FOSTERING VOCABULARY GROWTH DURING INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUDS

IN THE GRADE ONE CLASSROOM

By

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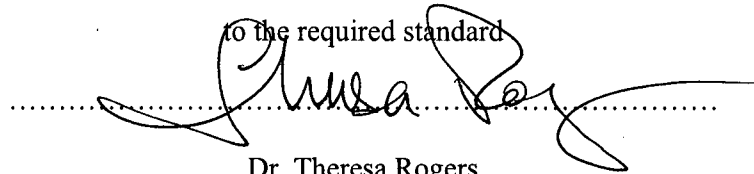THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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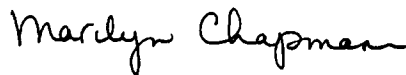
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We accept this major paper as conforming

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Abstract

During a six-week instructional unit in a Grade One class, I investigated students' abilities to learn specific target vocabulary during interactive read-alouds. Reading aloud to children provides a powerful context for word learning (Biemiller & Boote, 2006). Language and, specifically, vocabulary development play critical roles in early literacy development (Wasik, 2010, p. 621). During interactive read-alouds, teachers can focus their students' attention to Tier 2 words – "words that are of a high frequency for mature language users and are found across a variety of domains" (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002, p.8). Knowing that active participation during interactive read-alouds is more conducive to vocabulary learning than passive listening to a dramatic reading of a story, I posed this question: Would the implementation of specific vocabulary teaching strategies in the context of interactive read-alouds improve Grade One students' vocabulary?

During the read-alouds, I used various teaching strategies to teach the students 24 vocabulary words selected from 12 specific stories. Data consisted of pre and post-instructional vocabulary assessments, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Fourth Edition, student journals, observational notes about the students' usage of the target words, and my researcher's log. After analyzing the data I found that the students' vocabulary did improve. On average, students knew nine of the 24 words at the onset of the instructional unit and demonstrated an understanding of 18 of the 24 target words at the end of the unit. Overall, there was evidence of oral comprehension of the target words but limited expressive use of the vocabulary. It is also important to note that because this study did not use an experimental design, I cannot prove that improvements were a result of the intervention. The students' basic understanding of the target words, however, is a foundation upon which they will continue to build an increased fluency, flexibility, and knowledge of the specific vocabulary taught during the interactive read-alouds.

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Fostering Vocabulary Growth During Interactive Read-Alouds
In The Grade One Classroom

I have been teaching for over twenty years, the majority of which has been at the upper intermediate level. For the last seven years, however, I have been teaching Grade One. This rather radical shift in teaching assignments has been both challenging and rewarding. Because the students are beginning to read, Grade One is an exciting year. The children are immersed in print and this grade, in particular, lends itself to sharing many fabulous books with the children. Much of my teaching enjoyment comes from reading stories and other texts aloud. I also derive much satisfaction from engaging in whole group and small group discussions about the books we've read together.

During our discussions about the books we read, I have noticed a significant difference in the oral abilities of my students in terms of their vocabulary. I understand that vocabulary is not so easily or readily acquired by all young children and that language abilities differ greatly between children in the same grade. However, I am continually reminded of the wide range of abilities of my students when my class discusses a book together, when I share a story with a small group during our guided reading time, or when I converse individually with a student about a book that he or she is reading during independent reading time practice. Some students easily articulate their thoughts while others struggle to find the words that will enable them to express what they are thinking. Some children will know and use words that others have not been exposed to or heard.

I am concerned about the gap in the language abilities of my students and I've pondered the ways in which I can help my students improve their communication skills by increasing their vocabularies. Because reading aloud is such a positive, engaging, learning time for my students, I began focusing on my whole class read-aloud time. How could I use this time more effectively and purposefully? Thinking of ways in which to enhance my students' oral language abilities and to

expand their vocabularies during our daily read-alouds led me to formulate my research question:

Will the implementation of specific vocabulary teaching strategies in the context of read-alouds

improve my Grade One students' vocabulary growth?

Review of the Literature

In the primary years, most children's oral vocabularies are much greater than their reading vocabularies. Hence, when children are learning to read, the books with which they are engaged do not contain an abundance of new and novel words. Most Grade One children first learn how to decode simple, phonetic words. They are not exposed to rich vocabulary through the simple, short books they read and practice independently. For this reason, youngsters "will learn vocabulary from being read to, and from having their attention directly focused on words" (Graves, p.60, as cited in Farstrup & Samuels, 2008). "Reading aloud to students has been examined as an important curricular practice that positively affects concept and vocabulary learning" (Blachowicz & Fisher, p.34, as cited in Farstrup & Samuels, 2008). Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) strongly believe that reading aloud to children can increase their vocabulary. Reading aloud not only provides a powerful context for vocabulary acquisition but also, "reading aloud to children increases their ability to recognize words" (Lane & Wright, 2007, p. 669). Research by Santoro, Chard, Howard, and Baker (2008) suggests that read-alouds can promote vocabulary even as students are learning to read. Clearly, engaging young children in daily read-alouds is one method to boost their vocabulary development. But is it sufficient to just read a book aloud or is there *more* to the act of engaging students in a read-aloud experience?

The Case for Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

It is true that children can acquire vocabulary incidentally from a variety of sources such as the people in their family and community, the media, technology, and first hand and vicarious experiences. However, achievement gaps exist between learners in the same grade (Biemiller, 2003). Hart and Risley (2003) found a huge discrepancy between pre-school children with regard to their vocabulary growth. According to Biemiller and Slonim (as reported in Biemiller, 2003) most individual differences in vocabulary knowledge develop before grade three. "By the end of

grade two, children in the highest and lowest vocabulary quartiles differ by an average of 4,000 root words" (Biemiller, 2003, p.328). Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) have linked vocabulary size of first graders to their reading comprehension ability levels in eleventh grade.

Unfortunately, these differences in vocabulary knowledge are difficult to ameliorate (Biemiller, 2003; Hart & Risley, 2003). Clearly, early intervention into a child's developing language is paramount. Even though incidental word learning can occur by having children just listen to a story, research has proven that conducting daily read-alouds that emphasize explicit instruction of specific words can help children acquire more vocabulary than merely having them be passive listeners during read-alouds. Many studies (Baker, Kame'enui, & Simmons, 1995; Beck, Mckeown, & Kucan, 2002; Biemiller, 2004) support the positive effects of direct, explicit vocabulary instruction on both immediate vocabulary acquisition and longer-term reading comprehension. Students learn more words through targeted instruction and come to have a deeper and broader understanding of word meanings. Furthermore, "reading aloud and facilitating text-based discussions about words provides contexts and opportunities for children to learn new words before they have the reading skills necessary to acquire vocabulary independently" (Biemiller, 2001, as cited in Santoro et al., 2008, p.398).

Along with general discussions about vocabulary within the context of a read-aloud, specific vocabulary must be taught directly. Stahl (1999) stresses that efficient and effective vocabulary instruction demands informed, intentional planning. This includes paying careful attention to the activity of the learners during the read-aloud. Active participation during read-alouds is more conducive to vocabulary learning than passive listening to even the most dramatic reading of a story. In order to attempt to narrow the vocabulary gap that is prevalent among primary students, it behooves teachers to capitalize upon the daily story-time experience and select specific words to

highlight during the interactive read-aloud. However, the following questions arise: What books should be read aloud? What words should be taught?

Books to read

Many factors should be considered when selecting a book for an engaging read-aloud: the book's topic, length, availability, vocabulary, genre, relevance to curricula, and potential for connections between other books to which the children have already been exposed. Of particular importance, however, is the audience's interest. Because class read-alouds expose all students to the same book at the same time, careful consideration must be paid to the interests of the majority of the students. Having students complete a quick survey of the kinds of books they enjoy listening to will elicit interesting and surprising insights. Assumptions can mistakenly be made about a group's overall interests and then books may be selected based upon these faulty presumptions. I have found that most young children enjoy listening to humourous, silly stories. They also like listening to stories about children their own age solving problems. Books about animals and stories depicting fantastical adventures are popular. Read-alouds should not be limited to fictitious texts. Many non-fiction books and informational texts greatly appeal to all children. They love learning about real events, actual people and places, and the animal kingdom. Lane and Wright (2007) suggest that read-alouds, when possible, should be integrated throughout the curriculum and teachers should consider how the book fits into particular units being studied.

