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ABSTRACT

A study examined teaching methods for vocabulary at the first grade level. The study compared teaching vocabulary in context and teaching vocabulary in isolation. Subjects were 32 culturally diverse first-grade students from varying socio-economic backgrounds. The sample consisted of 14 boys and 18 girls, heterogeneously grouped. Two teacher-made tests were used, each consisting of 30 multiple choice items: Test A, to test vocabulary in isolation; and Test B, to test vocabulary in context. Target words for the tests were taken from the Dolch list, the Harris-Jacob list, and the reading material used in the classroom on a regular basis. Both tests were administered as pretests prior to instruction. After a 3-month period of instruction, Tests A and B were readministered as posttests to determine students' vocabulary growth. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in vocabulary acquisition by the sample. Results also indicated that, although there was vocabulary growth with both methods, the sample group's growth in vocabulary taught in isolation was greater than that of the vocabulary taught in context. Findings suggest that both methods of learning vocabulary will enable children to increase their vocabulary base and should be used. (Four tables of data are included; contains 37 references, 4 appendixes containing lists of vocabulary in context and in isolation, and related literature on vocabulary building.) (Author/CR)

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Vocabulary Teaching Strategies: Effects on Vocabulary Recognition and Comprehension at the First Grade Level

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary knowledge is a critical element of reading comprehension. A study was done to compare teaching vocabulary in context and teaching vocabulary in isolation. There were thirty-two first grade students that participated in this study. Two teacher developed pre-tests were administered prior to instruction of vocabulary in context and in isolation. Following a three month period of instruction, two teacher developed post-tests were administered. The data indicated there was no significant difference in vocabulary acquisition by the sample.

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I. Means, Standard Deviation, and Significance of the Isolation Pre-test and Post-test

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Vocabulary is an important part of reading instruction. Understanding words and identifying them in a reading passage will help the reader comprehend what they are reading (Glazer, Nugent, 1989).

To read, children must learn to distinguish among visual symbols and acquire a sight word vocabulary - a repertoire of words that is recognized and found meaningful on sight without involved analysis. In a whole language approach to reading, ability to work with and appreciate language sounds exists not in isolation, but in conjunction with listening and language production (Hennings, 1986).

As we gained a better understanding of the reading process and children's development as readers and writers, much of our instruction has changed (Manning, Manning, 1992). The prevailing approach to beginning reading in the United States is the word-centered skill approach. The focus is on the recognition of an increasing number of words and on providing children with the skills they need to unlock words they do not recognize by sight, so they can derive meaning from print (Cutting, Mulligan, 1990).

How teachers invest their time helping readers identify words, is an important instructional question. This topic has brought about much debate. Some reading experts feel strongly that vocabulary should be taught in parts, such as with the phonics approach. Other reading authorities stress that accurate word identification is an important aspect of

learning to read, and that learning sound-letter relationships is the most efficient way to achieve accuracy (Gove, Vaca, Vaca, 1987).

Sight vocabulary teaching includes a variety of approaches. There is an increasing amount of research on the different methods of sight vocabulary presentation. Ceprano (1981) reviewed research methods of teaching sight words and found that no one method alone was best for every student. She found evidence that teaching distinctive features of words help children learn. She also found evidence that the use of picture clues, along with specific instruction to focus attention on words, facilitated learning. She reported, however, that some research indicates that teaching words in isolation or with pictures does not assure the ability to read words in context. In fact, indications are "most learners need directed experience with written context while learning words in order to perceive that reading is a language process and a meaning-getting process" (Ceprano, 1981). Therefore, when teachers are working with sight-word instruction, it seems wise to present words in context rather than just isolation (Burns, Roe, Ross, 1992).

Since the evidence is not clear cut, further research is indicated to support one view or another.

HYPOTHESIS

To add evidence on this topic the following study was undertaken.

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in vocabulary recognition and comprehension, when vocabulary was taught in context or in isolation at the first grade level.

PROCEDURES

A sample was formed consisting of 32 first grade students who participated in this study. The sample consisted of 14 boys and 18 girls, heterogeneously grouped. The students were from varying socio-economic backgrounds and were culturally diverse.

