



Education

DISABILITY, LEARNING & SUPPORT

Vocabulary Instruction:

Working with students with language difficulties

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This presentation is part of a professional learning course (in development), designed by Robyn Armstrong, Coralie Janssens and Fiona Eastley for the NSW Centre for Effective Reading.



OUTCOMES FOR THIS SESSION:

Participants will:

- be given an overview of language difficulties and what this looks like in the classroom
- understand how vocabulary skills develop in students at various stages and the impact vocabulary has on learning
- understand the importance of vocabulary instruction and ways to support students by developing a rich and varied language classroom



VOCABULARY IS ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF LANGUAGE

Research has shown that:

- a child's vocabulary growth is directly linked to their overall school achievement
- the size of a child's vocabulary in kindergarten predicts his ability to learn to read
- the more words a child knows, the more information the child has access to
- having a large vocabulary helps children think and learn about the world

THE VOCABULARY LEARNING TASK

- Share with your neighbour your experiences with vocabulary instruction.
- How do students learn vocabulary?
- How many words do typical students enter primary school and high school with?
- How do you ensure your students learn these words?
- What is a language difficulty?

THE VOCABULARY LEARNING TASK

- The vocabulary learning task is huge
- The average fourth grader knows between 5,000-10,000 words
- The average high school graduate knows about 20,000+ words
- To acquire this extensive vocabulary 1,000 – 2,000+ root words per year have to be learned
- This translates to learning 3 - 7 words a day

Anglin (1993); Nagy & Anderson (1984); Nation (1990)



WHAT DIFFERENCES DO WE SEE IN STUDENTS BEFORE THEY COME TO SCHOOL?



	Words heard per hour	Words heard in a 100-hour week	Words heard in a 5,200 -hour year	4 years
	616	62,000	3 million	13 million
	1,251	125,000	6 million	26 million
	2,153	215,000	11 million	45 million

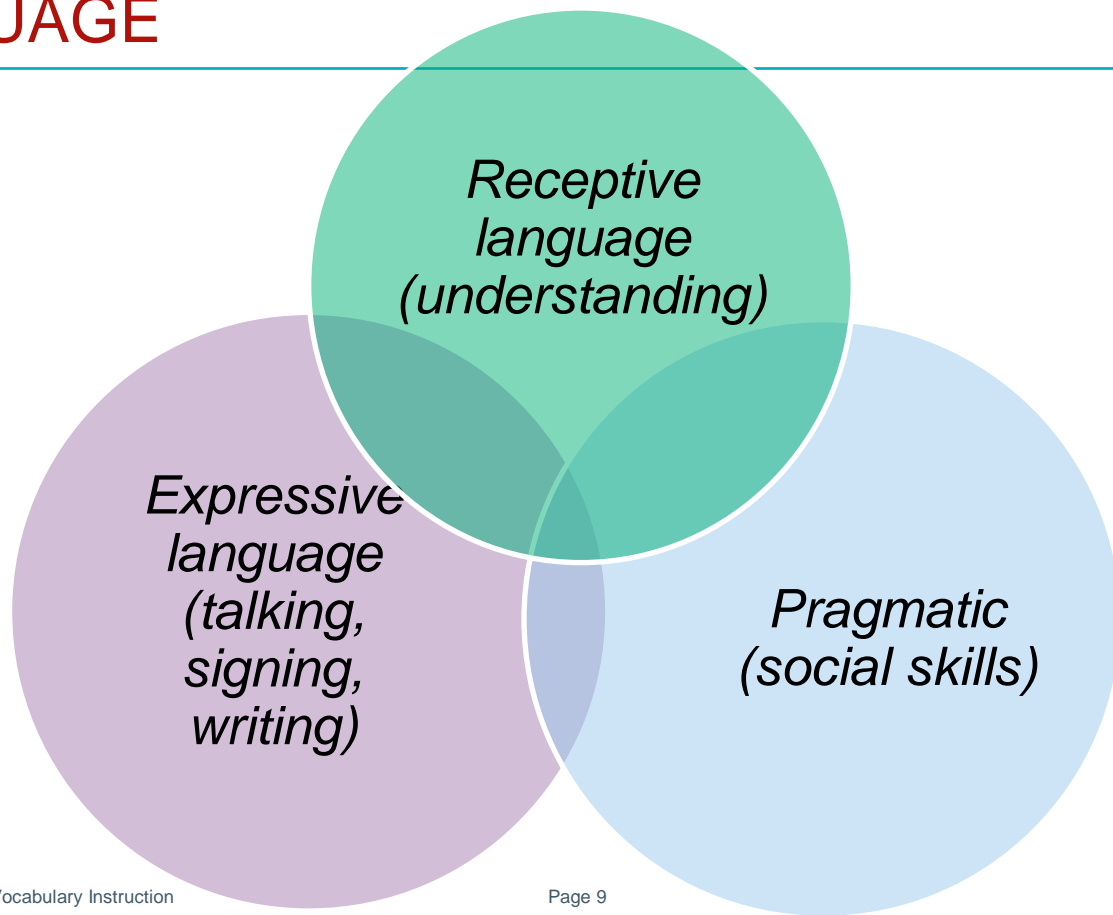
Betty Hart and Todd Risley (1995)