When selecting books for a study on making the most of classroom read-alouds, Santoro et al. (2008) avoided overly simplistic books and chose books that were rich in context for vocabulary and comprehension. "Children can understand much more sophisticated content presented in oral language than they can read independently . . . we need to take advantage of their listening and speaking competencies to enhance their vocabulary development" (Beck et al., 2002). Furthermore, Santoro et al. (2008) sought to select books that included diverse settings and characters but did not

contain multiple plots and confusing story structures. Engaging, creative illustrations also help

bring a story to life. Wonderful visuals aid in 'helping words stick'.

Words to Teach

Once a book is selected for a potential read-aloud, the vocabulary of the text should be

carefully considered. Selecting words to teach students can be a daunting task. Which words

should be selected? Will the words be too difficult, too easy? How useful are the words? How do

the words relate to other words or ideas? Are the words captivating and interesting? Will the

students be able to incorporate the words into their everyday lives? Would the words be important

to know because they appear frequently in other texts that the students have read or have heard? To

begin looking at words, Beck et al. (2002) suggest considering that words have different levels of

utility. Given this notion, they suggest dividing vocabulary into three tiers. Tier One consists of

basic, high-frequency words such as *talk, happy, baby, mum.* These words do not require much

instruction for most students. Tier Two consists of words that are high frequency words for more

mature language users. Words such as *reluctant, absurd, greedy,* and *fortunate* fit into this

category. Beck et al. contend that rich knowledge of words from this tier greatly impacts verbal

functioning. Tier Three words are words which are used infrequently. These words are usually

specific to particular units of study such as *photosynthesis, peninsula, canopy,* and *metamorphosis.*

Tier Three word meanings are best learned in context, for example, when studying Science or

Social Studies. There are many excellent non-fiction trade books that contain words of this kind. Of

course, informational books can be read aloud with important Tier Three content words being

highlighted.

The majority of words that should be addressed during interactive read-alouds are words

from the second tier. These words, often verbs and adjectives, are likely to appear in a wide variety

of texts. The categorization of words into specific tiers is not an exact science. But generally,

according to Beck et al. identifying tier two words should follow these criteria: select words that

appear frequently across varying domains; words that can be worked within a variety of ways and

children can connect the words to other words and ideas; and words for which the general concept is

understood, but provide a specific description of the concept.

Biemiller (2010) has taken the Tier system of words a bit further. He feels that it is

important to distinguish each tier as it applies to the primary grades and to the upper-elementary

grades. "Primary Tier Two words, words worth teaching, are the meanings that advanced students

know by the end of grade two and disadvantaged or at-risk second grade students often lack"

(Biemiller, 2010, p. 12). Furthermore, Biemiller suggests that Primary Tier Two words are the

words that provide the necessary foundation for acquiring more advanced word meanings. Graves

(2008, as cited in Farstrup & Samuels, 2008) agrees with Biemiller and Beck et al. that because

there is not enough time to teach all the words children need to know, there is a need for rich, deep,

instruction on some words and less extended instruction on others.

Biemiller's Direct and Systematic Instruction program (2004, 2006) suggests selecting 30

books during the year, engaging in repeated readings of the book, and selecting about 24 words

from each book. Students won't remember all the words taught, but if 24 words were taught each

week over the course of the year, students might learn 400 words. However, reading the same book

for the entire week would not be very exciting. Also, the many and varied trade books I have read

to my primary students do not contain 24 tier two words per book. At times, I am hard-pressed to

find half that many tier two words in a read-aloud. In *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary*

Instruction, Beck et al. suggest selecting four to six words for each book. Even though they

advocate for repeated readings of a text so the words can become more familiar to the students, they

are proponents of engaging in far more readings of different texts and not limiting the read-alouds

to just one story a week. It makes much more sense to reread a book once, not multiple times

throughout the week. Even though students are willing to listening to a rereading of a book, they

are generally more eager and excited to engage with new stories that could be related to the stories

they've already experienced. Once the book and the words are selected for instruction, the read-

aloud can begin.

Engaging in the Read-Aloud

All children love to listen to a story and they will be excited to actively engage in the

reading of it. Before reading, it may be important to explain the meaning of only one or two words

that are crucial to the understanding of the story. "Introducing more than three words at this time is

counterproductive as students find it too hard to hold that many meanings in memory as the story is

read" (Biemiller, 2010, p. 18). After explaining a couple of crucial words, if need be, read the book.

In the case where a word might be needed for story comprehension, the teacher can briefly stop and

explain the word during reading. During certain parts of the story, most children will be eager to

make a comment regarding a certain part of the book. This is natural and I find that it is important

to mediate the number and length of the comments. Also, there may be sections of the read-aloud

that lend themselves to whole group responses. This can be very engaging and interactive for the

children. Posing a question about a part of the book that the students can quickly respond to a

classmate about is an effective way to ensure that everyone gets a chance to express their thoughts

aloud. Too much discussion during the initial reading of the book, however, is disruptive and

hinders the flow and enjoyment of the story. During the reading of the book, it is important not to

interrupt the reading with vocabulary instruction. "Experience has shown that children may object

to interrupting the first reading of the book with vocabulary instruction" (Graves, p.65, as cited in

Farstrup & Samuels, 2008). Once the book is finished and children have been given opportunities

to comment on it, introduce the selected vocabulary. Beck et al. (2002) suggest that vocabulary

instruction should always begin with the context from the story because it provides a situation

already familiar to the children and it provides a rich example of the word's use. It is important to

move beyond this context because multiple contexts are necessary for students to develop a

meaningful and memorable representation of a word. Young children, in particular, tend to limit a

word's meaning to the context in which the word was originally presented. It is important to keep

the definitions of the target words child-friendly, simple, direct, and focused on the meanings as

they were used in the story. Show any pictures related to the target word. Then, have children

engage in activities to help them solidify their understanding of the word. The following examples

encourage children to interact with words:

> For the word *cautiously*, ask **questions**: If you are walking around a dark room, you need to
>
> do it *cautiously*. Why? What are some things that need to be done *cautiously*?
>
> For the word *impress*, ask the students to give **reasons**: What is something you could do to
>
> *impress* your teacher? Why?
>
> For the word *extraordinary*, ask the students for **examples**: Which of these things might be
>
> *extraordinary*? Why or why not?
>
> - a shirt that was comfortable, or a shirt that washed itself?
>
> - a person who has a library card, or a person who has read all the books in the library?

Students can also **make choices** when learning about a target word:

> I'll say some things, if they sound *leisurely*, say *"Leisurely"*. If you need to be in a hurry,
>
> say "Hurry".
>
> - taking a walk in the park
>
> - firefighters getting to a fire
>
> - runners in a race
>
> - sitting a talking with your friends
>
> - a dog lying in the sun (Beck et al., 2002, p. 56-57).

Most children also enjoy dramatizing a word. For example, they could act out the word *ferocious*, they could move their hands *swiftly*, or they could demonstrate what it means to *pounce*. Singing, creating artwork, role-playing, and engaging in short dramatizations are valuable activities that assist the students in understanding and making connections with the vocabulary being learned. After the target words have been presented and discussed, the words may be posted for all to see on a special 'wonderful words' wall. Posting a picture beside each target word will help trigger the children's memories as to what words they have been exposed to and are learning. Encouraging and modeling the oral and written use of the words throughout the day, weeks, and year is recommended.

Before reading another book aloud, teachers may want to consider the following sequence for reflecting upon and reviewing the previous day's target words. Review each word in a new sentence not taken from the story that was read. Then, review again the explanation of each word meaning. I have done this during my read-alouds and it does not take very much time. But it is an important part of the children experiencing repeated exposures to the target words. It is these repeated exposures to words that will hopefully enable children to eventually have a "rich, decontextualized knowledge of a word's meaning, its relationship to other words, and its extension to metaphorical uses, such as understanding what someone is doing when they are *devouring* a book" (Beck et al., 2002, p. 10).

Summary

Knowledge of new words enables a learner to build upon prior knowledge. Connections are more easily made if a reader isn't struggling to comprehend a myriad of unknown vocabulary. Vocabulary acquisition cannot be left to incidental factors such as oral language, chance, television, technology, and music. We have to understand that oral language can be taught, just like the skills acquired in reading, writing, and math. Many researchers have devoted untold hours in the hopes of

enlightening educators how to handle the issue of narrowing the language gap. Engaging children

in interactive read-alouds which focus upon carefully selected books and specific target vocabulary

is one way to increase the vocabulary bank of primary children. Given that there are excellent

resources that teachers can access in order to effectively teach and foster vocabulary acquisition, the

commitment to implement robust vocabulary programs in our classrooms should be a priority. With

this in mind, I was eager and keen to engage in my teacher research in the hopes of answering my

research question: *Will the implementation of specific vocabulary teaching strategies in the context*

of interactive read-alouds improve my Grade One students' vocabulary growth?

