



Assessing and Improving Children's Vocabulary

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**IGDI slides taken from Early Childhood
Research Institute on Measuring Growth &
Development**

<http://ici2.umn.edu/ecri/dissemin.html>

Why?

- **Understanding word meaning is essential for reading success—both for decoding and comprehension.**

- **Children come to school with a wide range of vocabulary skills and opportunities to be exposed to new words.**
- **Rare words are infrequently used in daily interactions.**



Children's Home Language Experience Vary Greatly:

- **Average child hears 1,500 words per hour**

- **Children of professional/college educated parents hear 2,100 words per hour**
- **Children of parents receiving welfare heard 600 words per hour**
- **Difference by age 4: 48 million compared to 13 million words**



Number of Rare (Uncommon) Words per 1,000

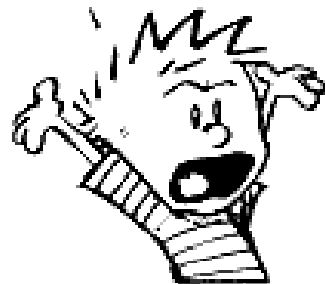
- **Adult speech (expert testimony) 28.4**
- **Adult speech (college grads) 17.3**

- **Prime Time adult television 22.7**
- **Children's books (elementary) 30.9**
- **Comic books 53.5**
- **Newspapers 68.3**
- **Scientific article abstracts 128**

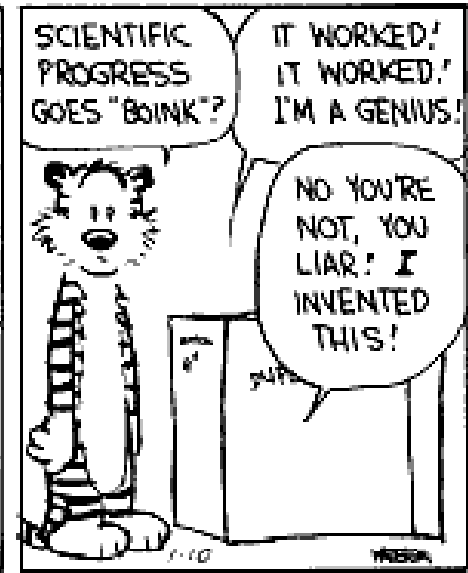
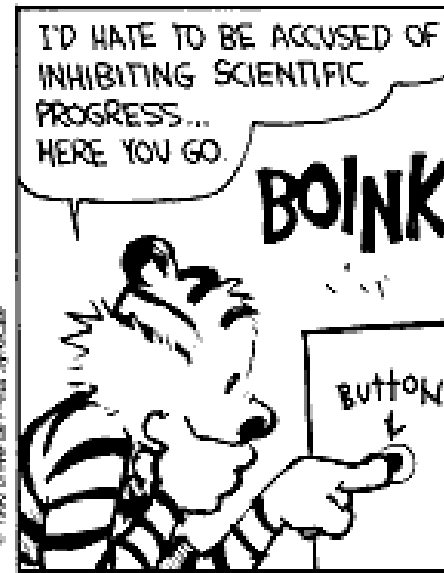
Scientific progress goes 'boink'

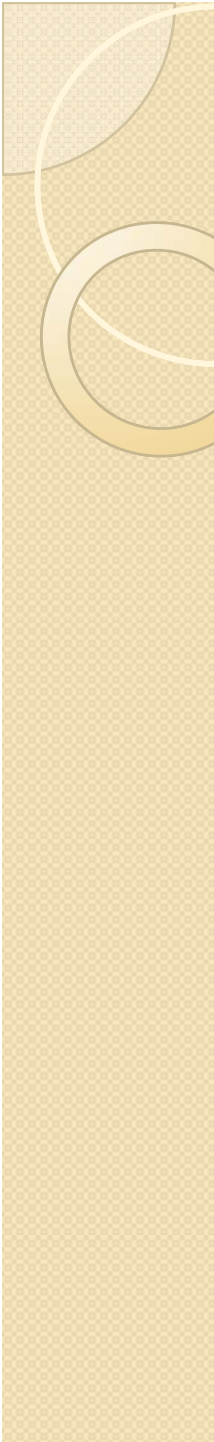


BROTHER! YOU DOUBTING THOMASES GET IN THE WAY OF MORE SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES WITH YOUR STUPID ETHICAL QUESTIONS! THIS IS A *BRILLIANT* IDEA! HIT THE BUTTON, WILL YA?