WHAT IS A LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY?

- Language difficulty refers to difficulties using and understanding language.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bemLJzDXOlk>

A LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY CAN INVOLVE ALL ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE



HOW COMMON ARE COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES?

- 20% of four year old children have difficulty understanding or using language
- 14% of 15 year olds have only basic literacy skills
- Children with a language impairment are six times more likely to have a reading problem than children without
- 46% of young Australian offenders have a language impairment
- There is a high correlation between communication difficulties and poor mental health

WHAT IS VOCABULARY?

The term vocabulary refers to the words we know.

This includes:

- **receptive vocabulary** – understanding of words that are read or heard
- **expressive vocabulary** – spoken/written use of words

VOCABULARY SKILLS YEARS K-2

Students with strong vocabulary skills may:

- know and use a wide variety of specific words
- read a lot, learn more words and find it relatively easy to learn new words (The Matthew Effects)
- be more likely to have good pre-reading skills and word identification skills
- respond more accurately to questions and instructions
- have a better ability to comprehend texts
- find maths word problems easier to understand

VOCABULARY SKILLS - YEARS K-2

Students with poor vocabulary skills may:

- have **difficulties using specific and technical** words
- **use hesitant language** ('um', 'ah') and non-specific words ('thing', 'this')
- **not remember words read previously** - take longer to learn new words
- be more likely to have **difficulty decoding words**
- often **give incorrect responses** during class discussions
- have **poor social and pragmatic skills**
- have **difficulties understanding stories read aloud** to them
- have **trouble answering questions** about written texts

'LEARNING TO READ' AND VOCABULARY

Texts are closely aligned with students' oral language abilities: vocabulary, sentence complexity.

Texts relate to familiar experiences

Devote attention to decoding words they are familiar with.

Understand words within language structures they use.

Recognise that events in texts usually happen within familiar contexts

VOCABULARY SKILLS YEARS 3-6

Students with strong vocabulary skills may:

- be able to use technical words when reading, writing and speaking
- be able to generate synonyms and antonyms for common words
- understand that some words have multiple meanings
- be able to orally define words
- have a good knowledge of word origins
- apply knowledge of prefixes and suffixes to understand meanings and create new words
- draw on topic knowledge to assist them in working out the meaning of unknown words

VOCABULARY SKILLS - YEARS 3-6

Students with poor vocabulary skills may:

