Triple R Teaching

Hello, this is Anna Geiger from The Measured Mom, and in this episode I had the privilege of interviewing Dr. Deb Glaser. She's the creator of The Reading Teacher's Top 10 Tools, which is an excellent training for teachers who want to learn about the science of reading. She's the author of multiple books and some curricula for teaching morphology, and we'll be talking about that in detail today.

I have admired Dr. Glaser's work for a long time, particularly her morphology work, and so I'd reached out to her several times through a contact form and didn't hear back, but I didn't give up. When I was in New York this October for The Reading League Conference, I was walking down the street with my friends looking for a restaurant, and there was Dr. Glaser walking all by herself!

I said, "Hello Deb Glaser!" because of course I recognized her.

She was very nice, and I gave her my business card and she noted that it was nice and thick, which I do on purpose so that people are less likely to throw it away, and told her I'd love to have her on the podcast.

When I got home I was able to find an email address for her and then we were able to schedule this interview! I thoroughly enjoyed it and I am sure that you will too!

Anna Geiger: Welcome Dr. Glaser!

Deb Glaser: Thank you, Anna. I am so excited to be here with you today.

Anna Geiger: I am so happy that I tracked you down because so many people have wanted to hear something about morphology on the podcast, and I knew that you were the one that I would love to talk to about it because of the wonderful work you've done in the curricula that you've published.

Could you first introduce us to yourself and maybe start by telling us how you got into education?

Deb Glaser: Oh, sure. Well, it's been a number of years, and I was very fortunate in the beginning of my career to work with a teacher who was involved in the early CBM (curriculum-based measurement) research, so right from the very beginning, science was a very strong contributor to the work I was doing.

Initially my work was teaching in resource rooms. It was the beginning of Public Law 94-142, and I knew that the schools would need teachers so I went into special education. I worked with children with reading difficulties right from the very beginning for a number of years. I taught second grade, fifth grade, and then I became the director of education at a private learning center for children and adults with dyslexia, the Lee Pesky Learning Center here in Boise, Idaho.

That then opened up my world even further into the science of reading and I was introduced to many of the researchers at the time when the National Reading Panel first published their findings in 1999. I was very fortunate to bring the Shaywitz's, Louisa Moats, and Reid Lyon to Idaho for a conference and became further immersed in the amazing things happening in helping us understand what it takes to teach reading.

Education has been my life since the very beginning when you think about how long I was in school and all the way to getting my doctorate in education.

I recognized really early in my work that teachers lacked the products, the programs, and the systematic explicit processes that would help them not only understand and identify what their children needed in order to be successful readers, but to be able to teach them what to teach their students so that they could learn to read. The greatest gift we can give a child is the gift of reading.

Anna Geiger: So it seems like you sidestepped instruction in balanced literacy. Was that never given to you in any of your higher education, your doctorate, or anything like that?

Deb Glaser: Oh, that's a really good question because at one point I remember sitting with a group of my friends, teacher friends, and we were having coffee one morning and we were so upset because our school district wasn't letting us teach whole

language.

Anna Geiger: Oh!

Deb Glaser: I mean, it was just so easy to get sucked into whole language, and that's what everyone was doing - the heart assessment of what whole language would be and opening up this world of being child-focused.

We spent a really short time feeling that way because we very soon realized that whole language is not whole language. It was actually very partial language because it left out some pretty important elements in instruction. In order for a child to read, they must be taught to read, especially the children that we were working with.

Anna Geiger: So in all your years of working with teachers, have you been seeing that the balanced literacy idea of three-queuing and leveled books has gotten in the way of some of the work you're trying to do, or do you feel like it creates issues that the special education teacher wouldn't normally have to see?

