Do Now

*Building Oral Language: Promoting Complex Vocabulary Using Self- and Parallel-Talk*

“In four years, an average child in a professional family would accumulate experience with almost 45 million words, an average child in a working-class family 26 million words, and an average child in a welfare family 13 million words.”

**For pre-work, you read “The Fight to Boost Student Literacy is Happening Years Too Late” by Conor Williams. Using your knowledge of that article and the quote above, respond to the following questions:**

* Why is it so urgent that our students are exposed to rich and varied vocabulary beginning from birth?
* What are you and your teachers already doing to promote language acquisition in your students? Where do you wish you were doing more?

The 30 Million Word Gap

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**After watching the video presentation, “Imprisoned by Illiteracy”, reflect on the following questions**:

* What are your initial reactions to the presentation?
* What does this mean that many of our children are up against?
* What can be done at the school, center, and classroom level to break this cycle of illiteracy?

The Oral Language Developmental Trajectory

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**Directions:**

1. Spend several minutes independently reading the Oral Language standards and Vocabulary standards in the Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines and the Pre-Kindergarten Standards.
2. Highlight any standards you notice that pertain specifically to vocabulary acquisition and development across the ages.
3. Map the major milestones that students will hit at each age (relating specifically to oral language and vocabulary) below.
4. Be prepared to share your takeaways!

**Language and Vocabulary Developmental Trajectory:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **BIRTH – 1 YEAR** | **1-2 YEARS** | **2-3 YEARS** | **3-4 YEARS** |
|  |  |  |  |

Three Key Literacy Experiences and Vocabulary Tiers

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Selecting the Right Complex Vocabulary

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**Key Idea:** Exposing students to complex vocabulary should happen constantly throughout the day. It’s not enough, however, to incorporate complex language without intentionality. It’s essential that we expose our students to the *right* complex vocabulary.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **IS IT USEFUL AND IMPORTANT?** | **CAN IT BE TAUGHT?** | **WILL IT HELP TEACH IDEAS?** | **DO YOU HAVE VARIETY?** |
| Will they see or hear the word often?Will understanding this word help them be able to express themselves or to understand what others are saying?Will it help them comprehend a text that we are reading? | Can you teach the word in a way that children will understand? Are you able to define the word using other words/text/movement/pictures that children can understand? | Is this connected to a current theme or big idea we are working on in our classroom?Will this help students make sense of the larger world? | Do I have a variety of different kinds of words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs) that will expand student vocabulary in a variety of contexts? |

**Directions:** Take 5 minutes to review the Complex Vocabulary list on the next page and highlight 5-10 words that you would want teachers to promote (and students to know and use) that align to your vision for your center or school.

Use the guiding questions above to help you pick strong complex vocabulary examples.

Complex Vocabulary Word List

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**Feeling Words**

disappointed

annoyed

thankful

delighted

frustrated

proud

curious

furious

irritable

exhausted

relieved

confused

terrified

astonished

**Nouns**

shadow

reflection

schedule

envelope

pond

swamp

relative

sibling

adventure

journey

neighborhood

predator

invitation

row

stack

meadow

instant

variety

envy

list

**Verbs**

absorb

admire

arrange

argue

assist

attach

avoid

comfort

cover

ignore

imitate

invite

outgrow

practice

regret

rescue

impress

identify

recognize

realize

explore

examine

investigate

create

remain

remove

transform

contain

convince

suggest

locate

receive

prefer

combine

protect

transport

appear

search

blend

separate

disappear

melt

introduce

concentrate

dream

imagine

assign

complete

pretend

**Adjectives**

edible

comfortable

complicated

difficult

dependent

elegant

determined

enormous

useful

powerful

independent

familiar

unexpected

available

sudden

same

different

strange

unusual

ordinary

pleasant

cautious

favorite

empty

humorous

serious

**Adverbs**

especially

daily

quickly

suddenly

patiently

prepositions

except

beneath

above

between

beside

Strategies for Promoting Complex Vocabulary

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**Key Idea:** Students don’t simply learn complex vocabulary. Complex language needs to be intentionally incorporated into every interaction students have with adults in their classrooms.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STRATEGIES** | **DEFINITIONS** |
| **Self-Talk** | Talk about what **you** are doing, seeing, eating, touching, or thinking constantly throughout the day when working or conversing with students. In other words, **narrate your actions**, incorporating **complex vocabulary** throughout. |
| **Parallel-Talk** | Talk about what **your student or students are doing**, seeing, eating, or touching. In other words, **narrate what they are doing**, incorporating **complex vocabul**ary throughout. |

**Video Analysis:** As you watch the classroom video, take notes below on where you see the teacher use self- and parallel-talk, and what vocabulary she might be emphasizing.

Practice Promoting Complex Vocabulary with Self- and Parallel-Talk

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**Planning Directions:**

* Imagine you are popping into a two-, three-, or four-year-old classroom during center time. Students are engaged in a writing center, a library center, and a science center.
* Write one self-talk sentence and one parallel-talk sentence that you could use with students in each center.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **PARALLEL-TALK** | **SELF-TALK** |
| **Writing Center** |  |  |
| **Library Center** |  |  |
| **Science Center** |  |  |

**Practice Directions:**

* With the person sitting next to you, practice delivering your sentences as though one of you is the leader and the other is the student.
* If you are the leader, you will practice delivering your self- and parallel-talk sentences to your “student” as though you are in the centers above. If you are the student, you will silently pretend to be playing and working alongside the leader.

**Feedback Directions:**

* After the first leader practices their self- and parallel-talk sentences, the “student” will provide feedback (one glow, one grow) to the leader using the self- and parallel-talk cheat sheets.
* After providing feedback, the roles will switch and the other partner will become the leader.
* Use the sentence frame, “Great job with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Next time try \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

Self- and Parallel-Talk Cheat Sheet

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **CRITERIA** |
| **Self-Talk** | * Talk about **what you are doing**, seeing, eating, touching, or thinking
* Narrate **your own actions** with complex vocabulary
 |
| **Parallel-Talk** | * Talk about **what student(s) are doing**, seeing, eating, touching, or thinking
* Narrate **your students’ actions** with complex vocabulary
 |
| **Complex Vocabulary** | * Use **complex vocabulary** during all narrations and conversations
* Vocabulary is **varied and relevant**
* Vocabulary is **useful and important**
* Vocabulary **can be taught** in an easy and student-friendly way
* Vocabulary will help **teach ideas**
* Includes vocabulary from **different word groups** (nouns, adjectives, etc.)
 |
| **Student-Teacher Interactions** | * **Stay focused** on students throughout the interaction
* Promote both **quantity and quality** of language
* Use **warm, child-friendly** tone and body language
* Interactions between teachers and students are **positive, driven by student interest and student work/play, and are NOT focused on behavioral redirections**
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Overcoming the Get It-Do It Gap

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The **Get It-Do It Gap** refers to the difference between cognitively understanding something and actually putting it into practice successfully.

**Brainstorm responses to the two questions below:**

What can we do or put in place to ensure that teachers not only understand the importance of promoting complex vocabulary constantly throughout the day, but actually follow through in doing it?

What can we do or put in place to ensure teachers are using self- and parallel-talk as key strategies to teach complex vocabulary?

Exit Ticket

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What are your next steps for ensuring that you are constantly and intentionally exposing your students to complex vocabulary?

When and where will you increase your use of self- and parallel-talk? How will you hold yourself accountable for using these strategies?

What questions do you still have about what you learned today?

What feedback to you have about the session for the facilitator?