Vocabulary Acquisition,
Word-Building Strategies
and
Interactive Word Walls
Comprehension
- Comprehension Monitoring
- Making Connections
  (Text-to-self/text/world, background knowledge, schema)
- Questioning
  (Generating, dissecting, QAR, author)
- Visualizing
- Inferring and Predicting
- Determining Importance
- Summarizing and Synthesizing
  (include application of knowledge)

Vocabulary
- Vocabulary Growth
- Independent Reading
- Passage Critical Words
- Active Word Learning
- Multiple Exposures
- Word Study Activities
- Making Connections
- Expanding Vocabulary

Fluency
- Accuracy
- Expression/Phrasing
- Rate/Speed
- Comprehension
- Phonemic Awareness

Reader
- Developmental Stages
  - Background Experience
  - Purpose
  - Knowledge of Subject
  - Motivation
  - Vocabulary

Text
- Print Material
  - Content
  - Format
  - Readability
  - Concepts
  - Organization
  - Author's Purpose

Context
- Reading Situation
  - Setting
  - Task
  - Environment
  - Outcome

The Literate Student needs:
Teachers are the most influential factor in raising student achievement. Children come into the classroom from a wide variety of backgrounds and with different educational experiences that present both opportunities and challenges for learning. (Teacher Quality, NCLB)
“We can directly access the meaning of only the words we already know. The referents of new words can be verbally explained only in terms of old words. This can be done either explicitly, by presenting their definitions, or implicitly, by setting them in a context of old words that effectively constrains their meanings.” (Adams, 1990)
Research: What We Know

• Vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to overall reading comprehension.
• Teaching vocabulary improves both verbal IQ and reading comprehension.
• Children who are behind in 1st grade have a hard time making up the gap.

Reading vocabulary is composed of the words in print that a person can identify and understand, or comprehend.

The reading vocabulary of the average child grows at a rate of 3000 words per year between grades 3-12 (Nagy, et al, 1984).

There is a 6000 word gap between a child at the 25% and 50% (Smith, 1991).

Bringing a low vocabulary student up to the median would involve a gain of 4000-5000 words not to mention keeping up with the 3000 word yearly growth.

Children encounter new words by the tens of thousands each year (Nagy and Herman 1985).
Facts About Vocabulary Development

- Twenty-five hundred to five thousand words are learned by age 5/6.
- About 8 new words are learned daily.
- Over 88,500 distinct word families are in printed English material (Grades 3 – 9).
- Multiple encounters are required before a word is really known.

Vocabulary is critical to reading success for three reasons (Alexander, 2006).

1. Comprehension improves when you know what the words mean. Since comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading, you cannot overestimate the importance of vocabulary development.

2. Words are the currency of communication. A robust vocabulary improves all areas of communication: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

3. How many times have you asked your students or your own children to “use your words”? When children and adolescents improve their vocabulary, their academic and social confidence and competence improve as well.
How are words learned?

The majority of words are learned through incidental/implicit learning opportunities, through everyday experiences with oral and written language.

Studies however, employing definition or synonym instruction (intentional/explicit), report that the number of words learned often exceeds the number acquired during incidental learning opportunities, particularly in low SES schools. (Baumann & Kameenui, 1991)

It is important for the vocabulary program to make use of several avenues of instruction.
### Families’ Language and Use Differ Across Income Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures &amp; Scores</th>
<th>13 Professional</th>
<th>23 Working-class</th>
<th>6 Economically Disadvantaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Pretest score (a)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded vocabulary size</td>
<td>2,176</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>1,498</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average utterances per hour (b)</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average different words per hour</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>251</td>
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- **a** Parents were asked to complete a vocabulary pretest. Each parent completed a form abstracted from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT). We gave each parent a list of 46 vocabulary words and a series of pictures (four options per vocabulary word) and asked the parent to write beside each word the number of the picture that corresponded to the written word. Parent performance on the test was highly correlated with years of education ($r = .57$).

- **b** Parent utterances and different words were averaged over 13-36 months of child age. Child utterances and different words were averaged for the four observations when the children were 33-36 months old.
We learn words 4 times faster… in a familiar rather than in an unfamiliar context. If school conditions provide enough context familiarity to speed up learning….. the gap of disadvantaged students’ vocabulary deficit can be narrowed.

