

VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS



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OVERVIEW

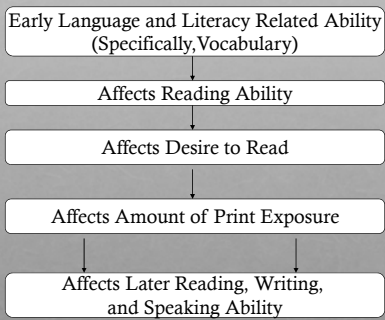
- Background
- Research comparing methods
- Research on supporting the vocabulary of ELs
- Research on using multimedia for vocabulary
- Research on the effectiveness of teaching practices
- Conclusions

BACKGROUND

- Many children arrive in school with limited vocabulary knowledge.

- These children may experience difficulties throughout their reading development.

The Matthew Effect



BACKGROUND

- Limited vocabulary knowledge incorporates quantity and quality (i.e., breadth and depth).
- There are both nature and nurture variables that are associated with limited vocabulary.

BACKGROUND

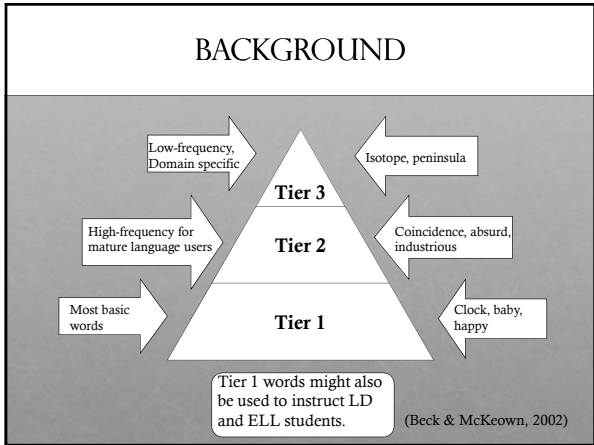
- Limited vocabulary knowledge incorporates quantity and quality (i.e., breadth and depth).
- Vocabulary is related to both decoding and comprehension.
- There are both nature and nurture variables that are associated with limited vocabulary.

BACKGROUND


- Word learning occurs from indirect exposure and direct instruction.
- Word knowledge develops along a continuum for each word.
- Generative word learning skills are developmental, and word learning strategies can support word learning.

BACKGROUND

- Research has begun to converge on strategies for supporting early word learning.
- Word choice is one area of relative agreement.



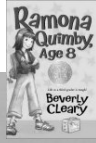
EXAMPLE



From a kindergarten through second grade read aloud book: *It's Mine* by Leo Lionni (1986):

*"On the island lived three quarrelsome frogs named Milton, Rupert, and Lydia. They **quarreled** and **quibbled** from dawn to dusk... Toad could here them **bickering** from his side of the island."*

EXAMPLE



From the 4th Grade Ramona Quimby Series

by Beverly Cleary:

A chapter entitled, "The Quimby's Quarrel."

And an excerpt with **bicker**... "Growing up is hard work," said Mr. Quimby... "I know," said Ramona and thought some more. She thought about loose teeth, real sore throats, longing for a bicycle her family could not afford, worrying when her parents **bickered**, how terrible she had felt when she hurt Beezus' feelings without meaning to, and all the long afternoons, when Mrs. Kemp looked after her until her mother came home from work. She had survived it all...

BACKGROUND

- Other principles common across studies include:
 - Defining words using child-friendly definitions.
 - Introducing words through rich contexts.
 - Using words in new contexts to which children can relate.

RESEARCH COMPARING METHODS

- Which method is most effective for kindergarten instruction?
- Compare contextual, analytic, and anchored approaches to instruction.

RESEARCH COMPARING METHODS

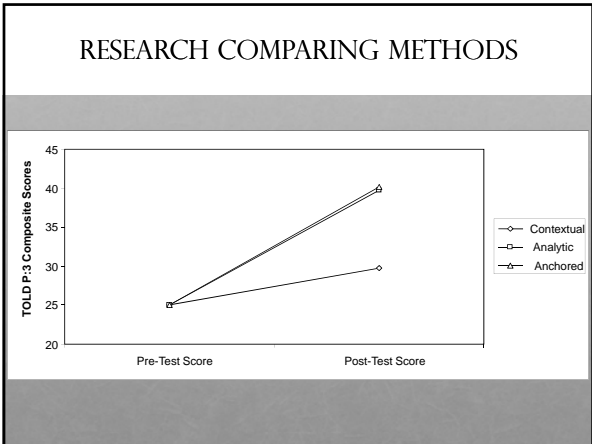
- Three conditions: Contextual, Contextual + Analytic, Contextual + Analytic + Anchored
- 94 children, 6 classes, 2 classes per condition, 3 days per week, 30 minutes per day, 6 weeks of instruction.
- 1 read aloud book per week, 3 times per week, 5 words per book

