Effective Vocabulary Instruction

“One of the key indicators of students’ success in school, on standardized tests, and indeed, in life is their vocabulary.”

-Marzano and Pickering, 2005

Student vocabulary should be connected to background knowledge, which is acquired through the interaction of two factors:

1. Ability of the student to process and store information
2. The regularity with which a student has academically oriented experiences.

The “How” of Teaching Vocabulary

1. Begin with a story or an explanation of a term. Model to students how you would use this word in your life or in everyday conversation.
2. Have students recode. This could be done during a “Do Now” during which students define the word using their own definitions (not a definition which needs to be memorized)
3. Students should be able to create a graphic representation of the word, if they cannot do this, they do not have real understanding.
4. Students should be engaged with the word. Words should be taught, and then used daily.
5. Students should include words in their writing.
6. Students should participate in games using the words.
Processing and Storing Vocabulary
Too often we ask the questions, “Does that make sense?” “Did everyone write that definition down?” “Does everyone know what that means?” and then have students memorize and identify definitions for words. Vocabulary should be taught in a 4 step approach:

Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983)
I do: Discussing the vocabulary word and reading it in context.
We do it together: Looking up the word and choosing a correct definition in context
You do it together: Work in pairs to come up with definition in their own words
You do it alone: Creating a mind map using the word as the focus

Students should read passages in which vocabulary is infused and the words are processed in enough different ways that the brain has stored them in several places.
"Don’t teach it ‘til they get it right—teach it until they can't get it wrong"
- Eric Jensen, 2012

We want students to be working in Webb’s DOK, Level 4. The problem with using *Vocabulary Workshop* is that it is often used to have students memorize words and then take 30 question vocabulary tests. This kind of instruction is Level 1: Recall. We want students to be at Level 4 with their vocabulary, which requires investigation and extends their thinking.

We are going to concentrate on the following 100 words for the rest of the year. We are not going to test the students memorization ability, but rather their transfer.