Methodology

Research Design

In thinking about the ways in which to investigate my research question I decided that

teacher research would best enable me to engage in systematic inquiry. Teacher research draws on

perspectives from action research, which includes "a cycle of posing questions, gathering data,

reflection, and deciding on a course of action" (Ferrance, 2000, p. 2). Teacher research must enable

us to maintain the flow of our classroom and continue to focus on the needs of our students. It is

also important to note that "action research takes place in real-world situations, and aims to solve

real problems" (O'Brien, 1998, p. 3). The real-world situation in this case is the vocabulary

abilities of my Grade One classroom. I employ both qualitative and quantitative methods in order

to investigate potential answers to my research question and critically reflect upon each cycle of my

inquiry. Because action research is a holistic approach to problem solving, it allows for various

research tools to be used as the study is conducted. In the methodology section I describe the

different data collection methods used throughout my research. One of the goals of action research

is to enable teachers to demonstrate to educators, parents, students, and to themselves that a

particular teaching practice has merit. "Action research is a way for you to continue to grow and

learn by making use of your own experiences" (Rust and Clark, 2007). As a constructivist view of learning asserts, every experience is a learning experience and as I engage actively in teacher research, I hope to learn more about my teaching practices and shed some light on my proposed research question.

Research Site. The study took place at a school located in a town near a major city in southwestern British Columbia. This suburban community is home to 21 000 residents. Because I work at this school, and I wanted to conduct research in my own classroom, this school was the obvious site for implementing my study. The school's neighbourhood is predominantly comprised of single-family homes and the children who attend the school are primarily middle-class. The school has an active and supportive parent group dedicated to fund raising and creating school spirit. The school currently enrolls 341 students, the majority of whom live within walking distance to the school. There are 14 divisions ranging from Kindergarten to Grade Seven. The staff is comprised of 20 teachers, five teaching assistants, two learning assistant/mainstream support teachers, and various support teachers involved with counseling, psychology, speech/language, and ESL. The average student-to-teacher ratio in the primary grades is 22 to 1, while the average student to teacher ratio in the intermediate grades is 29 to 1. Many students at this school benefit from the aid of a teaching assistant, assigned to classes based upon the varying needs of the pupils enrolled in particular classrooms. Students interested in Late French Immersion in grades six and seven have the option of enrolling in these French programs at the end of grade five.

Participants. Of my 23 grade one students, 19 children consented to participate in the study. Eight students were boys and eleven students were girls. One of the students received weekly support from the ESL teacher, as this student's first language was not English. At the beginning of this study, the mean age of the children was 6 years; 3 months, with a range from 5 years; 10 months, to 6 years; 9 months. At the completion of the study, the students ranged in age

from 6 years; 5 months, to 7 years; 4 months. Because my instructional unit was designed to involve the whole class, every student participated in the lessons associated with my research study. Student assent and parent consent letters went home with the children at the beginning of January 2010 and the students brought these forms back to the school's secretary over the course of the month. The return rate was 82%. In addition, full project approval was granted through the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board and through the school district before commencing the instructional unit.

Data Sources and Collection

I used a variety of data sources and collection processes in my study. I began with a survey, administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Fourth Edition, and conducted pre- and post vocabulary assessments of the target vocabulary in order to determine the students' understanding of the specific words. I also maintained a checklist, kept a researcher's log, and read student journals.

Survey. My study began mid-October, 2009. Because I wanted to select target vocabulary from books read during our afternoon read-aloud time. I met with each student and helped him or her complete a survey (Appendix A) regarding the types of stories he or she likes to listen to. This information would allow me to choose appropriate genres and topics from which the target vocabulary for instruction would be selected. During our individual conferences, I asked each child to respond to 11 questions by circling one of four Garfields for each question. This four-point scale, adapted from Measuring attitude toward reading: A new tool for teachers, by McKenna and Kear (1990), shows all Garfields looking exactly alike except for their facial expressions. All survey questions begin in the same manner. For example,

When I listen to a story about animals I feel . . .

When I listen to a story about kids who are about the same age as me I feel . . .

When I listen to a story about sports I feel . . .

I chose to use a four-point scale because I wanted each child to make a choice about the kinds of stories he or she likes to listen to. Since a middle option of "Neither agree nor disagree" is unavailable, it would be more evident which kinds of books to select for the story time.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition. Also in mid-October 2009, I administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition, (PPVT-4) to each child. I wanted to determine each child's understanding and use of general vocabulary knowledge and collecting this document data in the form of a standardized test would enable me to do so.

Vocabulary pre-instructional assessment. The next step was to select 24 target words from the 12 stories I selected based upon the results of the Garfield survey. I felt that teaching two vocabulary words per story was enough due to the time constraints of our afternoon read-aloud time and the age of the students. Attempting to teach more words at that time would take time away from other subject areas and may have overloaded the students with too much information. Because these read-aloud sessions took place immediately after lunch, it was important to create an atmosphere of relaxed engagement. I wanted this read-aloud experience to serve as a highly enjoyable and meaningful transition time, as well as providing an opportunity for the children to be enthused about learning and acquiring new vocabulary from the stories.

In order to select 24 words that would be appropriate for Grace One students, I consulted the books *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction* by Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; and *Words Worth Teaching: Closing the Vocabulary Gap*, by Biemiller, 2010. Once I selected the 24 target words for teaching, I used the oral sentence context assessment method as outlined by Biemiller (2010) and designed a vocabulary assessment tool (Appendix B) to determine the extent to which my students understood the selected target words. By assessing each student, I would get a baseline of the students' knowledge of the vocabulary.

I met with the each student individually and administered half the vocabulary pre-instructional assessment. Expecting each child to define 24 words during one conference would have been overwhelming - for both teacher and student. I completed the pre-instructional vocabulary assessment during individual conferences the following day. Once the pre-assessments were completed, I could ascertain if there was any vocabulary I should omit – in other words, if any of the vocabulary was understood by more than 80% of the students.

Implementation

The six-week instructional unit commenced January 2010. I scheduled my lessons to take place every Thursday and Friday, the two days I taught each week. The lessons began at 1:00, our usual read-aloud time, and typically lasted 25 to 35 minutes. The pupils and I engaged in an interactive reading (Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Barrentine 1996; Fisher, Flood, Lapp & Frey, 2004) of the selected story. Then, I introduced a target word. Depending upon the nature of the word, the students engaged in a discussion about the word, participated in a kinesthetic activity involving the word, illustrated and/or wrote about the word, or used the word in a short dramatic activity. These strategies were conducted for the purpose of reinforcing the meaning of the target word. The class was then introduced to the second target word from the story and engaged in an activity to reinforce meaning. After the lesson the words and a picture of the cover of the book from which the words were selected were posted on our *Wonderful Words!* bulletin board. The teaching of the words continued for six weeks – with four words being targeted each week through the reading of two stories. By the end of the unit, our word wall was covered with 24 vocabulary words and 12 book covers.
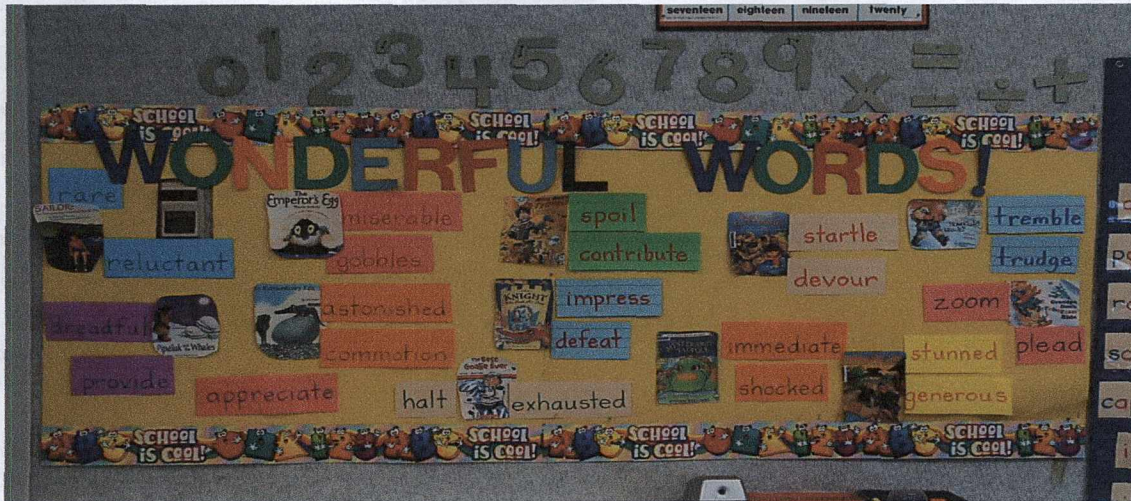
Figure 1. Wonderful Words! Display