RESEARCH COMPARING METHODS

- Contextual: Have you ever quarreled with a friend before?
- Analytic: When you are trying to be nice to someone, would you quarrel with them?
- Anchored: What sound do you hear at the beginning of quarrel? What letters make those sounds?

RESEARCH COMPARING METHODS

- Children in the Analytic and Anchored conditions outperformed children in the Contextual condition in word learning.
- Sixth months later, children in the Anchored condition remembered more words than children in the Contextual condition.
- Trends indicated that low SES and ELL children may have benefited most from the analytic condition.

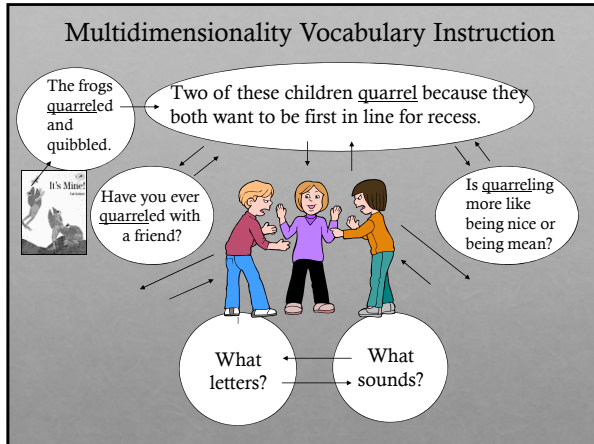


RESEARCH ON ENGLISH LEARNERS

- Given research based methods of vocabulary instruction, do English learners learn as much or grow as fast in vocabulary as their monolingual English peers?

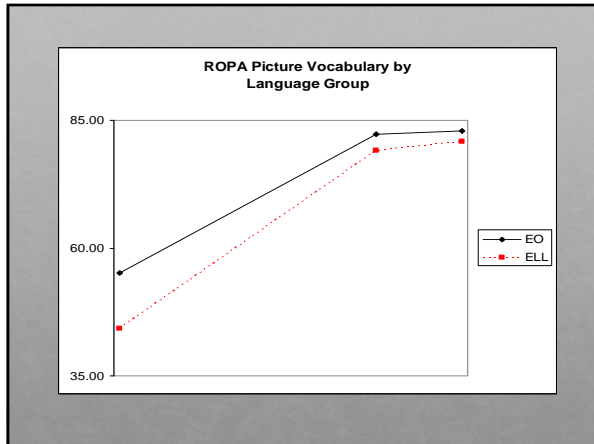
RESEARCH ON ENGLISH LEARNERS

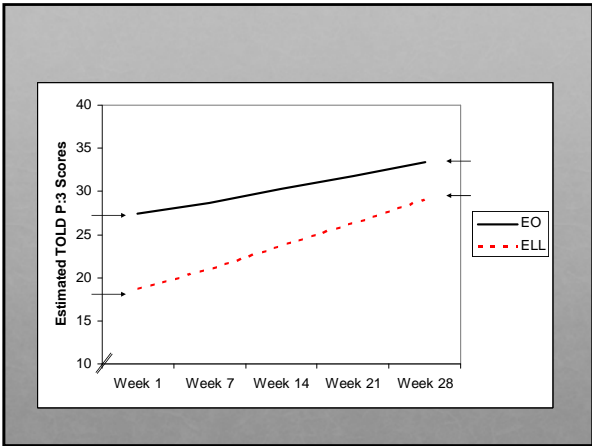
- **Multidimensional vocabulary instruction:**
 - Define word
 - Use in context
 - Have children analyze words
 - Ask and answer questions about words
 - Provide examples
 - Use actions
 - Show visuals
 - Focus on phonological representation
 - Connect to orthographic representation
 - Reinforce



RESEARCH ON ENGLISH LEARNERS

- 86 kindergarten participants from 6 classrooms, 49% ELL from a variety of language backgrounds, 52% receiving free or reduced lunch (SES)
- 36 lessons spread over 28 weeks of school, 12 books, 13 days per book plus review days, theme-based (animals and transportation), 5-10 words per book
- ELLs were catching up in knowledge of target words and growing faster in overall vocabulary.





