A Wonder of Words: Effective Vocabulary Development
Key Messages

Vocabulary development is a lifelong process (Hunt, 2002).

Multiple meaningful exposures to vocabulary build the depth and breadth of our word knowledge (Blachowicz and Fisher 2015).

Robust vocabulary instruction can lead to an improvement in learner outcomes, learner experiences and teacher practices (NCCA, 2012).
Vocabulary Facts

When children from families with lower incomes were 3 years old they knew 600 fewer words than children the same age from families with upper incomes. (Hart & Risley, 1995)

Vocabulary knowledge is a reliable indicator of literacy outcomes. (Snow & Oh, 2011)

The majority of books for teacher guidance on literacy instruction has fewer than two pages devoted to vocabulary development. In fact many do not index vocabulary. (Blackowicz & Fisher, 2004)
What does it mean to know a word?

My **right** shoe leaks.
Keep on the **right** path.
Turn through a **right** angle.
It’s **right** there.
**Right**, let’s get going.
You have no **right**.
(Hunt, 2013)
### What does it mean to know a word?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No knowledge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General sense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Context-bound knowledge</td>
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<td>Knowledge of a word, but unable to recall it readily for appropriate situations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rich and decontextualised knowledge</td>
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(Beck & McKeown, 2004)
How do we teach Vocabulary?
Vocabulary Development Workshop
The learning outcomes afford teachers the autonomy to decide the pace, content and sequence of language learning in order to meet the needs of children in their class.
A Four Part Vocabulary Programme

- Frequent, Varied, and Extensive Language Experiences
- Teaching Individual Words
- Teaching Word-Learning Strategies
- Foster Word Consciousness

(Graves, 2016)
Frequent, Varied, and Extensive Language Experiences

- Listening
- Writing for a purpose
- Discussion
- Reading
- Interactive oral reading

(Whitehurst et al., 1994; Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Roche, 2015; Graves, 2016)
What opportunities will this resource provide?

Are there opportunities to explore multi-meaning words?

What words can I explore in different contexts?

What words have roots, prefixes and suffixes?

How will I infuse this new vocabulary into my classroom?

Are there interesting words or phrases that are fun to say?
Vocabulary Development Workshop
What words do we teach?

**Tier 1** *warm  dog  tired*
- Basic words
- Form the basis of common everyday language

**Tier 2** *merchant  fortunate  repel*
- High utility for mature language users
- Appear frequently in texts read with/by pupils
- Found less frequently in conversation
- Words for which children already have some conceptual understanding

**Tier 3** *peninsula  staccato  photosynthesis*
- Low frequency words
- Limited to specific topics/domains
- Learned when a need arises

(Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013)
Teaching Individual Words

Word Introduction

- Further interaction
- Using all the words
- Multiple exposures
- Follow up activities

(Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013)
Maintaining New Words

- Brief revisions
- Word wall
- Connect two
- Captioning pictures
- Tally words

(Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013; Richek & McTague, 2008; Graves, 2016)
What do I do when I find a word I don’t understand?
Teaching Word-Learning Strategies

1. Using word parts (prefixes, suffixes, roots)
2. Using context
3. Consulting a reference

fortunate
Prefix Strategy

• Remove Prefix
• Check that you have a real word left, if you do it’s a prefix.
• Think about the meaning of the prefix and the new word.
• Combine the meanings of the root word and the prefix. Infer the meaning
• Try out the meaning in an oral sentence. Does it make sense?
• If it does, read on.

(Graves et al., 2017)
“Being curious about the meaning of an unknown word is a hallmark of those who develop large vocabularies. Students become interested and enthusiastic about words when instruction is rich and lively.”

(Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002, p. 13)
Word play

Hinky Pinkies/Hink Pinks:

A high fence is a _______ _______ (tall wall!)
A tent light is a _______ _______
An unhappy boy is a _______ _______

Riddles:
What has hands, but cannot clap?

Spoonerisms:
A well-boiled icicle

Rebus puzzles:

Word of the Day:
taradiddle
Best Practices in Action: Angela’s Class

(Blachowicz & Fisher, 2007)
“The day ends, as it began, with a wonder of words.”

(Blachowicz & Fisher, 2007, p.197)