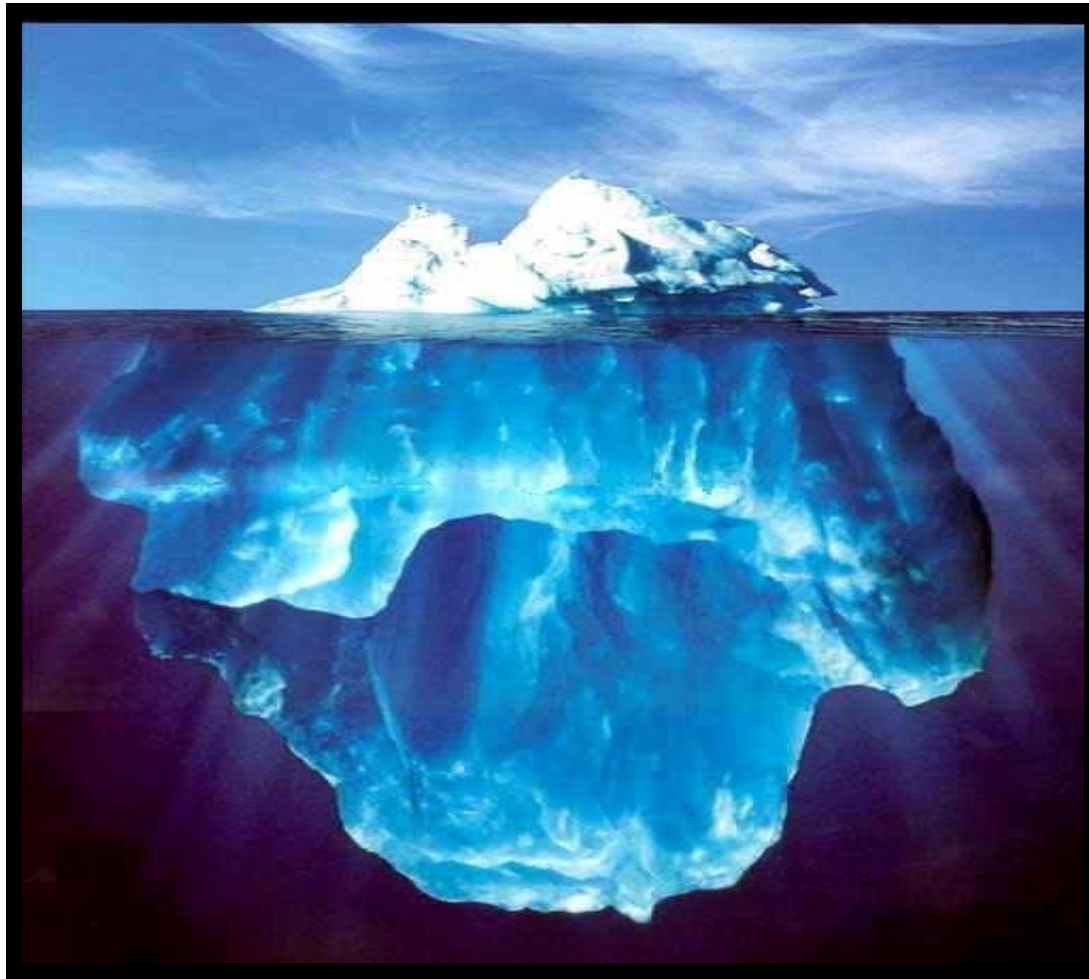




The Word Gap

In the Age of Common Core
Standards

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Tip of the iceberg



- Knowledge
- Symbolic representations
- Build concepts



All about words

- Vocabulary is THE strongest predictor of children's achievement
 - Not only in elementary school but in high school

