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Literacy/Numeracy Tidbits for the Classroom

Did you know...

Recent studies show that building students' **background knowledge** is more effective at improving literacy skills than teaching reading skills in isolation.

James Kim and Mary Burkhauser (2023), who led a Harvard study on the topic, advise educators to “consider the topics to be covered for the year and then ask yourself, ‘How can we integrate instruction around a coherent schema?’” The authors recommend **connecting topics through larger themes**, or “schema,” and revisiting them regularly to strengthen understanding (8-10 times). Think of a tree. The trunk represents the “schema” or theme and the branches are different entry points into that theme



EX: RELATIONSHIPS

According to this study, students who read widely on a topic and engaged in a variety of activities to build background knowledge **scored twice as high on reading comprehension tests** compared to those who did targeted reading skill practice like “find the main idea”.

*You can find the Edutopia article [here](#)!

Why not try...

Collaborating across curriculum on a given theme is a great way to build background knowledge of students on specific topic, theme or “schema”. **Eight to ten 30 min. lessons shared among grade group teachers can make a significant difference!**

Vocabulary games can help build content vocabulary. As Hannah Bradley notes, “Subject-specific vocabulary goes hand-in-hand with a deep and meaningful knowledge of content. It allows us to engage with that subject, unlocks understanding, and promotes clear and precise communication.” (Bradley, 2023)

For ideas on **word games**, click [HERE](#).

For ideas on how to teach **background knowledge**, click [HERE](#).

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