

Teaching 10,000 Words: Vocabulary Instruction in
the Middle Grades for English Language Learners

placid
a
the
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mommy
annoy
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CREATE Conference, Orlando Florida
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unreal
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humungous
apathy
reluctant
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Major Purposes of the Presentation

To describe a four part program that is broad enough and powerful enough to help middle-grade English language learners gain knowledge of the very substantial number of words they need to acquire vocabularies similar to those of their native English speaking classmates and succeed in school and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Vocabulary for All Students

- Having a substantial vocabulary is crucial to learning to read, to success in virtually all content areas, and to success in school and in the world beyond school.
- Having an inadequate vocabulary is associated with reading failure, failure in school more generally, and dropping out of school.
- Vocabulary knowledge in kindergarten and first grade is a significant predictor of reading comprehension in the middle and secondary grades.
- Vocabulary is far and away the most significant factor influencing text difficulty.
- Teaching vocabulary can improve reading comprehension for both native English speakers and English learners.

The Particular Importance of Vocabulary for English Language Learners

English vocabulary is a strong predictor of ELLs' growth in reading comprehension (Mancilla-Martinez et al., 2011).

Many ELLs enter school with vocabularies significantly below the mean for native English speakers (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005).

ELLs perform more than 1 standard deviation below other students at grade 4 and 1.3 standard deviations below other students at grade 8 in reading outcomes (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009).

ELLs are typically two to three years behind native-English speaking students in vocabulary knowledge (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011).

The Vocabulary Learning Task for All Students

- The average third grader knows something like 15,000 words.
- The average sixth grade student knows something like 30,000 words.
- The average high school graduate knows something like 50,000 words.
- This means that average students learn 3,000-4,000 words a year.
- This translates to 10 words a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year—with no time off for weekends, summers, or good behavior.

The Vocabulary Learning Task for Middle Grade ELLs

If, as the previous slide showed, typical students learn 3,000-4,000 words a year, then typical students learn about 10,000 words over the three years of middle school. Hence, my title "Teaching 10,000 Words."

Unfortunately, as Mancilla-Martinez and Lesaux found, ELLs are typically two to three years behind native-English speaking students in in vocabulary knowledge. Thus, for ELLs to attain the vocabulary knowledge of their native-English speaking peers, they would need to learn even more than 10,000 words.

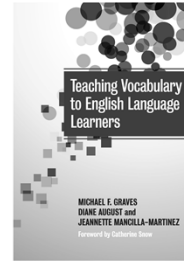
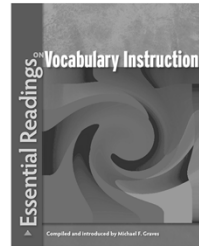
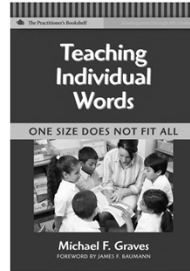
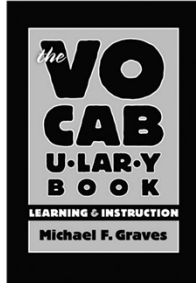
This is truly a very significant learning task and only one that a very powerful instructional program is at all likely to achieve.

A Multifaceted Vocabulary Program

Listed below are the four parts of a multifaceted vocabulary program that I describe in books and articles I have written over the past 30 years. It is similar to programs described by Baumann & Kaméenui (2004), Blachowicz, Fisher, Ogle, & Watts-Taffe (2006), and Stahl & Nagy (2006); was validated in a small study by Baumann, Ware, & Edwards (2007); served as the framework for multifaceted study recently completed by August & Snow (2008-2012); and was recently validated in a three-year study by Baumann, Blachowicz, and Manyak (2009-2012).

- Frequent, varied, and extensive language experiences
- Teaching individual words
- Teaching word-learning strategies
- Fostering word consciousness

Much of the Comprehensive Vocabulary Program I'll Lay Out Today Is Described in These Three Books.