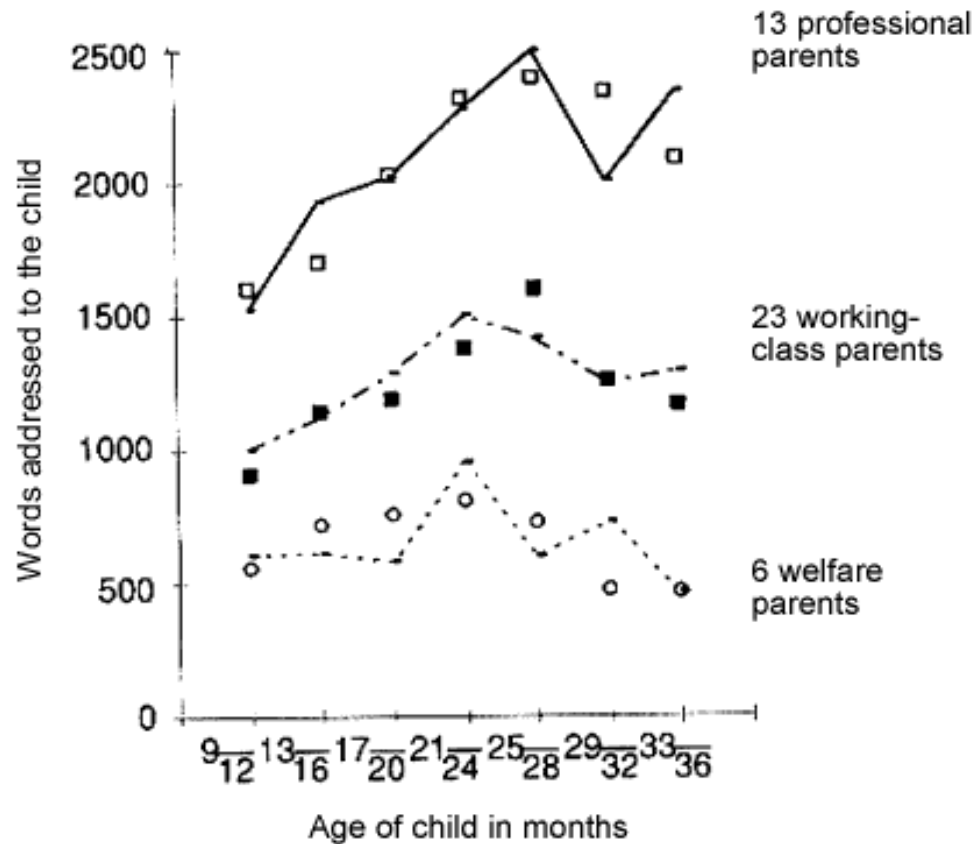
Relation to other skills



- Children of poor, marginalized populations
- Children of families who speak a language other than English
- Mother's education



Risk factors



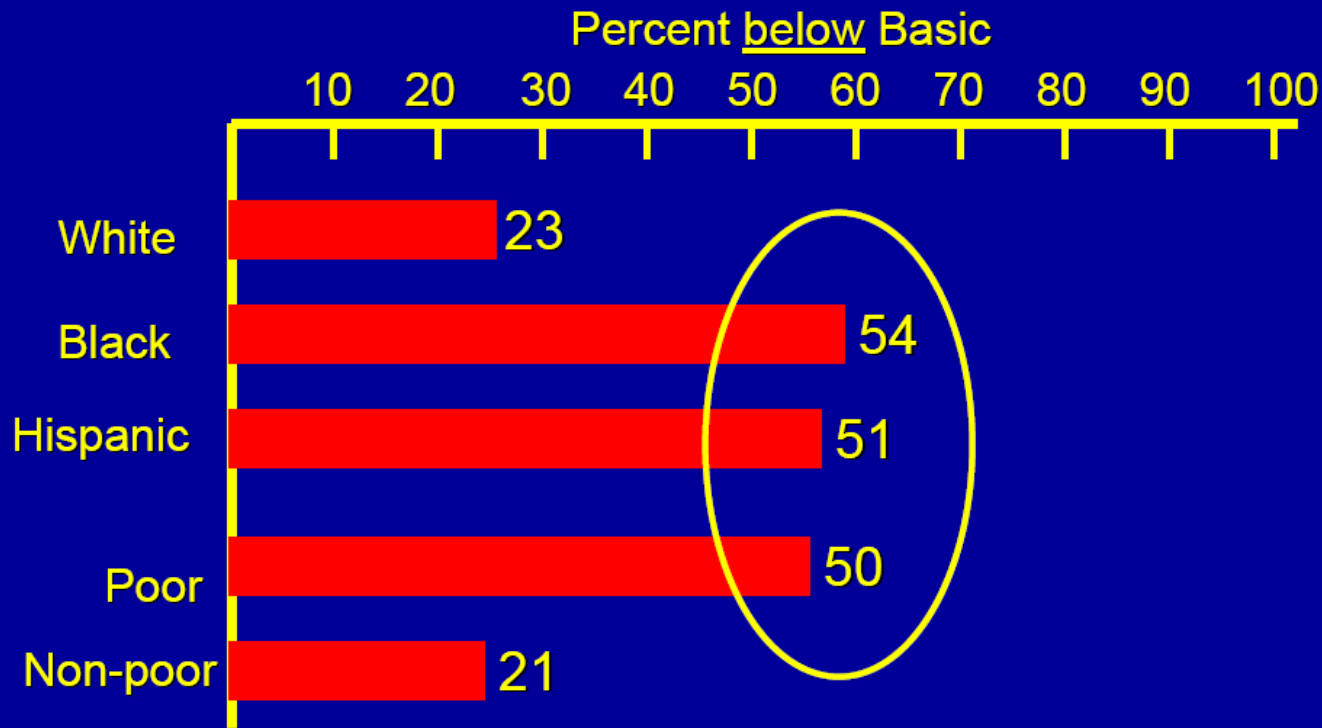
Hart and Risley...



