From Ann Whiting, middle school teacher at the International School of Kuala Lumpur

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Dear Pete,

Yes I was relieved to see how students were linking ideas and concepts to the words involved in this particular assessment. Obviously words are the tools of thought so giving students the skills to analyze words therefore helps them to understand a particular word more deeply as well as expand the repertoire of vocabulary at their disposal. A broader vocabulary helps in expressing ideas in a more focused manner as students sift between synonyms, some more formal some less so, at their disposal. I think the morphemic and etymologic understandings the students have gained throughout the year are beginning to show in their responses. It also clarifies for me areas of confusion or concepts that may need revisiting.

Here's how we worked towards this – sadly not nearly as systematic, or as often as I would like in my dream-class scenario! The students began the year with a Google Doc entitled W*ord a Day* that they share with me (yes an optimistic title-*Word a Week* slightly more realistic and as Melvyn so frequently has stated what applies to one word, applies to thousands!) Whenever, we encounter a word that is important conceptually to understand in our units/rich in terms of its base/root, I ask the students to speculate on its morphemes and justify this. Therefore, they support their claim for a morpheme with other words where this morpheme is present. Earlier in the year I would ask them to use the Mac dictionaries on the laptop to establish the root. I spent the first few sessions modeling how to read the dictionary. I discuss with my classes that they are working like an archeologist, sifting through the layers of time to establish the root- For example, when investigating education the Mac dictionary states:

> ORIGIN mid 16th cent.: from Latin *educatio(n-)*, from the verb *educare* (see **EDUCATE**).

We discuss the need to follow the trail- the capital letters in brackets indicate the need to dig deeper not stop at *educare* as the root. Even here we need to work back further to ORIGIN late Middle English : from Latin *educat- 'led out,'* from the verb *educare*, related to *educere 'lead out'* (see **EDUCE**).

Once students have established the root and looked at the range of synonyms, I ask them to establish a 'working definition' of the word, which we refine as time goes on and they hear it, read it more frequently throughout our units. Often these working definitions are written in collaborative groups. I ask that they try to link back to the root meaning where possible in their definition so as to help remember this root. This takes maybe 20 minutes initially shortening to 10 minutes as they become more adept at using the dictionary, etymology on line, Kennedy and Ayto to identify the root, related words and synonyms. We then have displays around the room of roots that we are familiar with and the bases

that spring from these roots: hence L.**ducere: to lead** with the twin base elements : <duct> (free) and <duc(e)> as seen in reduce – reduction, seduce- seduction, product- produce.

I had told the students they would be assessed on their morphological and etymological understandings in this assessment: they needed to analyze a word into its morphemes, identify the base and know whether its free or bound, give related words, provide synonyms and if appropriate antonyms(sometimes helpful to know the opposite to understand the word- know what it is not). As they had used resources to investigate the word, I wanted them this time to do this without resources. So in order to help them take in this word on a deeper level, to go into long term memory, I try to review quickly every time a word is mentioned, pouncing on students to stand up and analyze- encouraging a very dramatic pausing with hands up, provide related words, get them to remind me of the root and the root meaning and then review the word meaning. Then onto what we were talking about, so briefly sweeping in and out with the words so as to keep the morphemes and meaning familiar.

Closer to the assessment we played various games as a review. I did want them to take responsibility for becoming very familiar with these words, bases and roots and so as to know/remember the words deeply . Co-operative learning strategies such as Kagan's 'Numbered Head to Head Together'(Students huddle to make sure all can respond, a number is called, the student with the number responds, allows for discussion in a small group, review and ability to share information ,questions and understandings collaboratively. In *Heads Together Heads Apart*, students would initially think about the word on their own, then discuss and reach consensus in their group and then when their number is called analyze the word. The best analysis wins- that is analysis that is spoken particularly eloquently is accurate and elaborated by examples or just plain entertaining in delivery. Often this involves a lot of laughter rather than accurate point scoring on my part. Hearing the repetition and different groups sharing the information allows for a deepened understanding and reinforcement in long term-memory! At other times I'd use drama or ask kids to physically analyze a word: they would spell the word aloud- totally hamming up the pause between the morphemes and as one boy noted "killing that single silent e with a karate chop". So I guess it's just applying the usual array of teaching strategies to reinforce morphemic understanding and as an aid to longer-term memory.

