**VIAS Subproject 4: Content-Based Vocabulary Instruction:**
**Using Cognates to Promote the Vocabulary Development and**
**Reading Comprehension of Native Spanish Speakers**
*also known as EVoCA (Enhancing Vocabulary through Cognate Awareness)*

# Words in Motion Curriculum: Overview

Responding to the need to promote the academic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of adolescent English learners, in particular native Spanish speakers, researchers on the Vocabulary Instruction and Assessment for Spanish Speakers (VIAS) project created *Words in Motion*, a cognate-based curriculum that introduces academic vocabulary in meaningful contexts and promotes strategies for academic vocabulary acquisition. Using the Word Generation vocabulary program as a point of departure, *Words in Motion* targets middle school students, with a specific focus on supporting the academic vocabulary development of Spanish-speaking students.

Three versions of *Words in Motion* were developed:

1. a *monolingual* version, for instruction exclusively in English;
2. a *crosslinguistic* version, in which explicit links are made to the Spanish counterparts of target words; and
3. a *bilingual* version, in which the materials are available in Spanish as well as in English.

All versions are identical in terms of target words, unit topics, and the content and pacing of instructional activities. The only difference is in the extent to which Spanish is used for instruction.

The monolingual version is an academic vocabulary curriculum provided solely through English. The fact that the target words all have Spanish cognates is never mentioned, the cognate awareness strategy is not taught, and the Spanish counterparts of words and morphemes (prefixes, roots, and suffixes) are not introduced. As such, this version is most appropriate for mainstream classrooms in which there are few or no native Spanish speakers and the teacher does not have any familiarity with Spanish.

In the crosslinguistic version, cognate awareness is explicitly taught and reinforced as a key word-learning strategy for bilingual students, and the Spanish counterparts of all words and morphemes are introduced along with the English words and morphemes. In addition, the glossary provided with the crosslinguistic version is bilingual, allowing students to access word definitions, parts of speech, and an example of the word in context (a photo with an accompanying sentence) in both English and Spanish. This version can be used in mainstream classrooms with high percentages of native Spanish speakers, in ESL classrooms, or in the English component of dual language programs. The lesson plans were written for teachers with no knowledge of Spanish—providing pronunciations, meanings, and other necessary information about target words in Spanish—but the delivery of this version is obviously enhanced if the teacher has at least some familiarity with Spanish.

Finally, the bilingual version is a Spanish translation of the crosslinguistic version. For the five core units and 2 days of final review (i.e., all days of instruction after the first 3 days of introductory material), many of the student worksheets and teacher materials were translated into Spanish; in cases where no bilingual version exists, teachers are advised to use the crosslinguistic version. In theory, the curriculum could be delivered entirely in Spanish; however, because the curriculum incorporates multimedia (songs, videos, poems, and books) that are available only in English, it would be challenging to carry this out in reality. Moreover, in order to optimize the bridging capabilities of this curriculum, we recommend alternating days of instruction in English and Spanish. In our pilot of the bilingual curriculum in a dual language program, the teachers provided instruction in English on Days 1, 3, 5, and 7, and in Spanish on Days 2, 4, and 6, and this is what we recommend for other users as well, since it minimizes conflicts with the multimedia materials in English. (Note: We are not able to make the audio and video files available through the CAL website at this time.) The bilingual version is appropriate for bilingual or dual language classrooms.

*Words in Motion* was developed as part of the Enhancing Vocabulary Through Cognate Awareness study funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, as part of the VIAS research project.

The curriculum was developed in three phases:

1. Development, in which we developed a baseline curriculum working with four veteran ESL/literacy specialist teachers at a middle school recognized for its excellence in teaching English learners;

2. Piloting, for which trained research assistants worked with classroom teachers to deliver a revised version of the monolingual and crosslinguistic curricula; and

3. Full implementation, for which we worked with students and teachers in three urban middle schools with large populations of English learners to deliver the final version of the monolingual and crosslinguistic curricula. Participating teachers received prior training and ongoing coaching, as well as all materials. During Phase 3, we also worked with four teachers in a dual language program to develop and implement the bilingual version of the curriculum.

Words in Motion comprises 40 continuous days of instruction, with approximately one hour devoted to instruction each day. The curriculum begins with a 3-day introduction to word study, followed by five 7-day units that make up the core of the curriculum, and ending with 2 days of comprehensive review.

The five core units follow this 7-day cycle:

- Day 1:      Word study—affixes
- Day 2:      Word study—roots
- Day 3:      Introducing the target words and practicing word-learning strategies
- Day 4:      Gaining practice with the target words
- Day 5:      Putting words in context: reading
- Day 6:      Putting words in context: oral language and writing
- Day 7:      Review and quiz

The first 2 days of each unit focus on affixes and roots in an effort to develop morphological awareness. This component of the curriculum is known as *Detours*, since it has a somewhat different focus than the remainder of the curriculum, which centers on learning whole words and using them in context. *Detours* was developed to be used as a component of Words in Motion—that is, as the first 2 days of each 7-day unit—but we believe that it could also work well as a stand-alone curriculum for morphological awareness.

