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Vocabulary development in a literature-based instructional program

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Vocabulary development in a literature-based instructional program

Abstract
Teachers need to assist students in developing rich vocabularies in a variety of ways. As teachers present effective strategies for learning vocabulary, students will improve their speaking and writing abilities as they grasp newfound meanings of words. This project reviews the professional literature on vocabulary development instruction and then presents a staff development plan that will help teachers see the benefits of exploring different ways that students can increase their vocabulary knowledge in a literature-based instructional reading environment.

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VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT IN A LITERATURE-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

A Graduate Research Project
Submitted to the
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Department of Curriculum and Instruction
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Gwen Johnson
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has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education

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Abstract

Teachers need to assist students in developing rich vocabularies in a variety of ways. As teachers present effective strategies for learning vocabulary, students will improve their speaking and writing abilities as they grasp newfound meanings of words. This project reviews the professional literature on vocabulary development instruction and then presents a staff development plan that will help teachers see the benefits of exploring different ways that students can increase their vocabulary knowledge in a literature-based instructional reading environment.
Introduction

I currently teach in a small rural school district where the elementary building consists of grades prep-kindergarten through fifth grade. Very few teachers have recent training in reading instruction. Although the building does have a reading specialist who offers support in instructional services for reading, it does not seem to be enough to make the educational staff comfortable with exploring new strategies for helping students develop vocabulary knowledge.

During a recent school improvement meeting in my district, the language arts committee set a long range goal to have all students performing at proficient levels in reading for understanding. Due to the district's low vocabulary scores in the reading section of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, vocabulary was highlighted as a focal point for the annual improvement goal. Following the goal setting, teachers in a group discussion voiced concerns about needing new ideas for vocabulary instruction. They claimed to be lacking alternative ways to introduce the words to make the instruction effective, productive, and powerful in the classroom.

I have studied vocabulary development and have implemented a variety of vocabulary strategies over the past two years in my classroom. I first became interested in vocabulary development when I wanted to help my students go beyond memorizing definitions of specific words. My own experience resulted in students developing deeper and more flexible understandings of words. By being exposed to innovative practices of working with words, my students were adding to their individual vocabulary knowledge. This experience led me to believe that I could assist
other teachers by helping them learn some of these vocabulary strategies in their own classrooms.

I directed the research of this project towards two topics: vocabulary development and literature-based environments. I began my search by borrowing vocabulary strategy books and graphic organizer reference books from colleagues and the local Arrowhead Education Agency. I also purchased a few new sources that focused on vocabulary strategies and word study activities to improve students' word knowledge.

I then conducted an ERIC search to locate additional references to support vocabulary development in a literature-based environment using the descriptor words: vocabulary instruction, literature-based instruction, and elementary. After skimming several pages of abstracts, eighteen were chosen to read further. Those articles and books were gathered from the reading online website or the University of Northern Iowa Rod Library. Soon another nine were collected based upon the reference lists offered at the end of the chosen articles.

In order to pass this newfound knowledge of vocabulary development on to staff members, I needed to understand and be able to use effective teaching strategies for adult learners. A final ERIC search was completed using the descriptor words of effective staff development. Nine sources were located and gathered from the Rod Library. My research in vocabulary development supported the idea of elementary teachers benefiting from expanding vocabulary through the use of literature-based sources.
This project addresses the development of vocabulary in a literature-based environment. Research has shown that to maximize the development of student vocabulary, the right blend of activities must exist. Actively engaging students in discussing, elaborating, and demonstrating their learning of new words is critical. Students should be provided multiple opportunities to use new words during their speaking, listening, reading, and writing engagements.

This project is a workshop designed to teach elementary teachers uniform vocabulary strategies to explore new ways to help students develop rich vocabularies in a literature-based reading environment. It begins with a review of the literature on vocabulary development and literature-based instruction. Planning documents for the staff development workshop sessions follow, including a planning context, schedule, and lesson plans. Conclusions and recommendations, along with references and appendices complete the project.
Literature Review

Students remember meanings of the many words learned during their early years through various encounters with vocabulary. This is partly because the words are frequently repeated and common to their own word knowledge. These words are also learned through experiences where a real understanding is made known. Asselin (2002) suggests that “the incremental process of word learning, the varying nature of words and the context of usage make determining when a word is learned a complex task” (p. 58). A person who recognizes a word can use it in a variety of contexts, and will utilize the knowledge of the word in a combination with other types of knowledge to construct meaning.

Vocabulary Development

Due to the various learning experiences of constructing word knowledge outside of the classroom, students do not automatically understand how to learn and study vocabulary. Teachers need to provide the explanations, methods, and practice to make learning words meaningful. According to LaFlamme (1994), seven elements are necessary for developing vocabulary. Learners develop a rich vocabulary by:

1) being motivated by enthusiastic teachers
2) learning various strategies from direct instruction
3) experiencing integration methods in the classroom
4) working with the words intensively
5) having repeated exposures to the words
6) becoming fully engaged and involved with the words
7) and identifying the learning process as a long-term commitment.
This combination of elements will help students grasp the meanings of many new words. Because LaFlamme's seven elements considered as a whole provide such a comprehensive framework for considering vocabulary learning and instruction, these elements will compose the structure for this review of the literature, with other works cited in the context of describing LaFlamme's elements.

