



# Improving Vocabulary

In the Age of Common Core  
Standards:  
Guidance for Early Childhood  
Educators

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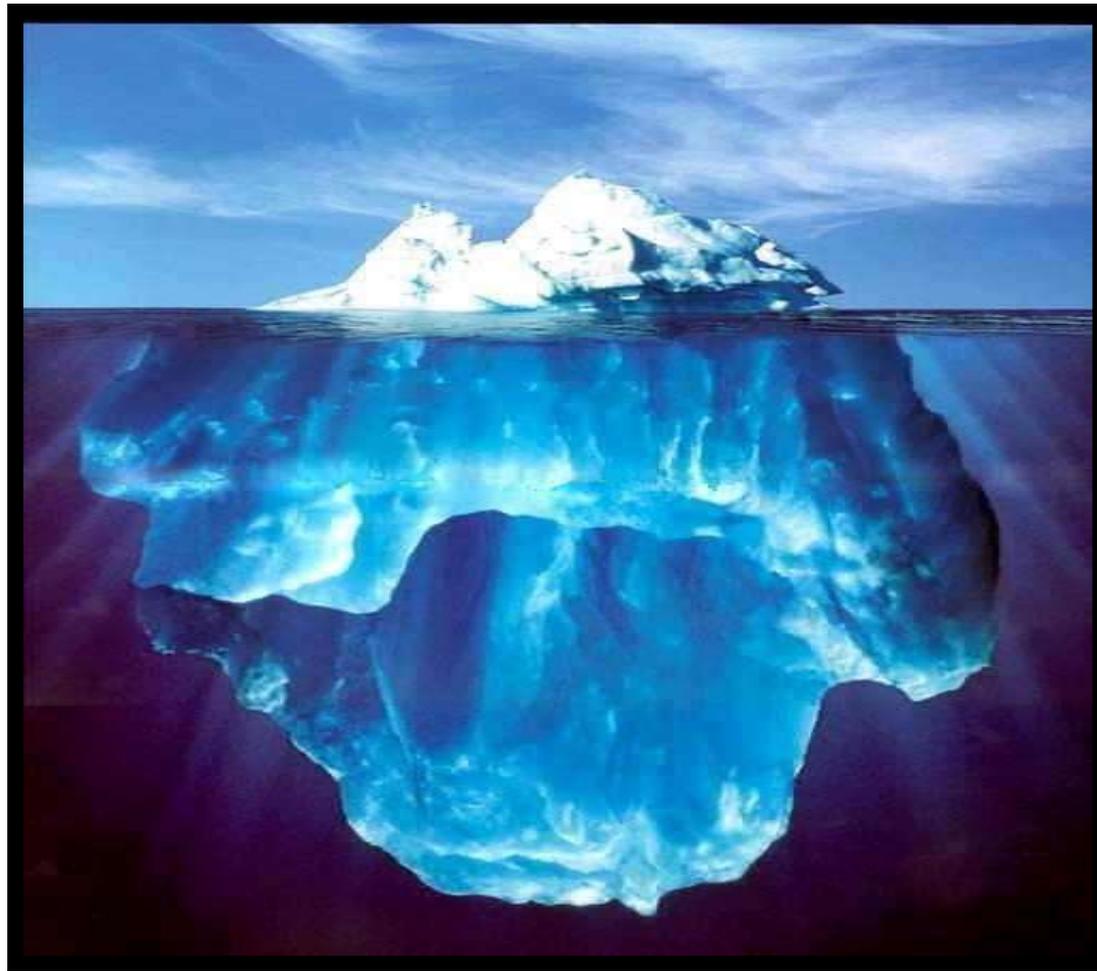
# ALL ABOUT WORDS

INCREASING VOCABULARY IN THE  
COMMON CORE CLASSROOM, **PREK-2**



ready-to-read

Teacher's  
College  
Press, 2013



Tip of the iceberg



ready to read

- Knowledge
- Symbolic representations
- Build concepts



# All about words

- Vocabulary is THE strongest predictor of children's achievement
  - Not only in elementary school but in high school

