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Vocabulary development at the primary level

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VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AT THE

PRIMARY LEVEL

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Words, though a small unit of any language, are the vehicle on which thoughts are communicated. Words represent ideas. If one is to express and communicate ideas, he needs facility in the use of words. This is far too important a subject to be left to chance. It is the duty of every teacher to cultivate in students the interest in vocabulary development which will carry over through their lifetime.[1]

When to Teach Vocabulary

For too long, teachers have been concerned about what the child is doing to reading while ignoring what reading was doing to the child. The mother watching her small child begin the processes of walking, originating with creeping on the floor, gradually pulling himself up on the furniture, and finally, the first step, is amazed at his progress. She reassures him "and encourages him to take one step at a time, not to hurry. She realizes each step must be mastered and young muscles

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[1]Paul C. Burns, "Means of Developing Vocabulary," Education LXXXV, (May, 1965) p. 533.

must be developed by practice and continued effort."[1]

How is it then, that having recognized this need for gradual development of a physical activity, one fails to apply this same philosophy to skill development so intricate as that of reading? How is it that the observer patiently awaits this physical development, while in a mental process, provision is not made for each step as it is reached by the individual child? What reason can be given for assuring mastery of each physical undertaking before going on to more complicated endeavors, and then set the pace at which mental summits are to be reached "by the establishment of intervals," or grades?[2] Before children can develop a reading and writing vocabulary, they must first develop a speaking and listening vocabulary.[3] "It goes without saying that students need to read to learn since reading still is the basic instructional device. But to be able to read to learn, a student must first learn to read."[4]

Why Teach Vocabulary?

Too often teachers assume the children know what they are talking about. A first grade class was read the

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[1]Donald E. Critchlow, "Eight Steps to Successful Reading," Catholic School Journal XLVII, (January, 1967) p. 33.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Virginia A. Graff, "Plenty of Words," Elementary School Journal LXVIII, (October, 1967) p. 9.

[4]Marilyn Carrol, "Designing an All-School Developmental Reading Program," Catholic School Journal LXVIII, (February, 1968) p. 30.

story of the flight into Egypt and then told to draw a picture of the story. One little boy, whose father was in the air force, knew very well what a flight was, as could be seen by the large picture of an airplane which occupied the center of the picture. Still more confusion appeared when he drew a baby, a lady, and two men in the picture. The teacher, upon inquiry, discovered that the people were Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and Punches, the pilot. That child had not only a flight, but even a pilot for the journey!

Why is it that many children pray, "Oh my God I am partly sorry for having a family," or "pledge allegiance to the flag and to the Republicans for which it stands," if it is not because meaningless vocabulary is being taught?

Many children, especially in culturally disadvantaged areas, often have serious language difficulties which must be corrected promptly.

> Speech deficits plus a narrow range of experience, are chiefly responsible for the limited speaking and reading vocabulary of these pupils. The children need word-recognition skills, but they also need more words--and more meanings and shades of meaning for these words--in their speaking and listening repertoire. The acquisitions will lead, one hopes, to richer and more advanced reading.[1]

Where to Teach Vocabulary

Where to begin instruction creates still another problem. Critchlow suggests that "the level at which he

[1]Graff, "Plenty of Words" p. 10.

should be instructed is one in which he does not know all the words, but he does know most of them."[1] Where all the words are known, there is no challenge to new mastery, but on the other hand, where he knows none of them, there can only result frustration.

Children give clues concerning what they are ready to learn, but these clues must not fall on deaf ears. If the clues fall within the structure of the prescribed curriculum, they may lead to an enriching of the curriculum as it exists. However, at times, the leads may be far off from the class units yet excellent stimuli to most areas of study. If the teacher is alert to these clues, and flexible enough to hear what children are saying and thinking, and see what they are doing, then he will know which direction to take, where to go from there. This will only be if "he is himself unafraid to learn, unafraid to venture into the unknown."[2] It is only by a study of the unknown motivated by the desire to know, that he or his students will ever become "true scholars."

How to Teach Vocabulary

No teaching can be accomplished without the use of words. They are "useful versatile tools," used to label objects, clarify ideas, indicate quantity, size,

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[1] Critchlow, "Eight Steps" p. 33.

[2] Dorothy H. Cohn, "Finding and Using Children's Clues to Clarify Meanings," Childhood Education XLV, (October, 1968) pp. 61-64.

and sequence comparison. It is up to the school to teach the concepts providing proper, accurate symbols, or words for the concept, at the proper time. The good teacher will provide much experience with ideas and develop "language by which the ideas can be passed from one person to another, compared and evaluated."[1]

Out of this known experience, words, which are the invention of man to communicate these experiences, will be born. Many times words, not filling the role for which they were intended, become barriers. They are intended to be a conveyance of ideas; facts, opinions, sales talks, directions, or feelings. Obviously, then, it is most important "that children understand what words are, how people react to them, what they do to our thinking, our feelings and our actions."[2] Continually the teacher will point up that words do make a difference in what one understands and feels, how he lives and behaves.

It is also important that individuals realize that speaking words must preceed reading them. When readiness programs emphasize "symbol recognition to the exclusion of meaningful language, a child's entire intellectual growth--and most specifically, his reading growth--is

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[1]Agnes Zeeman, "Words and Teaching," _Elementary English_ XXXIX, (May, 1962) p. 485.

[2]Leland Jacobs, "Teaching Children More about Words and Their Ways," _Elementary English_ XLI, (January, 1964) pp. 30-34, 94.

actually stunted."[1]

> According to nearly a half-million tests given to individuals from widely varied walks of life, knowledge of the exact meaning of many words correlates with success more often than any other measurable factor. This successful performance matching wide vocabulary holds true not just in business and the professions, among scientists and college students, but in every type of work from the highest to the lowest. Furthermore, the higher the ranks of the worker, the wider is his knowledge of words—a definite and surprisingly consistant progression.[2]

Purpose of This Paper

Since this is the case, it would seem logical that every classroom teacher should be vitally interested in vocabulary development and provide a firm base on which the child may build his vocabulary. How to foster interest in words becomes the challenge of every teacher. For the child who is a broad reader, there is little need to motivate vocabulary growth, but what of the reluctant reader? How can anyone, no matter how skillful, present this reading task, so loaded with vocabulary he cannot fathom, actually make him want to read?