Vocabulary development begins with enthusiasm from the teacher. The teacher, serving as an influential role model, helps students become motivated as the benefits of the words are made known through vocabulary involvement. Students cannot be forced to study vocabulary unless the reasons are made known for using the words (LaFlamme, 1994). It is through the teacher that students can get excited about constructing meaning of the new words because teachers are lifelong learners, too.

A verbally rich environment in the classroom shows the true value in creating a lasting vocabulary. This kind of instruction "goes beyond definitional information to get students actively involved in using and thinking about word meanings" (Beck et al, 2002, p. 73). As students create various associations among words, they will develop a comfort zone and accept new knowledge to experiment and apply in various ways.

Direct instruction is an important part of developing vocabulary. Direct instruction informs reading comprehension when students integrate new words with other knowledge, process new words in a meaningful manner, and are exposed to multiple encounters of the new word (Harmon, 1998). Teachers must provide instruction in the classroom on the necessary skills and techniques students need to learn unfamiliar words. As teachers model these strategies, students become more comfortable with reading independently. Readers who become aware of a variety of
methods will be able to monitor new vocabulary understandings. Students will also have the capacity to modify reading strategies as new meanings of words are constructed individually (LaFlamme, 1994).

Direct instruction must also involve the teacher modeling the skill of using context clues so that students will not interrupt the flow of reading when an unfamiliar word appears. However, instruction should be “presented as a process of figuring our meaning within an individual context, rather than focusing on the product - a word’s meaning” (Beck et al, 2002, p. 115). As context contributes to vocabulary growth, students benefit from the amount of reading done, as well as see results with the efficient method of learning to use the context (LaFlamme, 1994).

Another strategy that can be taught through direct instruction is the use of prior knowledge. Connecting students’ prior knowledge and personal experiences to word meanings in the context of the reading helps students integrate more words in their vocabulary. Carr and Wixson (1986) state that “new vocabulary becomes personally meaningful and students’ understanding of new vocabulary is enhanced” (p. 589) which improves the overall reading comprehension of the literature selection. Making the word construction process relate with students’ personal knowledge and experiences helps learners expand and integrate vocabulary learning, oral as well as written.

Throughout the integration process, students associate words and connect meanings. Thus, the words will stay with them for a longer period of time. Sometimes the association is between the word and a definition, the word and a synonym, or the word and a single context (Stahl, 1986). As students become more
familiar with the different kinds of word relationships, the teacher can model the
process of identifying the connections between old vocabulary and new word
knowledge.

Intensive practice with words in a natural environment helps students in
vocabulary development. As teachers design activities in the classroom, students will
be able to elaborate on word knowledge and explore word relationships (LaFiamme,
1994). Practicing with thorough exercises helps students visualize and experiment
with the new word knowledge, thus expanding vocabulary awareness. These activities
will be described in more detail later in the review.

Students also need assistance in developing a transfer of learned skills to
become independent learners and readers. According to Carr and Wixson (1986),
"these instructional procedures enable students to apply their knowledge of new
vocabulary as they read...in a variety of other contexts...[and] enhance students'
ability to remember the meanings of new words" (p. 590). Visualizing words used in
different kinds of literary works heightens students’ vocabulary growth.

Vocabulary development is also most effective when students continue to use
the acquired skills related to vocabulary knowledge. The more students read and
practice the learned skills, the better the vocabulary knowledge becomes. So whether
the students practice in a familiar school setting or outside of the classroom
environment, the frequency of using the skills will be beneficial.

Repetition alone will not guarantee that a word will remain in the students’
vocabulary unless incorporated with meaningful activities. Repeated encounters of the
vocabulary words give students the opportunity to use the words in their reading,
writing, listening, and speaking vocabularies. Students need meaningful experiences in multiple formats so that new terminology may be elaborated on. This can provide for greater reflection and thinking about the meaning (Curtis & Longo, 2001) as learners experience the value of language-rich activities.

Learners need to be actively involved with vocabulary to truly think about the meanings of words. Classroom discussions work well in presenting new words. As students take an active role in defining new terms in their own words or providing examples of how to use the new vocabulary, the growth of word knowledge will expand. The learners will no longer need to rely on the meanings of the new terminology being supplied in the classroom by the teacher.

As students take responsibility of their own word learning, a depth of processing comes to exist in vocabulary development. According to Stahl and Fairbanks (1986), students “who process information more deeply retain that information better than [those] who engage in more ‘shallow’ processing activities” (p. 75). The harder students work to process or construct a relationship rather than memorize a definition, the better they will retain the word’s meaning (Blachowicz, 1985).

Once the learners are actively involved, the responsibility of selecting their own vocabulary words to study will become evident in later stages of reading development (LaFlamme, 1994). Teachers need to explain and model how to make sufficient word selections for study so that the students can become familiar with the skills and strategies necessary for choosing their own unfamiliar words to expand the vocabulary knowledge.
A long-term commitment in extending vocabulary is essential to attain success. As word learning remains an ongoing concern, students will be offered repeated exposures to word construction and added motivation for learning (Blachowicz, 1985). Teachers need to be conscious of attaining a systematic approach to insure that vocabulary growth continues in the students’ development of word knowledge.