E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *The Knowledge Deficit*
Types of Implicit/Incidental Instruction

- Read-alouds
- Sustained Silent Reading
- Listening, Speaking (conversation), and Writing
- Music
- Television
- Print-rich Environments
- Interactive Word Walls
Types of Explicit/Intentional Instruction

- Word Origins and Their Meanings
- Dolch Sight Words
- Vocabulary Programs/Work Books
- Words of the Week
- Word of the Day
- Content-specific Vocabulary
- Interactive Word Walls
Vocabulary Instruction

• Choose interesting words with mileage.
• Create student-friendly explanations.
• Decontextualize the words; provide examples.
• Create follow-up activities that prompt children to interact with meanings.
• Create ways to maintain the words over time.
Choosing Words to Teach: Three Tiers

- Tier One Words, the *most basic*, rarely require instructional attention to their meanings in school.
- Tier Two Words are *high frequency words* and found across a variety of domains.
- Tier Three Words are *words whose frequency use is quite low* and often limited to specific domains.
• Instruction should focus on words considered to be “high utility” or “Tier Two” words such as coincidence, absurd, unfortunate, and industrious.

• High utility words are those that are crucial to the understanding of text.

(Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2002)
BEST PRACTICES IN VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

• Vocabulary instruction should include the study of words with multi-faceted meanings, such as peer, nail, run, address, read, and desert.

• The exact meanings and sometimes even pronunciation of these words can only be determined through context.
• Vocabulary instruction should also include the study of homophones such as *there*, *their*, and *they’re* or *pair*, *pare*, and *pear*.

• Best practice suggests that students find examples of these words used in texts and then determine meanings on their own.
BEST PRACTICES IN VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

• Vocabulary instruction should address exploration into the nuances of language.
• This would include shades of meaning such as walk, ramble, stroll, strut, saunter, and how those various meanings are utilized in both reading and writing.
• The category Shades of Meaning has been added to the new Florida Literacy Standards.
By far the best way to support the learning of vocabulary is to provide examples of its use in many different types of text and through rich classroom discussions.
“Readers need a range of strategies for making sense of troublesome words they encounter.”

Jim Burke
Four Stages of Word Knowledge

Stage 1: No knowledge ~ never saw it before
Stage 2: Vague familiarity ~ heard it, but does not know what it means
Stage 3: Contextualized knowledge ~ recognize it in context as having something to do with...
Stage 4: Rich and flexible ~ know it well

(Adapted from Dale, 1965)
# How Well Do I Know These Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t know the word at all</th>
<th>Have seen or heard, but don’t know the meaning</th>
<th>I think I know the meaning</th>
<th>I know the meaning</th>
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</table>
I heard a word _____ and it was used in this sentence:
____________________________________________

• I thought it meant ___________________________

• I found out it meant__________________________

• The sentence I wrote is_______________________

• The association I made is______________________

Gallimaufry

- Say the word (3x)
- Spell the word (3x)
- Close your eyes, visualize the word
- With your eyes still closed, using your index finger, write the word in the air.
- Student friendly example of gallimaufry
Knowledge of word origins and word meanings assists students with determining the meaning of new words. Word origins and their meanings involve:

- derivations (e.g. bases, affixes)
- word associations (e.g. synonyms, antonyms, analogies)
- denotative (i.e. explicit) meaning
- connotative (i.e. implicit) meaning
- morphemic knowledge (i.e. individual meaningful units)

Word Origins Strategy

**Geologist**

- **geo** = earth
- **ology** = the study of
- **ist** = a person

**Geologist:** a person who studies the earth

Word parts consist of root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Word parts include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Derivatives</th>
<th>Combining Forms (word origins)</th>
<th>Morphemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Combinations of root words and prefixes and/or suffixes</td>
<td>• Usually root words borrowed from another language that are combined together and/or are combined with a prefix and/or suffix</td>
<td>• The smallest units of meaningful language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observation</strong> is a derivative of <strong>observe</strong>.</td>
<td><strong>Microscope</strong> contains <strong>micro</strong> (Greek) and <strong>scope</strong> (Greek).</td>
<td><strong>Some</strong> is an example of a <strong>free</strong> morpheme. <strong>Tele</strong> is an example of a <strong>bound</strong> morpheme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dolch Sight Words

Edward W. Dolch developed a list of the 220 most frequently used words in children's books. From 50% to 75% of the text consisted of the words he put on his list which became known as the Dolch Words’ List.
Dolch Sight Words

• Dolch sight words should be recognized on sight (instantly) for reading to progress smoothly.