Two teacher-made tests were devised; one to test vocabulary in isolation (Test A) and one to test vocabulary in context (Test B). (See Appendix A and B) The test for vocabulary in isolation consisted of 30 multiple choice items which targeted specific words used in isolation. The test for vocabulary in context also consisted of 30 multiple choice items which were targeting specific vocabulary used in context. The target words for these tests were taken from the Dolch list, the Harris-Jacobs list, and the reading material used in the classroom on a regular basis.

At the onset of the study, both tests were administered as pre-tests, to determine the students' ability to identify

vocabulary in isolation and in context. The students were separated during the test to prevent the temptation to copy. Each student was given a piece of oaktag, 1" by 8", to use as a marker, helping the students keep their place. The students were given the directions and instructed not to guess at an answer, but rather leave it blank. Each test was administered on a different day and each test did not take more than 30 minutes.

Test A, the test of vocabulary in isolation, was administered by the teacher, who instructed the students to place their markers under the sample item. The teacher then read the targeted word and told the students to circle the correct word among four choices. The students then reviewed the answer to the sample item and were directed to follow the same procedure for the rest of the items. As each target word was given and circled, the students moved the marker down under each item.

Once this pre-test was administered, instruction of the target vocabulary ensued. The teacher had a target word on a card and hid the word card behind a cut-out of a door. The teacher would set up a "Hang Man" game by putting blanks on the black board or chart paper for each letter in the word. The students were told how many letters were in the word and how many of those letters were vowels. The students were instructed to call vowels first. Each student was given a chance at guessing the letters and/or the word. The student who guessed the word was given a token reward.

Once the word was identified, the students would say the word, spell the word, then say it agian. The word was then written down by the students in their vocabulary notebooks and the word card was added to the class word bank.

Test B, the test of vocabulary in context, was administered by the teacher, who instructed the students to place their markers under the sample item in row 1. The teacher then instructed the students to color in the bubble in front of the correct word of 4 choices that identified the picture clue. There were 18 items on the first part of the test which followed this procedure. Once the sample item was reviewed, the students were instructed to complete items 1 to 18, using their marker to keep their place. They were instructed not to guess on the items they did not know, but rather leave them blank.

The second part of the test consisted of 12 items with a picture depicting an activity and 3 sentences to choose from, only one of which described the picture. The students were instructed to place their marker under each item and color in the bubble in front of the sentence containing a target word, which best described the picture. Again, the students were instructed not to guess. The remainder of the test was taken independently.

Following the administering of this pre-test, instruction of these target words in context ensued. Each day, a target word was identified and taught using various

context strategies to ensure vocabulary comprehension, as well as identification.

The words were associated with pictures that had concrete referents, the students read and framed words in language experience charts, the students added these words to their word bank, but included a sentence using the word correctly. The teacher used a "think-aloud" to help students develop the strategies of using context clues, meaning clues, and cloze to determine an unknown word.

The period of instruction was between November 1, 1995 and January 31, 1996. The students were instructed in vocabulary identification and vocabulary comprehension using isolation strategies for specified vocabulary, (see Appendix C) and context strategies for specified vocabulary. (See Appendix D). Following this period of instruction, test A and test B were re-administered as post-tests to determine the growth of the students' vocabularies. The post-tests were administered following the same procedures as the pre-tests. The results of the pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed to determine which strategy, teaching vocabulary in isolation or in context, enabled the students to show the most growth in vocabulary identification and comprehension.

RESULTS

Table I illustrates the findings when comparing the pre-test of vocabulary taught in isolation and the post-test of vocabulary taught in isolation. The t of -4.45 showed

TABLE I

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ISOLATION PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

Isolation Test	M	SD	t	Significance
Pre-test	85.52	17.82	-4.45	<.01
Post-test	96.91	4.14		

that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test. This indicates a sizeable growth for the sample.