Deb Glaser: Well, I think of early on when a small group of us worked very closely with Louisa Moats on the development of the initial LETRS trainings. We were so like a group of disciples, very religious in our devotion to getting the word out there, and there were many years initially when the audience was very skeptical. Teachers were very skeptical. They wanted what they were comfortable doing, they wanted it to continue, and it was hard for them to think that there was going to have to be a change and they were very resistant. That resistance lasted for many years. As you know, Anna, and your listeners know, in just the last few years, the tide has turned.

Anna Geiger: It must be exciting for you to watch.

Deb Glaser: Oh, it's so exciting! What's most exciting is those of us who have been in this for all of these years are now able to step back, and there are so many gifted and thoughtful and smart young educators out there who are taking the reins and want to continue this movement. It's all to the benefit of our world, our children's world, and our community world, our social world.

Anna Geiger: I agree, it is a very exciting time. We're so thankful that so many of you are still willing to put yourself out there, give us lots of information, and are still

publishing books, which is very helpful for people who are looking to learn this and, as you said, spread the word.

We're going to get into some technical stuff now.

Before we pressed record, I said that when I first started learning about the science of reading, there were some words that were brand new to me, like phoneme, grapheme, and morphology was definitely one. It seemed a little strange, like something I probably didn't have to think too much about. Now I realize how integral that is to how spelling works.

Can we start off with, first of all, some definitions, like the difference between a phoneme and a morpheme?

Deb Glaser: Well, both phoneme and morpheme are terms related to language, and the way we know that is because each of them ends in E-M-E, which is Latin for little bit. A phoneme is a little bit of sound. It is the smallest sound unit in any spoken language.

The combination of phonemes is what gives us our words, which are morphemes. A morpheme maybe is an E-M-E, a little bit, of form or meaningful form. It's the smallest form within a word that has meaning.

For example, if we have the word "seen," it has three phonemes, /s/ /ē/ /n/. I can use that word in a couple of different ways, meaning the morpheme, the meaning of the word, changes.

Have you "seen" my car keys? That is the S-E-E-N. So there we have a grapheme representation as well, which is an E-M-E, the smallest unit, of writing in a word. So we have S-E-E-N are the graphemes.

Or it was a beautiful "scene" at sunset last night. The word is the same, /s/ /ē/ /n/, from the phoneme and sound perspective. In this particular word, there is a different grapheme representation, but also a different meaning. We know that, well, I could get into the graphemes, but I think we're going to talk about that a little bit later... But what we need to know is a phoneme is the speech sound, and the morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning.

Anna Geiger: Yeah. What's interesting is that a word can be really long and have a single morpheme, or it can be short and have multiple morphemes. Maybe we can talk about a long word that has a single morpheme like "alligator." It's all one unit of meaning, which is different from a shorter word like "unhappy."

Deb Glaser: "Unhappy" is two morphemes, "un" meaning not, and "happy" of course has its meaning of feeling of joy. "Unhappy" would be three syllables and two morphemes.

Anna Geiger: So how is phonemic awareness different from morphological awareness?

Deb Glaser: Yeah, that's a really good question, Anna. I talk about that sometimes with teachers in helping them understand that phoneme awareness has been around a long time, and the importance of teaching the awareness of phonemes as it relates to decoding.

But we've given very little attention to morphological awareness, and that is the awareness of the meaningful forms that compose our words. Both phonemes and morphemes are part of spoken language prior to children coming to us to learn to read.

Our job is to create an awareness of those components of language that will make it easier for students to learn the written system of the language that they speak.

Children come to us with a knowledge that is implicit about language. There's an implicit knowledge where they know that there's a difference between the two words, "cat" and "cot." They aren't aware what that difference is because they're focused on meaning, but they know what a cat is and that a cot is a little bed.

It's an implicit knowledge that they have about the language, and the same with morphemes. When we listen to young children speak, their implicit knowledge of how words are composed from the morpheme perspective becomes apparent.

My brother, who is a medical doctor, called me yesterday morning because he knows my field and the work I've been doing. I've been talking with him about it. He called and said, "Oh, one of the young doctors came in the other morning and was so tickled that

his four-year-old said in the kitchen that night before, 'My mom is a cooker and my dad is a cooker'."

