EDUC 403 - Individualized Reading Instruction in the Elementary Grades, Winter 2008

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http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/64961
ED 403
Week 3
Agenda

• Sharing of Fountas and Pinnell choices in threes
• Book Talk
• Announcing a new activity: Problems of Practice
• Mini-lesson on “drawing inferences” using Out of the Dust activity
• Appreciating the Author’s Craft
• Teaching Vocabulary
  – Why vocabulary teaching is important
  – What do we know about effective vocabulary teaching
• Launching a Writer’s Notebook
Making inferences from text

• Name the activity: “Today, we are going to practice making inferences while reading.”
• Describe why this activity is important: Good readers are like good detectives; they can “read between the lines.” What do I mean by that?
• How do we “read between the lines?”
• We have to use the ideas in the text and the ideas in our heads to make sense of what the author is saying.
Making inferences (cont.)

• Modeling: From *Out of the Dust*

• An inference that I made about Billy Joe is that she is very feisty!
  “red’s the color I’ve stayed ever since.” (p.3)
  “…a hunger for playing fierce piano” (p. 3)
  “I can handle myself most everywhere he puts me.” (p. 4)
  “…and mostly, that’s what I do” (p. 10)
Vocabulary Overview

Why is vocabulary instruction important?

What are some stumbling blocks to effective vocabulary teaching?

What do we know about effective means of vocabulary instruction?

Selecting and engaging children with Tier II words
What does it mean to know a word? How would you characterize your knowledge of the words in the table?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>I know it well I can explain it I can use it</th>
<th>I know something about it I can relate it to a situation</th>
<th>I have seen this word or I have heard this word</th>
<th>I do not know what word this is</th>
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For those words that you marked “Know it well, can explain it, use it,” script an explanation of the word for a fifth grader who has encountered the word in text.

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Why is vocabulary important?

- Vocabulary knowledge is related to reading comprehension
- When reading comprehension is compromised, it is difficult to learn new concepts and vocabulary from text
- Matthew’s effects lead to gaps between children
Research on Vocabulary

First-grade children from higher-SES groups knew about twice as many words as lower SES children.

High school seniors near the top of their class knew about four times as many words as their lower-performing classmates.

High-knowledge third graders had vocabularies about equal to lowest-performing 12th graders.

All the available evidence suggests that there is little emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary in school curricula.
Children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds know FAR FEWER words by age 3 than their middle class and wealthy peers and their growth trajectory is slower (Hart & Risley, 1995).
Vocabulary

-R.WS.06.07 in context, determine the meaning of words and phrases including regional idioms, literary and technical terms, and content vocabulary using strategies including connotation, denotation, and authentic content-related resources.
What have some leaders in the field suggested as instructional techniques?

**Wide reading**: Struggling readers do not read well enough to learn vocabulary through wide reading.

**Learning from Context**: Relying on context alone often does not provide enough information to derive word meanings.
Why is vocabulary instruction difficult?

Written context lacks the features of oral language that support learning new words and meanings, such as intonation, body language, and shared physical surroundings.

When children are learning to read, the books often use familiar words and controlled text in order to enable children to become good decoders.

Struggling readers do not read well enough to make wide reading an option.

Relying on context alone often does not provide enough information to derive word meanings.
Why is vocabulary instruction difficult?

Sandra had won the dance contest, and the audience’s cheers brought her to the stage for an encore. “Every step she takes is so perfect and graceful,” Ginny said grudgingly as she watched Sandra dance.
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**MISDIRECTIVE CONTEXT:** Contexts that, rather than revealing the meaning of the target word, direct the student to an indirect meaning.
Why is vocabulary instruction difficult?

Dan heard the door open and wondered who had arrived. He couldn’t make out the voices. Then he recognized the *lumbering* footsteps on the stairs and knew it was Aunt Grace.
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**Nondirective Context:** Context is of no assistance in directing the reader towards the meaning of the target word.
Joe and Stan arrived at the party at 7 o’clock. By 9:30, the evening seemed to drag for Stan. But Joe seemed to be having a good time. “I wish I could be as gregarious as he is,” thought Stan.
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GENERAL CONTEXT: Provides enough information for the reader to place the word in a general category.
Why is vocabulary instruction difficult?

When the cat pounced on the dog, he leapt up, yelping, and knocked down a shelf of books. The animals ran past Wendy, tripping her. She cried out and fell to the floor. As the noise and confusion mounted, Mother hollered upstairs, “What’s all that commotion?”
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**DIRECTIVE CONTEXT:** Contexts likely to lead the child to a specific, correct meaning of the word.
Bringing Words to Life

**Tier 1 words:** Not all words need instructional attention. The first tier consists of the most basic words – clock, baby, happy, walk, etc. Most children know these words.

**Tier 2 words:** Words that comprise the second tier are those that are of high frequency for mature language users. Words in the second tier include *coincidence, absurd, industrious, and fortunate*.

**Tier 3 words:** Tier three words are domain specific and low frequency. Examples of tier three words include *isotope, lathe, peninsula, and refinery*. In general, a rich understanding of these words would not be of high utility for most learners. These words are probably best learned when a specific need arises, such as introducing *peninsula* during a geography lesson.
Robust Vocabulary Instruction

• Selecting 5-7 Tier II words per week
• Introducing Tier II words using student friendly definitions
• Engage students daily in activities around target words that foster deep processing and word consciousness:
  – Provide opportunities to use words in a variety of contexts
  – Encourage thinking about words
  – Support associations between words
  – Explore facets of word meaning
Robust Vocabulary Instruction

- Midweek assessments/speed rounds
- End-of-week assessment
  - Consider goals for depth of word knowledge
  - What does it mean to know a word
- Maintenance activities