

Word Work in *The Daily 5*:  
Why and How We Build Vocabulary  
in the Middle Grades

Mary McGriff, Ed. D.  
Assistant Professor  
Literacy Education Department  
*New Jersey City University*


# Complexity of Word Knowledge

- Incrementality--  
Word knowledge occurs in degrees
- Multidimensionality—  
There are several distinct types of word knowledge
- Polysemy—  
Words often have multiple meanings
- Interrelatedness—  
Knowledge of one word is dependent upon knowledge of other words.

# Incrementality

Stages of word knowledge (Dale, 1965; Paribakht & Wesche, 1997)

1. Never saw it before;
2. Heard it but does not know what it means;
3. Recognizes it in context as having something to do with ....;
4. Knows it well; and
5. Can use it in writing

 40+ instructional encounters may not enable students to advance to Stage 5. (finding from McKeown, Beck, Omanson, & Pople, 1985)

# Multidimensionality

Word knowledge consists of several distinct types of knowledge.

\*\*Based on findings from Graves, 1986; Dixon & Carnine, 1987; and Laufer, 1998.

- Spoken form

- Written form

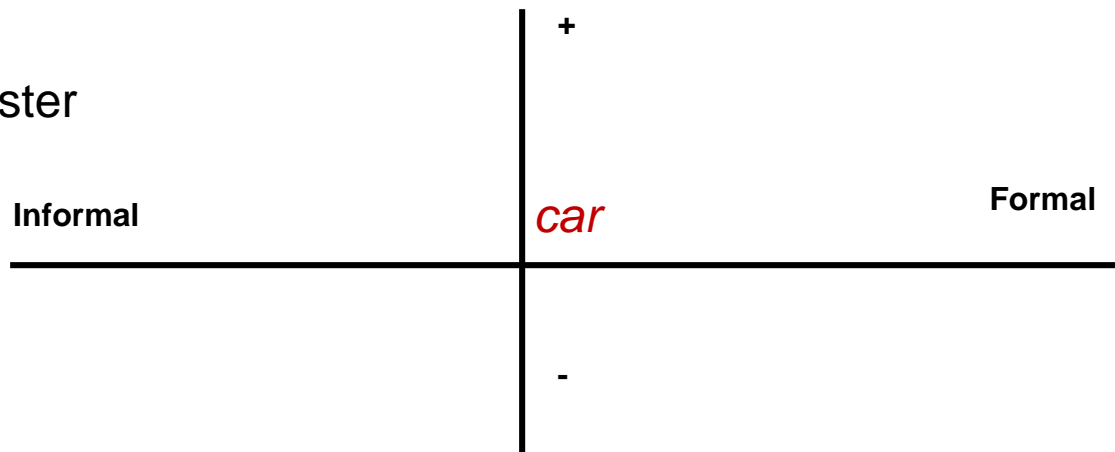
- Grammatical behavior

*drive drove had driven*

- Associations

*car interstate motor sedan Harley Davidson*

- Stylistic register



# Polysemy

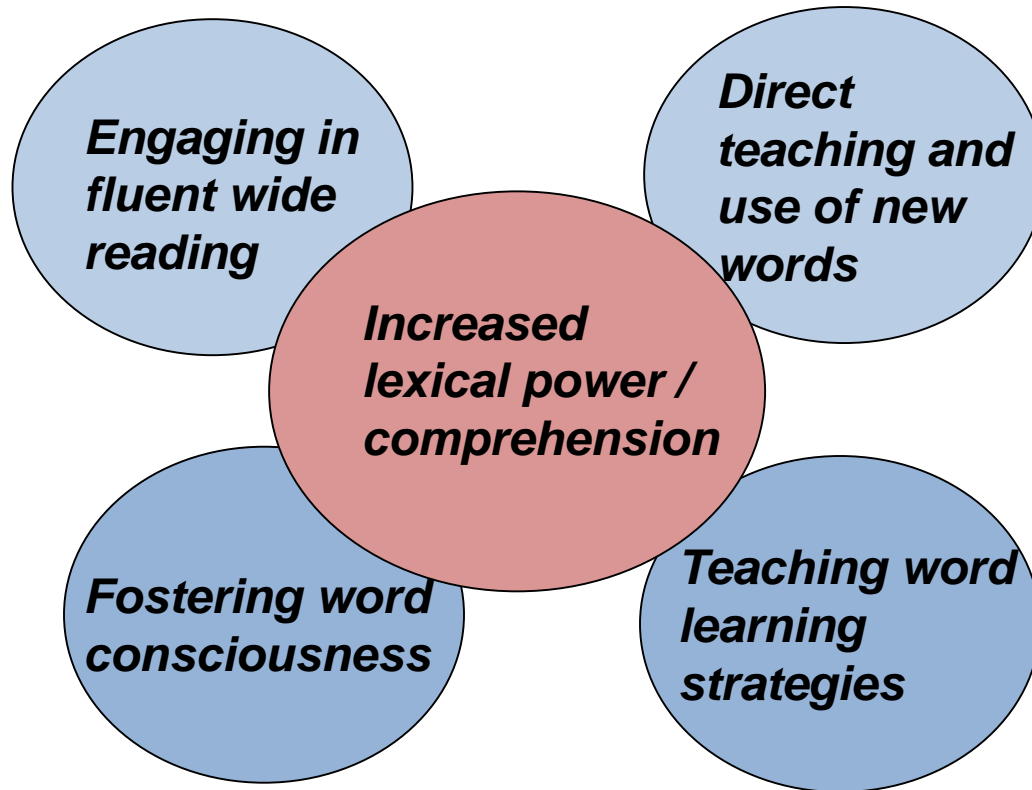
- Multiple meanings of words
  - The greater a word's frequency, the more meanings it tends to have.
- Mini-lesson-- Explicitly teach students to choose effectively among multiple word meanings in dictionaries.

