

The Effects of Context Clue Instruction on Finding an Unknown Word

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to increase word meaning in independent and instructional level texts for fifth grade readers through the use of context clues. The literature review examines peer reviewed research on the topic. The question guiding this research is does context clue analysis support students when finding the meaning of an unknown word? The majority of the research completed during the study indicated that explicit instruction of context clues will increase a reader's ability to identify unknown words. In this study, students were given three texts, two fiction and one nonfiction, with a given set of words. As a pretest, they were given the words and were to try and define them as best as they could. After, they were to define the words given in a sentence. Finally, they were able to work collaboratively to define the words after reading the complete text. The study found the students' abilities to identify unknown words appeared to increase with instruction.

Introduction

The National Reading Panel (NRP) compiled a report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) identifying and analyzing vocabulary as one of the five prominent components of the reading process. One way to support vocabulary development and help struggling readers is to build word identification and the development of figuring out word meanings through the use of context clues. In one section of this article, it will discuss how in previous research, the use of contextual analysis in identifying word meanings is inconclusive. It is said that it is unclear that context clues can fully support a child's understanding of an unknown word in a text. In the next section, this article will discuss the methods used to show how contextual analysis can help student's understandings of unknown words. Through the literature reviewed discussed, the subsequent research was conducted using context clues to identify word meaning.

Theoretical Framework

Vocabulary is one of the five components of the reading process. According to Bromley (2000), vocabulary is a principle contributor to comprehension, fluency, and achievement. Vocabulary development is both an outcome of comprehension and a precursor to it, with word meanings making up as much as 70-80% of comprehension. Researchers have described the influential relationship between vocabulary and comprehension. Children who know the meaning of most of the words they hear and read comprehend more than those who do not (Freebody and Anderson, 1983). Those students who already know most of the words they are exposed to will not only be able to understand more but also can use the understanding to acquire new knowledge and the vocabulary to represent that knowledge (Spencer & Guillaume, 2006).

The ability to read and write is imperative to learning. “Literacy is primarily something people do; it is an activity, located in the space between thought and text. Literacy does not just reside in people’s heads as a set of skills to be learned, and it does not just reside on paper, captured as texts to be analyzed. Like all human activity, literacy is essentially social, and it is located in the interaction between people” (Barton & Hamilton 1998; taken from Larson & Marsh, 2005, p. 10). Being socially accepted among cultures is what makes literacy a factor that encompasses the aspects within one’s life. One of the literacy theories associated with contextual analysis is the Sociocultural theory. Larson and Marsh stated that the Sociocultural theory is “learning through participation in social, cultural, and historical contexts that are mediated by interaction. Thus, children learn by participating in sociocultural activity, in both formal and informal contexts” (2005). Children are able to develop higher order functions out of social interactions. Through the use of context clues, students learn to how to work with one

another as well as verbalize and discuss their work. This gives the students a chance to express their opinions and perform as an investigator of words.

As part of the four dimensions of literacy, the student or learner acts as a scientist. When the learner is a scientist, he or she is learning language through data collection, rule generation, rule testing, and rule modification (Kucer, 2005). A vital factor that takes place through the experimentation of learning language is discovery. To help form a basic platform for understanding language, active engagement needs to occur within the educational environment (Dyson, 1998). When a child is learning language by having development as a recursive process, he or she is learning language through their mistakes, gaining understanding over time, and through interaction development (Dyson, 1998). When students are taught to work together with effective learning strategies, the performance benefits can be seen at both the individual and group testing levels (Jones, Levin, & Beitzel, 2000). Having students working collectively to figure out an unknown word could be beneficial for their learning process.

Review of Research

Allen stated, “At the heart of being able to construct meaning is the ability to recognize words automatically” (1998). One way to support word recognition and meaning is through the use of context clues. In order to develop as reader’s children need to be able to decode printed words (Lapp and Flood, 1997). Context clues could help struggling readers build word identification and the development of word meanings. Starting with using context clues for word identification may be more beneficial to students because once a child can decode easily more

attention can be paid to building meaning (Allen, 1998). Though the literature reviewed discussed using context clues for word meaning and word identification, the subsequent research was conducted using context clues for inferring word meaning.

