

Handing Them the Tools of Thought 2.0

A strategy for imparting sophisticated
academic word meanings to young
learners of all backgrounds.

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NJTESOL/NJBE Spring Conference

May 30, 2018

Lets' Watch a Few

See if you can identify four
or five features of the AHS
presentation.

Turn and Talk: React

The critical terms of
academic processes and
discourse are often
difficult to teach.

Turn and Talk: React

A language is
fundamentally words and
meanings.

An Inventory of Signs

Ferdinand De Saussure described the observable parts of a language as solely words and their meanings, which he called signal/meaning pairs, or signs.

of Arbitrary Signals

He also explained that sounds of words are completely arbitrary, but this code system works because each word means what the others do not.

In Their Own World

What is your word for
green?

Name two words that are
perfect synonyms.

Each Has a Role

There may be some overlap,
but each word has its
unique gift to the code,
however nuanced or salient.

Turn and Talk: Explain

How does a language *work*?

Just Words and Meanings

William Diver maintained that each word has only one meaning. The language user *arranges* words to convey a message. Thus a *limited* code can be used to convey an *unlimited* amount of messages.

The AHS Approach

- At the outset a core meaning is determined, usually comprised of five or six fairly common words.
- A hand sign and “meaning script” are developed which illustrate this core meaning.
- The rationale for the choice of hand sign is explained and reviewed during instruction.

Beneficial Effect

The use of a hand sign
and *single* core meaning
enable immediate
comprehension of
sophisticated and
abstract academic terms.

Beneficial Effect

The multisensory approach enables storage in long term memory through multiple mnemonic links.

Beneficial Effect

Tier 2 terms become
accessible and relevant to
elementary students from
ELL and “non-academic
backgrounds”. (Zwiers)

AHS 2.0

So what's the 2.0 in
the approach?

And Put Them to Use

A recent development (11/2017) of the AHS model is **academic process clusters** that can be applied to academic tasks in the classroom.

See <https://www.franklinboe.org/Page/14569>

Hillcrest 2016-17 Word of the Week Data

- Academic Terms: compare contrast determine elaborate complete analyze summarize conclude classify combine cause effect connect infer cite theme organize interpret
- Monthly HR Pre/Post Scores: 18% **80%** 27% **68%** 15% **66%** 32% **68%** 13% **61%** 25% **46%** 13% **81%** 23% **65%** 4% **77%** 10% **43%**

The 2017 Hillcrest WOW Team: Laura Sutlic, Cindy Jimenez, Jeffrey Linn, Jared Sheffrin, Annie Walsh.

Hillcrest 2017-18 Word of the Week Data

(18 words assessed)

Third Grade: Average Pre: 7%
 Average Post: 72%

Fourth Grade: Average Pre: 11%
 Average Post: 68%

- The 2018 Hillcrest WOW Team: Laura Sutlic, Kate Freeman, Jeffrey Linn, Nicole Nietzer, Alexa Niro, Jared Sheffrin, Annie Walsh.

References

- Asher, James The Total Physical Response Approach to Second Language Learning. The Modern Language Journal. Vol. 53, Issue 1, pages 3–17, January 1969.
- de Saussure, Ferdinand *Cours de linguistique générale*, édition originale: 1916.
- Huffman, Alan "The Linguistics of William Diver and the Columbia School." Word 52:1, 29-68, 2001.
- Wong-Fillmore, Lily. Supporting Access to the Language & Content of Complex Texts for EL & LM [Maryann Cucciara,, a student and associate of Dr. Wong-Fillmore, emphasized precise knowledge of word meanings in our district PD.]
- Zwiers, Jeff Building Academic Language: Essential Practices for Content Classrooms, Grades 5-12 John Wiley and Sons, 2008.

Appendix A: The SKIER Model for Creating AHS

- Select a significant word.
- Know the word meaning well.
- Illustrate the word meaning with a hand sign.
- Explain the hand sign with respect to the word meaning.
- Review, practice, assess.

Appendix B: Presenting AHS

- 1 Read the word aloud.
2. Perform the hand sign, reciting the meaning script.
3. State the core meaning.
4. Read the word aloud again.

Review: Ask for someone to explain how the hand sign depicts this meaning.

Usage Check: Conduct turn and talks where students use the word in sentences.

(Note: This procedure was refined through extensive daily practice for two years in collaboration with Jared Sheffrin and his grade 3 classes.)