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Types of Vocabulary Vary by Type of Children's Book

With storybooks teachers:

- **Before story---**Discuss author, central characters, and concepts
- **During story---**clarify vocabulary, engage students in making predictions and explaining motives and events
- **After story----**ask students to reflect on meaning and message of story



Children's Books (cont.)

With science texts teachers:

- Engage children in activities designed to relate to text
- Lead students to predict, explain, deduce, and test causes
- Vocabulary discussed through elaborate concept development rather than definition

With easy-to-read picture books teachers:

- Have more limited discussion
- Focus on print and the words on each page



Summary

- **Value of reading different genres extends well beyond texts themselves**
- **Activities and discussion associated with each genre make distinctive contributions towards children's developing vocabulary, comprehension, and processes of reading.**
(Mason et al. 1989)



Is everyone making sufficient progress with my approach?

- **Progress monitoring with Individual Growth & Development Indicators (IGDI) Picture Naming task**
- **Get it! Got it! Go! Website:**
www.getgotgo.net
- **Instructions**
- **Video clip**



Picture Naming Task

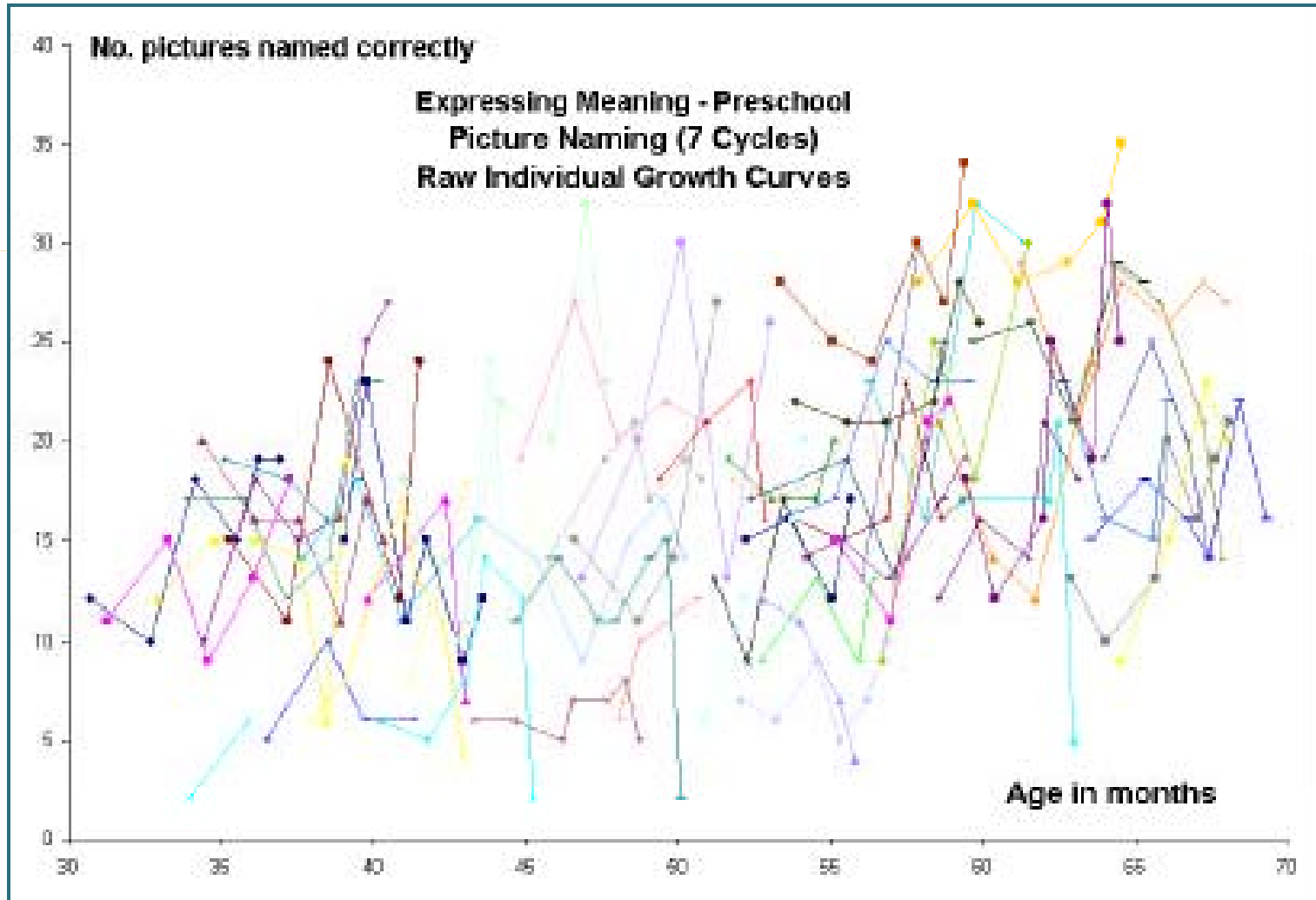
- **Shuffle cards**
- **Sample cards: name it if child doesn't—only continue if child names all 4 correctly**
- **1 minute timed test**
- **Sort into two piles: correct and incorrect/skipped**
- **Record total number of correct responses (don't include sample cards)**



