

Beck, I., & McKeown, M. (2007). Increasing young low-income children's oral vocabulary repertoires through rich and focused instruction. *The Elementary School Journal*, 107, 251-271.

Keywords: vocabulary instruction, tradebooks, kindergarten, elementary school, low-income students, read-aloud.

Summary: Kindergarten and 1st grade students from low-income backgrounds underwent two studies to determine the effectiveness of instruction on acquiring advanced vocabulary words through the use of children's tradebooks that are read aloud. The first study compared the impact of direct instruction against non-instruction on advanced word acquisition. The group of students exposed to direct instruction on the advanced words had significant gains over their non-instructed counterparts. The second study examined the effect of the amount of instruction a student receives on the acquisition of new and advanced words. The students who received instruction for six days gained almost twice as many advanced words as those who only received instruction for three days.

Assumptions:

- A large vocabulary is strongly related to reading proficiency.
- There are substantial differences in vocabulary knowledge dependent on socioeconomic status (SES) and ability.
- Tradebooks that are read aloud provide a good resource for developing advanced vocabularies.

Results:

- Greater gains were seen in students acquiring advanced vocabulary words who received direct instruction compared to those who received no instruction.
- The number of advanced words a student learns may be related to his or her language base.
- More instruction time was a significant indicator for learning advanced vocabulary words.
- Number of vocabulary words learned almost doubled as the amount of instruction time doubled.
- Picture and verbal assessments indicated a strong understanding of the new and advanced words.

Conclusion:

- Advanced language words can be taught to students thereby promoting "advanced literacy development" (p. 258).
- Advanced word acquisition is more likely to occur, and at greater levels, when taught frequently.
- Seeing Tradebooks provide more advanced language than simply reading aloud traditional storybooks or hearing conversations about words.

Suggestions for Teachers:

- Tradebooks and read aloud strategies should be used to promote advanced vocabulary knowledge.
- Direct instruction of advanced vocabulary words accessed from tradebooks leads to vocabulary learning.
- Students from low SES backgrounds can achieve significant gains in advanced vocabulary.

Suggestions for Literacy Leaders:

- Tradebooks and read aloud strategies should be recommended as a resource for teachers in advancing students' word knowledge.
- Being shown Tradebooks allow students to encounter more advanced words than they would encounter via simply hearing Tradebooks or hearing oral conversation.
- Literacy leaders should ensure that teachers have access to the kinds of books they need in the classrooms and libraries.
- Access to Tradebooks that can be shared with students is essential.