- **use fewer, simpler words** and repetitive sentences when writing or speaking
- have **poor reading comprehension** - reduced depth of word knowledge
- have **difficulty using/understanding/remembering figurative language**
- have **difficulty learning new words**
- have **poor social and pragmatic skills**
- **not learn words easily** from conversations/discussions and need direct instruction and repetition
- show **difficulty inferring information** from text - limited word knowledge

‘READING TO LEARN’ AND VOCABULARY

Texts now become the context for encountering vocabulary that is not within one’s oral vocabulary

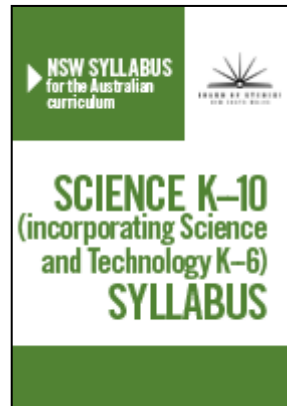
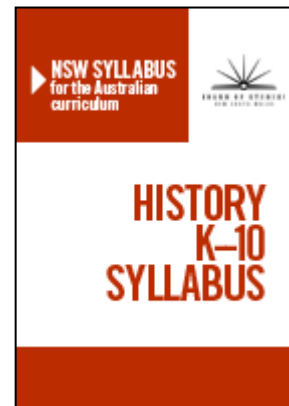
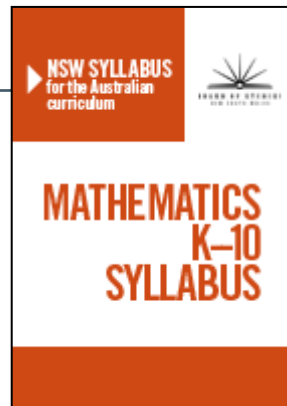
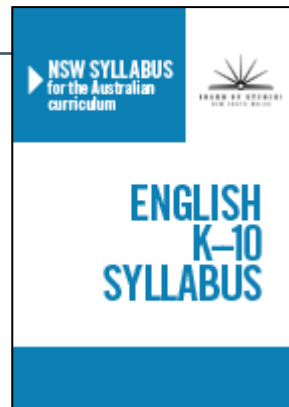
Kamil & Hiebert (2005)

Vocabulary development is both an outcome of comprehension and a precursor to it, with word meanings making up as much as 70% – 80% of comprehension

Nagy & Scott (2000) and Pressley (2002)

VOCABULARY IN THE SYLLABUSES

- English syllabus – Early Stage 1
- Mathematics K-10 syllabus
- History K-10 syllabus
- Science syllabus – Stage 3



NSW SYLLABUS – ENGLISH EARLY STAGE 1

Writing and Representing 1

CONTENT ENe – 2A

Respond to and compose texts

- create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge
- identify and use words around the classroom and in books during writing

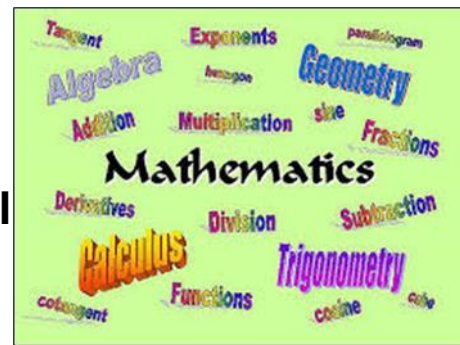


NSW SYLLABUS – MATHEMATICS

Learning across the curriculum - literacy

Students need to understand **written problems and instructions**, including the **use of common words with a specific meaning in a mathematical context**

.....students are provided with opportunities to **learn mathematical vocabulary** and the conventions for communicating mathematics in written form, including through its symbols and structures, **as well as verbally through description** and explanation.