Vocabulary development must become an integral part of all facets of instruction. When this approach follows a system and incorporates all of the principles, vocabulary development will be effective (LaFlamme, 1994). Implementing the instruction of vocabulary into other curriculum areas will ensure repeated encounters and influence for the students, making word learning an ongoing interest (Blachowicz, 1985).

**Literature-Based Instruction**

This project involves the embedding of sound vocabulary development within a literature-based reading program. Morrow and Gambrell (2000) claim literature-based instruction:

1) uses a knowledgeable teacher with literature as the primary focus
2) offers many social interactions in the classroom
3) gives students freedom to choose their own selections of reading
4) renders several opportunities to respond to literature
5) and incorporates a sound read aloud program.

Like LaFlamme’s list of elements in quality vocabulary instruction, Morrow & Gambrell’s list is comprehensive and serves as the framework for the following discussion of the general characteristics of a literature-based reading program.
A multitude of words will be learned as students are exposed to a variety of literary works. Literature-based reading instruction will give students the advantage of building upon background knowledge and previous experiences as well as making explicit connections between new words and what is already known. Literature-based reading instruction emphasizes the use of high quality literary works, usually trade books, as the core instructional materials used to support reading achievement.

High quality literature-based programs begin with knowledgeable teachers. The teacher must acquire knowledge to use literature as a primary basis in the reading instruction or as a supplement to basal programs (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000). Attending workshops and annual conferences, sharing ideas with colleagues, or taking college credit classes can assist teachers in receiving background information for using literature with students in the classroom.

The environment of the classroom should include positive social interactions between the students and the teacher. Discussions of the literature and related activities play active parts in a literature-based classroom as well as collaboration with writing projects (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000). According to Hiebert and Colt (1989), students “have more opportunities to share their interpretations of passages, describe favorite books, and talk about strategies that work for different reading purposes” (p. 17) in a literature-based environment. A group of students in the classroom can create knowledge and understandings that go well beyond the capabilities of one individual student.

Students need several occasions to choose literature selections independently. Hiebert and Colt (1989) claim that “lifelong reading depends on children having
numerous opportunities to participate in authentic reading situations within the classroom community” (p. 17). Students have individual preferences and interests which reflect a variety of possibilities from which to select literature for personal reading (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000).

A literature-based program also gives students many opportunities to respond to the reading selection. Self-reflection helps students make added connections to the reading. Students may speculate in a writing journal on what would happen next in a story, evaluate a character’s actions, respond from a character’s point of view, or relate a personal experience (Zarillo, 1989; Morrow & Gambrell, 2000). These written reflections could then be shared in a whole group discussion.

Acquiring a read-aloud program also gives added reinforcement to a literature-based program. Students receive enhanced opportunities that introduce them to story elements as well as provide extended experiences that portray different uses of dramatic forms in the reading of literature selections (Heald-Taylor, 1996). The learners will also expand their oral vocabularies when listening to literary works.

**Developing Vocabulary Within Literature-Based Instruction**

The kind of literature-based program described above establishes an environment that matches well with the conditions for vocabulary learning described by LaFlamme. Students who are immersed in language-rich activities as well as exposed to more meaningful experiences with words will expand their vocabulary knowledge (Blachowicz and Lee, 1991). The following guidelines, according to
Blachowicz and Lee (1991), make vocabulary development effective in a literature-based classroom:

1) using vocabulary from contextual reading
2) applying maps or graphic organizers to help identify the words for study
3) planning prereading knowledge activation activities
4) involving vocabulary in post reading discussion
5) using contextual reinspection and semantic manipulation
6) and exercising vocabulary in an integrated way.

Choosing vocabulary from the literature material used in the reading classroom helps students focus on words encountered in real reading and will then assist in reading comprehension (Blachowicz & Lee, 1991). Rupley, Logan and Nichols (1999) stated that students will “make the meanings of words relevant to the context in which they appear [and] help build connections between existing knowledge and new knowledge” (p. 338). Students will see relevance to the context in order to build connections between the background information and the newly found knowledge. A vocabulary list of words that has nothing to do with the curriculum will have no impact on the student learning.

Maps and graphic organizers help students elaborate and demonstrate meanings of words. Rupley et al. (1999) believe that “instructional activities that allow for a visual display of words and promote students’ comparing and contrasting of new words to known words can be a beneficial means for increasing vocabulary knowledge” (p. 339). Semantic mapping, semantic feature analysis, word mapping,
and webbing are some of the most common and effective instructional strategies used to construct word meanings that represent background knowledge.

Teachers who plan prereading activities contribute to the process of vocabulary learning. Learners can make predictions and connections as well as set the purpose for reading during these activities. Word knowledge enhances reading comprehension, frames questions in specific ways, and uses familiar situations to help learners make important connections (Harmon, 1998; Blachowicz & Lee, 1991).

A post reading discussion gives the students another chance to grasp information that was previously misunderstood or unfamiliar. The discussion can also make distinct clarifications to the reader. Students relate, explain, and question specific terminology during group discussion as well as activate individual prior knowledge and past experiences, striving to make connections with words and their learning (Harmon, 1998; Blachowicz & Lee, 1991).

