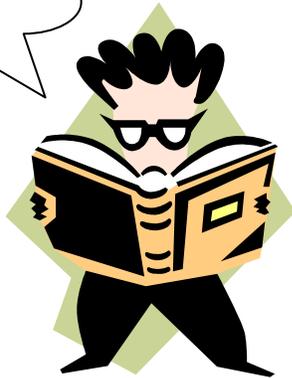


CT Reading Institute Newsletter

September 2012

Did you know that
September 8th is
International
Literacy Day?



Adult Ed

International Literacy Day 2012- Literacy & Peace

International Literacy Day is September 8th. For over 40 years, UNESCO has been celebrating International Literacy Day by reminding the international community that literacy is a human right and the foundation of all learning. Quality basic education provides students with literacy skills for life and further learning. Literate parents are more likely to send their children to school. Literate people are better able to access continuing education opportunities, have better jobs and participate more actively in their community.

As we start the new school year it's a good time to acknowledge that, whatever the age of our students, we play a key role in reducing illiteracy.

~ Aileen Halloran

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Anybody can have ideas--the difficulty is to express them without squandering a quire of paper on an idea that ought to be reduced to one glittering paragraph.

~ Mark Twain

Words, words and more words

We all know that vocabulary is an essential ingredient of good reading skills. Teaching to ensure that our students have not just a large vocabulary, but a deep knowledge of words is supported by the recent findings of well-known researchers and practitioners (Moats, 2009; Ebbers, 2009; Coyne, 2008-09; Kamil 2009; Allen, 2007; Marzano 2004 and others) who have been examining the processing systems proficient readers use to learn words. Evidence shows that the more a reader knows **about** words, the more efficient comprehension will be. These processing systems include:

- Phonological processing (auditory sounds within the word)
- Orthographic processing (spelling of the word)
- Morphology (structures of the word—roots, prefixes, suffixes),
- Semantic processing (meaning(s) of the word),
- Syntactic processing (the grammatical structure/part of speech of the word), and
- Etymological processing (origin of the word, including cognates— words found in two languages that share similar spelling, pronunciation, and meaning).

As students become more sophisticated readers, they need more advanced decoding strategies that focus on the structure of words (i.e. roots, prefixes, and suffixes). This provides students a strategy for segmenting multi-syllabic words, those words found most frequently in academic texts, into decodable parts for determining the meanings of words (Henry, 1997).

Direct instruction in word structure (morphology) provides another powerful instructional tool that will build vocabulary and improve spelling.

Why is it important to study morphology?

Morphology relates to the segmenting of words into roots or base words, which provide the origin of words and affixes (prefixes and suffixes) and aids in decoding. Direct instruction of morphology is an effective means to help with understanding and applying word structure for decoding, spelling, and vocabulary study (Wilson, 2005). The English language has its roots in several languages, including Greek, Latin, and older forms of English, German, and French. Knowing a single root in any of these languages can help us understand as many as twenty related English words. The words *synchronize*, *chronology* and *chronicle* all come from the Greek root “chron” meaning “time”. Understanding how words work allows us to think about words in new ways, understand unknown words, and is a way to connect this deeper understanding to what we already know.

What does morphology instruction look like?

Latin and Greek prefixes, roots and suffixes are fairly consistent in their meaning and spelling patterns. Simply teaching root words will not be sufficient, so include prefixes and suffixes. Begin with the root: a root word (morpheme) is a part of a word that carries meaning. A good example is the Latin root “struct”, which means “build”. Add the prefix “con/m”, which means “together”, and the suffix “tion”, which means “the process of”, and the meaning of construction becomes clear. Add a few more affixes and students will understand how *structure*, *construct*, *instructor*, *obstruct*, and *destruction* are related. Put individual prefixes and suffixes on index cards, give students a root word and ask them to work in pairs to see how many words they can create. Have them write sentences using the words to share with the class.

By varying the prefixes/suffixes and root words you have an activity that can be used repeatedly throughout the year. Students who understand how words are formed by combining prefixes, suffixes, and roots tend to have larger vocabularies and better reading comprehension than those without such knowledge and skills (Prince, 2009).

Websites

Lists of roots, prefixes and suffixes with meanings

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/40406/>

More roots and quizzes for practice

<http://grammar.about.com/od/words/a/wordroots.htm>

"If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted?"

~George Carlin

CT READING Institute Update

Using Evidence-based Reading Research (EBRI) and the STAR model, the **CT Reading Institute** offers a series of workshops focusing on reading strategies. The first, *Introduction to Evidence-based Reading Instruction*, is scheduled for October 2nd at CREC in Hartford. These workshops would be beneficial for any teachers who want to help their students improve their reading skills.

To see the complete schedule and register go to: <http://www.crec.org/cetes/atdn>

**And don't forget
Adult Education &
Family Literacy Week
Sept. 10th - 16th!**

