EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY STRATEGIES
A RESEARCH-BASED VOCABULARY HANDBOOK

A Project

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in

Education

(Language and Literacy)

by

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Department of Teacher Education
Abstract

of

EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY STRATEGIES
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Statement of Problem

Many students today do not possess enough vocabulary knowledge for a variety of reasons. They are unable to read and comprehend the text that they are exposed to. The purpose of this work is to determine the best strategies and methods for teaching vocabulary. The authors are focusing on 4th through 8th grade students that lack many of these vocabulary building strategies. The authors will compile a handbook of these useful strategies for educators to utilize during classroom instruction.

Sources of Data

The authors extensively researched literature in the field of vocabulary. Research included a focus on the nature of vocabulary acquisition, the vocabulary word gap, theory behind effective vocabulary strategies, and the effect of vocabulary instruction.
The authors analyzed many seminal articles and theories related to vocabulary knowledge and instruction.

Conclusions Reached

Due to a discrepancy in vocabulary word knowledge among children, the authors have concluded that there is a current need for direct vocabulary instruction. In order to bridge this word gap, teachers need the resources in order to effectively implement a vocabulary program in their classroom. The most effective vocabulary strategies are meaningful, engaging, and offer students frequent and on-going exposure to vocabulary words.

______________________________
Committee Chair
Porfirio Loeza, Ph.D.

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Chapter I

BACKGROUND OF PROJECT

Introduction

A classroom full of students seemingly engaged in a reading of *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) may appear as though they completely comprehend everything that is being read. However, when these same students that appear to be engaged are invited to discuss and explain their understanding of the novel, they are left baffled. A teacher in this classroom may be completely at a loss as to how their students have not comprehended the material when they had seemed so engaged in the reading. This occurrence is alarmingly common in classrooms everywhere. Lack of comprehension may stem from a variety of factors including, but not limited to: poor phonemic awareness and decoding abilities, limited comprehension strategies, and little vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary knowledge nevertheless, tends to be one of the most versatile components of literacy instruction. This means that teachers across grade levels and subject areas can find a way to implement vocabulary instruction in their classrooms. Therefore, we have set out with our goal being to create a handbook of vocabulary strategies that can be used by any teacher who has experienced this aforementioned dilemma. In order to compile the handbook we first needed to examine the research previously done on vocabulary development and instruction.

The research concluded that students today do not possess enough vocabulary knowledge for a variety of reasons (National Reading Panel, 2006). They are unable to read and comprehend the texts that they are exposed to on a daily basis. The purpose of
this work is to determine the best strategies and methods for teaching vocabulary in the classroom. We are focusing on 4th through 8th grade students that lack many of these vocabulary building strategies. We will compile a handbook of these useful strategies for educators to utilize during classroom instruction.

**Problem Statement**

As mentioned in the introduction, lack of reading comprehension is a major problem in many classrooms today. The struggle students have with comprehending texts stems from many different issues including a major gap in vocabulary knowledge. The gap in vocabulary knowledge tends to be most prominent between children of different socioeconomic classes. This is due to a correlation between education and socioeconomic class. People who are more educated are often more proficient readers and language users than people who are not as educated. Parents are often the first people to expose their children to language and therefore parents who are more educated and more proficient language users are more likely to expose their children to more sophisticated language.

When children enter school, they enter with different levels of language sophistication. The gap continues to widen as children learn to read because those who have an advantage of more vocabulary knowledge are going to have the skills necessary to continue to grow and develop as readers, whereas those who are lacking will struggle to keep up with their peers. Teachers need to have access to strategies they can use to help narrow the vocabulary gap between their students and remediate their struggling readers, or this will continue to be a major problem in our education system.
**Significance of Study**

One of the major trends in reading instruction today is a strong focus on vocabulary knowledge, and its relationship to the reading process (National Reading Panel, 2006). There are a variety of reasons that many students are lacking the vocabulary they need to be able to effectively read grade-level materials and complete the necessary coursework assigned to them. Some students have not been exposed to a variety of rich vocabulary at home, while others have not been provided with an engaging vocabulary program at their schools. This is in part because their teachers are not teaching vocabulary with the correct methods (National Reading Panel, 2006). Until educators are provided the tools to effectively teach vocabulary, students will continue to struggle with the reading process.

Further, vocabulary instruction is critical in the coming months due to the implementation of the Common Core Standards. These standards will require a higher volume of reading throughout the disciplines. Most of which will be expository, which tends to be significantly more challenging than narrative text. Extensive vocabulary knowledge will be especially important because much of the information needed for classroom learning, will be gathered through the reading process. If students do not have the necessary vocabulary knowledge to be able to comprehend these more challenging texts, then they will struggle to gain access to the content. Therefore, it is even more critical that teachers identify students’ levels of vocabulary knowledge and implement strategies to offer remediation for students lacking in that area.
In order to equip teachers with the strategies to help remediate students, there are a variety of sources that teachers can use. However, many of the vocabulary handbooks that are currently in print are difficult to follow due to their narrative form. This format does not allow a teacher to quickly flip through the book to find appropriate strategies to use with their students. A handbook that is separated into two parts: New Concept Words and New Label Words will be the foundation of our handbook. It will provide teachers with a handbook that is fast and is simple to find the strategies they need. Dividing the handbook in two parts allows us to compile vocabulary strategies that will best fit the type of word the teacher needs to teach. For example, a teacher will most likely not need to spend as much time teaching a word that is a New Label word, as they will have to when teaching a New Concept word. This is because students have prior knowledge and lexical information regarding words that merely have a different label. As opposed to New Concept Words, in which most students do not have that prior knowledge so additional time and explanation must be built into the strategy in the handbook.

In addition to creating a simple and straightforward layout for our overall concept, we also will offer several ways to introduce vocabulary, ways to incorporate continued exposure with these words in the classroom, and strategies that allow students to construct a deep and fundamental knowledge of the taught words. These strategies will be presented in a clear and concise manner that allows any teacher to quickly read about and understand the strategy they are planning on using. The handbook will be
broken into easy to read sections including: summary, rationale, materials, strategy prep steps, and strategy implementation.

**Methodology**

After reviewing the literature that we have collected, we will determine a series of effective vocabulary strategies. Our strategies will be research based using many seminal pieces of literature combined with current literature written within the last 7 years. We focused on well-known and respected authors and researchers in the field of vocabulary and reading. Our strategies will be age appropriate, and many will be adaptable for diverse classrooms and a variety of age groups. We will focus our handbook on strategies directed to 4th through 8th grade students. We chose this specific age group because 4th grade is traditionally when students begin using reading as a tool for learning. At this age it is important to be able to provide students with the necessary tools and strategies to continue their success in reading. We decided to end our particular handbook at 8th grade because within that 4 year period, students should become equipped with a wide variety of vocabulary knowledge as well as independent strategies to carry them through high school and beyond. The strategies deemed effective through the intensive literature review process will be compiled in a vocabulary strategy handbook.

We will research New Concepts versus New Labels in vocabulary instruction and how best to instruct students in regards to these. We will analyze how vocabulary influences comprehension and the reading process in general. Statistical analysis on vocabulary instruction will also be utilized during this process. Most importantly, we
will be compiling research-based vocabulary strategies that have been proven to be effective in the classroom. Isabel Beck’s *Bringing Words to Life* (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002) and *Creating Robust Vocabulary* (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2008) will be major pieces of the literature review. We will also reference the 1995 article written by Hart and Risley referencing the vocabulary word gap among socioeconomic classes. Additional references include Stanovich (1986); Nagy (1988); Graves, Brunetti, and Slater (1982); LaBerge and Samuels (1985); Culham (2003); Shenk (2010); Pressley (2006), Biemiller and Slonim (2001); and several others.

**Limitations**

Because this is a project, many limitations have been eliminated. However, there is a small amount of research conducted on how vocabulary knowledge affects the reading process.

**Definition of Terms**

**Academic Language:** Rich, mature language used by more experienced language users

**Comprehension:** The act or action of grasping with the intellect

**Explicit Learning:** Being taught information directly

**Expository Text:** Informational text

**Friendly Definition (student-friendly definition):** A vocabulary definition, usually composed by the teacher, that has been carefully constructed into words to make it accessible to students
Incidental Learning: Learning information naturally in context

Lexicon: The total stock of morphemes in a language

Narrative Text: The representation in art of an event or story

Strategy: A careful plan or method

Tier 1 Words: Frequent and commonly used words, do not need explicit instruction

Tier 2 Words: Rich, academic language used frequently by experienced language users

Tier 3 Words: Content specific words not used as frequently outside of content-area

Vocabulary Gap: Discrepancy in number of words children know, often between socio-economic statuses

Vocabulary: A list or collection of words or of words and phrases usually alphabetically arranged and explained or defined

Layout of Project

This project is broken into five parts including four chapters and our handbook. This chapter, our introduction, states the problem surrounding vocabulary instruction and sets up the significance of the study of vocabulary instruction. The introduction also provides a brief methodology explaining the foundation and creation of our handbook in addition to providing an explanation of limitations and terms surrounding this project. Chapter 2 will provide a synthesis of the literature published in the field of vocabulary,
while Chapter 3 will delve deeper into the methodology behind the compilation of our handbook. Chapter 4 will sum up and conclude our project and lead into our handbook.