Word Identification vs. Word Meaning

Rhoder and Huerster (2002) suggested the ability to know, understand, produce, and use a large number and variety of words are critical to reading and listening. Context clues could help support word meaning and word identification. Students must be able to use contextual analysis as a tool to decode words. Greenwood and Flanigan agreed but added that many students may not have the tools that lead to long term improvements in comprehension of text (2007). This means one of the first goals of reading and writing instruction should be to quickly provide students with skills they will need to read the texts around them (Lapp and Flood, 1997).

Children may become frustrated with reading if they do not have automatic and decoding skills (Allen, 1997). Bishop, Reyes, and Pflaum (2006) believed that in order for students to truly comprehend a text, a child must be immersed within a text and to create a balance between creating one's own personal response to the text and problems that naturally occur within a text. Context clues can help create an interaction with the text that could help support the identification of unknown words. The act of comprehending a text is complex and depends on a number of different thinking processes (Neufield, 2005). Flanigan and Greenwood also agreed. In their 2007 article they discussed choosing the method of instruction should depend on the knowledge of students and the goal or purpose for teaching. Therefore, a choice should be made by the instructor whether to teach context clues for word identification or word meaning based on the student or student's specific needs.

Experienced and skillful students create a purpose for reading. They relate what they read to their own experiences, make predictions, and skim the text for main ideas or important information (Bishop, Reyes, & Pflaum, 2006). Talking about the thought process of strong comprehenders, Neufield (2005) discussed how the ability to identify words quickly, accurately, and effortlessly are customary for skillful readers. He discusses later in the article how flexible strategy use is by expert readers. Readers use a variety of strategies during meaning making and consciously select the right strategy for the right job (Neufield). Children need word identification skills and should be taught word identification skills when they are learning to read and enjoy literature (Lapp and Flood, 1997).

Context Clues

Greenwood and Flanigan (2007) stated that children learn approximately 4,000 words in a school year, but that only 400 of them are learned through direct instruction. If, on average, 90% of the words are learned through repeated, meaningful encounters then this avenue of learning should be optimized (Greenwood and Flanigan, 2007). If repeated, then meaningful encounters are necessary then context clues may be effective in increasing word identification and supporting word meaning. According to Rhoder and Huerster (2002), students might learn word meanings incidentally by using the surrounding context or by a word learning strategy that they have been taught explicitly. Using context clues as a strategy could help assist students to identify unknown words in sentences or longer texts.

There are specific conditions needed to be in place although the research suggests a need for context clue instruction. Context instruction should require students to have to make hypotheses about what a word is based on what they already know and the context within which the word is found. Students should then be able to cross check these hypotheses with other

information (Blachowicz, 1993). Teaching students how to use context to derive word meaning is important (Goerss et al, 1999). Greenwood and Flanigan agreed and discussed that context clues merit careful teaching and students need to realize that authors choose their words carefully and purposefully (2007).

There are several factors to consider when deciding the use of context clues. In order for a reader to be successful in figuring out an unknown word, it depends on how many times the word is presented in the context, whether the context is oral or written, the ability of the reader to use context clues, and whether the context is sufficient (Rhoder and Huerster, 2002). When the reader has common knowledge and background information with the context, it is easier for a student to learn an unfamiliar word. It must be essential to consider the abilities and background knowledge of the particular reader when considering the use of context clues. Greenwood and Flanigan (2007) discussed how important it is for students to see and engage in discussion around context explicitness to be able to one day determine how supportive a context actually is. The purpose is to develop students into readers which can determine what the word is based on the context it is found and not vice versa. In conclusion, it is important to teach students how to use context to identify unknown words (Goerss et al., 1999).

