

Vocabulary: Making Connections

Strategies to Help Struggling Readers Expand
Their Word Knowledge



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Why Do Struggling Readers Need More Explicit Vocabulary Instruction?

- They struggle to decode, so they often read simpler texts with simpler vocabulary.
- They are often not interested in reading, so they read less.
- They do not have a sufficient foundation in vocabulary to catch up with their peers by themselves.

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10 Ways to Provide Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers

1. Choose important, useful words to teach directly.

Tier 2 words

- rich in meaning
- appear often in various written text
- easy to explain in words that student knows
- can be used in various contexts

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Choosing Tier 2 Words

Which of the following would be considered Tier 2 words?

box generous armory coaxed sorry

disrupt conversation beetle essential tardy

marriage lipstick strangely reluctant insist

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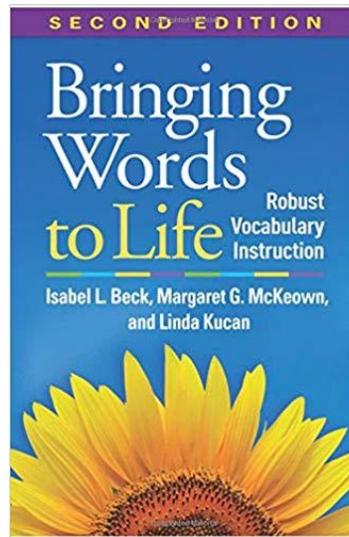
Choosing Words to Teach

“Ha!” said the Queen, speaking more to herself than to him. “A door. A door from the world of men. I have heard of such things. This may wreck all. But he is only one, and he is easily dealt with.” As she spoke these words, she rose from her seat and looked Edmund full in the face, her eyes flaming; at the same moment she raised her wand. Edmund felt sure that she was going to do something dreadful but he seemed unable to move. Then, just as he gave himself up for lost, she appeared to change her mind.”

- from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*

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Choosing and Teaching Tier 2 Words



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Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers (2)

2. Pre-teach the meanings of important, useful words before reading.

- Use student-friendly definitions.
- Use same definition each time word is discussed or practiced.
- Remind students of meaning when word is read in text.
- Relate word's meaning to written text.
- Encourage noticing and using words outside of the classroom – Word Wizard.

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Tier 2 Words – How to Teach

- Teach words in varying contexts. Use games, interactive activities.
- Provide multiple opportunities for review.
- Don't leave old words behind as new words are being learned.
- Use words in everyday conversations with students.
- Use vocabulary wall to aid with practice and review.

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Tier 2 Words – How to Teach (2)

Provide activities that help students understand the different contexts in which words can be used.

- True word learning goes beyond matching a word with a definition.
- Readers need to be able to understand and use words in different contexts.
- Relating words to everyday experiences increases “word consciousness”.

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Vocabulary Activities- Can You?

Can you **stroll** in a race?

Can you **coax** someone to **stroll**?

Can you **budge** a mountain?

Can a friend help you **budge** a heavy box?

Can you **shift** your feet?

What else could you **shift**?

Can your shirt be **steep**?

Can your driveway be **steep**?



- from *Connect to Comprehension*, Level D

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Vocabulary Activities – Show Me!

shrug dazzled concerned summon
pace bolted loomed fumble

- Put each word on an index card.
- Act out the new vocabulary words.
- Do as a group or one by one.
- Play as a game.

- from *Connect to Comprehension*, Level F

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Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers (3)

3. Review learned words frequently.

- Struggling readers need multiple exposures to new words.
- Use games, varied activities for review.
- Number of learned vocabulary words should continue to grow: don't leave the old words behind.
- Use words in everyday conversations with students.
- Use vocabulary wall to aid with practice and review.
- Use vocabulary deck and games.
- Incorporate new vocabulary words into your student questioning in LA and content areas. – “Vocabulary across the curriculum.”

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Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers (4)

- 4. Provide activities that help students understand the different contexts in which words can be used.**
 - True word learning goes beyond matching a word with a definition.
 - Readers need to be able to understand and use words in different contexts.
 - Relating words to everyday experiences increases “word consciousness”.