Vocabulary knowledge is an integral part of the reading process and requires frequent instructional time in the classroom. The completion of our handbook will offer teachers an easy to follow guide that is organized by the types of words the teacher will be teaching; New Concept words and New Label words. Once the teacher identifies what type of word they will be teaching, each of the two sections narrows the scope even smaller. For example, both sections offer a variety of strategies to introduce words, activities for continued exposure to the words, and activities/strategies that allow students to use and apply the words in a deeper, more conceptual manner. The teacher will be able to not only find lessons to introduce the words to their students, but they will also have access to lessons that foster frequent and meaningful exposure to previously learned words. The following chapter will elaborate on the research that was conducted in regards to vocabulary instruction. Throughout the chapter we will provide a synthesis of the relevant research that ties into and informs our project.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this work was to review the research that has been conducted on vocabulary instruction and its effects on the reading process and student learning. This review includes many seminal articles and theories related to vocabulary knowledge and instruction. The authors of this review focused on primary resources. Secondary sources were utilized when additional information, details, and/or more current information regarding the topic was needed.

This chapter presents a review of the relevant literature that has been compiled and synthesized. There has been a large amount of research completed in this field; therefore, we chose to focus our review on the importance of vocabulary instruction, vocabulary word selection, and the characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction.

Importance and Effects of Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary knowledge is one of the many components of successful reading comprehension and has been noted by several researchers including Nagy (1988) and Baker et al. (1995) to have a strong, causal relationship. Vocabulary knowledge impacts reading comprehension in multiple ways. For instance, vocabulary knowledge positively impacts reading comprehension in relation to early reading development. Children who have been exposed to more words and cultivated a larger vocabulary will have developed a greater phonological awareness. This phonological awareness aids in the decoding and pronunciation of language in text. In order for a reader to comprehend
or gain meaning from the text, he/she must first be able to decode the words (LaBerge & Samuels 1985). Thus, vocabulary knowledge helps build phonological awareness, which supports the development of decoding skills, which leads to reading comprehension.

As children mature as readers, the connection between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension continues to exist. A person will more likely be successful in decoding and understand what they are reading if they have the background knowledge about the words, prior to coming across those words in a text. The reader will recognize the word and will be more likely to be able to pronounce it correctly as well as have a clear grasp of the words’ meaning. Therefore, having a substantial vocabulary will have positive effects on reading comprehension. When a reader is able to successfully decode and comprehend a text he/she is more likely to learn more words which further increases his/her vocabulary. With this larger vocabulary, the reader is now able to decode and comprehend even more challenging texts and the cycle is perpetuated. When a child does not have sufficient background knowledge with word meanings, he/she will not be able to construct the full or even partial meaning of the text being read. Deep vocabulary knowledge is an important component of the reading process.

A topic of interest for many educators consequently becomes teaching vocabulary so that children can become better readers. First however, teachers must understand how people acquire vocabulary. Although a person can learn new vocabulary words through direct instruction, it would not be likely that they would be
able to learn as many words through this method alone. Incidental learning accounts for a vast majority of the words learned because individuals are surrounded by words on a daily basis and it is only natural with exposure to these words that they will learn and begin to use this vocabulary.

Direct instruction in regards to vocabulary is when students are taught by a teacher in an organized and specific way. An example of a direct instruction lesson would be when a teacher has students search and find definitions to words in the dictionary and then discusses them in detail as a class. The teacher uses scaffolding techniques in order to provide students with adequate support when learning new vocabulary.

Incidental learning differs greatly from direct instruction. In fact, it does not require much/if any attention by the teacher. The learning experiences are based purely on organic happenings such as reading and conversation. New words are learned daily through books, magazines, billboards, and many other types of writing. Exposure to frequent conversations with adults and peers can foster the learning of new vocabulary. These experiences occur naturally and are referred to as incidental learning experiences.

One way people acquire new vocabulary words incidentally is through verbal interactions with individuals who have greater vocabulary knowledge (Elley, 1997). Through verbal communication with the more experienced language user, a person is exposed to a plethora of new vocabulary words (Hart & Risley, 1995). The more words a person hears, the more words they are likely to learn and understand. An added bonus of learning words through hearing them used is that not only is the person exposed to
this new vocabulary word (and possibly its meaning through context), but they hear its pronunciation, so when they see the word in print they have an easier time recognizing and decoding it.

Another way people acquire new vocabulary incidentally is through experiencing the words in texts (Elley, 1997). People experience words in texts by reading. For individuals who struggle with reading or are still developing as readers, listening to a book being read can also serve the same purpose of introducing new vocabulary. By encountering new vocabulary words in a book, the reader (or listener) is exposed to new words. They have the opportunity to gain an understanding of the word’s meaning through the context in which the word is used. Frequent reading in a variety of genres is key in building one’s vocabulary knowledge. The more a child reads, the more advanced and extensive their vocabulary knowledge will become.

Unfortunately, not all people have the opportunity to learn as many words through incidental learning. For one, children from lower socioeconomic households typically are exposed to fewer words through verbal communication than children from higher socioeconomic households. They are also less likely to learn new words from texts at home. This is because typically, lower socioeconomic families are less educated and therefore less likely to read to their children, thus not exposing them to as many new words. This discrepancy of word knowledge between the socioeconomic statuses creates a vocabulary gap between students entering school. Once the students from the lower socioeconomic households are in school, they will have the opportunity to gain exposure to many vocabulary words. However, they are already behind their higher
socioeconomic classmates. The students from higher socioeconomic households will also be learning more and developing as readers, which makes it very difficult for struggling readers to catch up (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Explicit vocabulary instruction offers a chance for the students to learn target words that they otherwise may not be exposed to. Take for instance the words absurd, industrious, and coincidence. These are all tier two words; however, these words are not in everyone’s vocabularies and may not be used in verbal communications and/or personal readings that students are a part of when away from school. Due to the frequent need for use of these words, it is important that students be instructed on them. This is especially true for those students who come from lower socioeconomic households. Because we know that these families engage less in verbal communication, it is important to provide these students with opportunities to learn rich and descriptive vocabulary in the classroom.

While most of the research behind the importance of vocabulary instruction centers around comprehension, it is also an important component of the writing process. In fact, according to Culham (2003), word choice is frequently used on rubrics as a way to evaluate a student’s writing. “One of the joys of reading well-crafted prose and poetry is an appreciation of an author’s knowledge and skill in selecting words that surprise and delight readers with their precision, aptness, and overall good fit” (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2008, p. 5). When students use diverse vocabulary in their writing, it adds significantly to the imagery of the piece of writing, allowing the reader to intricately visualize what is happening in the text. The particular use of certain
vocabulary words adds greater detail and makes the intention of the writer more clear. Words have several facets of meaning, while some have several synonyms, there are particular words that just “fit” in certain situations. Causing the need for a breadth of vocabulary knowledge.

In a study conducted by Scott, Jamieson-Noel, and Asselin in 2003, they studied three classrooms in which the teachers taught vocabulary words in an intensive manner, focusing on using rich language in the classroom and their writing. Students were encouraged use the words they were learning during conversations and their writing. They compared these three classrooms with three like classrooms and found that the classrooms in which intense vocabulary instruction was being taught, the students used considerably more rare words in their post-test writing sample than the other three classrooms (Beck et al., 2008). Scott et al. (2003) also noted that adding a writing element to vocabulary instruction increased students test scores in writing. However, it is unclear as to how much due to the lack of research that has been conducted on the effects of vocabulary on the writing process.

Children who struggle with reading often grow to dislike it. A child who dislikes reading is less likely to read independently, which inevitably affects his/her reading ability because he/she is not learning new vocabulary incidentally through reading. This cycle continues because the less the child is reading, the further behind they will get in not only vocabulary, but in the overall reading process. In order to become a better reader, one must practice reading more. If a child does not like reading and does not
read then they will not improve their reading ability. This will continue to cause them to struggle with reading as text complexity increases throughout the grade levels.

Due to the complications with incidental learning as a way to learn vocabulary, educators must actively seek to close the vocabulary gap by providing direct instruction and remediation in vocabulary. As struggling readers learn more vocabulary through direct instruction, they will become more confident with their reading abilities. This will hopefully encourage them to spend more time reading independently and in turn, learn even more words incidentally in the process. The effects of direct vocabulary instruction therefore are invaluable to all students, especially struggling readers. It is imperative that children lacking in vocabulary knowledge are immediately identified and remediated in order to address the issue before it escalates and causes them to become non-readers.

Vocabulary Word Gap

For any educator who has worked with a diverse student population, it is evident that every student varies in his/her vocabulary knowledge. This gap in vocabulary directly correlates with reading success. It not only makes it more difficult for a child to comprehend text, but if no remediation is provided to the student, they will become frustrated with the reading process and eventually begin to give up on reading altogether. Therefore, it is imperative that educators are aware of this gap, its causes, and negative implications.

According to Graves, Brunetti, and Slater (1982) this vocabulary word gap is most commonly seen between socioeconomic statuses (SES). In their study of first
grade children they found that students from higher socioeconomic households knew twice as many words as children from lower socioeconomic households. Further, race and gender were not directly correlated to this discrepancy in word knowledge. The difference was linked primarily to a family’s socioeconomic status. They believed this to be because of the significant language usage differences between socioeconomic households. Many of the upper and middle class families tended to be educated, having an increased vocabulary. This is contrasted by the lower income families that were most often uneducated and worked low-wage, menial jobs and lacked extensive vocabulary knowledge.

