Transcript of Webinar

What Exactly is Oral Language? How does it serve as the foundation for literacy?

1:01

Good morning, and thank you for joining us.

1:05

Today, we're having yet another of our topical calls. And I want to thank you so much for making it a part of your day. We have a few updates, and then we're going to get right into our oral language presentation.

1:18

The Instructional Materials Office is still signing up stay expert reviewers for the ELA adoption.

1:25

The call for reviewers, with qualification requirements and application procedures, may be found on the instructional materials webpage, and the announcement, we've been waiting for us Celebrate Literacy Week, will be January 25th through 29th.

1:41

The theme for this year is, Humanity tells us a story, What's your Chapter?

1:46

We'll have more information on that coming out soon, and we have three presenters today that we're so lucky to have. Oral language is something that we've gotten so many questions about, and they have been kind enough to join us.

2:01

Our presenters today are all faculty from FSU and they've conducted extensive research including developmental and intervention studies on oral language and its relationship to reading.

2:13

We have Dr. Beth Phillips, Professor of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems. We have Dr. Carla Word, Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders, and Dr. Nicole Patton Terry, Professor of Reading, Education, and Language Arts.

2:28

All three of our presenters are also associated with the Florida Center for Reading Research where Dr. Word is a faculty associate. Dr. Phillips is the Associate Director and Dr. Patton Terry is a newly appointed director. So, thank you for joining us.

2:56

Good morning, everyone.

2:59

I hope you can hear me.

3:01

And my name is Dr. Phillips, and I'm very glad to be here with you all.

3:10

We're, as you can see, on the screen, we're going to be presenting about oral language and its connections to reading and literacy development today. All three of the presenters are going to be taking turns speaking to you today about this critically important topic of oral language in the early elementary school years.

3:33

Here's a brief overview of our presentation. We'll be starting with sort of, since foundational information about understanding oral language.

3:40

We'll be talking about the connections between oral language and reading.

3:44

We'll be talking about some highlighted individual differences in oral language development and then, spending the last section talking about some instructional strategies related to developing students' oral language. So, without further ado, we'll get right to it, and I'm going to have Dr. Wood kick off with what is oral language.

4:08

What is oral language and applying an oversimplified definition?

4:14

Next slide.

4:16

Language is the ability to produce and understand words for the purpose of communicating with others.

4:23

It sounds simple, but we know language is more complicated than a definition sounds. Language is symbolic, it's rule governed, socially shared.

4:33

We use it to connect with others, and we create, we can create an infinite number of word combinations to communicate with and about the world around you.

4:45

Given that it's complicated, and to establish a really common understanding, we'll highlight three broad, overlapping domains of language form, content, and use. Using a psycho linguistic model, really.

5:01

So keeping in mind as we go through that language is not just expressive, but also receptive. So we have two layers. The expressive portion, using words to express meaning, but also receptive, being able to listen, process, and understand the meaning of spoken language.

5:22

So, five basic components.

5:24

And we'll kind of, briefly highlight, assuming you have a lot of background in these, but really wanting to review for all of us. First, form.

5:34

So we have phonology, syntax and morphology within the domain of form.

5:41

Next content consists of semantics. You probably hear lots of other terms for that, vocabulary lexicon.

5:49

And, again, we have expressive and receptive components in that domain. And finally, use. Language use. This domain, refers to pragmatics, which is really the social communicative aspects of language. Initiating, responding, topic maintenance.

6:06

We'll talk a little more about that.

6:10

So let's review each of these in a little more detail, starting with form.

6:17

First, phonology.

6:18

Here with phonology, the system of sounds, I'm not really thinking of letters, not written letters, but actual phonemes or sounds in a word.

6:33

And phonemes are described according to how they're produced.

6:37

This somewhat complicated chart, lays them out by place, where the articulators touch. Manner.

6:46

Rather, the sound is the airflow has stopped, or constricted and then mode, rather, the voices on or off during production.

6:55

Complicated. But we know phonology relates to phonological awareness and later letter sound association, decoding and we'll look at how all of it comes together.

7:07

Next slide.

7:09

Also within forum, we have morphology. The smallest unit that carries meaning is referred to as a morpheme.

7:22

Some morphemes are standalone, free morphemes, like cat.

7:27

Other morphemes are bound to a free morpheme, like the plural S on cats.

7:34

The morphology becomes a little more complicated as we get into morphologically complex words that might have multiple word parts.

7:42

Next slide.

7:45

So types of morphemes.

7:46

As we try to break word parts down into something we can kind of categorize and make sense of, we see, again, morphemes in general refer to that smallest meaningful unit that carries meaning and they can be broken down into free and bound.

8:05

Free stands alone, bound has to be attached or fixed, right?

8:09

And we can further break those categories down into another level of morpheme description.

8:15

Where free morphemes could be lexical, like dog, or functional, like a, the, in, on.

8:23

And lexical morphemes represent meaningful concepts that we have a shared understanding for.

8:29

When I say dog, you think of all these attributes that come up.

8:35

Where functional morphemes like the article's A-and-e stand alone, but don't represent in a meaningful lexical concept in and of themselves they serve a function in language.

8:57

So, other definitions, as you probably hear related terms, in various curricula, in some cases, a root is also a base word.

9:10

Flex, for example, is a Latin root, as well as a base word. But in contrast, potent is a Latin root of power.

9:22

But F U L attaches to the base word like power, powerful, not to the Latin root.

9:28

So in a lot of ELA curricula you may hear, the term affix, base word, roots, word parts. Various terms are used for the elements of morphology.

9:43

These also relate to the standards. We've embedded Florida Best standards throughout this part of the presentation, to kind of show you how many of these standards are represented.

9:54

The core components of oral language are there. The content and focus of the standards, also signal how important it is for educators to have a really solid understanding of these foundational aspects of oral language.

10:11

You can see standards that relate specifically to morphology across kindergarten, first and second.

10:26

You see the frequently occurring base words and their common inflections morphemes and grade level content as a first grade.

10:34

Again, tying right into that forum domain that we talked about.

10:41

All right.

10:42

Moving on to the domain of within form, we had phonology, morphology and now syntax, and syntax refers to the rules.

10:52

Language is rule governed, and it's the rules that govern the word combination, the structure of the sentences.

10:59

So, the type of syntax we're talking about is mostly implicit knowledge that you may not have been explicitly or directly taught, but you acquired over time. You know that in English, you might say big a big red barn, but not red big barn. You would input the modifier first. That's not true in other languages, right?

11:22

So, these rules allow us to understand who the noun, who did what, to whom they did the action.

11:30

We have then allowable word orders like with passive sentences versus active. The baby was kissed by the girl, has a different meaning than the girl was kissed by the baby.

11:44

Right?

11:45

Syntax refers to how we combine the noun and verb phrases to make compound and complex sentences, and as children really develop in their sophistication, within syntax, we see them begin to expand the number and types of connectives said that they use or linking devices within sentences.

12:05

Initially, we might see early developing ones like and, but, because, so. And later, we see additional cohesive connected devices, like although, instead of, meanwhile, consequently. For example, I studied hard, consequently, I did well on the test.

12:24

Much more complex syntactic structure.

12:27

Next slide.

12:30

So, the next domain, content include semantic word knowledge, as we said, also known as vocabulary lexicon.

12:40

And recall, initially, we highlighted two components receptive and expressive. And here, certainly, we emphasize expressive vocabulary. The use of words to express meaning. And also receptive vocabulary. The ability to understand the meaning of the word.

