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# VOCABULARY TRAINING

**‘THE WAY OF WORDS, OF KNOWING  
AND LOVING WORDS, IS A WAY TO  
THE ESSENCE OF THINGS, AND TO  
THE ESSENCE OF KNOWING.’** JOHN

# SESSION PLAN

- ▶ The research
- ▶ Identifying children with vocabulary difficulties
- ▶ Understanding how children learn new words.
- ▶ Vocabulary learning strategies
- ▶ The tiers of vocabulary.
- ▶ Classroom/practical strategies to support vocabulary learning for children with limited vocabulary

# WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SHOW?

- ▶ Vocabulary knowledge is one of the best indicators of verbal ability, reading achievement and success in school.
- ▶ Vocabulary difficulties strongly influences the ability to understand text.
- ▶ Teaching selected vocabulary can improve student's understanding of texts.

*(Beck, et al. 1992, Hattie 2009; Stahl & Nagy, 2006, National Reading Panel, 2000).*

- ▶ Language impaired children use fewer words than their peers.  
*(Justice et al 2014, McGregor et al 2002)*

# THE WORD GAP

- Evidence shows that a child's vocabulary is also linked to their economic status.
- This word gap is shown as early as 18 months whereby children from different socio-economic groups display drastic differences in their vocabulary.
- By the age of 3 there is a 30 million word gap between children from the wealthiest and poorest families.

(Fernald, Marchman & Weisleder 2013)

# SIGNS OF VOCABULARY DIFFICULTIES

- ▶ **Hesitating**

  - e.g. “We went to errrrm.....”

- ▶ **Using general words**

  - e.g. “We went there.....” “I went on                    the thing.”

  - e.g. “I was doing the slide.”

- ▶ **Substituting verbs for “doing” or “getting”**

- ▶ **Using a similar word**

  - e.g. “I went to the fair.” (instead of park)

- ▶ **Getting the word wrong**

  - e.g. “I played on the round-a-round.” “I ate a bear.”

- ▶ **Avoidance**

  - e.g. Reluctant to answer questions/participate in class.

# WORD FINDING DIFFICULTIES VS LIMITED VOCABULARY

Limited vocabulary

Word finding (WF) difficulties

# Learning strategies for WF and limited vocabulary

- Vocabulary learning strategies that benefit both children with word finding difficulties or limited vocabulary



# LEARNING STRATEGIES - HOW WORDS ARE STORED?

**Parts:**

Legs, Table  
top

**Category:**

furniture

**Function:**

Eat at it



**Material:**

Wood

**Location:**

Kitchen

**Rhyme:**

Label

**Initial Sound:**

†

**Syllables:**

2

<p>What is it called? <b>car</b></p>	<p>What does it feel like? <b>hard, smooth</b></p>
<p>What would you do with it? <b>drive it, travel in it</b></p>	<p>What is it made of? <b>metal, plastic, rubber, leather</b></p>
<p>Where would you find it? <b>road, garage, car park</b></p>	<p>What parts does it have? <b>wheels, gear stick, engine</b></p>
<p>What category does it belong to? <b>transport</b></p>	<p>What's the first sound of the word? <b>c</b></p>
<p>What does it look like? <b>shiny, big, dirty</b></p>	<p>How many syllables? <b>1</b></p>

# CATEGORISING

- ▶ Categorising helps children think about the relationships between words and helps them organise new vocabulary.