Over a decade after Graves et al.’s (1982) study, Hart and Risley wrote *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children* (1995). In this study, Hart and Risley collected data on 42 families that took place over a two year time span. They collected data that further validated the inequality in vocabulary knowledge between the socioeconomic statuses. Hart and Risley noted the differences between welfare, working class, and professional families in their study. In each type of household there was a large variance in the number of words to which children were exposed. For example, in an hour, the number of words a typical child from a welfare household heard was nearly half of the number of words that a child from a working class family heard. The gap widened even further between children from welfare households and children from professional households, almost quadrupling. Over one year, that amounted to a difference of nearly 8 million words, which, by age four, amounted to a total gap of 30 million words. The words that the
professional families were using were advanced and complex, hence exposing their children to sophisticated vocabulary. While the lower income households were using significantly less sophisticated language, most likely due to their lack of education.

This 30 million word gap begins long before the child even enters school, putting these students at a huge disadvantage before they enter kindergarten. Hart and Risley (1995) also found a substantial gap in tone and in the complexity of words being used. As they crunched the numbers, they discovered a direct correlation between the intensity of these early verbal experiences and later achievement (Shenk, 2010). The amount of words that a child is exposed to directly affects the number of words that are learned by the child. Children who are exposed to fewer words on a daily basis, therefore, learn fewer words over time.

The number of words that children learn correlates with the number of words that they use on a regular basis. A child that learns more words will likely use more words when speaking. While the typical three-year old child from a welfare household may only speak five-hundred words in the time span of a month, the typical three-year old from a professional family can be expected to speak over twice that number of words. The only difference between the two children is the socioeconomic status of the household in which they are raised. They noted that even six years later, the children from the economically advantaged families were still far better readers than those who were not. Hart and Risely (1995) put an emphasis on the language heard during the first three years of life as a precursor to a child’s later success in reading.
On the surface level, the differences between socioeconomic statuses appear to be variances in economic advantage (Shenk, 2010). However, there are many other factors connected to socioeconomic status other than economic advantage. For instance, education is largely associated with socioeconomic status. Typically, people of higher socioeconomic status are more educated. Therefore children born in to a higher status household tends to be raised by individuals with more education than children born into lower socioeconomic households. Interactions between parent and child tend to look different between more educated and less educated people. Parents who have received more education typically engage in more positive verbal communication and praise, whereas parents who are not very educated tend to engage in less verbal interactions with their children and their messages that tend to be more discouraging (Pressley, 2006). This discrepancy between children of different socioeconomic statuses provides immediate delays and “road blocks” for children from lower socioeconomic households in terms of their reading development. However, the effects of this vocabulary gap are far more detrimental to these children’s success in reading in the long run. Parent education in regards to the word gap is vital and early childhood programs such as Head Start act as a great place to begin.

According to Stanovich (1986) there appears to be a Matthew effect for children in terms of their reading comprehension. The Matthew Effect as used in this context refers to a child’s reading, meaning that the good readers get better and the poor readers continue to get worse as time goes on. Children who initially are successful with language and enter their educational careers with an established phonological awareness
are likely to continue to experience success in their reading development. Conversely, children who enter school with an underdeveloped phonological awareness and lack of sufficient exposure to language are likely to not only experience less success than their more language-oriented classmates, but will also likely fall further behind. Over time the gap in reading success widens. This Matthew Effect appears to be equally true for children in regards to their vocabulary knowledge. Children who enter school with a large vocabulary are likely to develop as readers much more quickly than children who enter school with a significantly smaller vocabulary. As children progress through school, the ones who started with the advantage of having a greater knowledge of vocabulary will be likely to continue to have an advantage. The gap in reading success will eventually branch out to affect a child’s overall success in school.

As children move from learning to read to reading to learn, the children who have struggled in reading development will likely continue to struggle with their other studies. When they reach the age where they need to read textbooks and assignments in order to learn new material, it will be more difficult for them to comprehend the information due to their long-standing struggle with reading. Students who have a difficult time in school, typically fall further behind as time goes on. As they progress in school they are less likely to continue to pursue advanced education beyond basic high school completion. Therefore, children who are raised in less educated households often end up being less-educated adults which continues to perpetuate the cycle as well as the 30 million vocabulary word gap.
Although vocabulary is only one of the components to success in reading, it does play a major role. Because there is an inconsistency between the vocabulary knowledge of children from different socioeconomic statuses, there often is a variance in the overall reading success between the different groups. This gap is likely to widen over time and directly affect student success in not only reading, but overall in their education. There is a clear need to close this vocabulary gap amongst the socioeconomic groups, but it is a challenge that for now will be up to teachers to help close.

Factors Informing Selection of Vocabulary Words

A common thought amongst teachers is that there are too many vocabulary words to teach their students, and most of these words occur rarely in both speech and printed text. This leaves many teachers feeling overwhelmed without any knowledge of how to begin to narrow them down. In *Bringing Words to Life* by Beck et al. (2002), they use a tiered system of vocabulary words. The system is broken into 3 tiers:

Tier 1: Is comprised of basic words that are well known and used most frequently. These include words such as walk, going, happy and chair. Most of these words are learned through conversation at an early age and carry throughout primary grades. Due to the high frequency of these words, they rarely need to be taught in an explicit manner. Most children will learn them through everyday interactions with their parents, teachers, and peers and through text incidentally.

Tier 2: Consists of medium frequency words that are used by mature language users. These words span content areas and are used in a variety of formats, thus adding
to their importance. These words are used infrequently in conversation, so children will not learn them through peer interactions. Therefore they are important words to learn through intentional vocabulary instruction. A few examples of tier 2 words are: frequent, converse, and require. Tier 2 words require the majority of instructional attention both incidentally and explicitly.

Tier 3: Are low frequency words that are largely content area specific: photosynthesis, hyperbola, and electron. Due to their rare occurrence in both conversation and text, these words should be taught when a specific need for the word arises. These words are usually linked to a specific content area and are important to teach during the lesson in which they will need to be utilized.

Beck et al. (2002) suggest that vocabulary instruction should generally focus on Tier 2 words. While emphasis on only Tier 2 words narrows down the amount of words needed to be taught, it is still an overwhelming number. Nagy and Anderson (1984) estimate a total of 7,000 word families (introduce, introduction, reintroduce, introducing) in Tier 2. This number may sound shocking; however, Beck et al. (2002) offer some perspective. They assert that if 10 words are given to students each week between kindergarten and ninth grade, then that would equate to 400 words learned explicitly per year. This would leave only 300 words per year that are not explicitly taught, many of these will be learned incidentally through language and reading.

Establishing the difference between the tiered words when deciding which words to teach requires careful attention by the teacher. The teacher must have knowledge of their students and their students’ academic levels. It is also important to
know that there are no distinct, matter-of-fact rules that separate these tiers. Many teachers may not produce the same set of tiered words as their colleagues. This is to be expected, considering the ambiguous nature of the lines that divide the tiers. However, Beck et al. (2002) offer some easy to follow criteria to help select Tier 2 words:

1. Importance and Utility: Words that are characteristic of mature language users and appear frequently across a variety of domains.
2. Instructional 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.
3. Conceptual Understanding: Words for which students understand the general concept but provide precision and specificity in describing the concept.

Tier 2 words should be useful to students in many contexts, and students should come upon the words often in texts. What makes these words so important to learn is that while they are frequently encountered in text, they do not occur frequently in conversation. Words are less often learned in context than in conversation, hence the importance of selecting Tier 2 words when explicitly teaching vocabulary. Students should know how these words relate to others (synonyms, antonyms, concepts, etc.) and why it is important to know these words as well. They should be able to compare and contrast like words, allowing them to understand the individual nuances of the learned words. These words should add another dimension to the concept or idea that they are learning about. Lastly, Tier 2 words should play a distinct role in the students’
vocabulary, and they should be able to distinguish what that role is and how it relates to the context.

While Tier 2 words require a majority of instructional attention, there will be times when it is necessary to instruct students on Tier 3 words. It may be necessary when a text uses such words and knowledge of the words is required for comprehension, such as in the book, *The Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954). In this story, an important piece is the conch shell and what it represents. This would be a Tier 3 word; however, knowledge of the word in this story is necessary, so it must be taught in order for students to fully grasp the meaning of the text.

While many teachers find it overwhelming to tackle the amount of words that need to be taught, separating grade level words that students will come into contact with over the course of the class into the 3 tiers as described can be a useful strategy. It is important to remember that a large of number of words students learn will be learned incidentally, so students will in reality be learning a much larger number of words other than those directly and explicitly taught during class.

**Characteristics of Effective Vocabulary Instruction**

In many classrooms today, students sit at their desks searching feverishly through dictionaries to find the definitions to that week’s vocabulary words. These students are doing what they have been taught to do to learn vocabulary. However, over 60% of students that complete definitions from the use of a dictionary are unable to put the word into their own words, thus demonstrating that they lack an understanding of the word and are not likely to use the words in their own conversations (Beck &
McKeown, 1991). “… the reality is that definitions are not an effective vehicle for learning word meanings” (Beck et al., 2002, p. 33). While we know dictionary usage is not successful in teaching students vocabulary, it is still widely used today. This may be due to the lack of proper education/professional development provided to teachers, lack of resources, or possibly teachers are unaware of how to properly teach vocabulary to their students. Whatever the reason, there are specific characteristics that are present in effective vocabulary instruction.