Poverty

2007 results from National Assessment of Educational Progress at 4th Grade

Overall, 34% of 4th graders performed below the Basic Level of Proficiency in 17,600 schools



NAEP 2012

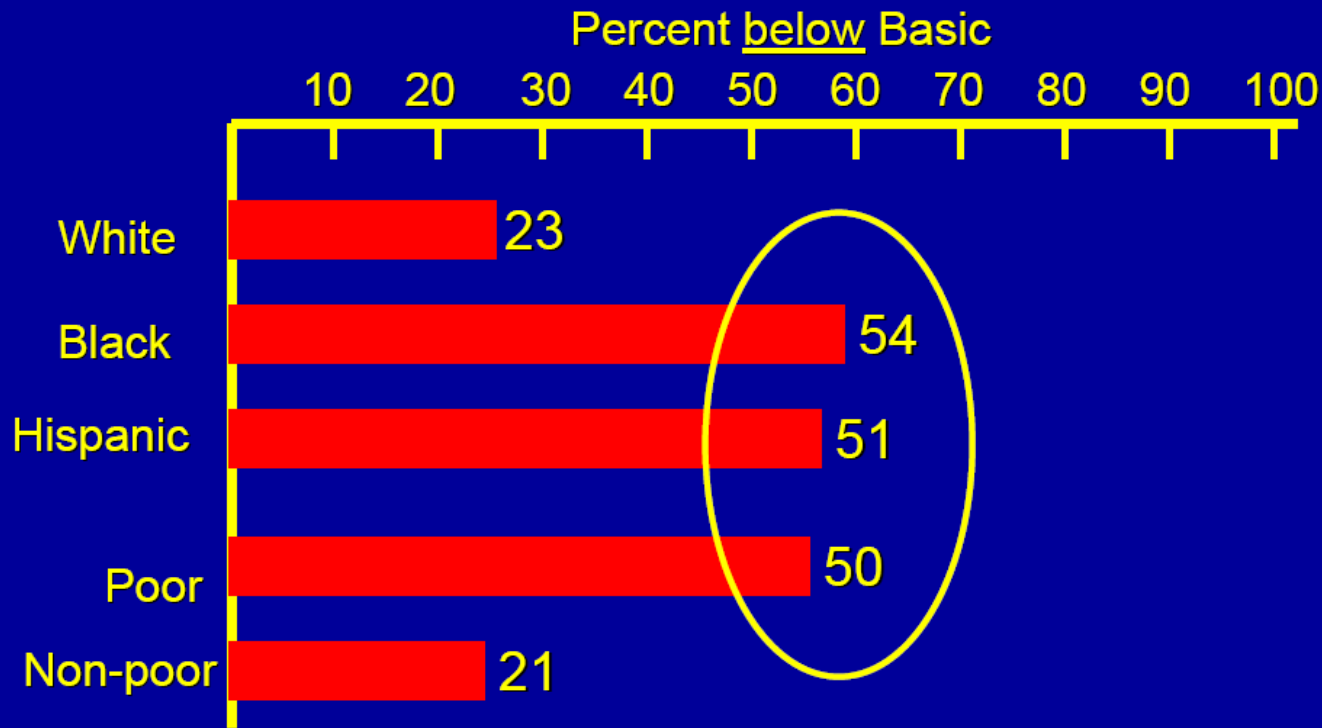
- Cumulative model of expectations
- Academic Vocabulary
- Building knowledge through texts
- Creating cross-textual experiences
- Integrating technology and print
- A focus on evidence

