# Teaching vocabulary as part of an effective literacy programme 

## IPPN Conference 2012 FORGING A FUTURE

City West

Thursday $26^{\text {th }} \&$ Friday $27^{\text {th }}$ January 2012



## Balance of evidence




## More context

1971 Primary
Curriculum - Doubled the subjects


1999 Primary Curriculum further increase

Consequences?

Curriculum Time

Effort to give coverage to every topic $=$ less attention to higher order skills such as comprehension, inference, comparison

## Some variables that impact on literacy standards

Teachers perceived by over $50 \%$ of inspectors to have limited knowledge of methods for teaching reading (NAER, 2005)

Teaching children literacy requires a strong knowledge base of the skills and complexities involved


## Significant \% of primary school children in disadvantaged areas suffer from severe literacy problems

Starting point is not the same for all children!!!!

## The Impact of Differences in Language Experiences

- "By age three, children from privileged families have heard 30 million more words than children from poor families. By school entry the gap is even greater. The consequences are catastrophic."

Hart \& Risley, 2003

## Vision for teaching literacy in your school?





## Traditional Literacy <br> -Reading, writing, speaking and listening

## Digital Literacy

-The ability to use digital technology, communication tools or networks to locate, evaluate, use and create information

## Today's (New) Literacy

## Tool Literacy

-The ability to use tools to manage, consume and create information

Information Literacy
-The ability to identify what information is needed and the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information

## Media Literacy

-The ability to question, analyze, interpret, evaluate, and create media messages.

## Critical Literacy

-The ability to question, challenge and evaluate the meanings and purposes of texts

## Visual Literacy <br> -The ability to understand and produce visual messages

## Profile of a graduating pupil from........?



## Junior Cycle Development

Key skills

- Communicating
- Being creative
- Working with others
- Managing information and thinking
- Managing myself
- Wellbeing


## Planning for and Leading Literacy

What are the areas of focus?


## Why am I suggesting a focus on teaching vocabulary?

"The limit of my language means the limit of my world"

Ludwig Wittgenstein

## Vocabulary influences our existence

## Communicate more effectively

Improves selfesteem

Improves selfconfidence

Adds
sophistication to speech

Better/more job offers

Improves people's perception of you

## In school

## Child with poor vocabulary development may.........

- have difficulty understanding any vocabulary outside their own limited word-well
- have problems with conceptual thinking and find concentrating a challenge
- Not develop the range of expressive language necessary to evaluate, analyse, describe, persuade etc
- become frustrated, troublesome or withdrawn and struggle at school


## Reciprocal hypothesis

- Relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension - works both ways



## Develop larger vocabulary

## better reader



## Reference to "vocabulary" in the English Language Curriculum Statement (1999)

|  | Infants | $1^{\text {st }} \& 2^{\text {nd }}$ | $3^{\text {rd }} \& 4^{\text {th }}$ | $5^{\text {th }} \& 6^{\text {th }}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Oral Language |  | - experience challenging vocabulary and sentence structure from the teacher <br> experiment with more elaborate vocabulary and sentence structure in order to extend and explore meaning | ~ experience the teacher's use of challenging vocabulary and sentence structure | - experience from the teacher a growing elaboration and sophistication in the use of vocabulary and sentence structure |
| Reading | - build up a sight vocabulary of common words | - continue to build a sight vocabulary of common words from books read and from personal experience |  |  |
| Writing |  |  |  | - to use dictionaries and thesauruses to extend and develop vocabulary and spelling |

Reading vocabulary
"word-synthesis and word-analysis skills, which receive much attention in the early stages of the teaching of reading, can, in Middle an Senior classes, be developed more fully and used in conjunction with vocabulary-building activity"

## The Voluntary State Curriculum

## Standard: General Reading Processes

## Topic D - Vocabulary:

Students will use a variety of strategies and opportunities to understand word meaning and to increase vocabulary

## Indicator 1

Develop and apply vocabulary through exposure to a variety of texts
a. Acquire new vocabulary through listening to, independently reading, and discussing a variety of literary and informational texts
b. Discuss words and word meanings daily as they are encountered in texts, instruction, and conversation

## Indicator 3

Understand, acquire, and use new vocabulary
Use context to determine the meanings of words
Use word structure to determine the meanings of words
Use resources to confirm definitions and gather further information about word
Use new vocabulary in speaking and writing to gain and extend content knowledge and clarify expression

## Strong focus on enabling skills

- Phonemic awareness

- Letter recognition
- Decoding
- Phonics
- Oral reading fluency

Danger of plateau effect

## Challenge

- 26 letters of the alphabet
- 44 phonemes
- 75,000 words
- It is clear that teachers must teach the sounds and letters systematically and explicitly - the challenge is how to teach 75,000 words!!