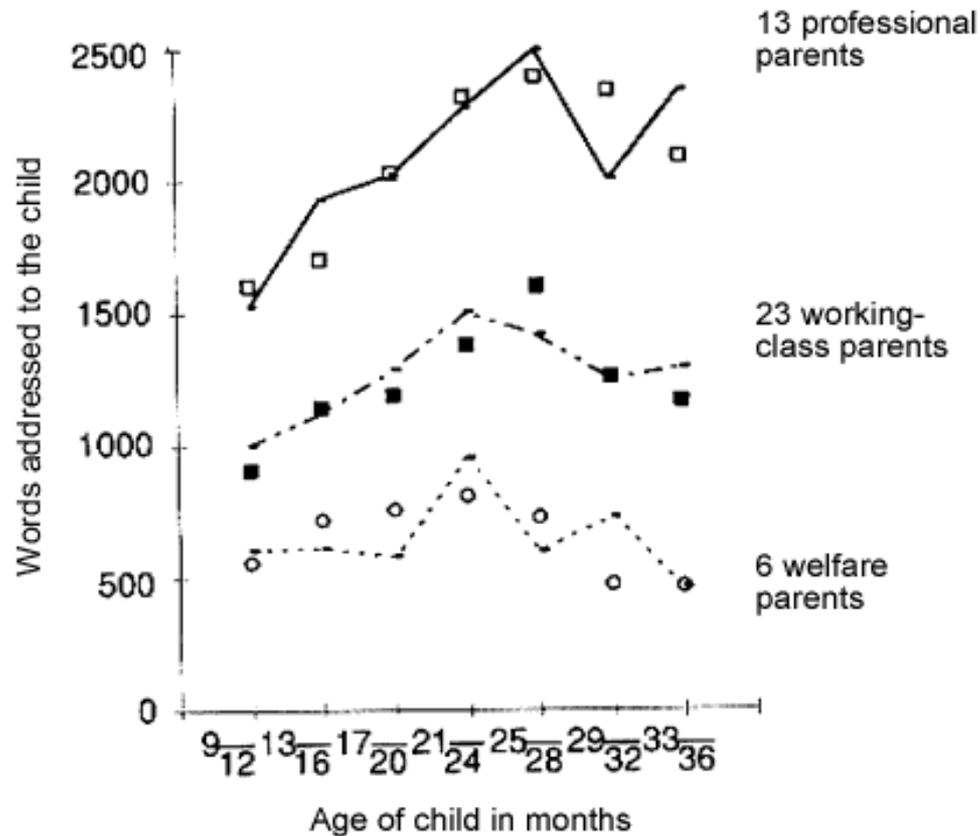
Relation to  
other skills



- Children of poor, marginalized populations
- Children of families who speak a language other than English
- Mother's education