As students actively process information, their understanding of new words can be double-checked during class interactions. The discussion may focus on a reconstruction of word meanings or lead to verbal understandings of the semantic features of the words. According to Blachowicz and Lee (1991), “it is necessary that post reading time be allocated to help students locate information to flesh out their knowledge of words and experiment with using words in situations where they receive feedback on their attempts” (p. 192). Learners become aware of their own understanding of new word meanings while participating in the social interactions of the classroom.
As students use the vocabulary in a variety of ways, further response activities may be needed as the literature integrates a related set of words to learn. Students take advantage of creating their own extensions as they use the words in a variety of learning engagements and apply the new knowledge in meaningful experiences.
Workshop Introduction

The goal of the workshop is to better prepare teachers to assist students in effective ways of developing vocabulary in future classrooms as well as help students succeed in becoming lifelong readers. Teachers will see the benefits of exploring a variety of ways to help students develop rich vocabularies and will soon become more of a facilitator for student learning rather than a distributor of knowledge.

The information included in the literature review was used to develop a workshop to be used as staff development for elementary teachers. The method of presentation will be a workshop format. The initial workshop will require eight hours. The workshop is set up in four two-hour sessions so that teachers can learn something, try the strategies in the classroom, and then return for follow-up sessions.

The workshop on vocabulary development is designed for teachers to use the direct and concrete experiences gathered in the workshop and discover relevancy to the current curriculum. Teachers will be able to immediately apply this newfound knowledge within their own various classroom practices. Guided practice and experiential learning during the workshops will offer the teachers opportunities to share, reflect, and generalize from their own experiences. Active support from their own peers will help the teachers reduce the fear of judgment during the learning process. Teachers will be able to try out the new learnings and will receive structured, helpful feedback. Coaching and other kinds of follow-up support are needed to help the teachers transfer the learning and implement the information in their own classrooms (Thoms, 2001; Wood & Kleine, 1988; Wood & Thompson, 1993).
Staff Development Workshop Planning Context

Administrative Support

• Enlist your principal in supporting a vocabulary development workshop
• Include goals that involve students and elementary staff within the school district
• Share possible session ideas that support the needs and concerns of the school improvement action goal for reading

Advertising for the Workshop

• Advertise through personal invitations and emails
• The message should include why the teachers are invited along with the times, dates, and location of the workshop

Workshop Arrangements

• Attendees: twelve elementary teaching staff members
• Location: elementary lunchroom
• Time: four workshop sessions for two hours each on inservice days
• Refreshments: provided by school
• Handouts: provided at the beginning of each workshop session for all participants
Staff Development Workshop Schedule

Session One - Overview of Vocabulary Development and Literature-based Instruction (2 hours)

1. Welcome/opening activities
2. Overview of the session
3. Opening vocabulary quote
4. Review of research
   * Vocabulary development
   * Literature-based instruction
   * Vocabulary development in literature-based instructional program
5. Closing of the session
6. Session one evaluation

Session Two - Selecting Vocabulary and Prereading Activities (2 hours)

1. Opening/Review of evaluations/Sharing
2. Overview of the session
3. Selecting vocabulary from contextual reading
4. Planning prereading knowledge activation activities
5. Closing of the session
6. Session two evaluation

Session Three - Graphic Organizers and Contextual Reinspection (2 hours)

1. Opening/Review of evaluations/Sharing
2. Overview of the session
3. Applying maps or graphic organizers
4. Using contextual reinspection and semantic manipulation
5. Closing of the session
6. Session three evaluation

Session Four - Post Reading Activities and Integration (2 hours)

1. Opening/Review of evaluations/Sharing
2. Overview of the session
3. Involving vocabulary in post reading discussion
4. Exercising vocabulary in an integrated way
5. Closing of the session
6. Closing of the vocabulary workshop
7. Session four evaluation and vocabulary workshop evaluation
Staff Development Workshop Lesson Plans

Session One (2 hours)
Overview of Vocabulary Development and Literature-Based instruction

Welcome/Opening activities (30 minutes)

- Participants pick up a vocabulary development packet and refreshments
- Welcome all participants to the workshop (Appendix A, p.34)
- Ask participants to do vocabulary activity (Appendix A, p.35)
- Participants share responses in small groups
- Share responses in large group and record on large chart paper
- State goal of the vocabulary workshop (Appendix A, p.36)

Overview of the session (5 minutes)

- Explain objectives for the session
  1) review the research by LaFlamme that supports vocabulary development
  2) review the research by Morrow and Gambrell that supports literature-based instruction
  3) review the research by Blachowicz and Lee that supports vocabulary development in a literature-based environment
  4) brief overview of the next workshop sessions

Opening vocabulary quote by Asselin (5 minutes)

- Read quote by Asselin (Appendix A, p.37)

Review of research: vocabulary development (15 minutes)

- Participants brainstorm in small groups what they believe to be the most effective principles of vocabulary development according to their own experiences
- Share responses in large group and record on large chart paper
- Vocabulary development statement (Appendix A, p.38)
- LaFlamme’s seven components for effective vocabulary development (Appendix A, p.39)

Review of research: literature-based instruction (15 minutes)