Baumann et al (2002) suggested that the idea of context clues is commonly used, but the research to support it is quite vague. However, Rhoder and Huerster (2002) stated that if teaching context clues is supported and encouraged by most teachers, it could produce positive results.

Effective Implementation

Students need guidance to learn new tactics and strategies that will help them increase their vocabulary and reading comprehension. Without effective strategy instruction and

intervention, readers often simply guess at unknown words in text (Pemberton, 2003). Cohen and Byrnes (2007) claimed that students can increase their new word knowledge and develop strategies over time with efficient instruction from the teacher. As educators, it is imperative to help the students learn how to problem solve when they come to unknown or unfamiliar words within a text. Pemberton (2003) stated that intervention students often times guess at unknown words without an effective strategy instruction. Context clues could help support the students to find the correct word identification in a text without making a guess.

Teacher modeling is the first step to effective implementation. In Bromley's article (2007), it is said that it becomes contagious when teachers are inquisitive and passionate about words and share their enthusiasm with their students. Modeling is an effective way through which teachers can demonstrate how to interact with a text (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2008). Teachers should assist the learning of context clues through modeling. When modeling is complete, the teacher should incorporate feedback and discussion to maximize student learning (Rhoder & Huerser, 2002).

One way to implement context clues is by presenting students with single sentences first. It is more manageable and comprehensible for the student using a smaller chunk of a text (Buettner, 2002). Buettner suggested that students are able to focus on working on one sentence at a time and also so they can self-monitor while learning and practicing. When students begin to understand the strategy of context clues, they can begin using larger text to find unknown words. It is important that students have multiple exposures to the use of context clues.

Research completed on word learning shows many times student engage in little discussion or cross checking if learning new words (Blachowicz, 1993). Having students work in pairs may help to engage them in more meaningful discussion around identifying what a word is.

Researchers have found students who studied and were tested as a pair were generally more confident in the correct answers they gave (Jones, Levin, & Beitzel, 2000). The same study produced the result that students who learned in pairs recalled more definitions and story information than those students who worked individually did (Jones, Levin, & Beitzel, 2000). This could be considered an important component to effective context clue instruction. One last researcher suggested it is the job of the teacher to scaffold strategies that help develop independent readers (Pemberton, 2003). With effective instruction, students develop a greater use of word learning tools and strategies (Baumann, Ware, and Edwards, 2007).

Method

Researcher Stance

Contextual analysis is a strategy that can create optimal growth and development of identifying and learning new vocabulary within a text. With that being said, I created a research project that is based on contextual analysis and the effects, if any, on identifying new words and their meanings. I am currently a fifth grade general education classroom teacher in an urban district. I heard several negative comments when becoming an educator in an urban district about the low literacy abilities of the students. I highly believe that all children can learn to read and write with effective instruction. In my current classroom, I found that students have a difficulty with the use of context clues and how to identify words and their meanings. I chose to do this research study to illustrate that minority students with high-poverty backgrounds can also achieve grade level reading abilities given the appropriate strategies to help them become successful. This experience has given me the initiative to want to research the ideas that other educators have on this topic within the same literacy instruction setting as myself. I believe that

with the appropriate instruction, the students can be successful with this strategy. Therefore, the question at hand that needs to be answered is what effects, if any, does context clue instruction have on identifying unknown words?

Design

Given the time restraints with students, this research study was given over four weeks. This design allowed me to examine and study the student's work, discussions, and observations without interfering with the curriculum. The students were given a pretest of the vocabulary words that were chosen along with a posttest to investigate the effects of the skill of inferring meaning from context clues. I have established this study in which researches have illustrated that students need independent word learning strategies that they can transfer across a wide variety of school and personal texts (Roder and Huerster, 2002).

School Setting

Smith Elementary school is one of thirty nine elementary schools in an urban district in a northern city. Smith approximately enrolled 476 students this year. 33 percent of the children were classified as learning English as a second language. 17.1 percent of the children were classified as receiving special educational services. 98 percent received free or reduced-price lunches. Additionally, the school offered breakfast and lunch. 95.5 percent of the students were classified as minority, most often Hispanic (52.1%), although they were clearly the majority in this school.