NSW SYLLABUS - HISTORY K-10

Rationale

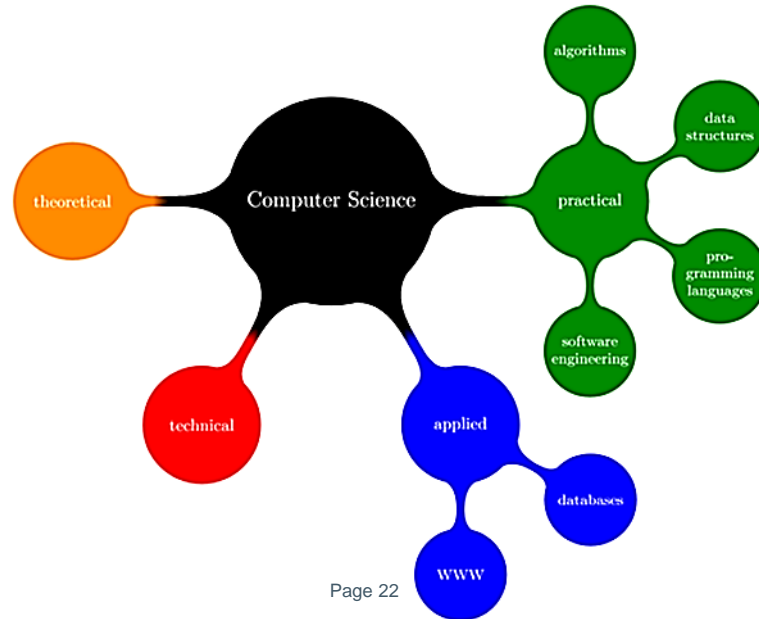
An investigation of an historical issue....**develops language specific to the discipline of History** and provides opportunities to further develop literacy skills.



NSW SYLLABUS – SCIENCE

Stage statements - Stage 3

.**They are able to discuss** how science and technology directly affect people's lives and are used to solve problems



WHAT IS THE LINK?: VOCABULARY & READING

Reading :

- recognising and/or decoding words automatically
- reading in a phrased and fluent way
- navigating texts to create meaning.

Vocabulary:

- understanding the meaning of spoken and written words
- using words to create and understand texts.

Responding to and composing texts

Vocabulary serves as the bridge between the word-level processes of phonics and the cognitive processes of comprehension.

Kamil & Hiebert (2005)

COMPREHENSION DEPENDS ON KNOWING WORDS

A word is a complex concept and includes:

- its meaning/meanings
- what it sounds like, and how to say it
- how to use it in a sentence
- what words it is frequently used with
- how to read it
- how to write it

WHAT IS KNOWING A WORD WELL?

Knowing a word is also knowing its:

- phonological and morphological form
- spelling patterns
- meanings and meaning networks
- linguistic history
- syntactic roles, grammatical usage
- meaning in any context, multiple meanings
- collocations

Vocabulary Fist-to-five



<http://ccssvocabulary.weebly.com/word-specific-vocabulary-assessment.html>

VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE IS A BUILDING PROCESS

For each exposure, the child learns a little about the word, until the child develops a full and flexible knowledge about the word's meaning. This will include definitional aspects, such as the category to which it belongs and how it differs from other members of the category.... It will also contain information about the various contexts in which the word was found, and how the meaning differed in the different contexts.

Stahl & Stahl (2004)

HOW DO WE LEARN NEW WORDS?

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/build-student-vocabulary>

HOW DO WE LEARN NEW WORDS?

How students move words into expressive vocabularies

- Learn common words orally
- Learn to read words they know orally – beginning reading
- Learn new words that represent known concepts
- Learn new words that represent new concepts
- Learn new meanings for known words – multiple meanings
- Clarify and enrich the meanings of known words

ACTIVITY

Word	Very well and can use it any context	I understand the word but can't use it	Somewhat, I have a general sense	Not at all
inveigh				
besmirch				
vicissitudes				
garrulous				

SO WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS?

