

Fill Your Vocabulary Playbook!

Nancy Wright
Iowa Reading Association
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Title I Reading/Reading Recovery
Northeast Elementary, Glenwood, IA
wrightn@glenwoodschoools.org

References

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What does it mean to "know" a word?

STAGES OF KNOWING A WORD

WORD	Know it well, can explain it, use it	Know something about it, can relate it to a situation	Have seen or heard the word	Do not know the word
<i>tyranny</i>				
<i>surreptitious</i>				
<i>grapnel</i>				
<i>purport</i>				
<i>sensitive</i>				
<i>dubious</i>				

Learning can take place in many ways - its not always a result of instruction. Word learning is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Repeated encounters over time help us build our understanding of a word.

Knowing a word can be viewed as a continuous process affected by meaningful encounters with words - including instruction to help build a network of understanding.

What do the experts say?

A significant amount of vocabulary learning takes place through:

- Incidental or environmental learning
- Wide reading
- Discussion
- Listening
- Media

(rather than from direct instruction)

Vocabulary learning is "problem solving"

- Preteaching of vocabulary does not always affect comprehension.
- We can comprehend stories fairly well without knowing every word.
- Lack of word knowledge is overcome with help from the learner's knowledge of syntax, grammar, stories, concepts, and the world in general.

Good instruction builds vocabulary!

At-risk students come to school knowing fewer words, including school-type words. They may also have a limited network of meaning for familiar words. Both deficits make it difficult for these students to make connections of meaning. Good instruction CAN make a difference for these at-risk learners.

FOUR GUIDELINES OF EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

1. Teacher builds a word-rich environment.
2. Teacher helps students develop as independent work learners.
3. Teacher uses instructional strategies that teach vocabulary effectively and model good word-learning behaviors.
4. Teacher uses assessment that matches the goal of instruction.

CHOOSING WORDS TO TEACH:

Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, Linda Kucan, 2002

Consider that words in the language have different levels of utility.

- **Tier 1 words:** Familiar words used in conversation - *clock, baby, happy* These words rarely require instruction in school.
- **Tier 2 words:** Most often used in written language - *coincidence, absurd, industrious* Instruction in these words can add productively to an individual's language ability.
- **Tier 3 words:** Specialized vocabulary - such as math terms, science, geography (*isotope, lathe, peninsula*) Frequency of use is low, limited to specific domains

Identifying Tier Two Words in texts

Tier Two words

merchant
required
tend
maintain
performed
fortunate
benevolent

Students' likely expressions

salesperson or clerk
have to
take care of
keep going
did
lucky
kind

Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, Linda Kucan, 2002

SOME CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING TIER TWO WORDS

- *Importance and utility:* Words that are characteristic of mature language users and appear frequently across a variety of domains.
- *Instructions potential:* Words that can be worked with in a variety of ways so that students can build rich representations of them and of their connections to other words and concepts.
- *Conceptual understanding:* Words for which students understand the general concept but provide precision and specificity in describing the concept.

Good learners are active!

Blachowicz and Fisher state: . . . the effective vocabulary teacher presents new vocabulary in ways that model good learning. . . having learners take an active role in constructing a network of meaning for a word is critical.

Learn words in context

Learning to sew: *thread, needle, selvage, pattern, dart*

Learning to play baseball: *hit, run, base, fly*

Learn words by answering questions that ask students to evaluate different features of word meaning (Beck & McKeown, 1983).

"Would a **recluse** enjoy parties?"

Careful selection is the teacher's responsibility: Which words will receive focus?

- Comprehension words - essential to understanding the selection (*Rebel* would be critical to understanding *Civil War* selection)
- Useful words - not critical to understand a particular selection, but high-utility for later use (*homesick*)
- Generative words - have parts or morphemes that lead to further word learning (prefix "*re-*")
- Academic words - cause lots of trouble for at-risk learners or second-language learners (*in contrast, however, analyze*)

Learn words by making meanings and relationships visible - **semantic webs, maps, organizers.**

Learn words by making it personal for the student - **relate words to past experiences; link to prior knowledge; act-out word meaning. Create a mnemonic or image to personalize meaning.**

Learn words by trying them out - **students need opportunities to use words in writing and conversation with feedback from the teacher.**

Learn words through word-play: poetry, riddles, games, activities

Now that I've got the words to teach, what do I do with them?