It is, therefore, the purpose of this paper to examine those componants necessary to vocabulary development, namely: the teacher, the child, and the instructional techniques, and propose activities which may enhance word

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[1] Roma Gans, "They Must Talk Before They Read," Grade Teacher, (December, 1966) p. 102.

[2] Mary Louise Lake, "First Aid for Vocabularies," Elementary English XLIV, (November, 1967) p. 783.

recognition and increase facility in affixing meaning to words. These abilities will make the program more profitable and more enjoyable for every child.

"Interest in words can be taught independently of formal reading and in the process, the language arts program can be greatly enriched and stimulated."[1] What child is there who will not respond to games and puzzles? In these chapters, this author will endeavor to present some of the numerous activities which may bring about a painless increase in vocabulary.

The creative instructor will try every method to make children interested in words, "because a fascination with words can become a lifelong habit."[2]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid. p. 784.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Not all children need the same amount of training.
but distinguishing different needs creates a problem.
"We glibly say, 'Start where the child is,' but in order
to start where he is, we need to know where he is."[1]

Every moment of every school day is a continuing
opportunity for the teacher to acquire information about
individual students which can immediately be turned into
helpful information for teaching them. Strang related
an incident in which an elementary school principal had
told the first graders to use the walk instead of going
across the grass. Two youngsters meeting him at the noon
hour said, "Mr. R, you didn't think we were walking
across the grass, did you?" After assuring the children
that he hadn't been accusing them, the little girl turned
to her little boy friend and commented, "There, Percy,
you see, we are exonerated." This was a definite clue
to an extraordinary vocabulary for a first grader.[2]

For those who are not so fortunate as to manifest

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[1] Ruth Strang, "Levels of Reading Diagnosis," The
Educational Forum XXXIII, (January, 1969) p. 187.

[2] Ibid.

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this degree of verbal ability, much can be learned of their needs through formal and informal testing and through observation.[1]

Tests are available which aid the teacher in analyzing and diagnosing all aspects of vocabulary development. The Phonics Knowledge Survey "is designed to help teachers identify, in very specific ways, what students know about phonics."[2] This survey can be administered to individual children in about ten minutes. The Wide Range Achievement Test can also be given to individuals in a brief time. This test indicates the level of ability in word recognition. The Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test Level I is a group test for grades 2.5-4.5 which "yields separate scores in reading comprehension, vocabulary and several word recognition skills." A typical battery for intensive individual testing is the Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty. Among other scores of reading ability, "scores are provided for rapid word recognition, and word analysis."[3]

The alert teacher will notice which vocabulary skills have been developed and which need most attention. She will observe the student's ability "to use context

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[1]Ibid. p. 188.

[2]Dolores Durkin and Leonard Meshover, Phonics Knowledge Survey, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964.)

[3]Anne Anastasi, Psychological Testing, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1968) pp. 404-8.

clues; to use phonetic and structural analysis; to use the glossary and the dictionary; to use wide reading, to develop and extend word meaning."[1]

Word recognition as well as perception can be derived from many skills, "by letter sounds, (phonetic analysis) by familiar clusters of letters, (structural analysis)"[2] and from seeing words printed in books, magazines, and newspapers.

If the instructor observes that a child is looking at the first letter and then guessing the rest of the word, then, for that child, this is the "teachable moment" to help him use several word-attack skills systematically. "Instruction is interwoven with observation, testing with teaching, diagnosis with remediation."[3]

Points to be Considered
in Vocabulary Development

If the teacher is to help the young child in vocabulary mastery, certain points should be considered: (1) The vocabulary of the young child is acquired through experience involving the five senses. His speaking-meaning vocabulary is a result of what he sees, feels, hears, smells, and tastes. (2) the speaking vocabulary of the

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[1]M. Agnella Gunn, "What Does Research in Reading Reveal about Reading and the Teacher of English?" English Journal LVIII, (March, 1969) pp. 368-385.

[2]Strang, "Levels of Reading," p. 190.

[3]Ibid. p. 191.

small child is acquired mainly through imitation of what he hears at home and reflects the manner in which his parents handled his questions and interests. (3) Because of larger experiential backgrounds, it has been noted that children from higher socio-economic levels have superior language development to those from lower occupational groups. (4) Success in the language arts programs of reading, writing, and spelling is dependent on the previously established good language patterns and correct speech. (5) There is a high relationship between language development and environment. Interaction between pupil and teacher helps increase vocabularies. Encourage discussion in the classroom and outside of it.[1]

Not only should the teacher concentrate on the role of the child and his immediate readiness for vocabulary training, though these are indeed important, but she must look at her own personal responsibility in bringing about this desired goal. (1) The teacher's speech which can be hardly heard and poorly understood, can never bring about great increases in the children's verbal skills. (2) Her work will be effective only when her attention is directed toward meeting the needs of each individual child. (3) By providing the children with "a school environment rich in experiences and material that stimulates them to talk and share with

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[1]Bonita P. Marquart, "A Venture Becomes an Adventure," Elementary English XLIII, (May, 1966) p. 480.

each other in a social atmosphere,"[1] language development
can be hastened tremendously. (4) Independence is the pro-
duct of free speech which arises from increased self-confi-
dence. (5) Quality first hand experiences and much opportun-
ity for free pleasurable discussion in a warm friendly
atmosphere is the yardstick for measuring vocabulary increase.
(6) Experiences are fruitless unless the child is given
the opportunity to communicate these experiences to
others. "Thus the teacher must see to it that children
are given actual experiences to increase this 'intake'
before vocabulary is enriched and speech made fluent."[2]

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Research Findings and

Concentrated Programs

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Research has examined several aspects of vocabulary
development, but it would seem that there is much more
work to be done in this area.

Curoe reported a study designed to note vocabulary
increase. After college seniors received three minutes
a day extra training in activities intended to increase
vocabulary; considerably greater gain in vocabulary
development was noted for the experimental groups than
for the controls.[3]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid. p. 480-81.

[3]Phillip R. V. Curoe, and William G. Wixted, "A
Continuing Experiment in Enriching the Active Vocabularies
of College Seniors," School and Society LII, (October 19,
1940) pp. 372-78.