That's a really good example of that morphological implicit knowledge. One who teaches is a teacher, one who farms is a farmer, one who cooks is a cooker. It just makes sense!

So then when we create awareness of the morphemes, we teach children that E-R means one who or that which, because a cooker could be a pot. We'll have a cooker on the stove here like this pot, or a stove is a cooker perhaps. I think that's not really common in our use of that word here in the States, but that's that which cooks and a person would be the one who cooks.

That knowledge is implicit and there's no reason to bring an awareness to the phonemes or the morphemes unless we are teaching reading, because that is critical to word recognition, especially as children get older and the number of multisyllabic, multi-morphemic words increases in the written language.

Anna Geiger: Yeah. I think my favorite story about that was when my youngest, he's in second grade now, but when he was about four, he came in and hung his swimsuit on the rack and he said, "I hanged my swimsuit on the rack!"

I said, "Oh, you hung it."

He said, "Yes, it's hunging!" So he knew the morphemes, he didn't know the base, but it was pretty funny.

I know that that's so fun for parents as their kids are starting to talk and all the funny ways that they change words into past tense or things like that and all the things that they kind of approximate.

Deb Glaser: I tell a story about my three-year-old grandson and his creativity with words. After eating crackers off of his soup, he said, "I uncrackered my soup," which is adding a prefix and making cracker past tense. I mean, it's pretty amazing.

A teacher reflected to me how we celebrate a young child's temporary or inventive spelling when they're learning the grapheme-phoneme relationships, but she wasn't aware that we ever celebrate or truly understand what's happening when a child is using that temporary language and experimenting with morphemes. Because what an amazing acquisition, I mean, that's just such a beautiful representation of that biological language brain we have, that in a world where we're spoken to and we're read to, we're building that implicit knowledge about the construction of words.

Anna Geiger: Yeah, very interesting to think about.

So as you said, they don't have to have morphological awareness to understand how to speak or to start applying it in different ways, but as they're reading and spelling, especially, we need to teach morphology.

Could you tell us why is it important for teachers to understand morphology?

Deb Glaser: Well, you have to understand something to teach it, that's the bottom line. Many teachers have shared with me that they don't feel comfortable in their own understanding of morphology based upon their ability to know the meanings of every prefix, every suffix, every root.

Let me just point out right here, none of us ever know the meanings of every prefix, suffix, and root, and awareness is on a continuum. You can be aware of prefixes and suffixes, and it helps you read words and it helps you understand their meanings. Then as we grow along this continuum of awareness, when we are teaching prefixes and suffixes and roots, we are learning the meanings of those right along with our students.

That's one of the reasons I've been dedicated to this development of materials for teachers is to help build their own confidence in their understanding of what morphological awareness truly means and developing their knowledge of the meanings of those morphemes as they teach them.

Anna Geiger: That is very good to hear because I think it becomes very overwhelming, especially when you watch a presentation with someone talking about morphology and they're breaking the word apart and you're like, "I didn't know any of those things. How can I teach my students?" It's good to know that you don't have to know it all to get started, you just have to be a step ahead. That's good.

Deb Glaser: That's right. Absolutely.

It's important for teachers to understand morphology so that they can teach it because there is so much research out there, and we keep getting more research too, that supports the need for teaching morphological awareness.

Even in kindergarten, the implicit knowledge that children have about words can be brought to their attention through the phoneme and the morpheme as we prepare them to learn to decode, and early morphological knowledge and awareness shares a relationship with future literacy, the ability to decode and comprehend.

Anna Geiger: Yeah. It all comes down to understanding that we have a morphophonemic language and not just phonemic.