# Risk factors



# Hart and Risley...



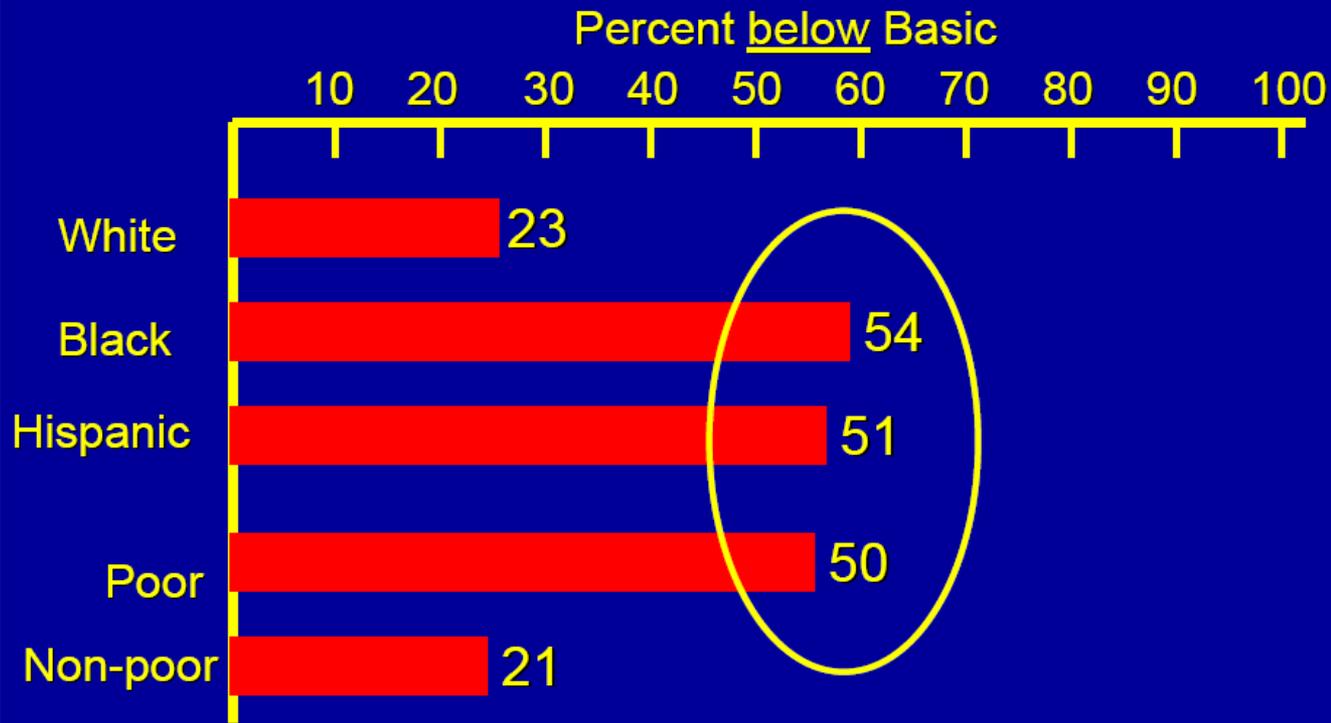


# Poverty



## 2007 results from National Assessment of Educational Progress at 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Overall, 34% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders performed below the Basic Level of Proficiency in 17,600 schools



# NAEP 2012

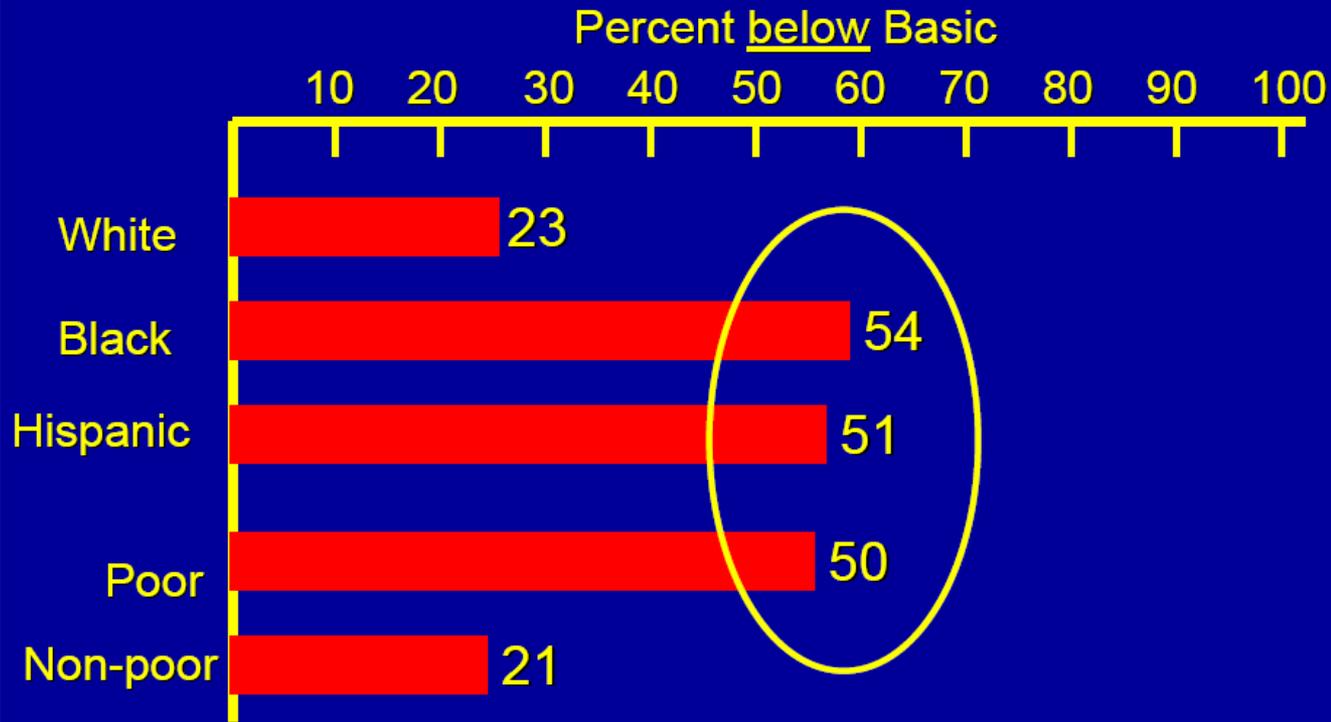
- Cumulative model of expectations
- Academic Vocabulary
- Building knowledge through texts
- Creating cross-textual experiences
- Integrating technology and print
- A focus on evidence

# Common Core Standards



## 2007 results from National Assessment of Educational Progress at 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

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# NAEP 2012



# Poll question

- Children are ‘word sponges’
- They learn words through activities
- Storybook reading
- “I do it all the time”



# Common myths

- The numbers are larger than you can imagine

No. of words  
children will  
need to know



- Children will need explicit AND implicit instruction
- Explicit: A ‘cave’ is a hole in the mountain”
- As opposed: What is a cave?