Smith Elementary is known for its high enrollment in minority and low-income students. As for all the mandated state tests that are given, this school is also known for their low test scores. As of the 2007-2008 school year, the percentage for meeting proficiency on State tests is

English Language Arts 47%, Math 47%, Science 73%, and Social Studies 60%. Smith Elementary was typically located at the bottom for ranking low in the State mandated assessments. These scores resulted in the state claiming Smith Elementary to be a low-performing school and requiring the school to develop a better way to educate and help the students become successful in learning. The school was listed as a SINI school for two years which was known as a School In Need of Improvement.

Participants

The observations took place in one classroom within the school. It was in a fifth grade general education classroom with eighteen students who participated. I sent a letter home to the student's parents discussing the observations that were going to be done within the classroom. I requested permission to work with each child and also received assent from the students as well.

Of the eighteen students that participated, seven of them were boys. Two of the boys were African American while the other five were Hispanic. Six of the eleven girls were African American, four were Hispanic and one was Asian. All of the children in the classroom spoke English fluently and did not receive English as a Second Language or special education supports. However, six of the students spoke a different language in their home. In this particular class, all the students read at grade level or above.

Data Collection

There were two major sources of data during this research study. The primary source was observations that were made by the teacher during the four weeks. The observations were assisted by the artifacts from student work and carefully examining the students while they were working.

Observations. The observations that were made during this study took place three times a week for an hour. During their reader's workshop time, I observed the students reading and comprehending unknown words in a text at their instructional level. At times there was no prompting or encouraging the students. I acted as an observer and listened to the students conversations about the text and took field notes. The field notes were gathered and used with the artifacts from the students.

Artifacts. The majority of artifacts that were collected were from student work samples. The child's literacy knowledge of the subject was observed through field notes and documented to confirm the child's literacy knowledge. The worksheets were prepared by the teacher.

Materials. The books selected for the study were Houghton Mifflin texts, The Doodler (Denny, 2004), Mexico's Smoking Mountains (Finton, 2004), and Sandman to the Rescue (Dominick, 2004). These books had not yet been read to the students during this academic year. For this study, vocabulary words were taken from each of the pieces of literature. (See Table 1).

Table 1: Vocabulary words from texts

The Doodler	Mexico's Smoking Mountains	Sandman to the Rescue
Collided	Haven	Occasionally
Strode	Fiery	Coax
Qualified	Dormant	Relented
Expectantly	Accumulate	Prompted
Glumly	Spewed	Cautiously
Determined	Mourned	Cajole
Confidence	Volcanology	Entice
Debut	Intensely	Adept
Limelight		Modest
		Dawning

Data Analysis

Data was collected and analyzed through an interpretive approach. For this study, there were three texts given altogether. Two of the texts were given at their independent level which

consisted of a fiction and nonfiction text. The third text was a fictional text at their instructional level. Before beginning any of the texts, the students had explicit instruction on the use of contextual analysis. The five types of context clues that the class worked on were synonyms, antonyms, examples, definitions, and inferences. The students had a book mark to refer to that gave the type of clue, the definition of the clue, and an example of how the clue is used. The discussions that were had during the instruction time were constructive. The students were able to discuss the clues they used to help them figure out the meanings of unknown words. They also realized that the clues could be within the sentence, the paragraph, or on the page.

Before each of the texts, the students were given a pretest of the vocabulary words chosen for each text. The students had to define each word to the best of their ability. However, the words that were chosen, the students most likely would not be able to define. This was given individually. After the students took the pretest of the given words, they were given a worksheet with the same words but this time they were in a sentence straight from the text. The students had to try and define the words again and write the clues that were given for each sentence. Some of the sentences were difficult because the words could not be defined with the context clues that were given. On day three of the texts, the students were given the text to read with a partner and once again, define the words and the context clues that they used to help them. Observations were made and the artifacts were collected to examine the meanings of the unknown words to the students.