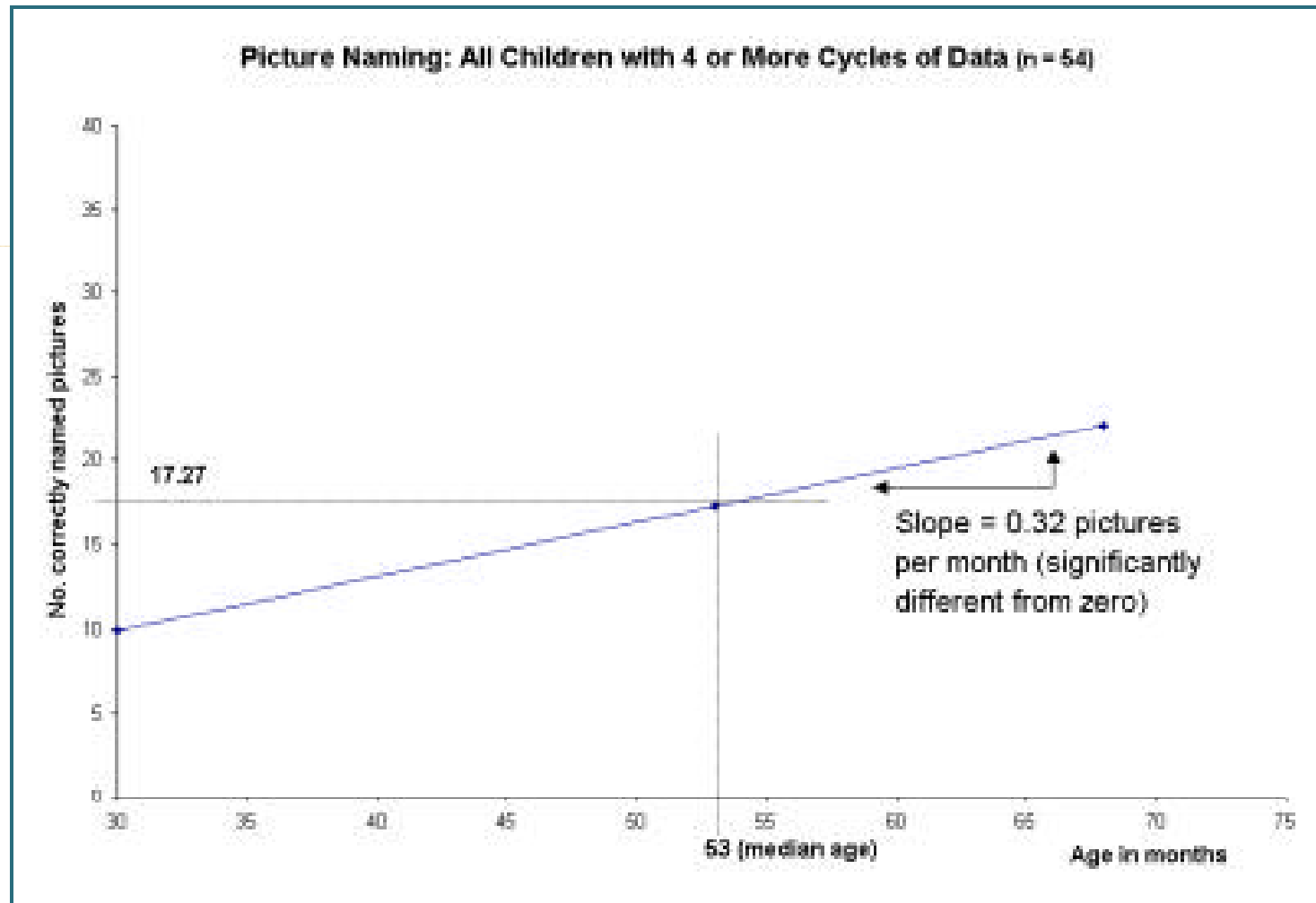
IGDI Picture Naming Psychometrics

- **Validity: correlations with
PPVT .69-.72
PLS .63-.81**
- **No significant differences between
boys and girls**
- **Test-retest reliability $r = .67$**