# Key principles

- Be intentional in our word selection
- Words from core reading program
  - Platypus
  - Around
  
- OR:
- Ride
- move

○ Question: are these words important?

Key principle



- INSTEAD: insects, antennae, segments, legs
- Parts of the body: brain, heart, lungs

# Knowledge networks



- Camouflage
- Habitat
- Survival

Key principle



- Ongoing professional development



# Key principle



# Poll question

# Creating a vocabulary rich environment

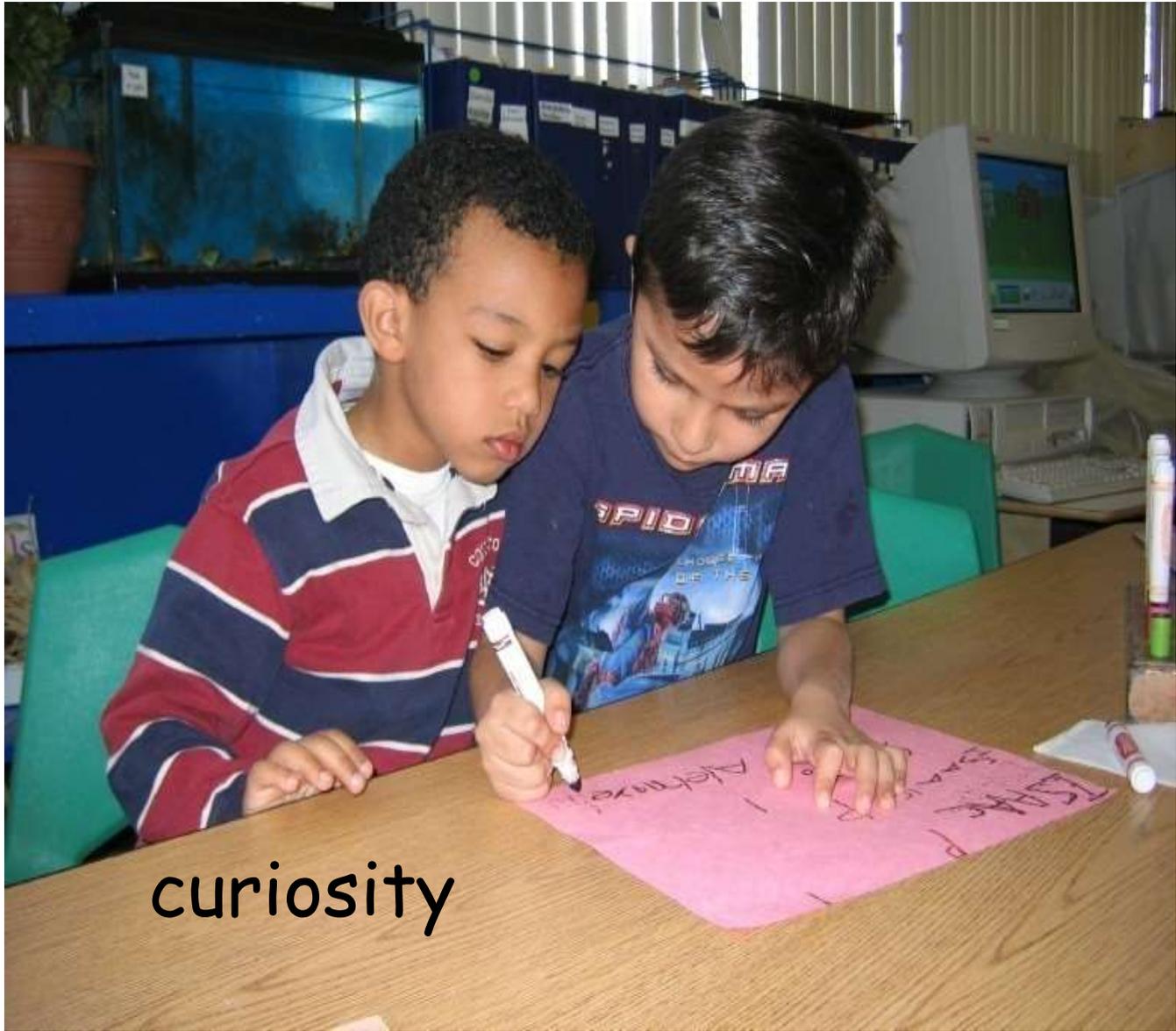


ready to read



Creating cozy spots  
for reading

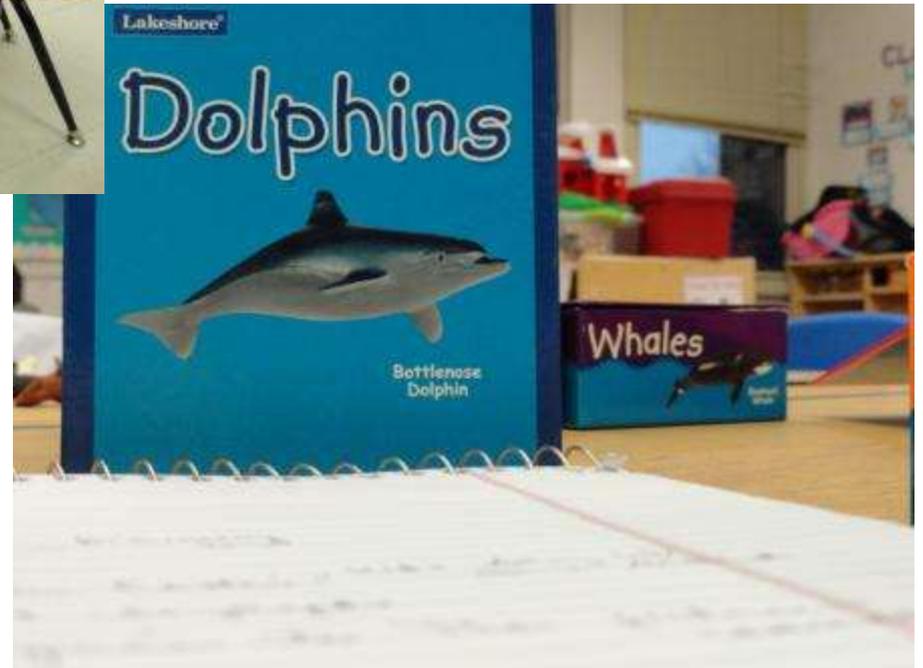




curiosity



ready to read



ready to read

- Purposeful talk: Why do you think?
- Challenging words: meteorologist
- Extend and clarify
- “Taking it up a notch”
  - Compare/contrast
  - If/then



# Oral language



Eye to eye instruction



- Implicit instruction
- Explicit instruction

# Building vocabulary





# Poll question

- The problem
- “A space probe is an unpiloted spacecraft that leaves Earth’s orbit to explore the Moon, planets, asteroids, comets, or other objects in outer space as directed by onboard computers and/or instructions sent from Earth.”
- 
- Grade 6 text