RESEARCH ON MULTIMEDIA

What is the added benefit of multimedia reinforcement of vocabulary words taught in the context of a PK-2 science unit?

Is there a differential benefit for ELL versus EO children?

DESIGN

- The two teachers at each grade level PK-2 participated in the project (n = 8).
- One teacher was assigned to the video group and one was assigned to the non video group. Assignments were random.
- Students (n = 85) were randomly assigned to condition across classrooms but within grade.

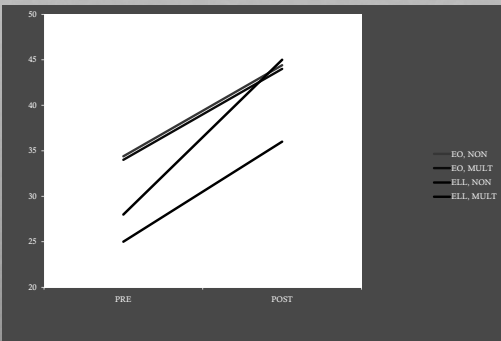
INTERVENTION

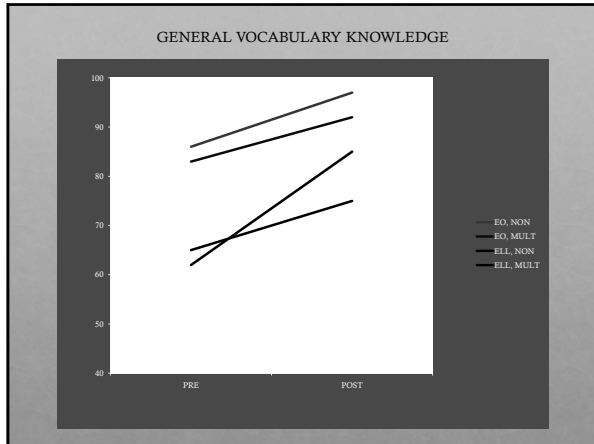
- The intervention was set within a 12 week unit focusing on the science topic of habitats.
- Three weeks was spent on each of the following habitats: Rainforest, Savannah, Coral Reef, and Desert.
- For each habitat one narrative book and two expository books were chosen for read alouds.
- Eight Tier 2 words were focused on per book.

INTERVENTION

- Scripted curricula were written for the non-video and video conditions to accompany each book.
- Each teacher in the study read aloud 1 book per week, focused on 8 words per book, and implemented the scripted curriculum for her condition.

KNOWLEDGE OF TARGET WORDS





RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the relationships between teachers' use of specific research-based vocabulary instruction strategies and children's growth in general vocabulary knowledge and learning of words taught during language arts (i.e., read aloud and non-read aloud time)?
- Do these relationships depend on children's initial level of vocabulary knowledge?

DESIGN

- An observational study over the course of a school year in 16 early childhood classrooms.
- Observations of teachers coded for instances in which the teachers used specific research-based strategies of vocabulary instruction during language arts.
 - Frequency of strategy use was the variable under consideration.
- Assessments of children at beginning and end of the year.

SAMPLE

244 children from 16 PK or K classrooms in an urban school district in the Northeastern United States.

- 55% were male.
- 38% African American, 32% Caucasian, 17% Asian, and 14% Hispanic
- 26% spoke a language other than English at home
- 47% participated in the federal school lunch program
- 64% in kindergarten (K) and 36% in pre-kindergarten (PK)

PROCEDURES

- Teachers attended PD on teaching vocabulary.
- 36 books and a list of 4 specific target words per book.
- Teachers were asked to read books in a specified order and to focus on the target words listed for each book.

OBSERVATIONS

- The teachers were observed during LA block 3 times over the course of the school year.
- On laptops and in real time, observers transcribed teacher and student language and described teacher instructional practice.
- Observers were told to capture verbatim instances in which teachers focused on vocabulary.

CODING

- Identify instances in which teachers explicitly taught the meaning of a word.
- Code these instances for the strategy or strategies among a list of practices that teachers used to teach the word.

ACT/ILLUSTRATE

- Teacher uses a visual support such as a picture or kinesthetic cues such as gestures to support learning the word.
- T: Today's the day when the groundhog comes out of his hole, and if he sees his *shadow* we have six more weeks of winter. See how my hand makes a *shadow* on the wall when the light hits it.
- T: Show me *peeking* with your hands and your face. (Teacher models.)
- (T demonstrates *wilted* by making her arms look limp.)