As a final activity before the assessment students paired up with partners to review their google docs in order to see that all information correct/accurate(I too would check and then explain any errors). Students made flip cards as a study aid (another teacher uses these extensively in her science class to help kids prepare for various quizzes and consolidate key information. It worked particularly well for word study as kids always wrote the base element in red , prefixes in one colour suffixes in another- information stored on the other side- root and meaning, synonyms, antonyms, related words. Students could use these to test one another. Other review techniques below:

Find someone Who: (Adapted from Kagan, 1992 l)
This is an interactive strategy to help students practice new vocabulary. Teachers prepare a Find Someone Who ... form that looks similar to a bingo card, putting a new vocabulary word or a defining phrase into each space. Each student is given a card to fill out as they roam around the room looking for a peer who can provide definitions or examples (i.e. students write the name of the student and what he or she gives as the meaning of the word or the word itself depending on the design of the card). The student who gets most of the spaces filled without using anyone twice 'wins.' See example below. Endless variations! So I set up a grid with the following inside each box:

So find someone who can explain and give an example of a **Latin root** we have examined this year, give the meaning of the root and the base element/s this root has created.	*Find some one who* can give an example of a **compound word** we have studied.	*Find someone who* can give an example of a word with a **connecting vowel**…
Find some one who can divide the word ……… into morphemes.	*Find someone who can give you a word* with 2 prefixes a bound base element and one suffix.	*Find someone who* can give you an example of a word with a bound base element.
Find some one who can give you an example of a bound base element we have studied this year which has ending in a single silent <e>.	*Find someone who* can give you an example of a root that has led to a twin base element in English and explain the meaning of the root.	*Find someone who* can give you two examples of words originating from a Greek roots we have studied this year. They must be able to give the definition.

Right now the students are very impressed with how far they have come. As we gather a wide variety of evidence of the year long's growth in humanities, students are commenting over and over how much more they understand and better still, how they are actually interested in words. I caught two kids yesterday afternoon engaged in a tug of war over who was going to take home John Kennedy's Word Stems (not thrilled with man-handling of the book but thrilled that they actually cared enough to want to have it over the week end when no assessment was ensuing!!) In quickly asking kids to record themselves speaking about a word they enjoyed discovering and connecting it to our year's humanities focus, I was surprised by how many students were queueing up to do this!! So this now will be included as part of their on- line portfolios.

So what's worked well in terms of word-study this year? I suppose 5-10 minute analysis regularly as words come up, resources around the room- suffixes, on

going charts of bases and roots we discover, laminated charts of prefixes to all tables as quick references, the google doc. Word a day (will change that title to Word a Week).

To do better: actually work through doubling, i/y, suffixing patterns- in other words target more of the Real Spelling kits particularly the ones that develop students morphemic analysis, not just rely on my memory and on the fly approach, begin each class with a word challenge of some sort as a 5minute warm-up (my problem here is that when I do this I can drift on and on and there goes 40 minutes- valuable of course but it means I won't do this consistently as I think I 'm not getting on with meant to be covered in the curriculum!!!)

And to continue? Just having fun with words- regularly asking kids to speculate about words, ranking as the most appropriate synonym, using gradient scales as students apply various words to a character, using the idea of working definitions and therefore regular revisions of this so students truly understand a meaning, continue to read about words myself, and have dictionaries and books such as Australian linguist Kate Burridge's entertaining books lying around the house for all those idle moments!! I wish I had done more but am pleased by the a general level of enthusiasm and belief by the students that word knowledge helps their understanding of important concepts.

Bo Young, an EAL student in my humanities class, just sent me her analysis about the word refugee:

'The word 'refugee' comes from Latin root 'fugere' to flee. When we divide this word into 3 morphemes, we see it is re+fug(e)+ee. 're' is an prefix and 'ee' is an suffix. As you see, you would have noticed that base 'fuge''s e is crossed out. That is because of the 'vowel suffix' The example of 'refugee' is the group of Jews when Hitler was active. They were not humans to their eyes and they were put into Auschwitz. But the Jews who were captured in Auschwitz wasn't refugees. They were prisoners. The Jews who ESCAPED Germany(and other countries if Hitler was in the lead)was a refugee. Sugihara was a Japanese diplomat, and he gave out Japanese visas. He knew he would be in trouble when hundreds of Jews goes into Japan per day. But he thought hundreds people's life is more important then his. Jews at that time in Japan was unwelcome and Japanese thought they were different. I think the feeling behind refugee is a sorrow that they can't live in their own country and living uncomfortable life, but better than the one that they fled out from.'