# Building vocabulary

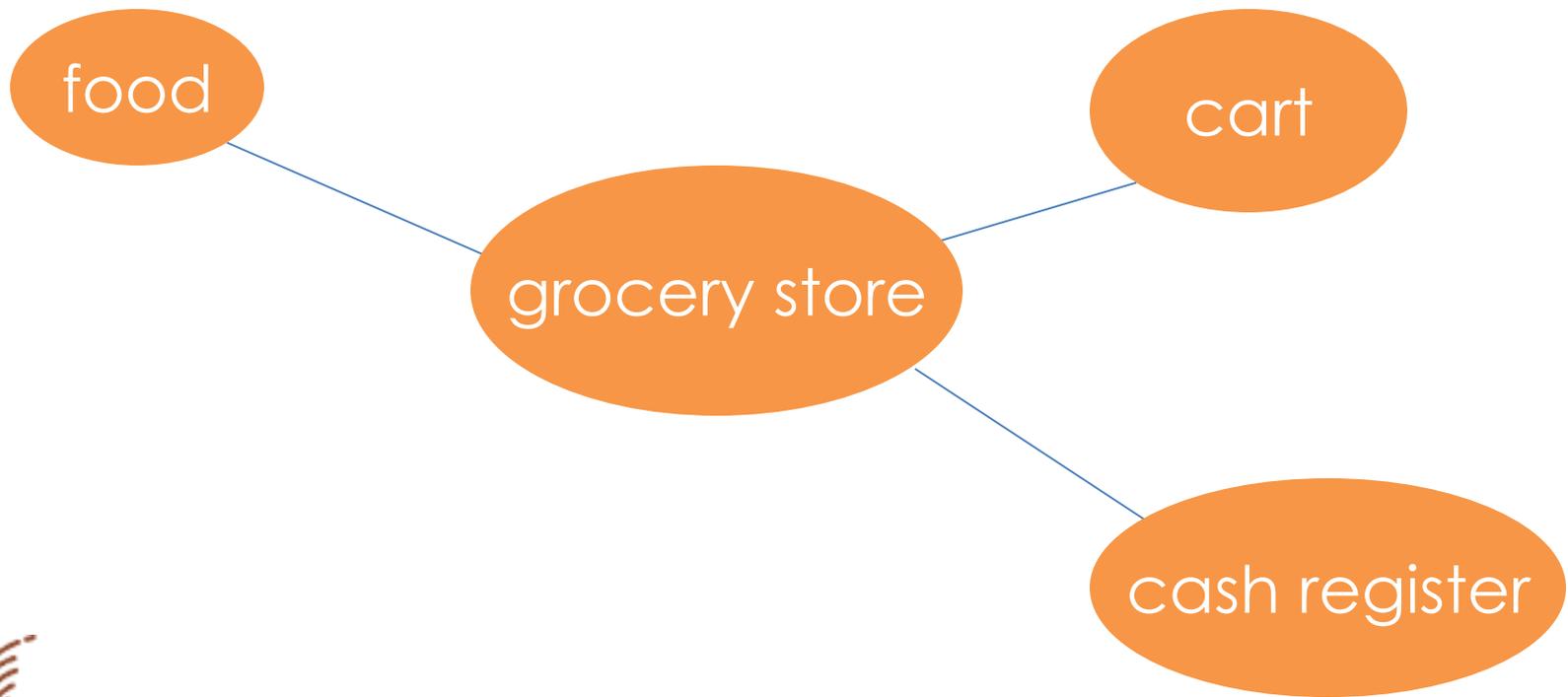


- 'asteroid'
  - 'comet'
  - 'Atmospheric conditions'
  - 'space probes'
- 
- What is similar about them?