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FREQUENT, VARIED, AND
EXTENSIVE LANGUAGE
EXPERIENCES

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When I first developed the four-part program, this first part was called Wide Reading. But is now clear that children need listening and discussion experiences as well.

Frequent, Varied, and Extensive Language Experiences

Immersion in a word-rich environment

Rich and varied experiences in listening, discussion,
reading, and writing

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When I first developed the four-part program, this first part was called Wide Reading. But is now clear that children need listening and discussion experiences as well.

Immersion in a Word-Rich Environment-1

- By a word-rich environment, I am referring first to the physical environment: the classroom, the school library, the school, and certainly students' homes if possible.
- One key here is having lots of books and other reading material, attractively displayed, invitingly displayed, on various topics, at various reading levels.
- Another key is having words prominently displayed: on a word wall, at other points around the room, on the teacher's desks, on word cards students have, in the library, around the school, and possibly even at home.

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Note Susan Newman's finding that children in impoverished areas find not just fewer books in the classroom and school library but also fewer books in the public library, and fewer reading materials of any sort in drug stores and supermarkets.

Immersion in a Word-Rich Environment-2

- In addition to a word-rich physical environment, we want to make the classroom a stimulating emotional and intellectual environment that encourages and celebrates rich word usage.
- We need to make the classroom a place that invites experimentation with words and with ideas—a safe place where a mispronunciation, a malaprop, or a misunderstanding is treated as an opportunity for growth and not something to be ridiculed or in any way derided.

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Perhaps ask what they have found particularly effective promoting an environment that encourages experimentation with words and ideas.

Rich and Varied Experiences in Listening

- We need to consider listening experiences as well as reading experiences.
- Reading to students is important at all grade levels—including the middle grades. Moreover, almost everyone, regardless of their age or reading proficiency, enjoys listening to a well read text.

Rich and Varied Experiences in Discussion

- The key to getting rich vocabulary into discussion is to get meaty and somewhat academic topics to discuss.
- Another key to getting rich vocabulary into discussion is to study and discuss topics in some depth.
- It is also the case that discussions of content subjects such as science and social studies often engender the use of some sophisticated vocabulary.

Rich and Varied Experiences in Writing

The keys to getting rich vocabulary in students' writing parallel those for discussion:

Write about meaty and somewhat academic topics.

Write about matters related to content subjects such as science and social studies, areas in which students have developed some knowledge that they can use in their discussions.

Write about these topics in some depth.

Revise and polish the writing, making word usage appropriate to the topic and the audience a major consideration.

Rich and Varied Experiences in Reading

While listening, discussion, and writing are certainly important, reading is the language activity most likely to engender rich vocabulary growth. Books, in the words of Steve and Kate Stahl, are “where the words are.”

Hayes and Ahrens (1988), for example, showed that adult books contained about 53 rare words per 1,000 words, children's books about 31 rare words per 1,000, adult TV shows about 23 rare words, and typical adult conversations about 17.

Extrapolating from that, middle-grade books are likely to contain something like 40 rare words per 1,000 words, about twice that of adult speech and adult TV shows.

TEACHING INDIVIDUAL WORDS

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Note the title of your second talk and how and why "one size does not fit all" is your major point here. Note also that your remarks here are somewhat abbreviated because you are giving that second talk.

Some Characteristics of Effective Instruction for Individual Words

- Instruction that involves both definitional information and contextual information is markedly stronger than instruction that involves only one of these.
- Instruction that also involves activating prior knowledge and comparing and contrasting meanings is stronger still.
- More lengthy and more robust instruction that also involves students in actively manipulating meanings, making inferences, searching for applications, and frequent encounters is still stronger.
- **BUT—STRONGER INSTRUCTION TAKES MORE TIME!**
With the number of words to be learned we very often do not have more time.

