

From Word to World:

Designing Children's Literature to Empower
Thoughtful Engagement in Life and Learning

694 Synthesis of Theory and Practice

Spring 2019

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You are reading this.

Parameters

- English language
 - Spoken & written language
 - On the basis of familiarity
- Reading experience
 - Not strictly teaching to read
 - Establishing a learning disposition
- Language and communication are different
 - Language is a form of communication
 - Language has established rules

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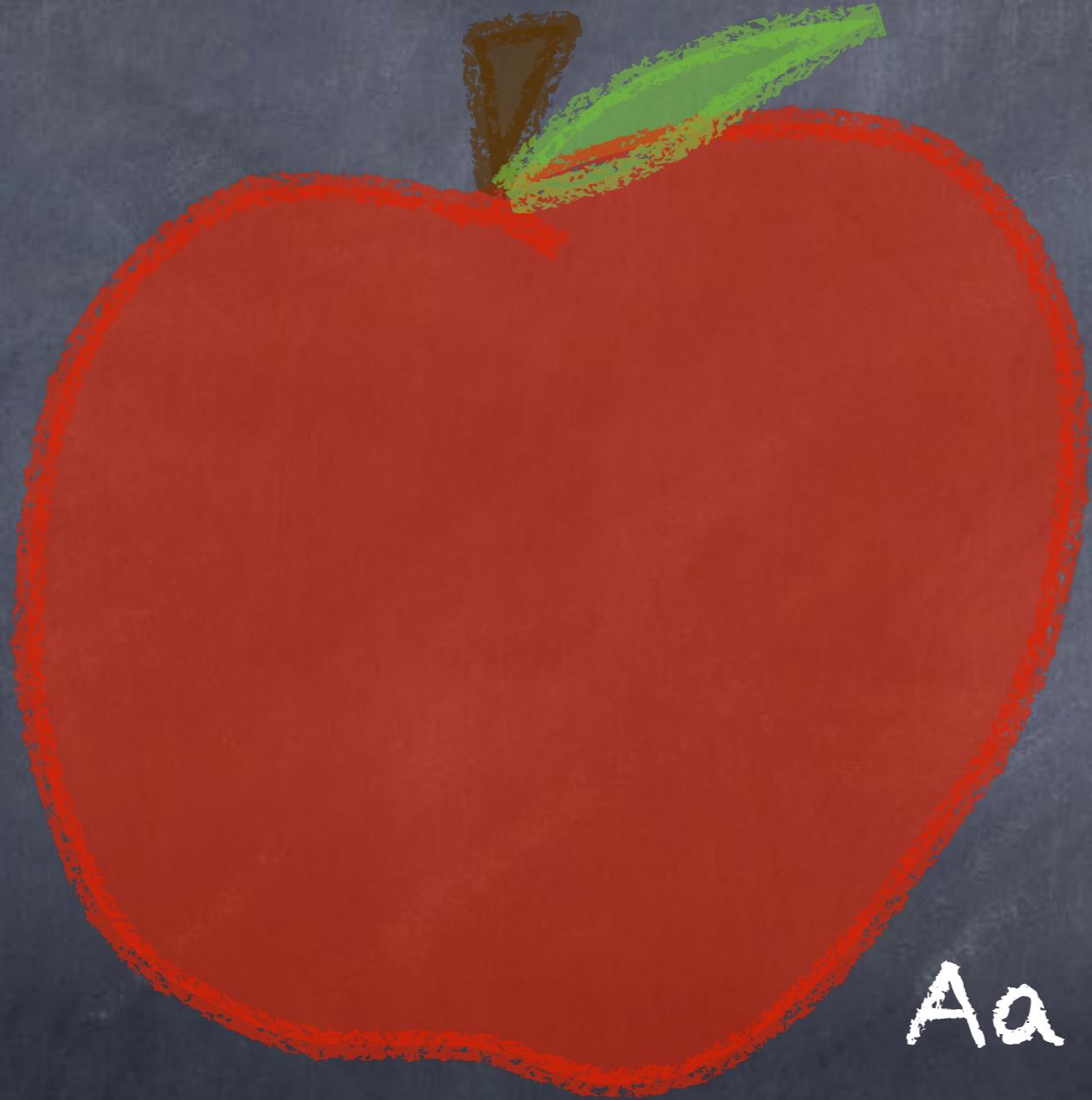
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A



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26 Letters

44 Phonemes

- The English language is made up of 26 alphabet symbols and (roughly) 44 sounds (phonemes)
- Regional accent and dialect make it challenging to pin down an exact number of phonemes... or standard pronunciation... or universal spelling of common words
- Each phoneme can be represented by at least two letters or letter combinations... some by as many as 12 variances (remember A?)
- And these are just the basics...