First, vocabulary must be learned both explicitly and incidentally (Pressley 2006). “By early adulthood, many individuals have learned 15,000 or more root words (i.e., words that are the bases for families of words, such as child, which is the root word for children, child-like, and childish)” (Biemiller & Slonim, 2001, p. 501). With only a few hundred words learned each year at school, it is only plausible that the large majority of these words were learned incidentally. Incidental learning in regards to vocabulary is described as informal learning that happens as a result of reading and interacting with others. The amount of text read by a student is directly related to the depth and breadth of their vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, how much time a student spends reading will largely determine the size of their own known vocabulary.

While reading affects a students’ vocabulary, oral interactions with friends and family does as well. Depending on the types of interactions a student has during the course of the day, they can directly affect their working vocabulary. This is also correlated to the word gap that was previously explained. The more meaningful conversations that include rich language a child has, the larger their vocabularies will
be, and vice versa. It is important for educators to be aware of this information and include mature, rich language when interacting with students on a daily basis.

A dependence of acquiring vocabulary through incidental learning clearly can become an issue due to the fact that not all students have the same language opportunities. For instance, not all students are avid readers and struggling readers are less likely to seek reading opportunities on their own. In addition, not all students come from households where mature, academic language is used. Therefore teachers must recognize that some vocabulary (perhaps more for particular students) will need to be taught directly and explicitly in order for students to make significant vocabulary gains.

Explicit instruction is systematic instruction by the teacher in which the students are highly engaged. The National Reading Technical Assistance Center (2010) states that, “Explicit instruction of words and their meanings increases the likelihood that young children will understand and remember the meanings of new words” (p. 4). The intentional and explicit instruction of vocabulary in the classroom not only teaches word meanings, but it also aids in reading comprehension. It is important to engage students in thought provoking vocabulary instruction that focuses on learning the words on a deep, conceptual level. There are several research based strategies that are recommended for classroom use, these will be addressed later.

Another important characteristic of effective vocabulary instruction is that students should be exposed to multiple encounters with the learned words over an extended period of time (Beck et al., 2002). Many times, students are provided with a list of 10 words at the beginning of the week. The student uses them in activities such as
definitions, cloze exercises, sentence writing, etc, during the week, both in class and at home. However, once the week is over, many teachers do not continue to use them during instruction or when interacting with students. The students soon forget what they have learned and sadly, they do not add additional words to their vocabulary repertoire, therefore, making the time spent on vocabulary instruction more or less wasted time.

Multiple encounters with a learned word over time is required for a word meaning to really be known. Students must use these words in a variety of settings and contexts in order to fully understand each word and their nuances, subtleties, and characteristics. Providing students with one single definition is not sufficient enough instruction to expect students to know and use the word properly.

Continued encounters with learned words can be done in a variety of ways. For example, dedicating a wall in the classroom as a “word wall” (a list of vocabulary words that have been taught, usually printed in large font for quick and easy reference) provides students with a plethora of words to use during classroom activities. A word wall is an effective way to continue a student’s exposure to vocabulary words, in hopes that frequent usage will increase understanding. A word wall should be kept current, no more than 3-4 weeks old. This is to prevent the students from feeling overwhelmed when glancing at it for support. If teachers compile all of the vocabulary words from the lessons they have taught, within a couple months the wall would be so massive that it wouldn’t serve its purpose.

To solve the problem of a massive word wall, Beck et al. (2008) recommend the use of a word bank. This can be done is a few ways. An index card holder with
alphabetical tabs is one way to use this in the classroom. Depending on the make-up of the classroom, there can be one or several of these “word bank” containers. Once words have become too old to keep up on the word wall, they can be placed in the word bank for use by the teacher and students as needed. These word cards should contain the word, its student-friendly definition, and a sentence in which it is used in the correct context. A word bank is a great way to choose words for quick writes, classroom trivia games, and guidance for rich vocabulary usage during writing.

Furthermore, it has been established that dictionary definitions are a less than desirable strategy for vocabulary word learning. However, a teacher can use these definitions to create their own, student-friendly explanation of the word. When developing these explanations, the teacher must account for their audience. The reading level of their students must be considered before the explanations can be compiled. Once this has been done, the teacher is able to know what words their students will be able to understand in an explanation and what one they will not. It is key to put the vocabulary definitions in easy to understand words. They need to be easily accessible to students, allowing them to understand the meaning and use them in their day to day interactions.

Using context is another characteristic of effective vocabulary instruction (Pressley 2006). This may be perhaps one of the most common strategies used in the classroom when teaching students vocabulary. Having students use the clues around the unknown word to provide a word’s meaning has proved to be extremely successful. Much of the time this strategy is more successful when a teacher is there to scaffold the
activity. Depending on a student’s background knowledge, they may not understand the clues around the unknown word and become more confused. So it is advised that when using context clues, a teacher is there to engage students in further thought provoking questions in regards to the text.

Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction is that is meaningful and engages students. In order to create and implement a successful vocabulary lesson, the teacher should make sure that it is meaningful to his/her students. In order to do this, the teacher must know what is important to their students. Perhaps integrating current movies or books into the lessons when possible. Or discussing with them the importance of the new words they are learning and how it will later help them. Students will become more engaged and take ownership of their own learning when a lesson involves their personal interests and values. If they view a lesson or task to have no connection to them or their own lives, they are more likely to shut down and will not retain the information learned.

Engaging students in vocabulary instruction can be difficult, however it can be done. Simply copying definitions from the dictionary is tedious and does not require much effort on the student’s part. Vocabulary instruction should involve activities that require critical thinking and the students should take an active role instead of a passive role as with dictionary definitions. Small group activities, games, and long-term projects are just a few ways to incorporate engaging activities into vocabulary instruction.

Other characteristics previously mentioned, in part, make the instruction meaningful. For instance, by teaching words that students encounter frequently and are
able to use in a variety of contexts, teachers are making instruction meaningful because the students can see the value in the words that they are learning. In addition, by using student-friendly definitions teachers can make the meaning of the words understandable for students so that they can own them and feel comfortable using them in their everyday vocabularies. Other ways to make vocabulary instruction meaningful and engaging to students would be to make use of different activities and strategies. The use of technology in vocabulary instruction is one way to do this. The National Reading Panel (2006) has published in its findings that, “the use of computer technology … enhance[s] the acquisition of vocabulary” (p. 13). In a world where students have been raised and surrounded by technology, the use of technology is something that they know and understand. The use of technology offers limitless ways of providing exciting and engaging ways to teach students. Therefore, vocabulary instruction that uses technology is more likely to get students’ attention and hook them into learning new material.

Although it is important for educators to provide opportunities for their students to learn new vocabulary incidentally (providing access to new words through rich, academic language used in the classroom and many reading opportunities) it is also important that they are providing frequent and meaningful explicit instruction over time. These encounters should be frequent, engaging, and use of the words should be used throughout the school year. There are many ways to implement the effective characteristics of vocabulary instruction discussed in this chapter. They can be easily adapted into any classroom and for any teacher’s specific teaching style.
There has been much research conducted on how vocabulary knowledge affects the reading process. After careful review of all the literature, the authors of this chapter chose to incorporate the importance of vocabulary instruction, the word gap, vocabulary word selection, and the characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction within their study. These subtopics have driven the creation of the vocabulary strategies handbook and have given insight for the methodology behind its contents and organization.

In this chapter we have discussed the research validating the importance of a vocabulary strategies handbook as well as evidence of effective vocabulary instruction. The next chapter will explain the methodology and theory that has driven the construction of the handbook. It includes theory behind its organization, development, and content as well as the target audience.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY: DEVELOPMENT OF VOCABULARY HANDBOOK

Returning to the scenario presented in Chapter 1, one is reminded of the classroom full of students who appear to be engaged in the reading of *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008), but fail to comprehend and demonstrate an understanding of the novel. The teacher who is at a loss turns to her resources for a solution to her problem. After she determines that a major issue in comprehension for her students is a result of lacking vocabulary knowledge, she searches for strategies to help her remediate the problem. Unfortunately, she finds herself overwhelmed sorting through texts that are wordy and confusing. In order to help teachers avoid this problem we have created our handbook with careful attention to theoretical and practical/functional aspects of development.

**Theoretical Development**

The overall development of the ideology of our handbook is research-based. We created our handbook with well-supported theoretical evidence published in the field of reading instruction. The strategies we have compiled possess the characteristics proven in multiple studies to be effective in improving vocabulary knowledge. Based on the theoretical research we have created meaningful and engaging strategies that can be taught directly and frequently in a variety of educational settings.

**Indirect vs. Direct**

A majority of a person’s vocabulary is gained incidentally. This means that people are constantly being exposed to and learning new words indirectly. People learn
new vocabulary indirectly through conversations with (or listening to) more experienced language users as well as reading texts that include new and challenging vocabulary. Unfortunately, as discussed in Chapter 2, there is a tremendous issue with leaving the acquirement of vocabulary up to indirect learning. People who come from lower socioeconomic households typically are exposed to less vocabulary. This is because parents of lower socioeconomic status are typically less educated and possess smaller vocabularies, spend less time talking to and verbally interacting with children, and spend less time reading with their children. Therefore, the children coming from lower socioeconomic households will oftentimes have much smaller vocabularies than children coming from higher socioeconomic households. This gap between children of different socioeconomic statuses will only continue to widen when the children enter school. The children with smaller vocabularies will likely struggle with reading, causing them to read less often and therefore continue to be at a disadvantage when it comes to learning vocabulary indirectly (through reading in school).

