Vocabulary & Language Use
How can we go broader & deeper?

Karin Hess, Ed.D.
Educational Research in Action LLC
www.karin-hess.com

*Vocabulary is **almost always addressed most effectively** **after reading*** (Hammond, 1984)

1. Is the word/phrase necessary for text comprehension AND not defined in the text?

2. Is the /phrase necessary for text comprehension BUT defined <u>explicitly</u> in the text?

3. Is the /phrase necessary for text comprehension AND defined <u>partially or implicitly</u> in the text?

4. Is the /phrase <u>not necessary</u> for overall comprehension, <u>but perhaps interesting</u>?

5. Is the /phrase <u>not necessary</u> for overall comprehension, AND of <u>little interest or relevance</u>?

Karin Hess, 2011

Vocabulary is almost always addressed most effectively after reading (Hammond, 1984)

1. **Is the word/phrase necessary for text comprehension AND not defined in the text?**

Use the text as the content for exploring …

- Is the word/phrase necessary for text comprehension BUT defined explicitly in the text?

- Is the word/phrase necessary for text comprehension AND defined partially or implicitly in the text?

- Is the word/phrase not necessary for overall comprehension, but perhaps interesting?

- Is the word/phrase not necessary for overall comprehension, AND of little interest or relevance?

A useful formula

Reading comprehension is the product of decoding (D) skills and language comprehension (L).

- D x L = RC

- 0 x L = 0 *(poor decoding, strong language comprehension)*

- D x 0 = 0 *(strong decoding, poor language comprehension)*
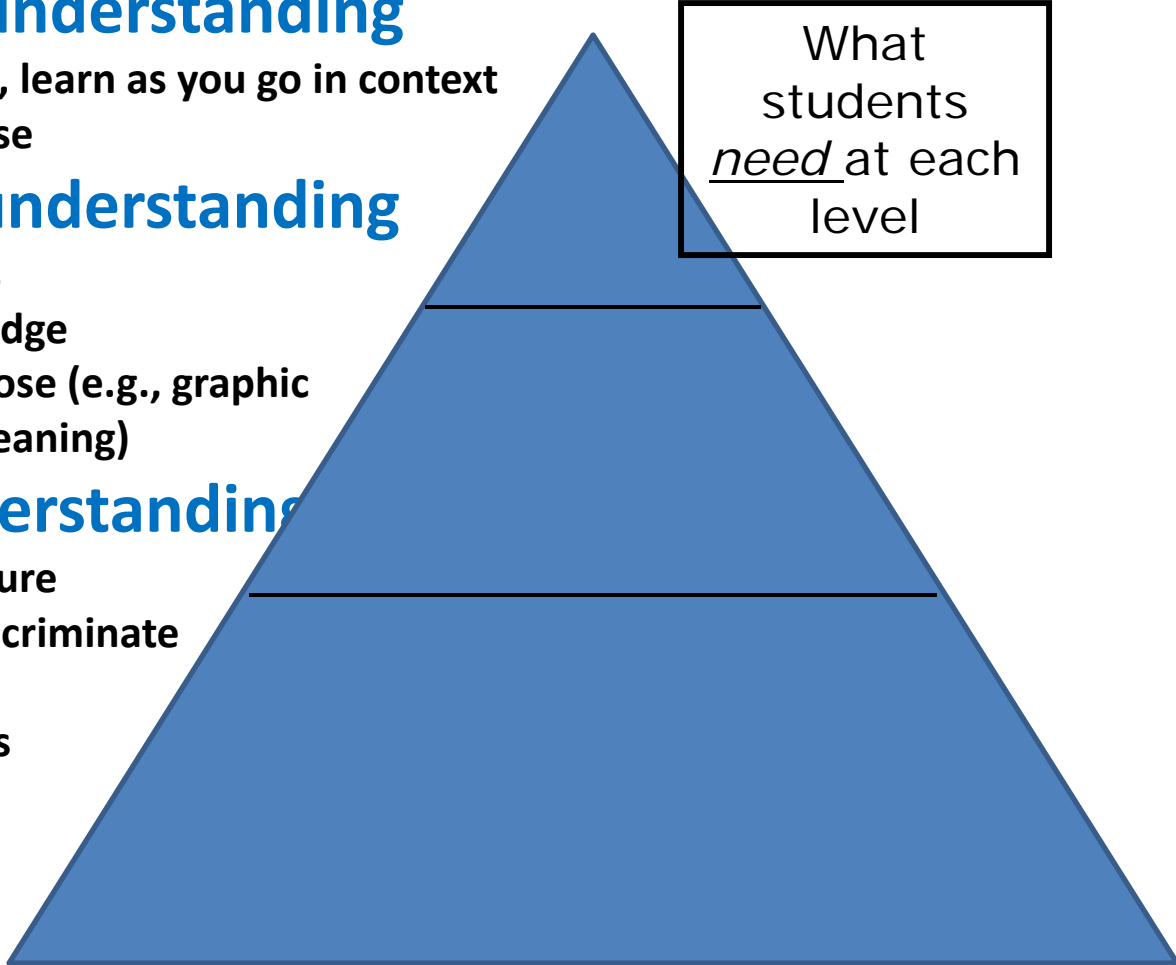
Karin Hess, 2011