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Providing Student-Friendly Definitions: A Key to Effective Instruction

Providing student-friendly definitions—definitions that are accurate and that students will understand—is no mean task. Below are a definition of *dazzling* from the dictionary on my computer and a student-friendly definition from Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2003).

“bright enough to deprive someone of sight temporarily”

“If something is *dazzling*, that means that it’s so bright that you can hardly look at it.”

The *Collins COBUILD New Student’s Dictionary* (Harper-Collins, 2006) provides many excellent examples of student-friendly definitions.

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beach visit climate pleasant ensure adobe applicable

Three Types or Intensities of Instruction

Introductory Instruction

Rich and Powerful Instruction

Repetition Review

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beach visit climate pleasant ensure contagious applicable

INTRODUCTORY INSTRUCTION

- Providing glossaries
- Using pictures
- The context/relationship procedure

Providing Glossaries

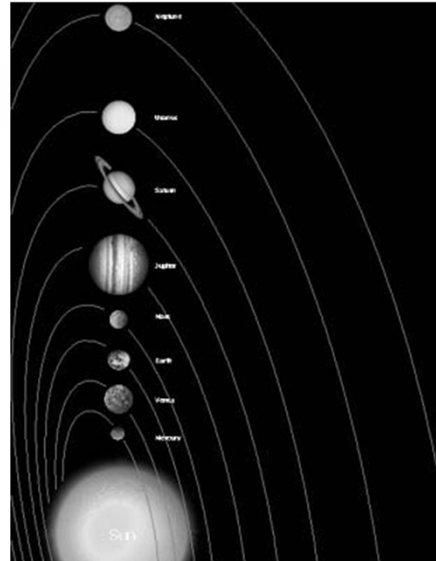
Probably the next least time-consuming and least intrusive thing you can do to assist students with the vocabulary of selections they are reading is to provide glossaries of important terms.

tsu-na-mi. A large wave that can occur after an underwater earthquake

Using Pictures

Solar system. The nine planets that revolve around our sun make up our solar system.

Someday it may be possible for humans to explore all the planets in our solar system, but that will not be soon.



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Context-Relationship Procedure

Create a brief paragraph that uses the target word three or four times. Follow the paragraph with a multiple-choice item that checks students' understanding of the word.

1. Explain the purpose of the procedure.
2. Pronounce the word to be taught.
3. Read the paragraph in which the word appears.
4. Read the possible definitions, and ask students to choose the best one.
5. Pause to give students time to check a definition, give them the correct answer, and answer any questions they have.
6. Read the word and its definition a final time.

Context-Relationship Procedure Example

The luncheon speaker was successful in *conveying* his main ideas to the audience. They all understood what he said, and most agreed with him. *Conveying* has a more specific meaning than *talking*. *Conveying* indicates that a person is getting his or her ideas across to someone else.

Conveying means

- A. putting parts together.
- B. communicating a message.
- C. hiding important information.

RICH AND POWERFUL INSTRUCTION

- Semantic mapping (Heimlich & Pittleman, 1986)
- Frayer method (Frayer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969)

Semantic Mapping

1. Put a word representing a central concept on the board, overhead, lcd, smart board, etc.
2. Ask students to work in groups listing as many words related to the central concept as they can.
3. Display students' words grouped in broad categories.
4. Have students name the categories and perhaps suggest additional ones.
5. Discuss with students the central concept, the other words, the categories, and their interrelationships.

Semantic Mapping Example

Conditions

Run down

Small

Crowded

Drab

Owners

Hard to reach

Make good money

Don't live there

Often don't care

TENEMENT

Costs

Not cheap

Lower than some places

Too high

Tenants

People without a lot of money

New immigrants

City people

Large families

Fruyer Method

1. Define the new concept.
2. Distinguish between the new concept and similar concepts it might be confused with.
3. Give examples, and explain why they are examples.
4. Give non-examples, and explain why they are non-examples.
5. Present students with examples and non-examples, and ask students to distinguish between them.
6. Have students present examples and non-examples, explain why they are one or the other, and provide feedback.