Checklist. Throughout the course of the six-week instructional unit, I maintained and compiled a checklist of the children's word usage (Appendix C). I modified the checklist slightly from a checklist Peg Schippert (2005) designed and utilized with her Grade One students in the article *Read Alouds and Vocabulary: A New Way of Teaching*. I was interested in whether the children would assimilate the words into their conversations and whether they would utilize the words in their writing. I was also curious if the children noticed the words embedded in other texts they read, and if they recognized the words being read aloud by me as we encountered them in subsequent read-alouds. As well, I recorded if the children noticed when I used the target words in conversation. Finally, I sought to record students' recognition of the target words being used in the media. In Schippert's (2005) article, she reports, "The results of my data collection indicated that most students were learning these new words, and the words were becoming part of their vocabulary" (p. 14). I, too, hoped to see evidence of my students' acquisition of the target vocabulary during my teaching days. I reviewed the checklist at the end of each week and analyzed it at the completion of the instructional unit.

Log. Each evening, after the lesson, I recorded my thoughts and feelings about how the unit was progressing in my researcher's log. I also recorded details of the teaching strategies I employed

and the comments and responses elicited from the children during the day. I reviewed my

researcher's log at the end of each week.

Student journals. I collected the students' journals to gather evidence of the occurrence of

unprompted usage of the target vocabulary words in their weekly writing.

Vocabulary post-instructional assessment. By mid-February, the six-week instructional

unit was complete and it was time to meet individually with each child to administer the vocabulary

post-instructional assessment.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition. To complete my data collection

efforts, I administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition (PPVT-4), in mid-May

2010, seven months after initially administering it to each student.

Data Analysis

After administering the Garfield survey, I calculated how many students out of 19 selected

the extremely happy and excited Garfield when answering each question on the survey (the most

favourable response). Tabulating the scores using the Excel program in Microsoft Office enabled

me to ascertain which genres received the 'highest scores', in other words, which genres the

children enjoyed listening to the most (Appendix D). I was then able to determine which books I

would select for the read-alouds. Appendix E outlines the book titles, authors, and genres, and the

order in which they were read throughout the instructional unit.

In order to analyze the PPVT4, I followed the specific scoring guide as outlined by this

standardized test. Each student's score was converted into an age and grade equivalent, and a

percentile. This data gave me a sense of each student's general, vocabulary knowledge in regards to

oral comprehension. I compared the results of the Fall and Spring administration of the test by

focusing on the percentile scores and the age equivalent scores for each student.

To score the vocabulary pre-instructional vocabulary assessment, I referred to Biemiller's

book, *Words Worth Teaching: Closing the Vocabulary Gap* (2010). Outlined in this book are the

methods of testing and rating word meanings after administering the test. After reading each

sentence to a student, and asking for a definition or explanation of the target word, I wrote the

child's response. Later, I was able to assign a score for each sentence. A score of 1 was given when

the student understood the target word. A score of 0.5 was given if I wasn't sure whether or not the

child knew the word. A score of .01 was given for wrong answers, and a score of 0 was given for

no response or "don't know". The post-instructional vocabulary assessment was scored in the same

manner. Below is a sample of scoring a child's word meaning from *Words Worth Teaching*

(Biemiller, 2010).

Cups, ***saucers***, and spoons went flying.

Full score (1.0)	"plate you put a cup on," "plate under a teacup"
Half score (0.5)	"plate"
Wrong response score (0.01)	"cups and saucers" (repeats what was supplied)
No answer score (0.0)	"don't know," "pass"

For both the pretest and the post-test, I was curious how each child performed. I was also curious

what the average scores were for the whole class. Again, I used Excel to create a spreadsheet of the

results from the two tests.

I analyzed observational data, (student checklist, students' journals, researcher's log) to see

how often the students engaged in using the target words expressively and/or demonstrated an

understanding of the selected vocabulary.

Findings

The results of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition are shown in the bar

graph below. The graph indicates the students' scores as a percentile in October, 2009 and in May,

2010. According to the PPVT-4 scoring manual, if a student's percentile increases, then the student

has improved faster than average and is now performing better relative to his or her age peers. If

the percentile remains the same, the student's vocabulary has grown at an average rate, and if the

percentile declines, the student's vocabulary has not improved at the rate that is typical for that

particular age.
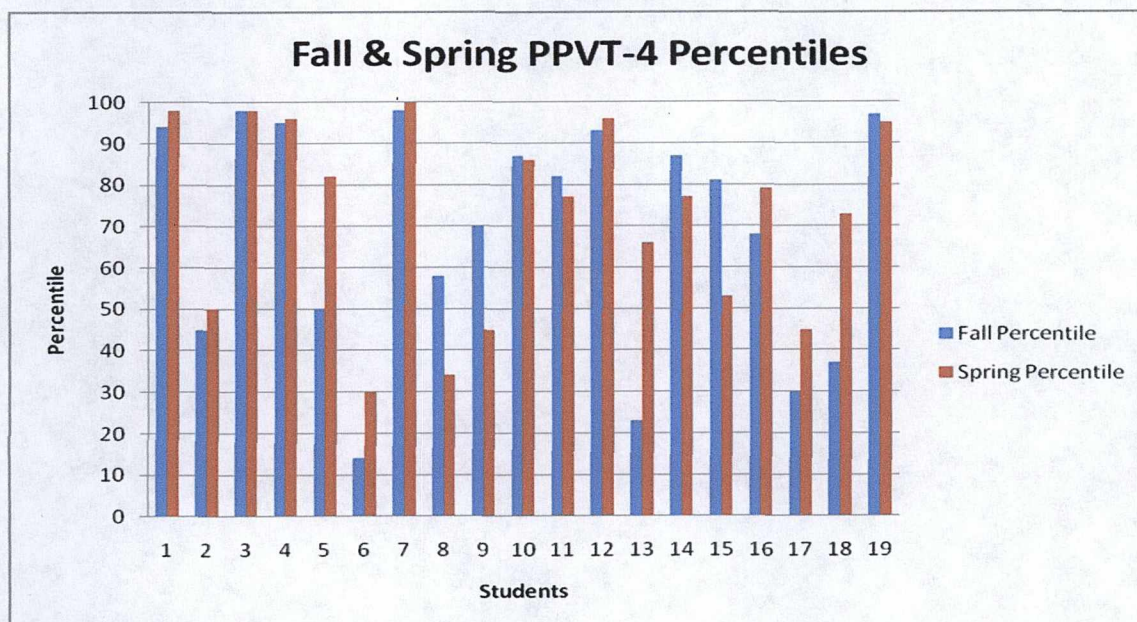
Figure 2. Fall and Spring PPVT-4 Student Percentiles

Percentiles increased for 11 of the 19 students, indicating that their "receptive vocabulary" growth

improved faster than average. One student's percentile remained unchanged, indicating that her

vocabulary grew at an average rate. Seven students' percentiles declined. However, of those seven,

two scores were very close to being unchanged (students 10 and 19) and were above the 85th

percentile. Also, when looking at their age and grade equivalent scores, these particular students

scored above their age and grade. So, upon analyzing this data, I would be inclined to focus on

students 8, 9, 11, 14, and 15 to ascertain why their growth in oral comprehension of vocabulary did

not improve at a typical rate. Because I administered the PPVT-4 in October and then just seven

months later, the short time span between administrations may be too soon to allow some children to expand their vocabulary. Looking for trends over a year or more may produce a more significant and helpful picture of a student's abilities.