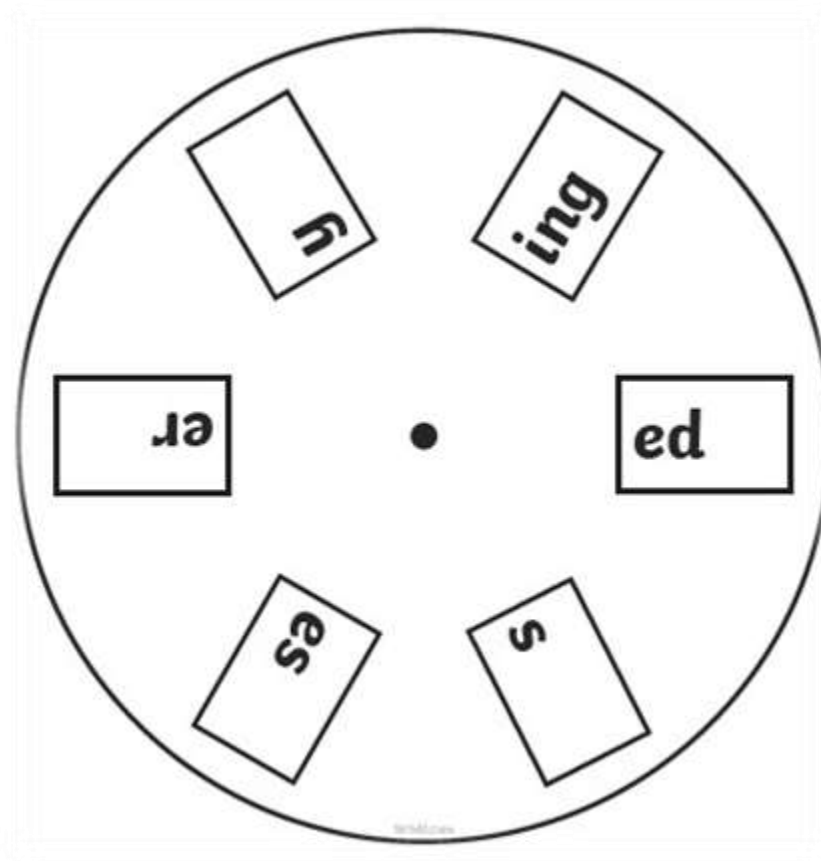
# TEACHING PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES

- ▶ Teaching common prefixes and suffixes can aid children's learning of new words
- ▶ The four most common prefixes in English:
- ▶ un-, re-, in, dis-

Common Suffixes:

-ly, -ment, -ness, -er

# HOW TO WORK ON PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES



# CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

## ▶ Cues

### ▶ Phonological (sound) cues

Gives clues about the way the word sounds

e.g. **Zebra**

Initial sound      “z”

First syllable     “zeh”

### ▶ Semantic (meaning) cues

Gives clues about what the word means

Category      “It’s an animal”

Appearance “It looks like a stripy horse”

Location “It lives in a zoo”



# CHILDREN WITH LIMITED VOCABULARY

- ▶ We learn most vocabulary indirectly through spoken language, reading and play.
- ▶ Children with communication difficulties struggle to learn vocabulary indirectly because...

Therefore children with limited vocabulary need to be explicitly taught words...

# THREE TIERS TO WORDS

Thinking of words as belonging in three tiers - Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 – can help us decide which words are worth teaching

(Beck et al, 2002)



# TIER 1: THE MOST BASIC WORDS

- Basic vocabulary
- Used everyday
- Learned by hearing carers, teachers and peers

E.g. book, girl, sad, run, dog, and orange

# TIER 2: CROSS-CURRICULAR WORDS

- Used across the curriculum
- Written more than spoken
- Multiple meaning
- More likely to be abstract
- Important for reading comprehension

# TIER 2: CROSS-CURRICULAR WORDS

## Examples:

➔ Repeat

➔ Curious

➔ Frustrated

➔ Sinister

➔ Mumble

➔ Prefer

➔ Predict

➔ Summarise

## OTHER MEANINGS - EXAMPLES

Johnny Harrington was a kind master who treated his servants fairly. He was also a successful wool merchant, and his business required that he travel often. In his absence, his servants would tend to the fields and cattle and maintain the upkeep of his mansion. They performed their duties happily, for they felt fortunate to have such a benevolent and trusting master.

## OTHER MEANINGS - EXAMPLES

Johnny Harrington was a kind master who treated his servants fairly. He was also a successful wool **merchant**, and his business **required** that he travel often. In his absence, his servants would **tend** to the fields and cattle and **maintain** the upkeep of his mansion. They **performed** their duties happily, for they felt **fortunate** to have such a **benevolent** and trusting master.

# IDENTIFYING TIER 2 WORDS

- ▶ Is it useful (Does it have other contexts)?
- ▶ Can it be defined by another word the children understand?
- ▶ Will it help in understanding text?