12:55

And as we move across these domains from form to content, it's important to remember that components of oral language are really not functioning in complete isolation of each other, obviously. Students leverage their knowledge of one domain to help another, to assist another.

13:11

And you really see this here in the overlap of form and content that in that Venn diagram mode, right in the middle, you see that word knowledge for students includes knowledge. Not just of the meaning of the word, but of the word parts and the grammatical meaning, the form and the morphology aspect we talked about.

13:32

And so this relationship between the domains can be used to kind of bootstrap students' acquisition of new words. And bolster their vocabulary and comprehension skills.

13:47

Again, linking back to the standards, you've likely noticed that the vocabulary standard is identical in all three grades, really emphasizing that expectation that vocabulary gets more complex across grades. You might also notice the word academic vocabulary slipped in here, specifically. And the term academic vocabulary refers to those words that are common in academic textbooks or school aged children.

14:17

And academic words are often school based. They tend to be more abstract and de contextualize in nature.

14:26

They tend to be later developing, in that they are not as concrete, familiar, homewards, that occur in informal conversation.

14:34

But, instead, consist of more general academic vocabulary that students might encounter across multiple academic subjects.

14:41

Like contrast, analyze, resource, as well as more domain specific types of academic words.

14:52

Next slide.

14:53

Notice that the ELA standards for second grade also highlight similes, idioms, alliteration.

15:04

These aspects tie into another aspect of content, another layer of vocabulary in figurative language. Being able to understand figurative language like metaphors, similes, idioms, sarcasm, requires metalinguistic skills that are a little more advanced, right?

15:24

Students are separating from the literal meaning of the word to grasp a more abstract or non-literal meaning. Still within semantics.

15:37

All right, so overall we have form, content, and now shifting to focus for a minute on pragmatics or use.

15:47

Next slide, pragmatics focuses, as we mentioned, on really that social communication aspects, but in particular it is really a multi-faceted domain in that we're thinking about communicative functions.

16:02

Students using their language to ask questions, request protests, persuade, demand, unfortunately, for lots of different purposes, right?

16:15

Next slide. But pragmatics also is about adapting our language based on context and being so sensitive to those social situations.

16:25

So it may include shifting registers, meaning adapting or modifying your language for a particular context or audience.

16:35

So implying the implicit rules of politeness. Maybe you would modify your language based on who you're speaking to.

16:42

Students learn early on that they should speak to their teachers, perhaps in a different way than they speak to their peers on the playground.

16:49

And, as they progress in school, they become more sophisticated in this in learning to alter their word choice or their language for more formal academic writing versus casual conversation at home.

17:02

Hopefully they don't write the way they would maybe speak to a sibling. And as adults, we do this all the time, right? We speak differently and situationally maybe at church versus a football game.

17:13

So, pragmatics also involves those rules for conversation and narrative.

17:18

So knowing how to initiate a topic, how many turns you should take on that topic before switching.

17:25

Similarly, in narratives, setting the stage, introducing characters or people, introducing a conflict, having resolution, lots of implicit rules that we expect in good storytelling.

17:40

Next slide.

17:42

So as we proceeded, hopefully, you're also staying attuned and aware of this overlap in the Venn diagram.

17:52

It reminds us that form content and use don't function in isolation.

17:57

And students are tasked to really integrate their knowledge across form, content and use. Make inferences from meaning, morphology, and the social communication piece.

18:13

We also see that overlap in the Venn diagram within the standards. The students are tasked to pull it all together. As you can see here, the standards require students to integrate knowledge of form, content and use and leverage across those domains.

18:35

Next slide.

18:36

Similarly, this set of standards is about learning the meaning of new words.

18:42

However, the skills draw upon students' ability to process and require other aspects of oral language, form, content and use, syntax, morphology, and broader discourse. And now I'll pass the mic back to Dr. Phillips.

19:03

Thank you so much, Karla.

19:05

OK?

19:12

So, now that you have a broad sense of the core components of oral language, we want to think about how these components all work together to support the purpose of oral language, which is to communicate information, feelings, and ideas.

19:25

We rely on our combination of our facility with semantics, syntax, morphology, pragmatics, and phenology to create messages that others will readily comprehend, and to understand the messages we received from others.

19:40

Listening and reading are bolded here to highlight the parallel idea of receptive comprehension and takes place when listening and reading.

19:48

Across this next section, I'll be talking about how this works in ways that are both very similar, but also meaningfully different when the communication is in oral versus written forms.

20:00

When we talk about deriving meaning, it is important to recognize this is a dynamic process.

20:06

We understand what words, phrases, or even entire texts we read mean, in the context of the connections that are formed and reinforced between these concepts and each other. And between what we read and our lived experiences.

20:23

When we think about finding the meaning of what someone is saying to us, we build that meaning up from our understanding of the individual words, and the sentences, and the context in which we are hearing, or reading the statement.

20:37

This is how two phrases can end up meaning two very different things, if we change just a single word, and how they exact same words can take on a different meaning, depending on the tone of voice in which they are stated.

20:55

So, focusing for a minute on the semantics aspect, when we think about building meaning for words and word combinations or phrases.

21:05

Studies of vocabulary development and instruction remind us that the idea of knowing a word is on a continuum, rather than being an all or nothing phenomenon.

21:15

There are many, many words for which we may not know a precise definition, but we have some sense of whether the word represents something good or bad.

21:23

For example, you may not know exactly what the word malefactor means. But if you think about it for a second, you might have a sense that it's something bad because you understand the male part of the word that prefix to represent something negative because you likely know the word's malign, malignant, and malevolent better than you know the word malefactor.

21:50

So we learn about words in the context of what we know about words that are related to those words and we learn about words in the context of what we know about how the word is pronounced.

22:03

When and how to use it.

22:05

And how is the same or different from other words, with overlapping features. Words that may be in the word family, or what we call the semantic network of a word.

22:21

So, when we think about multiple meanings of words, deepening our knowledge of a word means that we would know when and how is the most appropriate word to use.

22:32

Do we know exactly which word or synonym is the right meaning for what we intend to communicate?

22:38

Do we know the synonyms of the word that we're thinking about? Do we know the antonyms? Do we know other words that may be in the same or different related categories? So, these are all aspects of what's conveyed by the idea of depth of word knowledge, or we call the quality of our knowledge of a word.

22:56

And of course, as noted before, these are not only on a continuum, but they continue to broaden and deepen over time.

23:03

So, even when we think we know most of what there is to know about a word, we can always be growing and learning by extending the associations between that word and other words and other ideas.

23:34

So, on the screen, you can see the idea of multiple kinds of definition of words. And I'm just sort of reminding you that some words have multiple meanings as well.

24:01

So moving from semantics to syntax for a moment.

24:04

So as Dr. Wood mentioned before, when we're talking about syntactic knowledge here, we're really not necessarily talking about the kind of knowledge that would allow a child or an adult to describe the rules of how words and phrases and sentences go together, but rather to sort of know it when you see it.

24:26

And to be able to automatically and implicitly produce it, so you recognize good word sequences, or errors in those words sequences, when you see them.

24:36

You can pretty automatically interpret the meaning of word sequences without having to give it a lot of thought.

24:43

You can generate novel, never before been produced sequences, that conform to the system, that follow the rules without even being able to articulate the rules. And we also see facility with syntactic awareness when you are able to paraphrase what somebody else wrote or what somebody else said. But knowing how to change the words but retain the core meaning.

25:18

So as noted before, although we don't have time right now to go into much more detail here, just note that the concepts of morphological awareness and pragmatics, so on the other aspects of form and the aspect of use, also play a role in deriving the meaning of words, of phrases and of entire texts or conversational discourse.