The results of the pre-instructional vocabulary assessment indicated that on average, the students knew nine words out of a possible 24 target words, or 37% of the words. When I assessed the students at the end of the six-week instructional unit using the same assessment measure, the students, on average, knew 18 out of the 24 words, or 75% of the target vocabulary. Each student improved in his or her understanding of the words. Some students made quite significant gains by initially only understanding five of the words and then demonstrating knowledge of 18 words. This increase of 13 words was impressive. The following graphs illustrate the findings.
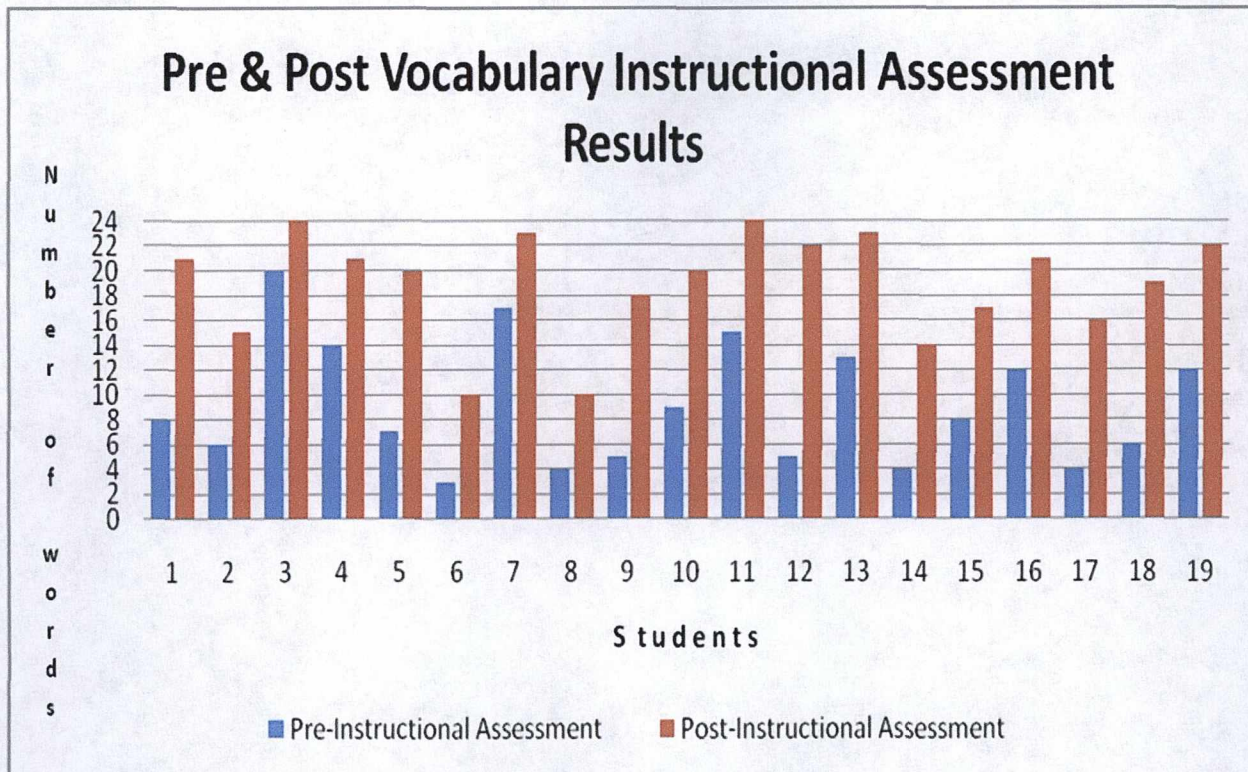
Figure 3. Pre and Post Vocabulary Instructional Assessment Results
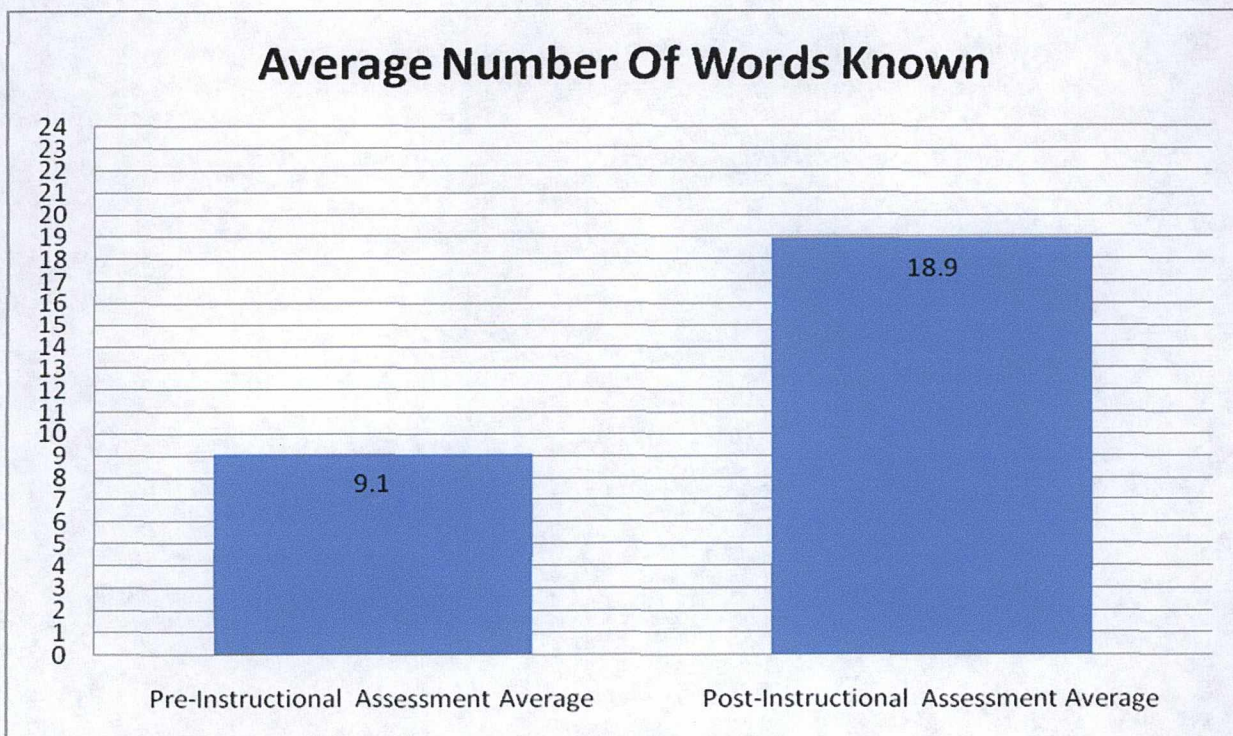
Figure 4. Average Number of Target Words Known by Students

When I reviewed my checklist at the end of the instructional unit, it was apparent that students' expressive usage of the target vocabulary was very infrequent. Also, there was no evidence indicating that any of the students 'found' any of the vocabulary words in other texts that they read. Not one student reported recognizing any of the vocabulary words being used in the media. There was limited evidence of students recognizing the words when they heard them in various texts being read aloud. Many students, however, demonstrated that they were aware of *my* expressive use of the target vocabulary. I would deliberately integrate the target vocabulary words into daily discussions, directions, and conversations. The students enjoyed indicating that they recognized the words by telling me so, or pointing to our *Wonderful Words* wall, which displayed the vocabulary words and pictures of the books from which the vocabulary words were chosen. Many students, upon hearing my usage of the word, which I did not deliberately emphasize, would say, "*She used the purple word*" (the words on our Wonderful Words wall were printed on different coloured sentence strips, so as to better delineate the words from one another). Some students would comment, "*She used the word from the penguin story*". The children were more apt to recognize my usage of the words as opposed to hearing the words embedded in the stories we read.

There was no evidence of any student *independently* using the target words in his or her journal writing. When specifically asked at the end of the instructional unit, however, to use any of the vocabulary words in sentences, 13 out of 19 students could easily accomplish the task. Below are some sample sentences that the children came up with *on their own* when asked to write (boldface words indicate target vocabulary):

1. *Wen I wus at hokey i wus exostd beks i had 4 brakuwas.*

   (When I was at hockey I was *exhausted* because I had four breakaways.)

2. *I wus impressd bcus wen we woch tv we woch Canidu ugenz U.S.A we wund the gam*

(I was *impressed* because when we watched tv we watched Canada against the

U.S.A. We won the game.)

3. *I wus **Shocked** that a Sled **Zoomd** Past Me*

   (I was *shocked* that a sled *zoomed* past me.)

4. *I was wociinn my dog and sudlee a car kame and i sed **halt** to my dog.*

   (I was walking my dog and suddenly a car came and I said *halt* to my dog.)

5. *It Wus **dreadful** that My Dog DiDe*

   (It was *dreadful* that my dog died.)

