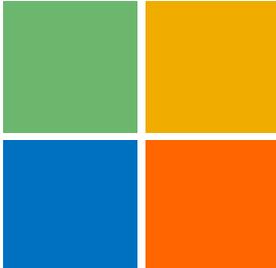


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Strategies for Reading Narrative Nonfiction Aloud to Build Preschoolers' Vocabulary and Comprehension



Susan B. Neuman  
New York University

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**+** **Giving children voice: Overview**

Key Areas	Our focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How do we support all of our children</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary Rich Classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make storytime come alive</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Help children develop vocabulary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The relation between vocabulary and comprehension</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop an instructional routine</li> </ul>

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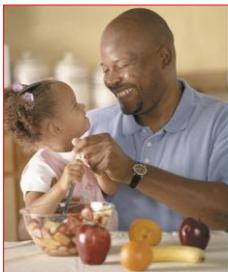
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+ Oral language development

Children learn language as they interact with responsive adults and peers and experience language use in meaningful contexts.



Seven horizontal lines for writing.

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+ Quality teacher talk is teacherese



Seven horizontal lines for writing.

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+ Oral language and vocabulary

Oral Language
☒ Colloquial
☒ Highly contextualized
☒ Informal

Vocabulary
☒ The 'language of school texts'
☒ Densely-packed language (higher concept load)
☒ Decontextualized



Seven horizontal lines for writing.

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+ **Vocabulary Development**



- Learning new words that may be outside of everyday contexts
- Often involves a level of abstraction that is beyond the here-and-now
- Often includes ‘academically’ related words, and literacy language

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+ **Research on oral language and vocabulary**



- Oral language proficiency is the single best predictor of kindergarten readiness
- The number of vocabulary words children know prior to kindergarten predicts children’s success at the end of kindergarten, elementary school, and high school

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+ **Dual language learners**



- Rapid growth over the past several decades
- DLL: “bilingual children or second (or Multilanguage) language learners who are exposed to and given opportunities to learn two language from birth or shortly thereafter”

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+ **Research on dual language learning**



- Rate of learning is dependent on their learning environments and the quality and amount of exposure to each language
- Children will benefit from developing oral language skills in rich and engaging language environments

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+ **What We Know**



- **Preschool years = highest rate of vocabulary development**  
(Farkas & Baron, 2004)
- **Effective** vocabulary intervention can even the playing field  
(Marulis & Neuman, 2013)
- **Quality, quantity & responsiveness of teacher/parent talk can mediate socioeconomic status**  
(Mol & Neuman, 2012)

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**Poll question #1**

- a. 1,000
- b. 20,000
- c. 50,000
- d. 80,000

How many words can we teach in one year?

- a. 1,000
- b. 550
- c. 350
- d. 650

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**Answers**

According to E.D. Hirsh (2006), students will need to know about 80,000 words by the time they finish high school.

**How many words can we teach in one year?**

350-500 words in depth (Jenkins et al., 1984) per year...max: 6,000 new words, preK-12.

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**Hart & Risley (1995)**

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	Words heard per hour	Words heard in a 100 hour week	Words heard in a 5,200 hour year	Words heard in 4 years
Low Income Families	616	62,000	3 million	13 million
Working Class Families	1251	125,000	6 million	26 million
Professional Families	2153	215,000	11 million	45 million

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**Implications**

For all of our children

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- We need to help children become 'word conscious'
- We need to carefully consider what words we teach
- We need to engage them in listening and interacting with many different books

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## How do children learn words?

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- They need to become 'word conscious'
- Frequency of encounters
- Word learning needs to be connected to developing meaningful contexts

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## Word Consciousness

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Take a moment to think about how Ms. Jay promoted 'word consciousness'

- How did she help children become aware of and interested in words?
- How did she show a positive attitude or disposition towards words?
- How did she incorporate words in her 'reading/singing' of the book?

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+ **Research on 'word consciousness'**



- Falling in love with words
- Awareness of words (ex.: scrumptious)
- Relies on incidental learning
- Teachable moment

For more information, Neugebauer et al. (2017). Promoting word consciousness to close the vocabulary gap in young word learners, *Elementary School Journal*, 118, 28-55.

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Book reading is known to be the single most powerful activity for children's vocabulary development

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**Why?**



**Children Learn:**

- 'Decontextualized language'
- The 'language of schooling' or book language
- Rare words outside of colloquial language
- About their own culture as well as others.