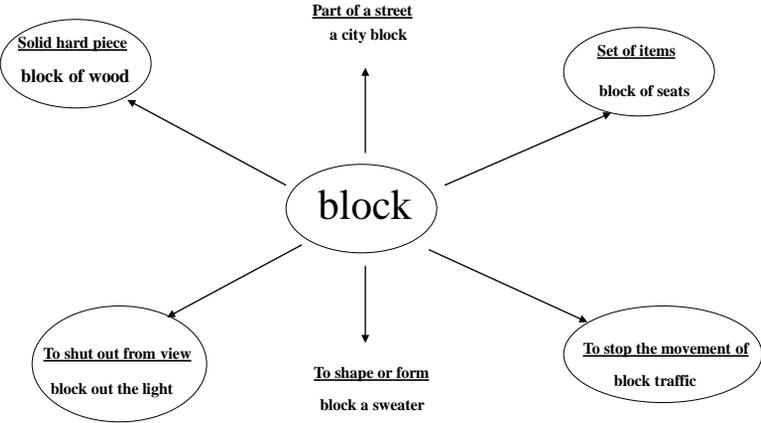
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Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers (5)

- 5. Teach words with multiple meanings.**
 - Helps students understand how context affects word meaning
 - Can help struggling readers can learn to think more flexibly
 - Improves overall comprehension skills

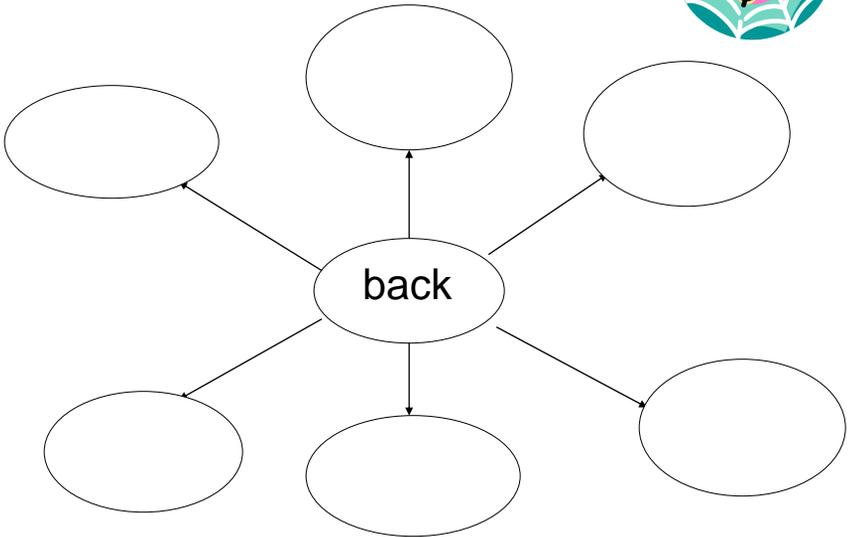
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Multiple Meaning Words- Block



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Multiple Meaning Word Web



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Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers (6)

6. Teach idioms and figurative language.

- Helps struggling readers go beyond literal understanding
- Teach each type of figurative language and encourage students to find and explain examples they find in reading.
- Encourage students to use each type in speaking and writing.

“The sails were like stiff sheets.” Does this way of describing the sails help us to picture them more clearly?

The rough bricks felt like _____.

The clear sky looked like _____.

The baby’s cries sounded like _____.

From *Connect to Comprehension, Level B*

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Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers (7)

7. Teach morphology/structural analysis (prefixes, suffixes, roots)

- Critical for decoding as well as vocabulary and comprehension
- Struggling readers should learn meanings of word parts (morphology) while they are learning to decode them (structural analysis).
- Teach one word part at a time, easier/most common ones first.

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Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers (8)

8. Use graphic organizers as visual aids.

- Provides multi-sensory component to vocabulary learning
- Encourages critical thinking about words
- Helps students make important connections among new and previously learned words
- Connects words with concepts
- Choose organizer that fits the purpose (semantic map, semantic feature analysis, word map, Frayer map, etc.)

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Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers (9)

9. Incorporate writing activities that involve using new and learned vocabulary words.

- Fosters reading-writing connection
- Helps with retention of new words
- Strengthens ability to write sentences with more complex word usage

Write the following vocabulary words from this story or display the Vocabulary Deck cards. Review the definitions with students.

steep slope thrash strain swift base romp

Ask students to write a good sentence using each of these new words. Encourage them to try to use more than one of the words in some of their sentences. Students should then read their sentences aloud.