Table II describes the findings of the pre-test of vocabulary taught in context compared to the post-test of vocabulary taught in context. The t of 3.52 indicates

TABLE II

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONTEXT PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

Context test	M	SD	t	Significance
Pre-test	83.06	18.83	3.52	<.01
Post-test	95.41	6.42		

that there is a significant difference when comparing the pre-test and post-test. The 12.35 point difference between

the two tests shows considerable growth for the sample group.

Table III shows the results of comparing the pre-test of vocabulary taught in context to the pre-test of vocabulary taught in isolation. With a t of 0.19, it can be seen that there is no significant difference between the two pre-tests. The point difference between the two mean scores is 0.54, which indicates that the sample group did not test better on either of the two pre-tests.

TABLE III

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ISOLATION PRE-TEST AND THE CONTEXT PRE-TEST

Tests	M	SD	t	Significance
Isolation pre-test	82.52	17.82	0.19	n.s.
Context pre-test	83.06	18.83		

Table IV describes the results of comparing the two post-tests. As indicated by the t of 1.11, the difference between the two posts-tests was not significant. Although the sample group scored better on the isolation vocabulary post-test, these findings illustrate no major differences.

TABLE IV

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ISOLATION POST-TEST AND CONTEXT POST-TEST

Test	M	SD	t	Significance
Context Post-test	95.41	6.42	1.11	n.s.
Isolation Post-test	96.91	4.14		

CONCLUSIONS

The authors hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in vocabulary recognition and vocabulary comprehension when vocabulary is taught in context or in isolation at the first grade level. When the results of the study were analyzed it was seen that the hypothesis was shown to be true and thus was accepted.

For reading comprehension to occur, it is noted that the reader needs a large vocabulary base. This study illustrates that the sample group shows significant growth in vocabulary recognition and vocabulary comprehension in both areas tested.

Although there was vocabulary growth when taught with both methods, it can be seen that the sample group's growth in vocabulary taught in isolation was greater than that of the vocabulary taught in context. The sample group's mean score for vocabulary taught inisolation increased from the pre-test score of 82.52 to the post-test score of 96.91, a total of 14.39 points. Whereas, the mean score of vocabulary taught in context increased a total of 12.35 points.

On the basis of the findings, this study concludes that both methods of learning vocabulary will enable children to increase their vocabulary base and should be used.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Good readers differ from poor readers both in sizes of sight vocabularies and in their ability to decode words (Burns, Roe, and Ross, 1992). Word recognition skills are a "necessary prerequisite for comprehension and skilled reading" and we need "a balanced reading program, one which combines decoding skills and the skills of reading in context" (Samuels, 1988). These skills and strategies include developing a store of words that can be recognized immediately on sight and being able to use context clues, phonics, and structural analysis (Burns, Roe, and Ross, 1992).

Frank Smith contends that children learn to read by reading. When building children's sight vocabulary, the materials and methodology used should provide repeated opportunities to recognize high frequency words (Smith, 1978). Skilled readers make efficient use of contextual clues embedded within sentences and paragraphs to develop a conceptual understanding of unknown words (Morgan, 1983).

Research has confirmed that there is a strong link between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. We know that a number of factors contribute to the relationship of vocabulary and reading comprehension. The reader must know word meanings in order to comprehend text. The instruction of vocabulary in lists does not appear to increase comprehension of the text. However, teaching

vocabulary in context does appear to improve comprehension to some degree (Glazer, Nugent, 1989).

When students are taught vocabulary in isolated lists, they demonstrate mastery of the words, but still do not understand these same words in the context of the text. From this, we can conclude that isolated vocabulary study is simply ineffective. Students don't need to be drilled on isolated vocabulary, rather they need to be guided with meaning centered strategies for reading texts that may contain unfamiliar vocabulary (Manning, Manning, 1992).

According to Reggie Routman, when introducing the vocabulary of a new book, for the purpose of comprehension, it should be discussed in context. Unless the vocabulary is essenatial to the story and cannot be recognized in context, it is always discussed during and after the text reading, not before it. If a child comes across a word that he/she does not know the meaning, he/she is encouraged to put in a meaningful substitution. In this way, the student learns that he/she can usually identify words from context and continue his/her reading. Vocabulary is not only discussed in context, it is recorded by the teacher so that it can be reviewed orally on subsequent occasions. When words are talked about beyond the initial use in context, and when students relate words to concepts they already possess, these words become a part of students' speaking and writing vocabulary (Routman, 1988).