Miles conducted an experiment with high school students very similar to the one just cited, concentrating vocabulary study for ten minutes a day with noticeable vocabulary increase.[1]

Gray and Holmes explored the question whether teaching vocabulary at the beginning of instruction is more or less effective than teaching words as they pose a problem within the instructional period. In their experiment, the incidental learning proved less beneficial.[2]

Bradly, Cahill, and Tate attempted to learn whether words used orally while clarifying meanings through the use of the dictionary would aid to vocabulary development. They discovered that reliance on the use of the dictionary alone was not beneficial because children tend to select the first meaning of the word.[3]

In 1961 Eicholz and Barbe experimented with teaching words in context. Words were selected and put in a programmed type of format. The conclusion reached at the end of eight weeks was that if words are repeated in context, this is an aid to learning word meanings.

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[1] I. W. Miles, "An Experiment in Vocabulary Building in the High School," School and Society LXI, (April 28, 1945) pp. 285-86.

[2] W. S. Gray and Eleanor Holmes, The Development of Meaning Vocabularies in Reading: an Experimental Study, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938) p. 58.

[3] Martha H. Bradley, Loretta C. Cahill, and H. L. Tate, "Acquisition of a Reading Vocabulary," Elementary English Review XVIII, (January, 1941) pp. 19-21, 32.

Though the experiment was conducted at the college level, it is applicable to the elementary school.[1]

Criscuolo pointed out that critics complain about the limitations of the basal reader because of its controlled vocabulary, claiming that this is an insult to the intelligence of the child. However, he contends, supported by research findings, that if the vocabulary is to be retained, then controls are necessary in the initial stages of learning to read. He cites research as stating that if there is to be retention there must be repetition. "Once the child increases his stock of sight words, the need for rigid control of vocabulary decreases."[2]

O'Leary compared the direct teaching method to a wide reading method with eighth graders. Though both groups made significant gains, the direct teaching produced slightly greater gains.[3]

It would seem that research in vocabulary development offers many possibilities. Much research has been done, however, in comparative studies of vocabularies used in

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[1] G. Eicholz and R. Barbe, "An Experiment in Vocabulary Development," Educational Research Belletin XL, (January, 1961) pp. 1-7, 28.

[2] Nicholas Criscuolo, "Exploring the Value of Basal Readers," Peabody Journal of Education XLII, (September, 1964) pp. 98-99.

[3] Sister James Marie O'Leary, O.S.U., "An Experimental Study of the Effectiveness of Two Methods of Improving Vocabulary of Average and Above Average Eighth Grade Pupils in the Classroom Reading Program," (Unpublished Master's Dissertation, Cardinal Stritch College, 1967) p. 37.

various textbooks at the elementary level,[1] between

readers,[2] and vocabulary in readers contrasted with

vocabulary in vocabulary tests.[3] Studies appear in an

effort to determine the most effective means of develop-

ing vocabulary: teaching through direct means or through

context clues,[4] with tapes or independent work to

reinforce vocabulary learning,[5] and Emans' study using

several methods of applying context clues with and with-

out other word attack skills to aid these clues.[6]

These research studies do not point to a single

best approach to teaching vocabulary, but "rather indicate

a variety of techniques are useful."[7] Therefore, directed

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[1]Russell G. Stauffer, "A Vocabulary Study Compar-
ing Reading, Arithmetic, Health and Science Texts," The
Reading Teacher XX, (November, 1966) pp. 141-47.

[2]Arthur V. Olson, "Vocabulary Problems Inherent
in Basal Readers," Education LXXXVI, (February, 1966)
pp. 350-51.

[3]Marion Potts, "A Comparison of Vocabulary Intro-
duced in Several First Grade Readers to that of Two
Primary Reading Tests," Journal of Educational Research
LXI, (February, 1968) p. 285.

[4]Sister Ellyn Dowd, C.S.J., "An Experimental
Study of the Effectiveness of Teaching Vocabulary Through
Direct Means and Context Clues," (Unpublished Master's
Dissertation, Cardinal Stritch College, 1967) p. 52.

[5]Sister Rebecca Hite, D.C., "An Experimental
Study of the Value of Tape Recordings in Reinforcing Basic
Reading Vocabulary for Primary Grade Children of Inhibited
Learning Ability," (Unpublished Master's Dissertation,
Cardinal Stritch College, 1965) p. 148.

[6]Samuel Weintraub, "The Development of Meaning
Vocabulary in Reading," The Reading Teacher XXII,
(November, 1968) pp. 171-75.

[7]H. C. Hardwick, Words are Important, (Maplewood,
N.J.: C.S. Hammond and Co., 1959) p. 3.

Vocabulary instruction will be most beneficial to comprehension when numerous useful techniques are utilized.

Realizing that an expanding vocabulary is a sign of increasing intelligence, the teacher will try to cultivate in her charges a sound knowledge of words and their correct usage. Being better equipped with an extensive vocabulary, the child will not have to rely on the repetition of a limited number of words, but will familiarize himself with new words and have the satisfaction of using them to convey his ideas and to receive with greater facility the ideas of others. It is desirable that every individual will be stimulated to increase his vocabulary and to make it a practice to learn the meaning of each new word he hears or reads.

> Much of the controversy concerning reading instruction in the past has been because the various practices advocated have merit in some instances, but not in others. This is not to say that anything goes. Conversely, what may be a good practice in one case may be a bad practice in another. The task is to be analytical so as to determine when the various approaches should be put into effect and when they should be avoided.[1]

Some of the methods which will be suggested in the later chapter of this paper may be familiar while others may seem elaborate and time-consuming. However, "trying to get words introduced too quickly and too casually is one of the common reasons why children receive a very

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[1] Robert Emans, "Phonics: A Look Ahead," _Elementary English_ XLVI, (May, 1969) p. 580.

vague and inadequate impression."[1] Under this plan new
words tend to continue to remain in that category, and
what is presented by the teacher fails to be understood
by the children.

It is only when teachers become curious about
their own language that their classrooms will be electri-
fied by the zeal created by their own efforts of discovery.
However, teachers must cultivate the restraint not to
"impose the fruits of the discoveries in dull little
lists or artificial sentences upon children whose being
cries to express itself."[2] Rather, it is the function
of the instructor to set the stage that the excitement
of discovery can be theirs and their learning reinforced
because of the intensity of their attention at the moment
of insight.