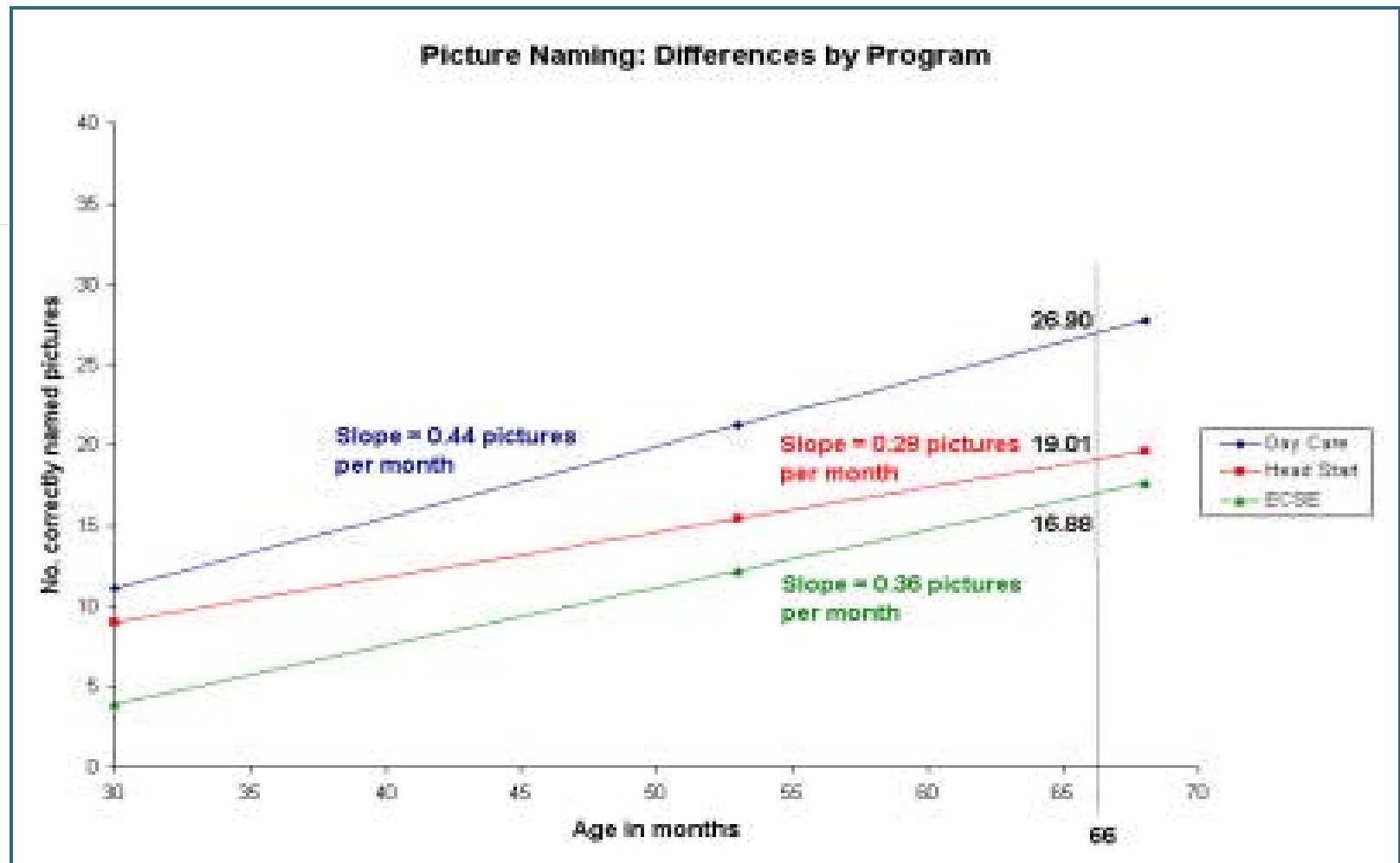
Evidence of Sensitivity to Growth



Picture Naming Group Growth Curve



Picture Naming Group Differences





Rationale for Measuring Growth & Development

- **Increasing demand for accountability**
- **Need for a comprehensive system that:**
 - describes children's growth and development over time
 - provides a model in which decisions may be made for designing, informing and evaluating interventions
 - can be used for individuals and groups of children
 - allows families, early childhood and elementary educators to identify areas in need of change to optimize child outcome

