WORD WALK:
A New Vocabulary Strategy for Young Children

Katrin L. Blamey, Ph.D.
DeSales University

Katherine A. Beauchat, Ed.D.
York College of Pennsylvania
Introductions

Katie Beauchat, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor
York College of Pennsylvania

Katie Blamey, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
DeSales University
A Powerful Context

Shared Storybook Reading

• *Shared storybook reading* is a broad term, including all instances when an adult reads to a child or children, pausing to engage children in discussion about the text.

  Dooley, 2010; Holdaway, 1979

• Discussion includes items both inside and outside the text

  Snow, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998

• Shown to be a powerful tool for building children’s short- and long-term reading development

  Beauchat, Blamey, & Phillipakos, 2012; Wells, 1985
Literacy and Language Targets

Why Focus on Vocabulary?

• Children who have been exposed to rich and wonderful words enter school prepared with the language skills necessary to become readers


• Meaningful differences exist: In both the amount and the types of words children in which children are exposed and this is tightly tied to relative economic status

  Beauchat, Blamey, & Walpole, 2009; Hart & Risley, 1995

• Oral vocabulary at the end of first grade is a significant predictor of comprehension ten years later

  Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; IRA & NAEYC, 1998
How to Choose Words?

**Tier 3:** low-frequency words, limited to specific domains, *isotope, estuary, lathe*

**Tier 2:** high-frequency words for mature language users, important to academic success, *coincidence, fortunate, absurd*

**Tier 1:** Most-basic words, rarely requiring instruction in school, *baby, happy, go*

Beck & McKeown, 2001; 2007
Preschool Vocabulary Instruction: What we know

• Shared reading allows children to expand their ‘vocabulary stores’
• Repeated readings with explanations of individual word meanings
• Specific word instruction
  • Targeting and introducing specific vocabulary instruction into storybook reading
  • Repeating specific vocabulary words
  • Providing specific vocabulary definitions in child-friendly terms
  • Explaining specific words with respect to story
  • Explaining specific words in context outside story
  • Providing opportunities for children to discuss words as they relate to their own lives

(Beck & McKeown, 2001; 2007)
What is Word Walk?

Word Walk is an instructional routine for teaching vocabulary words to preschool children.

Word Walk is based on our work with preschool teachers to implement vocabulary best practices.

Lessons Learned:

1. Children need more than one reading focusing on the same words
2. Children can focus on 1 to 2 words a reading
3. Children need to think about words before, during, and after reading
What is Word Walk?

Before Reading: Target Vocabulary

During Reading: Target Vocabulary

After Reading: Target Vocabulary

Planning: Choose the Perfect Book!

Llama Llama Red Pajama
Anna Dewdney
Planning: Choose Wonderful Words!

Target Word:
• patient
Planning: Plan your Word Walk instruction!

Planning: Plan your Word Walk instruction!

Word Walk: Day 1 – Before Reading

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Before Reading</th>
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| 1 | Teacher introduces specific word written on a card with an accompanying picture, prop, or acting activity.  
   "Today we are going to talk about the word patient. I have a picture here with children being patient waiting for the bus." |
| 2 | Teacher says the word and asks the children to repeat the word.  
   "Can you say the word patient?" |
| 3 | Teacher provides a child-friendly definition of the word.  
   "Patient means waiting for something or someone without getting upset." |
| 4 | Teacher asks the children to listen for the word in the book.  
   "While I am reading the story, listen for the word patient. When you hear the word patient, raise a quiet hand." |

Day 1 Before Reading:
Introduce the Word Using a Picture Card or Prop!

1. Teacher introduces specific word written on a card with an accompanying picture, prop, or acting activity.
2. Teacher says the word and asks the children to repeat the word.
3. Teacher provides a child-friendly definition of the word.
4. Teacher asks the children to listen for the word in the book.

## Word Walk: Day 1 – During Reading

1. Teacher pauses while reading when the word is encountered in the book and alerts the children to the word.

   “I just heard the word patient, so did some of you!”

2. Teacher provides a quick child-friendly definition of the word.

   “Patient means waiting for something or someone without getting upset.”

Day 1 During Reading
Target the Words

## Word Walk: Day 1 – After Reading

### After Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
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| 1    | Teacher reintroduces the word using the picture, prop, or acting activity.  
      | “Remember, today we are talking about the word patient. The children are being patient waiting for the bus.” |
| 2    | Teacher asks the children to repeat the word.  
      | “Can you say the word patient?” |
| 3    | Teacher provides a child-friendly definition of the word.  
      | “Patient means waiting for something or someone without getting upset.” |
| 4    | Teacher physically goes back into the pages of the book to talk about how the word was used in the context of the story.  
      | “Let’s go back into the book to see where the word patient is used. Oh, here it is. Mama tells Llama to stop all the drama and be patient.” |
| 5    | Teacher provides examples of using the word outside of the context of the story.  
      | “You can be patient at other times too. You need to be patient waiting to open your birthday presents, and you have to be patient when something is crossing your path.” |
| 6    | Teacher asks the children to say the word they have been learning.  
      | “What word have we been learning? Say patient.” |
Day 1 After Reading
Take a Few Minutes to Talk about the Words!

