

Baumann, J.F., Edwards, E.C., Boland, E.M., Olejnik, S., & Kame'enui, E.J. (2003). Vocabulary tricks: Effects of instruction in morphology and context on fifth-grade students' ability to derive and infer word meanings. *American Educational Research Journal*, 401 (2), 447-494.

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Summary: The study compared the effects of morphemic and contextual analysis instruction (MC) with the effects of textbook vocabulary instruction (TV) on 157 fifth-grade social studies students. The research found: 1) TV students were more adept at learning textbook vocabulary; 2) MC students had an advantage in inferring meanings of novel words with affixes; 3) MC students were more successful at inferring the meanings of morphological and contextually decipherable words in the long term but not in the short term; 4) Statistically, there was no difference in how the two groups performed with regards to reading comprehension or their performance in their social studies classes. Overall, there was some efficacy for teaching contextual analysis; however, most gains were seen in teaching specific vocabulary and utilizing morphemic analysis.

Assumptions:

- Teaching text-specific vocabulary may be advantageous in understanding text.
- Vocabulary learning programs should be age appropriate.
- There are differences in assessing oral and written vocabulary.
- Instructional time is important with regards to vocabulary acquisition.
- Multifaceted vocabulary instruction can help students gain vocabulary knowledge.

Results:

- TV students were more successful in learning textbook vocabulary than their MC counterparts.
- MC students were more adept at deriving meanings of morphemically decipherable words than TV students.
- MC student could infer meaning of morphologically and contextually decipherable words on a delayed test but not on an immediate test.
- There was no statistical difference between groups on reading comprehension or social studies content learning.

Conclusions:

- Results support teaching specific vocabulary and morphemic analysis. There was some effect related to contextual analysis.
- The delayed effect of morphemic and contextual analysis may be due to one or a combination of the following: 1) time must pass before MC students can internalize morphemic and contextual analysis; 2) test sensitization; or 3) validity of the assessment tools used in the study.

- Statistically, there was no difference between the two groups on reading comprehension, with morphemically and contextually decipherable words, or in learning the course content during the study.

Suggestions for Teachers:

- Multifaceted vocabulary instruction, in this case, instruction using word-learning strategies, has the potential to increase vocabulary knowledge.
- Using morphemic analysis can assist in deriving meanings of novel words.
- Word learning instruction does not inhibit content learning.
- Preteaching specific, subject matter vocabulary can benefit the students' vocabulary knowledge.
- Word learning strategies can be used with all students regardless of previous vocabulary and subject matter knowledge.

Suggestions for Literacy Leaders

- While these findings were based on students in fifth-grade social studies classes, the findings may hold true for other content area classes.
- Teaching morphemic analysis can be instrumental in assisting students in adopting novel words.
- Morphemic analysis, as determined by the gains in this study, may be useful for students in understanding new vocabulary in other classes. In other words, the gains may not be isolated to fifth-grade social studies students.
- Using a multifaceted approach should be emphasized as a method for vocabulary instruction.