Data Findings

The main aim of this study was to see the students were able to use contextual analysis to help them define the meanings of unknown words in a text. The students were given the pretest,

the sentence assessments, and the text assessment. Each assessment was compared and the scores for the assessments are presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

The first text that was given was The Doodler by Joan FitzGerald Denny. This text was nonfiction at their independent level. Nine words were chosen for this nonfiction text. The table below lists each student and the words they got correct for the pretest, the use of sentence clues, and the text clues after reading.

Table 2: Text 1, The Doodler

Students	Pretest	Sentence Clues	Text Clues
1	6	7	8
2	2	4	8
3	4	4	8
4	2	3	6
5	5	7	8
6	5	8	8
7	6	7	8
8	3	5	6
9	0	3	7
10	3	6	9
11	4	5	8
12	3	4	5
13	4	5	6
14	5	5	6
15	3	4	6
16	6	6	9
17	5	6	9
18	2	4	8
TOTAL CORRECT	68	93	133

The second text that was given was Mexico's Smoking Mountains by Nancy Finton. Eight words were chosen for this nonfiction text. This text was fiction at their independent level. The table below lists each student and the words they got correct for the pretest, the use of sentence clues, and the text clues after reading.

Table 3: Text 2, Mexico's Smoking Mountains

Students	Pretest	Sentence Clues	Text Clues
1	1	6	8
2	0	5	8
3	2	4	8
4	1	4	7
5	3	6	8
6	2	5	8
7	2	6	7
8	0	6	7
9	1	5	6
10	1	7	8
11	1	7	8
12	0	5	7
13	2	6	8
14	3	5	7
15	0	4	7
16	2	7	7
17	2	7	7
18	3	5	7
TOTAL CORRECT	26	100	133

The third text that was given was Sandman to the Rescue by Gloria Dominick. This was a nonfiction text at their instructional level. Ten words were chosen for this nonfiction text. The table below lists each student and the words they got correct for the pretest, the use of sentence clues, and the text clues after reading.

Table 4: Text 3, Sandman to the Rescue

Students	Pretest	Sentence Clues	Text Clues
1	1	5	8
2	2	5	7
3	2	5	8
4	2	4	7
5	2	6	9
6	2	6	10
7	3	7	10
8	2	7	9
9	2	6	8

10	2	7	9
11	2	5	7
12	1	8	10
13	3	7	9
14	2	6	10
15	1	5	8
16	2	9	10
17	1	6	9
18	2	7	8
TOTAL CORRECT	34	111	156

Looking over all three texts and their results, it is evident that the students were able to use the context clues to help them define the meanings of the unknown words. It is clear that the students had a difficult time describing the words in their pretest because the words they got correct were very minimal. However, when the students were given the words in a sentence, some of them were able to use the clues in the sentences to help them. Most of the students increased the number of words correctly defined. Then looking at the third column, when the students were able to work cooperatively, they were able to get most of the words correctly defined. It can be seen in all three tables that the students appear to have improved their performance on contextual analysis.

As an observer in the classroom, I was able to listen to great conversations going on between the students while they were reading the text and using the clues to assist with the vocabulary words. Below are three conversations that I was able to examine while the students were working with their partners.

Table 5: Conversation - During the first text, The Doodler, I listened to two students try and define the word glumly.

Student 1: Let's look at the word glumly since we just read it.
 Student 2: What do you think it means?
 Student 1: Well... sad I think.
 Student 2: Why? How did you get that?
 Student 1: Well... at the beginning of the book... he decided that he didn't want to work hard because he didn't think he could do draw. He thinks he could just doodle. But then in the classroom... he saw that everyone was having so much fun working on the newspaper. Then book says that he was thinking about how he should change his mind.
 Student 2: Oh okay... yeah I think you are right. Because in the next paragraph it says how he becomes sad because he wish he said that he would have become the drawer for the newspaper. Yeah, I think you are right.