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- Its not about throwing out what we've traditionally done in early education
- Its about tweaks to our programs to make them more effective

## “Powering it up”

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Medium	Rare Words per 1000
<b>Print</b>	
Newspapers	68.3
Adult books	52.7
Comic Books	53.5
Children's books	30.9
Preschool books	16.3
<b>Television</b>	
Adult TV	22.7
Children's shows	20.2
Mr. Rogers	2.0
<b>Adult speech</b>	
College Graduate	17.3
Expert testimony	28.4



## “Power it up”

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## Designing environments for rich language interactions

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+ Poll Question: What's Wrong with this Picture?

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+ Options

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- A. Include more pictures
- B. Add additional lighting
- C. Arrange chairs in rows
- D. None of the above

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+ How do we 'power it up?'

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- De-clutter; every space does not need a filling
- Put alphabet and numbers in children's eye view
- Provide cozy spaces to support language interactions

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Fewer but nicer books in open-faced book shelves (rotate)

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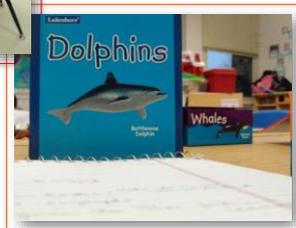
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**“Today Keisha and Tanya spent time reading our favorite books together”**

## Anchor Charts

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## Eye to eye instruction



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10 Instructional Practices for Young English Learners

 <b>1. Visuals</b> Incorporate images and concrete objects that correspond with text.	 <b>2. Mnemonic Devices</b> Integrate songs into lessons to help children remember what they are learning.	 <b>3. Check for Understanding</b> Periodically stop instruction to make sure students are grasping new vocabulary words and concepts.
 <b>4. Think Time</b> Expect for at least 3 extra seconds between asking a question and receiving student responses.	 <b>5. Hand Signals/Gestures</b> Allow children to respond using hand signals and gestures in addition to verbal responses.	 <b>6. Heterogeneous Grouping</b> Create discussion groups with children of mixed language ability.
 <b>7. Repetition</b> Repeat words frequently across content areas.	 <b>8. Multiple Modes of Representation</b> Provide different ways for children to perceive and comprehend information.	 <b>9. Explicit Instruction</b> Be clear and direct when explaining something new to students.
 <b>10. Bridging Connections</b> Ensure that learners have knowledge of what their children are learning so that content becomes salient to their lives.		

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© Halley Bratenfeld and Kevin M. Wong (2017)

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## Powering up storybook reading!



Fiction	Non-fiction
Refers to plot, settings and characters created from the imagination. We read or watch this material for fun.	Refers to factual stories that are based on real people and events. We read or watch this material for information.
Example: • A book about a cat that talks. • A cartoon on TV.	Example: • A book about animal life cycles. • A documentary on TV.




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## Power it up by:

- Sequencing texts so that children have sustained amount of time with a topic (3 weeks) (Text sets)
- Repeated readings
- Multiple genre
- Topics (wild animals; insects; wild weather)...Challenging!!




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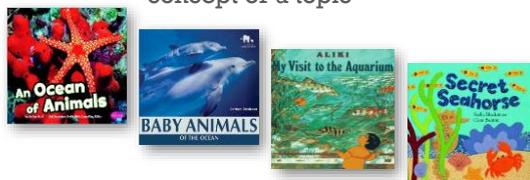
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## What are Text Sets?

“Collections of different genres to support our vocabulary teaching sequence.”

“Collections of books that focus on a concept or a topic”




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### Text Set Progression

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- Start with a predictable book
- Rhyming books
- Introduce storybooks (narratives)
- Informational books

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### Different genres of books influence different ways of responding to books



01	Predictable Books	Books with repetitive language; common phrases repeated frequently. Often introduced through song.
02	Narrative (nonfiction)	Books with a narrative structure (ex. Setting, characters, plot, resolution)
03	Information Books	Nonfiction books that provide factual information.

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### + Text Set Example: Insect Topic

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### Book Reading Routine



**1** Talk Together. Introduce vocabulary words and child friendly definitions (consider about 3 words). Use picture supports if you can.

**2** Read Together. Engage children in interactive reading.

**3** Reflect Together. Review the vocabulary words, and ask questions that help children think about the book.

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### Let's take a look:

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Watch how Ms. Zappier introduces words.  
What are some of the ways she supports children's engagement?  
How does she support children's responses?