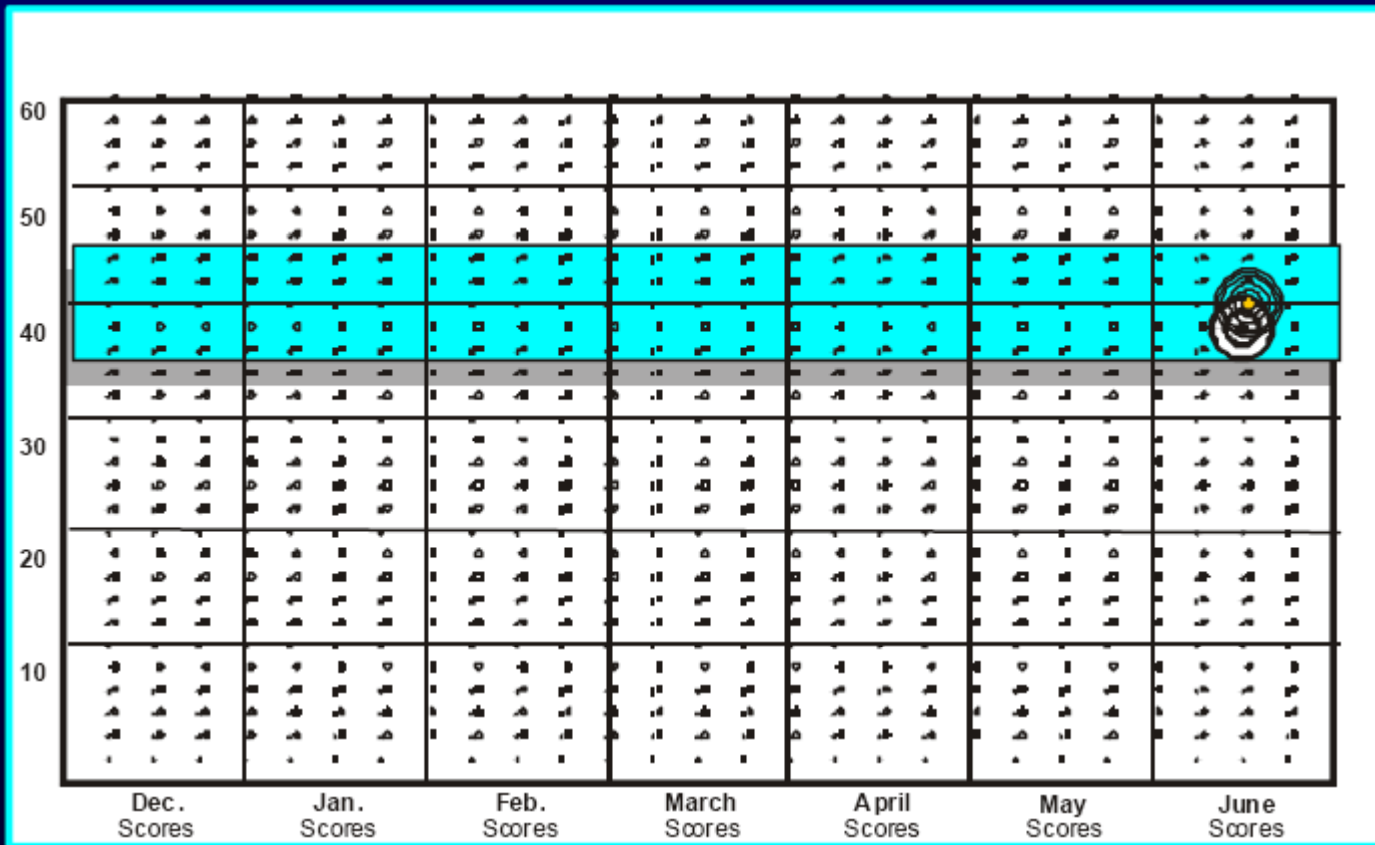


What can you do with IGDIs?