When building vocabulary, students have been presented with long lists of often unrelated terms that they could study and memorize, only to forget them once they've been tested on these words. It is important that we provide students with strategies to increase their vocabulary so that they are able to communicate effectively at various levels (Hadaway, Florez, 1988).

Five strategies that should be considered are:

(1) Teaching words in context.

In teaching vocabulary, it is important to provide meaningful learning experiences for students. One way of nurturing vocabulary development and retention, is to teach words in context. Divorcing words from their surroundings decreases the likelihood of comprehension and retention (Kruse,1979).

(2) Move from known to unknown.

Teachers should introduce new words in already known structures, moving from known to unknown. When a new word is introduced in familiar structure and content, comprehension increases. Having students volunteer words from their own background increases comprehensibility.

(3) Group and categorize items.

Grouping items into topical or thematic areas also enhances vocabulary development (Hadaway, Florez, 1988).

(4) Relate content to students interest.

Hooking into individual interests and backgrounds, can enhance vocabulalry development (Finocchiaro, 1974).

(5) Provide for constant review.

It is important that there be continual review of vocabulary after its initial presentation (Hadaway, Florez, 1988).

Practices that reflected a word-centered view of reading became outdated. We then directed our students attention toward learning words. We equated reading with pronouncing and identifying words. It has abeen found through research that students who are taught in meaning-centered classrooms, acquire a larger sight vocabulary than those who are taught in a word centered classroom. We know that beginning readers learn sight words through active reading of predictable books and related reading materials (Manning, Manning, 1992).

Dependable contexts help the reader develop a sight vocabulary that can soon be recognized in other contexts (Smith, 1978).

The major goal of most basal readers, was to develop a core vocabulary of high frequency sight words. Preprimers and primers accomplish this by first introducing the vocabulary in isolation, then having the child read this vocabulary over and over in short sentences which are supposed to be easier to read. The strict control of the sentences and the repetition of vocabulary in contrived, unnatural sentences, does not match the natural language that children are already using (Sampson, Sampson, 1981). These often plotless stories are so disconnected that they

may interfere with the readers comprehension (Brennan, 1982; Rhodes, 1979). These stories unnatural language and lack of story structure may actually inhibit children's ability to predict the next word or phrase, thus making it more difficult to read (Bridge, Haley, and Winograd, 1983).

The most important thing about reading material may well be their predictability (Boodman, 1976).

A study was done in Kentucky to compare the effectiveness of beginning reading instruction using predictable materials vs. less predictable materials. Of interest is the effects of the two types of reading materials on the children's sight word recognition and those strategies used to identify unfamiliar words.

A control and experimental group were set up. The control group was given a preprimer while the experimental group was given patterned predictable books such as: Brown Bear, Brown Bear and Fire! Fire! Said Mrs. Mc Guire, both by Bill Martin, as well as, other predictable patterned books. To determine whether or not there was a difference in the number of target words learned by the two groups, T-tests were used on the difference between the means. The students using the predictable materials learned significantly more target words than students using preprimers. The significant differences indicate that the patterned language books facilitated children's acquisition of sight vocabulary. The use of this type of context proved to be very successful, it is believed, because the material was

relevant and predictable, the vocabulary was taught in context, and their was no fractured learning taking place, as in the case of the control group. This group was taught the target vocabulary in isolation and the children had no opportunity to read these words in meaningful contexts (Bridge, Haley, and Winograd, 1983).

According to Frank Smith, Margaret Spenser has documented exactly how authors teach reading. She emphasizes that the books must be ones that children know well, favorite stories, predictable stories in which it is obvious what the next word will be. The child already knows the words and the author shows the child how to read them. They help the child to recognize the written word. The more written words the child is able to recognize, the easier it becomes to learn new words. Authors also teach the meanings of words by having the reader deduce their meaning from the context in which they appear.