Frayer Method Partial Example

1. A *globe* is a spherical (ball-like) representation of a planet.
2. A *globe* is different from a *map* because a map is flat. A *globe* is different from a *contour map*, a map in which mountains and other high points are raised above the general level of the map, because a contour map is not spherical.
3. The most common globe is a globe of the earth. Globes of the earth are spherical and come in various sizes.
4. A map of Minnesota. A map of how to get to a friend's house.
5. An aerial photograph of New York (non example)
A red sphere representing Mars (example)
A walking map of St. Louis (non example)
A ball-shaped model of the moon (example)
6. [Have students generate examples and non examples.]

REPETITION AND REVIEW

Regardless of how well you teach a word initially, if you want students to have that word in their vocabularies over time, repetition is critical. Richek (2005) has suggested two several approaches, two of which I will describe here.

- Anything Goes
- Connect Two

Anything Goes

Display the words to be reviewed where everyone in the class can see them and explain to students that occasionally you are going to point to some of the words displayed and ask questions about them.

From time to time, ask students to do something with the one or more of the words. They might

Define the word

Give two of its meanings

Use it in a sentence

Give an example of the thing named by the word

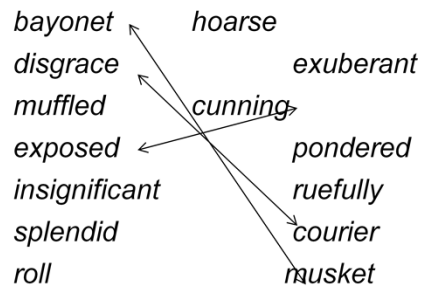
Say where you would find the thing named by the word,

Note other words or concepts to which the word is related

Explain the difference between two of the words/concepts on the list

Connect Two

Give students two columns of 5-10 words each and ask them to identify relationships between a word in column one and a word in column two.



TEACHING WORD-LEARNING STRATEGIES

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Teaching Word-Learning Strategies

Word-learning strategies are conscious and flexible mental processes that readers use in an effort to infer the meanings of unknown words they meet while reading.

Word-learning strategies are tools we teach students to use as they are reading.

When students master word-learning strategies, they become increasingly independent and mature readers.

Without word-learning strategies, students are not likely to master the 30,000 words that competent readers learn by the 6th grade or the 50,000 words they learn by the end of high school.

The Principal Word-Learning Strategies

Using context

Learning and using word parts

Using glossaries and the dictionary

Recognizing and using cognates

Recognizing and dealing with idioms

A combined strategy for dealing with unknown words

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romantic / romantico
history / historia

important / importante

absurd / absurdo

bird in the hand
the bush

cat got your tongue

piece of cake

beat around

General Guidelines for In-Depth Instruction in Word-Learning Strategies

Realize that teaching word-learning strategies requires significant time and effort on both your part and your students' part.

If you cannot teach all strategies, teach one or two strategies well rather than more strategies less well.

Use direct explanation as your basic instructional approach.

Temper the direct explanation approach with some constructivist elements.

Combining Direct Explanation and Constructivist Instruction-1

Motivate students to use the strategy, explaining and discussing its value.

Provide a description of the strategy and information on when, where, and how it should be used.

Model use of the strategy for students on a text the class can share.

Work with students in using the strategy on a text the class can share.

Give students opportunities to construct knowledge.

Graves, Ruda, Sales, & Baumann, 2012

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Combining Direct Explanation and Constructivist Instruction-2

Discuss with students how the strategy is working for them, what they think of it thus far, and when and how they can use it in the future.

Guide and support students as they use the strategy over time. At first, provide a lot of support. Later, provide less and less.

Work over time to help students use the newly learned strategy in various authentic in-school and out-of-school tasks.

Review the strategy and further discuss students' understanding of it and responses to it from time to time.