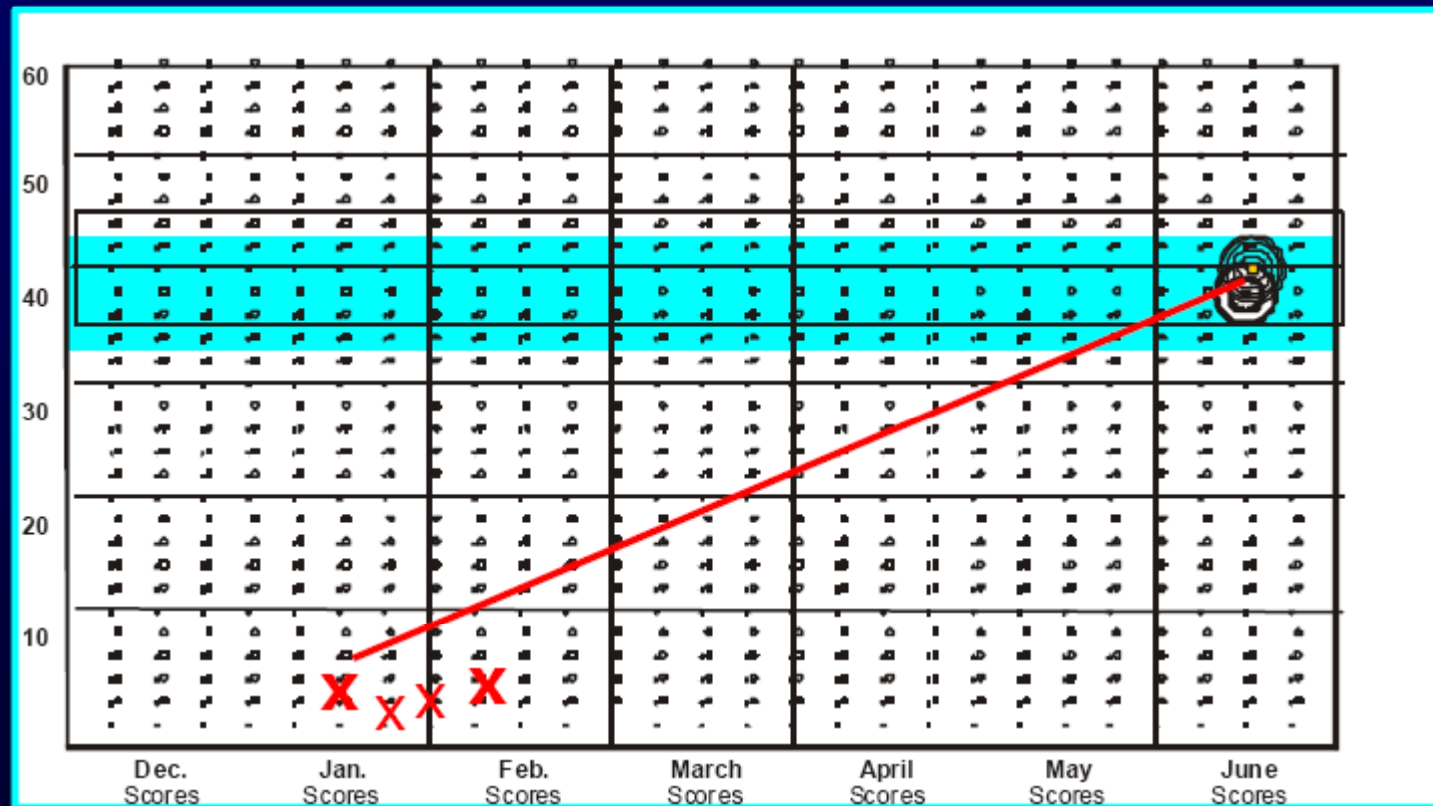
Monitor growth and development to:

- **Identify children who may need additional support or intervention to achieve important long-term outcomes**
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions**