25:48

All right, so now I'm going to move to our second section, where we'll be talking about the primary question of, how does oral language connect to reading?

26:00

But before I focus exclusively on reading, I really want to emphasize just how important oral language skills are for many aspects of our academic and social development. Oral language would be very important, even if people had never invented writing, and then, therefore, reading.

26:18

So, instructional attention to oral language will pay dividends across many different kinds of outcomes.

26:24

There's a large literature, for example, on the links between language and various facets of self-regulation, like executive functioning, social development, and peer relationships.

26:37

Children with better language skills typically have better self-regulation, better social problem solving skills, and better peer relationships.

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There's also a growing literature on the relation between oral language and math.

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Plus, of course, oral language is critically important for reading comprehension.

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And because much of what students learn about science, social studies, and more advanced math concepts comes from what they read, you can see the deep connections between oral language and not just reading, but all the broad academic content areas.

27:21

So this is a very famous visual, created a number of years ago, by language and reading researcher, Hollis Scarborough. This visual is very powerful and quite accurate, because it really nicely depicts how many, many different foundational skills. Those that are related to how well, we can decode written words and those that are related to how well we can derive the meaning from these words and from the entire discourse are all needed together to support strong reading comprehension.

27:51

And this visual of the, what we call the reading rope, just shows us just how much these skills are all inter-related.

28:01

Those arrows on the screen also depict how the process is dynamic across time and across students' development.

28:09

While decoding abilities become increasingly automatic, the comprehension processes become increasingly sophisticated in terms of being more strategic.

28:20

This comes from practice and maturation, but it also comes from really good instruction and how to be a good comprehender of what you're trying to read

28:34

So, here's a simpler figure that focuses on the many ways that oral language supports reading comprehension.

28:42

There is a large direct pathway between oral language and reading comprehension. But also multiple indirect pathways through the foundational phonological awareness skills. And also, as being emphasized with animation here, via the direct connection from oral language to decoding.

29:00

So over the next couple of slides, I'm going to talk to you about some results from some particularly useful studies that help us gain a little insight into our confidence in the multiple arrows in this figure.

29:18

So there's a lot of numbers on the slide, and I don't really want you to worry about the details of those numbers. I'll try to give you the sort of the take home message. So these are some results from a set of predictive studies amassed a little over a decade ago, or a little longer than that, by the National Early Reading Panel. A group of experts convened to help the field understand the connections between language and foundational literacy skills that are developed in the preschool and early kindergarten period with what happens with more conventional reading skills, such as decoding comprehension and spelling in the later kindergarten and elementary years and beyond.

30:02

So the key message here is that oral language is highly predictive, significantly predictive of later decoding and of later reading comprehension.

30:15

The other key message is that the more robustly we measure oral language, such as with the language composite row at the top of the screen, the stronger the prediction is. Especially for reading comprehension. And this is because as you were reminded this morning, oral language is a very complex set of skills, highly, highly inter-related, but still multi-faceted. And so the more robustly we measure those different facets of oral language, the more strongly it's going to show relations with later reading comprehension.

30:58

So, here's another visual that you may have seen before.

31:03

This figure represents the well-known and very well supported model of reading comprehension, called the Simple View of Reading.

31:09

Reading comprehension, on the right side of the screen, is the product of listening, linguistic comprehension, and decoding.

31:19

This has been a very longstanding and very influential model, in part because it is backed up by a whole lot of research.

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In fact, in 20 some years, the model has only been robustly reinforced.

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This message also should remind you of the Reading Rope we just saw a few slides ago.

31:40

The basic messages of the two images are the same. That skilled reading comprehension relies on both skill decoding and highly skilled, broad, and deep language skills.

31:59

So the simple way to say this, is to say that reading comprehension is the joint product of decoding and listening comprehension.

32:07

Another way to think about this is to recognize that both decoding and linguistic comprehension are necessary, but that neither alone is sufficient to support competent reading comprehension.

32:26

As noted on the slide, hiding from viewing this model, but important to recognize, are all the precursor early literacy skills that support decoding, such as alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness, and understanding of the alphabetic principle and sort of cracking the code of decoding.

32:45

And also how to use these skills to decipher unfamiliar words.

32:49

Similarly, all the language skills we've been discussing and even more higher order language skills we'll talk about in a few minutes, support linguistic comprehension. And then, through linguistic comprehension, ultimately, support reading comprehension.

33:03

Of course, both of these sets of pathways also rely on general cognitive skills, such as memory and attention, as well.

33:14

So the really key take home message here is that weakness in either area of decoding or linguistic comprehension undermines a student's capacity to flourish in their reading comprehension.

33:32

Two more key points about the simple view of reading that I want to emphasize today.

33:38

In thinking about children who struggle with reading comprehension, we can also use the simple view of reading to recognize that there will be predominantly three groups of children.

33:52

Well, technically four groups of children. Children who are right on track and doing really well with their decoding and their language skills, and therefore right on track developmentally in terms of meeting grade level expectations, reading comprehension.

34:09

But then there will be children with specific word reading difficulties. Those with language based comprehension difficulties.

34:16

And the third and largest group will be children who have both of these kinds of difficulties.

34:23

So, thinking about strengths and weaknesses in these two areas also supports the idea of differentiating instruction.

34:33

This will enable us to match the intensity of instruction to the areas where students need the most support.

34:42

But I do want to emphasize that what I just said before, that the group of children who are likely to have problems in both the areas of coding and language are the largest group of children with atypical development.

34:58

For many, many children, these skills go up or down together, in other words. It’s also really important to recognize that these strengths and weaknesses are all on a continuum versus sort of good versus bad dichotomies.

35:11

So students may not be so weak in an area to meet a criteria for a disability or a delay but still have need for more intensive instructional support.

35:25

So on the next couple of slides, I'm going to be talking to you a little bit more about the overlap between decoding and language abilities.

35:34

So this is a figure from a paper by Barbara Foorman and colleagues from 2018. There are a few key takeaways that I want to have you recognize.

35:46

First, as I've been emphasizing the aspect of children's capabilities that is shared between measures of their decoding and their language skills is the biggest predictor of any comprehension.

35:59

Second this shared component plus the aspects that are unique to decoding and unique to language explain for this sample, around 70% of the individual differences in children's early reading comprehension. Third, in first grade at least, there's still a decent chunk of understanding of why some children are better than others at reading comprehension.

36:25

It wasn't completely explained by the simple view model.

36:31

In large part because children in first grade are still at the very beginning of their reading development process.

36:43

That point I just made is emphasized as we move up the grades here. So this is a complex slide, but it's basically showing very, very similar ideas. But now we're in the third to fifth grade.

36:59

And what you can see, if you look at the dotted line running horizontally across the top of the figure, that's pretty close to the point nine zero to one point zero axes markers there, is that, once again, the variance shared between language, decoding and they're unique components.

37:27

So the total variance from just those two things, just knowing how a child’s language skills are, and just knowing their decoding ability, explains virtually all of their performance in reading comprehension. And you should see here that, unlike in first grade, now there is very, very little unexplained variance.

37:49

So the other way to think about this is that the older children get and the more solidified their decoding skills become, the better the simple view model works in that decoding and linguistic comprehension tell you basically everything you would need to know about how a child is going to perform on reading comprehension measures.

38:18

The other way we can think about this, though, is that the shared variance between decoding and reading and language comprehension and then even children get even older than third to fifth grade, it's the language skills that really become increasingly important.