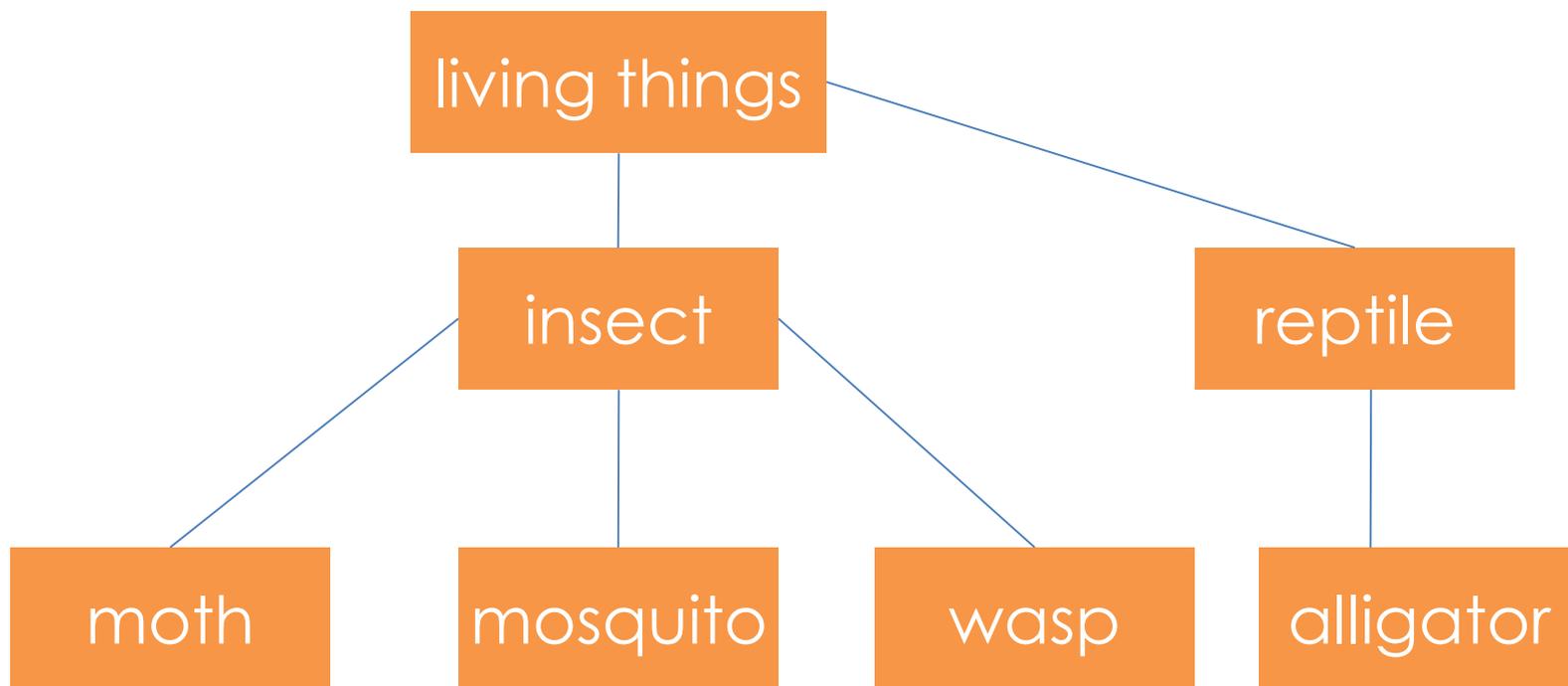
# Difficult words

- Traditionally, much instruction has been designed around themes



# thematic vs. categories

- We teach children words and content in categories



thematic vs. categories



- Not necessarily 'tier II' words
- Not necessarily 'academic' words
- Rather they are 'content-specific' words: words that are essential for learning content

- STEP 1



# Difficult words

- Plants
  - Stems, petals, leaves,
  - Photosynthesis; oxygen and carbon dioxide
  
- All about me
  - Heart, lung, brain, blood



# An example

- A common teaching sequence
  - Identify words: 8-10
  - Child-friendly definition
  - “A dolphin is a marine mammal. It looks like a fish but it has lungs and breathes air just like us”
    - STEP 2

How do we go about  
teaching  
vocabulary?



- Give children many opportunities for guided practice.
  - Pictures; rhymes; riddles;
  - Call and response techniques



# Step 3

- Distributed review
  - Over learning
  - Weekly, monthly, and over time



# Step 4

# Progress monitor

## WOW Labels

Point to the picture that shows a katydid.



Category distractor