Due to the issue with the inequality in indirect learning, teachers must be able to employ direct strategies in order to teach vocabulary in their own classrooms. Students who struggle with or have smaller vocabularies, would definitely benefit from direct instruction in the area of vocabulary. The use of direct instruction could be used to remediate students so that they eventually reach grade level in regards to their vocabulary knowledge.

The research conducted on vocabulary instruction was the reason why we created a series of direct strategies in our handbook for teachers to use. Although our
handbook can be used for the remediation of a student, the strategies described in it can
also be used in a whole class as well. These strategies can be used to introduce
vocabulary and provide additional exposure for any student.

**Meaningful and Engaging**

Just because a strategy is being taught directly, however, does not mean that it
will be retained by the student. In order to truly learn and understand all of the facets of
new vocabulary words, students must learn these words in a meaningful and engaging
way. Many adults remember learning vocabulary by being given a word, looking it up
in the dictionary, and trying to remember it all week for a test on Friday. This method of
vocabulary instruction is direct. However, simply looking up and memorizing the
definition of a word is not meaningful or engaging for students. Since the definition is
not directly connected to the student, he/she is less likely to remember the words they
have looked up. Therefore, we have sought to create and include strategies and
activities in our handbook that teach vocabulary in new and different ways. By
providing students with interesting activities and strategies for learning vocabulary,
teachers are more likely to find that their students will be excited about and enjoy
learning. As a direct result, the students are more likely to remember the words and be
able to use them in their own daily language.

**Frequent Review**

In addition to using meaningful and engaging strategies and activities, it is also
important that teachers are allowing students to encounter words frequently. A word
must be seen/used multiple times before a student can truly know and understand the
word. Therefore, our handbook includes a plethora of strategies that offers teachers a variety of ways that they can teach vocabulary to their students. Teachers should not use one strategy to teach the vocabulary word and assume the students have learned the word and no longer need to see or hear it. They should be providing their students with multiple opportunities to be exposed to and encounter the words. This will allow students to feel more comfortable using the words while providing them with practice so that they are able to fully grasp and retain the words. Our handbook makes it simple for teachers to quickly choose a strategy/activity to implement a vocabulary lesson in class. The strategies in the handbook can be used to teach vocabulary words over a period of time.

**Practical/Functional Development**

While the overall theoretical concept of the handbook was developed with research-based theories in mind, the overall design and use of the handbook was created with the practical and functional uses in mind. In creating our handbook we thought of our audience in order to present something that could be easily used and understood by those who would be using our handbook. Therefore it was important that we create a resource that is practical, or offers strategies that are useful to our target audience and is functional in that the strategies could be easily implemented or used. We also planned how our handbooks would be dispersed in order for them to actually be used by teachers.
Audience

Vocabulary knowledge is a crucial component of the reading process. Therefore, all students will benefit from vocabulary instruction. More importantly, most, if not all, teachers could use new and effective strategies for teaching vocabulary. Due to this understanding, our vocabulary handbook has been designed with all students and teachers in mind. Our goal for the handbook was for any teacher to be able to pick it up and use it in their classroom. While some strategies might work better for certain grade levels, they can all be adapted depending on the teacher’s sense of the class’ overall academic abilities and vocabulary development.

In order to further aid teachers in making our handbook accessible to all audiences, we designed it to be easy to read, understand, and implement. It was important to us that teachers who are already extremely busy, would not have to spend a great deal of time reading through the handbook and figuring out how to use the strategies in their classroom. Therefore, we created a layout that was straightforward and simple. For each strategy a rationale is given, followed by clear directions/steps, and any necessary diagrams, graphics, handouts, etc. This will allow for any teacher who wishes to implement new vocabulary strategies into their lessons can quickly open our handbook, skim through the strategies, find the appropriate strategy for their lesson, and use it in their classroom. Teachers will not have to spend a lot of time reading through pages of explanation and research for each strategy, but will instead be able to go directly to the strategy and learn how it to use it.
New Concept vs. New Label

The concept for our handbook stemmed from the idea that new vocabulary is learned as either a new concept or a new label (personal communication, John Shefelbine, September 13, 2011). When people are learning new words, they are learning more than just the definition. They are also learning what the words represent. Before a person can learn a new word (label) they must understand the meaning of the word. Therefore, the concept or meaning of a word must be taught and understood before teaching the label. If a student knows the concept behind a word, then the teacher only needs to enlist strategies to teach a new label (synonym). However, if the students have never encountered the concept before, the teacher must use strategies to first teach the concept and then teach the label. When students need to learn the entire concept of a word, the lessons should be significantly more descriptive, involving plenty of visuals, examples, and/or real object realia. New concept vocabulary requires a longer lesson than a new label lesson. When teaching a new label lesson, it is important to tap into students’ prior knowledge and schema. Many times these words can be taught by merely giving them a synonym for the new word, while other require a more in depth lesson. This may be due to a student’s lack of background knowledge of the new label word or they may not remember the required word knowledge that is needed for the new label.

Due to this, we have designed our handbook to include strategies specifically for teaching new concepts and strategies for teaching new labels. All teachers must do then
is determine whether their students know the concept and just need to learn a new label or need to learn the label and the concept.

**Conclusion**

Prior to the creation of our handbook, we considered several factors including vocabulary research, effectiveness of strategies, handbook organization, ease of use, etc. The theoretical design of our handbook was developed and based on the research on vocabulary development and instruction. The practical or functional design of our handbook, although tied to the theoretical design, was created with its audience in mind in order to make it quick and easy to use in a variety of educational settings.

In this chapter we examined both the theoretical and practical/functional development of our handbook. In our fourth and final chapter we will summarize our project. We will also offer recommendations for teachers and draw conclusions.
Chapter 4

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Due to many factors there is a major discrepancy in the vocabulary knowledge of the students in today’s classrooms. The word gap has a direct impact on students’ reading abilities which affects their overall academic success. This word gap is in play far before children begin school. However, educators should be equipped to handle these challenges and provide these students with engaging and effective vocabulary instruction. With this understanding that possessing vocabulary knowledge is crucial for students, many educators are faced with students who lack the key components for success, but do not know how. In order to bridge this gap, educators must make an effort to bulk up their students’ vocabulary knowledge and know how to do this. The handbook that we have created was put together to provide educators with effective, research-based vocabulary strategies that have proven to be effective. The handbook has been organized in such a way that allows for easy and quick reference in order to put the lessons into action.

Discussion

Children often enter school at very different levels in terms of their vocabulary knowledge. Oftentimes, children from higher socioeconomic households start their educational careers with a much higher number of words in their vocabulary repertoire than students that were born and raised in lower socioeconomic households. This initial gap in vocabulary knowledge often is exacerbated over time which causes the gap to widen even further. Because vocabulary knowledge is a key component to reading,
many students who have smaller vocabularies tend to struggle with reading and as time goes on they continue to fall further behind. The students who struggle with reading because of a lack of vocabulary knowledge most likely entered school without learning many words incidentally. Further, it cannot be expected that they will be able to close the gap by learning enough words incidentally at home or through their own reading. Therefore, teachers must employ explicit vocabulary strategies in order to remediate the students that are lacking in vocabulary knowledge. This project serves as a resource for teachers to use quickly and easily in order to teach vocabulary in their classrooms. The simple and straightforward layout of the handbook makes engaging and effective vocabulary strategies available to all educators and most can be adapted across grade levels and content areas.

The Handbook

Although vocabulary instruction is very important for all students, it does not seem be incorporated in an effective manner in many classrooms. One explanation for why it is not taught effectively is that educators do not have access to easy-use tools and strategies. The handbook created for this project presents ways to teach vocabulary in a simple and straightforward manner. The strategies compiled in the handbook all contain components that have been proven in the research to be effective. Each strategy used in the handbook is engaging and has the ability to be meaningful for all students. In addition, the plethora of strategies made available in the handbook also allow for educators to employ a variety of strategies in order to provide students with multiple exposures to vocabulary words to ensure that they are retained.
**Recommendations**

With the move towards the upcoming Common Core standards, students will need to rely more on their own critical reading in order to learn. In order for students to be able to properly comprehend the material and be successful in reading, they will need to be accurate decoders and have an understanding of the words they are reading. Educators can ensure that students understand the words that their students are encountering by explicitly teaching vocabulary in their classrooms. It is recommended that all educators familiarize themselves with the current research regarding vocabulary instruction. It is also recommended that all educators in all grade levels and content areas seek ways to integrate vocabulary instruction into their classrooms frequently and in meaningful and engaging ways.

**Professional Development**

It is imperative that teachers receive quality and timely professional development in order to ensure that they have the tools to effectively integrate vocabulary instruction into their classrooms. Professional development should provide educators with recent, research-based methods of vocabulary instruction. The training should not only familiarize educators with what the strategies are and the research that backs them up, but should also provide them with the opportunity to fully understand how to implement the strategies. Teachers should also be provided professional development time to collaborate with one another and to discuss how they have personally used the strategies and any challenges/successes they encountered. If
educators are provided the time to invest in learning new strategies, they will be more effective in implementing them in their teaching.