38:38

So as most children master decoding and also as the syntactic, morphological, semantic, and pragmatic content of a text that we're asking them to read becomes more difficult, and the underlying content becomes more conceptually complex, reading comprehension increasingly relies on children's language skills.

39:02

So one of the underlying takeaway messages from these last couple of slides is that there are indeed some children who will look like they are right on track in their reading because they have good decoding skills, but they may have sort of a hidden weakness that is not as easy to see in their language skills.

39:31

But as time goes on and as the text becomes increasingly complex, these children may start to have increasing difficulties with reading comprehension.

39:47

So one of the take home messages here is that it is really critically important to start supporting oral language and broad linguistic comprehension early on.

39:55

There's absolutely no need or benefit to waiting to thinking about language development until decoding skills are developed.

40:15

So here's another, relatively complex figure, but I just want to use this figure to make 1 or 2 really key points. For better or for worse, as children get older, and by that, I mean, just by third, fourth, fifth grade.

40:31

We can start to see a really strong stabilization in their reading skills.

40:37

So, I'm highlighting these parameters here, these one point zero associations between decoding and reading comprehension, the type one and the type two.

40:46

So, in this particular figure, what that's showing is that children who were measured first and third, fourth or fifth grade, and then a year later in fourth, fifth, or sixth grade.

40:59

So, these one point zero associations do not mean the children were not of course, learning and improving their skills are taught across time.

41:05

What they indicate is that the relative status of children relative to their peers.

41:11

So whether they're sort of towards the upper end of the distribution or the lower end of the distribution, that's what stays largely the same. So children sort of rank ordering relative to each other is what really stabilizes.

41:27

The good news is that there's much more movement in rank ordering and of the entire distribution in the earlier grades. And so, therefore, this is yet another reason to place a substantial emphasis on oral language skills in the preschool to second grade time window.

41:50

OK, so the last few slides have focus on the theoretical measurement perspectives of how we can explain children's reading comprehension.

41:58

Now, we want to pivot back to the idea of process. The idea of applying these skills to the act of reading, or to think about it a little more simply, how we find the meaning in a text.

42:12

As you can see on the screen, there are multiple layers to the understanding we build up as we read. And you notice that I'm using very active verbs.

42:20

I'm talking about building and constructing and supporting.

42:25

That's because it's really important to recognize that reading comprehension is an active process. Even the parts of the process that we don't know they're happening. The parts that are essentially happening so automatically and seamlessly for most of us, it's still a whole lot going on under the surface there.

42:45

So, one can think about these layers of building, constructing the meaning of what we read as sort of being moving from micro to macro structure.

42:56

The micro structure is how we apply the linguistic knowledge of form and content to sort of make an explicit representation of text. Sort of knowing exactly what the words mean, and understanding what the word order is conveying to us.

43:14

When we move towards actually understanding what the whole text is trying to say to us, we can think about it more towards the macro structure. It's all of these basic foundational language skills plus our background knowledge that helps us to understand and derive an appropriate interpretation of the text.

43:32

The background and knowledge about the world, and the words, and how objects, actions, and ideas all worked together in the real-world, helped to support what's really important about reading comprehension as a process, which is our capacity to draw the right inferences from what we're reading, or from the text that is read aloud to us.

43:54

So some of this can be thought of as representing our schema for familiar events.

43:58

If you're an expert cook or chef, and very familiar with the terminology and the behaviors, the sights the sounds, the smells, even the textures and tastes of making a traditional Thanksgiving meal, then, sometime next month, you will be much more readily able to derive meaning from somebody's story about cooking a turkey dinner for their family in late November.

44:25

So it's really important to recognize that beyond decoding, reading comprehension requires access to the meaning of words and these higher level processes so that we can integrate words into sentences and derive meaning there.

44:41

Integrate sentence to sentence, and derive meaning from entire passages and paragraphs.

44:47

And pay attention to whether or not we're actually understanding what we're reading.

44:53

In other words, to be able to use our capacity to do what we call monitor and comprehension to detect when our understanding, when our comprehension is breaking down and to go back and sort of try to fix that. So those of us with good comprehension skills are also more adept at saying, no, wait a minute, I'm lost, I didn't understand what I just read there. Let me go back and reread that. Let me go back and think about it more slowly and more carefully and try to figure out where my comprehension broke down and what do I need to do to fix that so I can move on with a firm grasp of what I was just reading.

45:37

Of course, I don't want to miss the really important core idea that among these even more complex language skills, reading comprehension of course, depends on knowing the meanings of the individual words.

45:52

So, of course, vocabulary knowledge is strongly, strongly related to knowing individual word meanings.

46:00

If a word is decoded incorrectly pronounced, but the meaning of the word is not recognized, if a student just simply doesn't know what that word means, and it doesn't have it anywhere close to the top of their continuum of recognition and understanding, comprehension will, of course, be impaired.

46:17

If a word is not recognized automatically and efficiently, comprehension may be affected because it may slow down the decoding process and, therefore, hamper the sort of fluent reading comprehension and fluent decoding process, which can be a bottleneck, then, that process of constructing the meeting passage by passage, sentences or sentence by sentence and then passes by passage. And, of course, knowing what a word means also facilitates confidence in the decoding process itself. So, when you decode a word and it matches seamlessly onto a word in your mental dictionary, your mental lexicon, it builds confidence in children that they've correctly decoded the word and it makes it more likely that that word and its meaning will stick so that it will be decoded even more rapidly and automatically the next time that same word is encountered in the passage.

47:16

Of course, linguistic comprehension is more than just vocabulary as I've been emphasizing.

47:21

Vocabulary is necessary, but not alone sufficient for reading comprehension, with regard to oral language skills.

47:29

So, the simple view of reading uses the term linguistic comprehension to represent how all the aspects of oral language connect to and support reading comprehension.

47:41

So as I've been saying, but just to summarize here, we use our higher order language skills to draw inferences from text to monitor comprehension as we read, as I was just discussing.

47:55

And we also use our understanding of how texts work.

48:00

So we use our understanding of the structure of a text.

48:04

The idea that a narrative text is going to have a beginning, a middle and an end. That it's going to have a story: characters, settings, most often a problem, and some kind of resolution. And that expository or non-fiction texts are going to be most of the time, quite different. And have quite different structures. Such as chronological structures, or cause and effect structures.

48:31

And we combine this understanding, this familiarity with sort of the scope, and sequence, and framework of a text to use this knowledge, along with the rest of our language skills, to support our reading comprehension.

48:45

This is another reason, just to put a plug in here for various genres, why it's really important from early, early on to expose young children to both narrative and expository texts, and to be quiet explicit and transparent with them, about how their structures are the same or distinct.

49:08

So you may be thinking, now, wait a minute, don't I use these four higher order language skills to comprehend spoken language, too? Don't I draw inferences from somebody's tone of voice, or the particular word choice they use when having a conversation with me? And the answer is yes, absolutely. You are absolutely using many of these quote, unquote higher order language skills to comprehend spoken language too.

49:35

But what we do know is that comprehending written text brings some additional and slightly more unique challenges that I'll be talking about in a second here.

49:49

So when you're talking with somebody or listening to them, you have extra help.

49:57

We have sort of what are we what we call the affordances of the, face to face or even video conferencing face features where you can rely on the non-verbal cues.

50:13

You can rely on somebody's facial expressions. You can rely on their gestures.

50:19

You can rely on the visual reference in the physical space. So, if somebody uses a vague term like put that over there but they're pointing to what they want you to move and relocate, you can fix their really vague, non-specific language by relying on those gestural and visual reference.