Target



Thematic distractor

## WOW Hybrid

Which is an insect? (*Category membership*)

Which has 3 body segments? (*Conceptual properties*)



Target



Thematic distractor



Out-of-Category distractor

# Step 5



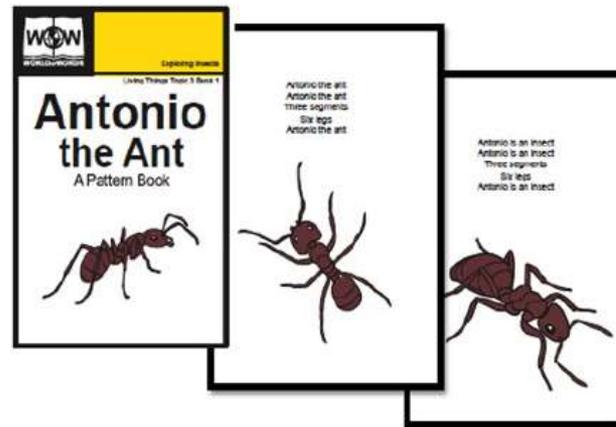
- Teach content-rich words (5-step series)
- +
- Make sure these words are related in categories (to form a semantic network)
  
- =
- SELF TEACHING DEVICE
  - Ex: Is a spider an insect? A spider has 8 legs, and all others have 6, so it is not a spider

# To summarize

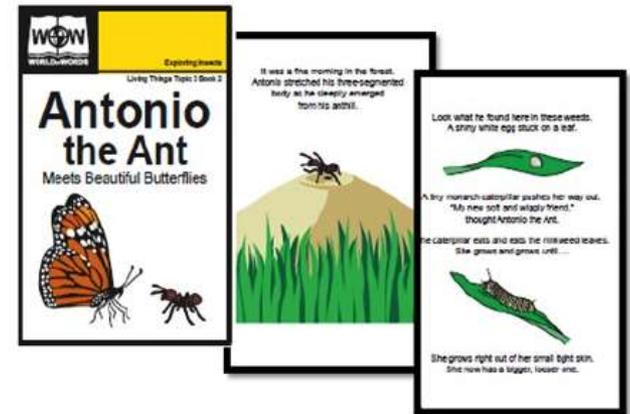


# ○ Text sets

Book 1: Pattern Book



Book 2: Transitional Text



Book 3: Transitional Text



Book 4: Informational Text



# Materials to use

- Focus on a topic of interest
- A series of books that use multiple genre
  - Pattern books or predictable books
  - Narrative nonfiction
  - Informational

# Features of text sets



- Daily readings of books in text sets
- Start with predictable books (gives children the names they can remember)
- Move on to narrative nonfiction; spend at least two times a week reading these books
- Turn to Information books

