grades 2-3 achieved as well as normative population in 6 measures
  - word recognition, word analysis, oral reading, word meaning, reading comprehension, and spelling
- In grades 4-7
  - First thing to slip was word meaning
  - Next thing to decelerate was scores on word recognition and spelling

Children from Low-Income Homes

"Why should low-income children have greater difficulty with word meanings at about the fourth grade? One reason is that the words at fourth grade and above are less familiar. Although the children’s language seemed to have been sufficient for the first three grades, they were not prepared to meet the challenge of the greater number of abstract, technical, and literary words characteristic of the reading materials of grades 4 and beyond. Such language—often termed literary and abstract—is more complex than that used by children in everyday, oral interaction.”

Jeanne Chall and Vicki Jacobs, “Poor Children’s Fourth-Grade Slump”, American Educator, Spring 2003
How Can We Close the Gap?

- Acquiring Vocabulary
  - There is some evidence that all students are learning words in roughly the same order
- What's possible?
  - Children can learn 2 – 3 words per day
  - However you have to explain 8-10 words a day in order for them to learn 2-3
  - How do you know if a child has learned it?
    - Assess knowledge a few weeks AFTER instruction

Learning New Words

Students need to learn at least 2,000 to 3,000 words per year

4 components of comprehensive vocabulary instruction: (according to Michael Graves)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four Components of Instruction</th>
<th>Words Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching individual words</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fostering word consciousness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage in wide reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching word learning strategies</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

#1 - Teaching Individual Words

How many words do most teachers teach each week?

10 per week x 36 weeks = 360
15 per week x 36 weeks = 440

#2 - Fostering Word Consciousness

Word consciousness – and especially understanding the power of word choice – is essential for vocabulary growth. Words are the currency of written language.

Judith Scott and Bill Nagy, Graves, pg. 119
“Simply stated, word consciousness refers to awareness and interest in words and their meanings.” – Graves (2006), pg. 119

Other descriptions:
- Interest in learning and using new words
- Interest in becoming more skillful and precise in word usage

Word meanings for WARM
- hot
- lukewarm
- tepid
- boiling
- balmy
- flushed
- sweaty
- mild
- scorching
- sizzling

“Model an attitude of inquiry and a habit of search.”

Richard C. Anderson
#3 - Wide Reading

- Are your students reading widely?
- Which students are reading widely?
- Skilled readers or struggling readers?

Independent Reading is Critical for Improving Vocabulary

According to a research study of 5th graders, the children in the 90th percentile read 2.3 million words/year compared to 134 thousand words/year for the children in the 20th percentile.

#4 – Word-Learning Strategies

Strategies for Word Learning:

- Use context
- Use word parts to unlock the meanings of unknown words
- Use the dictionary

Frequency of Word Use in Major Sources of Oral and Written Language (Hayes & Alcorn, 1988)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rare Words per 1,000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Printed texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstracts of scientific articles</td>
<td>128.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular magazines</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult books</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's books</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool books</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Television texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime-time adult shows</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime-time children's shows</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Adult speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert witness testimony</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduates talk to friends/spouses</td>
<td>17.3</td>
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Students Need to Learn at Least 2,000 to 3,000 Words Per Year

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<td>1. Teaching individual words (10 words per week x 35-40 weeks)</td>
<td>350-400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fostering word consciousness</td>
<td>Few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Encouraging wide reading</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teaching word learning strategies</td>
<td>MOST PROMISING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2,600 Word Gap

Most Influential Layers

- Greek
- Latin
- Anglo-Saxon

Write at least 5 words from each layer

Marcia Henry’s Layers of English

- Short, common, everyday words
- Comprise about 10 – 20% of English words that we use about 65% of the time in our speaking and writing
- Originate from a Germanic base
- Most are single syllable
- Spelling is often irregular
- Contains silent letters, vowel teams, consonant blends, digraphs, r- and l- controlled vowels, etc.
- Compound words with defined structure

Anglo-Saxon Words: Characteristics

- Short, common, everyday words
- Comprise about 10 – 20% of English words that we use about 65% of the time in our speaking and writing
- Originate from a Germanic base
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Latin Words: Characteristics

- 50 - 55% of all English words
- Most often polysyllabic
- Meanings of Latin roots are often abstract
- Often found in literature or social studies
- Many roots are closed syllables
- Does not use “k” or “ck”
- Use of “ct” or “pt” as final blends

Greek Words: Characteristics

- 11% of English words
- Technical, specialized words, especially related to science and math
- Begin to appear in textbooks around 3rd grade.
- Greek morphemes combine or compound
- Have no strict structure
- Often use ch=/k/, ph=/f/ and y=both short and long i sound.

Word Sort Activity

Instructional Techniques for Teaching Vocabulary Using Morphemes
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Sequence of Instruction

Anglo-Saxon
- Inflected Endings (s/es, ed, ing)
- Affixes (27 prefixes, 24 suffixes)

Latin
- Affixes (7 prefixes, 10 suffixes)
- Latin Words

Greek
- Greek Words

Lesson Plan

15 minutes daily – 4-day cycle
- Day 1: Uncover the Meaning – in context of sentences
- Day 2: Deepen Meaning
- Day 3: Multiplier
- Day 4: Demonstrate Meaning

Day 1: Uncover the Meaning

I DO Teacher dialogue:
I’m going to model using my detective skills to figure out what the underlined word parts mean.

I’ll use the other words in the sentence to develop a Working Definition of a word part.

Here are the first 2 sentences:
1. The bell’s noisy clamor called the children in from recess.
2. In a loud voice, the referee proclaimed our team the winner!

Which words are clues?
Day 2: Deepening the Meaning

Deepening the Meaning, We Do

Deepening the Meaning, You Do

Day 3: Multiplier