**Limitations**

Although vocabulary knowledge is important in all content areas, many teachers struggle to teach it for a variety of reasons. Aside from not having the strategies or tools to effectively teach vocabulary, many educators do not think that they have the time to teach all of the necessary words. With many students who have lacking vocabularies it seems almost impossible to ever close the word gap. Because there is a wide range of information teachers are trying to put into their lessons, vocabulary, which may seem like a lost cause, might be forgotten or disregarded. In addition to the lack of willingness to integrate vocabulary instruction (either due to lack of time or disregard for its helpfulness), there often is a lack of funding. This effects opportunities for professional development and new curriculum which would provide teachers with current and effective strategies they would need to learn to use in their classrooms.

**Conclusions**

Due to a word gap often found between the different socioeconomic statuses, many students are lacking the necessary vocabularies they need to be successful in school. Educators can aim to close this gap between students by remediating students and providing explicit vocabulary instruction. This handbook was created in order to provide educators with an accessible resource that offers meaningful and engaging vocabulary strategies. When students are exposed to new vocabulary words frequently and in an engaging or meaningful way, they are more likely to remember the word and
feel confident using it in their own language use. The more words students acquire, the better readers they will become. Reading achievement often fosters positive attitudes in regards to reading which further encourages students to read more, thus continuing the cycle. As students become more successful readers they are also paving their way to overall success in school because they are able to comprehend the informational materials presented in their classes. Therefore, effective, explicit vocabulary instruction is necessary in all classrooms and all educators must have access to these strategies.
APPENDIX

Effective Vocabulary Strategies:

A Research-Based Instructional Vocabulary Handbook
Effective Vocabulary Strategies

A Research-Based Instructional Vocabulary Handbook

Kristin Browning
Jordan Herron
Dear Educator,

Within this handbook you will find strategies that have been compiled from extensive research and have been proven effective. This handbook has been divided into three sections. The first section of this handbook includes strategies for introducing vocabulary. It is further divided into two sections: New Label strategies and New Concept strategies. It is divided into these parts because students that are learning a New Label word will require a less intensive introduction to the word, mostly because they already understand the concept. New Concept words on the other hand, are entirely new ideas for students, so a more intensive introduction is necessary.

The second section of this handbook is Additional Exposures. This chapter contains strategies to use after the vocabulary word has been introduced to the student(s). It provides several strategies that allow students to encounter words on a deeper level. The strategies in this section help students begin to own the vocabulary words.

The third and last chapter is comprised of strategies that require the application of vocabulary knowledge. These lessons allow students to use the vocabulary knowledge in high level thinking activities. These strategies should be implemented after students have had a few exposures to the vocabulary words. This is because the activities will require students to deeply understand the new words and their individual nuances.
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Introducing Vocabulary Words
New Label
Student-Friendly Definition

Summary: Providing students with a teacher-created definition that allows the students to understand the word in context in language that the students are familiar with.

Rationale: Having the classroom teacher carefully create student-friendly vocabulary definitions is far more effective than the actual dictionary definition. The teacher is able to use words that they know will be understood by their students. Further, the students will learn the particular word in the appropriate context, whereas a dictionary merely lists definitions that aren’t context specific, leaving the student overwhelmed and confused. Student friendly definitions tend to be longer and leave out room for assumptions as with the short and concise dictionary definitions.

Materials:

1. Dictionary
2. Textbook

Strategy Prep Steps:

1. Choose the vocabulary words that students will be learning
2. Look up the definitions in the dictionary or textbook for each word
3. Consider possible challenges that students may face when encountering the particular definition. Are the words used accessible to students? Can the word be given in a more effective context? Can an example be used to help understanding?
Implementing the Strategy:

1. This can be used in a variety of ways in the class
2. When first introducing student friendly definitions in the classroom, have the students compare and contrast the student friendly definition with the dictionary definition.
3. Discuss why the student-friendly definitions make learning more accessible to students.

Example:

Dictionary definition- Corrupt: Immoral or dishonest

Student-friendly definition- Corrupt: A person, group, or business that lacks honesty, integrity, and morals. They are largely out for personal gain and may commit crimes in order to do so.

While these are both definitions of the word corrupt, the student friendly definition is far more detailed and offers the explanation in student-friendly language.
Picture This!

Summary: This lesson consists of pictures that portray vocabulary words and teacher posed questions to engage the students in creating a definition for the picture/vocabulary word.

Rationale: Pictures help students connect vocabulary with its meaning. Providing students with such visual aids, allows for increased comprehension of a word. Involving students in the creation of a vocabulary definition gives them ownership of the word and a deeper understanding of its meaning.

Materials:

1. Pictures that portray vocabulary words
2. Teacher-prepared questions

Strategy Prep Steps:

1. Prepare at least 3 questions per picture to ask the students. These questions should prompt possible definitions of the picture prior to the students knowing the word.
2. Prepare pictures of the vocabulary words that will be used

Implementing the Strategy:

1. Introduce this lesson by showing the students one of the pictures that portrays the first vocabulary word that will be taught.
2. Ask the students the teacher prepared questions
3. Record the answers/suggestions provided by the students on the board.
4. Guide students in this process and create a definition
5. Provide the students with the vocabulary word that they just created the definition for.
6. Have students record the definition in their vocabulary journal.

**Example:** Perhaps a fifth grade teacher wants to teach her students the word “identical.” In order to formulate questions, the teacher must find a picture that portrays this word. A few examples may include a photo of twin siblings, a pair of computers that are the same, or a few books that are of the same novel.

Examples of teacher-formulated questions may be:

1. What can you tell me about this picture?
2. Do you notice anything in common with the objects?
3. What do you notice?
4. They are the same. Can we say that in a different way?

Once the questions have been asked and the answers recorded on the board, let the students know what the target word is. Involve them in the creation of a definition.

**Motivation Tip:** The pictures should attempt to connect to students’ lives in some way. So if it is available, try to include popular culture, current movies, and/or books they are reading. This will increase their interest level during the activity.
Narrative Chain

**Summary**: This strategy involves telling a story that includes the target vocabulary words and accompanying hand motions/gestures to introduce new vocabulary words and terms.

**Rationale**: By presenting new words and terms in a narrative form, educators provide their students with a first encounter that is not only engaging, but memorable as well. Combining the fun story with the kinesthetic hand motions/gestures ensures that students will be more likely to remember the vocabulary terms that they are learning.

**Materials**:

1. Narrative Chain Brainstorm Page

**Strategy Prep Steps**:

1. *Come up with a list of the words you want to teach* (Try not to teach more than 5 words at a time)
2. Brainstorm hand motions/gestures to go with each word/term
3. *Create a story that incorporates the words that you want to teach* (if you can't think of a way to easily integrate the vocabulary terms, use a word that sounds like the vocabulary word and makes sense in the story; homonym)

**Implementing the Strategy**:

1. Begin telling the story to students
2. When you come to a vocabulary word, do the accompanying hand motion/gesture and have students say the word aloud and do the hand motion/gesture
3. Stop periodically and retell the story from the beginning, pausing when you come to the vocabulary words. When you pause, have the students say the word and do the hand motions/gesture. (You can do the hand motion/gesture to prompt them)

4. When you have finished telling the story, have students list the vocabulary words introduced in the story. If there were words that were used because they sounded like the vocabulary words (homonyms), tell students those words.

5. Now that students have been exposed to the vocabulary words you can provide them with the words' definitions.

Example: The following is a narrative chain that could be used to introduce vocabulary terms for different active reading strategies.

I was watching this really intense movie last week that kept me on my toes the whole time. How many of you start guessing what’s going to happen in a movie, but then are completely surprised by what ends up happening? Well, while I was watching this movie, I kept trying to predict what was going to happen.

What did I keep trying to do? Predict

Everything thing that happened was completely unexpected. Every character that I thought was a good guy ended up being on the side of the bad guys and whenever I thought someone was going to get away safely they ended up getting cornered. I ended up questioning my sweet movie analyzing skills.

What did I end up doing? Questioning

About halfway through the movie there were so many things going on and so many different stories intertwined that I was really confused. I had to ask my best friend to clarify what was happening.
What did I have to ask my best friend to do? Clarify

There was this really cool scene at the end of the movie where the characters were on the beach. The waves were crashing on the sandy shore and the seagulls were squawking loudly. The bright sun was slightly covered by a thin wisp of clouds. Thinking back now I can really visualize that scene.

What am I able to do? Visualize

Even though that movie was super crazy and intense, I still really liked the main character because I thought she was a lot like me. I could really connect to her.

What could I do? Connect
### Narrative Chain Brainstorm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary Words/Terms</th>
<th>Describe Hand Motions/Gestures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ____________________</td>
<td>1. ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ____________________</td>
<td>2. ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ____________________</td>
<td>3. ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ____________________</td>
<td>4. ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ____________________</td>
<td>5. ____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Create a rough draft of the story including each of the vocabulary words throughout.

1st Event: __________________________________________________________

2nd Event: __________________________________________________________

3rd Event: __________________________________________________________

4th Event: __________________________________________________________

5th Event: __________________________________________________________
Returning to the Scene of the Context

Summary: This strategy involves referring to actual text where the target vocabulary words/terms appear. Educators not only have to opportunity to expose students to the vocabulary words, but they also can use the context of the words around the target word to reveal the word’s meaning.

