

Building a Literacy Environment

What does it look like?

What does it sound like?

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Language & Literacy

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AGENDA

Upon completion of today's workshop, participants will have:

- Explored the research on building literacy;
- Reviewed what is being taught in kindergarten in the area of literacy, and
- Explored new strategies and techniques for building a literacy rich classroom.

1. Introductions: Let's Share
2. What do I already know?
3. What do children need for kindergarten success?
 - Phonemic awareness and phonological awareness
 - Fluency
 - Comprehension
 - Word Study
 - Vocabulary
4. Let's watch a movie!
 - What does it look like?
 - What does it sound like?
5. Let's build vocabulary – learn another new strategy
6. Bring your families along
7. What does the research on literacy say?
 - Read Articles
 - Jigsaw
8. Group problem solving
 - Solve in a group
 - Share with everyone
9. Let's review: What do I know?
10. Questions/Comments/Concerns

WELCOME TO THE LANGUAGE & LITERACY MEETING
July 2009

Please choose your favorite candy.

If you chose:

- **M and M's - Introduce yourself and share your biggest professional challenge this year.**
- **Skittles - Introduce yourself and share your biggest professional joy last year.**
- **Starbursts - Introduce yourself and share your favorite language arts song/strategy.**
- **Three Musketeers - Introduce yourself and share your favorite read-aloud.**
- **Snickers - Introduce yourself and tell us what you like the very best about teaching.**

Rate Yourself

What's Your Language & Literacy Skill?

Rate yourself on a scale of one to five, with one being the weakest and five being the strongest:

1. My room has a rich assortment of books that interest both boys and girls. _____
2. Children in my room have many opportunities to have books/poems read to them. _____
3. Children in my room have many opportunities to self select books/poems and read to themselves. _____
4. Children in my room have books written by themselves or containing photos of themselves available in the room. _____
5. Children in my room hear music many times a day that build their literacy skills. _____
 - a. My favorite CD's for building literacy are: _____
6. Every day I plan for many meaningful whole group and small group literacy activities. _____
7. I know what it is and understand the importance of phonemic awareness for young children. _____
8. I know what it is and understand the importance of phonological awareness for young children. _____
9. I know what it is and understand the importance of fluency building for young children. _____
10. I know what it is and understand the importance of reading comprehension for young children. _____
11. I know what it is and understand the importance of vocabulary building for young children. _____
12. I have many resources and ways for sharing literacy building strategies with parents. _____

VOCABULARY QUIZ

1. The most important time for children to learn vocabulary words is ages five and six.
2. The key factor about the difference in vocabulary learning is gender.
3. The gap in vocabulary knowledge increases at every grade level.
4. Vocabulary is not as important as fluency and phonemic awareness in learning to read.
5. Generally, boys and girls enjoy very different kinds of books.
6. It is important to have a class library with one half fiction books and one half non-fiction books.
7. There is little a teacher can do to close down the vocabulary gap between children.
8. The best way to teach vocabulary is by taking advantage of the “teachable moment”.
9. Children need to hear vocabulary that is age appropriate, as opposed to vocabulary that is too sophisticated.
10. It is important to “teach” children new words and new meanings in an organized, planned fashion.
11. There is little a teacher can do to make a difference in a child’s reading life.
12. Choose to teach vocabulary words that come from those young children need to read.

Get Ready – Choosing Books and Vocabulary

It is important to choose engaging storybooks with beautiful pictures and appealing stories that will capture and hold children's interest and attention. (Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui, 2004)

How to Select Books

Choosing the right book to read aloud to students is of critical importance since our goal is to be intentional about developing vocabulary. Whether narrative or expository, a book **must** be chosen for its rich vocabulary, although it **may** be chosen to fit a particular theme or topic. When read orally, a book should be somewhat challenging with a number of words not known by at least half of the class.

Choosing the Vocabulary

Research indicates that children who enter school with limited vocabulary should be exposed to **8 - 10 new words per day**. However, **2-3 of these words** should be chosen from the carefully selected daily read aloud for deliberate study. The choice of which vocabulary words to target is one of the most important decisions a teacher has to make. There will always be a number of word choices within any given text. According to Dr. Steven A. Stahl from the University of Georgia, Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, targeted vocabulary words should include:

- Words that the child has a concept for, but does not know
- Words that represent new concepts

Within any given text there are also:

- Highly common words (sight vocabulary)
- Words that are in the student's oral vocabulary but not written vocabulary
- Rare words (vocabulary students infrequently encounter in the primary grades)

However, these are not the words that the teacher should target for explicit vocabulary development. These may be a part of the additional words introduced in a given day.

