



Overview:

Based on the principals of effective vocabulary instruction, this lesson presents 8 brain-based strategies for teaching students vocabulary for full acquisition.

Standards: L.11-12.4-6

Introduction:

The National Reading Panel states, “vocabulary is critically important in oral reading instruction. There are two types of vocabulary—oral and print. A reader who encounters a strange word in print can decode the word to speech. If it is in the reader’s oral vocabulary, the reader will be able to understand it. If the word is not in the reader’s oral vocabulary, the reader will have to determine the meaning by other means, if possible. Consequently the larger the reader’s vocabulary (either oral or print), the easier it is to make sense of the text (NRP report, p. 13).”

Research supports that students learn approximately 3,000 words per year through direct instruction and incidental learning. There are various approaches suggested to foster vocabulary acquisition.

Principles for effective vocabulary instruction:

- New words should be integrated with familiar words and concepts.
- Students should experience words in repeated, meaningful encounters to build automaticity.
- Students should apply the words they learn, using them in other contexts and associating them with other knowledge.
- Instruction should engage students in active processing of word meanings.
- Learn when to consult an authority (i.e., dictionary) and when other cues can be used effectively.
- Learn that not only do words have different meanings (definitions), but words may also have different meanings to different people (connotations).

Strategy 1: Word Associating

Understanding how words connect enables the proficient reader to analyze and synthesis information and to determine ways in which words relate to each other. The process of



attaching a new word or concept to an existing one allows the reader to connect and make meaning from the text.

- Do you know a word that is similar to this word?
- What made you think of that association? Why?
- What features do these words have in common?

Strategy 2: Contextualizing

Understanding how the surrounding context provides clues to help the reader predict the meaning of an unknown word. Using contextual techniques allows the reader to be active rather than passive in discovering new words.

- What do you know about the word _____ from this sentence?
- What clues are in the sentence that helped you to figure out the word?
- What words within the sentence help support the meaning of ____?

Strategy 3: Categorizing

Understanding how categorizing words can engage students and encourage them to organize new concepts and experiences in relationship to prior knowledge about the concept. Categorizing vocabulary words allows students to develop an understanding of the words attributes, qualities, and characteristics.

- What do you know about this word?
- What other words come to your mind when you think of the word ____?
- How are these words related?

Strategy 4: Visual Imaging

Understanding how visual imaging can enable students to increase vocabulary development and comprehension across the curriculum. Linking verbal and visual images increases student's ability to store and retrieve information.

- What do you see when you think of the word?
- How does your example remind you of the word?
- Is there an action or experience that could help you remember the word?



Strategy 5: Analyzing

Understanding how analyzing the structure of the words can enable the student to determine the meaning of the word. There are three main word parts: prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Using these word parts students acquire information about the meaning, pronunciation, and parts of speech of new words.

- What word do you have left if you cover the prefix and/or suffix?
- What is the meaning of the prefix and/or suffix?
- What is the meaning of the root word?

Strategy 6: Word Awareness

Understanding how utilizing a new vocabulary word in writing and speaking enables readers to have ownership for that new word. Effective readers acquire up to seven new vocabulary words each day. Students need to know words and gain enrichment from using them and from hearing others use them.

- What do you know about the word _____?
- How can you find out more about this word?
- How often did you use or hear someone else use this word today?

Strategy 7: Wide-Reading

Understanding how wide-reading enables students to foster vocabulary development through a variety of opportunities to read. Students need at least 20 minutes of daily reading in various genres to help increase their vocabulary list by 1,000 words per year. Multiple encounters with words help students commit these words to their long-term memory.

- What are some of the interesting vocabulary words the author used?
- Why are these interesting words to you?
- What kinds of words are common in this specific genre?

Strategy 8: Referencing

Understanding when a resource is needed to bring meaning to an unknown word. Rather than solely using a dictionary to learn the meaning of a new word, resources can aid in learning the



meaning of words in appropriate contexts. Other resources can include: a book's glossary, a thesaurus, or the Internet.

- What resource would help you determine the meaning of that word?
- How do you use this resource to investigate a word?
- What feature of the computer could help you understand the word better? How?

Works Cited

Fountas & Pinnell, Guided Reading & Guiding Readers & Writers: Grades 3-6

Ellery, V., Creating Strategic Readers