Common Core Standards



2007 results from National Assessment of Educational Progress at 4th Grade

Overall, 34% of 4th graders performed below the Basic Level of Proficiency in 17,600 schools



NAEP 2012

- The numbers are larger than you can imagine

No. of words
children will
need to know



- The problem
- “A space probe is an unpiloted spacecraft that leaves Earth’s orbit to explore the Moon, planets, asteroids, comets, or other objects in outer space as directed by onboard computers and/or instructions sent from Earth.”
-
- Grade 6 text

Building vocabulary



- 'asteroid'
 - 'comet'
 - 'Atmospheric conditions'
 - 'space probes'
-
- What is similar about them?



Difficult words

- Children are ‘word sponges’
- They learn words through day-to-day activities
- “I do it all the time”
- Schools are poor places to develop vocabulary
- Vocabulary is resistant to change



Common myths

- Oral language development is highly amenable to instruction
- Meta-analyses of 65 studies indicate $ES=.94$
- Must begin early on (before preK)
- Must be meaningful to children
- Must remember that oral language instruction is foundational for learning other skills



Research base

- They need to become 'word conscious'
- Frequency of encounters
- Word learning needs to be connected to developing knowledge networks

How do children learn words?



- Word selection from core reading program
 - Platypus
 - Around
 - OR:
 - Ride
 - move
- Question: are these words important?

What we see too
often



- Poorest children often end up in classrooms where the oral language is most impoverished.
- Study of 55 kindergarten classrooms indicated that the richest oral language environment occurred in classrooms of middle-and upper-middle children



Patterns

Creating a vocabulary rich environment





Creating cozy spots
for reading

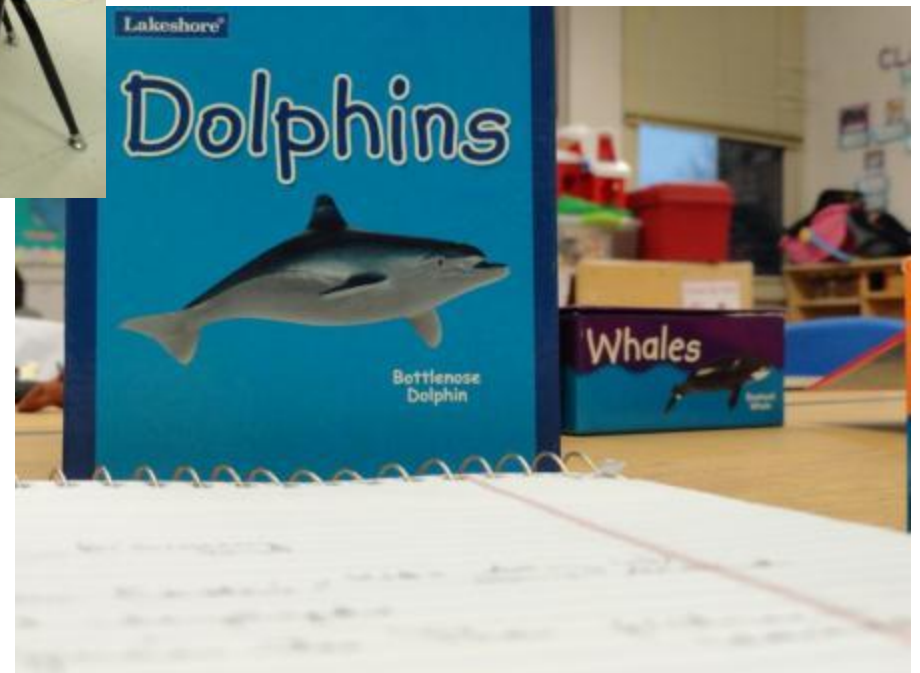




curiosity



ready to read



ready to read

- Purposeful talk: Why do you think?
- Challenging words: meteorologist
- Extend and clarify
- “Taking it up a notch”
 - Compare/contrast
 - If/then