Each unit introduces 10 target words, all of which are general academic vocabulary words and all of which have cognates in Spanish. The words are presented through a student-centered topic, such as dealing with bullying or overcoming adversity, thus providing a meaningful context for the study of these words. All topics are designed to be engaging to middle school students, and three of the units (1, 3, & 4) focus specifically on middle school protagonists and issues that concern them. Following the same logic as Word Generation, and building from its reading passages and target words as a point of departure, all five topics are intentionally provocative to promote critical discourse and to allow for the exchange of multiple perspectives, particularly on Days 5 and 6 of the curriculum.

The curriculum uses a predictable, repetitive structure to allow students and teachers to anticipate upcoming instructional activities and build on instruction from one unit to another, while still incorporating unique activities within that structure to retain student interest. The lessons within each unit build incrementally, using a part-to-whole logic: 1) starting with morphological awareness; 2) making connections between morphemes and whole words; 3) using the target words in context through integrated reading, writing, and oral language activities; and 4) concluding with review and a quiz. The activities are varied but rely heavily on cooperative learning or group activities, hands-on materials, visual aids, technology, and incorporation of the arts —drama, music, and drawing or collage.

The full curriculum consists of lesson plans, teacher materials, and student worksheets for each day. In many cases, there are separate materials for the monolingual and crosslinguistic versions of the curriculum, as well as Spanish translations of the crosslinguistic versions to support the delivery of the bilingual version.

The materials are organized first by unit; within each unit they are organized by day; and within each day they are organized into lesson plans, student materials, and teacher materials. Each file is labeled *Monolingual, Crosslinguistic, Monolingual and Crosslinguistic* (when the same file is used in both the monolingual and crosslinguistic versions of the curriculum), or *Bilingual* (for materials translated into Spanish for use in the bilingual version of the curriculum). There are also supplementary materials: English and English–Spanish glossaries, posters, word wall cards, and fidelity of implementation protocols for units 4–6.

At the onset of each unit, teachers are provided with an advance organizer called "unit at a glance," which provides a quick overview of the central activities for each unit. Likewise, each lesson plan starts with a one-page advance organizer that provides the content and language objectives, needed teacher materials and student materials, and the "day at a glance" overview of activities for each lesson. Each lesson plan then provides a detailed script with suggested teacher language and anticipated student responses, along with pacing guidelines.

It is important to note that while the lesson plans are scripted so that a teacher could theoretically read them as written, this is not the intended use for them. Our experience is that the lessons flow better if the teachers use the scripts as a resource to understand the lesson content and to internalize the sometimes technical language that may be used to explain difficult concepts (such as the use of suffixes to change parts of speech), but ultimately deliver the lessons in their own words. In the case of the bilingual approach, this is absolutely necessary, as the scripts have not been translated into Spanish.

Similarly, the pacing guidelines are merely our suggestions, and our experience in implementing the curriculum with teachers is that the amount of time needed for any given activity varies greatly depending on the age and ability levels of the students and the experience of the teacher. Teachers who implemented the curriculum with more than one class noticed that they were more efficient after the first class; similarly, all teachers were able to move through the curriculum more efficiently in later units. *Words in Motion* is a complex curriculum with a lot of parts, so there is a learning curve for both teachers and students, but teachers who have used the curriculum have reported that the predictable, repetitive structure helps them to become familiar with it and move through later units more efficiently.

Certain formatting conventions are used in each lesson plan to help teachers follow along. Instructions to teachers and anticipated student responses are both written in a standard font, frequently in brackets. Things that teachers should say (again, preferably in their own words) are in bold. In the crosslinguistic/bilingual scripts, places where crosslinguistic connections are being made are underlined.

Here is an example of these conventions from the Unit 5, Day 1 crosslinguistic/bilingual lesson plan:

> **As I drop each word into the word transformer, I want you to write the word that you think will come out on your white board. Leave enough room so that you can fit all four words on it. <u>And again, if you speak Spanish, write the transformed words in both English and Spanish.</u>** [Drop the word cards in one at a time, prompting students to write the transformed word before you do, and then having them check when the transformed word comes out to make sure that they have the right ending and spelling. You may want to call a student up to be your assistant to do this. Write the transformed words on the corresponding lines on your worksheet overhead.]

There are also certain icons that are used throughout the scripts to draw teachers' attention to different issues.

Ideas for differentiation are indicated with the icon shown in this example from Unit 5, Day 1:

**Differentiation:** If some students would benefit from having a word bank for this activity, the word-search words are *originality*, *personality*, *popularity*, *similarity*, and *tranquility*. Once they find the words, they can underline the secret suffix in each word.