Discussion

The Literature Used in the Instructional Unit

At the start of my teacher research, I decided to survey my students about which books they

enjoy listening to during a read aloud. It was important for me to carefully consider the results of

the Garfield survey and select the books I would read to the children based upon the findings. The

fact that almost 80% of the children want to listen to funny stories is not surprising. It simply

reaffirms children (and adults, too, I hope) enjoy laughing. Children, undoubtedly, delight in

experiencing some levity and silliness during the day. The other point that came to light was that

almost 70% of the children wanted to hear stories about animals. We cannot overlook the

importance of sharing read-alouds about the creatures with whom we share this earth. Most

children show a great affinity towards animals of all kinds and I enjoy using texts about animals to

teach all manner of concepts. In addition, 63% of the students were keen to listen to non-fiction

stories being read aloud. Integrating the curriculum with informational texts is essential. Children

are extremely curious and love not only learning new things about the world around them, but also

revel in sharing their own background knowledge about the world. Having gathered this

information about the books my students favoured gave me necessary insights into the genres and

topics from which to select the target vocabulary. It made sense that if the children were listening

to books that interested them, they would be more apt to focus their attention on the story and then

on the target vocabulary. The children appeared to thoroughly enjoy the books. Their actions,

responses, concentration, and focus indicated that they were very much engaged in the read-aloud

experiences.

General Vocabulary Ability

After administering the PPVT4 for the first time in the fall, I noted that 15 out of 19 students

recieved age equivalent scores that were the same or higher than their actual age. In four of those

cases, the children scored two years above their actual age, and in two cases, the children scored

three years above their actual age. I was most concerned, however, with the four children whose

age equivalent scores on the test were below their actual ages. Having this information at the

beginning of the school year regarding the students' general oral comprehensive (referred to by the

PPVT-4 as "receptive vocabulary" enabled me to address their particular needs more closely. When

I tested all the students seven months later, of the four students with whom I was initially

concerned, three of them had made gains by scoring either just below, the same as, or higher than

their actual age. The remaining student in that group of four again scored well below their actual

age. I expected the 15 students whose age equivalent scores that in the Fall were the same as or

greater than their actual age to progress and make gains accordingly. Thirteen of those 15 students

did. Two students' age equivalent scores were slightly below their actual age. In fact, their age

equivalent scores remained unchanged from the Fall assessment to the Spring assessment even

though they had aged seven months and been exposed to a rich and varied Grade One program.

Targeted Vocabulary Growth

Given that the average number of words known by the students before the commencement

of the instructional unit was nine, or 37%, I felt confident that the words I had chosen were

appropriately challenging. The target vocabulary consisted of Tier Two words, according to the

definition suggested by Beck et al. (2002). The majority of the words were also words that

Biemiller (2010) suggests primary children should know before entering the intermediate grades.

After engaging interactively in the reading aloud of the selected books, and then focusing on the

target vocabulary for six weeks, the children, on average, knew 18 of the 24 words, or 75%. In what

way did the students really 'know' these words? This was the intriguing question to me. At the

start of my study, I hypothesized that the children would not only acquire an understanding of the

words and expressively define the word during my assessments, but also they would demonstrate

expressive use of the vocabulary throughout the study.

Expressive Use of Targeted Vocabulary

Upon reviewing my various checklists and researcher's log, it was apparent that the children

demonstrated an understanding of the targeted vocabulary. More specifically, they could recognize

when the target words were being spoken by me or being read aloud to them from various books

(not just from my selected read-alouds). Furthermore, they could define the words by explaining

what the words meant or by acting out the meaning of the word. The evidence of expressive use of

the words, however, was extremely limited. In the six-week study, I recorded only eight instances

of various students using the target vocabulary expressively. For example, upon coming back from

a bake sale in the gym, one student remarked, *"There was a big commotion at the bake sale!"*

(*commotion* being one of the target words). Another example is a student's use of the target word

contribute: *"I am going to contribute some coins tomorrow"* (in referring to a fundraiser that was

taking place at the school). This sentence exemplifies a student's expressive use of the target word

reluctant: *"I was reluctant to come to school today because of my wii!"* I liken the fact that the

children demonstrated limited unprompted expressive use the target words to learning a new

language. Our understanding is almost always initially greater than our expressive usage of new

words and phrases. Why should learning a new word in the same language be any different, especially for young children? Furthermore, the children's limited expressive use of the vocabulary could be attributed to the fact that I taught the class two days a week. Had I been teaching my students full time, I may have evidenced more expressive use of the targeted words. The children would have been exposed to the words more frequently through my conversations with them and by me drawing their attention to the printed words more often during subsequent read-alouds.

I thought that I would witness independent usage of the target words in their journal writing. Only when prompted and encouraged did the students demonstrate that they could use the target words when writing sentences. In reflecting again about the students' lack of spontaneous expressive usage of the words, I was reminded of a quote from an article written by Neuman and Dwyer (2009, p. 384) entitled *Missing in Action: Vocabulary Instruction in Pre-K*: "To know a word's meaning is to know what a word represents and to begin to understand the network of concepts that goes with it". Until my students repeatedly see the target words in texts, hear the words being used, and practice using the words themselves both in their writing and in their oral language, they will not have full and flexible knowledge of the words. Vocabulary knowledge appears to grow gradually and this notion is supported by the fact that my students demonstrated a very good understanding of the target words by the end of my instructional unit.

Further review and examination of my checklist and researcher's log regarding the usage of the target words enabled me to ponder the kinds of teaching strategies that I employed in order for the students to learn the specific vocabulary. In teaching each word, for example, the students and I engaged in role playing/dramatizing; action/movement; writing; drawing; and discussions. Reflecting upon this chart (Appendix F) and comparing it to the data pertaining to the students' scores on the post-instructional vocabulary assessment enabled me to see patterns and make connections between vocabulary teaching strategies and word understanding. The key vocabulary

words were always discussed after reading the text. It was important to relate the target word to the

students' experiences and background knowledge and engage in a sharing of what the word meant

to students. Decontextualizing the target words was important, too, as was analyzing the words, and

paying attention to the words' sounds and their letters. Through use of these contextual, analytical,

and anchored instructional strategies (Juel & Deffes, 2004), I felt that the children would be able to

better retain the target words' meanings. Many times, however, the target words would lend

themselves to being dramatized, used in a role-play, or being associated with a particular action or

movement. Other times, the words would lend themselves to being written or illustrated. It

appeared that when learning the words involved a kinesthetic component, the children were able to

make those words 'stick' particularly well. When individually asked to define the words during the

post-instructional assessment, it was fascinating to see how many children accompanied their oral

explanation of the word meaning with the action or movement that we discussed as a whole group.

Remembering to acknowledge and provide for many learning styles is paramount. I am sure that if

the class only participated in an oral discussion of the target vocabulary's meaning, and there were

no other varied opportunities for the students to find ways in which to connect to the meanings of

the words, the children would not have remembered as many word meanings at the end of the

instructional unit.

During my post-instructional assessment of each student, it was evident to me how proud the

children were of their word knowledge. Many children made comments such as, *"I am really good*

at this, aren't I?" or *"I know a lot of these words."* One student was able to use the target word

impressed during the post-instructional assessment by asking me, *"Aren't you impressed, Mrs.*

Harkley!?" Obviously, this student was very pleased with her word knowledge, as was I! These

comments made me feel that teaching the words to the students was worthwhile and was a step in

the direction of increasing their vocabulary and promoting their word consciousness – their

awareness and interest in words. The ability to have fun with words and enjoy learning new words

is integral to fostering word consciousness.

Correlation Between General and Targeted Vocabulary Knowledge

After scoring the results of the Spring PPVT-4 and my post-instructional vocabulary

assessment, I was curious whether there were any similarities between the children's general,

"receptive vocabulary" on the PPVT-4 and their understanding of the words I taught them.