Graves, Ruda, Sales, & Baumann, 2012

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A One-Semester, Research-Based Program in Word Learning Strategies

The *Word Learning Strategies* program was recently developed by my colleague Greg Sale, his company Seward Learning, and I with an IES/SBIR grant (Graves, Sales, & Ruda, 2012)

The project developed and tested a comprehensive program for teaching 4th and 5th graders a set of practical, research-based, and theoretically sound strategies for inferring the meanings of unknown words they meet while reading. The strategies taught included using word parts (compound words, inflectional suffixes, prefixes, derivational suffixes, and roots) context, and dictionaries. Additionally, Spanish-speaking English language learners (ELLs) received instruction in using cognates, and all ELLs received instruction in recognizing idioms.

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The Sixteen Week *Word-Learning Strategies* Program

Compound Words	1 week
Prefixes	3 weeks
Inflectional Suffixes	1 week
Derivational Suffixes	2 weeks
Context	4 weeks
Dictionaries	2 weeks
A Combined Strategy	3 weeks
Using Cognates	Individualized and web based
Recognizing and Dealing with Idioms	Individualized and web based

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Results of the Program

Three preliminary one-week trials on a small part of the program produced mean pretest scores averaging 6.08 and mean posttest scores averaging 14.90.

A 16-week trial during the second year produced a mean pretest score of 21.56 and a mean posttest score of 27.17.

A 16-week trial during the third year produced a mean pretest score of 18.96 and a mean posttest score of 26.06.

Motivate Students

Students seldom come to school all excited about learning to use context or word parts to figure out the meanings of unknown words. Thus some motivation is in order.

Sometimes we resort to extrinsic motivation.



At other times, we use more intrinsic approaches.

We begin a unit on teaching context with these slides illustrating how context, in this case visual context, supports inferences.



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Explain and Discuss the Value of Strategies with Students

Let's not keep kids in the dark!



You can use word learning strategies to build a rich and powerful vocabulary!

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Make Certain Students Can Read the Texts Used in the Instruction

We can't present students with a text like this and expect them to learn to use word learning strategies.

The goal of this _____ was to _____ the _____ of an _____ on second grade English-_____ learners' _____ of high _____ content _____ and _____.



The alternatives include.

1. Finding texts that convey understandable content using largely words that students can read
2. Writing such texts
3. Finding the most appropriate texts you can, but recognizing that they are still too difficult for your ELLs and scaffolding their reading with techniques like instructional conversations

Model the Strategy and Work with Students in Using the Strategy on a Text the Class Can Share

Project the following paragraph, and model or work through it with the class as you identify cognates one by one.

On their way to the moon, Apollo 8 astronauts looked back and saw a bright blue globe. At that instant, they became the first people ever to see earth as a planet. Their photographs demonstrate something we know but is hard to believe. We are all moving through space. Our spaceship is the earth; it moves around the sun at 67,000 miles an hour.

As you or your Spanish-speaking students identify the cognates, display them along with their Spanish equivalents. Here are three of them:

astronauts/astronautas

instant/instante

photograph/fotografía

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Gradually Give Students Increased Responsibility for Using the Strategy on Their Own

Model the strategy.

Work with the class and have students you call on or volunteers do some of the work.

Have students work with the strategy in pairs.

Have students work with the strategy individually, but then let them confer with a classmate before they turn in their work or share it with the class.

Have students work with the strategy individually, and have them turn in their work or share it with the class without first sharing it with a classmate.

Gradually Increase the Complexity of the Task

With word parts, you might move from

Inflections ⇨ Prefixes ⇨ Derivational Suffixes ⇨ Non-English Roots

With cognates, you might move from

English and Spanish words spelled identically: animal/animal

Spanish word differs by adding a single letter: experiment/experimento

Spanish word differs in that more than one letter is changed: activity/actividad

Spanish word differs at both the beginning and the end: student/estudiante

With texts, you might move from

Word Parts ⇨ Words ⇨ Sentences ⇨ Paragraphs ⇨ Complete Texts

FOSTERING WORD CONSCIOUSNESS

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What Is Word Consciousness

The term “word consciousness” refers to an awareness of and interest in words and their meanings (Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002). Word consciousness integrates metacognition about words, motivation to learn words, and deep and lasting interest in words.