I remember doing this when I was a kid and one of my teenagers likes to do this. He'll just take words and say, "Well, if it was pronounced the way it was supposed to," say the word tripped, "it would be /t/ /r/ /ĭ/ /p/ /ĕ/ /d/." But of course, it's not supposed to be pronounced that way because that's not how English works. It's not a one-to-one for phonemes, and the E-D has a purpose in there.

The point of this is to help our students realize that more goes into spelling than just one-to-one matching of sounds, phonemes and graphemes.

Maybe we can talk a little bit about why morphological awareness is so important for spelling.

Deb Glaser: Yeah, but let me just add one more point to what we were just talking about as well. Teaching morphological awareness is not new. Anna, you had shared early on that was something you weren't aware of in your early preparation for teaching.

When I did a lot of work for the National Council on Teacher Quality and reviewed texts that were being used for preparing teachers to learn to read, morphology was always there in those textbooks, but it was very surface and just lists of prefixes and suffixes to teach, without really helping teachers understand what the awareness of morphemes meant. We have always taught E-D as a past tense within our spelling lessons. Well, I

wouldn't say ALL of us did, but it's always been there to teach.

A lot of the morphological awareness that we have is something we intuited ourselves. We weren't taught directly. In that way it's a lot like phoneme awareness, and before we taught explicitly phoneme awareness, there were some children who just intuited that these phonemes were sounds that we connected to letters without having been taught explicitly.

The same has been with morphological awareness. A lot of this is just intuitive about the language, but we can't take a chance that kids are going to figure it out themselves. They benefit a lot from morphological instruction.

One of the benefits is children become curious about words and they become excited about words, and they start asking questions and wondering, is that a root? What does it mean? Does this word have a prefix on it? Is that a prefix in this word? Those are the kinds of questions we want children to ask because the basic premise of building a long-term memory for something is spending time thinking about it. We remember what we think about. Giving opportunities to children to think about words along these lines builds a rich language classroom.

Anna Geiger: Well, and it's very fun as an adult to figure all this out too. I was reading "Beneath the Surface of Words" the other day, by Sue Scibetta Hegland, and she was talking about the root "cave" and how it's in words like "cavity." I never thought about that before! So I said to my teenagers who were sitting on the couch, "Have you ever thought about that? That cave is related to the word cavity? Why do you think that is?" We talked about it.

Then just at that very moment, my fourth grader was doing some homework and she had to write the word militia and she said, "I don't know how to spell it!"

I said, "Well, actually," and I wrote the word "military." I said, "It has to do with 'military.' Now can you figure it out?" And she could.

It's just so much fun. The more you learn about it as an adult, the more it opens up the conversations you can have with kids and the same is true for them. That little example I gave of course shows how important it is for spelling because so many words you might just guess and not know because there's a silent letter, but when you can connect it like "sign" and "signal," those silent letters are pronounced in other versions of the word.

Can you speak to us more about how it affects spelling?

Deb Glaser: Yeah. Well, Anna, you've already pointed out that the English orthography is morphophonemic, which means the spelling of the words is based on the morpheme and the phoneme. Both together are what can be used to explain the spellings of so many of our English words, which you just gave a beautiful example of "military" and "militia," and how nice you had that knowledge that you could share with your daughter.

The awareness helps us spell because, and I think it's best to explain this through examples, and "military/militia" was one of them, but at a simpler form too. Ken Oppel, who has given us a lot of our research on morphology, points out that the strongest research in terms of outcomes is when kids know the prefixes and suffixes. They really apply that knowledge.

If we have the word "irregular," for example, if I'm aware that "irregular" begins with a prefix I-N, which has to change its form to I-R, I will know I have to double the R in "irregular" because I have a prefix unit that must standalone, I-R, and I have my root, "regular," or actually it's R-E-G. Those two R's together, an R at the beginning of my root and an R at the end of my prefix, means I have to double it.

That is an example of bringing knowledge to the English orthography to help us explain the spellings. We don't have to memorize lots of spellings, but we have that basis in phonomorphemic knowledge and awareness to help us.

