

Robust Vocabulary Learning Strategies

For Concept Learning, Word Consciousness, and Reading Comprehension

Presented by Tracy Bunting

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- English Learners Program Coordinator, M.S.D. of Pike Township
 - Certifications: ENL (K-12) and Social Studies, Science, and English/Language Arts (6-9)
 - School Improvement Specialist
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 - Staff Developer: Standards of Effective Pedagogy, SIOP, Reading, Writing, Vocabulary and Academic Language, ELLs, WIDA
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 - Former Instructional Coach at Elementary Level and Middle School Level
 - Former Intermediate and Middle School Classroom Teacher (Including Multi-Age)

Objectives for this Workshop

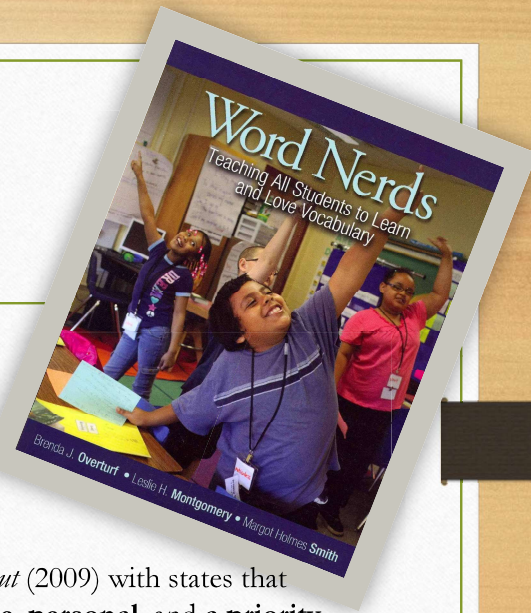
- Content Objective:
 - Participants will learn about key components to strengthen vocabulary and academic language instruction.
 - Participants will practice word play strategies, games, and activities in order to gain insight on using interaction and play as a way to positively impact long-term word learning, word consciousness, and reading comprehension.
- Language Objective:
 - Participants will be able to articulate and use academic language and vocabulary words accurately as they play word games as a whole group, with partners and in small groups.

Research Behind Vocabulary Instruction

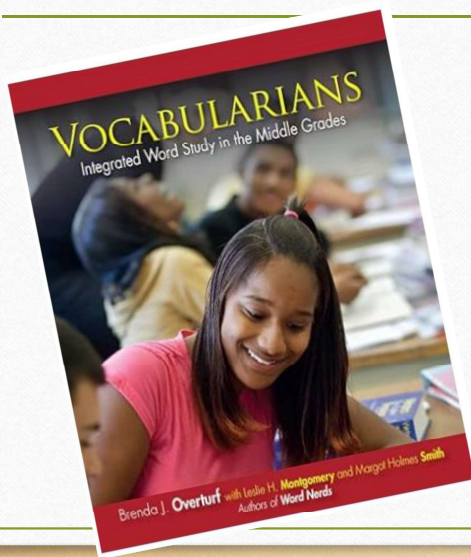
- Effective vocabulary instruction has to start early, in preschool, and continue throughout the school years (Nagy, 2005).
- Teaching vocabulary helps develop phonological awareness (Nagy, 2005) and reading comprehension (Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982).
- Vocabulary instruction needs to be long-term and comprehensive (Nagy, 2005) for ELLs (Carlo, August, & Snow, 2005; Calderón et al., 2005).

A word about *Word Nerds*:

- Structure of vocabulary instruction is largely based on Michael Grave's four-part vocabulary program described in *The Vocabulary Book* (2006):
1) **Provide rich and varied language experiences**; 2) **teach individual words**; 3) **teach word-learning strategies**; and 4) **promote word consciousness**.
- Follows guidelines from Frey and Fisher's book, *Learning Words Inside and Out* (2009) with states that teachers should make teaching vocabulary **intentional, transparent, usable, personal, and a priority**.
- Information in the book is concentrated on individual word instruction, word-learning strategies, and word consciousness within a larger literacy framework.



2nd Book: *Vocabularians:* *Integrated Word Study in the Middle Grades*



Both books similarly are based on what the authors say are **key components to strengthen vocabulary instruction.**

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Some words are more important to teach than others.