Whatever approach teachers use to develop vocab-
ulary, it is necessary to proceed with enthusiasm, "for
enthusiasm is extremely contagious."[3]

Summary

Varying degrees of vocabulary development are
evident in children and tests are available to determine

[1]Helen F. O'Leary, "Vocabulary Presentation and
Enrichment," Elementary English XLI, (October, 1964) p. 613.

[2]Constance M. McCullough, "Linguistics, Psychology,
and the Teaching of Reading," Elementary English XLIV,
(April, 1967) p. 361.

[3]Marquart, "A Venture," p. 482.

these levels of growth. The child, the teacher, and the method should be considered in a program of vocabulary study. Research has explored many avenues of vocabulary development revealing that the best results employ a variety of approaches.

CHAPTER III

ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE WORD RECOGNITION

"Interest begets interest."[1] As children become
interested in the activities and games directed toward
the acquisition of vocabulary, they also become interested
in persuing the study of words, thus increasing vocabu-
laries. However, no technique is more effective than
the observable love the teacher has for words which will
surely be contagious.

Research discovered that no one word attack
method is the answer to every child's needs, and that
when word attack skills are used together they are more
effective. Therefore, all avenues of word attack will
be explored in this chapter.

Picture Clues: Discussion

Picture analysis is used to develop ability in
noting details needed for discriminating word forms. The
child is prepared for this scrutiny during the readiness
period when he examines many pictures. He may be asked
to pick out a chair which is different from the other

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[1]Sidney Tiedt and Iris M. Tiedt, "Word Play,"
Elementary English XLII, (February, 1965) p. 189.

chairs in the row when the only difference is the position of the chair. This type of readiness prepares him to distinguish a <u>b</u> from a <u>d</u>, <u>big</u> from <u>dig</u>, and <u>bark</u> from <u>dark</u>.[1]

Through the use of pictures in the early stages, the child is conditioned to expect to find meaning in books. Many pages in reading-readiness books suggest activities which promote the kind of thinking "that children must engage in if they are to use context clues while reading."[2]

Word meanings are frequently revealed to the children through the use of pictures. "The pictures are clues to the story, and the text often merely represents the conversation of one of the persons identified in the pictures."[3] Children should be encouraged to look at many pictures from various sources and tell: (1) What is happening in the picture? (2) What do they think preceded this picture? (3) What do they think will happen next? and (4) What do they think the characters are saying?

Picture clues, coupled with sentence context are especially valuable at the early reading levels. These

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[1]William S. Gray, <u>On Their Own in Reading</u>, (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1960) p. 19.

[2]<u>Ibid</u>. p. 24.

[3]Emerald V. Dechant, <u>Improving the Teaching of Reading</u>, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964) p. 133.

clues aid the child in the identification of printed
words. "A picture of three horses on a page may help
the young reader identify the words three horses in a
story."[1]

Pictures offer the child the opportunity to
experience meanings which confirm and extend his exper-
ience. The teacher tells the child to look at the picture
of a camel. She tells him that the camel lives in a desert
and that he can go seven days without water. Perhaps the
child didn't know what a camel or a desert was and the
opportunity for vocabulary expansion has been utilized.[2]

Picture Clues: Activities

Activities which may promote the use of picture
clues include:

1.   Charts can be made with three or four pic-
tures, including two which sound the same. In one row,
eye glasses, mittens, and drinking glasses; in another
row, a writing pen, a pin, and a pig pen. Children are
asked to match the pictures. A similar activity can be
done with pictures which are hot or cold, hard or soft,
and sweet or sour. Charts can also be used to introduce
prepositions. Questions which must be answered in whole
sentences facilitate learning of in, on, under, over, etc.

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[1]Gray, On Their Own, p. 24.

[2]Dechant, Improving the Teaching, p. 133.

These activities may be reinforced through similar independent work.[1]

2.   When the children have learned a few pre-primer verbs, they can make verb books and illustrate them. The child may wish to draw himself in these actions.

3.   Labeling objects in the classroom and collecting and labeling other objects will increase vocabulary and word recognition.

4.   Have children describe objects collected or objects in the room and other children guess what is being described.

5.   Children illustrate nouns or present other rebus ideas.

6.   A word catalog is placed on the reading table and children are encouraged to bring pictures of anything that: people wear, teachers use, dishes, silverware, what we use in school, etc. These pictures are labeled and serve to aid vocabulary learning and help with spelling for written assignments.

7.   Children are given large colored pictures from magazines. They look for words in magazines or newspapers to tell about things in the picture. No words are written, only cut out and pasted in.

8.   Noun books can be made illustrating the singular and plural forms.

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[1]_Ibid_. p. 134.

Configuration Clues: Discussion

"The first printed words a child learns to recognize are usually presented to him as wholes in context. Words that children learn in this way are called sight words."[1]

Unquestionably, not only beginning readers, but also mature readers frequently identify a word through its general shape and configuration. "They see the word as a unified symbol rather than as a collection of related letters."[2] The individual learns to observe the length of the words, if they have tall letters or letters which extend below the line. However, this general recognition of the configuration of words must soon be replaced by a more minute scrutiny of words. "Words like eat and cat, bean and bear, but and tub, then and than, from and form may be easily confused by a child who is not looking closely or noting the serial order of letters."[3]

Some children relying too heavily on the configuration clue often have their tricks betray them. The configuration of purple is the same as people, car is like can, and but like bat. Therefore, other techniques must necessarily accompany this initial word attack skill. The child would also reach a point where he could

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[1]Gray, On Their Own. p. 17.

[2]Dechant, Improving the Teaching, p. 190.

[3]Gray, On Their Own, p. 20.

no longer remember the thousands of words to which he is exposed.[1]

The value of the method lies in the initial stages of reading, the introduction of highly useful words and in words which fail to follow common spelling patterns.[2]

Configuration Clues: Activities

Procedures used by many teachers to make learning sight words enjoyable include:

1. The teacher or a child announces a word in a sentence they are thinking of. They then point to various words in the sentence and other children clap only when the mystery word is pointed to.

2. Red light is played with a stack of vocabulary cards which have a number of cards with red borders mixed in. The child may draw cards as long as he can name the words or until he reaches a red light. The other player or team continues. Cards are counted at the end of the game.

3. Jack be Nimble is played by laying flashcards on the floor with spaces between. The child jumps over the cards saying the words on his way. He then jumps over the candle at the end of the cards.

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[1]Dechant, Improving the Teaching, pp. 191-2.