1. Teacher reintroduces the word using the picture, prop, or acting activity.
2. Teacher asks the children to repeat the word.
3. Teacher provides a child-friendly definition of the word.
4. Teacher physically goes back into the pages of the book to talk about how the word was used in the context of the story.
5. Teacher provides examples of using the word outside of the context of the story.
6. Teacher asks the children to say the word they have been learning.

Day 1 After Reading
Take a Few Minutes to Talk about the Words!

Word Walk: Day 2 – Before Reading

1. Teacher introduces specific word written on a card with an accompanying picture, prop, or acting activity from day one.

   “Remember, we are talking about the word *patient*. The children are being patient waiting for the bus.”

2. Teacher says word and asks the children to repeat the word.

   “Can you say the word *patient*?”

3. Teacher invites the children to comment on the word.

   “What do you know about the word *patient*?”

Day 2 Before Reading
Re-Introduce the Word Using a Picture Card or Prop!

1. Teacher introduces specific word written on a card with an accompanying picture, prop, or acting activity from day one.
2. Teacher says word and asks the children to repeat the word.
3. Teacher invites the children to comment on the word.

**Word Walk: Day 2 – During Reading**

1. Teacher pauses while reading when the word is encountered in the book.
   “I just heard the word *patient*, so did some of you!”

2. Teacher provides a quick child-friendly definition of the word.
   “*Patient* means waiting for something or someone without getting upset.”

3. Teacher asks the children to discuss or comment on how the word is used in the context of the book.
   “How is the word *patient* used in our book?”

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Day 2 During Reading
Re-Target the Words

Teacher reintroduces the word written on card with accompanying picture, prop, or acting activity.

“Remember, today we are talking about the word patient. The children are being patient while waiting for the bus in this picture.”

Teacher asks the children to repeat the word.

“Can you say the word patient?”

Teacher provides a child-friendly definition of the word.

“Patient means waiting for something or someone without getting upset.”

Teacher invites the children to think of examples of using the word outside the context of the book.

“Can you think of other times you need to be patient?”

Teacher physically goes back into the pages of the book and asks the children how the word was used in the context of the story.

“Let’s go back into the book to see where the word patient is used. Oh, here it is. Can you tell me whole might need to be patient on this page? Why does Llama need to be patient?”

“What word have we been learning? Say patient.”

Teacher asks the children to say the word they have been learning.
Day 2 After Reading
Take a Few Minutes to Talk about the Words Again!

1. Teacher reintroduces the word written on card with accompanying picture, prop, or acting activity.
2. Teacher asks the children to repeat the word.
3. Teacher provides a child-friendly definition of the word.
4. Teacher physically goes back into the pages of the book and asks the children how the word was used in the context of the story.
5. Teacher invites the children to think of examples of using the word outside the context of the book.
6. Teacher asks the children to say the word they have been learning.

Word Walk Classroom Poster

Application: Let’s Practice Planning!

Llama Llama Red Pajama

Anna Dewdney
Llama llama red pajama waiting waiting for his mama.

Mama isn’t coming yet. Baby Llama starts to fret.
Application: Let’s Practice Planning!

Take a moment to complete your Word Walk Planning Page for *Llama Llama Red Pajama*

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Let’s Share our Planning Page!

1. Share out the child-friendly definition for ‘fret’
2. Share out how the word ‘fret’ was used in the story.
3. Share the examples you would provide for the word ‘fret’ outside of the story.

Let’s Share

Child-Friendly Definition

To be really worried about something

Let’s Share

How is the Word Used in the Story?

Llama llama was FRETTING when he thinks Mama Llama is gone and has left him alone in bed in the dark.

Let’s Share

Examples of the Word Used in Other Ways

I might FRET when I have to get my house cleaned and Thanksgiving dinner made for a houseful of guests.

You might FRET about moving to a new school and meeting new friends.

Word Walk Implementation Checklist

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Examples of Word Walk in Practice
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Word Walk Preliminary Research Findings

- On measures of **receptive** vocabulary knowledge, children in the intervention group made gains in the percentage of words they knew from pre-test to monthly CBM tests.

- On measures of **expressive** vocabulary knowledge, children in the intervention group made even greater gains in the percentage of words they knew from pre-test to monthly CBM tests.

- When comparing students who had Word Walk with students in the control group, students who had Word Walk scored significantly higher than students who did not have Word Walk on subtests of receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge in the TOLD-4 (Test of Oral Language Development).
Contact Information

Dr. Katherine A. Beauchat  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Education  
York College of Pennsylvania  
LS113  
York, PA 17403  
kbeauch1@ycp.edu

Dr. Katrin L. Blamey  
Assistant Professor  
De Sales University  
120 Dooling Hall  
Center Valley, PA 18034  
katrin.blamey@desales.edu
THANK YOU!