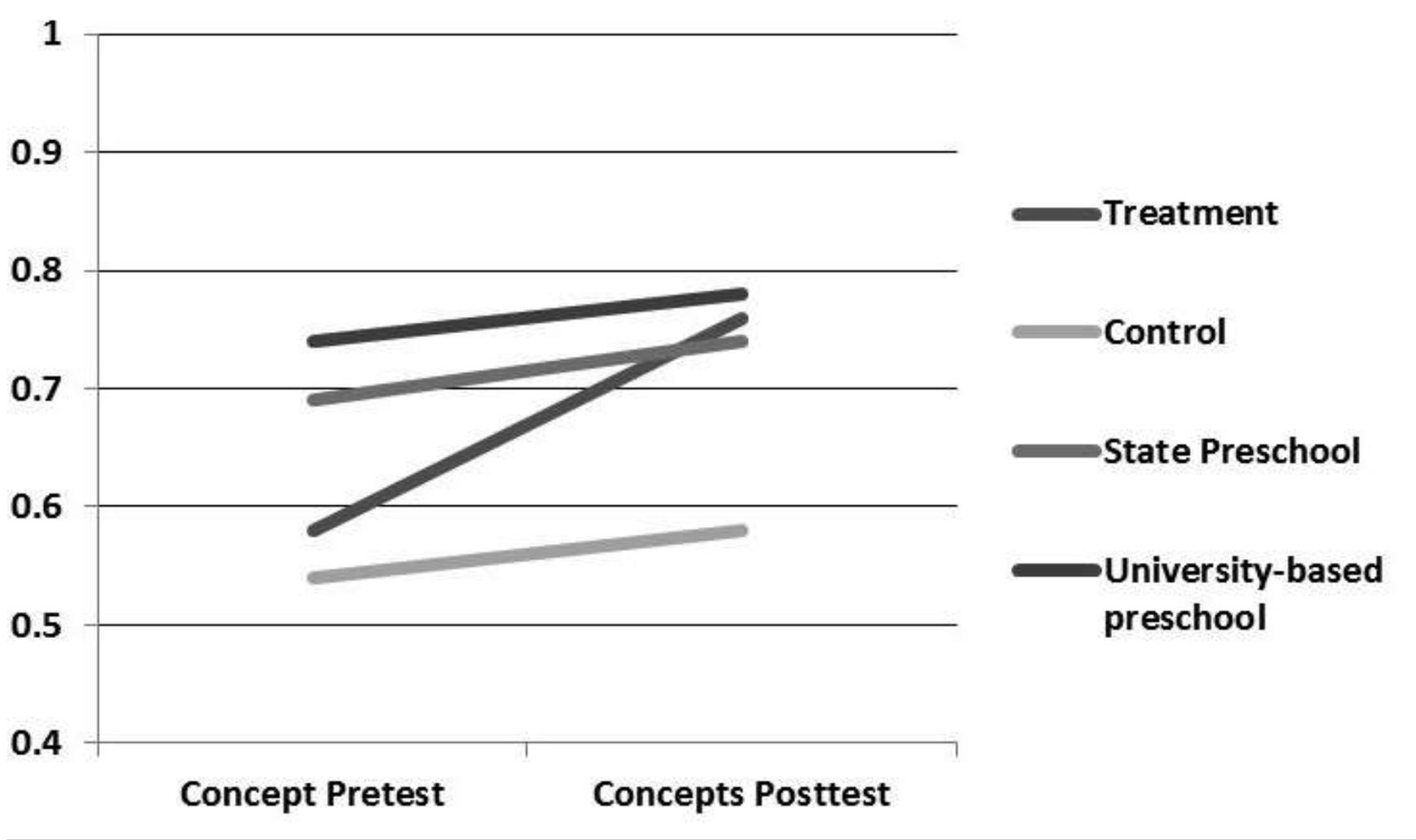


# Activities

- Supports word knowledge and conceptual development
- Enables children to develop ‘inter-textual links’ as they compare and contrast across genres
- Helps them to learn the ‘features of information books.’

Why is it  
powerful?





# Evidence





# Poll question

- Principles:
  - The notion of acceleration
  - Content-rich vocabulary
  - Organization of word knowledge
  - Use of text sets
  - Gradual release of control
  - Lots of practice and distributed review
  - Don't be afraid of challenging students; they love it!

Reducing  
disparities





# Poll Question

Book: All About Words (Teachers 'College Press, 2013)

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<http://readytolearnresearch.org/>

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Contact  
information