From Connect to Comprehension, Level B

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Effective Vocabulary Instruction for Struggling Readers (10)

10. Provide instruction and practice in using context clues.

- Critical part of vocabulary instruction, since every unknown word cannot be taught
- Begin when students first begin to read with basic instruction
 1. Look for clues in the sentence that contains the unknown word.
 2. Look for clues in the sentences that come before or after that sentence.
 3. Try out the meaning in the original sentence to see if it make sense.
- Later instruction can center around specific types of clues: definition, example, synonym, antonym, etc.

NOTE: Context clues do not work very well in content area text, so morphology is more effective here.

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Making Vocabulary Connections

- “Connections between previously learned vocabulary words and new words encountered in reading help students understand the relationships that form the connections for these words. When instruction is based on strengthening these connections, students are not just asked to provide an abstract definition of a word, but instead are asked to link newly encountered words with their past experiences, which then represent meaningful concepts within the stories and informational texts that they are reading.”

“William H. Rupley ,John W. Logan,William D. Nichols”

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5 Guidelines for Making Vocabulary Connections (1)

1. Have structure and organization behind the words you present.
 - Word walls, word networks
 - Present words in related groups rather than randomly selected words at grade level.
 - Present words that focus on word parts/morphology.
 - Provide word options to differentiate instruction.

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Vocabulary Connections Guidelines (2)

2. Use multi-sensory instruction.
 - Use “Show Me” and other similar activities to incorporate movement.
 - Provide opportunities for writing about words.
 - Encourage use of words in oral language.
 - Provide materials and opportunities for word drawings, word cartoons.

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Vocabulary Connections Guidelines (3)

3. Keep lists of words prominently displayed to aid in making connections.
 - Idea is not to memorize definitions but to come to deeper understanding.
 - Can be done with graphic organizers – examples later

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Vocabulary Connections Guidelines (4)

4. Keep “growing” words and connections as you read to students and they read independently.
 - Refer to learned words and connections during interactive read-alouds.
 - Encourage students to add to word wall and networks as they are reading.
 - Encourage “word consciousness” and word curiosity.

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Vocabulary Connections Guidelines (5)

5. Make vocabulary part of every day.

- Use words yourself.
- Use words in other subject areas - “vocabulary across the curriculum”.
- Incorporate new words into your questioning.
- Encourage students to use new words in their writing.

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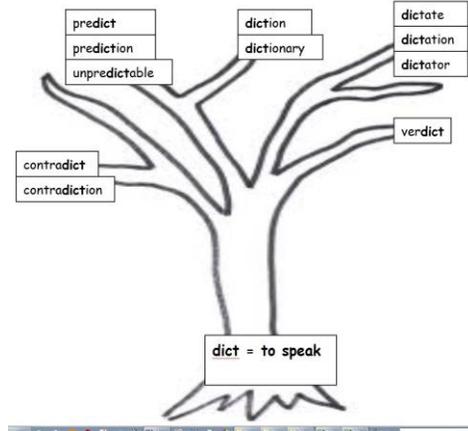
Ways to Make Connections

Teach morphology/structural analysis
(prefixes, suffixes, roots)

- Even young students can begin this study with common prefixes, suffixes.
- Upper elementary and older students benefit greatly from instruction and practice with Greek/Latin roots.
- Morphological study leads to great vocabulary gains as well as to “word consciousness.”

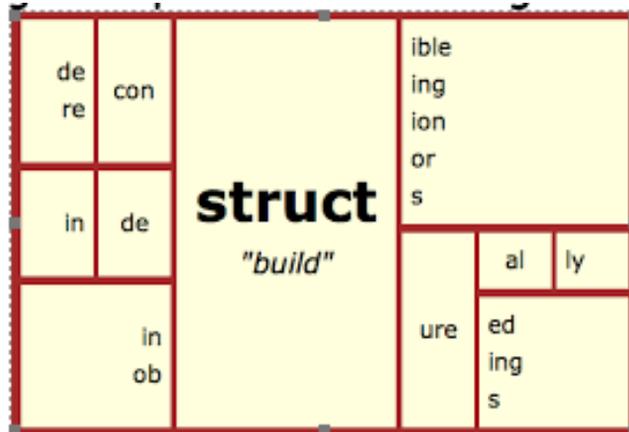
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Morphology Tree



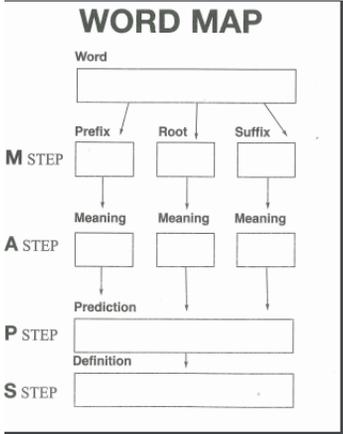
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Morphology Matrix