"When it comes to words, every person is destined to be a lifelong learner."

Dale Johnson (2001)

# Word knowledge 

(Not an all or nothing activity!)

## How well do we know words?

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | I know the word <br> and could use it <br> in conversation <br> or in my writing | I know the <br> word and <br> understand <br> what it means | I remember <br> seeing or <br> hearing it <br> before | Don't know <br> it and <br> haven't <br> heard it |
| score |  |  |  |  |
| hippopotamus |  |  |  |  |
| quincunx |  |  |  |  |
| protagonist |  |  |  |  |
| parsimonious |  |  |  |  |



## TeaChing Individual Words

## Which words to teach?

## Two pieces from 'middle classes'



## Matilda

Roald Dahl Chatper Three: Miss Honey

N 1 atilda was a little late in starting schoolyMost children begin Primary School at five or even just before, but Matilda's parents, who weren't very concerned one way or the other about their daughter's education, had forgotten to make the proper arrangements in advance. She was five and a half when she entered school for the first time.

The village school for younger children was a bleak brick building called Crunchem Hall Primary School. It had about two hundred and fifty pupils aged from five to just under twelve years old. The head teacher, the boss, the supreme commander of this establishment was a formidable middle-aged lady $_{x}$ whose name was
Miss Trunchbull.

## Selecting words for instruction

|  | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Description | Basic words that <br> most children <br> know before <br> entering school | Words that appear <br> frequently in texts <br> and for which <br> children already <br> have some <br> conceptual <br> understanding | Uncommon words <br> that are typically <br> associated with a <br> specific domain |
| Examples | umbrella, hot, <br> happy | Ionely, fortunate, <br> curious | revolution, <br> peninsula, <br> staccato |

(Beck, McKeown, Kucan, 2002)

# Girll in Goal 

Rob Childs
1
"Can I play?"
The boys lookedroundin surprise. They were just about t pick sides for their lunchtime kickabout.
"Go on, let me play in goal."
"You must be joking," said Ben, captain of Gateway Juniors soccer team.
"Girls are no good at football. Clear off, Samantha."

She stayed where she was.
"They called me Sam at my old school."


The footballers grinned at each other and waited to see what Ben would do. He didn't want to be shown up by this new girl in front of all his mates. She was bigger than him and he didn'tfancy the idea of trying to get rid of her by force.


| Word as appears in text | Meaning in the text | Synonym (S) <br> Antonym (A) <br> Other Meaning (O) | Other Words or Interesting Information |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| pick | choose | - select (S) <br> - to gather (0) <br> - to nibble (O) <br> - to steal (0) | - "I'll pick you up after the match...." <br> - "If you lose the key you'll have to pick the lock" <br> - You can use that pick to break up the ground <br> - "Pick a fight with someone your own size" |
| round | behind | - straight (A) <br> - circular shape (O) <br> - stage in a competition | - I'd love to play a round of golf with Rory Mclroy. <br> - The boxer was knocked out in the first round. <br> - After the robbery the police had to be quick to round up the local suspects. |
| fancy | like | -wish (S) <br> - special or unusual (O) | - I fancy an ice-cream <br> - Fancy that! |

## Ten Important Words



Analyzing Text to Select Important Words While Reading (informational) Text

## How can Ten Important Words help vocabulary development

Two objectives

- Support children in using context to identify important words
- Extend understanding of these words through further exploration


## Butterflies live

all over the world.
They are in backyard gardens.



You can find butterflies on cold mountains . . .

and in hot deserts.


7

Butterflies are insects
like flies and ladybugs.
They have six legs,
a body in three parts,
and skin that is hard like a shell.
Like most insects,
butterflies have wings.