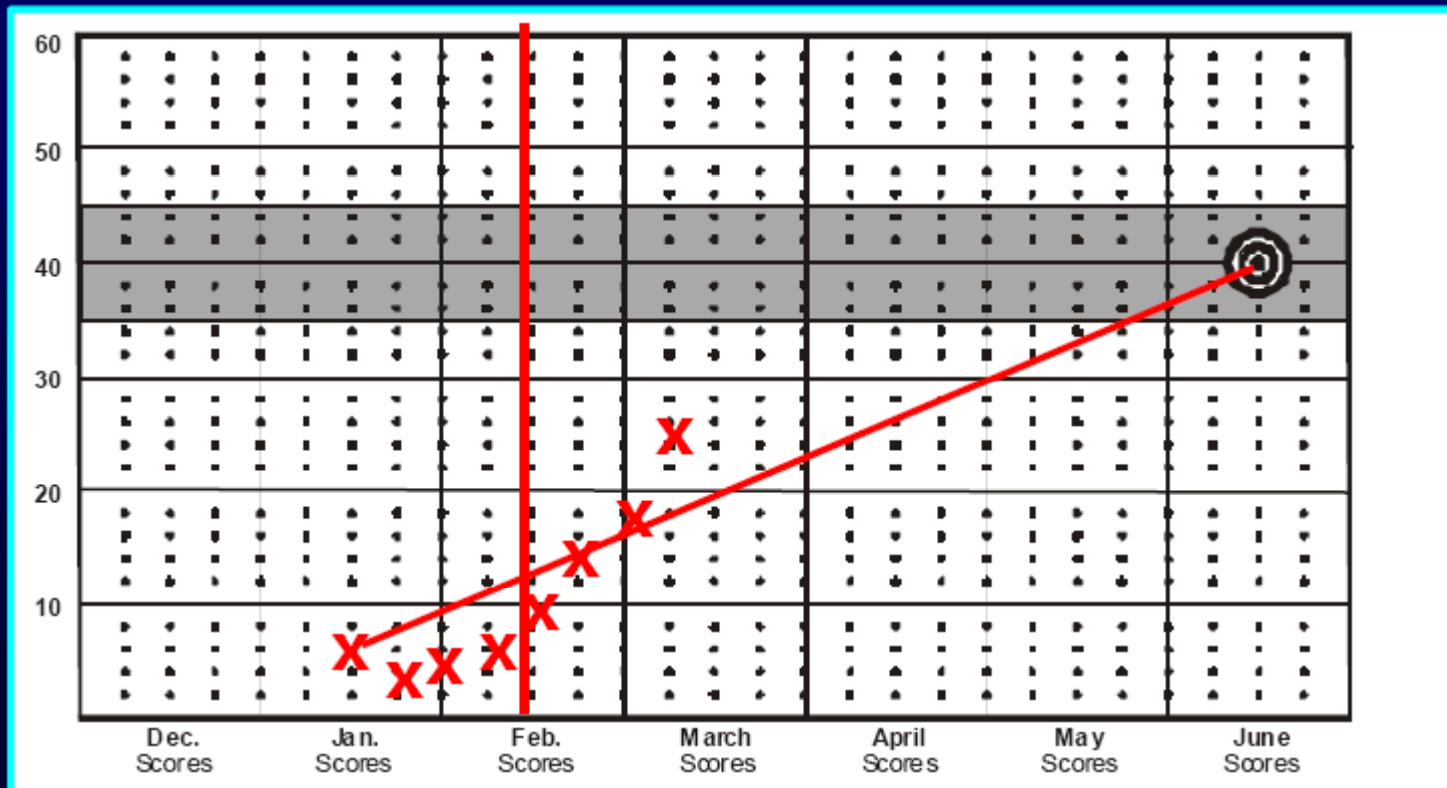
IGDIs can tell you where you want to be

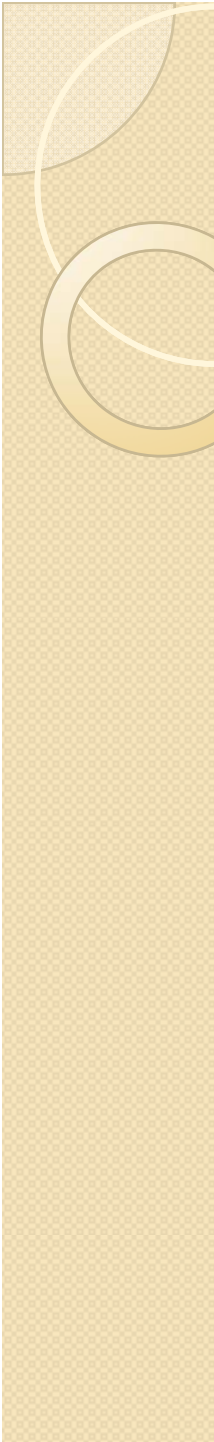


IGDIs can tell you when you are off course



IGDIs can tell you when you are off course so you can make an early course correction