Language Comprehension is affected by

- Inadequate vocabulary and oral language
- Insufficient background/world knowledge
- Poor working memory **(have no mental schemas)**
- Insensitivity to causal structures that connect information **(e.g., conversely, as opposed to, simultaneously)** or change meaning **(e.g., adding affix)**
- Lack of identification of semantic relationships **(seeing semantic cues in texts: "once upon a time" = story; "… is a dilemma = information organized as problem-solution structure)**
- Inability to make (and support) inference

Karin Hess, 2011

5
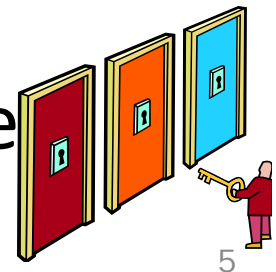
Multiple Levels of Understanding

- **Verbal association understanding**
  - **Definitional, single context, learn as you go in context**
  - **Wide & varied; everyday use**
- **Partial conceptual understanding**
  - **Deeper/multiple meanings**
  - **Extend definitional knowledge**
  - **Strategies <u>match</u> text purpose (e.g., graphic organizers integral to text's meaning)**
- **Full conceptual understanding**
  - **Word families, word structure**
  - **nuanced meanings; can discriminate a word from similar words**
  - **Integrates meanings & uses**
  - **Explicit strategies to connect & extend definitions to related concepts**

What students _need_ at each level

What does a *K-6* learning progression look like?

- **E.RWL.a acquiring understanding of new words** from shared literacy activities

- **E.RWL.c applying grade-level phonics and word analysis skills** when decoding or interpreting word meaning (e.g., reading names, signs, labels, lists, connected text)

- **E.RWL.e determining word meaning, multiple meanings, or shades of meaning** based on word relationships (e.g., categories, synonyms/antonyms), context, or use of resources (e.g., glossary)

- **E.RWL.g applying grade-level phonics and word analysis skills/ word structure** (e.g., syllables) when decoding and interpreting word meaning

- **E.RWL.k distinguishing literal from figurative meanings** of words and phrases used in different contexts

- **M.RWL.a determining word meanings, multiple meanings, and nuanced meanings** based on context or making connections between known and unknown words

Karin Hess, 2011

7

What does a *gr 7-12* learning progression look like? [2]

- **M.RWL.e identifying and** interpreting use of literal or figurative language in a variety of contexts & discourse styles (e.g., satire, humor)

- **M.RWL.g making conceptual connections** between known and unknown words, using word structure, word relationships, or context

- **M.RWL.h using word derivation to expand vocabulary use to new contexts** (e.g., historical, cultural, political, mathematical)

- **M.RWL.k interpreting use of words/ phrasing** (e.g., figurative, symbolic)

- **H.RWL.a utilizing specialized or content-specific reference tools** (print and digital) to verify and expand vocabulary when reading, writing, listening, and speaking

- **H.RWL.c making conceptual connections between known** and unknown words/phrases and analyzing nuances of word/phrase meanings (multiple meanings, similar denotations, precise intended meaning) used in different contexts

