

WHEN CHILDREN SPEAK WITH CLASS

Word-A-Day

a vocabulary awareness program

By Marlene Glaus

WORD POWER

There are many young children who have been taught to speak and write such meaningful words as

obelisk

sibling

bactrian

equestrian

with as much assurance of their proper use as most children use

tower

brother/sister

camel

horseback rider.

WORD-A-DAY

Children learn the words by "looking up" the meaning of a new word each day which the teacher assigns to the class just before they leave for home each afternoon.

The children can bring anything appropriate to illustrate the word meaning for their homework assignment due in the next school morning.

ex. make a model
write a story
build a diorama
create a collage
write a definition
etc.

THE MAGIC RECIPE

The best selected words will usually be nouns. They will be words that children often meet pictured in books and in real life. They will be words to represent things close around them in their daily living.

They will be sensible, not "far-out" words which the teacher

carefully selects for the needs of the class. It will reflect an awareness of their world.

The children and teacher will have a verbal agreement with one another while they are together in the classroom. This powerful strategy becomes unique within each classroom. Each class and teacher will communicate with their own set of words and grow a language bond where one word will greet the next word in a meaningful and understanding way.

The speaking and writing skills of the children will become highly enriched.

It's a creative approach which grows each day where one word links to another like a long train of cars going somewhere. Words such as cat, mouse, dog, and frog become feline, rodent, canine, and amphibian. Fancy snacks become hors d'oeuvres, fluffy clouds become cumulus, thin ~~moons~~ become crescents, kangaroos become marsupials and on and on. It is another look at the world, a closer and more intellectual look!

WATCHING IT GROW

One labeled hand-size picture of each word is put on the wall and is added to daily and left there for the entire year.

The children watch their growing vocabulary by observing the addition of new pictures.

A wall of one word for the first day grows into a wall of one hundred seventy or so words by year's end.

The wall area becomes an enormous picture gallery for learning, reviewing, and appreciating.

The words are used many times in conversations every day until the children know them with certainty.

The creative teacher plans to use the words as often as possible.

ex. When dictating words for the weekly spelling test, the teacher adds words in the listening sentence from the vocabulary program.

We will say that the spelling word is FRIEND and the children have learned the definition for BACTRIAN and DROMEDARY for the vocabulary

WORD-A-DAY program. The teacher would dictate the sentence as the following:

"FRIEND - A bactrian is a FRIEND of a dromedary. FRIEND"

Every child in class will know what the teacher means. They will enjoy his/her sense of humor and the "tricky" ways they come to learn. (It is a style, an art, a talent that this special teacher brings.)

By November, some forty words will have been introduced in the WORD-A-DAY program. It will be about this time when the children will excite more in opening basic readers, story and science books, and magazines with the carry over of the often recognized vocabulary pictures.

They will quickly see cumulus clouds, deciduous trees, primates, fronds, and vehicles. They will note pictures of harvest times and Indian summers, castles with turrets and moats, dawns and dusks and silhouettes. The children and teacher will communicate on a higher level than before. Word analogies, categories, and classifications will form naturally first in conversation and then in writing. There will be more joy in working with nouns and verbs and adjectives because of the richer background.

The child will have more to write and rhyme about. His dictionary knowledge will greatly expand. The appreciative world of language will become changed forever for the child.

PARENTAL FEEDBACK

Parents will share their enjoyment from home as they watch their children show excitement from watching pictures on TV showing their vocabulary words. They will find the words with their children on drives and at shopping. (Super markets are a bonanza for vocabulary as are card shops.) They will notice together the mirage on the freeway, the skylines at the edge of the city, the odometer in the car and on and on. (These or other words will become theirs because of your careful selection.)

Teacher-parent conferences will be enhanced when parents tell teachers of the new and wonderful verbal experience they are having along with their children due to interest in WORD-A-DAY.

Hundreds of lives can be touched every day in any one school where several teachers are participating in the program with their students and parents.

NOTHING NEW

This WORD-A-DAY concept by no means claims to be a new idea of instruction. Teachers and publishers of texts have been using their own WORD-A-DAY approach in many ways for decades.

The technique, presentation, and total organizational plan of this special program is what claims to be fresh and innovative. It has been successful in working with many hundreds of students over the time of twenty-five years.

Parts of this program have been written up in several newspapers, journals, and books since the early 60's. Teacher workshops have been presented by the author for as many years.

THE WORD-A-DAY WORKSHOPS

This vocabulary program has gained national and international attention this past year partly due to workshops and seminars presented in and around the Minneapolis-St. Paul area with the most reaching one being a session given at the NCTE Convention in April, 1982.

Thirty teachers in Bermuda are entering the program for the 1982-83 school year because of interest stirred by a Bermuda teacher at the NCTE session.

MODEL SCHOOL

Centennial Elementary School, Richfield, Minnesota serves as the model school where the program was created and where teachers at the various grade levels are participating.

Throughout the year, the staff is busy scheduling many visitations for teachers from other school districts who want instruction for implementing the program in their own classroom.

Classroom demonstrations are presented at Centennial School where children give specific lessons for the visitors to observe. After school, follow-up workshops are held for the training of the new teacher and administrative interest.

THE BOOK

Due to the many requests from educators for the word lists, a copyrighted book is now available with the title TAKE MY WORD FOR IT. The entire program is completely presented in the book with special activities written for the gifted child, summer school, and a rich array of classroom activities in reading, language arts, architecture, art, etc.

Self-addressed stamped envelopes mailed directly to Centennial School will be returned to the sender with materials about the workshops and the book.

Requests should be mailed as follows:

Miss Marlene Glaus
Centennial Elementary School
73rd & Bloomington Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55423

MIDWEST WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The Midwest Writing Centers Association announces the first Midwest Writing Centers Association Conference, to be held Saturday, April 30, 1983, at the University of Missouri at Columbia. The theme of the conference will be "The Challenge of Diversity."

We are inviting proposals for papers which will fit into either a one-hour workshop format or a twenty-minute individual presentation followed by a ten-minute question and answer period. Although we welcome proposals dealing with any of the standard concerns of writing centers, topics of particular interest include:

the professional status of writing lab personnel
the role of computers in teaching writing
tutor training
the use of the writing lab approach in the classroom
programs for writing across the curriculum
effective diagnosis of writing problems

All papers presented at the conference will be published in the Conference Proceedings. The presentations, however, should not be merely readings of papers. Instead, presenters are encouraged to give informal talks focusing on practical suggestions.

Writing centers and labs are also invited to share instructional materials, descriptions of their programs, or other items of interest at the Materials Exchange Table.

The conference will be co-hosted by the University of Missouri at Columbia and Central Methodist College at Fayette.

One-page proposals (or completed papers) should be submitted no later than February 15, 1983. Please send all proposals and requests for further information to: Melody Daily, Dir., Writing Lab, Central Methodist

College, Fayette, Missouri 65248 (816) 248-3391 ext 328/338