• Many of these words cannot be sounded out by decoding rules. Words such as if, do, am, for, as, so, and be can not be represented by pictures as they are service words and give meaning. In addition, Dolch Words here, there, now, then, on, at, in, over, and today give direction.

• Before children finish first grade, they should be able to read all of the Dolch sight words.
## Vocabulary Building Strategies: Before, During, and After Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Before</strong></th>
<th><strong>During</strong></th>
<th><strong>After</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Pre-teach (using explicit instruction) unfamiliar words from the text that the students are going to read.  
• Examples  
• Word maps  
• Semantic maps  
• Structural patterns  
• Personal word lists | • Use students’ **word maps** to reference key words while reading.  
• Have students add information to their **semantic maps**.  
• Teach students to use **structural patterns** when they encounter unfamiliar words.  
• Teach students to use **context clues**.  
• Examine word relationships: synonyms, antonyms, and associations. | • Have students revise their **semantic maps** to include new words.  
• If appropriate, have students complete a **semantic features analysis chart**.  
• Review the **graphic organizers** for completion and understanding.  
• Encourage students to use newly learned words while reading, writing, and speaking.  
• Determine if some words need to be readdressed. |
Dictionary Definitions

• Not an effective strategy.
• Studies that provided dictionary definitions and asked students to create sentences or answer brief questions about the words showed:
  - Sixty-three percent of students’ sentences were judged to be “odd.”
  - Sixty percent of students’ responses were unacceptable.
  - Students frequently interpreted one or two words from a definition as the entire meaning.
• Provide student-friendly explanations that tell what a word means in everyday connected language.

• Example: Unexpected

• Dictionary: Not expected, surprising

• Friendly: If something is unexpected, you are surprised about it.
Sentence Stems

• The newspaper called Mr. Brown a philanthropist because…

• I told my teacher I wanted to be a spectator at the play because…

• I scrutinized my mom’s face because…
Picture Notes
(Sandee Fleming, Project CRISS)
Picture Notes...

- Involve students reading, talking and then drawing their own representations of meaning.
- Reduce information to essential ideas critical for comprehension.
- Work well in small groups, with a partner or individually.
- Used as a pre-reading, during or post reading activity.
- Used for reviewing content, key vocabulary terms or concepts.
Picture Notes
Photosynthesis
Project CRISS
Sinister

• ADJECTIVE
• SUGGESTING OR LEADING TO EVIL OR HARM

• The villain’s sinister words, “I’ll be back!” sent shivers down our spines. (Evelyn Scondotto, Carver Middle)
SEQUENCE

- NOUN
- A CONNECTION, STATED OR IMPLIED, OF SUCCESSIVE ORDERED SETS OF IDEAS OR EVENTS
- SEQUENCE IS VERY IMPORTANT WHEN YOU PERFORM ALGEBRAIC OPERATIONS. (Evelyn Scondotto, Carver Middle)
Composition of Reading Vocabulary

Content words are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. They can be concrete or abstract.

Concrete words can be taught using an object or showing a picture.

Abstract words can be taught using examples and non-examples.
Vocabulary Mapping

• Word maps and charts help students expand word meanings and discover relationships between vocabulary terms.

• They help students develop elaborated definitions, rather than simple one-or-two word descriptions.