[2]Emans, "Phonics: A Look Ahead," p. 381.

4. For a <u>Train trip</u>, each child is given two tickets, (word cards). One word is pronounced to get on, the other to get off the train. If the child misses the word, he cannot take the trip.

5. As a class activity or individually, make a list of words that give the children trouble. Scatter these words on the chalkboard. Children find words according to clues and erase them.

6. <u>Stepping stones</u> are drawn on the chalkboard leading up to a house. Each time a child knows a word he moves up until he is safely inside the house.

7. <u>Fish</u> is a small group activity using paired flashcards. Each player has five cards and the remainder of the cards are spread out on a table for the fishpond. The beginning player asks any other player for a card like one in his own hand. If the other player does not have one he says "fish." The asking player draws a card and if it matches he has a pair and may play again, otherwise, the next player takes his turn.

Phonetic Clues: Discussion

"Frequently instantaneous word perception is blocked by a word the child cannot readily identify from a glance at the configuration and by the use of context clues."[1] At such times, the child should have a systematic method of attacking unfamiliar words at his command.

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[1]Gray, <u>On Their Own</u>, p. 26.

Chall asserts that greater emphasis should be placed on sounding out words. This would make it possible to introduce larger vocabularies in reading material for the early grades. In this way, there could be an improvement in the content of these readers. She also contends that "early mastery of decoding skills will enable the child to become independent at an earlier age and move away from a reading diet restricted to textbooks."[1]

Burmeister, collating the results of her own and others' research, has listed the phonetic generalizations which are "especially useful"[2] and the value of the double vowel generalizations.[3] Having these useful generalizations at her fingertips might prevent the teacher from teaching valueless rules.

Though important, phonics can never be considered the total reading program. It is only a small portion of the total. Phonetic analysis is not even the whole of word-recognition, since "children learn to recognize words by general patterns, by similarity to known words,

[1] Jeanne Chall, "Beginning Reading, Where Do We Go From Here?" Today's Education LVIII, (February, 1969) p. 39.

[2] Lou E. Burmeister, "Usefulness of Phonetic Generalizations," The Reading Teacher XXI, (January, 1968) pp. 349-56.

[3] Lou E. Burmeister, "Vowel Pairs," The Reading Teacher XXI, (February, 1968) pp. 445-52.

by context clues, and by peculiarities in the words."[1]

"Phonics is essentially a system of generalizing about sounds of words; and before the child can generalize, he must know a number of word samples which illustrate the generalizations."[2] The child must not depend solely on sight words if he is to become self-directive in the process of identifying new words. "The phonics process can offer much in this regard."[3]

Because of the inability of some children to discriminate certain sounds, they are unable to "make the sound properly and form the proper association between the spoken element and the written element."[4] It is therefore necessary for the teacher to determine what phonetic elements should be taught and the order and method for teaching them.

> A complete program would include ear training to give the child skill in attending to the auditory elements of words, visual training for recognition of the visual elements that accompany word sounds, and above all, provision for independent use of the skills. It is not enough for a pupil to be able to know the sounds of the various elements of words or to recognize them when he hears them or sees them in words.[5]

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[1] David H. Russell, Children Learn to Read, (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1949) p. 213.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Dechant, Improving the Teaching, p. 237.

[4] Ibid. p. 240.

[5] Donald D. Durrell, Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities, (Yonkers-on-Hudson, N.Y.: World Book Co., 1940) p. 198.

Meaningless combinations of sounds should not be taught, but rather words which are in the child's speaking and listening vocabulary. These should serve as the basis for the phonetic program.[1]

Phonetic Clues: Activities

Activities which may enhance the teaching of this skill include:

1. Write a word on the board or put it on the magnetic board to play change it. Directions are given to change the initial consonant, the vowel, or the final consonant. The child may be asked to replace the letters with a specific element as a murmur diphthong, digraph or blend. Each time the child decides what letters will effect the change requested and then pronounces the word and uses it in a sentence.

2. Have four children hold letters which spell a long vowel word. The child holding the first vowel stands erect and calls his letter name. The child holding the silent vowel pretends to be asleep. Sound the word and use it in a sentence.

3. The teacher or child asks who can tell a word that has _____ (any phonetic element). A variation of this activity is Stump the Leader. One child is the leader and children challenge him to tell different words with specific elements, or to spell them and use

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[1]Ibid. p. 199.

them in sentences. If the leader can do what he is told to do, he remains the leader. If not, the child who asked does it and becomes the new leader.

4. Have children spell words to make sure they are hearing each sound correctly.[1]

5. Cut large lower-case letters from tagboard and paste pictures that begin with that letter. Label the pictures.

6. Consonant or vowel houses can be made from different colored paper. The inside of the house has pages like a book on which labeled pictures are pasted which begin with the consonant or contain the vowel.

7. A cardboard magnetized bun is placed on the board with a vowel letter placed between. The teacher asks what kind of filling is in the sandwich. The child responds with the name of the vowel and its sound. A word is given which would fit the sandwich form, spelled, and used in a sentence.[2]

8. Through the use of the overhead projector, words which are phonetically regular can be flashed on the chalkboard, or words may be written on the board. Children assign diacritical markings, pronounce, and use the words in sentences.

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[1] Dinah Crotter, "Rule 2: Use a Sandwich Filler," Today's Catholic Teacher, (October 10, 1969) pp. 31. 41.

[2] Ibid.

Structural Clues: Discussion

The value of structural analysis seems to be much debated.

Breen contends that prefixes, suffixes, and Latin and Greek root derivatives should be considered syllables with meanings. "The development of vocabulary may be aided by a working knowledge of the elements. These elements have meaning by themselves, and when combined with one or more elements or words, do formulate a new word."[1] It is in affixing meaning to the elements and viewing them in relation to one another that we derive meaning.

Deighton, however, holds that "most words are more than the sum of their parts. Prefix added to root added to suffix does not often give the correct meanings of the words."[2] Such an operation gives only literal meanings of words which may or may not be identical with correct meanings. The most dangerous problem with using this type of word analysis is that it gives only one meaning for the word and it has been noted that many words have multiple meanings.

However, Deighton does point out 26 prefixes

[1] L. C. Breen, "Vocabulary Development by Teaching Prefixes, Suffixes, and Word Derivatives," The Reading Teacher XIV, (October, 1960) pp. 93-7.