A few days later,
the egg hatches.
Now it is a tiny caterpillar.

All the caterpillar does is eat and rest, eat and rest.

It chews up many leaves.


Two weeks go by.
Now the caterpillar is ready to change.

It finds a safe spot on a twig or leaf. It spins a silk pad. It hangs down from the pad.

It looks as if
the caterpillar is just resting.
But it isn't!
Slowly, it sheds its skin.
Then it forms a hard shell.
Inside the shell, the caterpillar is changing.

## Butterflies Important Words Graph

| butterfly |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| butterfly |  | wings | caterpillar |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| butterfly | insects | wings | caterpillar |  |  | flower |  |  |  |
| butterfly | insects | wings | caterpillar |  | egg | flower |  | spins |  |
| butterfly | insects | wings | caterpillar | fly | egg | flower | sheds | spins |  |
| butterfly | insects | wings | caterpillar | fly | egg | flower | sheds | spins | hard |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## One sentence summary:

## Prompt Cards

List synonyms or related words for sheds.

Green: Write sentences using words from the graph.

Blue: Pick 4 words and draw a picture.

Orange: Find some little words 'hiding' in words from the graph.

Find some little words 'hiding' in words from the graph.

butterfly: but, butter, fly insects: in<br>caterpillar: cat, pill, pillar, ill<br>spins:<br>in, pin, spin, pins<br>wings: win, in, wing

## Process for Ten Important Words

- Introduce book/text, read and model
- Create class graph
- Discussion and summary
- Explore the chosen vocabulary (prompt cards)


# Word Learning Strategies 

Using definitions and context

## Important to have of student-friendly definitions

e.g. Compare these two definitions of dazzling

## bright enough to deprive something of sight temporarily

or
if something is dazzling, that means that it's so bright that you can hardly look at it

## Dictionary Definitions

- (Most) dictionary definitions are not effective for learning the meanings of words.
- Students often take one or two words from a definition to be a word's entire meaning.
- There are often multiple definitions; which is the most appropriate?
- Dictionaries often use the word itself in the definition!


## Clear \& Understandable Definitions



Defines words in easy to understand language and gives a sample sentence for each word.

e.g. furious

Definition: "if someone is furious, they are extremely angry"

Sentence: "He was furious at the way his mother had been treated"

## Contextual Approach

- May not be sufficient as a means of teaching new meanings
- Although John was very rich, his brother was destitute.
not jealous, unconcerned, generous, charitable,


## Depends on the sentence

Meaning of corpulent

- Mr. Smith was a corpulent man.
- Mr. Smith was a short and corpulent man, with a very large head and no neck.
- Mr. Smith was a corpulent man, who appeared to burst out of his clothes in every direction.


## Using context clues and antonyms

1. He was so parsimonious that he refused to give his own sons the few pennies they needed to buy pencils for school. It truly hurt him to part with his money.
2. His brother was the opposite. He always bought gifts for his friends and was really generous.

## Definitional and Contextual Information

"Now he saw another elephant emerge from the place where it had stood hidden in the trees. It reached up, broke some leafy branches with a snap, and draped them over the mass of torn thick flesh. Finally it tilted its massive head, raised its trunk, and roared into the empty landscape."


## Definitional \& Contextual Information

| Story Sentence | Meaning | Our Sentence |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Now he saw another <br> elephant emerge from <br> the place where it had <br> stood hidden in the <br> trees. | To come into <br> view; to come <br> up to the <br> surface | Shane can swim under <br> water for one minute <br> before he needs to <br> emerge to breath |
| Then it reached up, <br> broke some leafy <br> branches with a snap, <br> and draped them over <br> the mass of torn thick <br> flesh. | To place <br> casually and <br> loosely; to hang <br> or arrange in <br> folds | We draped the flag <br> from the top window of <br> our school one week <br> before the All Ireland. |

## Deep Processing of Vocabulary

## Depth and Breadth of Vocabulary

- Full understanding and use of vocabulary "occurs only over time and multiple encounters."
(Beck, McKeown, Kucan, 2002)
- Knowing many words is to have breadth of word knowledge.
A word's literal meaning, its connotations, semantic associations such as synonyms and antonyms - these refer to depth of word knowledge. (Augustetal, 2005)


## Learning new words... .........what does this mean?

- Not just learning to recognise words (in print)
- Acquiring new meaning
- In-depth word knowledge
e.g. Children encounter delicate and astonishing (Tier 2 words) in their text


## Encouraging Deep Processing

## delicate

Let's play a word game. I'll tell you about some things.
If you think it is weak, say "that's delicate!"
If you think it is not very weak, say "that's not very delicate!"
Examples:

- A big truck on the motorway.
- A little paper airplane on a windy day.
- A tall tower made of straws.
- This school.
- butterfly's wing.