ANALYZE

- Teacher prompts children to analyze how words are related by comparing and contrasting, attending to multiple meanings, and providing synonyms and antonyms.
- T: Are *sleeping* and *relaxing* the same thing?
- T: How are *peering* and *peeking* different?
- T: *Utensils*. Some people call it *silverware*.
- T: Does a *humongous* building mean it's a big building or a *wobbly* building?
- T: You could change that word *illustrator* to *artist* and it would mean the same thing.

CONTEXTUALIZE

- Teacher guides children to apply word knowledge by using the word productively in new contexts other than the one in which the word appears.
- T: You know what I used to *fear*? When I am driving on the highway and the trucks were right beside me, I felt like they were too close to me.
- T: Can you think of a sentence with *still*?
- T: If you watch the Olympics, what do you see athletes do? They *compete* to win medals like a gold or a silver medal.

DEFINE

- Teacher provides explicit definition or explanation of the word in the context in which it appears.
- T: This word *samovar*. I am not sure what that word is, so we will look it up. Where do we look it up? In the dictionary. See? Even grown-ups don't know words sometimes, so I am going to look it up in the dictionary. (Teacher looks in dictionary.) So it is like the teapot.
- T: *Bald*. That means you have no hair.
- T: What's the *dipper*? It's like a long handle on a little cup, so you can have a drink.

WORD STUDY

- Teacher uses or prompts children to use a word that they have taught as a vocabulary word in instruction of spelling, phonics, phonemic awareness, or writing practice.
- T: Let's add our words to our vocabulary pocket chart. How about the word *gather*? What letter does *gather* go with? Yes, "g." Let's see you write "I gather..."
- T: Can you say *naughty*? It starts with "nnnn."
- T: Our word is *creeping*. What words rhyme with *creep*? (S: Leap, sleep)

OTHER IMPORTANT PRACTICES		
Feedback	Teacher provides feedback to children on how they use the word	T: They like to chat . What's chatting ? S: That means talking to each other. T: Yes, that means talking to each other.
Relate	Teacher relates the word to new contexts in addition to the one in which it appears by providing examples and connecting to personal experiences	T: To prepare means to get ready ahead of time. Like maybe making things. Like what did you do to prepare for Halloween? Did you make a costume?
Review	Teacher reviews a word that has already been taught and/or connects to past instruction	T: Horizon . We talked about that word yesterday. Do you remember what horizon means?

DISCUSSION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the more frequently teachers used strategies throughout LA, the more children grew in vocabulary. • Wide variation among teachers in their use of strategies. One teacher used < 10 strategies in the 90 min. period whereas another used nearly 60 strategies during that same amount of time. 	

DISCUSSION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting out and illustrating words during read-aloud time was positively related to vocabulary for children with low vocabulary. • This practice was negatively related to growth in vocabulary for children with high initial vocabulary knowledge. 	

DISCUSSION

- Analyze was the least used practice in this study during read-aloud and non-read-aloud time despite its support in the literature.
- Contextualizing words during non-read-aloud time was related to higher vocabulary for all children,
- But greater use of this practice was related to greater gains in vocabulary for children with higher vocabulary than for children with lower vocabulary.

DISCUSSION

- Defining words seemed to have a greater effect for children with higher word knowledge than for children with lower word knowledge, though the relationship was positive for both groups of children.
- Using word study in combination with vocabulary words was positively related to children's vocabulary across contexts.

DISCUSSION

- Teachers' use of vocabulary instruction practices during read-aloud time was positively related to children's vocabulary learning.
- Teachers' use of vocabulary instruction practices outside of read-aloud time was also positively related to children's vocabulary learning.
- Practices showed different patterns of relationship to vocabulary learning during these two time periods.

DISCUSSION

- This study adds to the research base by demonstrating that relationships between particular vocabulary instruction practices and children's vocabulary may depend on children's initial vocabulary level.

CONCLUSIONS

- Particular practices seem most promising.
- These practices can support EL children in catching up to their peers in vocabulary.
- Teachers need more support for implementing practices that encourage children to analyze words in the early years.
- Teachers should plan to implement practices throughout read aloud and non-read aloud time.
- Some practices may support some children more than others and vocabulary instruction may need to be somewhat differentiated.

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