Vocabulary learning by students with language difficulties is limited by their:

- inefficient learning strategies
- poor reading skills
- lack of independent reading
- reading texts that provide few new words
- already poor vocabulary knowledge that hinders learning new words from context

VOCABULARY TEACHING

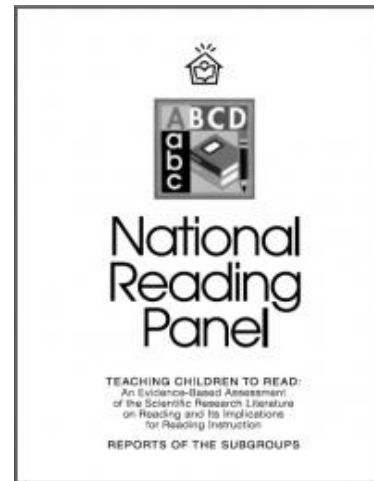
Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- comprehensive – more than a list of words
- integrated – in all KLAs in all grades
- school-wide – seen as important and supported

VOCABULARY TEACHING

National Reading Panel (2000) recommendations:

1. Vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly
2. Repetition and multiple exposures are important
3. Learning in rich contexts is valuable
4. Students should be actively involved in learning tasks
5. Dependence on a single instructional method will not result in optimal learning



CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

- Words should be introduced using everyday language as opposed to dictionary definitions
- Providing a vocabulary word in multiple contexts is preferable to a single context
- Instructional activities should promote deep rather than shallow processing of meaning
- Multiple exposures are better than single exposures to new words
- Encourage students to attend to occurrence of new vocabulary words in settings outside the classroom

A FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY

Incidental vocabulary learning

**Rich oral language
experiences**

Wide reading

Teacher read-alouds

Independent reading

Intentional vocabulary teaching

Specific word instruction

Rich and robust instruction of words in
text

Word-learning strategies

Dictionary use

Morphemic analysis

Contextual analysis

Word consciousness

adept diction

word play

word origins

HOW DO WE DO IT?

Putting children in an environment rich in words is obviously essential. However, children will not necessarily notice things in their environment that aren't perceived as being interesting, useful or valuable.

We not only need to surround children with rich language; we need to create a classroom culture in which words are recognised as being interesting and valuable.

(Stahl & Nagy, 2006)

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

Talking to children

- replace 'talk-talk' with 'book-talk'

'Goldilocks' words

- Not too difficult, not too easy – just right

The language of school is more than conversation

DEVELOP A RICH & VARIED LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

There is no way that specific word instruction alone can provide students with enough experiences or with enough words to produce both the depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge that they need to attain.

Nagy & Scott, 2000

Read a range of texts aloud to students of all ages

- use think alouds to discuss interesting vocabulary
- relate words to background knowledge