Oral language



Eye to eye instruction

- Most powerful way to promote language development and content rich instruction

- Books

- Teachers

Shared Book reading

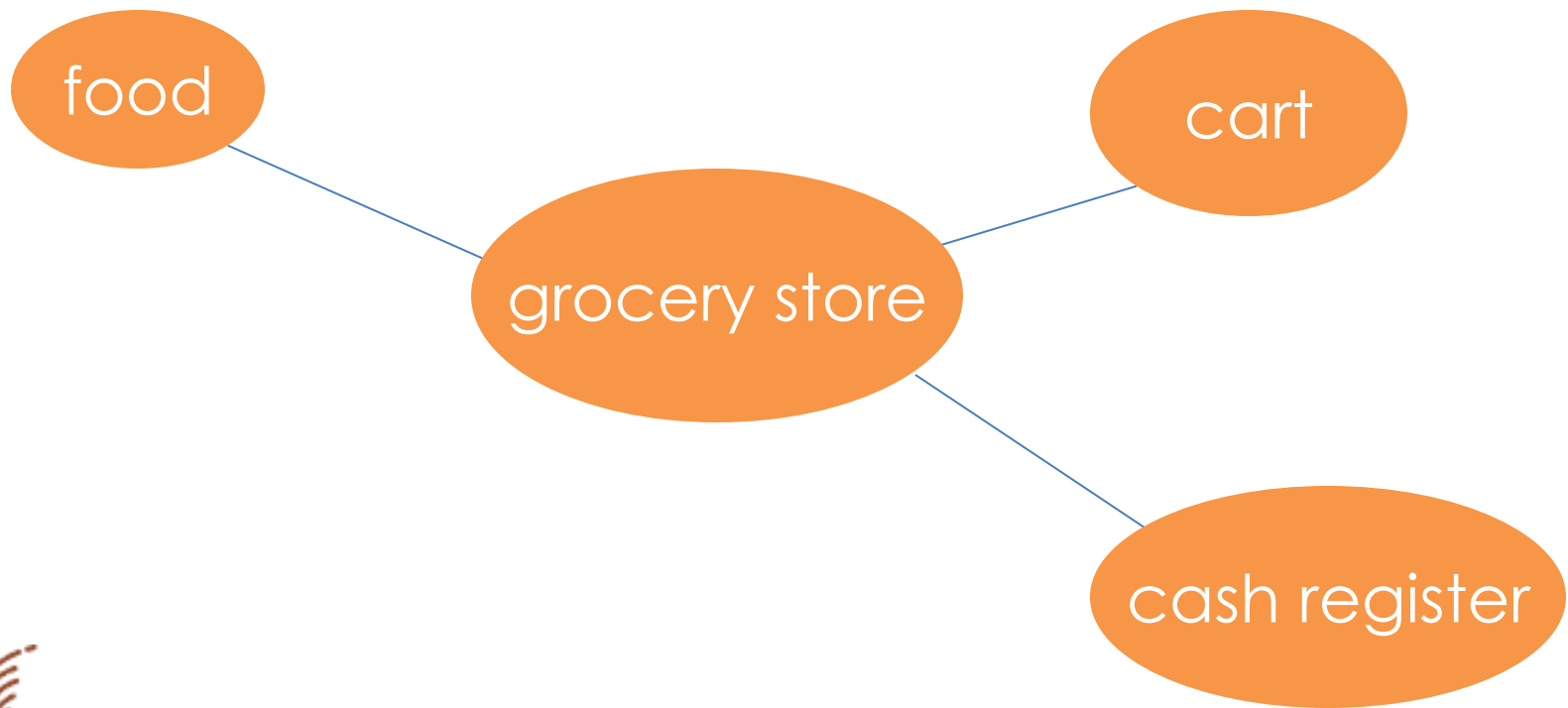


- INSTEAD: insects, antennae, segments, legs
- Parts of the body: brain, heart, lungs

