Supporting Students of Poverty

If children come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families, it makes our job easier.

If they do not come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families, it makes our job more important.

-Barbara Colorose

Academic Impact of Poverty

Poverty is one of the strongest predictors of reading achievement. For the United States as a whole, 27% of 4th grade students scored below basic on the NAEP assessment; however, for children falling below the poverty level, the percentage was 34.6% (NAEP, 2005).

About 16% of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than for proficient readers. For those children who were poor for at least a year and were not reading proficiently, the proportion failing rose to 26%. For children who were poor, lived in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and not reading proficiently, the proportion jumped to 35% (Hernandez, 2012).

Why Does Poverty Affect Reading?

Children who begin elementary school with deficits in their vocabulary knowledge are at risk for reading failure and academic underachievement (Catts, Adolf & Weismer, 2006; Marzano, 2003; Nagy, 2005).

… students from low SES backgrounds are more likely to arrive at school having heard far fewer words, and therefore having fewer words in this phonological lexicon. Couple this with the fact that exposure to words in the preschool years also promotes phonological awareness (Burgess, Hecht & Lonigon, 2002; Metsala, 2011), assuming no genetically based phonological-core deficit, and the reasons for the reading gap between low SES and high SES students come into sharper focus (Kilpatrick, 2015).

What This Looks Like Over Time

In 1990 - Chall found that low-income students in 2nd and 3rd grade tended to score around average in national reading tests, but in 4th grade they began to drop and continued to drop as they progressed to higher grades because... tests in earlier grades focused on decoding NOT vocabulary knowledge.

Children of poverty start school with significantly less word knowledge than same age peers. The difference is as much as a 35,000 word gap that gets magnified each year, resulting in high-performing 12th grade students knowing about four times as many words as the low performing 12th graders (Hart & Risley, 1995).

The Matthew Effect

We can't teach Low SES/Low Language Environment students the same way as other students…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Average Student (2.4 root words per day)</th>
<th>Bottom 25% (1.6 root words per day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of Pre-K</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>2,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of K</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>3,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of 1st</td>
<td>5,160</td>
<td>3,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of 2nd</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>4,168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How trauma affects the skills needed for academic success:
- Organization
- Memory
- Ability to produce work
- Engagement in learning
- Self regulation
- Emotional regulation
- Attention to task
- Task perseverance
- Getting information into long term memory
- Impact on play skills that impacts problem solving
- Understanding cause-effect relationships
- Perspective taking and empathy

Share Your Expertise

Share with educators:
- The impact of vocabulary on comprehension
- The impact of vocabulary on decoding
- The impact of vocabulary on spelling and writing

Share with caregivers:
- Dr. Dana Suskind’s… Tune In, Talk More, Take Turns, Turn Off
- That reading at home…

A child who reads 20 minutes a day will hear 1,800,000 words per year. They will have read for 851 hours by 6th grade and will likely score better than 90% of their peers.

A child who reads 5 minutes a day will have heard 282,000 words per year and score better than 50% of their peers.

A child who reads for 1 minute a day will have heard 8,000 words and score better than only 10% of their peers.

Three Tiers of Vocabulary (Beck, McCowen, & Kucan, 2002)

Tier 3

Tier 2

Tier 1

Four Types of Vocabulary (Montgomery, 2007)

Semantic Features
- Category
- Function or Action
- Properties/Characteristics
- Location
- Features/Constituent Parts
- Association/connection to background knowledge

Visual Imagery

- Picture in the mind’s eye
- Size
- Shape
- Number of
- Action
- Color
- Appearance or location

Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2019
**Frayer Model** (Frayer, 1969; Buehl, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pirates are people whose job is to be a sailor</th>
<th>They are usually found on a ship or an island</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They swab decks, attack ships, hunt for treasure</td>
<td>They wear hats or scarves on their heads, carry swords, may have an eye patch or wooden leg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Word Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>#syllables</th>
<th>#sounds</th>
<th>#letters</th>
<th>#morphemes</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thoughts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>To have several ideas or opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reprinted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>To have written or printed something again or in a different way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Whoa, Slow and Go Words**

- Whoa! I don’t think I’ve heard that word before!
- Slow down – I think I have heard it, what does it mean? Does it make sense here?
- Go – I know you! You mean ______.

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**Language of the Standards**

- To **REVISE** is to make sure it sounds right and make changes.
- PUNCTUATION MARKS are periods, question marks, and exclamation points.
- PERIODS go after telling sentences.
- QUESTION MARKS go after asking sentences.
- A SENTENCE is complete thought.
- CAPITALIZATION is the use of uppercase letters for the first word in a sentence, special names and the word I.
- To **PRINT LEGIBLY** is to write neatly for others to read.
- COMPLETE SENTENCES are complete thoughts using nouns and verbs.
- MEDIAL SOUNDS are the sounds in the middle of a word.
- PREWRITING STRATEGIES are making lists, charts, or brainstorming.
- WORD FAMILIES are words that are built from the same basic word.
- BASE WORDS are words before you add an ending.

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**Read books to develop CONTENT knowledge**
- Etymology (word origins)
- Figurative language
- Teaching Greek and Latin Roots
- Pre-teaching vocabulary BEFORE reading (great accommodation to put on IEP)
- Conversation starters with Tier 2 vocabulary (TPT, Speech Time Fun)
- Synonyms/Antonyms
- Compare/Contrast