**The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3**  
Hart & Risley , 1995 findings

<b>Families' Language and Use Differ Across Income Groups</b>						
	Families					
	<u>13 Professional</u>		<u>23 Working-class</u>		<u>6 Welfare</u>	
Measures & Scores	Parent	Child	Parent	Child	Parent	Child
Pretest score <sup>a</sup>	41		31		14	
Recorded vocabulary size	2,176	1,116	1,498	749	974	525
Average utterances per hour <sup>b</sup>	487	310	301	223	176	168
Average different words per hour	382	297	251	216	167	149
<sup>a</sup> When we began the longitudinal study, we asked the parents to complete a vocabulary pretest. At the first observation each parent was asked to complete a form abstracted from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). We gave each parent a list of 46 vocabulary words and a series of pictures (four options per vocabulary word) and asked the parent to write beside each word the number of the picture that corresponded to the written word. Parent performance on the test was highly correlated with years of education ( $r = .57$ ).						
<sup>b</sup> Parent utterances and different words were averaged over 13-36 months of child age. Child utterances and different words were averaged for the four observations when the children were 33-36 months old.						

# What builds vocabulary?

Read-to-Self Read-to-Someone Listen-to-Reading Word Work Work-on-Writing



# Common Practices That Do NOT Reliably Build Long-term Skills

- Incidental teaching of unknown words
- Rote memorization of lists with no context
- “Look it up” in typical classroom dictionary
- Skill sheets and workbooks done silently at desks



# *Selecting words for instruction*

## 1. Cognitive Academic Vocabulary (Tier II Words)

- High frequency words for *mature* language users
- Appear in many subject areas
- i.e.– coincidence, analysis, compare, reflection
- Exceptionally important for English learners
- Lists commonly available online. Search “Tier II word list”  
<http://www.hpcsd.org/district.cfm?subpage=29208>

## 2. Morphemes

- Latin and Greek roots
- Prefixes and suffixes

## 3. Unit-specific terms

# Morphemic Analysis

60 – 80% of English vocabulary is generated through the combination of Greek / Latin roots, prefixes and suffixes

90% of science and technology vocabulary is generated through this process (Bear et al., 2013)

Word Study: Mini-lessons followed by related Word Work activities

- Word Sorts

- Vocabulary self-assessment

- Concept Sorts

- Word Collection (w/ follow-up sharing)

# View a prefix sort...

Think about: How does the teacher scaffold students' understanding of these prefixes: mega- super- hyper- micro- ?

# Unit Vocabulary Pre-assessment & Partner Sharing

migration



hobo



Dust Bowl



# Concept Sort

Open Sort : Students determine categories

Closed Sort: Teacher provides headings



*You try!*

*How many different ways can you think of to sort the terms in your baggie? Record the different categories you develop!*