[2] Lee C. Deighton, Vocabulary Development in the Classroom, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959) p. 22.

which are used consistently enough for the reader to know. Each of these has but "one fixed invariant meaning."[1]

He also lists a number of short words used as prefixes or suffixes in self-explanatory compound words. These can be used with great care as guides to the meanings of unfamiliar words.[2]

Two useful prefixes taught at the primary level are en and un. "Since these two prefixes are used with so many English words, it is worth while taking time to sort out and illustrate their variant meanings." However, the pupil must be made aware that when he meets a new word containing either of these prefixes he must "try one meaning tentatively until the context determines whether it is the right one."[3]

Deighton has also noted 86 suffixes which indicate with certainty and without variation the part of speech of the word to which they are attached. Most of these provide additional clues to word meaning. Base words may also be beneficial in attacking other words. Once the meaning of the base word is established, the meanings of some variations may be clear. This method is not intended to do away with the use of the dictionary. "On the contrary, it will work well only if the dictionary is used

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[1]Ibid. p. 25.

[2]Ibid. p. 26.

[3]Ibid. p. 28.

freely."[1]

Schell suggests that perhaps the prefixes and suffixes have more value as a phonetic tool for unlocking the sound of words which will then be recognized as a word from the listening or speaking vocabulary. In this way the individual can give meaning to the word rather than study their inconsistant meanings. He suggests that "this approach begins with the affixed form and goes to the base form, a realistic reading procedure. It also treats syllabication as an integral part of phonics which is its correct role."[2]

Dechant lists knowledge of structural analysis in the primary grades to include knowledge of: (1) the common word ending s, (2) two-syllable words--beginning with words ending in ing, (3) doubling the consonant before adding an ending beginning with a vowel, (4) compound words, (5) simple prefixes and suffixes, (6) apostrophe s, (7) past tense with ed, (8) plural with es, and (9) simple syllabication.[3]

The value of making a sharp distinction between phonetic analysis and structural analysis in the word-recognition program of these grades may be questioned."[4]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Leo M. Schell, "Teaching Structural Analysis," The Reading Teacher XXXI, (November, 1967) p. 136.

[3] Dechant, Improving the Teaching, p. 251.

[4] Russell, Children Learn to Read, p. 216.

The usefulness of clues for recognizing words vary from word to word. Most teachers, however, do use both phonetic and structural analysis.

Structural Clues: Activities

Exercises which may aid knowledge of structural analysis include:

1. Children build words from roots. The root-word light, might suggest: delight, lighthouse, headlight, lighted, etc.[1] These words would then be used in sentences.

2. Cards can be made which have the affixes on adjoining cards. As each card is folded so it reveals the root, the new word is exposed.

3. A similar activity involves a word wheel which has suffixes on the smaller wheel with the root-words on the outer wheel.[2] Words for the exercise are suggested.

4. All forms of several words are written on small cards, for example, dress, dresses, dressed, and dressing. These cards are dealt to the children each child receiving four cards. The remainder of the deck forms a pile to draw from. The first child asks another child for any of the three words of a set which he does not have in his hand. His turn continues as long as he is getting cards from the other players. If they do not

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[1] Tiedt, "Word Play" p. 190.

[2] Durrell, Improvement of Basic Reading p. 221.

have what he wants, he draws a card and discards a card.
The first child to complete his set, or the child having
the most sets wins.[1]

5.   Finding small words in larger ones gives
"the child practice in using the part of a word which he
knows to help him pronounce the complete word.[2] This
activity must be approached with much caution, for though
veather has seven apparent words in it to help: we, eat,
her, at, he, the, and eath, not one of these helps in
the pronunciation.

6.   Place words on the board and let the children
see how many suffixes they can add to each.[3]

Context Clues: Discussion

It must always be kept in mind that words by them-
selves have no meaning. They have no meaning until
they are used, until they are placed in a context.
The question, then, as to what a word means out of
context can not be answered, for there is no such
meaning.[4]

If context clues are used in conjunction with
phonetic and structural analysis, they "provide one of
the best means for achieving the recognition of a word."
The value of context clues also lies in their function
as a check on other word analysis skills, seeing if they

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[1]Ibid. p. 215.

[2]Ibid. p. 216.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Deighton, Vocabulary Development, p. 24.

make sense in context.[1] "The use of context has the great advantage of reliance upon meaning. When combined with some word-analysis activities it does much to ensure recognition of unknown or partly known words."[2]

The slower children are, the more difficult they find working with words in isolation. For these children, words must be related to a totally meaningful experience. "Vocabulary thus appears to be learned best by young children in a context of emotional and intellectual meaning."[3]

"The obvious purpose for being interested in contextual aids in reading is to determine the meaning of a word whose sense, for one reason or another presents a problem"[4]

McCullough enumerates seven kinds of context clues and stresses that all of these must be adequately emphasized in the reading program if children are to learn to use varied approaches to reading. She lists these clues as: (1) Definition, by which the unknown word is defined somewhere in the passage; (2) and experience,

[1]Robert Emans and Gladys Mary Fisher, "Teaching the Use of Context Clues," Elementary English XLIV, (March, 1967) p. 243.

[2]Russell, Children Learn to Read, p. 209.

[3]Dorothy H. Cohen, "The Effect of Literature on Vocabulary and Reading Achievement," Elementary English XLV, (February, 1968) p. 213.

[4]Constance H. McCullough, "Context Aids in Reading," The Reading Teacher XI, (March, 1958) p. 225.

where the unknown is predictable from what the child knows of such situations through book or life experience. (3) Comparison or contrast, likens or contrasts the new word with something known. (4) Using synonyms, the structure of the sentence is such that where one would expect the synonym to be repeated, the author gives the unknown word. (5) Familiar expression requires an experience with common language patterns; expressions heard everyday and easily anticipated before they are completed. (6) Summary is the clue by which the unknown word summarizes the several ideas that preceded it. (7) Reflection of a mood or situation involves the context providing a situation or establishing a mood or tone, and the unknown word reflecting that kind of situation or mood.[1]

The child who has a good reading understanding vocabulary is likely to easily comprehend what he reads. "A vocabulary broad in both depth and breadth of meaning, is therefore, essential to the comprehension of what is read."[2]

"No language can be understood as a glossary. In primary basic terms, reading is a language-related process. In seeking meaning, the successful reader does not often read words as units."[3] Rather he reads words ordered by

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[1]Constance M. McCullough, "Recognition of Context Clues in Reading," Elementary English Review XXII, (January, 1945) pp. 2-3.