Additional Vocabulary Monitoring Strategies

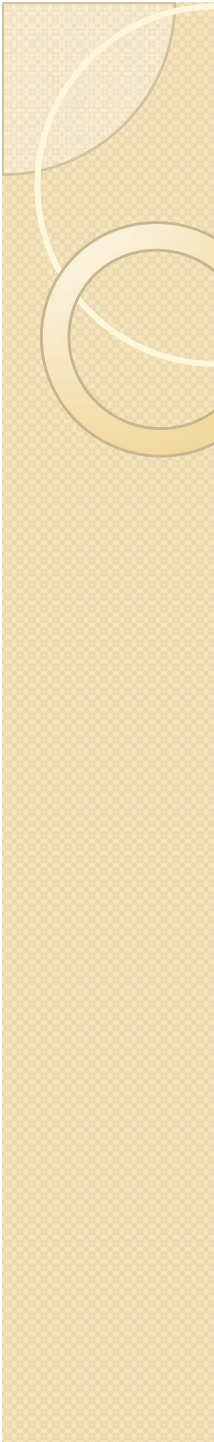
- **Word maps for assessment and teaching**
 - **What is it?**
 - **What is it like?**
 - **What are some examples?**
- **Before-and-after word knowledge self-rating**
- **Teacher-constructed vocabulary tests**
- **Modified Cloze passages**
- **Published Diagnostic Vocabulary Tests (Reutzel & Cooter, 2008)**



Strategies to Build Vocabulary

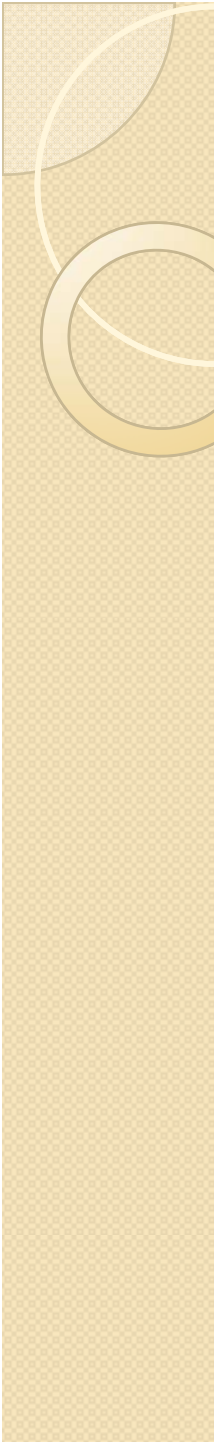
(National Research Council (1998);
Reutzel & Cooter, 2008)

- **Written text places a high demand on vocabulary knowledge.**
- **“Even at the youngest ages, the ability to understand and remember the meanings of new words depends quite strongly on how well developed one’s vocabulary already is.”**
- **Learning new concepts and words are essential for reading comprehension.**



Can children's word knowledge and comprehension be measurably improved through instruction?

- **Yes!**
 - **Vocabulary instruction improve specific word knowledge, sometimes improves scores on global vocabulary measures, seems to increase comprehension.**
 - **Drill and practice significant improvement with particular words.**
 - **However, information about the words' definitions and examples of word usages in variety of context resulted in larger gains in vocabulary and reading comprehension**



Four components of an effective vocabulary program (Graves, 2000):

- **wide or extensive independent reading to expand word knowledge**
- **instruction in specific words to enhance comprehension of texts containing those words**
- **instruction in independent word-learning strategies, and**
- **word consciousness and word-play activities to motivate and enhance learning**



Findings of the National Reading Panel

- **Intentional instruction of vocabulary items is required for specific texts.**
- **Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important.**
- **Learning in rich contexts is valuable for vocabulary learning. Vocabulary tasks should be restructured as necessary.**
- **Vocabulary learning should entail active engagement in learning tasks.**

Findings (cont.)

- **Computer technology can be used effectively to help teach vocabulary.**
- **Vocabulary can be acquired through incidental learning. How vocabulary is assessed and evaluated can have differential effects on instruction.**
- **Dependence on a single vocabulary instructional method will not result in optimal learning.**



Three strategies I use to promote vocabulary:



Strategies to promote vocabulary growth:

- **Explicit systematic instruction**
- **Multiple exposures in multiple contexts**
- **Definitions and context**
- **Restructure vocabulary tasks**
- **Depth as well as breadth**
- **Incidental vocabulary learning**
- **Word mapping**
- **Dialogic reading**
- **Foster word consciousness**

Strategies for ELLs:

Take advantage of students' first language

- draw on knowledge for figuring out unfamiliar words in English

Teach the meaning of basic words

- Basic words can be found on lists, such as the Dale-Chall List (Chall and Dale, 1995).

Review and reinforcement

- read-alouds, teacher-directed activities, listening to audiotapes, activities to extend word use outside of the classroom, and parent involvement



Learning Vocabulary Independently

- **Use dictionaries**
- **Use information about word parts**
- **Use context clues**
- **Talk, talk, talk....**
- **Read, read, read.....**