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### Things to consider

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- ✓ Focuses on a few words that are related to the big idea--rainforest
- ✓ Uses teacherese: rain forest
- ✓ Repeats the words; asks children to repeat with her. 'Call and Response' techniques to encourage relatively rapid responses
- ✓ Only mentions the type of tree in the story.
- ✓ Helps children not only know about the word, but over-riding concept of rain forest

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## + Review and distributed review

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Children only develop a partial understanding of word through introducing and using the word several times. To develop a deeper understanding:

- Review the word frequently
- Review the word in another context

### Distribute the review

- Immediate recall is useful BUT
- 'Spaced review' --next day, next week, next month more powerful

Let's take another look at Ms. Zappier and how she engages in reviewing the story. You might note:

- Open-ended questions
- 'Recasts of children's responses'
- Why questions

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## + Let's take a look:

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Pause and ponder: Write down some of your reflections about the video?

How might you incorporate some of these ideas into your classroom routine?




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## A suggested scheduling routine

Whole Group	Small Group	Discovery Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduces vocabulary</li> <li>Creates a shared understanding of words and a shared community</li> <li>Relies on quick conversational turns</li> <li>Turn and talk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides guided practice on words introduced</li> <li>Helps children 'try it out' in smaller settings</li> <li>Often introduces artifacts and objects which help children interact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for children to independently interact with theme based materials</li> <li>Highly tactile</li> <li>Engages children in opportunities for writing</li> </ul>

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**Jen's Class  
Exploring the  
Blubber Glove**

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**+ Marine Mammals: Picture Cards**

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**Pam's Class - Pocket chart with  
WOW picture cards**

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**3. Check for Understanding**

Periodically stop instruction to make sure students are grasping new vocabulary words and concepts.

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### Marine Mammals: Picture Cards

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Martha's Class - Using WOW picture cards for a small group lesson

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### Marine Mammals: Discovery

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Pam's Class - Sorting sea animals, exploring how marine mammals might look and feel, and learning about camouflage

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### 3. Check for Understanding

Periodically stop instruction to make sure students are grasping new vocabulary words and concepts.

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+ **Marine Mammals: Discovery Center**

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Jen's student explaining what is and isn't a marine mammal.

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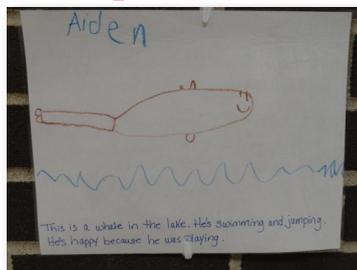
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+ **Marine Mammals: Written Expression**

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Molly's Classroom – Depiction of a whale drawn by a student and posted in the hallway for all to enjoy

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**10. Bridging Connections**

Ensure that families have knowledge of what their children are learning so that content becomes salient in their lives.

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+ Parent Involvement

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WOW Refrigerator Note

WOW! We are reading and learning about matter right now. During the next several weeks you can help your child by asking them about matter and helping them discover new things about insects.
• Read the attached page with your child. Ask them to tell you something they learned about one of the things.
• Go to the library and check out some books about matter. Read the book with your child and discuss some of the information you read about.
• The kitchen is a great science lab for learning more about matter. As you are preparing meals or work in the kitchen point out to your child how matter can start out in one state, but when it gets hot or cold it can change. For example, water can change into an ice-cube when placed in the freezer. It can change back into a liquid when heated. If water is boiled, steam is formed as a gas.
• Bake a cake or something with a batter. As you pour the batter into a container, ask your child if the batter is a solid or a liquid. Ask them to prove it by listing the properties they see. When the batter is done baking, ask your child if the batter has changed states. Ask them to describe the properties for proof of their thinking.

Thanks!

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

54

+ Advantage of This Approach

65

It teaches words in meaningful clusters so it creates a "self-teaching device" that supports independent learning.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

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+ Poll Question

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For children to successfully meet the expectations of career and college ready standards:

- 1. a deep and rich vocabulary
2. ability to understand what they hear and read
3. oral language skills to communicate with others
4. all of the above

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

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+ **In Conclusion**



- We can dramatically accelerate children's development when we talk, sing, and **interact** with them throughout the day.
- Quality and quantity of language matters not just in the early years, but throughout their schooling.
- Narrative nonfiction book reading can make a difference!

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