[2]Weintraub, "The Development" p. 171.

[3]Carl A. Lefevre, "The Simplistic Standard Word-perception Theory in Reading," Elementary English XLV, (March, 1968) p. 349.

the sentences in which they find meaning.

The teacher who considers only what she views as the new hard words will miss many of the serious problems confronting the children. Language is not a network of islands, but rather a "fabric whose very open spaces are significant."[1]

Through the seeking and use of context clues, the reader is demanding meaning from what he is reading. Meaning and pronunciation depend on the context. Words like tear, wind, and wound, defy pronunciation until they are placed in meaningful context. "Very early, then, children learn to combine scrutiny of form and phonetic clues with context clues and to use the latter as a final check on their identification of new words."[2]

Gray contends that "context clues are perhaps the most important single aid to word perception. Regardless of whether a child identifies a printed word quickly or stops to figure it out, he must be sure that it makes sense in the sentence."[3]

However, Deighton points out that even these clues have their limitations: (1) The reader may lack the experiences to give meaning to the word even though it is in context. (2) The clue to the meaning of the word in context is valuable only if it is the close

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[1] McCullough, "Linguistics, Psychology," p. 358.

[2] Gray, On Their Own, p. 25.

[3] Ibid.

proximity. For the primary child, this means in the same sentence. There must be some clear-cut connection between the unfamiliar word and the context which clarifies it.[1]

Decoding of meaning is "only one part of the total process. We should never magnify it to the exclusion of other important parts. Neither should we neglect it."[2]

Context Clues: Activities

Some activities which facilitate developing an awareness of context clues are:

1. Use open phrases to develop descriptive ability. "a ____ rose" suggests many adjectives.

2. Play "I see" with the color words. The leader says "I see Mary's coat is ____. A child finds the color word.

3. Prepare sentences using trouble words. One child thinks of a word and other children try to guess which word it is, pointing to the word they guess.

4. Vocabulary words are posted on the board. One child makes up a sentence omitting one of the words listed. Other children make intelligent guesses which word belongs in the sentence.

5. Analyze sentences in which the same word

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[1] Deighton, _Vocabulary Development_, p. 4-5.

[2] McCullough, "Linguistics, Psychology," p. 361.

has different meanings.

6. Read books to the children which arouse
questions and provoke discussions, but easy enough that
word meanings may be known from context.[1]

Flexibility

It is not rate, but comprehension which is the
ultimate end of reading. "The good reader is a flexible
reader. Just as cars have in them the power to go slowly
or to go rapidly as the occasion demands, so also the
good reader can slow down or speed up as the nature of the
material and his needs change.[2]

> Reading for study often needs to be done slowly
> to insure careful attention to details and relation-
> ships and to note associations in thinking, planning,
> and comparing. However, reading speed should be
> controlled by the pupil's attention and not limited
> by his faulty basic reading skills. The child
> should always read as rapidly as his purpose per-
> mits and should know when to slow up his reading
> for greater efficiency and satisfaction.[3]

Fry suggests that there are 300 basic words which
constitute from 58 to 77 per cent of all primary reading
and almost 50 per cent of adult reading which must be
recognized instantly. For this reason, he calls them
the "instant words."[4]

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[1]Burns, "Means of Developing Vocabulary," p. 535.

[2]Dechant, Improving the Teaching, p. 219.

[3]Durrell, Improvement of Basic Reading, p. 157.

[4]Edward Fry, "Teaching a Basic Reading Vocabulary,"
Elementary English XXXVII, (January, 1960) p. 38.

Many of the first three hundred words do not yield to the commonly taught phonics rules. Even if the rules could be made to work out well in all cases, we should still not expect a student to achieve any degree of reading fluency, if he has to sound out most of the words he learns.[1]

Methods used to teach these words vary with the teacher, the pupil, and the situation. Whatever method works is a good method whether it is games, tachistoscopic activities, easy reading, or spelling lessons. Where the words are taught, and to what size group, is immaterial, but they need to be taught thoroughly and the child needs to realize that they are important.[2]

It is well to review easy words just for fun; "but generally, instructional games should follow the same rules as the selection of instructional reading material, i.e. not too easy and not too hard."[3]

Techniques to Increase
Rate of Recognition

1. Easy reading is one of the best ways of helping the child to become familiar with these important words. "Easy reading makes it easier to apply context clues. Each reading gives the child a feeling of success and encourages him to try to learn more."[4]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid. p. 39.

[3] Ibid. p. 44.

[4] Ibid. p. 39.

2. Some children immediately become discouraged
when they see a page of print. For these, tachistoscopic
work may be more fruitful. If a machine is not available,
Sister Julitta suggests to her students that regular
flashcards be used with a cover card. The card is removed
and quickly replaced.

3. Tachistoscopic work may also be done by
cutting two slits a word's width apart and pulling a
list of words quickly through the slits. Caution must
be taken to prevent memorization of the sequence. Words
should be changed often.

4. Detective can be played with three or four
children by placing word cards on a table. The word is
described and the children race to find it. With third
graders instead of telling about the word, written
descriptions can be held up by the teacher.

This can be a larger group activity by forming
teams and posting the words in the card holder. One
member from each team races to tell the word and then
goes to the end of the line. The next member of each
team then tries.

5. Word Relay is played with a stack of flash-
cards being flashed to the front member of 2 teams who
then move to the back. Teams count the cards at the end.

6. Around the World is played with all children
in their own seats. One child begins the game by stand-
ing at the first desk. The child in the desk and the

beginning child race to recognize a flashed word. The
child who says the word moves on to the next child for
another race on words. The other child must sit in that
seat.

4.   Train is a whole class activity. There are
as many trains as there are rows in the classroom.
Seats must be arranged so there is an equal number in
each row. One team stands behind each row. Children
tell the word flashed and move to the seat in the back
of the row. That child becomes the engineer. After
each team has had one turn to recognize a word, the
teams get a second turn. If the second child is correct,
the first child moves up one seat and the second child
takes the back seat. The first team to be sitting in
a row wins.