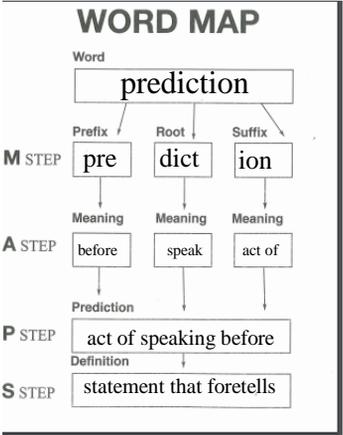
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Morphology Word Map



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Morphology Word Map (completed)



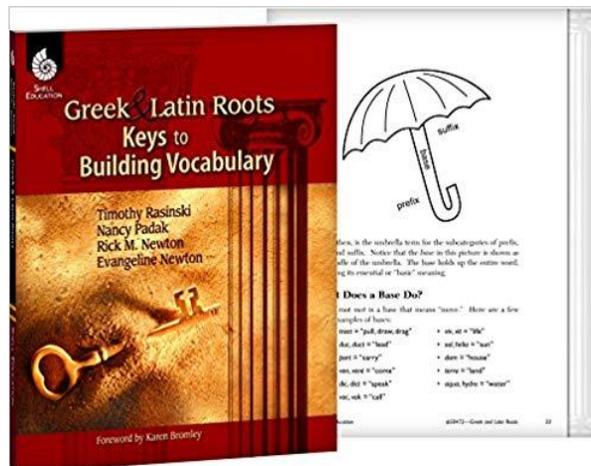
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Roots by Category

Further grouping makes learning roots more effective.

- **Action Word Roots -**
ject (throw), mit/mis (send), tort/tors (twist)
- **Noun Roots -**
aqua (water), bell (war), chron (time)
- **Animal, Senses Roots-**
bio (life), mort (death), vis (sight)

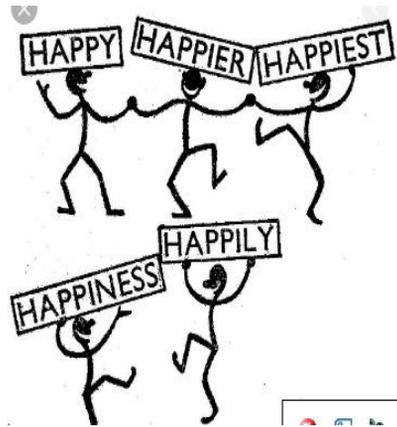
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Ways to Make Connections

- Incorporate grammar into vocabulary instruction



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Grammar to Aid Vocabulary Growth

- Teach basic parts of speech
- Teach affixes that form these parts of speech
- Noun suffixes – tion, ity, ness, ment
- Verb suffixes- ate, ize, fy
- Adjective suffixes- ful, less, ous, ic, ive
- Adverb Suffixes - ly
- EXAMPLE: final, finality, finalize, finally
- protect, protection, protective, protectively

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Grammar to Aid Vocabulary Growth (example)

Base words: soft

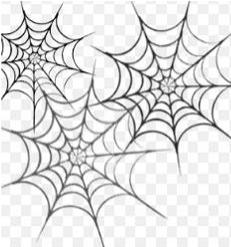
Noun	Verb	Adj.	Adv.
softness	soften	softer	softly

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Ways to Make Connections

Example: word webs

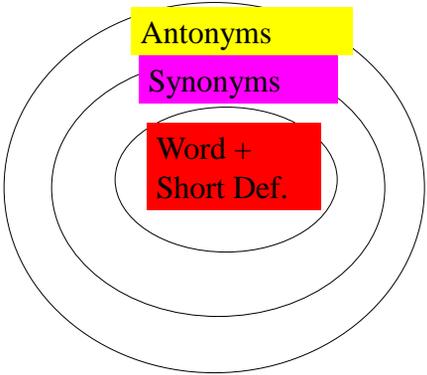
- Incorporate instruction on synonyms, antonyms, shades of meaning to grow “word webs.”