• Word maps provide students with a way to learn vocabulary independently. (Project CRISS)
Vocabulary Mapping

Concept of Definition Map

- **Term**

  - **What is it?** (Category)
  - What is it like? (properties)
  - What are some examples? (illustrations)

  - Comparison Term
Vocabulary Mapping
(Project CRISS)

- Definition
- Sentence
- Vocabulary Word
- Synonym
- Picture
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Word</th>
<th>Similarities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yacht</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>Known Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing Two Words

Unique Characteristics

Similar Characteristics

Unique Characteristics

word

word

Unique Characteristics

Unique Characteristics
The Frayer Model is an adaptation of the concept map. The framework of the Frayer Model includes: the concept word, the definition, characteristics of the concept word, examples of the concept word, and non-examples of the concept word. It is important to include both examples and non-examples so that students are able to identify what the concept word is and what the concept word is not.
Essential Characteristics
- Insect
- Social creatures
- Live in colonies
- Slender body with constricted abdomen
- 2 pairs of membranous wings
- Females have stings with which they paralyze their prey
- Mated queens take shelter during the winter and in the spring lay eggs and start new colonies

Non-essential Characteristics
- Animal
- Solitary Creature
- Lives alone in dens
- Slow moving creatures
- Spend most daylight hours underground

Examples
- Wasp
- Hornet

Non-examples
- Skunk

(Frayer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969)
Sycophant

- A servile self-seeker who attempts to win favor by flattering influential people.

WASHINGTON - In sharp contrast to the lionization of General David Petraeus by members of the US Congress during his testimony this week, Petraeus's superior, Admiral William Fallon, chief of the Central Command (Centcom), derided Petraeus as a sycophant during their first meeting in Baghdad in March, according to Pentagon sources familiar with reports of the meeting. ..... That remark reportedly came after Petraeus began the meeting by making remarks that Fallon interpreted as trying to ingratiate himself with a superior.
Palm Beach County
SECONDARY VOCABULARY UNITS

• Nine units for sixth grade students have been developed.
• By the start of SY 08/09, the following units will be available to schools: 12 units for sixth grade, six units for seventh grade and six units for eighth grade.
• The currently available units can be used at any secondary grade level.
• Teachers may provide instruction for each unit over a period of two weeks or more.
Section 1: Definitions

1. accuracy: [ak-yer-uh-see] (n) freedom from error or mistake; exactness; precision
   The accuracy with which we are able to predict the path of the hurricane is dependant on many complex factors.
   synonyms: precision; carefulness; correctness; exactness
   antonyms: inaccuracy; imprecision
   Word Family: accurate (adj); accurately (adv)

2. acute: [uh-kyoot] (adj) sharp and intense; very serious; critical; extremely sensitive
   Health officials are concerned that the acute shortage of flu vaccine will leave many individuals vulnerable to infection.
   synonyms: severe; intense; racking; keen; sensitive
   antonyms: moderate; mild
   Word Family: acuteness (n); acutely (adv)

3. analyze: [an-l-ahyz] (v) to examine in detail
   If we analyze the data carefully, we may be able to determine the cause of the accident.
   synonyms: inspect; scrutinize; investigate
   antonyms: ignore; overlook
   Word Family: analysis (n); analyst (n)
The words were selected from several sources including: SAT word lists, content area lists from the state, and literature.

There is a balance of nouns, verbs and adjectives among the word lists.
ACTIVITY SELECTION PROCESS

- The sentences are designed to model good writing of varied sentence structures and with the use of words in a variety of ways with different meanings.
- The “Word in Context” section exposes students to the history of words.
- The “Thinking Critically” section challenges students to understand word relationships beyond synonyms and antonyms.
Section 6: Thinking Critically About Words

Directions: Answer each of the following questions “yes” or “no”. Then explain your response. In most cases, either response could be correct if the explanation is logical.

Example: Are you intrigued by cultural differences?

Yes, because I am fascinated by the foods and clothing of people from different countries.
(OR)
No, living in south Florida, which is a melting pot of cultures, has taught me that all people are basically the same.

1. Is it ever proper to detain someone because of their attire?

2. When you closely analyze a problem, does that guarantee the accuracy of your solution?
Teachers need to go far beyond the actual activities in terms of extension activities and accommodations for students of varying levels.

Teachers must find ways to use the core activities to touch multiple standards and benchmarks.

