

Activities to help _____'s word-retrieval skills

The terms "word retrieval problem" or "word finding difficulty" imply that the person knows and understands the word, and has used it correctly before. However, they have difficulty retrieving such known words at times. Often when a person is having difficulty retrieving a word they will have the sense that it is "on the tip of their tongue": a state of affairs familiar to all of us; at other times they seem simply to "go blank".

With all of the following activities put the emphasis on _____ listening, thinking and speaking. *They are aimed at having the person retrieve known words - not at extending _____'s vocabulary by teaching new words.*

As a separate objective, extend _____'s vocabulary of *new* words.

Use a minimum of visual cues. If the word to be "retrieved" does not come easily for _____, provide an auditory cue (e.g., say the first sound or syllable of the word) or a verbal clue. Give _____ time to think, but don't leave it so long that _____ is struggling to find the word. TELL _____ the answer, and go on with the next few items. Then ask _____ the one that was difficult again. Aim for a high success-rate to encourage motivation and confidence. Adapt the tasks to suit _____'s age and stage.

1. Talk to _____ about words and the meanings of words as opportunities arise e.g., "I wonder why they call the highway the Pacific Highway?", "I wonder where they got the Ninja Turtles' names?", "Why is Big Bird called *Big Bird*?" Why is *North Sydney* called that?". Talk about people being named after other people. Talk about why certain names might have been chosen for pets and TV characters (Cookie Monster, Luke Skywalker, Inspector Gadget, Uncle Scrooge, Sooty, etc). Talk about the traditional names of native north Americans (Running Deer, etc).

2. Read books about words to _____, for example:

- a) "I'll Teach my Dog 100 Words" (Beginner Book Series);
- b) Books about rhymes;
- c) Books about opposites;
- d) Books about word classification (i.e., semantic classes): e.g., vehicles, tools, occupations, etc, involving knowing the precise names of objects or entities within a class;
- e) Books about animals and their young, involving knowing the precise names for animals' offspring (e.g. horses have foals, cows have calves, etc), and the correct names for some common animals according to gender (horse: mare, stallion. filly, colt);
- f) Books about names, e.g. traditional Aboriginal stories about how natural phenomena were named.

3. Play games involving transforming one part of speech to another, e.g.:

Today I am riding, yesterday I ... (rode)

Today I am driving, yesterday I ... (drove)

Today I am sleeping, yesterday I ... (slept) etc.

Yesterday I rode, tomorrow I will ... (ride) etc.

4. When you read stories, recite rhymes or sing songs, incorporate simple cloze tasks (i.e., sentence completion), e.g.: Little Jack Horner sat in a ...(corner)
5. Read Riddle Books.
6. Tell knock-knock jokes and other jokes (or riddles) that rely upon accurate word-retrieval to make them funny.
7. Play impromptu word-classification games with _____, e.g., "See how many boys' names you can think of in one minute. Time yourself while you do it".

tools	drinks	colours	movies	flowers	pets	cars	factories
games	vegetables	animals	toys	tools	buildings	clothes	shops
minerals	sports	foods	games	characters	towns	countries	trees
8. Play "name the category": e.g., red, blue, green and pink are all ...; lions, tigers and elephants are all ...
9. Play "pick the word that does not belong", e.g.: cat dog *tree* mouse
10. Play "which two words go together the best" e.g. *watch* pig nail *clock*
11. Play sentence completion ("cloze") games, e.g.:
 - A house is a place to live. An office is a place to ...
 - A service station is a place to buy petrol.
 - A Post Office is a place to buy ...
12. Play games involving synonyms, e.g.: "Can you think of another word that means big/pretty/chilly/furious/smart...?"
13. Play word-association games: Fish goes with ... (chips) etc.
14. Devise simple games involving similarities, e.g.: "What is the same about a sheep and a cow?"
15. Play games involving antonyms, e.g.: "The opposite of hot is ..."
16. Play word games involving differences, e.g.: "What is different about a bird and a plane? They can both fly, but they are different because ..."
17. Practise finishing sequences by playing "What comes next?" e.g.:
 - Monday Tuesday Wednesday ...
 - Summer Autumn Winter ...
 - 10 20 30 ...
 - First second third ...
 - January February March ...