When choosing targeted vocabulary words, a teacher must be certain to answer all of the following questions:

1. What is the purpose for choosing these words?
2. Are these words instrumental in helping the student understand the text?
3. Are these words new for half of the students?
4. Are these words that students might come across in a number of contexts?

The teacher needs to devise a method for keeping track of books read, targeted vocabulary and definitions shared. One possible organizational tool is a chart divided into three columns that is easily accessible to the teacher for her reference throughout the year. **This is an important step as it is critical for the students to hear the vocabulary words defined the same way each and every time.** The chart might look as follows:

Teacher Vocabulary Reference Chart*

Book / Date	Vocabulary Taught	Definition
<u>Caps For Sale</u> 9-10-04	peddler	Someone who travels and sells things
	stamped	To put your foot down hard
	disturb	To move out of place
Harry the Dirty Dog 9-11-04	buried	Put in the ground covered with dirt
	strange	Someone or something that you don't know
	furiously	Fast and wildly
A Chair for My Mother 9-19-04	tips	Extra money for good work
	spoiled	Messed up
	delivered	Brought

**adapted from the work of Coyne, Simmons, and Kame'enui, 2004*

Get Set – Planning and Rehearsal

There is especially strong evidence regarding the effectiveness of explicit vocabulary instruction that focuses on teaching students the meanings of specific words and instructional principles that maximize vocabulary learning. (National Reading Panel, 2000)

In order for thoughtful, explicit instruction of vocabulary words to occur, there must be careful teacher preparation prior to the reading of the story. The planning phase is therefore essential. This may be different from what has occurred in the past. One way to plan for explicit vocabulary instruction is to focus on two different read alouds in a five-day cycle. On Days One and Two, the first book is read and reread. On Days Three and Four, the second book is read and reread. On Day Five, students are given opportunities to enhance and expand their experiences with the targeted vocabulary in both read alouds. The students are provided with “multiple opportunities to process word meanings at a deeper and richer level” (Coyne, Simmons, and Keme’enui, 2004). Therefore, the teacher’s plans for the five-day reading cycle would look as follows:

Day One – Read Book 1

Day Two – Reread Book 1

Day Three – Read Book 2

Day Four – Reread Book 2

Day Five – Vocabulary Extension and Story/Fact Retell Activities for Book 1 and 2

Once the books and targeted vocabulary have been selected, the teacher needs to prepare in the following ways:

1. **Create word cards** with the targeted vocabulary. Each word needs to be on a white index card with black print for optimal student discrimination. In addition, each card, whenever possible, should have a descriptive illustration of the word and/or a sign of the word.

2. **Define each vocabulary word** in simple, concise terms that will be used consistently throughout the school year. Write the definitions on post-it notes to be placed within the text.
3. **Add book, date, words and definitions** to the aforementioned Teacher Vocabulary Reference Chart.
4. **Rehearse the story** with appropriate intonation and expression.
5. **Pencil in pauses** you will make as you read.
6. Plan for a variety of ways to **reinforce the words authentically** throughout the day in addition to read aloud time.
7. **Think about ways to assess** whether the words have become part of students' everyday vocabulary.

It is important to remember that in order to make the best use of vocabulary instruction, which is critical for later success in reading comprehension, every step of the planning stage must occur. This may be a change from current practice.

I suggest planning on about 30 minutes a day for reading aloud, word explanations, maintaining some focus on comprehension, and on assessment. I realize that 30 minutes is a large part of the day that primary grade teachers have with their children. I also know that failure to develop an adequate vocabulary is as limiting for a child as failing to learn to identify words or understand numbers. (Andrew Biemiller, 2004)

Go! – Read Aloud

The format for the read aloud should include these four parts: Story Introduction, The Reading, Post Discussion and Vocabulary Extension and Story/Fact Retell Activities. These activities occur over the course of the five – day cycle, using two books. The following is an example of a day-by-day plan using both books.