Rather than teaching vocabulary through phonics, the alternative is to teach the whole-word. The trouble with teaching the whole-word method is that someone decides in advance the order in which the learner will be taught individual words. This is not a useful way for beginning readers to learn vocabulary. Spoken and written words are learned in meaningful contexts.

Children cannot learn to recognize enough whole words to become readers, not if they are expected to learn lists of words in advance of reading. Children who cannot learn

and remember a dozen preselected words on a list, can learn and remember words taught in an interesting and meaningful context (Smith, 1992).

Reading instruction in New Zealand is predicated on a holistic theory of language teaching methods.

The word-centered skills approach to reading in the United States, involves breaking language into small units such as isolated word lists and then teaching these in a planned sequence. Reading instruction in New Zealand is based on the best way to learn to read is by reading. The best way to develop vocabulary is by using it in context (Cutting, Mulligan, 1990).

We may deny children a satisfying experience with a book if we assume that reading means identifying words and getting their meaning. We assume that word identification precedes comprehension when the truth is that if we are getting meaning from the whole context, we can then grasp the meaning of individual words. Words only have meaning when they transact with one another, within the context of the emerging whole.

Jeanne Chall emphasizes in her book, Learning to Read: The Great Debate. (1961, 1981) that there are two beginning reading approaches: code-emphasis and meaning-emphasis. The code-emphasis approach stresses breaking the alphabetic code, learning the correspondences between letters and sounds. The meaning-emphasis approach stresses getting meaning from what one is reading.

The code-emphasis focuses on identifying words suggesting that once words are identified, the meaning will take care of itself.

The meaning emphasis stresses that meaning is not in the text itself, but rather develops during an active transaction between the reader and the text.

Getting the meaning is usually possible without identifying all the words (Weaver, 1988). There are several stratagies that the reader can use within the text to determine unknown words and their meanings. These semantic cues which can help the reader are:

(1) Explanation and Appositives provide insight to the meaning of the unknown words.

(2) Prior knowledge or the experiences of the reader can provide insight into meaning if the reader applies it to the text.

(3) Mood and tone that prevails through the text can help determine meaning.

(4) The writer presents an example or situation that provides meaning.

(5) Summary is a description that proffers the word's meaning, but does not directly relate to the word or words in question.

(6) Synonyms provide a clue to the meaning of the word by offering a word that has a similar meaning.

(7) Compare and contrast is when a noun or pronoun is compared or contrasted to another noun or pronoun in some

way. This contextual situation often provides information regarding the meaning of the related words.

These semantic clue strategies are used by the reader to identify the vocabulary and then determine meaning and are taught to the reader using relevant context (Amoriell, 1984).

Barbara De Serres (1990) developed a way to improve vocabulary recognition buy using mastery words from the weekly stories, vocabulary word cards, and modified cloze stories. Use of modified cloze format provides an excellent means to give the students context clues to reinforce their recognition of new vocabulary words.

The process was done in three 15-20 minute sessions:

Session one entailed the introduction of the mastery vocabulary by writing each word on the board and using it in a sentence. Each student received a personal word card to be put in their word bank. On the back of the word card, the student wrote a sentence containing that word.

Before session two, De Serres (1990) wrote a one or two paragraph story based on classroom experience and used as many of the mastery words as possible.

During session two the mastery words were omitted in a modified cloze format to be replaced by the students. The students read the story and filled in the missing words with their word cards.

Session three was an individual practice of the activity using the word cards, only this time the students

received a written copy of the cloze story and were to write in the missing words.

Teachers who have used this method have been pleased with the improved vocabulary recognition of their lower performing students.

De Serres (1990) states three advantages to this approach and they are:

(1) It provides vocabulary practice in contexts which are current and personally meaningful.

(2) It gives each student several chances to study each word methodically.

(3) It reinforces the concept, that the purpose of reading is to get meaning from the story (De Serres, 1990).