1. VOCABULARY TEACHING WITH TEXT

- Start with a picture walk or semantic map
- Anticipation - choose 8 to 10 words to understand the text
- Pre-reading - use word meanings to set theme
- Point of contact teaching - just tell the meaning (especially with very young children)
- Consolidation - State the story's main idea, remember the word "determined"
- Sort words by category (types of animals, known/unknown words, types of transportation) WORDS THEIR WAY (Fountas and Pinnell)
- Give examples: "exquisite" - *The dinner is exquisite.*

In this story, "exquisite" means

The story said,

What else might be *exquisite*?

What do you think of when you hear the word *exquisite*?

2. TEACHING VOCABULARY WITH ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

- Word of the day (students can generate words from their reading)
- Word web
- Word consciousness -- locate "size" words in fairy tales, then rank the words on a continuum by size: *tiny, gigantic, puny, wee, huge*
- Word Play - words you like to hear, say, use (*dawdle, enormous, linger,*)
- Interactive classroom talk: Teach says "The door is open" -- "The door is ajar".
"Line up too slowly" -- *dawdle*
- Act out words - *eager, sadly, gusto, morose, scamper, crawled*
- Four square

Mammal	Examples (fox, dog, cat, horse)
Definition	Non-examples (fish, frog, bird)

- Content Vocabulary Word Wall (such as PWIM or Vocabulary Visits) These can be used all year to help students when writing.

Butterflies and moths: A - antennae, C - caterpillar, W - wings

- Making distinctions
 - How is *storm* like *hurricane*? How is it different?
 - How is *violet* like *purple*?
 - How is *dry* like *arid*?
- A continuum of words
 - Pretty to ugly* *Tall to short* *Day to night*
- Word Study - roots
 - Tri - triangle, tricycle
 - Oct - octagon, octopus

○ <u>Bene</u>	<u>Mal</u>
<i>benefit</i>	<i>malcontent</i>
<i>benevolent</i>	<i>malevolent</i>
<i>benediction</i>	<i>malediction</i>

- Venn Diagrams - compare and contrast (i.e. Pets/Mammals)
- Word Wizard - Students pick "school word" such as "identify"
Stick up a post-it note each time the students use it

3. VOCABULARY VISITS

- Teacher assembles thematic text sets with related vocabulary (Weather - storms, hurricane, thunder, lightning, damp).
- Create visual chart of what can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted if you were on an actual field trip - *What do you see?* (lightning, flash, storm) *What do you hear?* (thunder, crash, boom) *What can you feel?* (wet, rain, soggy)
- Use a picture poster and label with sticky notes - use the words over a period of time in many ways (sentence writing, listen for the words in a story, sort words by category, add new words)
- Save the Vocabulary Visit poster for future reference

4. STRATEGY FOR CONTEXT-USE LESSON

Make a transparency of a passage and omit a contextually explained word.

Direct students to

- LOOK. Before, at, and after the word.
- REASON. Connect what they know with what the author has written.
- PREDICT A POSSIBLE MEANING.
- RESOLVE OR REDO. Decide if they know enough or should stop.

Discuss—discussion is critical.

Reveal the author's word choice.

Discuss further. Use references to elaborate.

5. VOCABULARY SELF-SELECTION STRATEGY

- Students bring two words to class that they have found in reading, listening, etc.
- Each student presents words to the group.
- The group votes on five to eight words to be learned for the week.
- The teacher leads a discussion to clarify, elaborate, and extend word meanings.
Discussion is critical.
- Students enter their words into personal word logs and create some sort of memory and meaning aid (chart, diagram, picture, mnemonic, etc.).
- Students may create writing assignments, activities, games, and tests for practice.