- Participants brainstorm in small groups what they think would be the most important elements of a literature-based instructional program
- Share responses in large group and record on large chart paper
- Literature-based instruction statement (Appendix A, p.40)
- Morrow & Gambrell’s five aspects for a quality literature-based instructional program (Appendix A, p.41)
Review of research: vocabulary development in a literature-based instructional program (10 minutes)

- Discuss element similarities between LaFlamme and Morrow & Gambrell
- Vocabulary development in a literature-based instructional program statement (Appendix A, p.42)
- Blachowicz & Lee’s six guidelines necessary for an effective vocabulary study using a literature-based reading approach (Appendix A, p.43)

Summary of session (5 minutes)

- Summarize the reviews of research
- Refer to the lists of answers from the opening vocabulary activity and make connections to the research

Closing of the session (5 minutes)

- Explain what will be covered in the next three sessions
- Ask participants to keep track of how they teach vocabulary or work with words in their own classrooms and record in reflective log (Appendix A, p.44)
- Ask participants to bring some current literature being used in their curriculum and the vocabulary packet to the next workshop sessions

Session One Evaluation (10 minutes)

- Hand out evaluation sheets for session one (Appendix A, p.45)
- Collect sheets as participants exit the room
Session Two (2 hours)
Selecting Vocabulary and Prereading Activities

Opening/Review of evaluations/Sharing (10 minutes)

- Welcome and offer participants refreshments
- Respond to comments and questions from session one evaluations
- Ask participants to share vocabulary experiences encountered since last session

Overview of the session (5 minutes)

- Explain the objectives of the session
  1) provide an explanation of the first two components for developing vocabulary in a literature-based approach
  2) give examples of different strategies that could be used to make these components effective
  3) allow time for participants to practice using the strategies presented

Selecting vocabulary from contextual reading (45 minutes)

- Explain what words need to be taught (Appendix B, p.47)
- Vocabulary selection prompt (Appendix B, p.48)
- Give an example of selected vocabulary taken from the novel Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner (Appendix B, p.49) Explain that taxes was selected because it is important to understand the main idea of the story, loan was chosen because students will likely use the word again in the future, and immense was selected because the word was not well defined in the context and an important character trait.
- Participants practice selecting vocabulary words from own classroom literature, using Stahl's guidelines
- Participants share experiences in small groups (1. Summarize which text you used and which words you selected. 2. Discuss how Stahl's guidelines helped or didn't help. 3. Pose questions that came up for you during the word selection. 4. Be prepared to report the important ideas in your discussion to the whole group.)
- Discuss experiences in large group

Planning Prereading knowledge activation activities (45 minutes)

- Prereading knowledge activation prompt (Appendix B, p.50)
- Describe three strategies (Appendices B, p.51-53)
  - Guess and Check
  - Vocabulary Inventory
  - Word Wonder
- Participants practice using one of the strategies with an unknown word from the given list. Definitions will be covered up. (Appendix B, p.54)
• Participants share experiences in small groups (1. Tell what word you used and which strategy was chosen. 2. Discuss how the strategy worked or didn’t work. 3. Pose questions that came up for you during the practice. 4. Be prepared to report the important ideas in your discussion to the whole group.)
• Discuss experiences in large group and reveal the definitions of the unfamiliar words

**Closing of the session (10 minutes)**

• Review two components presented during session
• Allow time for questions or comments
• Ask participants to use selection criteria in an upcoming lesson in their own classroom and use one prereading strategy and record experiences in reflective log (Appendix B, p.55)
• Remind participants to bring vocabulary packet and literature from own classroom to next session

**Session evaluation (5 minutes)**

• Hand out evaluation sheets for session two (Appendix B, p.56)
• Collect sheets as participants exit room
Session Three  (2 hours)
Graphic Organizers and Contextual Reinspection

Opening/Review of evaluations/Sharing (10 minutes)
- Welcome and offer participants refreshments
- Respond to comments and questions from session two
- Ask participants to share vocabulary experiences encountered since last session

Overview of the session (5 minutes)
- Explain the objectives of the session
  1) provide an explanation of the third and fourth components of developing vocabulary in a literature-based approach
  2) give examples of different strategies that could be used to make these components effective
  3) allow time for participants to practice using the strategies presented

Applying maps and graphic organizers (45 minutes)
- Application of maps and graphic organizers prompt (Appendix C, p.58)
- Describe five maps/graphic organizers (Appendices C, p.59-63)
  - Vocabulary Cube
  - Word Pyramid
  - Word Study
  - Concept Definition Map
  - Frayer Model
- Participants practice using one of the strategies with an unknown word from the given list (Appendix B, p.53)
- Participants share experiences in small groups (1. Tell what word you used and which strategy was chosen. 2. Discuss how the strategy worked or didn’t work. 3. Discuss how you would provide instruction to your own students with the strategy. 4. Pose questions that came up for you during the practice. 5. Be prepared to report the important ideas in your discussion to the whole group.)
- Discuss experiences in large group

Using contextual reinspection and semantic manipulation (45 minutes)
- Contextual reinspection and semantic manipulation prompt (Appendix C, p.64)
- Describe two strategies (Appendices C, p.65-66)
  - Contextual Redefinition
  - Feature Chart
- Participants practice using one of the strategies with their own classroom literature
- Participants share experiences in small groups (1. Tell what word you used and which strategy was chosen. 2. Discuss how the strategy worked or didn’t work.
3. Discuss how you would provide instruction to your own students with the strategy. 4. Pose questions that came up for you during the practice. 5. Be prepared to report the important ideas in your discussion to the whole group.)

