Not Just Phonics; Essential Knowledge Building in K-2
Meet the Team

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Agenda

1. Examine current conversations in early literacy.

2. Explore knowledge-building texts for emerging readers.

3. Discuss how reading knowledge-building texts affects students.
Essential Question

What difference do knowledge-building texts make?
“It is not an overstatement to say that a school that doesn’t have a phonics program is doing its students a huge disservice. Increasingly, the same can be said about the lack of intentionality for building students’ knowledge of the world and access to complex text.”

Susan Pimentel, “Why Doesn’t Every Teacher Know the Research on Reading Instruction?”
“The best way to boost students’ reading comprehension is to expand their knowledge and vocabulary by teaching them history, science, literature, and the arts ... ”

Natalie Wexler, “Why American Students Haven’t Gotten Better at Reading in 20 Years”
“... a drop in literacy scores we see as US children move from elementary to middle school suggests that our schools may be focusing too much on constrained skills—and too little on unconstrained ones—in the early grades.” (57)

Catherine E. Snow and Timothy J. Matthews, “Reading and Language in the Early Grades”
Scarborough’s Rope

- background knowledge
- vocabulary
- language structures
- verbal reasoning
- literacy knowledge
- phonological awareness
- decoding
- sight recognition

language comprehension

reading comprehension

word recognition

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“Two phrases often present as if they represent a sequence in students’ reading development: ‘learning to read’ and ‘reading to learn.’ ... Only after students have cleared the hurdle of the basics do they receive text with rich content: texts about the natural world, machines, faraway cultures, and so forth.” (500–501)

“It is true that accurate, fluent word recognition underlies proficient reading. However, the argument that students first learn to read and then use text to learn is fundamentally flawed ... ” (501)
You spot a flag.
It flaps in the sky.

You feel a breeze.
It brushes past your skin.

You hear a strong gust.
It slams the door.
This is the wind. 
We can not see it, but it is there. 
The wind brings motion to our world.
Air is all around us. It fills the sky over the earth. When the sun shines on the earth, the air gets hot.

This hot air drifts up. Once it has drifted up, cold air rushes in to fill its spot.

- The sun is a very big, hot star. It brings light and heat to the earth.
- Hot air rises. Cold air sinks down.
The wind is air in motion. It blows when hot and cold air shift spots in the sky.
HOW DO WE MEASURE THE WIND?

It is no small task to measure a thing we cannot see. We have crafted many tools to help.

This is a wind vane. The tip spins as the wind blows.

This one tells the direction of the wind. You look at where the tip of the arrow has landed.

This is an anemometer. It has 3 cups that sit on a rod. When the wind hits the cups, the rod spins.

This one tells how fast the wind is passing by. You track the number of spins.
We can not see the wind. But we can tell its path—and how fast it moves.

When the wind blows, it brings changes in the weather.
Big storms blow over.

Hot spells end.

The sun pops out as the clouds drift by.
More

The earth is surrounded by a bubble of air. When the air moves, it creates wind and weather. The moon is different. It is not surrounded by a bubble of air, so the moon has no wind or weather.

Because there is no wind on the moon, its surface remains largely unchanged. There are no strong winds to break down, or erode, the rocks, so they stay large. Any imprints left on the surface of the moon are long-lasting. An astronaut’s footprint from years ago is still stamped into the moon dust because there is no wind to blow it away.

With its gusts and lulls, the wind brings motion to our world.
IN MOTION

You spot a flag.
It flaps in the sky.

You feel a breeze.
It brushes past your skin.

You hear a strong gust.
It slams the door.

What makes these things happen?
“The goal of this study was to examine one approach to building students’ knowledge—the reading of conceptually coherent texts—in support of comprehension and word learning. Compared with participants who read a set of unrelated informational texts, those who read a set of conceptually coherent texts built more knowledge of the concepts [in this particular study, about birds], built more knowledge of the words in those texts incidentally as they read, and had better recall of a subsequent text on a related topic.” (773)

Knowledge-Building Text Set: Geodes®
## Module 3 Titles

**Level 1 Module 3: Powerful Forces**

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<td>Suffix -ing*</td>
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## Module 2 Titles

### Level 1 Module 2: Creature Features

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<td><strong>Safety First</strong>&lt;br&gt;Consonant Blends*&lt;br&gt;The Crab and the Urchin&lt;br&gt;Thorny Devil&lt;br&gt;Stick with Us</td>
<td><strong>Curious Creatures</strong>&lt;br&gt;Consonant Blends&lt;br&gt;A Wish to Fly&lt;br&gt;One Look&lt;br&gt;Slug Study</td>
<td><strong>Rabbits and Hares, Oh My!</strong>&lt;br&gt;Digraph Blends*&lt;br&gt;Small Wonders&lt;br&gt;Rabbit or Hare?&lt;br&gt;Young Hare</td>
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“Building knowledge systematically in English language arts is like giving children various pieces of a puzzle in each grade that, over time, will form one big picture.” (33)

“Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades.” (10)
Reflection

What difference do knowledge-building texts make?
Q & A
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Works Cited


Pimentel, Susan. “Why Doesn’t Every Teacher Know the Research on Reading Instruction?” Education Week, 26 October 2018.