Anna Geiger: Yeah, and we can go back to a very, very basic example for kids learning to spell the word "jumped" and they spell it J-U-M-P-T. When we give them the understanding that even though it sounds like /t/, the E-D is the morphological piece.

Deb Glaser: That's right, yeah. Another really good example in the spelling is, and Doris Johnson, who was an early researcher, used these examples. She gave us several examples of how if we can recall the spelling of the root in another word form, it will help us spell other words within that family.

For example, if you have the word "medicine" and you hear that /s/ in there, "medicine," we know to spell that with a C because the root is "medic," which means

health. Then we can work with students to develop other words that would fit within that family. We have "medic," we have "medicine," we have "medicinal," and those are all words that relate to health in some way, and also word forms.

Oh, and another point about morphology, and I've had teachers reflect this to me who have my program "Morpheme Magic," they say they've never realized that the part of speech was so important. When you add suffixes to words, you change the part of speech and how that word will fit within a sentence.

Syntax becomes another piece of the puzzle when you're teaching morphological awareness because what do these words sound like in sentences is dependent on how that part of speech will play out.

Anna Geiger: So teachers are hearing this and knowing that morphology is important, and they have maybe a base understanding, a little bit, but they're wondering, well, where do I get started?

I always tell people there's no research-based phonics scope and sequence; we just have a general idea of simple to complex. Is the same true for morphology? Do you have sort of a suggested sequence for teachers?

Deb Glaser: No, you hit the nail on the head, because you're right. There is no one true phonics scope and sequence that has shown and proven to give stronger results.

What does give the results is when the most common are taught first, so it's a common sense that we're applying. Holly Lane has recognized this and that there was no research that showed this is the set of prefixes or suffixes or roots that need to be taught first. So what she and her colleagues did was to go into the content areas and subject areas and study the most common prefixes, suffixes, and roots that occur within these different subject areas. They did this just to give teachers the basis from which to develop their morphological awareness instruction, starting with the most common and working through.

At the same time that we're teaching these prefixes, suffixes, and roots from the most common working to the less common, kids are reading and reading a lot, and they're coming across other affixes and roots. So if we have a language rich, morphologically rich classroom going, these kids are going to be learning these through their questioning because they have this awareness that we have helped to light a little fire under in their language reading brains.

That's another constraint about phonics and teaching the grapheme-phoneme elements is that there's an end to what they will learn in their application, but with morphology there isn't.

Anna Geiger: Right, yeah. I was thinking about that being a difference between phonemic awareness and morphological awareness too. With phonemic awareness, you kind of get it eventually, but with morphological awareness, like you said, it's on a continuum and it's constantly growing throughout your life.

I think some things you mentioned there too, it's important to do this explicit instruction in morphology, which your books will help teachers do, but also being ready to teach it when it comes up, like when my daughter had the question about "military/militia." The more a teacher knows about that, the more prepared they are.

There are also so many great online resources, like Etymonline, where if a student has a question, the teacher could say, "Let me check this really quick," and you can both expand your knowledge at once.

Deb Glaser: Exactly.

Anna Geiger: Your first book was "Morpheme Magic," and then I don't know how many years later it was that you did "Morphemes for Little Ones," but you started out by sharing it as a resource for grades 4-12, and then your second book was about teaching it in the primary grades.

Can you talk about the difference, maybe start with the primary and how you think it should begin and how it will change as you move into the middle grades?

Deb Glaser: At the early grades, we're focused on building language that will prepare students for the reading demands, and part of that is morphemes and morphology. When we look at the components of language, teaching morphology fits very, very nicely into our teaching of vocabulary, orthography, phonology, and syntax, what these words sound like within sentences.

So the K-3 program is very heavily focused on language. That's why the subtitle is "Bringing the Magic of Language into K-3 Classrooms." In kindergarten, the level one lessons are through oral and spoken language. We begin building attention and awareness to the phonemes in words that are going to help them read those words, start with plurals and past tense, what sound do you hear at the end of the word, this is how you spell it, this is how we use the word, and connecting it to classroom experiences.

