

Building the Vocabulary Growth Habit

Based on my work experiences with middle school to college students and from this book: Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties, David A. Kilpatrick, 2015

Background

“A sight vocabulary refers to the pool of words that an individual can instantly and effortlessly recognize.” p.10

Engaging in academic studies entails a constant building of vocabulary. In fact, one could make the argument that this is the defining characteristic of academic studies. Language arts, biology, history, economics, the list is endless of courses that require an expanding vocabulary.

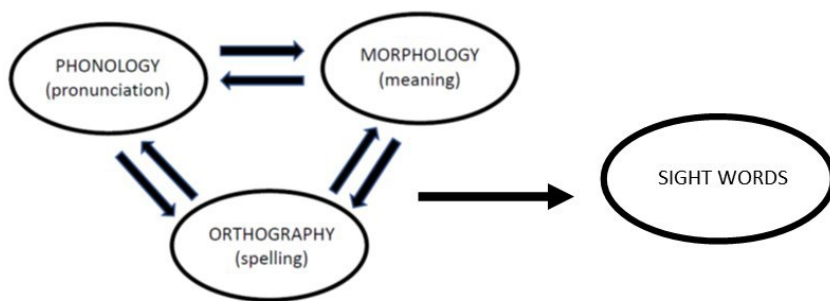
Students with learning differences struggle to master this core academic skill. The typical learning pattern - looking up new words, reading it in the assignment, done with a focus on visual memory – is expected to result in a learned word. However, often this does not end up with the word being *in there*, in your brain, ready for use with the next reading assignment or for recall on the next exam. Students become frustrated and lose their self-confidence when this doesn't happen.

“Fluency is not seen as a separate reading subskill, but rather is a byproduct of having instant access to most or all of the words on the page.” p.123

Orthographic Mapping Concepts

The strategy is based on core science of the reading principles of orthographic mapping. The essence of this application of this skill is to use a ‘condensed’ version that utilizes multisensory strategies and multiple stages to embed the visual, auditory and semantic content of a word. This leads to complete storage of the words in sight vocabulary.

“Written words are stored on multiple levels simultaneously: orthographically (the word's spelling), phonologically (the word's pronunciation), and semantically (the word's meaning).” p.34



Next Steps – Lesson Strategies

The strategy is to use Orton-Gillingham systematic, multisensory learning strategies along with a ‘condensed’ selection of core knowledge for phoneme/grapheme patterns, syllable patterns, and marking systems for decoding. This strategy is used for assigned vocabulary words. With this methodology the sight word bank will steadily increase. This will, hopefully, lead to the desired goal of improving meaningful engagement with academic tasks and increased confidence and commitment to academic work. This does require steady work habits, so students do need to plan a regular time for this activity.

Please look at the two related documents - **Building Vocabulary – Lesson Plan** and **Essential Resources for Orthographic Mapping**.

The Lesson Plan provides the steps for a full lesson and utilizes sample materials from a student.

Essential Resources is a collection that I pulled from various resources – Syllable Types and Definitions (from a course), Sound – Symbol Patterns (from [Linguistics Guide](#), Language Circle Enterprises), and a guide for marking vowel sounds and syllabication (created by me in an online whiteboard).