Knowledge networks

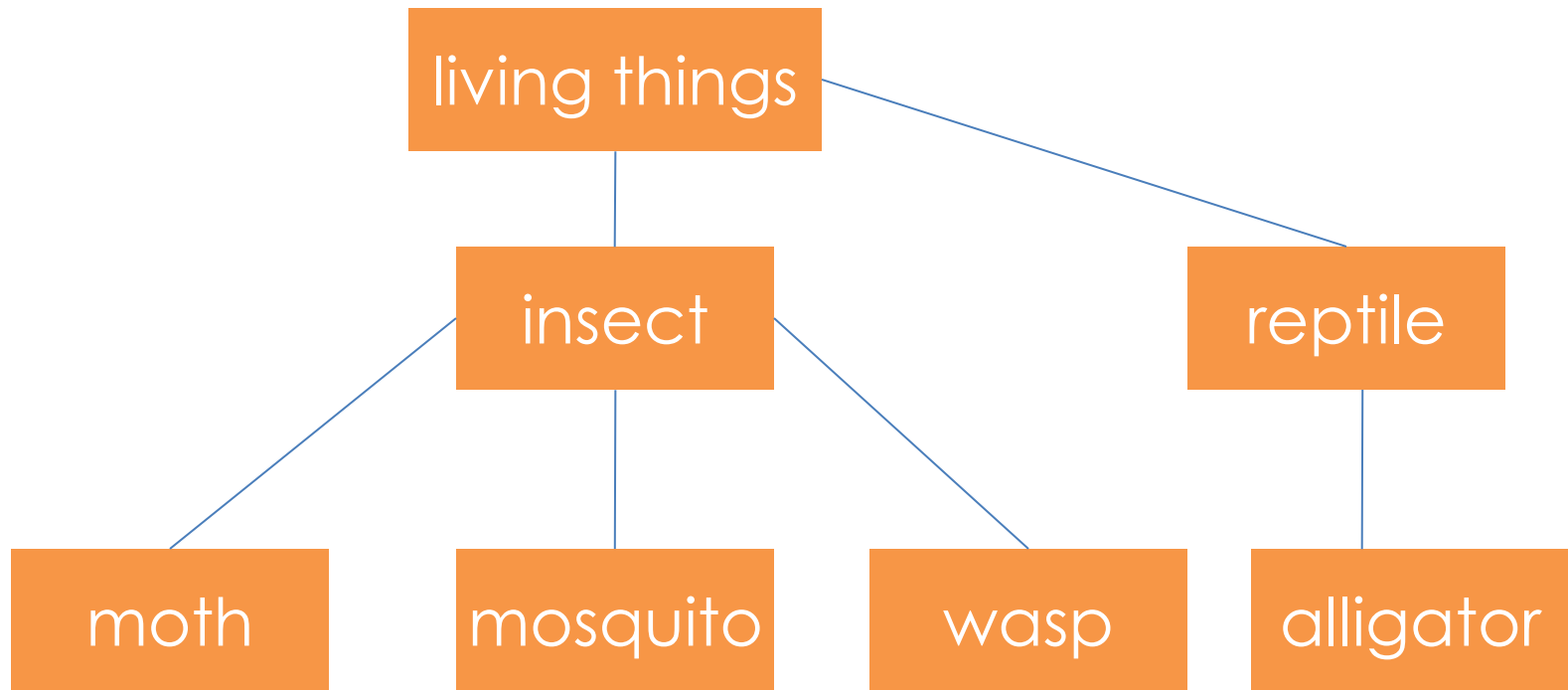


- Traditionally, much instruction has been designed around themes



thematic vs. categories

- We teach children words and content in categories



thematic vs. categories

Collections of different genres to support our vocabulary teaching sequence.

Collections of books that focus on a concept or a topic”



Text sets



- Predictable book

- Rhyming books

- Narrative nonfiction (storybook)

- Informational books

Text Set Progression





New words

- Call and response; choral reading
- Closed-ended questions
- Open-ended questions

Teacher interaction



- Teach content-rich words +
- Make sure these words are related in categories (to form a semantic network)
- =
- SELF TEACHING DEVICE
 - Ex: Is a spider an insect? A spider has 8 legs, and all others have 6, so it is not a spider