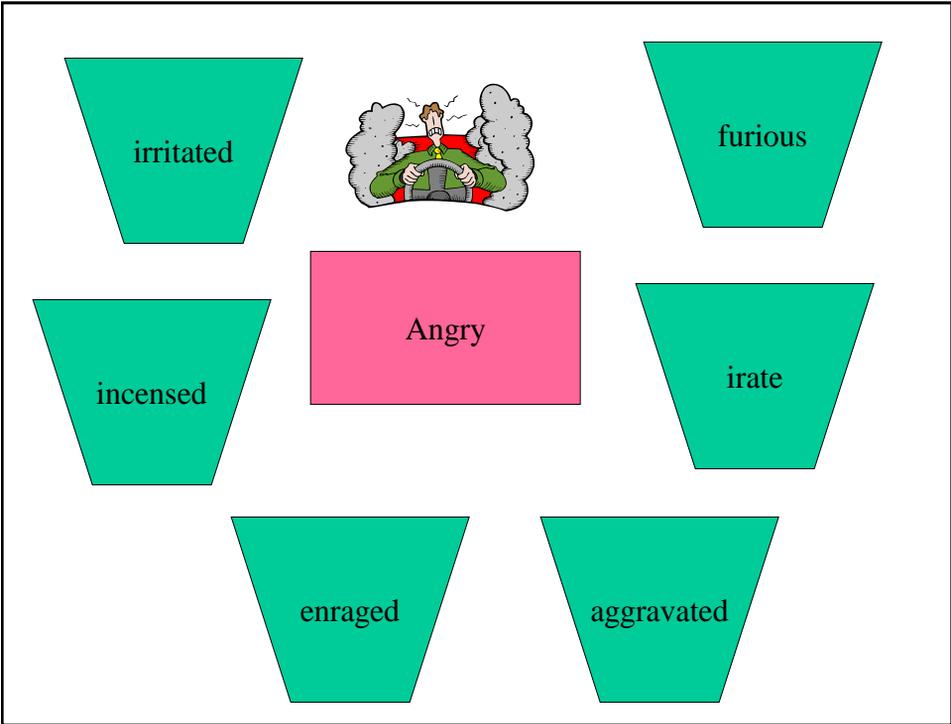
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Expanding Connections

Target Words



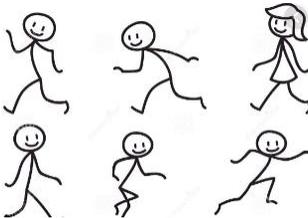
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Shades of Meaning

- Graphic – speeds of walking
- Meander, amble, saunter, stroll
- Strut, step, stride, swagger
- Hasten, scurry scamper, hustle



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Linear Array

- Linear Arrays: Linear arrays are a strategy to extend vocabulary by asking students to extend their understanding of words. Using opposites on each end, students add words that are in between.

Beautiful..... Ugly

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Word Sorts – Open/Closed

**Big
Words**

**Small
Words**

**immense
meager
miniscule
vast
massive
scanty
substantial
gigantic
puny
minute**

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Expanding Connections “Connect Two”

Helps to deepen students’ knowledge of words and to help them make different types of connections.

- Make a list of previously learned words.
- Ask students to choose two words they think might belong together.
- Ask them to state their reason for making the connection. “I would connect ---- and ----- because -----.”

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Assessing Vocabulary Knowledge

“Diagnostic tests of vocabulary....are non-existent.....Because there is no agreed-upon vocabulary for each grade, we simply cannot assess a student to determine which words need to be taught.” (Walpole, McKenna, Philippakos, 2011)

Knowing a word is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon.
Vocabulary learning is incremental and ongoing.

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Assessing Vocabulary Growth

Vocabulary Knowledge Scale

1. I don't remember having seen this word before. (1 point)
 2. I have seen this word before, but I don't think I know what it means. (2 points)
 3. I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____. (Synonym or translation; 3 points)
 4. I know this word. It means _____. (Synonym or translation; 4 points)
 5. I can use this word in a sentence: _____. (If you do this section, please also do category 4; 5 points).
- Use as pre- and post-assessment to measure growth.

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Word	1	2	3	4	5
urgent					
conceal					
bask					
stern					
potent					
morose					

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Summing it Up

Nagy (1998) summarized the research on effective vocabulary teaching as coming down to three critical ideas:

1. **Integration** – connecting new words to prior knowledge
2. **Repetition** – encountering/using the word many times in different contexts
3. **Meaningful use** – multiple opportunities to use new words in reading, writing, and discussion

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Student Connections Notebook

- Let's look at the organizers and other information in this valuable resource. We will practice as many of these activities as we can as time permits.

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