The overall goal is for students to infuse the words into their personal vocabularies.
Interactive Word Walls

The key to successful word walls is the word “interactive.” It is a tool to use, not just a display. Students need to actively interact with the word wall.

Interaction includes:

- Contributing words encountered in readings to the wall
- Cheering or chanting the new words of the week
- Expanding the students’ understanding of how words work (i.e. sketching the definitions, use in a sentence, crossword puzzles, “cloze” activities, matching, “dissecting,” word mapping, semantic mapping and identifying structural patterns).
- The use of the word wall as a primary source of writing.
Types of Word Walls

A classroom can have one main word wall and/or 2 or 3 smaller word walls, each within a different focus. The smaller word walls can be used for Greek and Latin root words, prefixes and suffixes, a special unit study and a special word study (i.e. verbs, adjectives, contractions, compound words, spelling rules). When building a word study, it is helpful to color-code the words according to their parts of speech.

Ex. Red = verbs, green = adjectives, blue = nouns
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amazing Adjectives</th>
<th>Contractions</th>
<th>Vivid Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History/SS Vocabulary</td>
<td>Math Vocabulary</td>
<td>Science Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Vocabulary</td>
<td>Character Names</td>
<td>Settings/ Locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophones</td>
<td>Homonyms</td>
<td>Homographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art/Music Vocabulary</td>
<td>Dolch Sight Words</td>
<td>Rhyming Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation signals...Warning, there may be more ideas to come</td>
<td>Change of Direction Signals</td>
<td>Sequence signals...There is an order to these ideas</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illustration signals...Here is what the author really means</td>
<td>Emphasis signals...This is important</td>
<td>Conclusion signals...This ends the discussion and may have importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause, condition or result signals...A condition or modification is coming</td>
<td>Compare and contrast signals.. We will now compare Idea A with Idea B</td>
<td>Project CRISS, 2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• The wall should be large (8’ by 6’).
• Five new words should be added per week.
• Words need to be at least two inches tall and done in a bold print.
• Creatively display and organize words, as secondary school students like visual stimuli as much as their elementary counterparts.
• Students should be able to access the word wall.
• The best resources are your students and the curriculum.
Pertinent Points About Word Walls

- Words selected must be useful to students, usable by students and frequently used in the subject area.
- Consistency is important when presenting organizational ideas to a class. Refer to the display area as the ‘word wall’ as some students will remember this from their elementary experience.
Pertinent Points About Word Walls

- Use the same display area throughout the semester for your word wall. Students, once used to the concept, will look for the wall.
- Prior to adding a word to the wall, engage the students in a “learning conversation,” inviting them to discuss the features that they notice and how the word is connected to the other words.
- Do not overcrowd the word wall. You may want to remove words as the unit progresses or you may want to display words by unit and then remove the entire word wall when the unit is completed.
Pertinent Points About Word Walls

• Create a visually cohesive wall so that students perceive it as a “collection” of words and it is obvious as to how the words are organized.

• Make word wall activities a regular and predictable part of the classroom routine. They make for natural class openers or closers. The word wall activity should be only about 5 minutes in length unless incorporated with a larger activity.

• Use a variety of instructional activities to review words.
Word Walls In the Secondary Classroom

• Word walls can be organized for a variety of purposes, such as concept, ideas, themes, etc.
• Word walls in the upper grades should focus on increasing vocabulary, although they may also help students spell and use words correctly.

(DeAnna Allen, Bear Lakes Middle)
Word Walls In the Secondary Classroom
(Sheri Predmore, Christa McAuliffe MS)
Word Walls In the Secondary Classroom
(Lake Worth High School)
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Word Walls In the Secondary Classroom
(Lake Worth High School)
Summary

• Explicit instruction alone will not increase vocabulary.
• A comprehensive approach incorporating different types of instruction that can effectively increase each student’s ability to learn independently must be employed.
• Attention must be given to affixes, context clues, awareness of words and their meanings and motivation to learn them.
• While generally addressed in LA classes, this can be implemented in content areas as well.
• This approach combined with regular sustained reading, either silently or as a read-aloud, in every classroom will result in long-term gains in vocabulary and reading comprehension.
“Everyone wins when we’re growing for the sake of the children.” author unknown
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