## Astonishing (not just surprising)

Which of the following would be astonishing?

- a clock on the wall
- a magician doing a trick
- a cold ice cream
- a cow driving a car
- Minister Quinn announces a pay increase for principals!



## Semantic map for weather



Will she like the round juicy orange ...

## Opportunities to Practice

## Examples that Encourage Deep Processing:



## A fill-in-the-blank game using ORANGE

$O \underline{\mathrm{c}} \underline{\mathrm{t}} \mathrm{o} \underline{\mathrm{u}} \underline{\mathrm{s}}$
(an underwater creature with eight legs)
$R$ i v e r
(something that runs but has no legs)
A $\qquad$
(a favourite fruit given to a teacher)
N $\qquad$
(another name for your bellybutton)
G $\qquad$
(another colour that oranges can be)
E

(how often you should eat colourful fruits and vegetables)


GG looked at the orange shorts with the yellow ducks. Then he looked at the yellow t-shirt with the big orange sun. 'I will look silly,' said GG. 'Everyone else will be wearing a suit.' Globby looked at the clock. 'Hurry up,' he said. 'It doesn't matter what you are wearing. They will just want to know all about you.'

# Multiple meaning and deep processing 

Molly's Mammy was not up.
She wa fast asleep.
Molly called her.
She called her again and again.
'Mammy, Mammy,' she called in a big loud voice. 'You have to get up now. You are late. You are very sleepy in the morning but Lucy and I are not sleepy at all. Mammy, I think you are the sleepyhead!'

On my street a car drove extremely fast by my house.


My watch was running fast.


I kept a fast grip on the bar throughout the ride.

Molly's Mammy was not up.
She was fast asleep.


When people fast they usually don't eat.

Multiple meaning words and context

- Mark spread some ___ on his bread.
- I was late for work because of the traffic $\qquad$ .
- Sarah had to $\qquad$ all her clothes into one suitcase.
- The driver had to $\qquad$ the brake pedal to the floor to stop the bus.


## Homograph Matrix

fish $\qquad$ bottom of your shoe

Nation $\qquad$
not absent
unkind
rural area
gift
average

## Word

Consciousness
(fostering an awareness and love of language and words)

## People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing.

- Dale Carnegie



## Strategies for creating word consciousness

- Word walls
- Words of the week http: / /learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/word-week
- Word Jars
- Word journals
- Etymology
- Portmanteaux
- Word Play
- Games



## Capitalising on children's sense of rhyme

1. A high fence is a
2. A happy father is a
3. An ill hen is $a$
4. A tent light is a
tall
_ Dad
sick
_ lamp

## Hink Pinks

1. An unhappy boy is a
2. A warm saucepan is a
3. An endless tune is a
4. A jet runway is a
sad lad
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

$\underline{ }$ $\qquad$

## Hinky Pinky

- improved symbol of the alphabet better letter
- friend who fell in wet dirt
- rabbit that tells jokes
- Violin in the centre
- Box for rocks


## Homophones

- What might you call seven days in a row that are not strong?


## weak week

-What would you call a aircraft that is not fancy?
plain plane
-What would you call when glass in a window has an ache?
pane pain

Interrelatedness

## Interrelatedness

Vocabulary expansion involves not just the acquisition of the meaning of individual words but also learning the relationships among words and how these words relate to each other.