- **Tier I:** Words that students already (or should) know when they come to school (*clock, baby, mother, happy*) – **Don't (always) need to be taught explicitly**
- **Tier II:** High-frequency words students will likely encounter in their school reading but may not know well (*coincidence, absurd, industrious, analyze, contrast, fortunate*) – **Should base most vocabulary instruction on Tier II words**
- **Tier III:** Domain-specific words which are primarily used in content areas (*isotope, germinate, peninsula, refinery, mitosis*) – **Should be introduced and explored during content-area instruction**

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Students have to learn words at more than one level.

- **No knowledge** (*I've never seen or heard the word.*)
- **General sense of the word** (*I've seen or heard the word before.*)
- **Narrow, context-bound knowledge** (*Although a word may have several meanings, I only know one meaning in one situation.*)
- **Having knowledge of a word, but not being able to apply it readily enough to use in appropriate situations** (*I may know the word has several meanings, but because I'm not sure which one to use, I sometimes use the word the wrong way.*)
- **Rich, decontextualized knowledge of a word's meaning, its relationship to other words, and its extension to metaphorical uses** (*I know multiple meanings of the word, and I can use the word appropriately in different situations.*)

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Students learn words when they experience them multiple times.

- Students need **6-12 exposures over time** to learn a word
- Provide a **systematic vocabulary instruction plan** to provide a sufficient number of exposures to new words over time.

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Asking students to look up words in the dictionary and write the definition does not help them learn words.

- Students frequently interpret one or two-words from a dictionary definition as the entire meaning of a word and are unable to use the word appropriately.
- Introducing words using student-friendly definitions in plain, everyday language helps students learn vocabulary.

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

When students learn words, they build patterns and networks of meaning called “word schemas.” Students may:

- Use background knowledge
- Make connections to word terms they already know.
- Understand synonyms and/or antonyms of the new word
- Use knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and root words.
- Use words appropriately in a variety of contexts

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Students can learn some words through the use of wide reading.

- **Students who already know how to read independently** continue to build word schema through wide-reading of different types and genres of text.
- **Pre- or early readers, and readers learning English** learn more sophisticated vocabulary and increase their word schemas through having texts read aloud and by engaging them in various types of vocabulary activities.

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Students can learn some words through rich conversations with adults and peers.

- Instructional Conversations
- Interactive read-alouds
- Academic Conversations with peers and adults
- Collaborative Joint Productive Activities

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Students can learn words through word play.

- Motivates learners
- Multi-sensory (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile) activities helps students internalize words and continue to develop word schema
- It is engaging and fun!

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Students can learn words by direct instruction

- Robert Marzano's 6-Step Instructional Process:
 - Provide a description, explanation, or example of the new word.
 - Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.
 - Ask students to construct a picture, pictograph, or symbolic representation of the word.
 - Engage students periodically in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the word in their vocabulary notebooks.
 - Periodically ask students to discuss the word with one another
 - Involve students periodically in games that enable them to play with the word.

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Students can learn words by direct instruction:

Lexia's instructional routine for introducing a new vocabulary word

Key Components to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Most students need word-learning strategies to become independent readers. For students to independently determine the meanings of unfamiliar words, students must learn to:

- Use context clues
- Understand morphemes (*the smallest units of meaning*) and use morphology (*the study of the smallest units of meaning*)
 - Inflectional suffixes to show plural or past tense (e.g., *-s*, *-es*, *-ed*)
 - Derivational affixes that portray their own meaning such as *un-* (not), *pre-* (before), and *-ful* (full).
 - Greek/Latin roots such as *photo* (light), *therm* (heat), and *port* (to carry)

Let's Focus on Word Play to Strengthen Vocabulary Instruction

Students can learn words through word play.

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Are you ready to PLAY with words?

Word Play Games Handout

- Scramble
- Counting Dude, Bragging Dude
- Word Charades
- Chain Link
- Hot Seat
- Last One Standing
- The Alphabet Game
- Commercial Games
 - Outburst
 - Scattegories
 - Taboo

Word Play Games Handout

- Semantic Gradients
 - Resource 1
 - Resource 2
- Memory Challenge
- Scrambled Letters (or Phrases)
- Cut up sentences
- Scramble
- Concentration
- Vocabulary Lanyards
- Word Play with Poetry
 - Diamante
 - Synonym
 - Antonym
 - Cinquain
 - Acrostic

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