- Although fostering word consciousness differs from grade to grade, doing so is vital at all grade levels.
- There are some time consuming word consciousness activities, but for the most part fostering word consciousness does not take a lot of your time or your students’ time.
- Given the number of words students need to learn, becoming word consciousness is a must.

Some Types of Word Consciousness Activities

- Creating a Word-Rich Environment
- Recognizing and Promoting Adept Diction
- Promoting Word Play
- Fostering Word Consciousness Through Writing
- Involving Students in Original Investigations
- Teaching Students about Words

(from Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2008)

Creating a Word-Rich Environment: Stocking a Classroom Library

Nette Bao Lord's *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson*

Avi's *Nothing But the Truth*

Candice Fleming's *Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart*

Dual language books like Manlio Arqueta's *Magic Dogs of the Volcanoes* (available on the International Children's Digital Library at en.childrenslibrary.org)

Exposition

Magazines

eBooks

Narrative Non-Fiction

Newspapers

Audio Books

Narrative Fiction

Pamphlets




Brochures

Creating a Word-Rich Environment: Encouraging Students To Define Words for Free Rice

freerice.com—a website run by the United Nations World Food Plan—donates 10 grains of rice to the World Food Program for each word a user correctly defines.

There are 50 levels of difficulty. And the program will pronounce words.

Here are sample items from levels 1 and 10 of the program.

large means:  **battle** means:  **margin** means: 

big
lovely
speedy
unhappy

woods
rug
movie
fight

pupil
edge
swirl
inconsistency

Creating a Word Rich Environment: A Wonderful Word Wall

A year long activity developed by Janice Hadley, a third/fourth grade teacher from the Washington DC area.

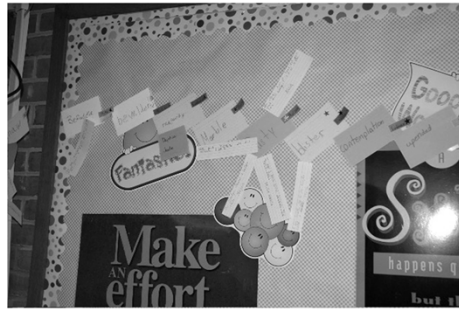
Students selected their own words, introduced them to the class, and put them on 3 x 5 cards on the wall weekly.

Other students could attach sentences or definitions to the cards.

The words eventually became a chain that circled the room twice and contained over 200 words by December and over 400 by the end of the year.

Students paired up and “walked the wall” twice a week, quizzing each other on words, defining them, and talking about them.

Walking the Wall in December



Results of the Wonderful Word Wall

The students demonstrated increased use of the dictionary and during the year graduated from *The Thorndike-Barnhardt Children's Dictionary* to *The American Heritage Dictionary*.

Ms. Hadley noted that students showed greater interest in words, dealt with them more effectively when reading, and used them in more interesting and effective ways in their writing.

A test given in May showed that students knew 87% of the words on the wall.

Recognizing and Promoting Adept Diction-1

Make it a point to use some somewhat sophisticated—but not exceedingly rare—vocabulary, and sometimes comment on your word choices: perhaps *alert* or *qualify*.

Point out adept word choices in the material students are reading, listening to, or viewing: perhaps *sequestered* or *daunting*.

Compliment student on their adept word choices in their discussions and their writing: perhaps *ancient* or *thunderous*.

Promoting Word Play

Play commercial games like *I Spy*, *Balderdash*, *Taboo Junior*, *Scrabble*, and *Taboo*.

Play well-known home-made games like Hangman, Word Bingo, or Dictionary. (billsgames.com has a nice version of Hangman.)