Table 6: Conversation – During the second text, Mexico's Smoking Mountains, I listened to two students try and define the word volcanology.

Student 1: (*Students just read the sentence with volcanology in it and laughs*) Oh wow! This word is easy! Look at the sentence.
 Student 2: (*reads the sentence again*) Oh yeah... it says the definition of the word right after it. That is what we learned. This is a definition context clue.
 Student 1: Yeah, and it says "Volcanology, the study of volcanoes..." which we learned that -ology means the study of something. This makes sense because the word volcanology has the -ology at the end. So this word means the study of volcanoes.

Table 7: Conversation – During the third text, Sandman to the Rescue, I listened to two students try and define the word coax.

Student 1: I'm not sure what this word, coax could mean.
 Student 2: Well, Jenna and Matt's friends are trying to get Matt into the water. Jenna yelled at him to get him to go in.
 Student 1: So do you think it could mean to go in?
 Student 2: No. If you read the sentence and put the words go in, it wouldn't make sense. "Some of Matt's friends joined Jenna in hollering to *go in* him into the water". See, it doesn't make sense.
 Student 1: Yeah you're right. Hhhmmm... I think they are trying to convince him or persuade him to go in. What do you think?
 Student 2: Yeah! That's it... let's read it and see if it makes sense. "Some of Matt's friends joined Jenna in hollering to *convince* him to go into the water". That does make sense because he doesn't want to go in the water at all and they are trying to get him in.
 Student 1: Let's write that down. Convince.

Looking at the conversations between the students, it is clear that it is imperative that students have the chance to work together in the learning process. The students were able to help one another define the words. Jones, Levin, & Beitzel, (2000) found that when students are taught to work together, perhaps with effective learning strategies, performance benefits can be seen at both the individual and group-testing levels. Students who work collaboratively can learn from each other and gain more knowledge from the conversations they produce. Many times the clues to the meaning are subtle and require the reader to make a lot of inferences. Context clues will often give the reader some idea of the meaning of the word, but they are not sufficient enough to determine an exact meaning. Through the use of collaboration, the conversations that were had during this study showed this exact point. For example, in Table 7, the students are trying to figure out the meaning of the word coax. The definition of the word coax is not in the story but the students need to make inferences about what the characters are doing. Student 1 suggests that the word could mean “to go” but Student 2 explains to Student 1 how it doesn’t make sense in the sentence. Student 2 describes to Student 1 how the other characters are actually “convincing” or “persuading” Matt to go into the water. Because Matt had a bad experience with the water when he was younger, he is not afraid of the water and Student 2 made an inference about how the other characters are convincing Matt that this time it will be okay.

The results of this study indicated that scaffolded context clue instruction increased the number of words the students could correctly define. The students were able to use the clues in the sentences to identify the meaning of an unknown word. While working collaboratively with a partner in the third assessment, the students demonstrated the ability to verbalize their processes of using context clues by stating the other clues within the sentences or paragraphs.

Limitations and Implications for Future Teacher Research

One limitation to this study was that the students and I were only able to focus on this specific study for one hour three times a week for four weeks. Because of the other required material for fifth grade students, I was not able to focus only on context clues during their Reader's Workshop time. During guided reading time, I was able to work with a couple of students a week. I would have liked to be able to observe each one of them more. I am curious to know if they applied the concepts of context clues to their home reading as well. Also, if this study were able to take place over a long period of time, would the results be even greater?

Another limitation for this study is that the results are limited to the types of context clues that I have taught so far. Our class had explicit instruction on the basic context clues types such as definition, example, synonym, antonym, and inferences. If this study went on to further types of context clues, the students could have an even greater understanding on how to use them.

This study was also limited to fiction and nonfiction books for guided reading purposes. I believe that this study could be opened up to other subject areas such as science and social studies. It would be interesting to see if the students could use their knowledge of contextual analysis to help figure out unknown words in other areas.