Gaining Facility with Words

The high correlation that is nearly always found
between meaningful vocabulary and reading compre-
hension indicates that vocabulary development must
be one of our most important areas of concern.
Children understand the meaning of a word only when
they have had enough experience out of which to
develop an appropriate concept for the word. In
the past few years we have become much more vividly
aware of the limitations in background of experience,
in concept development, and in meaningful vocabulary
that handicap thousands of children in their progress
in school.[1]

Since the meaning of words depends on the exper-

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[1]Albert J. Harris, "Key Factors in a Successful
Reading Program," Elementary English XLVI, (January,
1969) p. 71.

ience of the individual, only infrequently would any two

persons affix the same shades of meaning to a given

word. This arises from the fact that "few persons, if

any, will have had identical experience to give the

word the same meaning."[1]

> To stimulate vocabulary growth, a number of different
> kinds of effort are necessary. One of these is to
> provide real experiences in which new words and their
> meanings are absorbed easily and quickly. When real
> experiences can not be brought into the classroom
> or the pupils can not be taken out of the classroom
> to the experience, substitute or vicarious experiences
> can frequently be provided.[2]

Another way to aid vocabulary growth is the

effecient use of the dictionary. Dictionaries are better

than ever before and they begin as early as first grade.

"Guided practice in the correct use of dictionaries

should be built into our comprehensive reading program."[3]

Another approach to helping the children gain

facility with words is by helping to develop an interest

in words.

Techniques to Increase
Facility with Words

Activities which may cultivate this interest

include:

1. Children perform activities according to

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[1]Edward William Dolch, Reading and Word Meaning,
(Boston: Ginn & Co., 1927) p. 12.

[2]Harris, "Key Factors," p. 71.

[3]Ibid.

written directions. Cards may include words like: <u>run</u>, <u>walk</u>, <u>jump</u>, <u>stop</u>, etc.

2. Gift-wrap a box and post the word <u>come</u> in front of it. Through discussion, interest is stimulated in the box. The first child who can read the word gets to do what it says. The word <u>open</u> is on top of the box. If the child doesn't know this word, another child may do what it says. Inside the box is a surprise with the word <u>see</u>. The child looks at the surprise, but keeps it a secret. The game continues until the class has a clear concept of the three action words.

3. Make a cardboard manikin with limbs attached with shanks. The teacher posts action words and tells a story. The manikin is made to perform the actions and the children find and read the words.

4. Make lists of synonyms. Even primary children can think of many words which mean "said" or "pretty".

5. Children form two teams. One team stands in front of the room and are called quiz kids. The other group sits in seats. The quiz kids are asked to use specific words in sentences. If they are not able, one of the children in the seat does it. The quiz kid who missed sits down and the child who answered stands beside his seat. Later the teams are reversed.[1]

6. A word file is made in a shoe box. Each

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[1]Sister M. Sylvester, O.S.F. "Games Aid Learning," <u>Catholic School Journal</u> LXV, (April, 1965) p. 66.

card contains a word, its pronunciation, a simple defin-
ition, and a sentence.[1]

7.   What's the Good Word is a group game. A
word is thought of and described to be guessed by the
other members of the group. "It has three syllables.
It begins with a capital I. It is the name of the first
people to live in this country." The one who correctly
guesses the word thinks of the next one.[2]

8.   Scrambled words can be matched for smaller
children or untangled by older ones.

9.   Tell stories or use film strips which typify
the meaning of abstract words. Children tend to remember
the courage of John Glenn, how contrary Lucinda, the
donkey was, how dishonest the swindlers were in "The
Emperor's New Clothes."[3] "Discussion must accompany see-
ing if seeing is to be effective."[4]

10.   Puppets can be used effectively to discuss
words with the children helping them to analyze the
words and understanding meanings. Variety can be sup-
plied by use of stick figures or flannelboard characters.[5]

11.   Children form two teams. The team at bat for
basefall decodes a word and uses it in a sentence. The

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[1]Tiedt, "Word Play," p. 189.

[2]Ibid.

[3]O'Leary, "Vocabulary Presentation," p. 613.

[4]Burns, "Means of Developing," p. 534.

[5]O'Leary, "Vocabulary Presentation," p. 613.

batter moves to first base in another corner of the room.
Children move around the room to make runs. Words
missed cause outs and three outs, teams change.

12. Pantomime words and let other children
guess and frame words.

13. Each child is given a set of several words.
The teacher asks who has a word that means _____. The
word is placed in the card holder.

14. An interest in synonyms can be developed
while playing "password".

15. Hinky-pinky, a game of rhyming pairs will
send third graders running to the dictionary looking for
synonyms. The clue is given, "an unusual rabbit," rare
hare or "sound slumber," deep sleep.[1]

16. Clarify idioms, "It rained pitchforks" and
"She dropped her eyes," may be clear to the adult, but
not to the child.[2]

17. Much of the school day can be an opportun-
ity for providing experiences which broaden vocabulary,
the sharing period, daily news period, committee work,
free conversation, and discussion time.[3]

18. Put a new word on the bulletin board with
questions: "What does it mean?" "How is it pronounced?"
"How would you use it in a sentence?" Encourage children

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[1]Lake, "First Aid," p. 784.

[2]Graff, "Plenty of Words," p. 11.

[3]Burns, "Means of Developing," p. 534.

to use the word two or three times during the school
day.[1]

19.   Study ways words are used in various parts
of the country. An object used for carrying groceries
may be called a bag, sack, or a poke, depending on the
region.[2]

20.   Make up a story using all the vocabulary words.

21.   Children make puzzles with vocabulary words
and give the definitions. Puzzles are exchanged and
other children in the class try to solve them.

22.   Describe experiences. Feel a fluffy toy
and elicit words to describe the feeling. Listen to
sounds and describe what is heard. This can be done
with all the senses.

23.   Select words from a unit which may pose
comprehension problems and give a pre-test of the words.
Words most frequently missed could be taken two daily
for extra vocabulary practice.[3]

Summary

In this chapter, views on word attack skills
were discussed, citing advantages and limitations of
these approaches. Activities were proposed for the
teaching of picture clues, configuration clues, phonetic

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[1]Ibid. p. 536.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Criscuolo, "Exploring the Value," p. 99.

and structural analysis, context clues, and increasing
rate of recognition.

The principle was developed that "words are only
tools, and are useless unless they are attached to valid
concepts."[1]

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[1]Zeeman, "Words and Teaching," p. 485.

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