Engage in word play activities with idioms, clichés, and puns.

Play Synonym Toast on http://www.scholastic.com/wordgirl/synonym_toast.htm

Construct word play activities from books like Richard Lederer's *Pun and Games* or *Get Thee To a Punnery*, or let secondary students use these books themselves.

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joyous, menacing, hopeful, greedy, mature
perfume? (*fragrant*)

Which word goes with

Toddlers often think peas are *repulsive* because . . .

FIVE COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE
SCHOOL PROGRAMS APPROPRIATE
FOR ELLS AND SOME SCAFFOLDING
TECHNIQUES FOR FOSTERING ELLS'
WORD LEARNING

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Five Comprehensive Middle School Vocabulary Programs for ELLs

Carlo et al. (2004). The vocabulary improvement program for English language learners and their classmates. Versions of the program for grades 4, 5, and 6 are available from Brookes Publishing Company.

Snow, Lawrence, and White (2009). Generating knowledge of academic language among urban middle school students. The program, called *Word Generation*, is available to download at wordgeneration.org.

Lesaux, Kieffer, Faller, and Kelley (2010). The effectiveness and ease of implementation of an academic vocabulary intervention for linguistically diverse students in urban middle schools.

Goldenberg et al. (2012). Content-rich vocabulary development to improve reading achievement of struggling adolescent readers. A version of the program for grades 6-9 called *Word Intelligence* is available from CORE Inc.

Baumann et al. (2012). A multi-faceted, comprehensive vocabulary instruction program. A brief description of this program should soon be available at vocablog-plc.blogspot.com/

Some Scaffolding Techniques-1

Using students' first language to preteach vocabulary, preview an upcoming reading, provide background information prior to their reading in English, or describe an upcoming task or assignment

Using students' first language in reviewing newly taught or particularly challenging material

Using video clips, visuals, gestures, word cards, graphic organizers, concept maps, and models of the task to be done

Using bilingual dictionaries and glossaries

Using student friendly definitions and explanations

Using newly taught words in a variety of contexts

Some Scaffolding Techniques-2

Providing students with opportunities to act out word meanings

Pointing out cognates when they occur

Partnering ELLs with strong native speakers or weaker ELLs with stronger ones

Providing opportunities for teacher-student interactions and instructional conversations that permit some discussion in the students' first language

Providing repeated exposures and reviews of newly taught words, concepts, and skills

SUMMARY COMMENTS

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Major Purpose of the Presentation

To describe a four part program that is broad enough and powerful enough to help middle-grade English language learners gain knowledge of the very substantial number of words they need to acquire vocabularies similar to those of their native English speaking classmates and succeed in school and beyond.

The Multifaceted, Four-Pronged Program

- Frequent, varied, and extensive language experiences
- Teaching individual words
- Teaching word-learning strategies
- Fostering word consciousness

The Time Needed To Accomplish It?

For ELLs with vocabularies similar to those of their native English speaking classmates

For ELLs with vocabularies considerably smaller than those of their native English speaking classmates

Some Recent and Forthcoming Vocabulary Books

- Baumann & Kame'enui. (Eds.). (2004). *Vocabulary instruction: Research to practice*. **and** Kaméenui & Baumann. (Eds.). (2012). *Vocabulary instruction: Research to Practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford.
- Beck, McKeown, & Kucan. (2002 and 2008). *Bringing Words to Life **and** Creating robust vocabulary*. New York: Guilford.
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- Graves. (2009). *Teaching individual words: One size does not fit all*. New York: Teachers College Press and IRA.
- Graves. (Ed.). (2009). *Essential readings on vocabulary instruction*. Newark, DE: IRA.
- Graves, August, & Mancilla-Martinez. (in press). *Teaching vocabulary to English language learners*. New York: Teachers College Press, IRA, Center for Applied Linguistics, and TESOL.
- Stahl & Nagy. (2006). *Teaching word meanings*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

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