One of the big components of figuring out unknown words is to analyze the meaningful parts of a word known as morphology. Although our class has touched upon the basics of morphology, it would be fascinating to complete a study with both morphological and contextual analysis. If students could be taught with explicit instruction on morphology and contextual analysis, they would be able to break the words down, analyze them, and figure out the meaning.

Also, further instruction than what was completed in the classroom on word parts would be helpful such as prefixes, suffixes, and root words.

For further study, I would also be interested in linking the contextual analysis with the reading comprehension. If more time was allotted, I would have gave the students an assessment on what they read.

Conclusion

After researching the topic of context clues, I was unsure of what the results would be of the study. I expected the student would be able to use context clues by the end but was unsure of the best way to reach the goal of using context clues for word meaning. After referring to the research and planning instruction more thoroughly, I decided to start with a pretest and sentences and build on student success.

Explicit instruction proved to be effective in teaching context clues. Before having them begin the study, our class did several lessons on the different types of context clues. This precise instruction was beneficial for the students to completely understand on how to find the meaning on an unknown word. At first, the students felt helpless and frustrated with not being able to define many words on the pretest. As they reached the sentences, their confidence grew because they had clues around the word to help them. When they were able to work collaboratively with a partner on the last portion of the study, they felt successful because they were able to work with someone, go back and reread, and use the clues around the unknown word. The ability to explain some of their thinking during observations validated their decisions as a reader. More often than not, they were able to explain their thinking and eventually be able to define the word correctly.

Within this study, it found that context clue instruction appeared to improve most of the student's word learning strategies. The students were able to increase the words correctly defined as the study went on working collectively. This particular study proved that students could use context clues to help them find an unknown word.

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Appendices

Appendix A

NAME _____ The Doodler By Joan FitzGerald Denny

Directions: Define the following words as best as you can.

1. collided -

2. strode -

3. qualified -

4. expectantly -

5. glumly -

6. determined -

7. confidence -

8. debut -

9. limelight -

NAME _____ The Doodler By Joan FitzGerald Denny

Directions: Using your knowledge of context clues, define the underline word in each sentence. Then explain the clues you used to define the word.

1. During history, snowboarders streaked across his homework sheets and **collided** with answers to questions about the American Revolution.

Define collided - _____

Clues used from the sentence - _____

2. The next day, Mrs. Leland **strode** into the classroom with a gleam in her eye.

Define strode - _____

Clues used from the sentence - _____

3. "Well, it sounds like you're **qualified**, Irene," Mrs. Leland replied.

Define qualified - _____

Clues used from the sentence - _____

4. Everyone was looking at him **expectantly**.

Define expectantly - _____

Clues used from the sentence - _____

5. It looked like a lot of fun, Sam thought **glumly**.

Define glumly - _____

Clues used from the sentence - _____

6. It would be hard to draw, but now Sam was **determined**.

Define determined - _____

Clues used from the sentence - _____

7. Sam gained **confidence** as he studied the book.

Define confidence - _____

Clues used from the sentence - _____

8. On Wednesday morning the newspaper had its **debut**, and a copy lay on each student's desk.

Define debut - _____

Clues used from the sentence - _____

9. Sam beamed, enjoying the new feeling of being in the **limelight**.

Define limelight - _____

Clues used from the sentence - _____

NAME _____

The Doodler By Joan FitzGerald Denny
AFTER READING THE TEXT

Directions: Now that you have finished reading the text, define the words as best as you can. Use ALL the clues that have helped you figure out the meaning of the word.

1. Define collided (pg. 5) -

Clues used from the text -

2. Define strode (pg. 7) -

Clues used from the text -

3. Define qualified (pg. 7) -

Clues used from the text -

4. Define expectantly (pg. 9) -

Clues used from the text -

5. Define glumly (pg. 12) -

Clues used from the text -

6. Define determined (pg. 12) -

Clues used from the text -

7. Define confidence (pg. 14) -

Clues used from the text -

8. Define debut (pg. 15) -

Clues used from the text -

9. Define limelight (pg. 16) -

Clues used from the text -