Then in level three, there's a lot more explicit instruction in the orthography of the prefixes and suffixes. That program prepares students for the richer or deeper morphological lessons in "Morpheme Magic."

It's very language-rich, and teachers don't need another program in K-3. They're just beginning to learn how to teach decoding and phonics, so I make a very strong point that "Morphemes for Little Ones" is to help you incorporate this in the instruction that you're already providing in your phonics and decoding lessons. Which of the words in your decoding words this week are verbs that you can add I-N-G to and teach the doubling rule? It's a way to enrich the lessons in the programs our teachers are using through the lessons in the program.

Anna Geiger: Do you have a general idea in your mind about when you think it's an optimal time to start explicitly teaching roots, like Greek and Latin roots, to kids?

Deb Glaser: Well, I think it begins with teaching the Anglo-Saxon. Those are the most common words in a child's spoken language and also the first words children learn to decode. Teaching that that is a base, that is a stem, we could use the term stem if we want, upon which we can add prefixes and suffixes to build new words.

Then those early Latin roots like "act" or "sign," as you put it, those actually are roots, but they have become free in our spoken language as well. It can stand alone, so that's a very good beginning.

Words that have C-T in them are Latin. Those are based in Latin and there are several words we use like "act," which we can make "react" or "action" or "active." We can build a wonderful family around that simple word that children can decode early on.

But the introduction of the common Latin roots like "fer," for example, which means to bear, those are going to be introduced once children are consolidated readers, when they're beginning to recognize chunks within words to help them read unfamiliar words.

They know that when they see the word "react," for example, that E-A in there is not a vowel team. We don't say /r/ /ē/ /k/ /t/, but they recognize that "act" is a base, so that means this "re," which I know from "review" and "refer" and other words that start with "re" is a separate unit.

It helps knowing your students' phase of word recognition according to Linnea Ehri's phases of word recognition. Once our children are consolidated or moving into that consolidated phase, they're coming across all of a sudden thousands of words that they have not seen in print before. That morphological awareness helps them with the recognition of that word and they're also then ready to begin learning.

In fact, it's fourth grade pretty much, in the research you'll see this, fourth grade children are ready to start learning those Latin roots. In "Morphemes for Little Ones," in the third grade text I do begin to introduce Latin roots.

Anna Geiger: Okay.

So if a teacher is interested in checking out one of your books, and you can also separately buy a set of cards that go with each book that you can post and use as a teaching tool, but what might they expect in the primary? In "Morphemes for Little Ones," you talked about how the kindergarten level is more focused on oral language. As it moves through, if a teacher were going to use one of the lessons, how does it lay out?

Deb Glaser: There is a target morpheme, so there's a scope and sequence. At the beginning of the lesson, we introduce a keyword that is representative of the target morpheme through the phoneme. We say the word and ask what are the phonemes. Then if the children are decoding, we present the orthographic component of the word to read it, and then use the word in sentences orally. Then we teach the decoding of several words that contain that target morpheme, and not only decode them, but use them in oral sentences, and then we write. We're always decoding, followed by encoding, so that there's always a spelling component that is included in the decoding.

Then throughout the week, we create a morpheme lexicon or a vocabulary book that we're creating where we gather the morphemes as we learn them, word items that are representative of that morpheme, and writing sentences. This is not just writing a sentence using this word, but it's giving the students the word, talking about how that word could be used to reflect on a character in a book we're reading, or the guest speaker we had come in yesterday, or in social studies, or our community circle, or what we talked about this morning. Always connecting this to a conversation about what we are learning is really key to the work that we do in this morphological

awareness arena, and lots of review is needed.