Put into Words...

- Not just letters and sounds, but words
- and words for types of words
- and types of words that can be other types of words
- and types of words that can mean other words
- and words used only in certain professions
- and words we don't use anymore
- and then some words we just make up



Frustration with reading can cause a dysfunctional relationship with language, manifesting in a reluctance to seek out words as a means to express ideas.

"2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of the 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare."

-begintoread.com, 2019

"A child without adequate words is limited in his cognitive receptions when thinking."

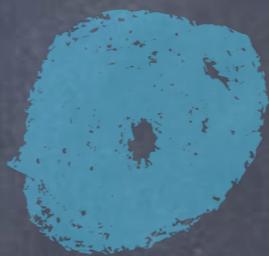
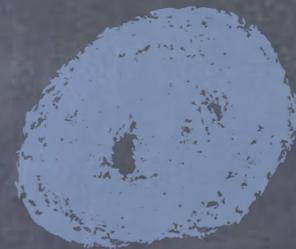
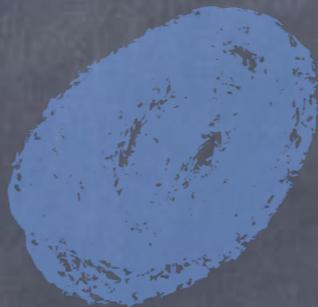
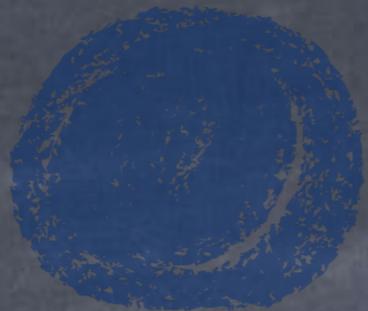
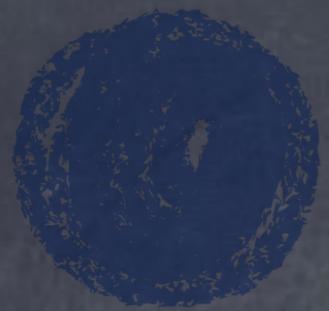
—Preparing Books for Children from Birth to Age Six: A New Children's Reality Approach
Çer, 2016

"Words are precision instruments.
They create categories to think with—
categories to apply not only to
received information, but also to
one's own thoughts"

-The Thinking Classroom
Tishman, Perkins and Jay, 1995

Words are ideas.

No, the other blue...



navy denim azure cobalt

lapis cerulean cornflower stone

sky arctic sapphire teal

ocean spruce aegean peacock



Blue is just one color.

"A" is just one letter.

Paint is not just for houses.

Why does this matter now?



Photo credit: Olivia Geylin, 2017

Why does this matter to you, Lauren?

Personal & Professional Background

- Early love of reading, writing, talking, learning, and sharing knowledge
- Teaching experience includes English language, literature, grammar, mechanics, usage, punctuation, pronunciation, idiom, vocabulary, writing, phonics, standardized testing, reading strategies, school entrance exams and essays
- Student base includes young learners, adolescent learners, adult learners, and language learners
- Outreach and collaboration includes other tutors, teachers, counselors, administrators, curriculum designers, education technology specialists, and families (parents & caretakers)

As of 2016, there were 83.09 million families in the United States and 3.6 million primary or secondary school educators.

-Statista, 2019 & Nces.ed.gov, 2019

"Students who start kindergarten behind form the largest group of dropouts, and they have less than a 12 percent chance of attending a four-year university."

-Readingfoundation.org, 2019

ALL moments are
Learning moments.

Her Majesty, Thundercat of the Universe



(Defender of the Learning experience)

Modeling behaviors & dispositions

- Playfulness
- Flexibility
- Perseverance
- Problem Finding
- Adaptability
- Experimentation
- Sensitivity
- Originality



Words, Rhyme, Rhythm



- Advanced vocabulary
- Rhymes produced by different letter combinations
- Variety of grammatical structures

Objective

- Provide children with a dynamic reading experience
- Provide caretakers with tools to help create/extend a dynamic reading experience
- Position learners to approach new concepts with playfulness, confidence, and flexibility

Principles

- Learning is always taking place
- Learning should not be static
- Learning can be a practice
- Learning interactions can inform learning dispositions