- **H.RWL.e analyzing intent, style, or impact of language used in print/non-print texts with more complex topics or themes** (e.g., figurative, symbolic or abstract language, potential bias-laden phrasing)

Areas for Vocabulary Instruction: Building Depth & Breadth

- ***Oral Language & World Knowledge***

- ***Strategic Thinking***

- ***Inference Making with Supporting Evidence***

Building Language Comprehension

Strategy: Linear Array

Building Language Comprehension: Articulating Shades of Meaning

➢ **Task:** fill in continuum of words found in a text

freezing --------------boiling

- Supports writing descriptively, builds language knowledge, selecting precise meaning

- Where do these phrases/words in text 'fit' along a continuum <u>& why</u>: **icy sheets, warmth, toasty, freezing feet, burning coals, shivering, tingles, frosty, seeing your breath**

Karin Hess, 2011   11

Strategic Thinking

Recognizing Strategic Thinking

- Moves from pre-existing/prior knowledge to expected learning/deeper understanding

- We begin to see a range of performance: how students organize ideas, facts; mental models/schema

  - ✓ **"Novice" Learners** (distracted by surface features & unrelated content; have no mental models or faulty mental models; must use of all working memory space)

  - ✓ **"Expert" learners** (use little working memory space, rely on patterns rather than bits of information), have mental models to organize new information)

- Depth, breadth, complexity, strategy use, ability to generalize/transfer in a variety of contexts …

Strategy: What do I know about these words?

Oral Language, Strategic Thinking, & World Knowledge: Activate and extend prior knowledge (before reading texts/start of unit)

HANDOUT: What do I know about these words?

➢ Silently read the words. Which column best describes <u>what you know now</u> about each word/phrase/term.

➢ Discuss with a partner the meaning of each word/phrase/term within the context of this topic or text.

➢ **List the words/phrases under the column that best describes your current understanding.**

TOPIC: Immigration

WORD LIST*

"a better life"   escape

potato famine   emigration

economic migrant   population ecology

Hitler   "green card"

disparaging   exodus

Underground Railroad

Huddled Masses

*generated by texts to be read, Internet searches using key words, etc.

Strategy: Exclusion Brainstorming

Strategic Thinking & World Knowledge: Activate and extend prior knowledge

➢ **Task: Cross out** words you do <u>not</u> think will be found in the text; **circle** those you're likely to find

- – **Topic:** Factory Reform
- – **Terms:** hate, reparations, disaster, fairness, humanitarian, survivor, rules, locked doors, unharmed, insurance, investigation, fire

Strategy: Connect-Correct-Collect

Connect	Correct	Collect
How large was the *Titanic*? When did it sail? How many people were on the ship? Write one other important fact you know:		

Strategy: Concept Circles

Strategic Thinking & World Knowledge: Analyze connections; integrate information

➢ **Task: describe relationships** among terms & topic

 – **Topic:** Civil Rights Movement

 – **Each circle section has a related concept or phrase:** racism, stereotyping, church bombing, violence

Inference Making with Supporting Evidence

Strategy: "One pager"

Making Inferences

➤ **Task:** select a <u>quote</u> from text that has implicit (rather than explicit) information and <u>illustrate</u> and <u>explain</u> your interpretation using <u>supporting evidence</u> from within or outside of the text (illustrations can also be models/ diagrams that show relationships or create analogies)

Some Vocabulary & Language Resources

- ***Bringing Words to Life*** by Beck, McKeown, & Kucan

- ***Teaching Vocabulary in All Classrooms*** (3rd ed.) by Blachowicz & Fisher

- ***Words, Words, Words*** by Janet Allen

- ***Choice Words*** by Peter Johnston

- ***Accelerated Vocabulary Instruction*** by Nancy Akhavan

- ***Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement*** by Robert Marzano

- ELA Learning Progressions, Hess, K. http://www.nciea.org/publications/ELA_LPF_12%202011_final.pdf

- Figurative Language PowerPoints & lessons http://languagearts.mrdonn.org/figurative2.html

- Search a word to find multiple uses/contexts

- http://sentence.yourdictionary.com/

- Word sift website (will show most used words) http://www.wordsift.com/