“Yes” to all 3 questions = Tier 2

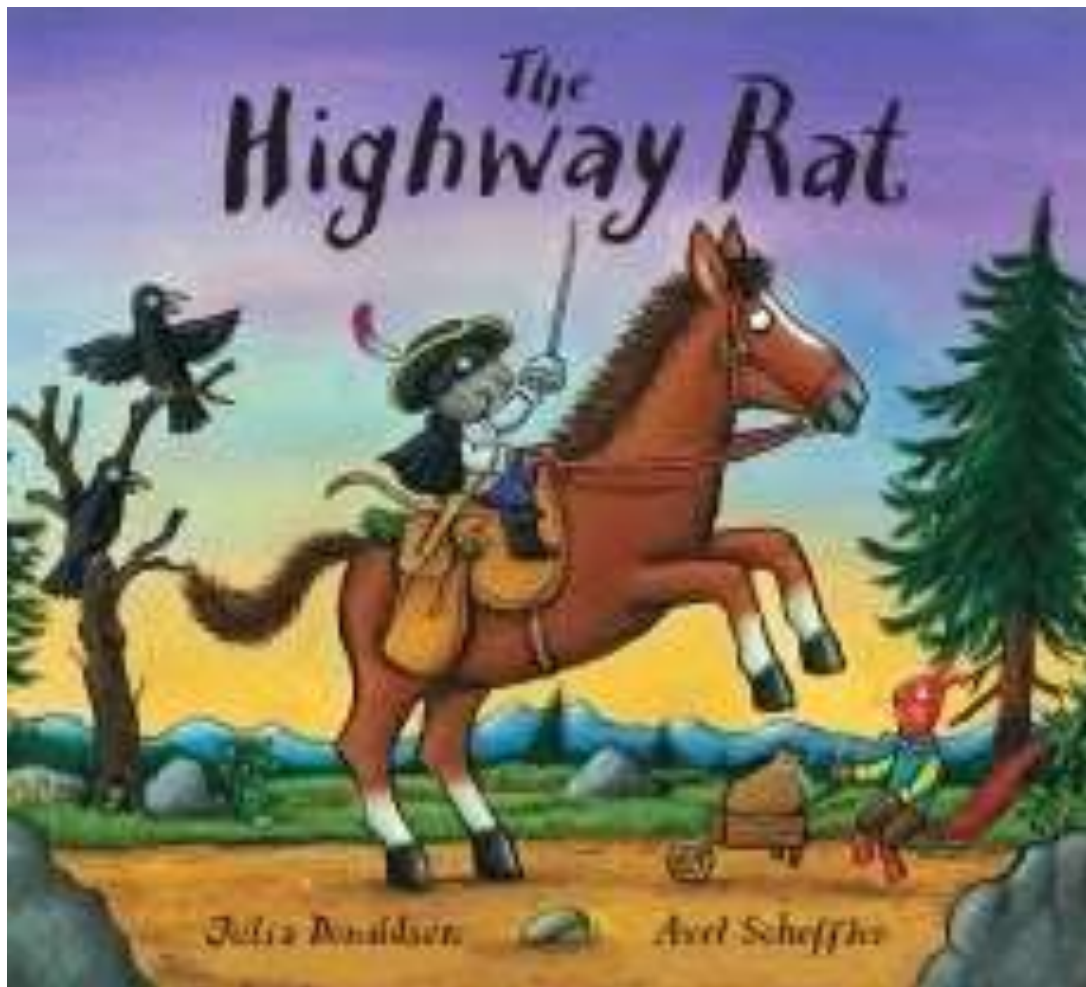
If not, it's probably Tier 3

# TIER 3: TOPIC WORDS

- Specialised words
- Domain specific
- Teach as the need arises

E.g. Atom, continent, polygon, Viking, stamen, vitamin, Pharaoh


# The Highway Rat



Julia Donaldson

Axel Scheffler





A squirrel came bounding along the road, then stopped with a shake and a shiver,

For reining his horse was he Highway Rat who thundered ‘Stand and deliver!

Give me your buns and your biscuits, Give me your chocolate eclairs! For I am the rat of the Highway- The Highway – The Highway

Yes I am the rat of the highway and the Rat Thief never shares.”

“I have no buns,” the squirrel replied “I just have a sack of nuts”

The robber snatched the sack and snarled “I’ll have no ifs or buts”

These nuts are probably rotten, These nuts are as hard as can be, but I am the rat of the Highway and these nuts belong to me!”

# EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION – DEEP LEARNING

**Step 1** – Give another meaning the children already know.

**Step 2** - Ask students to repeat the word to start forming a phonological representation.

**Step 3** – Provide lots of examples of ways in which the word can be used.

# EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION- DEEP LEARNING

**Step 4** – Link to synonyms and antonyms. Ask children to give their own example

**Step 5** – Reinforce in games, discussion, activities, phonics, mind maps etc.

(Based on Justice et al 2014, Beck and McKeown 2007)

# HOW TO SELECT THE WORDS

Tier 2 words:

- ▶ Work through Anne Locke's basic concepts (typically concepts learnt under 5 yrs of age) OR
- ▶ Choose a fiction/nonfiction the child is focusing on in class.
  - ▶ Read one page and highlight all the tier 2 words.
  - ▶ Select 3 of the most useful to teach the child.
  - ▶ Focus on 3 new words each week.
  - ▶ Revisit the words at the end of the month

Tier 3 words:

- ▶ Pre teach school topic words (Tier 3 words)

# HOW TO SELECT THE WORDS:

- For those children who do not know the very basic everyday vocabulary- focus on **Tier 1 words**.
- Blacksheep press have vocabulary builder packs you can focus on.
- Use everyday experiences to reinforce the meaning of words.
- Using lots of visuals -Sign, toys, pictures to help them understand the meanings of every day words.

# REINFORCING LEARNING OF VOCABULARY

- ▶ **For children to remember and use the words they need**
  - to have multiple exposure to the words
    - reading familiar texts/stories and revisiting the same texts again and again is a great way to reinforce and expand vocabulary
  - need to use the words within the correct context
  - need to practice using the words in their spoken sentences and written work

# CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

## ▶ **Visuals**

Topic display boards;

Key vocabulary on whiteboard;

Word mats; Sets of topic cards in lesson; Word of the day/  
week

## ▶ **Thinking time**

Wait 20 seconds before putting hands up

Count to 10 in your head before cueing child

## ▶ **Use the selected vocabulary within their classwork e.g. when telling a story.**

# PRACTICAL IDEAS

## ▶ **Vocabulary relay**

Teams collect a word, write down a sentence and come out for another word

## ▶ **Sense or Nonsense**

“Yes” or “No”

People might be *reluctant* to hug a shark.

People might be *reluctant* to win the lottery.

## ▶ **Word Wizards**

Give points for seeing, hearing and using words

(Ideas from Bringing Words to Life (Beck, McKeown, Kucan))



# PRACTICAL IDEAS

## ▶ **Word quiz**

What is something you could do to impress your teacher (mother, friend)? Why?

## ▶ **Completing sentences**

The skiing teacher said Maria was a novice on the ski slopes because...

## ▶ **Word Association**

Ask students to connect their new word with a more familiar word or phrase.

Which word goes with crook? (accomplice from a choice)

❖ Children who struggle with reading to listen to audio books

# TEACH SELF HELP STRATEGIES

As children become older and more aware we can start to help teach them to learn the meaning of new words by picking up clues from the context:

- ▶ Read a sentence, circle a word and tell the students they need to guess the meaning of the circled word
- ▶ Help the children to look for “clue words” in the sentence that might help them identify the meaning of the circled word
- ▶ Children to write down all the clue words and guess the meaning of the target word
- ▶ Access a dictionary/thesaurus

# USEFUL LINKS

Talking Point: [www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)

ICAN: [www.ican.org.uk/resources](http://www.ican.org.uk/resources)

The Communication Trust:

[www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/publications](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/publications)

# USEFUL RESOURCES:

- Closing the vocabulary Gap by Alex Quigley
- Vocabulary Ninja – Mastering vocabulary – Activities to Unlock the world of Words by Andrew Jennings
- Twinkl- categories/semantic links primary
- Blacksheep press: Categories- improve word finding (Ref: SS4)
- Identifying and describing- semantic skills (Ref SSI)
- Which one goes together (Ref: PRAG2)
- Semantic links <http://www.stass.co.uk/publications/semantic-links>
- Word Aware Speechmark Publishing Ltd; 1st New edition edition
- Word Aware 2: Teaching Vocabulary in the Early Years Paperback <https://uk.mrswordsmith.com>
- Semantic steps <http://www.stasspublications.co.uk/digital/semantic-steps>
- <http://www.stass.co.uk/publications/tall-tales-to-invest-in-vocab>