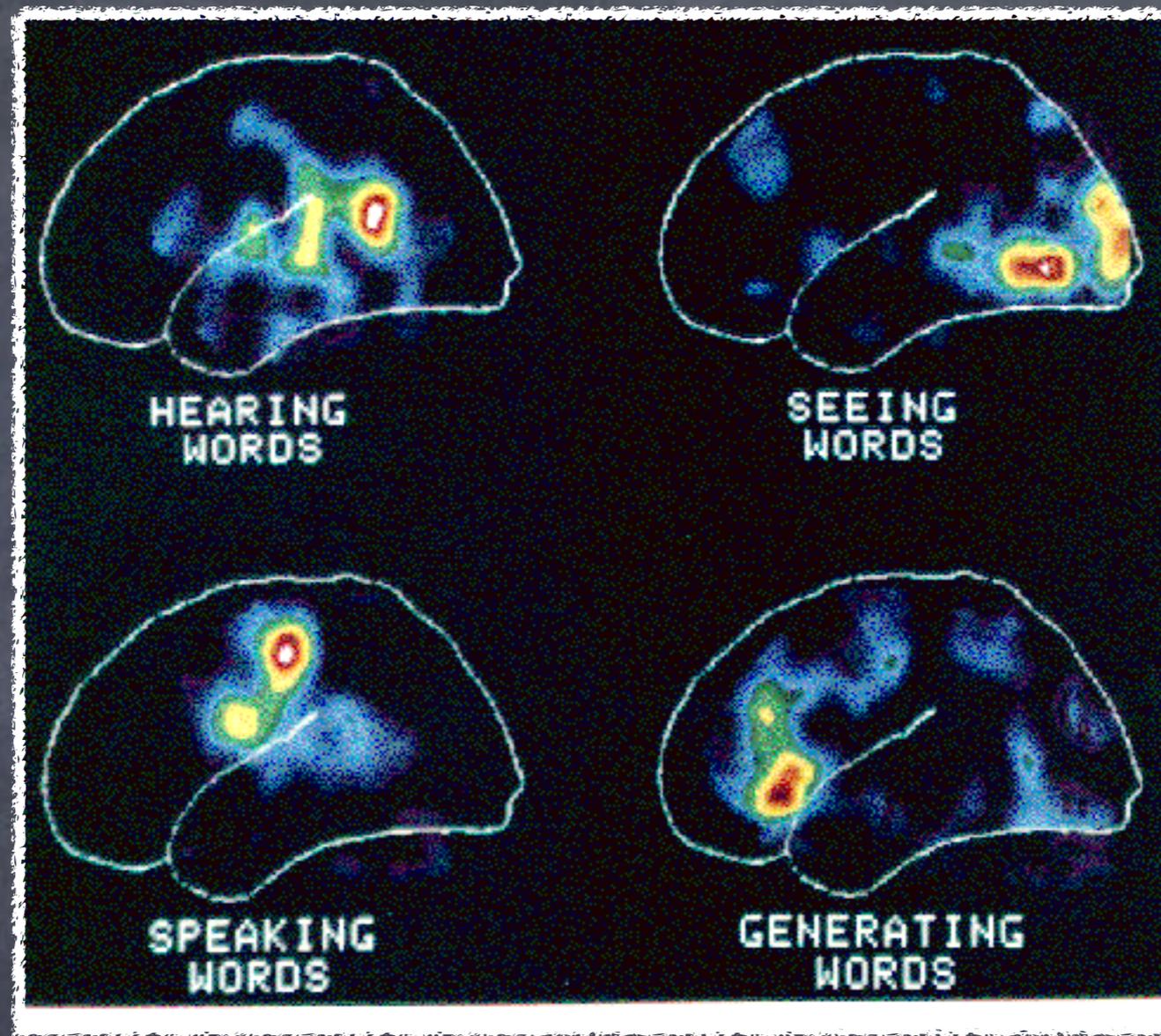
Assumptions

- Child has an available caretaker to help with reading
- Available caretaker is functionally literate
- Child and caretaker have access to reading material
- Child and caretaker have time/resources for reading activities
- Child and caretaker have shared language skills to engage in discussion

How can we extend & expand learning?

Approaching New Words

- "I don't think we've ever seen that word together. How can we find out what it means?"
- "Last time we tried looking up our new word in the dictionary. What else could we try?"
- "I like the sound of this word. Let's try saying it together. I wonder what it means."



-Norseen, 1996

Variety of interactions with words
stimulates brain activity in different regions

Learning and Intelligence Theories

- Periato-frontal Integration Theory (P-FIT)
 - Communication between regions of the brain correlates to greater general intelligence
- Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)
 - What a child can do without assistance, with assistance, and what is outside the realm of ability even with assistance



Creative Problem Solving

- How could different animals try to get the ball out of the tree?
- How could we get the ball out of the tree?
- Which ways can we try?
- Which ways worked?