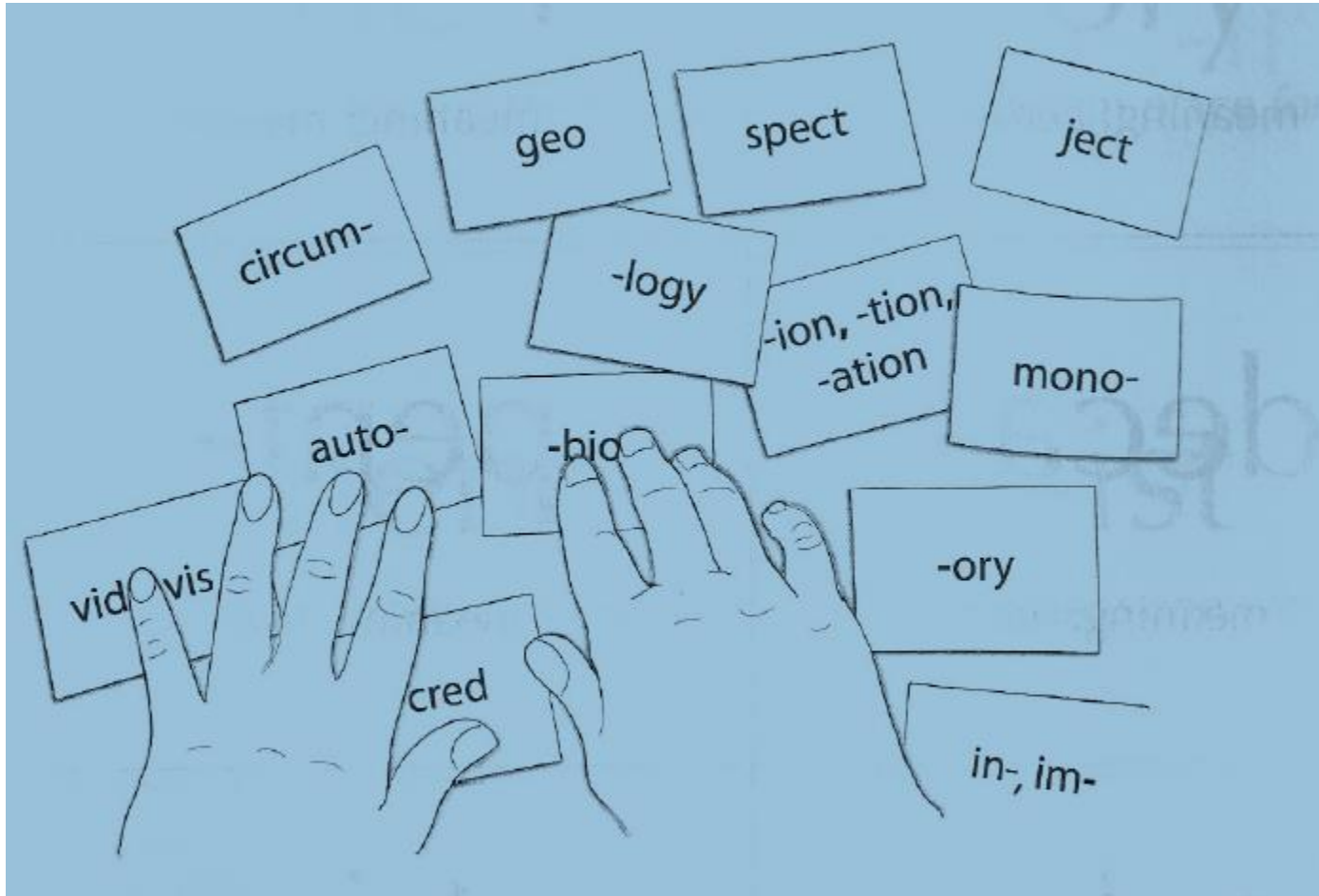
# Teach roots, prefixes and/or suffixes as they relate to content.

-ion  
-tion  
--ation

migrate	→	migration
discriminate	→	discrimination
administer	→	administration
conserve	→	conservation

What might –ion, tion, and –ation mean? How to these suffixes change a words?