Another study was done by Sippola (1988) to compare first grade readers trained in listen-read, listen-alone, and read-alone procedures. The listen-read strategy is when the student listens to a story on tape while scanning the corresponding text. The listen-alone strategy is when the student listens to the story on tape without following along visually. The read-alone strategy is when the student reads the story one additional time without hearing the story concurrently.

The study concluded that the listen-read strategy is an effective technique to use with low and middle first grade readers in facilitating word recognition and reading comprehension (Sippola, 1988).

This procedure has been used for a variety of purposes.

Chomsky says that this procedure facilitates sight word recognition and comprehension in primary readers (Chomsky, 1976). Automatic word recognition is necessary for optimal reading comprehension, however, it does not ensure the comprehension (Samuels, Laberge, 1983).

Rapid decoding of words in isolation does not improve comprehension. Beginning readers can and do use context to aid in decoding and comprehension. Readers with lesser word recognition skills are more dependent upon the use of context to identify words. Readers with more adept reading skills use context less in comprehension, however, they are sensitized to context (Perfetti, Roth, 1981).

Proficient readers, having practiced reading using context for some time, pay little conscious attention to it. The skill becomes automatic. This does not mean that the reader ignores it (Sippola, 1988).

In 1987, Crais did a study to determine if the reader is able to decode and comprehend "novel" or nonsense words when they are read in context. The following procedure will further substantiate the fact that adept readers pay little attention to context while the lower skilled reader counts on it.

The context used was separated into two types. The first type of context used had the words in close proximity to the "novel" words, be specifically related to the definition of those "novel" words. The second type of context used had the words in close proximity to the "novel"

words be non-specific and unrelated to those words. In both cases, the "novel" words were repeated frequenty throughout the text. It was found that in both cases, while there was no phonological recall of the words, the close proximity of the recurrences of the "novel" words facilitated recall of the information necessary for comprehension. There was, however, better recall when the "novel" word was in close proximity to more specific, more related words.

This study was done in an oral context, however, the results nonetheless support the cognitive effort view of processing when the "novel" words are presented in a context in which the surrounding words of the "novel words" are more meaning specific (Crais, 1987).

Marian Blank investigated the effects of non-content or functional words on the comprehension of a sentence. Children have more difficulty reading and spelling words such as "is", "was", "not", "does" than content words. The reader who is disabled has a severe problem with "non-content" words because they tend not to be spelled phonetically and most remedial programs for the reading disabled are based on phonics. These words are considered confusing exceptions and are usually taught in isolation as sight words with little attention to meaning.

Blank developed a method for teaching non-content words as part of reading curriculum. A priority in this instructional approach stresses semantic importance on non-content words as they appear in the context of a sentence.

The semantic information provided in non-content words often helps the reader anticipate the features of words that follow it. With a clearer understanding of the function of these words, the reader can more easily identify and use them (Blank, Bruskin, 1982).

In the Dallas School District, a remedial reading program for first graders was developed to improve their reading through activities and strategies used to promote comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary development.

To promotae vocabulary development, they chose 10 words from a story that was read weekly for vocabulary instruction. Introduction of vocabulary words in context, teaching of definitions and drill were based on techniques developed by Ried (1981). That is the see, say, write and spell method.

Several activities, which progressed from easy to difficult, were developed from student made word cards. The vocabulary learning process was a five day set up. The first day five words were introduced. The teacher introduced each word separately. The word was displayed, verbalized, repeated, used in a sentence, then spelled by having the children trace the word in the air. Then, each child wrote the word on a small word card.

Word cards were stored in large glass jars for each child. During a short practice session, the children reviewed the word cards in isolation and made a stack of

those practiced. The teacher circulated the room to offer encouragement and praise.

By the end of the week, the children were able to recall the words readily. These vocabulary activities enabled remedial first graders to recognize, use, and define at least ten new words each week (Matthews, Seibert, 1983).

This method presented vocabulary in context and in isolation. It appears that using both strategies with this method, produced a successful outcome.