• Discuss experiences in large group

Closing of the session (10 minutes)

• Review two components presented during session
• Allow time for questions or comments
• Ask participants to use at least two strategies in an upcoming lesson in their own classroom and record experiences in reflective log (Appendix C, p.67)
• Remind participants to bring vocabulary packet and literature from own classroom to next session

Session evaluation (5 minutes)

• Hand out evaluation sheets for session three (Appendix C, p.68)
• Collect sheets as participants exit the room
Session Four (2 hours)
Post Reading Discussion and Integration

Opening/Review of evaluations/Sharing (10 minutes)

- Welcome and offer participants refreshments
- Respond to the comments and questions from session three evaluations
- Ask participants to share vocabulary experiences encountered since last session

Overview of the session (5 minutes)

- Explain the objectives of the session
  1) provide an explanation of the last two components of developing vocabulary in a literature-based approach
  2) give examples of different strategies that could be used to make these components effective
  3) allow time for participants to practice using the chosen strategies

Involving vocabulary in post reading discussion (40 minutes)

- Post reading discussion prompt (Appendix D, p.70)
- Give examples of discussion questions using vocabulary from Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner (Appendix D, p.71)
- Participants practice creating discussion questions using selected vocabulary from own classroom literature
- Participants share experiences in small groups (1. Tell what words you used. 2. Discuss how the strategy worked or didn’t work. 3. Be prepared to report the important ideas in your discussion to the whole group.)
- Discuss experiences in large group

Exercising vocabulary in an integrated ways (40 minutes)

- Integrating vocabulary prompt (Appendix D, p.72)
- Describe a variety of integrating activities (Appendices D, p.73-77)
  Vocabulary Tic-Tac-Toe
  Wordo
  Vocabulary Plays
  Word Stories
  Picture Dictionaries
- Participants share experiences in small groups (1. Tell what strategy you have used or would like to try. 2. Discuss how the strategy was used or would be used. 3. Discuss how you would provide instruction to your own students with the strategy. 4. Pose questions that you may have concerning a specific strategy. 5. Be prepared to report the important ideas in your discussion to the whole group.)
- Discuss experiences in large group
Closing of the session (10 minutes)

• Review two components presented during this session
• Allow time for questions or comments

Closing of the vocabulary workshop (10 minutes)

• Review six guidelines for effectively developing vocabulary using a literature-based approach (Appendix A, p.43)
• Ask participants if there is interest in a follow-up session at a later date

Session evaluation (5 minutes)

• Hand out evaluation sheets for session four (Appendix D, p.78)
• Hand out evaluation sheets for vocabulary workshop (Appendix D, p.79)
• Collect sheets as participants exit room
Conclusions and Recommendations

After completing the research for this vocabulary project, I am even more convinced that vocabulary development in the classroom needs to go beyond memorizing definitions and using the words in a sentence. The target group for this vocabulary workshop was elementary teachers in the district. This workshop could be used with middle school and high school teachers as well. We need to help our students develop vocabulary in effective ways that will improve their abilities to keep the newfound meanings of words. My own personal experience with vocabulary development in the classroom is in agreement with the literature reviewed. I see students taking control of their own learning, eager to come to class with new enthusiasm for learning new words. Students will even make suggestions on the way that we should work with the words each day during the language arts block.

Elementary teachers will benefit from the workshop by learning alternative ways of developing vocabulary with their students. I spread out the workshop into four sessions of two hours so that teachers may be able to try out some of the strategies presented and offer feedback or ask questions as they are learning to explore these new ways of learning vocabulary. I also thought four sessions versus one worked well with our current schedule of inservice days as we do not usually have an entire day of inservice in the school schedule. A fifth session for a short hour may be important to clear up any misunderstandings and provide time for teachers to compare insights of experiences that happened in their own classrooms since the workshop sessions.
As teachers provide new strategies, students will become more engaged in learning the new words and as a result will experience a deeper and more flexible understanding of word knowledge. Students will see the importance of developing a broadened vocabulary and will be able to use the newfound words in various ways, from reading other literature to speaking to writing stories.

Research has not really prescribed a perfect way to present vocabulary. Teachers have the flexibility to select techniques and strategies that coincide with their personal philosophy of reading education, consider their students' needs, and utilize a wide variety of activities that stimulate vocabulary study in the classroom. In a literature-based environment, Blachowicz and Lee (1991) claim that "providing readers broad, rich experiences with words within a framework of contextual reading, discussion, and response is the goal of vocabulary instruction" (p. 194).

Vocabulary teaching is beneficial when students are participating in interactive discussions and making personal connections with the words. According to Rupley et al., (1999) "any instructional practice must be called into question that neglects the teaching of words in meaningful context and fails to immerse the students in vocabulary-rich activities" (p. 346). Vocabulary instruction geared towards connecting new information to previous learning experiences provides students with new relationships between words and will prove to be successful.
References


Marzano, R.J., Pickering, D.J., & Pollock, J.E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that...*
works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement.

Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.


Appendix A:

Session One

Slides for Presentation

Session One Evaluation
Vocabulary Development in a Literature-Based Instructional Program
Vocabulary Activity

1. How do you teach vocabulary in your classroom? Is it working?

2. Where does the vocabulary word list come from?

3. How are the words selected for vocabulary study?

4. Are students learning the vocabulary? How do you know?
The goal of the vocabulary workshop is to prepare teachers to assist students in effective ways of developing vocabulary in future classrooms as well as help students succeed in becoming lifelong readers.
Asselin (2002) suggests that “the incremental process of word learning, the varying nature of words and the context of usage make determining when a word is learned a complex task” (p. 58).
Students do not automatically understand how to learn and study vocabulary unless teachers provide the explanations, methods, and practice to make learning words meaningful.
LaFlamme (1994) suggests that learners develop a vocabulary best by:

- Being motivated by enthusiastic teachers

- Learning various strategies from direct instruction

- Experiencing integration methods in the classroom

- Working with words intensively

- Having repeated exposures to the words

- Becoming fully engaged and involved with the words

- Identifying the learning process as a long-term commitment
A multitude of words will be learned as students are exposed to a variety of literary works. Literature-based reading instruction will give students the advantage of building upon background knowledge and previous experiences as well as making explicit connections between new words and what is already known. It emphasizes the use of high quality works, usually trade books, as the core instructional materials used to support reading achievement.
Morrow & Gambrell (2000) claim literature-based instruction:

- Uses a knowledgeable teacher with literature as the primary focus
- Offers many social interactions in the classroom
- Gives students freedom to choose their own selections of reading
- Renders several opportunities to respond to literature
- Incorporates a sound read aloud program
Students who are immersed in language-rich activities as well as exposed to more meaningful experiences with words will expand their vocabulary knowledge.
Blachowicz & Lee (1991) suggest six guidelines to make vocabulary development effective in a literature-based classroom:

- Selecting vocabulary from contextual reading
- Planning prereading knowledge activation activities
- Applying maps and graphic organizers to help identify the words for study
- Using contextual reinspection and semantic manipulation
- Involving vocabulary in post reading discussion
- Exercising vocabulary in an integrated way
Session One Workshop Evaluation

1. List two things you learned about vocabulary development.

2. What questions do you have regarding using vocabulary from literature-based sources?

3. Do you think you might use some of these vocabulary strategies in your classroom? Why or why not?

4. How do you think Session One could have been improved?
Appendix B:

Session Two

What Words Need To Be Taught

Selected Vocabulary from *Stone Fox*

Guess and Check

Vocabulary Inventory

Word Wonder

Vocabulary Word List

Session Two Evaluation
What Words Need To Be Taught?
Stahl (1986)

1. Decide the importance of each word. (Is it important to understand the text? If not, is it a word the student is likely to run into again? Drop the word if both answers are no.)

2. Decide how likely the student is to get the meaning of the word from context. (Is the word well defined in context or is its meaning assumed by the author?)

3. Decide how thoroughly the words will have to be taught. (Some words represent concepts that are close to known words while others are not easily established.)

4. Determine how much the student actually knows and how well it is known. (Use a checklist and decide which level the word is known.)

5. Decide how the words group themselves. (Words in the same category may be easier to learn together.)
Choosing vocabulary from the literature material used in the reading classroom helps students focus on words encountered in real reading and will then assist in reading comprehension.
Using *Stone Fox* by John Reynolds Gardiner, an important word to have on the vocabulary list is *taxes* because Grandfather needed to pay his taxes or they would lose the farm. A second word important to the story is *loan* because Willy considered getting a loan to pay the debt. A third word to add to the list is *immense* which was used to describe the Indian standing next to little Willy.
Learners who make predictions and connections as well as set the purpose for reading during prereading activities will contribute to the process of vocabulary learning.
# Guess and Check

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<th>Clues to the Meaning</th>
<th>Guess the Meaning</th>
<th>Check the Meaning</th>
<th>+/-</th>
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# Vocabulary Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words I Know Well</th>
<th>Words I Have Seen Before</th>
<th>Words I Don't Know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(I think I know the meaning)</td>
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</table>
## Vocabulary Word List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jimmies</td>
<td>chocolate sprinkles on ice cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umstroke</td>
<td>edge or boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extorhinal</td>
<td>outside of the nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coapt</td>
<td>to adapt to each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brevity</td>
<td>expression in few words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jenny</td>
<td>female donkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offish</td>
<td>rude or unapproachable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>testate</td>
<td>make a testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peculate</td>
<td>to steal from the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zarf</td>
<td>coffee holder made of metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ratne</td>
<td>early in day or season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iceblink</td>
<td>a cliff of ice on a coast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session Two Workshop Evaluation

1. List two things you learned about selecting vocabulary and using prereading activities.

2. What questions do you have regarding using these vocabulary strategies?

3. Do you think you might use some of these vocabulary strategies in your classroom? Why or why not?

4. How do you think Session Two could have been improved?
Appendix C:

Session Three

Maps and Graphic Organizers

Vocabulary Cube

Word Pyramid

Word Study

Concept Definition Map

Frayer Model

Contextual Reinspection & Semantic Manipulation

Contextual Redefinition

Feature chart

Session Three Evaluation
Maps and graphic organizers allow for a visual display of words to help students elaborate and demonstrate the meanings of words.
Complete your vocabulary cube by filling in each side of the cube using the following guidelines. Then, cut the cube out, fold along the dotted lines, and glue together.

