Embracing Everyday Teachable Moments to Enhance Language & Vocabulary Acquisition

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Every home is a university and the parents are the teachers.

Mahatma Gandhi
Teachable Moments

• The time at which learning a particular topic or idea becomes possible or easiest.
• Something that is not planned; rather, a fleeting opportunity that must be sensed and seized.
• By embracing teachable moments, children can learn new words and concepts in their natural environment and practice them frequently.
Did you know?

Vocabulary is one of the most important indicators of students' success in school, on standardized tests, and in life. The knowledge that students possess about a topic is based on the vocabulary of that information (Marzano & Pickering, 2005).
3 Tiers of Vocabulary

• *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction* by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002)
Tier 1

- the most basic words
- “rarely require instructional attention to their meanings in school”
- Examples
  - clock
  - baby
  - happy
  - walk
Tier 2

• high frequency words
• words with multiple meanings
• words that are found across various domains
• used by mature language users
• important for reading comprehension
• increases descriptive vocabulary
• Examples – absurd, coincidence, and fortunate
Tier 3

• low frequency words
• often limited to specific domains
• words that are best learned when specific needs arise
• Examples – *peninsula, isotope, crepe*, and *asphalt*
Introducing New Words

A strategy to introduce new words:

1. Introduce and highlight the new word in context.

2. Define, describe and/or explain what it is or does and point out an example of it, if possible.

3. Elaborate and use the new word in context again.

4. Ask your child to do something with the word.

5. List and label different examples of the word.
Introduce

- Introduce and highlight the new word in context.

- “Oh wow! Look. I see a convertible. See it.”
Define

• Define, describe, and explain what it is or does and point out an example of it, if possible.

• “A convertible is a car that does NOT have a top.”
Elaborate

• Elaborate and use the new word in context again.

• “That convertible is red with a white stripe.”
Ask

• Ask your child to do something with the word.

• “Let’s look for more convertibles.”
List

• List and label different examples of the word.

• “Yes. You are right. That is a blue convertible.”
Teachable Moments at Home

• Mealtime (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks)

• Bathtime

• Television

• Playtime
Teachable Moments on the Go

• Running errands

• Road trip

• Exercising
Teachable Moments in the Neighborhood

- Grocery shopping
- Eating out
- Park
- Carwash
Teachable Moments & Special Occasions

• Wedding
• Graduation
• Sporting Events
• Movie theaters
Concepts of time

• Days of the week
• Months of the year
• Yesterday, today, tomorrow
• Seconds, minutes, hours
• Common expressions – 24/7, 365, TGIF, etc.
• Week vs. weekend
• Sequencing – before, after, then, next, until, etc.
• Watch vs. clock vs. calendar
Idioms

• An expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but has a separate meaning of its own.

• Examples:
  • Raining cats and dogs
  • Mumbo jumbo
  • Drive someone up a wall
  • Hit the books
  • Hold your horses
  • Tie the knot
  • Let the cat out of the bag
Colors

- Baby blue
- Navy blue
- Powder blue
- Turquoise
- Carolina blue
- Periwinkle
- Teal

- Forest green
- Lime green
- Hunter green
- Avocado
- Sea green
- Chartreuse
- Teal
Group Activity: Synonyms and Antonyms

List all the synonyms and antonyms you can think of for these words:

• big

• pretty

• good
Group Activity: Shades of Meaning

Now rank your list of synonyms and antonyms.

For example:
- loud
- noisy
- booming
- piercing
- deafening
- “could wake the dead”
Our growing language

New words and definitions are frequently added to our vernacular.

• In May 2014, Merriam-Webster.com estimated that over 150 words were added to its dictionary in 2014 (http://www.merriam-webster.com/new-words/2014-update.htm).

• The Oxford English Dictionary is updated 4 times a year to add new words, subentries, and senses. The March 2015 update included around 500 new additions, such as *ear-piercing*, *look-see*, *pollutable*, and *laters*. (http://public.oed.com/the-oed-today/recent-updates-to-the-oed/).
New words in the past 5 years

- bling
- bromance
- hater
- infomania
- jeggings
- mini-me
- muffin top
- muggle
- totes
- unfriend
- whatevs
- bajillion
- glamping
- facepalm
- crafting
- SMH, ICYMI, and YOLO
Questions
Thank you!

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