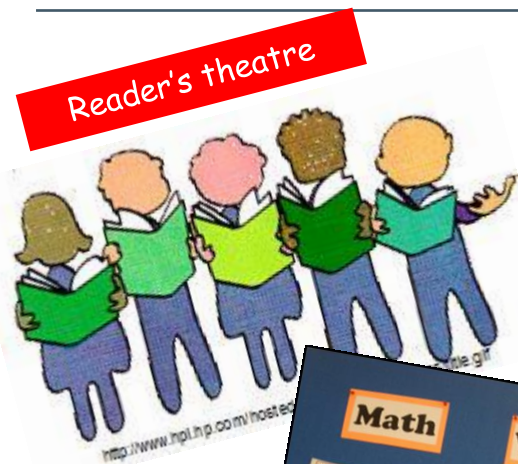
Facilitate on -going activities

- Word Wall
- Word Wizard
- encourage use of new words in speaking and writing

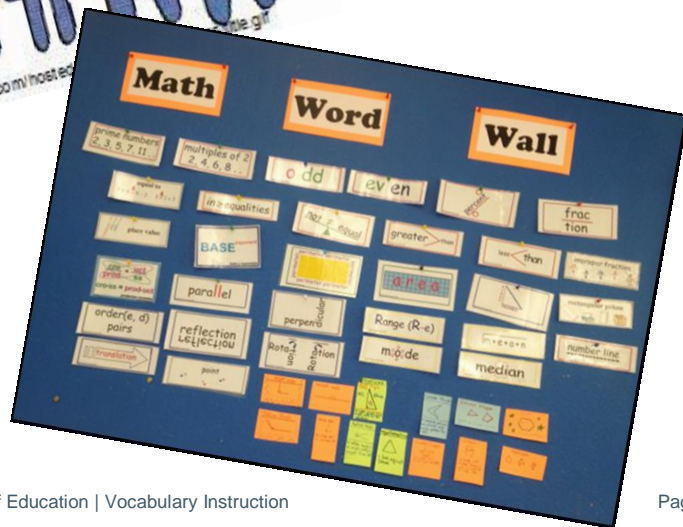
Encourage students to engage with a wide range of texts - independently at home and school

- Literature Circles
- word finder bookmarks
- reading logs and journals

DEVELOP A RICH & VARIED LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT



Reciprocal Reading				
Predict	Read	Clarify	Ask Questions and Discuss	Sum up
Skim/Scan the text looking at title and images to predict what it is about..	Read the text and test predictions	Are there words I don't understand? Is there anything that doesn't make sense?	Make up some here/hidden/head questions for others to	Summarise what the text was about.



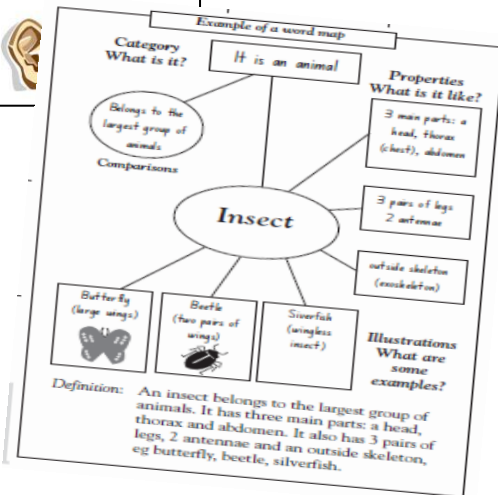
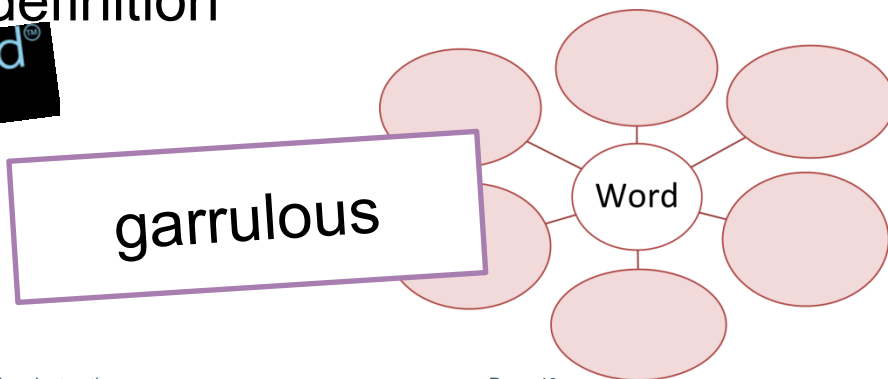
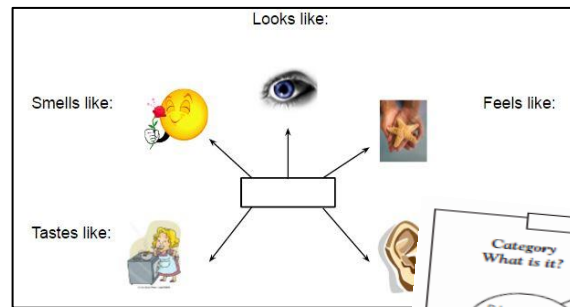
AVOID THE TEMPTATION TO 'DUMB DOWN' OUR LANGUAGE