50:41

You also can, in the moment, do what we call repair your understanding by simply asking for clarification?

50:48

You can say to the speaker, hold on a minute, I really don't understand what you're saying and basically ask for clarification.

50:57

It's really important to understand that children with sort of weaker language skills rely on these compensatory strategies when conversing.

51:08

So the idea that these supports are often missing when reading texts, because you can't easily ask the author what they really meant to tell you.

51:19

So the absence of these compensatory affordances, is particularly impactful when reading and particularly impactful on children, who bring weaker oral language skills into the reading context in the first place.

51:38

So on this slide I'm going to walk you through some of the other language links, comprehension strategies, or challenges that are particularly noticeable when reading and particularly important to recognize as potential barriers for children with weaker oral language skills.

51:59

So first, um, text is written in more complex, more syntactically advanced constructions, than we speak in normally. So we don't normally speak in past sentences. We don't normally speak in compound complex sentences with multiple dependent clauses, for example.

52:28

And so it's just a different register or different way of using language that can certainly be less familiar to students and until they sort of gain familiarity and fluency with those more complex syntactic constructions that can certainly slow down and impair comprehension.

52:54

Some of the comprehension problem specific to reading also, include, the fact that, as Dr. Wood mentioned before, there's a whole lot more of that academic vocabulary, and, quite frankly, just less frequent vocabulary that is found in text. So, you may have heard the oft repeated idea that children's storybooks are more complex than adults conversation, and that turns out to be, you know, relatively well supported.

53:27

Unless you're talking about the conversation of two academics having a very technical conversation with each other. Or two lawyers using legal lingo to have a work conversation. But in casual conversation, even between multiple, highly educated and sophisticated adults with big vocabularies, we just don't draw on our full breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge in the same way we do when we write. And, therefore, they're not called upon as much as when we have oral conversations as when we are reading.

54:02

It's also important to recognize this idea of decontextualization.

54:06

All of those supports, from being able to follow somebody's gestures, or know what's happening in the moments are missing when we're reading.

54:17

Because reading is, by definition, a decontextualized skill. It's capturing an idea and saving it for later. But then, when you're reading it later, you weren't necessarily in the original context. And you can't interact as easy way to get an explanation. There's no one immediately there to say, hey, I don't understand, can you say that differently?

54:39

You have to work your way through just the language that's provided to you.

54:46

And, of course, reading comprehension isn't just about understanding individual words or even individual sentences.

54:52

You have to be able to integrate the information, retain it, understand it, and match it up, and mash it together across sentences, paragraphs, entire text.

55:06

So all of these things are the kind of comprehension challenges that are specific to the reading process.

55:15

And all of these are really important reasons why, quite frankly, the best way to help children develop their reading comprehension skills is to help them develop their oral language skills, and help them practice applying their oral language skills to the process of reading comprehension.

55:37

So, basically, practice, practice, practice.

55:43

We're going to pivot back to that idea of practicing in a little bit, but right now what I'm going to do is, hand the speaker roll over to Dr. Patton-Terry who's going to talk to us a little bit more about children's individual differences, and how they relate to oral language.

56:03

Thanks, Dr. Phillips.

56:10

So, we wanted to make sure that we made explicit for you, if language is so important, then how it varies matters to what you do about it in the classroom.

56:27

Individual differences in language skills are apparent very early on in children's development as you heard from Dr. Wood and Dr. Phillips.

56:36

You can see a very predictable development of language skills in young children, um, and so it makes it possible for us to see how children vary in language skills early on.

56:51

What's important about that is, as children grow over time, those differences can become increasingly apparent, and increasingly difficult to modify, if necessary, to improve reading and writing outcomes for students.

57:06

So, it becomes important, as in all other areas when we talk about the importance of early intervention, language is no different. It is important for us to be able to consider and observe these language differences early so that we can do things about that to support children's healthy development of literacy skills.

57:33

There are many reasons why we may see differences in how children develop language and different language skills.

57:40

Many of those might be things you're familiar with. For example, disabilities.

57:45

Children may have specific language impairments, or they may have physical impairments, hearing impairments. They may have autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. And those disabilities tend to all have some indicator of language being a place where children with those different conditions tend to struggle.

58:07

And so disability is one place where we can see children who have difficulty developing language skills. We also talk about children language differences arising because of differences in children's environments. Perhaps they have limited language interactions with those around them, adults, as well as peers.

58:26

Children learn a lot about language, reacting with adults, but they do so, as well, with young children, and their own peers.

58:34

There are certainly cases where children have been deprived of language. And of course, there are extreme cases, children who've been, quote, unquote raised in the wild. But more often than not, we're talking about children, who really just have been deprived of both healthy language interactions. One way that can happen, for example, that people often don't consider is children who have health challenges.

58:56

For children who have health challenges and spend a lot of time in medical facilities, for example, often don't get a lot of engagement with other peers and don't get a lot of interactions in ways in which children can learn language both formally and informally with their peers. And that can make a difference to how well children develop language skills.

59:16

Children also, who are growing up in poverty tend to have limited language interactions that allow for the healthy growth and development of language skills. It's important to remember that language is something that is about both quality and the quantity of those interactions.  I'm sure we've all heard a lot about the 30 million word gap and that children who are perhaps growing up in low-income households are going to end up in poverty, maybe have heard fewer words than their peers were growing up in more affluent conditions by the time they enter school. And that makes a difference to how well they perform in school. And yes, that does happen. But what may be even more important is the quality of those interactions that children have with language. And you can see indicators of quality in language interactives for children who are growing up in poverty, as well as children who are growing up in more affluent homes. And so we want to think about the quantity of language, but we also want to think about the quality of those interactions.

1:00:15

In addition, language may develop differently because children are growing up with language differences.

1:00:20

Whether that difference, for example, be dialect variation in the US. We have a lot of dialects that are different from what we deem to be mainstream American English.

1:00:31

And those features of those dialogs are standardized, and they are rule governed, and they function very much so in the same way as Dr. Wood discussed with the form content and use of that dialect. But it may differ from the Standard English orthography that we use and books and that we see in schools. And those differences can make it in between the dialect in the written form may be difficult for children.

1:00:56

We also have children who are growing up speaking other languages, and it's important to think about how that happens.

1:01:02

For some children, it may be that they are growing up speaking multiple languages at the same time. And so, they are emerging bilinguals learning two languages at the same time.

1:01:13

And it could be that we have children who are growing up learning one language at home that is different than a language that they are learning at school.

1:01:21

It could be that you're in a situation where you have children who are learning that new language at school, and that causes some limited English proficiency, which is often the term that we hear. But you might hear limited English proficiency, you might hear dual language learner, you might hear English Language Learner. More recently, we've been using the term English learner, and you'll see that term used throughout here.

1:01:42

But it's important to remember that there's variability. There's variation, and how it is that children who are learning multiple languages might be having that language experience, and that will make a difference to how well they're able to learn and use English in the classroom for reading and writing.

1:02:08

So, going back to Dr. Wood’s figure on language, form, content, and use, we thought it would be helpful to talk about how language weaknesses in each one of those domains might present themselves in the classroom. Because the way that they present themselves, of course, will make a difference to reading and writing performance in the classroom.

1:02:30

For example, in that form domain, you might find children who have poor, phonemic awareness or phonological processing skills. You might find children who have poor morphological awareness.

1:02:42

Children who perhaps don't use grammatical morphemes or inflections on the ends of words, or they use them variably.