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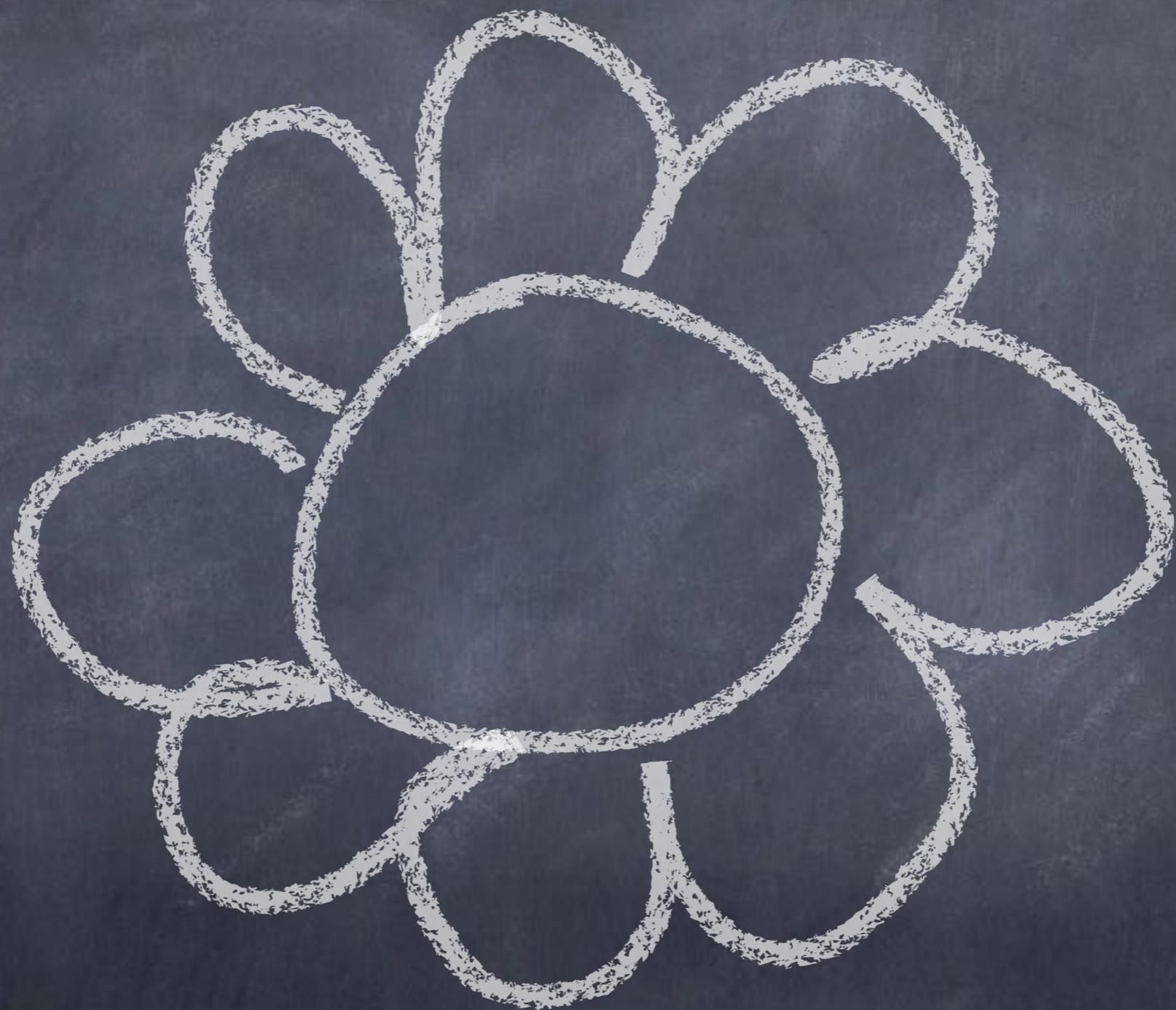
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Circle Game

To support divergent thinking and idea generation

Stage	Adjustment	Constraint	Benefit
Beginner	Letters	Alphabet (26 possibilities)	Flexible Thinking
Intermediate	Objects	Physical Modifications	Lateral Thinking
Advanced	Concepts	Mental Modifications	Creative Problem Solving

(Desired) Outcomes

- Confidence and willingness to try
- Appreciation for differences
- Ability to identify strengths, limits, and needs
- Comfort with asking for help
- Flexible thinking
- Reduced Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia

(fear of long words)





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Thank you.

Questions and comments welcomed.

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