Important side notes to teachers are denoted with a large exclamation point, as in this example from Unit 5, Day 4:

**!**

**Note:** For all of these games, it helps to project the vocabulary summary chart that you created on Day 3 or Day 4. Also, as you progress through the units, continue to include a few words from previous units so that students continue to get practice with those words as well. <u>Finally, reinforce the cognate connections throughout the game by asking students to say the Spanish word as well as the English word.</u>

Time management suggestions for cooperative activities are highlighted with a clock symbol, as in this example from Unit 5, Day 3:

**Timer:** Use the PowerPoint countdown clock or another timer to help students keep track of their time, and announce when 10, 5, and 1 minute are remaining. At the 1 minute mark, ask students to finish up, collect the glossary cards, and give each student a summary chart worksheet to record all of the words and definitions.

*Detours* (the morphological awareness curriculum for Days 1 and 2) uses a traffic light metaphor to help students key in on the three main word parts—prefixes, roots, and suffixes—and their respective functions and placements in a word.

- Prefixes are represented by a green light, because they come at the beginning of the word and give the first clue to the word's meaning.
- Roots are represented by a yellow light, because they frequently (though not always) come in the middle of the word, and are also the part of the word where you should slow down and think carefully because they give you a clue to the core meaning of the word.
- Suffixes are represented by a red light because they come at the end of the word, which means it's time to stop and think about the part of speech.

These ideas are shown graphically in a series of mini-posters provided with the curriculum and also appear as icons on each *Detours* student worksheet and teacher overhead.

Students are prompted to color the appropriate color in the traffic light icon on their worksheet (e.g., green if prefixes are being studied) and are also frequently prompted to identify and underline each word part with a marker or highlighter in its corresponding color.

Throughout the curriculum, there are a number of worksheets that students use in conjunction with instructional activities. Students also need to refer to the glossary on a regular basis. As a result, we recommend that students all have binders to keep their materials organized, preferably with a separate tab for each unit, as well as a tab for the glossary.

Teachers will also likely want to organize their materials in a binder, particularly if they are printing out hard copies of lesson plans and worksheets or making transparencies for overheads. Additionally, as previously noted, students will be asked to color-code prefixes, suffixes, and roots in a number of activities and will also create several posters and collages, so in addition to pencils or pens, it is important to have basic art supplies on hand such as highlighters, dry erase markers, wide markers, scissors, glue sticks, and so forth. We found it useful to have students keep all writing supplies in a pencil pouch in their individual binders, but a more communal arrangement could certainly work as well.

Finally, many activities require students to write their responses on an individual dry erase board. A very simple and inexpensive dry erase board can be made by placing a piece of white cardstock in a three-hole-punched sleeve protector. This can then be stored in the front of each student's binder for easy access.

We know that access to technology varies greatly across schools, so the curriculum can employ more or less technology depending upon access. For example, teacher overheads can be printed and made into transparencies to be used with an overhead projector, or the printed versions can be read with a document reader, or the electronic versions on the CAL website can be used directly with an electronic whiteboard or a basic computer/projector set-up.

Likewise, in our work with teachers and students, we digitally recorded many of the skits that students created and made basic movies with them, which we then showed in class and used to reinforce appropriate use of the target words, but this step is not necessary if the technology is not available. It is perfectly acceptable to have students present the skits live and discuss them together at the completion of each skit.

Finally, it is necessary to access some music and video files from various websites (some of which require a small fee for downloading), but if there are Internet blocks at the school, it is possible for teachers to do this from home and save the audio/video files on a remote storage device in order to play them in school. At a minimum, occasional access to a computer and projector is required for viewing the videos and listening to the music incorporated in the curricular activities.

We hope that you find these materials useful. Please keep in mind that the curricular materials provided on this website are the same materials that were provided to teachers as part of the study; therefore, there are statements in the lesson plans (primarily relating to the supplementary materials that are needed for the curriculum) that would not pertain to teachers downloading the materials from the CAL website.

In particular, you will need to provide all referenced books, audio and video files, and school supplies yourself. In addition, because these materials were developed as part of a research project, there was no funding to prepare them for wider dissemination, and the materials are presented here as is.

If you notice major issues (such as transparencies or student worksheets in the wrong language or missing altogether), please feel free to email the lead author, Dr. Elizabeth Howard, at elizabeth.howard@uconn.edu, and we will do our best to address them.

**The appropriate reference citations for the curriculum are as follows:**

Howard, E. R., Dressler, C., & Martínez-Alvarez, P. (2012). *Words in motion* (monolingual version). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Howard, E. R., Dressler, C., & Martínez-Alvarez, P. (2012). *Words in motion* (crosslinguistic version). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Howard, E. R., Dressler, C., & Martínez-Alvarez, P. (2012). *Words in motion* (bilingual version). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

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