**ANALYZE:** List the part of speech; the root word, or any affixes.

**DEFINE:** Write a short definition of the word.

**APPLY:** What can YOU do with this word? How can you use it?

**COMPARE:** What is it similar to or different from?

**ARGUE:** Make an opinion statement using this word and argue for or against it.

**ASSOCIATE:** How is this word related to your life? What does it make you think of?
Word Pyramid

WORD

ANTONYMS

SYNONYMS

ADJECTIVES DESCRIBING THE WORD

WRITE A SENTENCE USING THE WORD
# Word Study

**WORD**

**DEFINITION**

I think it means:

It really means:

**SYNONYMS**

**ANTONYMS**

**SENTENCE AND PICTURE**
Concept Definition Map

What is it?

(category)

What is it like?

(property)

(property)

(property)

What are some examples?

(illustration)

(illustration)

(illustration)

New Definition:
Essential Characteristics

Examples

Nonessential Characteristics

Nonexamples

Frayer Model

Topic / Word / or Concept
Students need to focus on reconstruction of the word meanings and discuss their verbal understandings of the semantic features of the words.
Contextual Redefinition

Contextual redefinition can give students a better understanding of how to learn words in the context of text as well as helping them discover the meanings of new words on their own.

1. Select unfamiliar words from the students’ text that could be considered key to understanding the text.

2. Write sentences for the words that give the meaning in context.

3. Then ask students to define the new words aloud. Discuss how the context helped the students understand the definitions.

4. You might then ask the students to verify their definition by checking a dictionary. The dictionary can also help them learn other ways the words are used.

*Improving Reading - A Handbook of Strategies*  
*Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company*
Session Three Workshop Evaluation

1. List two things you learned about graphic organizers and contextual reinspection.

2. What questions do you have regarding using these vocabulary strategies?

3. Do you think you might use some of these vocabulary strategies in your classroom? Why or why not?

4. How do you think Session Three could have been improved?
Appendix D:

Session Four

Postreading discussion

Postreading examples from *Stone Fox*

Vocabulary Tic-Tac-Toe

Wordo

Vocabulary Plays

Word Stories

Picture Dictionary

Session Four Evaluation

Workshop Evaluation
A post reading discussion gives the students another chance to grasp information that was previously misunderstood or unfamiliar, making distinct clarifications to the reader.
Post Discussion using *Stone Fox*

During a group discussion to check comprehension of the *Stone Fox* story, the following are some example questions using vocabulary from the story.

1. What did Willy harvest each fall?
2. Who was the tax man holding a derringer?
3. Was Willy disqualified for taking a short cut over the frozen lake?
4. Why was part of the race considered treacherous miles?
Students need to use the vocabulary in a variety of ways as well as take advantage of creating their own extensions. This helps apply the new knowledge in meaningful experiences.
Vocabulary Tic-Tac-Toe

Distribute to students cards with blank grids of nine squares (three across and three down). Then call out words (or put them on the chalkboard) and have students write them randomly into their grids (stress *randomly*, so students’ words are in different places). Once the words are written down, give the definition of the word and have the students “X” it out or cover it. When a student has covered three vertically, diagonally or horizontally, he or she calls out “Three in a Row”. The student must be able to give the definitions of the three words. Continue playing until all the words are covered.

*Independent Reading Activities*  *Scholastic, Inc*
Vocabulary Plays

Objective: Students will demonstrate meaning of new vocabulary words by writing and performing a play that incorporates the words.

Working in small groups, students write short plays that use vocabulary words in a way that either visually or dramatically tells the audience what the word means. Give students about one to two days to write their plays and then have each group perform their play in front of the class.

Quick Activities to Build a Very Voluminous Vocabulary  Scholastic, Inc.
Objective: Students remember a word's meaning by writing a story about the word.

Ask students to write and illustrate their own short stories that incorporate the meaning of the word into the story. After students have finished, read everyone's story aloud and then bind them together to make your own Word Stories book.

Quick Activities to Build a Very Voluminous Vocabulary  Scholastic, Inc.
Picture Dictionary

Assign each student a vocabulary word. Have students write the word and definition along with an illustration on their given page. Next, have students share their dictionary page with the class. Then, create a class picture dictionary of the vocabulary words.

Teacher Created Materials, Inc. 1994
Session Four Workshop Evaluation

1. List two things you learned about using vocabulary for post reading discussion and integration.

2. What questions do you have regarding using these vocabulary strategies?

3. Do you think you might use some of these vocabulary strategies in your classroom? Why or why not?

4. How do you think Session Four could have been improved?
1. Was the information presented clearly and effectively? What questions remain for you?

2. How might you use the information presented in your own classroom?

3. What follow-up would you like provided to help you use the ideas learned in this vocabulary workshop?

4. How do you think the workshop could have been improved?