Interestingly, there did appear to be a connection. Generally, if a student scored well on the Spring

PPVT-4, they did well on my vocabulary post-instructional assessment tool. Conversely, if a

student's score was low on the PPVT-4, their vocabulary score reflected this result too. Figure 5

illustrates the results of the Spring PPVT-4 and the post-instructional vocabulary assessment.
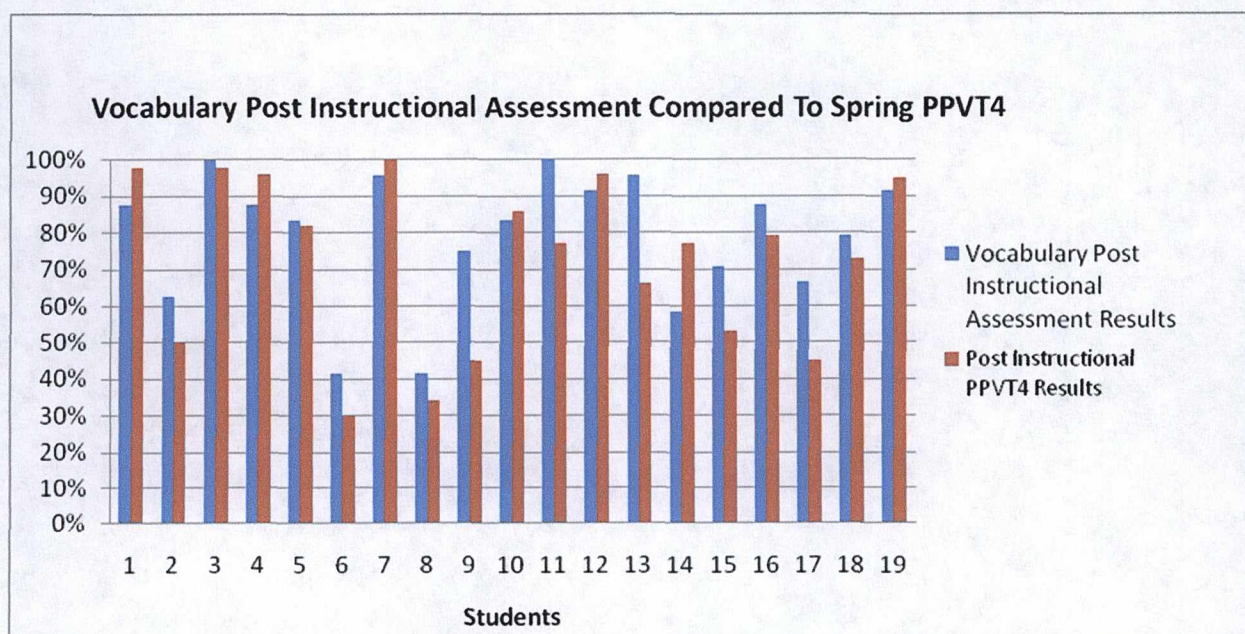

Figure 5. Vocabulary Post-Instructional Assessment Compared to Spring PPVT-4 Results

There were five instances, however, where the students performed significantly better on my

vocabulary assessment than on the PPVT-4 (students 9, 11, 13, and to a lesser extent, students 15

and 17). In thinking about these five particular students, I know that they struggle with the skills

associated with oral language, reading, and writing. However, during the reading of the books and the teaching of the specific vocabulary, they were some of the most enthusiastic participants when the learning of the words involved kinesthetic and oral activities. The 'talks' about the words, for the most part, did not seem to excite these students as much as the 'doing.'

Summary of Key Points

Overall, the students' general oral comprehension of vocabulary was linked to their understanding of the target vocabulary I taught during the read-alouds. Conducting a quick survey to ascertain which kinds of books a class enjoys listening to during story time is helpful. It is also advisable to select two Tier Two words from a text that will be used for story time and teach the meaning of those chosen words. Carefully planning how the specific vocabulary is going to be taught during an interactive read aloud is important. Also, it is paramount that teachers ensure that the reading of the story and the teaching of the target words do not take more than 35 minutes. After being taught specific vocabulary during an interactive read aloud, the students, on average, will have a good understanding of the target words. And, when prompted, they will be able to demonstrate expressive use the target words. However, the children will likely display very limited spontaneous expressive use of the target words. When the children are learning the meanings of the selected vocabulary it aids their understanding of the words if a kinesthetic component is incorporated into the teaching strategies.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to my teacher research. The study's sample size of 19 students is small and this particular group of students is relatively homogeneous. Thus, it is difficult to extrapolate the findings of this study to other more heterogeneous groups of Grade One children. It would be difficult for another teacher to exactly replicate my study without having explicit lesson plans that accompany each read-aloud. Including details about how each of the 24

target words was taught during the six-week instructional unit is beyond the scope of this paper.

My job-share teaching arrangement was also a limitation in this study. Teaching 40% of the time

clearly reduced my instructional time with my students. Furthermore, because I conducted the

research in my classroom with my students, the objectivity with which I assessed the children may

be questioned. Was I objective enough? Did I unwittingly guide or lead a child's response towards

the desired outcome while I assessed their understanding of the target words? It was also difficult

to accurately record all the student responses regarding their recognition of my usage of the target

words. This is, perhaps, the plight of the teacher who is conducting research alone in his or her

classroom. Filming the lessons would enable me to collect and analyze more data. Administering

the PPVT-4 to my students presented limitations. The issue of error of measurement needs to be

taken into account when interpreting the test scores. Also, over-generalizing from a test that only

measures a student's 'receptive' vocabulary may pose a problem.

Future Research

Undertaking this teacher research not only enlightened my understanding of young

children's ability to acquire new vocabulary through read-alouds, but also it encouraged me to think

about related research that could be investigated. It would be interesting to assess my students in

their Grade Two year to ascertain whether they retained their understanding of the words they

learned. Also, I am intrigued by what other teaching strategies could be employed to encourage and

facilitate the acquisition of new and novel words. What programs could be implemented into the

classroom to effectively support word consciousness? Further research related to classroom support

for students whose general, oral comprehension and expressive vocabulary is low intrigues me.

What teaching strategies would significantly bolster a child's general vocabulary over the course of

a school year? Interesting research could be done regarding the use of picture books in upper

intermediate classrooms. How could these books be effectively utilized to increase the vocabularies

of older students? I wonder how parents could be more involved in their child's learning of specific

target words. It would be interesting to investigate how specific parental involvement might impact

the children's learning of the specific target words. Lastly, I wonder about the words we teach

children and the words the children learn. What makes a word easier for one child to learn but

difficult for another to connect to and master? What factors are at play when one child can

immediately use a new word expressively yet another child maintains only oral comprehension of

the word for many, many months? Undoubtedly, these and other related questions would be

intriguing to investigate.

Significance

Language and vocabulary development play an integral role in young children's literacy

development. Encouraging and fostering the vocabulary development of my students has been an

interest of mine throughout my teaching career, whether I have been teaching upper intermediate

students or early primary students. I have always been fascinated by my students' range of abilities

associated with oral language and vocabulary acquisition. Undertaking this teacher research has

enabled me to learn much about language and literacy, specifically vocabulary acquisition, that will

enable me to enhance, supplement, adapt, and change my current teaching practices.

Addressing the significance of my research requires a revisiting of my research question:

Will the implementation of specific vocabulary teaching strategies in the context of read-alouds

improve my Grade One students' vocabulary growth? Implementing specific vocabulary strategies

during our interactive read-aloud time definitely enabled my students to be exposed to new

vocabulary. And, overall, my students' understanding of the target vocabulary improved. However,

it is important to note that they demonstrated extremely limited expressive use of the target words.

A dedicated read-aloud time is essential to any language arts program. Young children, when

engaging in independent reading, are sometimes limited to simple text which limits their

opportunity for being exposed to interesting and novel vocabulary. "Read-alouds fill the gap by exposing children to book language which is rich in unusual words and descriptive language" (Kindle, 2009, p. 202). Furthermore, students, who are visual learners, in particular, need opportunities to experience the beautifully and cleverly crafted illustrations in the picture books.

The question I kept asking myself is, "*How can I capitalize upon this story time to foster vocabulary growth?*" Of course, the teaching of specific vocabulary would also take place during our morning guided reading time. Plus, children were going to learn some new vocabulary incidentally by the books they read during our 'book bin' time – a time for children to practice reading independently at their level and then with a buddy. Specific vocabulary growth would also occur during science and social studies lessons. My goal was to use the read-aloud time to introduce two new words to the children without detracting from the enjoyment of the story or extending the story time too much. This goal can be accomplished and in this study every child demonstrated improved knowledge of the target words over the course of the instruction. It is important to note, however, that the teaching of the vocabulary words does not begin and end with just the story time. The new vocabulary words need to be woven throughout the course of the day, during the study of particular units and themes, and infused over the course of the year. Teachers can also encourage children to expressively use the novel words while keeping in mind that young children may not be developmentally ready to use the words in such a way.

I asked the students in this study to define a word orally and/or dramatically to show their understanding of it. Even though learning a definition of a word is usually not enough for a student to gain and develop a broad and deep understanding of the word, I still feel it is a starting point for them to begin to increase their vocabulary. The students now have some basic knowledge of the target words I selected for this study. Hopefully, as the children continue to develop their reading skills and through their continued engagement with interactive read-alouds, they will be able to

build upon this initial, cursory word knowledge in order to develop a more thorough understanding of the chosen vocabulary. "Effective vocabulary instruction and classroom read-alouds are proven to positively impact the development of vocabulary and comprehension skills for all students, and are particularly important for those students who enter school with a vocabulary deficit" (Moses, 2005, p.14). Most definitely, read-aloud experiences can and should be capitalized upon to meet multi-instructional objectives.