Rationale: Using context to introduce a vocabulary word illustrates how the word can be used in language. The context surrounding a word also reveals the concept or meaning of a word. If the students understand the concept of a word, adding the new “label” for the word will be easier for them to understand.

Materials:

1. Text in which vocabulary words/terms appear

Strategy Prep Steps:

1. Select vocabulary words from class reading and find in text
2. Examine context in which words are used

Implementing the Strategy:

1. While reading text, stop at target words.
2. Discuss context surrounding word and establish understanding
3. When referring back to vocabulary words, refer to the context it was used in

Example:

The *egret*, a large white bird, hunted fish in the marsh.

*In the above sentence the word “egret” is defined directly in context as a large white bird*
We had an **abundant** amount of vegetables after the harvest. We were able to make meals for weeks.

*In the above sentence the word abundant’s meaning can inferred indirectly through the surrounding context to mean a lot of something.*
Synonyms

Summary: Teacher provides a list of synonyms of the target vocabulary words in order to tie a previously understood concept to a new label.

Rationale: New Label words can be taught by simply going over the word’s synonyms when a student already knows the concept behind the word.

Strategy Prep Steps:

1. Brainstorm one synonym for each vocabulary word

Implementing the Strategy:

1. Teacher opens the discussion by presenting the brainstormed synonym
2. Students share out additional synonyms
3. Teacher presents the new label for discussed synonyms

Variance on Implementation:

1. Teacher opens a discussion on the concept behind the new target word
2. Students brainstorm synonyms that embody the concept
3. Teacher provides the new label

Example: Teacher shows a picture of a crying boy and writes on the board the following word: Sad. Students share out a variety of synonyms that tie to the picture and the word "sad". Teacher introduces the new word: Melancholy.
New Concept


Concept Mapping

Summary: This strategy taps into students' knowledge of a particular concept and the words used to label that concept or related to it. The students brainstorm the different words that they know are associated with a concept and then the teacher introduces the new vocabulary word/term that represents a concept tied to the one discussed in class.

Rationale: Concept mapping establishes students' understanding of a meaning or concept of a word and its relationship to other words, thus forming a solid foundation for the new word and concept.

Materials:

1. Whiteboard; Overhead; Butcher Paper

Implementation of Strategy:

1. Provide students with a list of words that are already in their vocabularies and are tied together by a particular concept
2. Have students discuss the relationships between the different words and illustrate the relationship through a graphic organizer
3. Introduce a new word and its relationship to the previously discussed concept and insert it into the graphic organizer to demonstrate relationship

Variance on Implementation:

1. Begin a discussion of a particular concept
2. Have students brainstorm words that represent the concept and illustrate them in a graphic organizer
3. Introduce the new word and the concept behind it and add it to the graphic organizer
Example: In the example below words tied to the concept of happiness are mapped out. This paves the way to introduce the new word "frolic" because it is a verb describing how a happy person might move.
Media Connection

Summary: This strategy incorporates the use of media such as video clips and music to develop an understanding of a new concept. Once the new concept is understood, a label can be attached.

Rationale: Many students are visual learners, so using video clips can help teach new concepts. Likewise, music can be an engaging way to present new information.

Materials:

1. Music Clips or Video Clips

Strategy Prep Steps:

1. Determine words and concepts for instruction.
2. Find songs or video clips that use the target words or illustrate concepts of target words.

Implementing the Strategy:

1. Play the song or video clip for students
2. Discuss the concept demonstrated/illustrated in the song or video clip
3. Provide a label for the new concept

Example:

- An example of a video clip that could be used to teach a new concept would be a clip of Dr. Seuss’ “The Lorax.” After watching this video clip the words conservation or environment could be introduced.

- An example of a song that could be used to teach a new concept could be The Black Eyed Peas’ “Where is the Love?” This song could help teach a new concept of prejudice and thus open the door to introduce the words prejudice or discrimination
Modeling

**Summary:** This strategy uses modeling, in which the teacher performs and/or demonstrates the word meaning.

**Rationale:** Modeling vocabulary words/actions provides students with a visual learning activity. The students are more likely to remember the word and use it if they have actually seen it modeled by a teacher. This works best when working with action words.

**Materials:**

1. Props (if needed)

**Strategy Prep Steps:**

1. Analyze the words that will be taught. Can these be acted out? If so, how? Will props make the modeling/acting out more effective?
2. Prepare a list of ways that each word will be modeled
3. If help from a few students is necessary, prepare them by telling them ahead of time that their help is needed

**Implementing the Strategy:**

1. Introduce the words to the students
2. Model the word/action (Teacher may also begin by modeling and providing the word after the action is carried out)

**Example:** To teach students the word “agitate” the teacher can act out a scene (perhaps with a student volunteer) in which he/she may encounter such a situation. Some examples may include, waiting in line at the grocery store, a car alarm going off continuously, or an itchy tag on a piece of clothing.
Tactile Exploration

**Summary:** Tactile exploration involves providing students with realia that is connected to the vocabulary word. This gives the students a tactile experience that allows them to connect objects with vocabulary words.

**Rationale:** When students are able to use their senses, to see and feel objects that connect to vocabulary, they are better able to remember the words and the correct meaning due to their personal experience with the object.

**Materials:**

1. Objects connected to vocabulary words

**Strategy Prep Steps:**

1. Organize objects that relate somehow to the words that will be taught

**Implementing the Strategy:**

1. Introduce students to the object(s) and vocabulary word that will be taught
2. Allow students to touch/feel/manipulate the object(s)
3. If there aren't enough objects for each student, have them assemble in a line or in groups to allow all students to participate

**Example:** If the students are to learn the word “frigid,” a teacher may provide a bucket of ice cubes for the students to interact with. If the vocabulary word was “viscous,” a teacher may bring in honey and allow the students to manipulate it inside of the jar or perhaps transfer from one container to the next, allowing students to see how a viscous object moves.
Experiential Learning

**Summary:** This strategy involves giving students an opportunity to physically experience a new concept. Students complete a task or perform an action demonstrated by the teacher. Once students have experienced the new concept, the teacher will attach a label to it.

**Rationale:** Experiencing a new concept by physically carrying out the motion or performing the action helps bring a concept to life. Students can truly understand it because they have experienced it first-hand.

**Implementing the Strategy:**

1. Model the action or motion for students
2. Have students imitate the action or motion and practice it until they have mastered it
3. Attach a label to the new concept

**Example:** To teach students a new concept like “hop” or “leap” teacher can physically demonstrate the action and then have students practice.
Additional Exposure
Memory

Summary: Students practice identifying vocabulary words and their definitions/examples by playing a game of memory. Each vocabulary word is written on a separate card. The definition/example of each word is also written on separate cards. The cards are mixed up and placed face down. Students take turns flipping over two cards at a time. The goal of the game is to match a vocabulary word with its corresponding definition or an example of the word.

Rationale: Playing a game to practice identifying vocabulary words is a fun and engaging way to challenge students to remember new vocabulary words and their definitions/examples.

Materials:

1. Two cards for each vocabulary word (one card should have a vocabulary term and the other should have the definition or example)

Strategy Prep Steps:

1. Create two cards for each vocabulary strategy (one card should have the vocabulary term and the other card should have the definition or example)

Implementing the Strategy:

1. Place all of the cards face down.
2. Students take turns, flipping two cards over at a time (the goal is to flip over two matching cards (a vocabulary word and its definition/example) at a time)
3. As cards are flipped over each time students should try to remember what cards are where so when it is their turn they can flip over the two matching cards

**Challenge**: To provide another challenge to students, have them create the game cards. Students would have to come up with clear and concise definitions and/or appropriate examples of the word

**Example:**

- **Required**
- **Needed or Necessary**
- **Occur**
- **To happen**
- **Observe**
- **To watch or look at carefully**
Word Associations

Summary: Word Associations require students to relate the learned vocabulary word with a person, object, movie, song, etc. The reason/rationale for the association must also be explained by the student.

Rationale: This strategy engages students on multiple levels. They have to connect the vocabulary term to their prior knowledge. The student must have a firm grasp on the word meaning in order to have a correct association. The explanation of the association adds a critical thinking component to this strategy as well. The student must articulate their thoughts behind their association and why it is accurate.

Materials:

1. Binder Paper

Implementing the Strategy:

1. Provide the students with the list of words they will be using for the activity
2. Explain the concept of associations and how they should connect to the vocabulary words
3. Provide at least one example

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Associations</th>
<th>Reason/Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epidemic</td>
<td>The Black Death</td>
<td>This disease killed off over half of Europe’s population in the 1300’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bystander</td>
<td>Fans at a baseball game</td>
<td>The fans are viewing the game, but are not taking part in it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous</td>
<td>The wheels on a bicycle</td>
<td>When riding a bicycle, the wheels rotate exactly the same</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finish Me

Summary: This activity has students complete teacher provided sentences by inserting the correct vocabulary word into the blank space provided. The blank space may occur at any point in the sentence.

Rationale: This strategy allows the student to use context to find the word that accurately fits into the sentence. Trial and error may occur, which requires the student to think critically about the word and if it works effectively in the sentence.