Anna Geiger: Just like when you're teaching new vocabulary words, you don't want to just teach it and forget about it. You want to weave it in as much as you can, put it in front of yourself so you remember to address it, and bring it up during the school week.

Deb Glaser: Right. That's one reason why I developed the visuals too. The cards in "Morphemes for Little Ones" are to build the oral language. They're a very stimulating picture, and the teacher presents a sentence reflecting the picture and engages children in deeper conversation about the picture, using words that have the target morpheme. Those then can be posted on a wall, and there are examples of what a morpheme wall might look like in my book and also on the Facebook group page. It's to give teachers an idea of, first of all, the purpose, and it keeps it in the teacher's frame of mind to bring up and refer to, and it gives the children something to refer to and also to remind them. It's the same with "Morpheme Magic."

Anna Geiger: So does "Morpheme Magic" follow a pretty similar lesson sequence as the one for the lower grades?

Deb Glaser: Yes, it does, only in "Morpheme Magic," I created connected passages. There is context, stories that I wrote, that are contextual where students use the focus words to fill in and complete the story. It's really important when using those that teachers talk through the story and the meanings of the words within each sentence the first time through to really build a substantial understanding of how this word can be used.

Anna Geiger: So I was recently at The Wisconsin Reading League event and someone, is it Michelle Elia? Is that correct? She's from your team, I think?

Deb Glaser: Yes.

Anna Geiger: She gave a wonderful, very funny, if morphology can be funny, she gave a funny presentation. She talked about the sentences in your book, and I have the books, but I did not notice initially that with these little passages you have with the underlines, the idea is not to use it as a quiz. You have the words in order and you want kids, when the blank comes, to fill in the next word. It's a teaching tool; it's not a testing tool. I thought that was really interesting.

Deb Glaser: Yeah, it's not a guessing game. No guessing, please!

Anna Geiger: Yeah, but that's great because giving them that, you're showing them how to use the words in context and not just in a sentence, but in a paragraph.

Deb Glaser: Yeah.

Anna Geiger: Thank you so much for sharing so much about morphology. I know people are going to want to learn a lot more, and I'll definitely link to all of your resources, but I know you've done so many other things. Can you talk to us a little bit about some other projects that you've done or are working on?

Deb Glaser: Yeah, especially for "Morpheme Magic" and the intermediate grades, middle school, and being used in secondary intervention, teachers clamored and just begged me for assessments. If I wasn't going to give them to them, they were going to make up their own assessments.

I know you've got to give the kids a grade, but I just was very resistant. But I began to recognize that assessments could be very beneficial and could be a teaching tool, not just for the students, but for the teachers as well. So I committed to creating these assessments, and I'm apologizing to everyone who's listening who waited and waited and waited. I finally got them done, and yes, they're published.

I based the assessments on everything I could find about assessing vocabulary and morphology. There is a proximal level of meaning that is assessed and also a distal. The distal form of assessment consists of questions you ask that take children into a whole different context to determine whether or not they understand the meaning of that word.

What I became very aware of in my work when I shared it with a famous vocabulary researcher, Margaret McKeown, was that she was quite perplexed with the way I was developing these assessments, and she said it's the base of the word that carries the most meaning. The assessment I had shared with her was one based on a prefix.

So I also then took that to heart and built into the assessments to make sure the children know and can recognize what is the base and what is the prefix and suffix,

because the base carries the critical meaning and then is modified by the prefixes or suffixes that are added to it.

For example, if the word is "transparent," "trans" meaning across, "parent," meaning to see a light coming across, then a question to determine a deeper level meaning might be why would it be unwise to have a transparent backpack?

I know you're thinking right now, but these are the kinds of questions I want teachers to learn to ask in any vocabulary assessment. Not even an assessment that you're taking a grade on, but just the teaching assessment we do. Who really gets this word? I'm going to ask this question.

I tell teachers to look at the assessment that you're going to give at the end of the week, read through what we're asking students to know and to show us they know, and think to yourselves, how can you incorporate the content of that assessment during your teaching this week? The assessments are giving teachers another teaching tool.