Classroom supplies	Walking in line	Group time
accumulate	approach	articulate
arrange	efficiently	assemble
collect	file	contribute
dispense	linger	converse
distribute	orderly	cooperate
gather	proceed	deliberate
issue	queue	elaborate
replenish	rapidly	express
reserve	swiftly	participate
stockpile	vicinity	verbalize

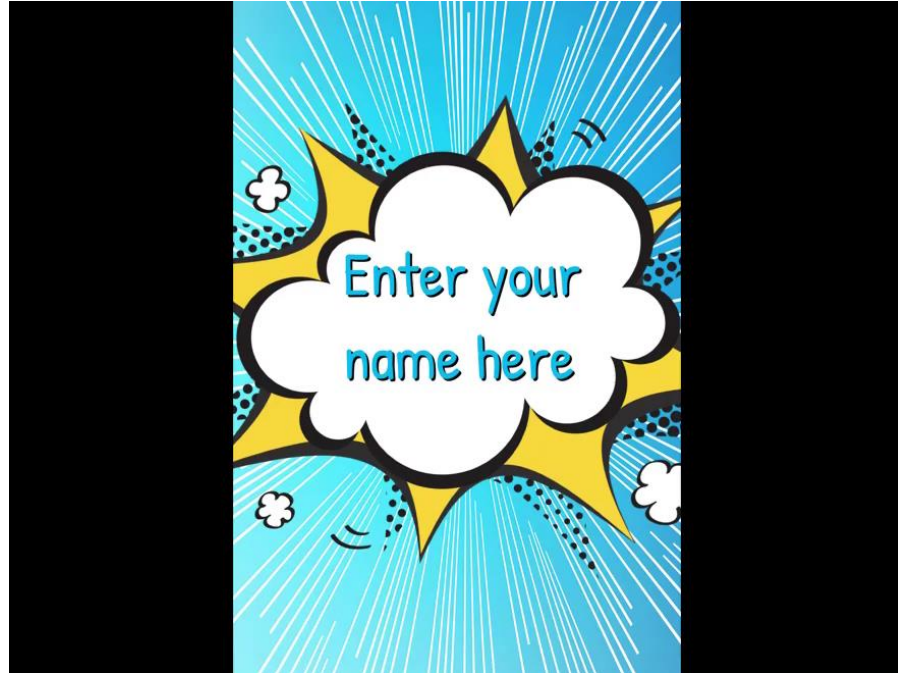
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/improving-student-vocabulary>

WORD LEARNING STRATEGIES

- Model the use of unfamiliar words for familiar concepts
- Word of the Day
- Sensory Webs
- Semantic Mapping – can be digital
- Concept of definition



USING TECHNOLOGY TO BUILD VOCABULARY



SESSION SUMMARY

Vocabulary is important

Students' vocabulary knowledge
can be improved

Expose students to a rich
language environment

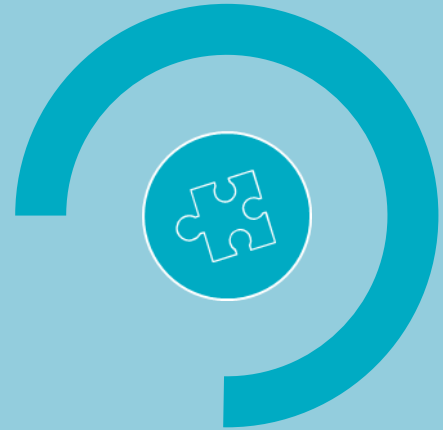
Promote word consciousness



VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION: WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

‘We bear witness to “the importance of ensuring that all children, regardless of their place in the vocabulary development continuum, are taught, encouraged and inspired to gain access to the meaning of words”’

E.J Kame’enui and J.F. Baumann (2012)



DISABILITY LEARNING AND SUPPORT

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