# Word Part Shuffle

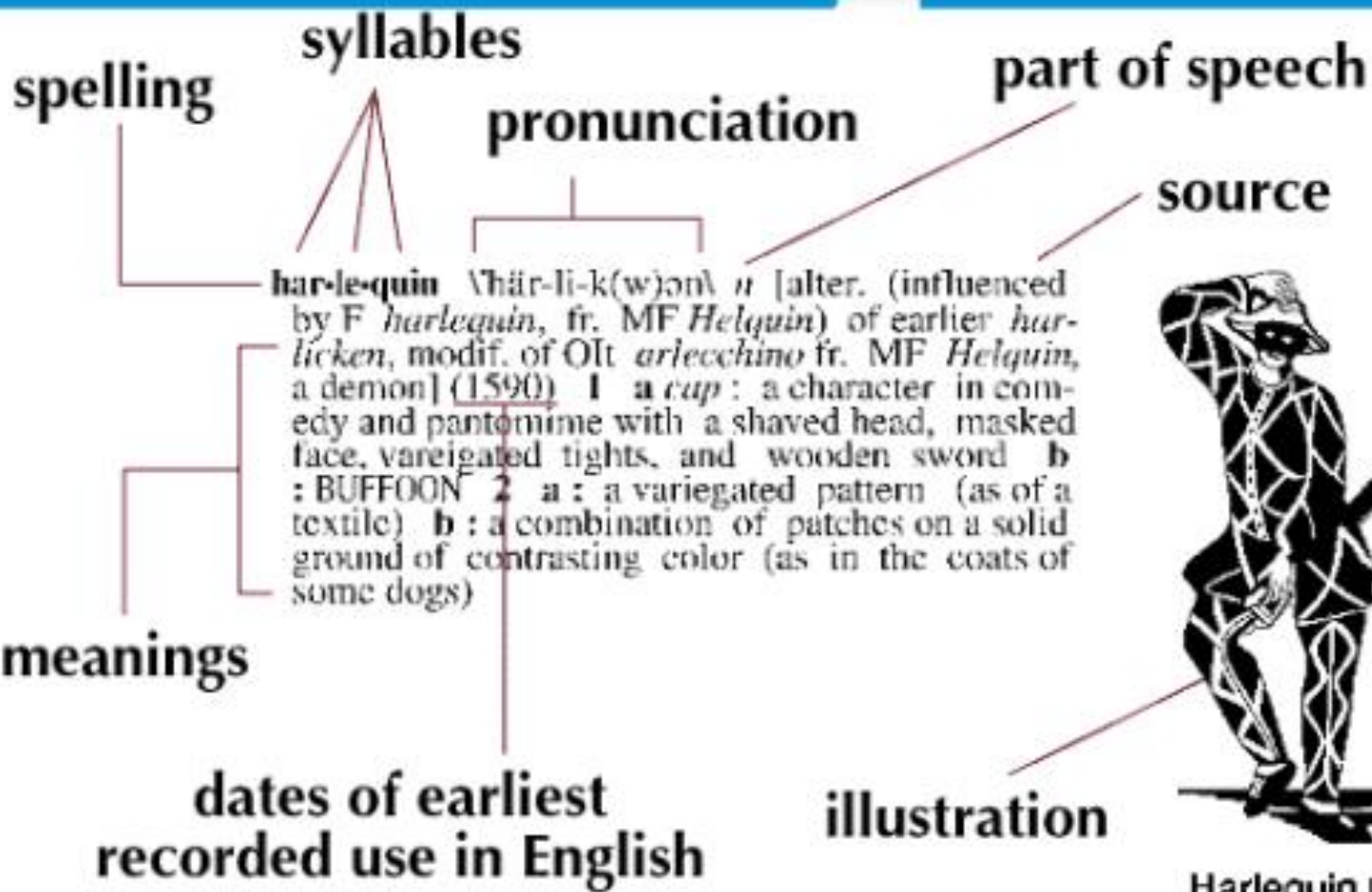


 **Word Collector**

<b>Aa</b>	<b>Bb</b>	<b>Cc</b>	<b>Dd</b>	<b>Ee</b>
<b>Ff</b>	<b>Gg</b>	<b>Hh</b>	<b>Ii</b>	<b>Jj</b>
<b>Kk</b>	<b>Ll</b>	<b>Mm</b>	<b>Nn</b>	<b>Oo</b>
<b>Pp</b>	<b>Qq</b>	<b>Rr</b>	<b>Ss</b>	<b>Tt</b>
<b>Uu</b>	<b>Vv</b>	<b>Ww</b>	<b>Xx, Yy</b>	<b>Zz</b>

© The CAPS South African Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Statement (2014) for English, Grade 1, page 48.





Harlequin





---

## ONLINE ETYMOLOGY DICTIONARY

Search:  Search Mode

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

<http://etymonline.com/>

**Word Collection Chart Entry**

Word: \_\_\_\_\_

Title and page number: \_\_\_\_\_

I selected this word because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Part of Speech

\_\_\_\_\_

Word Origin (See chart of abbreviations)

Date of earliest recorded use \_\_\_\_\_

Meaning in text: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Word Collection Chart Entry**

Word: \_\_\_\_\_

Title and page number: \_\_\_\_\_

I selected this word because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Part of Speech

\_\_\_\_\_

Word Origin (See chart of abbreviations)

Date of earliest recorded use \_\_\_\_\_

Meaning in text: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# On the importance of vocabulary...

“It is clear that a large and rich vocabulary is the hallmark of an educated individual. Indeed, a large vocabulary repertoire facilitates becoming an educated person to the extent that vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to ***reading proficiency*** in particular and ***school achievement*** in general.”