Exposing children to new vocabulary through interactive read-alouds is an activity that needs to be planned carefully. "Taking advantage of the read-aloud experience to develop children's literacy is complex and demanding" (Beck and McKeown, 2001). However, when the story time experience is thoughtfully considered and executed, each student can begin to acquire new vocabulary that will potentially increase the level of his or her own language learning.

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Appendix A

Garfield asks . . .
What kinds of books do you like to listen to?

Name _____ Grade __ School __

When I listen to a story about animals I feel

When I listen to a story about kids who are about the same age as I am I feel

When I listen to a story about outer space, aliens, and space ships I feel

When I listen to a story that is funny I feel

When I listen to a story about someone's adventure I feel

When I listen to a story about sports I feel
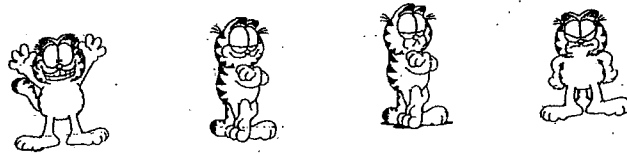
When I listen to a story about someone solving a problem I feel

When I listen to a story about fairies, wizards, and magic I feel

When I listen to a story that is true I feel

When I listen to a story that explains how something works or how something survives I feel

When I listen to a story that rhymes I feel

2.

Appendix B

Trembling
Alice was so nervous that her hands were trembling.

Trudged
I had just enough energy left so I trudged up the hill to my house.

Pleaded
When it snowed, I pleaded for just one more sled ride before I had to go inside for the night.

Zoomed
We watched the airplane zoom up into the air.

Miserable
When I was sick I was very miserable because I couldn't go skating or sledding.

Gobble
If you gobble your food, you may get a stomachache.

Dreadful
When the whales were trapped in the ice, they moaned and it was a dreadful thing to hear.

Provide
My parents will provide my team with lunch after the game.

Reluctant
No one knew why the big dog was reluctant to go into the water.

Rare
My aunt grows several rare, unusual orchid plants.

Commotion
The noisy group caused a commotion as they entered the classroom.

Astonished
The wonderful news astonished everyone.

Stunned
You would be stunned if you knew how much food is wasted every day.

Generous
The millionaire, who was very generous, gave money to all sorts of people.

Devoured
We watched as the hungry dog devoured the whole bowl of food.

Appreciate
I want you to know that I really appreciate your friendship.

Exhausted
After I played soccer for two hours straight, I rested on my bed because I was exhausted.

Halt
The police had to halt traffic until the wreck was cleared away.

Spoiled
The children started fighting and soon spoiled the games.

Contributed
The students in the class contributed some toys and food to the food bank at Christmas.

Immediate
The letter requires an immediate answer, so I will answer right away.

Shocked
The surprise birthday party shocked and delighted the girl.

Impress
He tried to impress us by bragging about how many goals he scored during the game.

Defeat
The knight decided he must defeat the terrible dragon in order to impress the princess.

Appendix C

Date	Student	Used in conver-sation	Found in text/used in journal	Heard in text	Heard in conver-sation	Heard in the media

Appendix D

Garfield Survey Results

Category	Percentage
Humour	79%
Animals	68%
Non-Fiction	63%
Science Fiction	53%
Peers	53%
Adventure	53%
Sports	42%
Fantasy	42%
Rhyming	37%
Problem Solving	32%
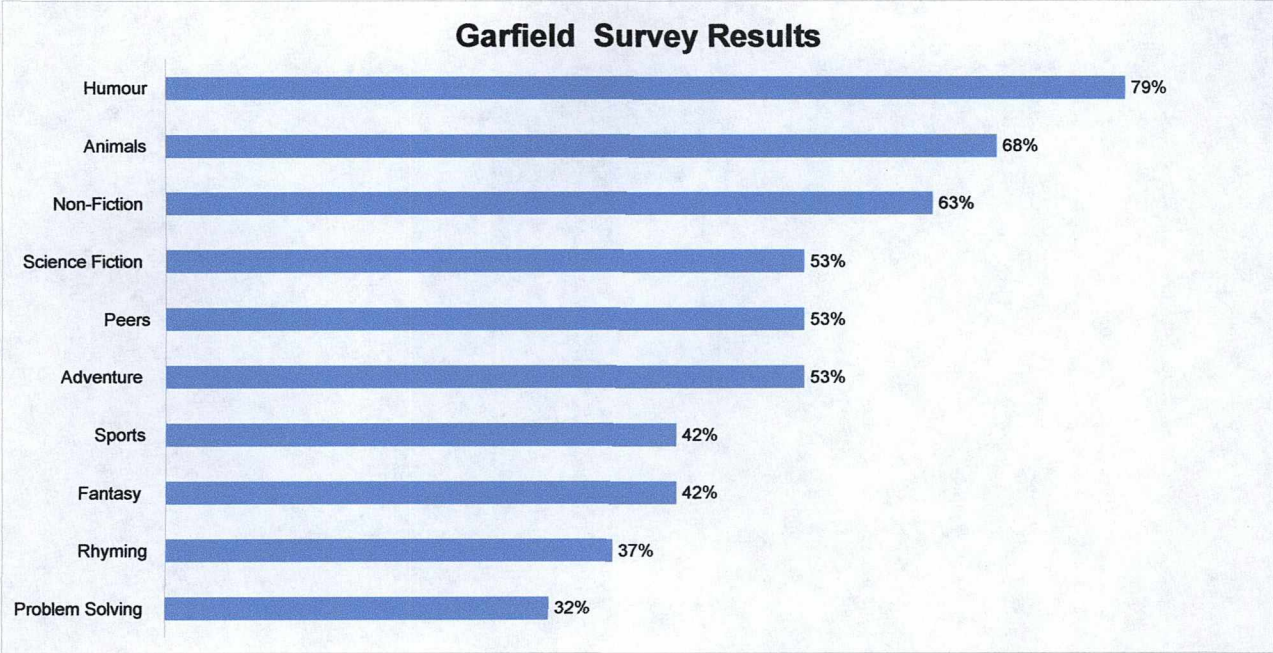
Appendix E

Title of Book	Author	Genre
Sailor – The Hangashore Newfoundland Dog	Catherine Simpson	Animal/Peer/Problem Solving
Pipaluk and the Whale	John Himmelman	Animal/Peer/Problem Solving/Non-Fiction
The Emperor's Egg	Martin Jenkins	Animal/Non-Fiction
An Extraordinary Egg	Leo Leonni	Animal/Humour/Adventure
The Best Goalie Ever	Gilles Tibo	Humour/Peer/Sport
Mice Make Trouble	Becky Bloom	Humour/Peer
The Mysterious Tadpole	Steven Kellogg	Animal/Humour/Fantasy/Problem Solving
The Knight Who Took All Day	James Mayhew	Humour/Fantasy
Sam and the Lucky Money	Karen Chinn	Peer/Problem Solving
The Runaway Rice Cake	Ying Chang Compestine	Humour/Problem Solving/Peer
How Cold Is It?	Jane Barclay	Peer
Grandpa Dan's Toboggan Ride	Suzan Reid	Humour/Peer/Adventure/Rhyme

Appendix F

Specific vocabulary teaching strategies:

Checklist

# of Students /19 who knew word before unit	Word (24 words)	# of students /19 who knew word after unit	Difference between pretest and post test	Drama activity	Action or movement	Writing activity	Drawing activity	Discussion of word
2	trembling	14	12		✓			✓
1	trudged	15	14		✓			✓
10	pleaded	18	8		✓			✓
14	zoomed	19	5		✓			✓
7	miserable	12	5	✓	✓			✓
6	gobble	15	9		✓			✓
3	dreadful	12	9					✓
1	provide	11	10					✓
2	reluctant	12	10					✓
8	rare	13	5					✓
12	commotion	14	2	✓				✓
5	astonish	12	7	✓				✓
3	stunned	11	8					✓
11	generous	16	5					✓
10	devour	18	8					✓
5	appreciate	12	7					✓
17	exhausted	19	2		✓	✓	✓	✓
8	halt	18	10		✓	✓	✓	✓
3	spoil	14	11					✓
12	contribute	16	4					✓
10	immediate	18	8		✓			✓
11	shocked	17	6		✓			✓
2	impress	6	4					✓
8	defeat	16	8					✓