Day 1 Book 1, First Reading

Story Introduction

1. Point to and read the title on the cover of Book 1, and tell who wrote and illustrated the text.
2. Give a brief overview of what the story is about. Encourage the students to be listening for a specific purpose.
3. Ask predictive questions about the text referring to the cover of the book. Build on students' responses by emphasizing character and problem or students' prior knowledge about the topic.
4. Remind students that thinking about story elements and text features while listening will help them better understand the text.
5. Explain to students that there will be 2-3 new targeted vocabulary words that they are to be listening for. Show and name each vocabulary word and have the students say them together. (Teachers have different terms for targeted vocabulary words: Awesome Words, Juicy Words, Key Words, etc. Determine with your class what you are going to call these words).
6. Tell students to signal each time they hear the 2-3 targeted vocabulary words while you read aloud the text. Decide with your students what that signal is going to be: raise your hand, touch your nose, pull your ear, etc.

The Reading

1. As you begin the read aloud, pay attention to volume, intonation, enunciation, and keeping the pace of the story suitable.

2. Read through with minimal interruptions. Do not interrupt more than once a page in a specific reading.
3. Pause at pre-selected points in the text, where the targeted vocabulary word first occurs. Use the following format each time a new targeted vocabulary word occurs in the text:
 - Pause after the new vocabulary word to give students an opportunity to respond with the predetermined signal.
 - Reinforce students for signaling in response to hearing the vocabulary. Ask the following questions:
 - What word did you hear?
 - Did anyone hear one of the _____ words?
 -
 - Reinforce the 2-3 vocabulary words by saying them again with your students.
 - Reread the line of text that contains the vocabulary word, again looking for students giving the signal that indicates they heard the new vocabulary word.
 - Define new vocabulary word using the concise definition (see Get Set section)

Post Discussion

Ask students open-ended questions, containing the targeted vocabulary words. Have them practice using and applying the words to their own experiences. If children are unable to answer, provide answers or share personal experiences, if appropriate.

Day 2

Book 1, Second Reading

Story Introduction

1. Follow the same organization and procedures as Day 1
2. Place more emphasis on discussing the targeted vocabulary within the context of the story.
3. Review targeted vocabulary by showing the illustrations from the story depicting the words' uses.

The Reading

1. Follow the same organization and procedures as Day 1.
2. During the second reading, the text can be interrupted 8-10 times to explain the targeted vocabulary.
3. Remove some of the teacher scaffolding so students can begin to take over more responsibility when discussing targeted vocabulary as well as story elements. (ex-Day 1-students only listen to teacher defining vocabulary, Day 2-students produce the definitions)

Post Discussion

Follow the same organization and procedures as Day 1

Day 3 Book 2, First Reading

Story Introduction

Follow the same organization and procedures as Day 1.

The Reading

Follow the same organization and procedures as Day 1.

Post Discussion

Follow the same organization and procedures as Day 1.

Day 4 Book 2, Second Reading

Story Introduction

Follow the same organization and procedures as Day 2.

The Reading

Follow the same organization and procedures as Day 2.

Post Discussion

Follow the same organization and procedures as Day 2.

Day 5
Vocabulary Activities and Story/Fact Retell, Books 1 and 2

The teacher does not reread the two texts on this day. Activities should reinforce student-to-student conversations facilitated by the teacher and engage students in discussions about targeted vocabulary, as well as the story elements and comprehension.

Vocabulary Extension Activities

Design activities to provide students with opportunities to process word meanings and practice targeted vocabulary use. Activities might include:

- Talking together about the targeted vocabulary using the text illustrations to spark discussion.

- Playing games with students that target which vocabulary word goes best with a similar word (*Which word goes best with “carton?” box or bathtub? Students choose the best word.*)

- Finishing the sentence using a targeted vocabulary word. *The washing machine came in a large box. The washing machine arrived in a _____.* (carton)

- Playing the What am I Talking About? game. *I went to Sears to buy an appliance, I bought a refrigerator. When it was delivered, the refrigerator was in a cardboard container. What is the word for a large cardboard container?*

Retell Activities

Students are encouraged to orally retell the story using targeted vocabulary and to recall information from the text, using illustrations and/or story elements for support. Teachers may need to supply verbal prompts.