1:02:50

Children who demonstrate poor subject verb agreement or who have difficulty recognizing similarities between words. Children who maybe don't recognize that health and healthy are related to each other.

1:03:03

Children who perhaps don't have a well-organized mental lexicon and what that means is how they organize words and parts of features of words up here in the head and what and how clearly and well-formed those representations are. Because it makes a difference to how well children are able to play with sounds in words, and able to add endings to words, able to rhyme words. All of those things are a part of form.

1:03:28

If children are struggling with those different aspects that will show up in the reading and the writing. That will show up in difficulties being able to spell inflected endings if you're not using them in speech. Maybe, you'll have difficulty sounding out words if you aren't able to receive and play with the phonemes and morphemes within words.

1:03:48

That will make a difference for your reading of the words, as well as the spelling of the words.

1:04:02

You also, in that form domain, you have phonology, morphology but you also have syntax. So that's how those words are put together and phrases and sentences, right? Students may have difficulty in your class coming up with multiple different types of sentence forms. You at one point may decide that they need to know about different types of phrases or different types of sentences, complex sentences and less complex sentences. Students who have difficulty with syntax will have difficulty doing that. Students who maybe have difficulty tracking reference and discourse. So students who have difficulty keeping up with pronouns when you start introducing chapter books or more complex stories. Narrative forms that have multiple characters. And, so, you have to keep up with who all those characters are. You have to keep up with all those pronouns. That can be a student who has difficulty with language.

1:04:52

What this part of language will have difficulty with that. When you ask students to summarize, tell me what the main idea is. Can you summarize this book in a book report for me?

1:05:04

Can't, but students who have difficulty with syntax may have real difficulty paraphrasing in that way, or sequencing texts in that way.

1:05:12

Eventually, you might want to use idioms and similes and metaphors and some of those really creative ways in which we express ourselves in reading as well as in writing.

1:05:24

And students who have syntax difficulty will find that challenging. Not only to come up with them themselves, but also interpret them as they're reading texts.

1:05:33

So issues with syntax can also make reading and writing difficult.

1:05:41

Then you've got that content part of language.

1:05:43

So this is where your semantics come in. Students who have difficulty with semantics that may show up in their reading and writing as well.

1:05:52

Those may be your students, for example, who seem to not have really advanced vocabularies.

1:05:58

Either they use the same word all the time, or they only able to grab content for a specific area and go deeply with that area, but not with all areas. They know a lot about football, but they can't expand that information and what they know about football to other athletic areas, for example. If your student is going to have fine have difficulty finding words, they can tell you all about this thing that happens in the fall when the leaves change colors. And it's red, but sometimes it's green, and they have a core with seeds, and there was this guy, Johnny Appleseed who used run around and cutting these trees down. But they maybe can't find the word apple.

1:06:37

That's the difficulty with semantics. Kids who have difficulty with word web.

1:06:42

So tell me different ways to express cool instead of just saying, well, it's cool, because school is cool, and I like to go to school. But school is cool. But they can't come up with awesome. They can't come up with excellent.

1:06:54

They can't come up with outstanding. Students who have difficult time, bridging those semantic networks and using more diverse words to express themselves in reading and writing.

1:07:05

That's language and students who have problems with those types of issues with semantics that will show up in their reading and it'll show up in their writing.

1:07:14

And it's important to remember that yes, we're talking about words and vocabularies. But, as Dr. Phillips talked about, it's more than just vocabulary. It will connect themselves, but these difficulties with language will connect themselves to not just an individual vocabulary word, but how you express yourself and understand things beyond and around that vocabulary.

1:07:37

Then there's use, which is often maybe an area that we maybe pay less attention to, but it really matters for reading and writing development. When you ask students to write cohesive and coherent essays, that's language skill. When you want them to figure out from a genre stand point that they're writing a persuasive essay that means you've got to consider your audience. And you got to consider how you're going to convince them for your argument and, and be able to deliver certain intent.

1:08:07

That's the language skill, that's pragmatics. Students who maybe use a lot of again stereotypical comments so they can only really figure out how to answer in one way.

1:08:17

That's a language difficulty.

1:08:19

You may also see it in challenges and interactions with peers. And so that might be simply because the student is unable to communicate and express themselves very well, but it can also be because they don't understand what's coming from others. So that ability language is about exchange, and you find that students, for example, often put the burden of explaining things on the person they're talking to and aren't able to express themselves as clearly as they like to.

1:08:47

Even though sometimes they think they are, that's the language difficulty, that's the pragmatics difficulty. And unfortunately, other young children don't always get it. Always get that maybe the student need some support, and so you might see difficulty with peers, because they themselves can't monitor it as well.

1:09:04

Those things, all of those language difficulties can show up in reading and writing.

1:09:12

We want to point out a little bit of extra spotlight on English learners, because English learners make up as much as 10% of the student population in the state of Florida.

1:09:21

And depending on where you are in the state of Florida, you may have a very large percentage of students you're serving, who are English learners. And so we want to make sure we bring a little bit of attention to that population.

1:09:31

It's important to keep in mind for English learners, and in particular, we're talking about English learners who are learning one native language at home, for example, Spanish or L one, as you can see in this figure. And when they enter school, they are learning English as a second language.

1:09:49

They may have different levels of proficiency with understanding English, expressively, or receptively, and that can be due to the fact that they have separate, but overlapping lexicons. And what that means is they organize information about Spanish in one place in the brain and English in another place. And as they're developing proficiency with that language, there will be some overlap, because languages all share this form, content, and use. And they can be more or less distant from each other and how similar that form, content and use are, so they can support each other. Having knowledge of one language can help support you on the learning of another language.

1:10:30

But because the languages themselves are separate and different, you will see students who are learning a second language, learning English in school, they will struggle a bit as they try to take on the new form and content and use associated with that new language.

1:10:55

Now, that can make it difficult for you as an educator, in terms of providing the best support for an English learner. Often, that's because it can be difficult to tell if what you're witnessing the difficulties that you're seeing, are they due to a language difference, a language delay, or a language disorder. And all three can happen with a student who has an English learner. What is the language difference? The process of developing the language is normal. It's just, you're normally developing your first language, and that has some impact on how you are going to normally develop a second language.

1:11:32

When there's a delay, however, language is coming on board, but it's coming at a slower pace, and it's slower than what would be expected for a student at a given age or ability level.

1:11:44

When there is a disorder, that there are typically deficits and comprehension, or reduction of the language, again, problems with that warm content and use. And you will see it in the first, and the second language. That’s one way, to help you distinguish between what is difference versus what is a disorder or delay. If there is a disorder, it will be present in both languages, because, again, both have that form and content and use.

1:12:10

So it would be important as you're observing your English learners and watching their patterns of behavior and their use of language, to think about whether or not the difficulty you may be observing is due to a language difference, delay, or disorder.

1:12:30

Some common things to look for, if you think your English learners need some extra support in the classroom, you may find that they speak more infrequently in a classroom or they rely on gestures and single words, a lot of non-verbal to communicate themselves.

1:12:45

You might find that they have real difficulty restating what you're talking about or recalling details of what you're talking about.

1:12:51

You might see difficulty following directions, as well. And they may confuse similar sounding words.

1:12:57

So, it's important again, to be responsive and reflective on those behaviors you're seeing from your English learners.

1:13:05

Again, these behaviors are typical, and understandable. This is not necessarily indicative of a disorder, but it might be indicative of a student who needs additional supports to succeed in school. And that's what you want to be looking out for. So, we can find ways to support them in their success in school.