## Words Sorts

stallion, mare, goose, bull, cow, gosling, hen, filly, gander, chick, colt, foal, rooster, calf, horse
stallion, mare, bull, cow,, colt, foal, calf, horse, filly
stallion,rooster, bull, colt, gander
hen, rooster, goose
gander, chick, gosling
mare hen, goose, filly, cow
foal, calf, gosling, chick, horse,

## Making connections between words with semantic gradients



## Gradable Antonyms

- Choose a gradable antonym (eg: hot/cold, big/small)
- Split into groups of 4 or 5 or into two teams
- Brainstorm related words in the groups
(eg: hot, cool, cold, warm)
- Arrange the words in a continuum
(eg: hot, warm, cool, cold)
- Share and discuss the word lists with the group


## hot / cold

blistering
scorching hot warm cool cold icy freezing

## Semantic Gradient

like adore fancy
cherish exalt
love
admire
adulate treasure

Least


Most

## Semantic gradient in context

Raced Sprinted Ran Strutted Walked Crawled

- John $\qquad$ down the street.
- John frantically $\qquad$ down the street.
- John $\qquad$ down the street. He was extremely proud of the award that he had received.

Greenwood, S.C., \& Flanigan, K. (2007). Overlapping vocabulary and comprehension: Context clues complement semantic gradients. The Reading Teacher, 61(3), 249-254.

## Exploring a concept in relation to other words



Something was coming. Chip picked up the pin.
"Oh help!" he said.

## Semantic mapping



# Strategies for teaChing words 

(Using graphics to help with vocabulary development)

## Semantic Feature Analysis

| transportation | Typical Characteristics |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Has only <br> two <br> wheels | Needs <br> fuel | Has more <br> than two <br> wheels | Has a <br> door | You see them <br> regularly on <br> the road |  |
|  |  | $\mathbf{X}$ | $\mathbf{X}$ | $\mathbf{X}$ | $\mathbf{X}$ |  |
| bus |  | $\mathbf{X}$ | $\mathbf{X}$ | $\mathbf{X}$ | $\mathbf{X}$ |  |
| bicycle | $\mathbf{X}$ |  |  |  | $\mathbf{X}$ |  |
| ship |  | $\mathbf{X}$ |  | $\mathbf{X}$ |  |  |
| train |  | $\mathbf{X}$ | $\mathbf{X}$ | $\mathbf{X}$ |  |  |
| skateboard |  |  | $\mathbf{X}$ |  | $\mathbf{?}$ |  |
| tricycle |  |  | $\mathbf{X}$ |  | $\mathbf{?}$ |  |

## Own the Word

My Definition:

Synonyms:
My Sentence:

Antonyms:

A picture to remind me of this word:

Vocabulary Graphic Organiser: Word Chart

| Word |  |
| :--- | :--- |
| Definition |  |
| Synonym |  |
| Antonym |  |
| Use in a <br> sentence |  |
| Draw a picture |  |

## Vocabulary Graphic Organizer: Vocabulary Map




## Learn \& Draw a Word

Word: laugh

## Means: making sounds to

 show you are happy or think something is funnySynonym: chuckle, giggle Antonym: cry, weep

## Sentence \& Picture

I had to laugh when I saw the clown fall into the bucket of water


Strategy adapted from: Nickelsen, L. (1999). Quick activities to build a voluminous vocabulary. New York: Scholastic, page 19.

## Semantic Clusters for a Word Wall

| Furniture | Animals | Feelings | Food | Things we use |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| table <br> chair <br> bed <br> seat | fox <br> elephant <br> mouse <br> monkey <br> chicken | happy <br> sad <br> upset <br> angry <br> afraid <br> brave | bread <br> jam <br> vegetables <br> pizza <br> sandwich <br> meat | scissors <br> fork <br> hammer <br> pen <br> ladder <br> Microwave |
| People | Games | How we move | What people do | How we travel |
| brother <br> sister <br> mother <br> father <br> aunt <br> cousin <br> parent <br> child | football <br> basketball <br> chess <br> hopscotch | walk <br> amble <br> sprint <br> crawl <br> run <br> hop | Teacher <br> Doctor <br> Judge <br> Nurse | Train <br> Airplane <br> Boat <br> Bicycle <br> Ship <br> Bus <br> car |

## A Graphic Way of Showing Tense




Present

## Vocabulary and writing




My favorit purt is obout when they pact the apls berause the apls are joosee and crachee

## Míle Buíochas

## gene.mehigan@mie.ie

