



UM-Ready to Learn World of Words Vocabulary Curriculum

Principal Investigator: Susan B. Neuman

Graduate Assistants:
Julie Dwyer, Serene Koh, Christine Meyer, Allison
Wein, Tanya Wright

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Theoretical and Pedagogical Support for an Embedded Multimedia Vocabulary Intervention: The World of Words (WOW) Approach

Serene Koh
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Overview

- Importance of vocabulary
- WOW Curriculum
- Content knowledge component
- Vocabulary component
- Research design: Importance of standards and benchmarking



Why teach vocabulary?

- Vocabulary gap
- Important predictor of future reading ability
- Influences ability to learn to identify new words.
- Little explicit teaching of vocabulary in pre-k and kindergarten years.





How to teach vocabulary?

Children need vocabulary instruction that:

- is rich and explicit;
- provides multiple exposures to target words with scheduled review and practice;



How to teach vocabulary?

Children need vocabulary instruction that:

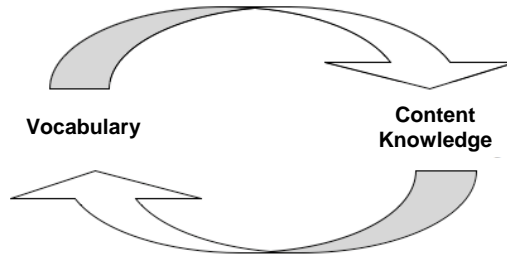
- is embedded in meaningful contexts; and
- utilizes richly structured taxonomic categories (grouping of like things)





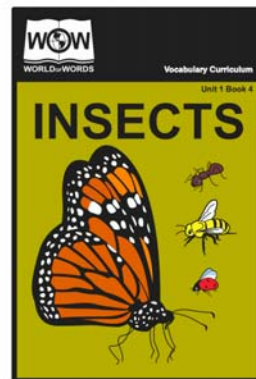
WOW Curricular Objectives

- Develop phonological awareness.
- Saturate children with both a breadth and sophistication of vocabulary and content knowledge.



Key WOW curricular features

- Vocabulary learning organized taxonomically, not thematically
- Embedded multimedia
- “Gradual release of responsibility” model
- Sequenced instructional flow
- Appropriately challenging

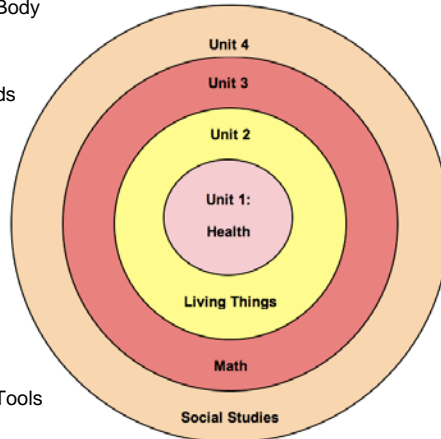




Content knowledge component: Overview

- Unit 1: Health
- Parts of the Body
 - Exercise
 - Emotions
 - Healthy Foods

- Unit 2: Living Things
- Pets
 - Wild Animals
 - Insects
 - Plants



- Unit 3: Math
- Shapes
 - Numbers
 - Patterns
 - Measuring Tools

- Unit 4: Social Studies
- Homes
 - Community Helpers
 - Transportation
 - Geographical Features



Content knowledge component: Development

The development of these conceptual ideas were guided by:

1. State standards (MA, MI, IN, CA, TX)
 - Geographically diverse with different political climates.
 - Exemplary state standards
 - Aligned with standards in the state of implementation (Michigan).
2. Exemplary teacher expertise



Vocabulary component: How were the words chosen?

- Content areas
- Exemplary teacher expertise
- Early childhood linguistic databases & AoA norms



Vocabulary component:

- In each topic, children are exposed to an average of 40 words.
- The primary words taught include words that are (*approx. 30 per topic*):
 1. In-category words;
 2. Out-category words; and
 3. Challenge-words
- Included are also a secondary level of supporting words that help children talk about the topic (*approx. 10 per topic*)



Vocabulary component:

- Using linguistic databases, we include words of kindergarten or 1st grade level.
- In Unit 1, 30% of the primary words taught are considered “unfamiliar”;
- Unit 2, at least 50% of the words taught are considered unfamiliar. Proportion of difficult words will continue to increase throughout Units 3 and 4.



Research design 2007/08

- Not only about treatment vs. control but notion of benchmarking
- “Gold standard” comparison
- Treatment/ Control design important for evaluation of curriculum, but does not ultimately tell us how to close gap.



Research design 2007/08

- Project not just about creating curriculum, but developing a methodology of how to design a specific kind of intervention.
- Demonstrate a methodology for calibration against these benchmarks and standards.