1:13:26

One resource that's available to you is the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide on Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School.

1:13:38

The What Works Clearinghouse is a division or a part of the Institute of Education Sciences that is charged with helping to provide resources and tools to practitioners and educators and others to take what we understand about this research and help you use it in practice. One of the primary ways that IES does that is by creating these practice guides, which are extremely user friendly, and have lots of information. Not just about the research, but what you can do on Monday in your classroom to put effective practices into place, so that you will be have a greater chance of seeing the outcomes you want to see for your students. And so there was a guide that was produced a few years ago that is specifically designed to support the needs of English learners and schools. Has great resources in it for you, and we encourage you to take a look at that as a student population you're serving.

1:14:32

Then finally some of the recommended instructional practices that you will find in that guide as well as elsewhere are a few things that I'm sure might start just sound like a broken record to you. But we're going to keep saying it in the present and in the standards as well. You really do want to focus on academic language and teach academic words intensively to students and teach them across the content. So not just science words in science, but let's talk about it across the content areas.

1:14:59

You want to integrate oral and written language instruction into content area teaching. So in science, we want you to be teaching, reading. IN science, we want you to be teaching writing. That's important for all students, but it's going to be particularly important for English learners as well.

1:15:16

Provide regular structured opportunities to develop those written language skills. So children need to be taught how to be good writers, right? Oftentimes writing is an area that tends to be misunderstood and underappreciated.

1:15:29

Because we and I say, we, all of us, tend to think of ourselves as either being good or bad writers and often that writing is some sort of natural, innate ability. So all poets are just innately great writers. That's why they're poets. But when you talk to poets, what you find out is they absolutely practice their craft because they understand that writing is a skill.

1:15:51

It's something they had to learn how to do. And they continue to work on and improve throughout their lives and careers as professional writers. That is no different for us and that is no different for the students in your classroom. So writing instruction, just as much as we're talking about reading instruction, should be explicit.

1:16:09

It should be systematic, and it should be intentional and well thought out, to ensure that children develop those writing skills, they're absolutely capable of developing.

1:16:18

Then, finally, small group instruction is very important. If you know that you're going to, if we know, and it is a guarantee, in fact, that children will walk into your classroom with different language abilities. You want to be able to deliver instruction that can meet their needs. And that may mean that you need to provide instruction in different ways to different students to leverage their strengths, as well as support their challenges. And one of the best and most effective ways to do that is supervised small group instruction.

1:16:47

So, in this next section, we're going to give you some more tips and ideas for things that you can do in your classroom to explicitly support language instruction for your students.

1:17:02

So, yes, I subtitled this section, educator empowerment, to really emphasize the idea that there are a whole lot of tools that educators can use to support oral language.

1:17:15

And, so, even though it can feel like a daunting task, that there are some well-established, evidence based practices, and we're going to sort of hit the highlights on some of them today. I'm going to kick this section off, and then I'm going to pass it back to Dr. Wood in just a second.

1:17:34

But I want to start off with a shout out to all the educators here today, with the idea that educators really do matter. It is easy, and not surprising, to get caught up in, in sort of what we've been emphasizing, the fact that oral language development begins at birth, and it continues a lifetime. In that you, as educators, cannot necessarily control the quantity and quality of early language to which children are exposed in their preschool home environments. But this quote is on the screen to remind you that you can control what happens in the classroom.

1:18:09

You can control whether or not you are providing children with a robust, rich environment in the classroom.

1:18:18

Support for language is embedded in every area of instruction and all across the day, not just in your reading block, but throughout the entire day.

1:18:32

So, this is just another shout out to another one of those practice guides from the Institute of Education Sciences.

1:18:39

This is the foundational skills for reading, for understanding kindergarten through third grade. And one of the reasons I want to emphasize this here is that, although most of this practice guide focuses on developing children's decoding skills, there is a whole section of this guide devoted to developing language skills. Because all of these experts know what we've been telling you today, which is that you cannot separate decoding from language development.

1:19:09

And you cannot ignore language development and expect children to develop strong reading comprehension skills.

1:19:17

So, I'm going to just walk you through a very big picture here of how we should think about supporting oral language. And Dr. Patton-Terry mentioned this a minute ago, while she was talking about the need to be intentional and explicit.

1:19:33

But I do want to emphasize that you should also be looking to seize the moment for what we call incidental teaching opportunities. Seize the moment to use a more sophisticated synonym. Seize the moment to reinforce children when they use and stretch and grow their oral language skills, and use a more sophisticated sentence structure, and something they wrote, even if they don't get it perfectly correct. You really want to reinforce their efforts to try to deepen and broaden their applied language skills.

1:20:04

I also want to remind you of the idea that, although sometimes pupils set up these false dichotomies, thinking about teaching language skills in meaningful context such as in the academic content areas and through books you read with them, and books to read themselves, and through projects you engage in, is not mutually exclusive from engaging in explicit instruction. There's nothing about being meaningful, that rules out being explicit. And even more importantly, the message I'm driving home here is that being explicit does not mean that you should also be meaningful.

1:20:40

You can embed high quality, very intentional, very explicit attention to building language skills right inside of really engaging, very meaningful and very authentic projects, and content area activities.

1:20:58

So, just as a reminder, although we haven't really been talking about this a lot, I do want to reinforce the idea that although much of our basic vocabulary is, of course, acquired before we learn how to read and therefore, without reading, children and adults do learn an enormous amount of additional language through reading.

1:21:20

And so the more robust their reading practice, the better they are at decoding, the more beneficial that reading process will be. It will be particularly beneficial if they're reading texts that are sort of at that sweet spot that it’s not too hard or too easy for them. And when they're motivated to understand what they're reading.

1:21:40

And, of course, you have to do it enough for it to make a difference.

1:21:45

And, as Dr. Wood will be saying in a minute, of course, we can't just rely, however, on children to gain language through what they read.

1:21:55

We really do need to be intentional and more explicit, and put some effort into the instructional aspect of teaching vocabulary, and I will let her tell you what we mean by that now.

1:22:11

Well, to illustrate those direct vocabulary instructional strategies, this slide, as you can see, it has a list of boxes that kind of highlighted these strategies for direct vocabulary instruction.

1:22:25

In the interest of time, we won't go through each of them, but, particularly, that first column can be a little more elusive, so we'll touch on those highlighting semantic features.

1:22:36

For example, this really gets back to what Dr. Patton Terry mentioned about semantic networks and really bolstering the semantic networks, describing the features. Obviously, you know, in a simple example with an apple, it's a fruit. It grows on trees. Apples have seeds, you eat apples, they taste sweet, apples are round, they come in red, green, and yellow.

1:22:57

All the features that we build deep in word knowledge but also help students link and leverage across new items that share some of those features. So when they're introduced to mango and know that it's a fruit, suddenly, they can capitalize on features that they associate with roots, right?

1:23:16

And so, it helps students to fast map, but also to deepen their word knowledge and create more linkages, little more density to their networks.

1:23:26

This, this first row, the next one, word segmentation. As we've kind of emphasized, academic words, in particular can be challenging for students, and many of them are morphologically complex words. And so segmenting word parts and helping students break down and kind of deduce the meaning of new words by leveraging their knowledge of the individual parts can be helpful. And so, you know, for example, in a simple example assessment, they know to assess means test, and ment is a thing.

1:24:04

So, assess where that's a verb, assessment becomes the test, right, the noun. But again, kind of modeling how you break down meanings, the word parts, to get a better understanding of novel word that might be morphologically complex.