6. DRAMA - WORD PLAYS

- Choose a short list of vocabulary words (three to five) from the selection that gives an impression of the setting, characters, problem/goal, actions, resolution,

and feeling. Place the words on index cards. Make a set of cards for each group of students.

- Give each team a set, and ask them to construct a 3-minute skit based on the vocabulary. As they plan, circulate to provide information and clarification as needed.
- Share the skits. Compare and contrast across student skits to look for similarities and differences.
- Read the selection to compare the author's choices with student's choices.
- After reading, refine vocabulary. Go back to the selection to clarify meaning or use reference words.
- Use the words in further oral or written work.

7. KNOWLEDGE RATING - STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

- From the selection, choose a list of vocabulary words that cluster in some way. Place the list on the chalkboard or overhead projector.
- Ask students to copy the list and to rate their knowledge of the words as: 1—Don't know anything. 2—I've heard or seen this word but I'm not sure what it means. 3—I know this word well enough to use it or define it. Students may share their knowledge as they work.
- Use the ratings for group discussion. Lead students to make appropriate predictions about the selection.
- Read the selection, watching for the vocabulary.
- After reading, have students rerate themselves. Then refine vocabulary. Go back to the selection to clarify words or use reference books.
- Use the words in further oral or written work. Students may use knowledge rating as an organizer for studying.

8. CHARACTER MAPPING

Teacher leads students in understanding the author's character development as the group reads from a core book.

- After reading the first few chapters, the teacher asks the students to suggest some adjectives that describe one of the main characters. Students use incidents in the story to support their word choice.
- In subsequent lessons, students add more characteristics and evidence that supports the actions of the character.

9. LITERATURE UNITS IN PRIMARY GRADES - ABC BOOKS

Teacher selects topic or theme - can be a culminating activity for a unit.

- Each child is given one letter of the alphabet, and selects a word from the unit to define.
- Definition can be pictures, words, or both.
- Variation - give a group of students two or three letters to make for the ABC book.
- Assemble student pages into a classroom ABC Book.

(See <http://www.readwritethink.org/> for examples)

10. COOPERATIVE LITERATURE DISCUSSION GROUPS

Vocabulary is selected by a student in the group, assigned by the teacher, or a combination of both.

- Group roles: **discussion director** is responsible for preparing questions to lead the group's discussion; **vocabulary researcher** chooses four to six words that will be unfamiliar to the group; **literary leader** selects a passage for oral reading that might illustrate some language the teacher emphasizes; **secretary-checker** sees that group members come prepared, keeps track of time and materials/work.
- Day 1 - Form groups, distribute books and journals. Explain procedures. Each group decides on the number of pages to read for each class to complete the book in four sessions. Each person in the group is responsible for taking a different role on each of the four days.
- Days 2, 3, and 4: Each group member is responsible for coming to class having completed the reading and prepared to fulfill his/her role for the day. Procedures for 20 to 30 minute sessions: discussion leader reads a summary of the action. All group members read their reactions. Each member completes the assigned daily task, beginning with the discussion leader, vocabulary researcher, literary leader, and secretary-checker. Group members share their predictions for the next reading. Complete and discuss self- and group-process evaluations and assign roles for the next day.
- Day 5: Same as days 2, 3, and 4. Additionally, each group needs to develop a plan for sharing its novel with the class on day 6.
- Day 6: Each group shares its novel with the whole class.

11. DRAMATIZING IDIOMS

(Phrases or expressions that have meanings different from the literal.)

- Have students in groups identify idioms in recent stories they have read. (*pay through the nose; don't pull my leg*)
- Students select an idiom they think might be easy to act out.
- Students write a short episode or skit in which the literal meaning of the idiom occurs. For example, a person selling shoes might pull someone's leg when trying to get off a tight-fitting shoe.
- Other students in the class try to guess what idiom is being acted out by the group.

Amelia Bedelia stories are great sources for idioms.