Sight vocabulary teaching includes a variety of approaches. The different methods of sight vocabulary presentation, have been tested and results recorded (Ceprano, 1980). Ceprano (1980) conducted a study concerning choice of methods to introduce sight vocabulary to first grade students. Ceprano chose two different strategies in the study, the context method and the isolation method. The context method entailed the introducing of words via pictures, along with oral and written sentences. The isolation method consisted of stressing the appearance of the presented word with emphasis on the letters it contained. The results obtained relay the implication that no single isolated method is best for all students (Markstakler, 1990).

In 1965, Ken Goodman conducted a study to determine if children read words better in context or in lists. The study concluded that children made 60%-80% fewer errors when reading words in context, as compared with reading words in

isolated lists. This study has been cited frequently because it has given support to methods of teaching reading in which use of context is strongly encouraged as in the whole language approach to teaching reading.

In New Zealand the use of context clues is a major factor in the reading process. When children encounter a difficult word, they are encouraged to guess what the word might be, to look at the first letter and guess, or to read through the end of the sentence and find other context clues to help them guess the word.

Children are expected to use context clues as a major strategy in identifying words and to give only secondary attention to letter-sound analysis. Phonics is down-played.

Tom Nicholson revisited Goodman's (1965) classic study. The findings of this study suggested that context clues were an important part of the reading process. There is quite a bit of evidence to suggest that the study may have overestimated the effects of context cues in reading.

In the classic study, one hundred children, grades 1 to 3, were given increasingly difficult lists of words to read until a level of difficulty was reached at which the lists were neither too easy or too hard. The students were then given text material to read, which was taken from a graded reading series that included the same words as the lists. Children's reading errors and miscues were noted.

The results showed a dramatic reduction in the number of errors made when the words were read in context.

Nicholson (1991) believes that the results of this study may have been misleading because: there was no comparison of individual differences between good and poor readers and there was no allowance for the effect of order. That means it could not be determined whether the results were due to context or to the effect of having had a second opportunity to read the words.

Other researchers had questioned the validity of this study due to those factors. In order to qualify or disqualify Goodman's (1965) findings, two experiments were conducted. In experiment 1, the purpose was to evaluate the effects of reversing the original order of testing. Children were given a context passage first, then the list form. Experiment 2 was replication of the original study.

The results of the experiment 1, showed that the poor readers of all ages generally showed significant gains with context, although there were no significant percent gains for the eight-year-old poor reader. The six and seven-year-old good reader and the eight-year-old average reader showed no reliable gains. The eight-year-old good reader gained significantly with lists.

In the second experiment it was found that six of the six year old poor readers were unable to cope with the easiest lists, but when given these same words in context, the children dramatically improved. The rest of the results were similar to the results in Goodman's (1965) classic study, that is, children generally read words better in

context than in lists. It must be noted, however, that the benefit of context went to the poor and average readers and made no difference to the good readers.

Nicholson (1991) concluded that the findings of Gpooodman's (1965) classic study may have exaggerated the effects of reading vocabulary in context. If context actually helped children to read better, then they would have read better in context, regardless of whether they read the words in list form first or context form first.

The key to successful vocabulary development, appears to lie in providing students with relevant and useful input and using language as a process (Hadaway, Florez, 1988). From all of the research presented, it appears that teaching vocabulary in context has the most positive effect on vocabulary development and comprehension. Learning vocabulary in isolation, however, should not be discounted as a positive strategy toward vocabulary development and comprehension. It would appear that teaching vocabulary and comprehension is best accomplished with a balance of these two strategies to ensure optimum learning is taking place.

APPENDICES

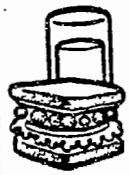
Name APPENDIX A Pg 28

SAMPLE	laugh	sang	lost	away
	after	barn	alone	call
	doll	color	cow	into
	from	hot	bring	friend
	grass	grow	is	cat
	hot	how	men	got
	basket	party	birthday	faster
	thing	pretty	three	see
	will	green	white	mouse
	sandy	pull	yellow	school
	open	friend	seed	party
	high	take	clown	surprise

bake	**window**	**bring**	**paint**
look	**hurt**	**step**	**pony**
farm	**wait**	**least**	**way**
pig	big	beg	dip
or	art	are	ear
yes	you	yon	young
come	some	coma	calm
took	leak	like	look
shop	stop	pots	step
skill	cool	school	shoal
said	sad	sand	seed
west	went	wind	when
wish	won	saw	was
about	abut	abet	bout
ferry	every	funny	very