Materials:

1. Vocabulary list of words students have learned
2. Paper and/or whiteboard

Strategy Prep Steps:

1. Create sentences that use the vocabulary words correctly in context and include blank areas for the vocabulary words. These can be written on the board or printed on a sheet of paper.
2. Include a word bank for the students so they are able to know which words are available to choose from

Implementing the Strategy:

1. Provide students with the list of sentences (either listed on the whiteboard or on worksheets)
2. Provide directions to the assignment and read an example aloud
3. Allow students time to complete the assignment

Variance on Implementation:

1. List sentences on the board along with a word bank
2. Complete this activity as a class allowing students to come up and write the correct vocabulary word in the blank space
3. Discuss why/why not other words do not effectively work in the sentence
4. Incorrect answers allow for an opportunity for students to use critical thinking skills and guess and check other words

Example:

1. There were many _____________ in the street during the fall carnival. (Pedestrians)
2. The argument between the President and his running mate began to _____________ during the televised presidential debate. (Escalate)
Alike/Different

**Summary:** This strategy has students focus on how words are both alike and different. This activity requires sets of words that are related in some way. For example: saunter and scuttle

**Rationale:** Having students compare and contrast learned vocabulary words allows them to understand the nuances of the individual words. While many of the word pairs may seem similar, there are distinct differences that set them apart from one another. Students use critical thinking in order to differentiate the learned words.

**Materials:**

1. Binder paper

**Implementing the Strategy:**

3. Explain the instructions to the students
4. Provide them with a list of words to use, this can include words from previous lessons
5. Instruct students to write the "alike/different" phrases for the pairs of words
6. Share and/or discuss as a group when finished

**Example:** They both are done using legs. One is slow and steady. The other is rushed and hurried. (Saunter/Scuttle)
Would You Rather?

**Summary:** Students will listen to a teacher’s prompted questions of “would you rather...” including vocabulary words. Students will share their response by moving to one side of the room (one response on one side, the other response on the other side). Students must share with another person very briefly why they chose a particular side with another student on their side. The teacher will then randomly call on a student from each side to explain their reasoning.

**Rationale:** This strategy will require students to think about a word’s meaning and its application in a real life setting. Students also must provide reasoning for their thinking to demonstrate they truly understand a word. Moving across the room will keep students actively engaged as well.

**Strategy Prep Steps:**

1. Teacher should think of vocabulary words they want to include in the activity.
2. Brainstorm “would you rather” questions using vocabulary words.

**Implementing the Strategy:**

1. Have students stand in the center of the room.
2. Pose “would you rather” questions and assign a side of the room for each of the choices.
3. Have students move to the side of the room that represents the choice they would rather do.
4. Have students discuss why they chose their option with a partner on their side.
5. Select one student from each side of the room to share their explanation.
6. Restart the cycle.
Examples:

- Would you rather be elated or dismayed?
- Would you rather be shunned or mimicked?
- Would you rather regurgitate or enunciate?
Application
Scavenger Hunt

**Summary:** Students participate in a scavenger hunt around the classroom to find real life examples/objects that are tied to vocabulary words.

**Rationale:** This activity has students thinking beyond the basic level of a vocabulary word and its definition. Students must truly grasp a term in order to see the relationship between a word and the object they are seeking in the classroom.

**Materials:**
1. Objects/examples that are tied in some way to vocabulary terms
2. A list of clues for the scavenger hunt

**Strategy Prep Steps:**
1. Compile a list of vocabulary words for the scavenger hunt
2. Find objects or examples in the classroom tied to vocabulary words
3. Create a list of clues using vocabulary words to lead to different objects or examples

**Implementing the Strategy:**
1. Give students the scavenger hunt lists (they can work individually or in groups/pairs)
2. Have students read through the clues to determine an object or example the clue is describing
3. Students must find the objects/examples in the classroom (you could either have students simply write down the answer or physically find the object example and check it for confirmation before writing it down)
Creating Motivation: Motivate students to participate in the scavenger hunt by making it a competition and awarding a prize to the person/pair/group that completes the hunt first!

Example:

The clues below include vocabulary words. In order to find the items on the scavenger hunt you must understand the vocabulary.

1. Something you look at if you want to be prompt. (Clock)
2. Where you might examine new words. (Dictionary)
3. What you could use to affix something to the bulletin board. (Tacks)
4. A place where texts are exhibited. (Bookshelf)
5. Chair that is occupied by instructor. (Teacher’s Chair)
Tree of Vocabulary

Summary: Decorate your classroom walls with a tree of vocabulary. Create a tree where each leaf displays a different vocabulary word.

Rationale: This strategy makes all vocabulary words viewable to the students. This makes it easy to continuously refer back to past vocabulary terms including them in classroom speech and writing.

Materials:

1. Tree trunk and branches made out of tissue paper, construction paper, etc.
2. Paper tree leaves to write different vocabulary words
3. Box to collect "fallen leaves"

Implementing the Strategy:

1. After learning new vocabulary words write them on paper leaves and place them on the "tree of vocabulary (you can also take student volunteers to write the words)
2. Each day refer to words on the "tree of vocabulary" in conversation and discussion with students; encourage students to refer to the tree to use words in their own speech
3. When you begin to run out of room on the tree place any “fallen leaves” (old words) in box to refer back to

Motivation Tip: Offer students praise and recognition for using mature vocabulary words to encourage continuous use

Writing Connection: When completing a writing assignment, pull a word off of the “tree of vocabulary” or out of the box of “fallen leaves” and center a writing prompt around the word or challenge students to use it in their writing
Example:
Vocabulary Journal

**Summary:** This strategy involves having the students keep an ongoing journal of the learned vocabulary words with their student-friendly definitions, contextual sentences, illustrations, etc.

**Rationale:** Continued exposure to vocabulary words increase student use and retention. Students will not only record the learned vocabulary words, but they will complete extension activities in their vocabulary journals, furthering their use and connections to the words.

**Materials:**

1. Small notebooks/binders for each student

**Implementing the Strategy:**

1. Record each vocabulary word and it’s student-friendly definition for every learned word
2. Get students involved in the creation of the definition when possible. However, make sure that each student writes down the same definition so that there is little room for individual interpretation
3. Encourage students to refer to the journal for helpful vocabulary during writing time, or if they encounter the word in text and need a quick reminder of its meaning.
The Word Hunter

**Summary:** The Word Hunter is a strategy that is best used for several months or throughout the school year. The teacher encourages students to volunteer to tell the class about vocabulary words they have heard recently. These words must be previously learned in class. The student explains where and when they encountered the vocabulary word. It can be in a text they're reading, in conversation, at home watching television, on the radio, etc. The teacher keeps a chart with all of the students names listed. They receive a sticker or mark of some kind each time they share a word that they have "hunted."

**Rationale:** This strategy encourages students to not only learn vocabulary, but to continue to use it and look for it in their daily lives. Multiple encounters with a word is part of what makes vocabulary instruction effective. Even if there are students in the class who do not share many/any words with the class, they are still exposed to the words when their fellow classmates discuss them.

**Materials:** Student tracking chart

**Strategy Prep Steps:**

1. Explain the activity to the students
2. Encourage them to “hunt” words during class, recess, and at home
3. Complete a student tracking chart with student names listed

**Implementing the Strategy:**

1. Weekly (twice per week is recommended) set aside 5-10 minutes for Word Hunter discussions
2. A song queuing that it is time for Word Hunter can be implemented.
3. Place a sticker or notation next to each Work Hunter’s name on the sheet each time they share
THE WORD
HUNTER
Pictionary

**Summary:** Students take turns drawing pictures that represent vocabulary words. Other students must guess what the vocabulary word is based on the drawing.

**Rationale:** This strategy takes a student's knowledge of a vocabulary term beyond a basic understanding because it requires them to think of examples and representations of the word through illustrations. Other students are also strengthening their understanding because they practice identifying examples of the vocabulary word in different contexts.

**Materials:**

1. Paper
2. Pencil
3. Timer

**Strategy Prep Steps:**

1. Write the vocabulary words on slips of paper

**Implementing the Strategy:**

1. Students take turns selecting a slip of paper with a vocabulary word on it
2. Students then create a drawing that represents the term while timed
3. Other participating students must guess the vocabulary word the student is trying to illustrate

**Motivation Tip:** Allow students to pair up with partners of their choice and make it a competition (the pair to get the most vocabulary words in the least amount of time wins!)
WebQuest

Summary: Students become experts on different vocabulary words and create webpages to teach others about their words. Students browse one another’s vocabulary word webpages and collect information presented.

Rationale: This strategy combines technology with application of new vocabulary. The integration of technology encourages students to take a more engaged interest in the vocabulary.

Materials:

1. Computers with internet access
2. Notebook or table for recording information from webpages

Implementing the Strategy:

1. Assign students a vocabulary word that has been previously taught
2. Have students create webpages that teach about their vocabulary word(s) (this is open to what students know about webpage creation/internet; see possible options below; consider using free webpages like wikispaces.com)
3. When websites are completed, have students view one another’s websites and collect information (students could collect information in a notebook, a table, etc.)

Strategy Prerequisite: Students must either be familiar with webpage design or must receive prior instruction in creating webpages

Possible Webpage Options:

1. Create a basic webpage that presents vocabulary word, definition, example, and picture
2. Create a webpage that offers examples, pictures and hyperlinks to online dictionary entries for word
3. Create a webpage with a game surrounding vocabulary words like hangman (try websites like mylanguageexchange.com)

**Example:** The picture below illustrates a simple webpage that provides the definition, an example, and a picture for the word “severe.” At the bottom of the page there is also a hyperlink to a dictionary website for more information on the word.
REFERENCES