Anna Geiger: Yeah, that is brilliant.

Deb Glaser: I hope teachers see them that way.

Anna Geiger: Yeah, that's wonderful. Like you said, your book does that for teachers that are coming in not knowing much about morphology, they learn it as they teach it, and to know that the assessment can also be useful. Are the assessments sold separately somewhere? Where would teachers find those?

Deb Glaser: Well, yes, they're in the second edition of "Morpheme Magic." If you've never bought "Morpheme Magic" before-

Anna Geiger: Oh, there's a second edition, okay.

Deb Glaser: It's in the second edition. That's the only change I made to the book, but there are thousands out there that have the first edition book, but not the assessments, so the assessments are also sold separately.

Anna Geiger: Okay, wonderful. I'll link to those for sure. Tell me a little bit really quickly about the book that you just coauthored.

Deb Glaser: Oh, yes, "Next STEPS in Literacy Instruction: Connecting Assessments to Effective Interventions." It's our second edition and we've updated it. It's based on the outcome-driven model, so that goes way back to Good and Kaminski's work with DIBELS years and years ago.

The outcome-driven model that we follow is a very common model, but one that many schools have never implemented. When we have a good benchmark assessment that helps us identify the children at risk, the next step is to diagnose what the issue is. Once we have that, then we meet collaboratively with other teachers.

We determine small groups from those needs and focus attention and instruction to identify diagnostic needs those students have. We start them in their small groups, monitor their progress to determine how well students are responding to the instruction, and make any changes that need to be made. We continue in the cycle of instruction and monitoring the progress, making changes as we need to and as we see in group composition, in instructional focus, or continuing as we're doing because students are making gains, until the next benchmark period when we identify again those who continue to be at risk and further diagnose.

This book is built upon that outcome-driven model with lots of ideas and structure for the small group instruction.

Anna Geiger: Well that is wonderful because teachers really are looking for that. I know not every school, but some schools are starting to do those screeners more, but the teachers aren't sure what to do with it afterwards and so that's wonderful.

Deb Glaser: Yeah, they're just learning. There's a welcoming environment out there now and a desperate need for this information.

What's so beautiful too is that the leaders in the schools, not only the teachers, teachers are leaders as well, but those administrative positions that are making the decisions now are looking for the products and the tools that are backed by research. They can bring that in and provide for their teachers knowing that this is effective stuff, and now let's support you in your application of this.

Anna Geiger: So are there any other projects in the works that you're willing to talk about?

Deb Glaser: No, I don't have any projects right now. I told my husband after this last book I was going to take a break. However, I do have some children's books kind of percolating in my mind.

Anna Geiger: Oh, really? How wonderful.

Deb Glaser: I do. I know a couple of beautiful, wonderful illustrators, so I'm kind of thinking about doing something a little bit different, but at the same time those books would be building vocabulary for their listeners.

Anna Geiger: Something for your grandkids.

Deb Glaser: Yeah.

Anna Geiger: That would be exciting.

Well, thank you so much. I could talk to you all day, but thank you so much for your long career of helping teachers and that you continue to do that. Your work is appreciated by so many people.

Deb Glaser: Thank you, Anna, it was a pleasure. I just wish all of you out there listening the best in the world of morphological awareness and I would love to hear from you anytime you have questions or would like to talk about morphology.

Anna Geiger: Oh, I'm sure they would. We'll put your contact information in the show notes. You'll probably get people take you up on that.

Deb Glaser: Thank you, Anna!

Anna Geiger: You can find the show notes for today's episode at themeasuredmom.com/episode150. Talk to you next time!

Closing: That's all for this episode of Triple R Teaching. For more educational resources, visit Anna at her home base, themeasuredmom.com, and join our teaching community. We look forward to helping you reflect, refine, and recharge on the next episode of Triple R Teaching.