1:24:21

The last one in that column, examples and non-examples. I think the intuitive thing is to bring up examples of the new word that you're teaching, but also give time to non-examples.

1:24:35

Sometimes pointing out the opposite or the antonym helps add clarity in knowing what it's not, right. It's exemplifying both what it is, but also what that word is not.

1:24:46

So even within the context of learning morphologically, complex words, contrasting powerful versus powerless, and how those differ.

1:24:57

And the right column is a little more self-explanatory. Providing meaningful definitions and words that children understand, not textbook necessarily definitions. Using pneumonic devices when helpful or useful. And really discussing word meanings, not just sharing a complex definition but making it meaningful as Dr. Phillips really emphasized.

1:25:24

Next slide.

1:25:25

So finally, in the last few minutes, we'll highlight four very simple, basic oral language learning strategies that can be helpful for all students. Most of these are really intuitive.

1:25:38

But I think pointing them out and sort of adding some explicit discussion of them increases our own awareness and helps us be more intentional in our use of these evidence based strategies, even within incidental learning opportunities.

1:25:52

So we'll kind of highlight bombardment using existing knowledge, guided practice and visuals.

1:26:01

First, bombardment. What is it?

1:26:04

It really refers just like it sounds to bombarding that word model, so you're increasing exposure to a target that you're interested in, increasing your awareness by frequent repetition, right.

1:26:18

You're just bombarding them with models of that, that word or those forms that you're interested in. It might be connectives or it might be grammatical pieces.

1:26:28

It's intended to heighten awareness and it really goes by a number of other terms.

1:26:33

So you may be familiar with consciousness raising, ostensive naming, and repetition across successive sentences. I prefer bombardment, but these all are referring to the same concept of just model, model, model, right? Children can't learn words they don't hear as easily. They don't know.

1:26:53

So, why do we do this? Why are we focusing on this one?

1:26:57

The evidence shows, really numerous research studies show and support the effectiveness of incorporating those repeated models within meaningful linguistic contexts.

1:27:09

Even though we use multiple different terms for the same thing, it's been proven to work.

1:27:15

Next, linking to existing knowledge. Really this is done by anchoring that new information to something that's known, a familiar experience, something they can relate to, be relatable, right? Otherwise, it's, it's hard to grasp.

1:27:33

So, linking the new word to a synonym might do it, or even contrasting it to an antonym, if that's more familiar term, may help increase the meaningfulness of it. Make it stick.

1:27:45

Next slide.

1:27:47

So, pairing that new word with maybe a simplified explanation or something that's relatable, previous experience, can be really useful. Linking is probably more common term for this.

1:28:00

Next slide.

1:28:04

Our third quick strategy that's useful for everyone, is active practice. Really getting students engaged in using those target language forms, words and other forms, in meaningful context, actively participating.

1:28:22

This is kind of beyond the worksheet, right? This also goes by other names, right, we hear guided co-operative practice, maybe other terms for this strategy, engaged opportunity for learning.

1:28:35

Why do we do it? Not surprisingly, active practice is consistently found to be associated with better language and learning outcomes in the literature.

1:28:46

Kind of goes right along with what Dr. Phillips was saying about the importance of making it meaningful.

1:28:53

And lastly, visuals.

1:28:57

Obviously, visuals facilitate oral language learning by connecting the referent to the language, right? For English learners and children with language based learning disabilities in particular, incorporating visuals may be particularly important and helpful in demonstrating the meaning, the referent, through visuals and manipulatives.

1:29:21

Consistent with guided practice. Recommended practice guides, elides for education and the IES Practice Guides, you've seen.

1:29:30

Much evidence has shown that visuals and manipulatives can really be beneficial, right, they work. We have evidence that says so. And it's often executed in various ways, roleplaying, graphic organizers, illustrations, lots of different ways to incorporate that. So, you've heard several simple techniques you can use.

1:29:54

On the next slide, there's also four examples of language activities that are available on the FCRR site.

1:30:02

And there are dozens of grade level, specific activities you can find on the FCRR Website.

1:30:07

Dr. Panteri, the Director of FCRR, has also provided the handout resources for you, which is available and also linked within the goto Webinar.

1:30:17

These highlighted activities and a lot of the links to resources are really designed, in large part, to intensify language and literacy for our students. And as you implement those, keep adaptations in mind.

1:30:33

They might be required, particularly for our English learners, and children with language based learning disorders that may require extra support for language and communicative exchanges among the top five recommended supports.

1:30:48

That a lot of those resources are designed to provide or being explicit, incorporating repetitions, pairing with existing knowledge, checking for understanding, and really expanding or extending the information beyond just that symbolic form.

1:31:05

I'll pass the mic back to Dr. Phillips.

1:31:11

Thank you so much, Dr. Wood. So I'm here just to wrap this up. I know that we're right towards the end of our time together. And so there are just a few more things that I want to emphasize.

1:31:23

I want to sum up by saying that our intention today was to really reinforce for you that language is a multi-faceted, complex set of skills that all work together to help us derive meaning from spoken and written language.

1:31:38

So it's really all about the communicative intent of language, whether it be spoken or written.

1:31:46

So we can understand what people are saying to us and communicate our own thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly, to others.

1:31:54

Language develops across the lifespan and can, as we've just been emphasizing, be supported by high quality and targeted instruction.

1:32:03

And as we really tried to emphasize, in the middle of the presentation, language is the foundation of reading, for understanding.

1:32:10

You simply cannot correctly derive meaning from text without having robust, well rounded, deep and wide language skills.

1:32:23

Children who struggle with reading comprehension therefore, are highly likely to not only have problems like decoding but also problems with their language skills which is why it is incredibly important to start building their language skills. Quite frankly, well, before you even start to think about teaching them to decode.

1:32:43

So we like to think about supporting language goes right from birth, certainly during the early childhood years, and then not hitting the pause button on supporting those language skills when you pivot to also focusing on decoding.

1:32:58

Because it's really important to remember.

1:33:03

That, and I'm quoting here from the set of very well-known reading researchers based in the United Kingdom, Maggie Snelling in Charleston, that oral language provides the foundation for a written language.

1:33:15

Good language can provide a compensatory resource for children with the word level reading difficulties. And, moreover, as we didn't really get a lot of time to talk about today, but as I gave you a little bit of teaser, about when I mentioned the idea, that children are, of course, also going to be gaining language skills And especially vocabulary, once they're good readers.

1:33:36

And once they read a lot, there are likely to be reciprocal interactions. So, language skills and decoding skills, and language skills, and reading comprehension skills are going to be mutually supportive in a positive upward spiral.

1:33:51

So, as you strengthen one, you are strengthening the other, and you're giving children the opportunity to use their practices reading to keep building their language skills.

1:34:02

So, as the very last thing I want to say, the take home message, if you don't remember anything else, we've tried to pour into your brains this morning.

1:34:11

It's the idea that teaching oral language is teaching reading. Every minute you spend in the classroom supporting vocabulary, syntax, pragmatics, morphological awareness, and so on is a moment that you are supporting children's reading comprehension.

1:34:29

So, thank you so very much for your participation and attention today and I'm going to pass it back to the Just Read, Florida! office personnel for their final wrap up.

1:34:41

Thank you guys so much, I am just giddy. I am truly giddy, this was wonderful. So, I just wanted to close. I know some people are, they've already messaged that they've got to jump out and jump into some other things. So, another, thank you to our presenters. And then, if everybody could be sure to fill out their surveys so that we can continue to make decisions for these webinars for things that will be most helpful to you.

1:35:15

Thank you, again.

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