I Know Some Words!

Billie J. Askew
Reading Recovery and Early Literacy Conference

Floretta Thornton-Reid
Georgia State University
Introduction
Why?

Working with words – solving words, learning words, understanding words, analyzing words does play an important role while learning to read and write. Jones, 2006
Cautions

- Focus on word learning is narrow.
- Only one of the units and sources of linguistic information.
- Over-focus on word learning can impede learning acceleration.

Jones, 2006
“When a child knows that a word is a pattern of marks he begins to locate the patterns he knows.”

Clay, BL, p. 163
“The child also locates readily those few words he has learned to write without copy.”

Clay, BL, p. 163
The Task of Learning Words

Word learning is a surprisingly complex issue.

Jones 2006, p.62
The Task of Learning Words

The moment of truth is the moment of input,
✓ how you attend,
✓ how much you care,
✓ how you encode,
✓ what you do with it,
✓ and how you organize it.

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part II, flyleaf, quoting Squire, 1996
The Task of Learning Words

How well you access it depends on how well you stored it in the first place.

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part II, flyleaf, quoting Squire, 1996
The Task of Learning Words
Learning to look at print

• Written language must be read in a certain direction (D);
• Symbols or letters have a particular orientation (O);
• Readers must attend to print in a particular sequence (S).

Clay 2002, OS, p. 22
Observing for Directionality

nac

3 2 1
Orientation

a a a a a a A A A A A
Sequence

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
  c & n & a \\
  1 & 2 & 3 \\
\end{array}
\]
The Task of Learning Words
Extending Meager Knowledge of Words

✓ Have the child stand to your left at the board, using magnetic letters the teacher demonstrates making *can* with the text visible to the child;
✓ then, the teacher asks the child to make *can* (with the text still visible) prompting and commenting as necessary;
✓ once the child can put *can* together correctly; then, remove the text and say “make the word *can*.”

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part Two, p.40 – 41
Directionality

Child puts the letters down as follows:

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a c
  2 1
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Teacher immediately stops the child and says:

“**You put the ‘a’ on this side of the ‘c’**.”
(Tells the child what he did.)

“**Does the ‘a’ go on this side of the ‘c’?**”
(Draws the child’s attention to looking.)
Orientation

Child puts the letters down as follows:

Teacher immediately stops the child and says:

\[ \text{C} \quad \text{D} \]

“You put the stick on this side.”

“Does the stick go on this side?”
Sequence

- *Child puts the n first.* The teacher immediately stops the child and says:

  - “You put the n first.”
    (This tells the child what he did.)

  “Does the n come first?”
  (Draws the child’s attention to looking.)
Sequence

• Child puts the letters as follows:

\[ \text{c a n} \]

1 2 3

Teacher says:

• “You put the \text{n} last.”
\[(Tells~the~child~what~he~did.)\]

• “Does the \text{n} come last?”
\[(Draws~the~child’s~attention~to~looking.)\]
The Task of Learning Words
Extending Meager Knowledge of Words

Children do learn a great deal about word structure from reading and writing itself, so text exposure alone may account for substantial individual variation in word knowledge.

Moats, 2000, p. 73
The Task of Learning Words
Extending Meager Knowledge of Words

There is considerable evidence that words, both spoken and written are remembered in relation to other words...Each word is part of a network of related meanings.

Moats, 2000 p. 72
The Task of Learning Words

Teacher’s Role

“Think how helpful it would be:

• If magnetic letters were stored away from the working space and out of direct view of the learner

• If the child worked at this or her eye level

• If the working space was clear and not cluttered, especially when a new task begins

• If things to be compared were placed close together, with big spaces to separate things not being considered together.”

Clay, 2001, COT, p. 167
The Task of Learning Words
Teacher’s Role

“...teachers must introduce new learning under conditions which make the orienting encounter clear, rather than confusing.”

Clay, 2001, COT, p. 158
“…new learning should be presented with visual clarity.”

Clay, 2001, COT, p. 158
“Teachers must ensure that the child’s visual attention is directed where it needs to be, and must find ways to prevent ‘wandering eye’ behaviour.”

Clay, COT, p.167
Scale of Knowing

High Attention
- New
- Only just known
- Successfully problem solved
- Easily produced but easily thrown
- Recognized in most contexts
- Known in many variant forms

Experience

Minimal Attention
Learning More About Words
Breaking Letter by Letter

• Seems to occur early
• Quick work
• Familiar words and letters

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part 2, p.42
Learning More About Words
Adding a Final Inflection

• Use a previous text context
• Quick work
• Teacher demonstrates

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part 2, p.43
Learning More About Words
Breaking Into Two Parts

• Teacher demonstrates
• Consistent use of onset and rime
• Ask the child to watch

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part 2, p.44-45
Taking Words Apart in Reading

Early

- Use a previous text context
- Quick work
- Teacher demonstrates

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part 2, p.43
Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part 2, p.142 - 143
Taking Words Apart in Reading

How does taking words apart in isolation at the magnetic board relate to what happens in reading.

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part 2, p.125
Baby Lamb is here.
Mother Sheep is here.

"Here I am, Baby Lamb."
Baby Lamb is up.
Baby Lamb is looking for milk.
"Baa-baa. Baa-baa."
Here is the milk.
Here is the milk
for Baby Lamb.
The Role of Writing

“Control over directional behaviour in reading, supplemented by practice in writing messages, compels children to observe each letter in turn and makes them attend to order.”

Clay 2001, COT, p. 173
The Role of Writing

One way of remembering a word in all its detail is to be able to write it.

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part Two, p.40
The Role of Writing

Attend to the forming of letters that are confused.

Clay, 2005, LLDI, Part Two, p.30
Summary

“A network of knowledge gathers around each word that a child knows…”

Clay, COT, p. 24
Summary

Substitutions are not mere guessing.

Clay, BL, p. 250
Summary

“Knowing many different words enlarges one’s chances of getting to new words…”

Clay, COT, p. 24
Summary

Children “…must acquire a variety of approaches and develop flexibility in dealing with new words…”

Clay, BL, p. 249
Summary

One must be drenched in words, literally soaked in them, to have the rights ones form themselves into the proper pattern at the right moment.

Hart Crane
Final Thought

Perhaps what words do I teach is not the most important question.

*paraphased from Clay, COT, p. 2*
fthornton-reid@gsu.edu
References