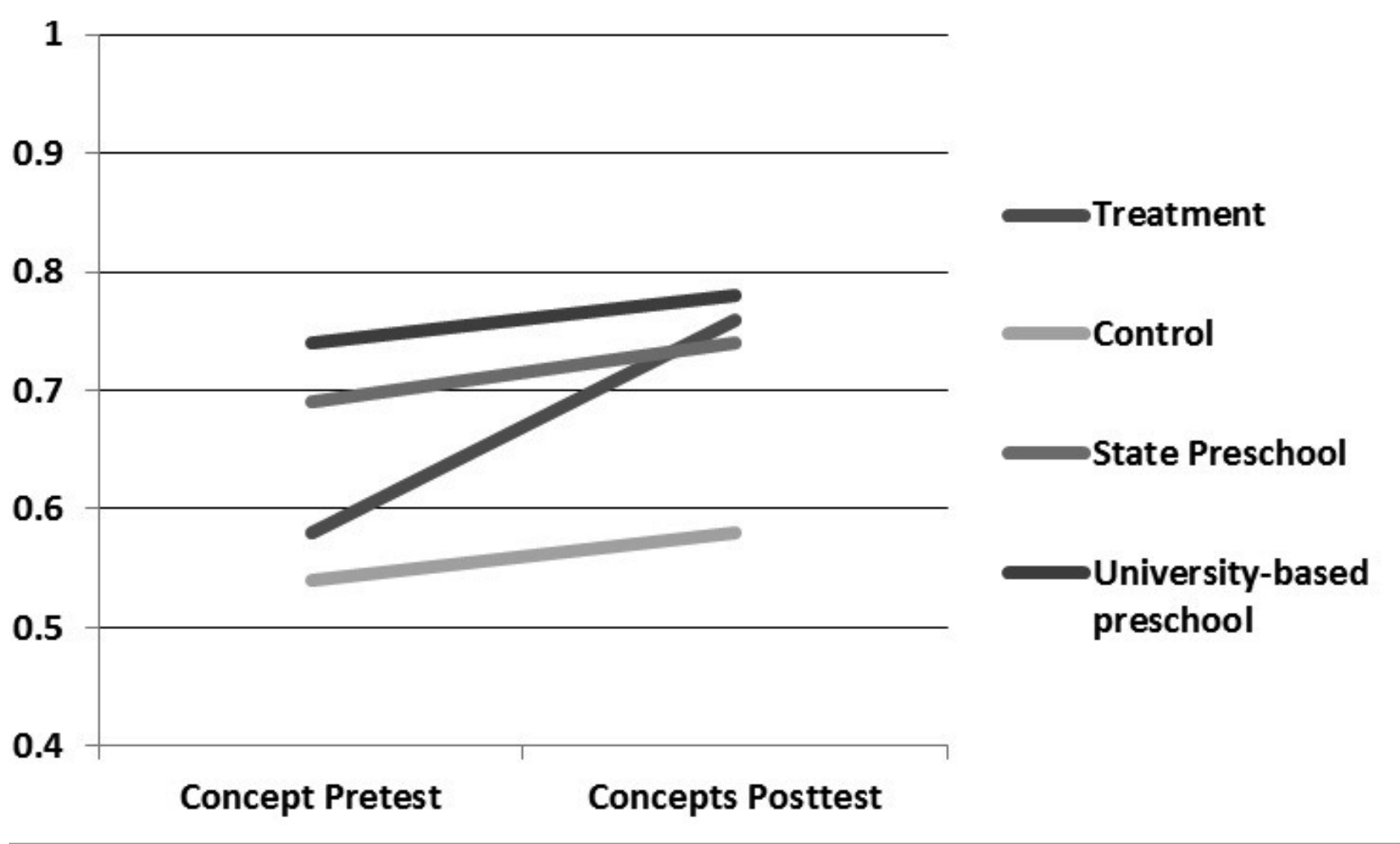


To summarize

- Supports word knowledge and conceptual development
- Enables children to develop 'inter-textual links' as they compare and contrast across genres
- Helps them to learn the 'features of information books.'

Why is it
powerful?





Evidence

○ Principles:

- The notion of acceleration
- Content-rich vocabulary
- Organization of word knowledge
- Use of text sets
- Gradual release of control
- Lots of practice and distributed review
- Don't be afraid of challenging students; they love it!

Reducing disparities



Book: All About Words (Teachers 'College Press, 2013)

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