Name _____ APPENDIX B Pg 30

- and
- cat
- go
- can



- floor
- food
- find
- fell

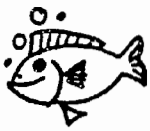
- day
- bring
- dress
- lost

- snake
- sheep
- soon
- best

- with
- help
- hat
- away

- boy
- hand
- box
- dog

- bed
- for
- with
- but



- fun
- like
- fish
- it

- will
- wagon
- home
- get

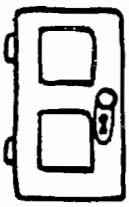
- dog
- little
- down
- up

- see
- have
- fast
- house

- best
- bird
- into
- hold

- cake
- not
- toy
- can

- bag
- boat
- two
- make



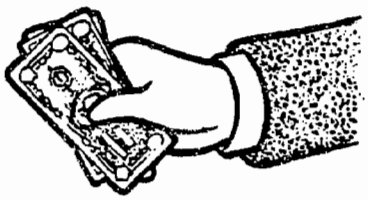
- did
- run
- door
- is

- ○ milk
- ○ night
- ○ know
- ○ miss

- ○ for
- ○ fence
- ○ flower
- ○ red

- ○ circus
- ○ give
- ○ girl
- ○ each

- ○ A girl is sitting.
- ○ A girl is sailing.
- ○ A girl is walking.

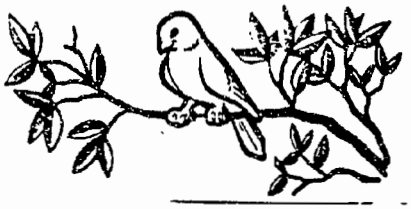


- ○ Here is the money.
- ○ This is a ball.
- ○ Here are two books.

- ○ Two boys play ball.
- ○ Three girls jump rope.
- ○ Three girls play ball.

- ○ Apples are in the bowl.
- ○ Two children have a basket.
- ○ They have a balloon.

- ○ I can dance.
- ○ The girl runs.
- ○ See the ring.



- ○ The bird sits in the tree.
- ○ It is time to eat lunch.
- ○ The bird is hopping around.

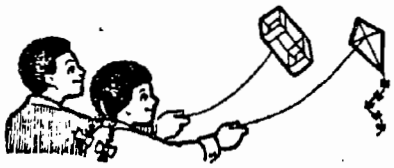
- ○ Here is your new pencil.
- ○ The boy is dancing now.
- ○ The boy is selling cake.

- ○ He has a fish.
- ○ The children came.
- ○ The cup broke.

- ○ She jumps up.
- ○ The cat drinks.
- ○ Read the book.

- ○ A dog and cat are walking.
- ○ See the cow and the dog.
- ○ The baby rabbit is mine.

- ○ Go down the steps.
- ○ This is for you.
- ○ Sit on the grass.



- ○ The children are sad.
- ○ See the kites go up.
- ○ Ann can sing a song.

APPENDIX C

VOCABULARY ISOLATION LIST

1 . after
2 . into
3 . from
4 . is
5 . how
6 . birthday
7 . see
8 . will
9 . yellow
10 .friend
11. surprise
12. window
13. look
14. way
15. big
16. are
17. you
18. come
19. like
20 stop
21. school
22. said
23. went
24. was
25. about
26. very
27. it
28. the
29. am
30. of

APPENDIX D

VOCABULARY CONTEXT LIST

1. cat
2. car
3. house
4. hat
5. dog
6. wagon
7. cake
8. fish
9. door
10. boat
11. bed
12. dress
13. snake
14. flower
15. ball
16. kite
17. boy
18. girl
19. run
20. down
21. bird
22. milk
23. jump
24. balloon
25. money
26. food
27. sits
28. drinks
29. walking
30. and

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