**Top 100 SAT Words**

*abbreviate* -- (v) to shorten, abridge
*abstinence* -- (n) the act of refraining from pleasurable activity, e.g., eating or drinking
*adulation* -- (n) high praise
*adversity* -- (n) misfortune, an unfavorable turn of events
*aesthetic* -- (adj) pertaining to beauty or the arts
*amicable* -- (adj) friendly, agreeable
*anachronistic* -- (adj) out-of-date, not attributed to the correct historical period
*anecdote* -- (n) short, usually funny account of an event
*anonymous* -- (adj) nameless, without a disclosed identity
*antagonist* -- (n) foe, opponent, adversary
*arid* -- (adj) extremely dry or deathly boring
*assiduous* -- (adj) persistent, hard-working
*asylum* -- (n) sanctuary, shelter, place of refuge
*benevolent* -- (adj) friendly and helpful
*camaraderie* -- (n) trust, sociability amongst friends
*censure* -- (v) to criticize harshly
*circuitous* -- (adj) indirect, taking the longest route
*clairvoyant* -- (adj) exceptionally insightful, able to foresee the future
*collaborate* -- (v) to cooperate, work together
*compassion* -- (n) sympathy, helpfulness or mercy
*compromise* -- (v) to settle a dispute by terms agreeable to both sides
*condescending* -- (adj) possessing an attitude of superiority, patronizing
*conditional* -- (adj) depending on a condition, e.g., in a contract
*conformist* -- (n) person who complies with accepted rules and customs
*congregation* -- (n) a crowd of people, an assembly
*convergence* -- (n) the state of separate elements joining or coming together
*deleterious* -- (adj) harmful, destructive, detrimental
*demagogue* -- (n) leader, rabble-rouser, usually appealing to emotion or prejudice
*digression* -- (n) the act of turning aside, straying from the main point, esp. in a speech or argument
diligent -- (adj) careful and hard-working
discredit -- (v) to harm the reputation of, dishonor or disgrace
disdain -- (v) to regard with scorn or contempt
divergent -- (adj) separating, moving in different directions from a particular point
empathy -- (n) identification with the feelings of others
emulate -- (v) to imitate, follow an example
enervating -- (adj) weakening, tiring
enhance -- (v) to improve, bring to a greater level of intensity
ephemeral -- (adj) momentary, transient, fleeting
evanescence -- (adj) quickly fading, short-lived, esp. an image
exasperation -- (n) irritation, frustration
exemplary -- (adj) outstanding, an example to others
extenuating -- (adj) excusing, lessening the seriousness of guilt or crime, e.g., of mitigating factors
florid -- (adj) red-colored, flushed; gaudy, ornate
fortuitous -- (adj) happening by luck, fortunate
frugal -- (adj) thrifty, cheap
hackneyed -- (adj) cliched, worn out by overuse
haughty -- (adj) arrogant and condescending
hedonist -- (n) person who pursues pleasure as a goal
hypothesis -- (n) assumption, theory requiring proof
impetuous -- (adj) rash, impulsive, acting without thinking
impute -- (v) to attribute an action to particular person or group
incompatible -- (adj) opposed in nature, not able to live or work together
inconsequential -- (adj) unimportant, trivial
inevitable -- (adj) certain, unavoidable
integrity -- (n) decency, honesty, wholeness
intrepid -- (adj) fearless, adventurous
intuitive -- (adj) instinctive, untaught
jubilation -- (n) joy, celebration, exultation
lobbyist -- (n) person who seeks to influence political events
longevity -- (n) long life
mundane -- (adj) ordinary, commonplace
nonchalant -- (adj) calm, casual, seeming unexcited
novice -- (n) apprentice, beginner
opulent -- (adj) wealthy
orator -- (n) lecturer, speaker
ostentatious -- (adj) showy, displaying wealth
parched -- (adj) dried up, shriveled
perfidious -- (adj) faithless, disloyal, untrustworthy
precocious -- (adj) unusually advanced or talented at an early age
pretentious -- (adj) pretending to be important, intelligent or cultured
procrastinate -- (v) to unnecessarily delay, postpone, put off
prosaic -- (adj) relating to prose; dull, commonplace
prosperity -- (n) wealth or success
provocative -- (adj) tending to provoke a response, e.g., anger or disagreement
prudent -- (adj) careful, cautious
querulous -- (adj) complaining, irritable
rancorous -- (adj) bitter, hateful
reclusive -- (adj) preferring to live in isolation
reconciliation -- (n) the act of agreement after a quarrel, the resolution of a dispute
renovation -- (n) repair, making something new again
resilient -- (adj) quick to recover, bounce back
restrained -- (adj) controlled, repressed, restricted
reverence -- (n) worship, profound respect
sagacity -- (n) wisdom
scrutinize -- (v) to observe carefully
spontaneity -- (n) impulsive action, unplanned events
spurious -- (adj) lacking authenticity, false
submissive -- (adj) tending to meekness, to submit to the will of others
substantiate -- (v) to verify, confirm, provide supporting evidence
subtle -- (adj) hard to detect or describe; perceptive
superficial -- (adj) shallow, lacking in depth
superfluous -- (adj) extra, more than enough, redundant
suppress -- (v) to end an activity, e.g., to prevent the dissemination of information
surreptitious -- (adj) secret, stealthy
tactful -- (adj) considerate, skillful in acting to avoid offense to others
tenacious -- (adj) determined, keeping a firm grip on
transient -- (adj) temporary, short-lived, fleeting
venerable -- (adj) respected because of age
vindicate -- (v) to clear from blame or suspicion
wary -- (adj) careful, cautious
Vocabulary Instruction “Musts”


The National Reading Panel (NRP)’s synthesis of vocabulary research identified eight findings that provide a scientifically based foundation for the design of rich, multifaceted vocabulary instruction. The findings are:

- **Provide direct instruction of vocabulary words for a specific text.** Anderson and Nagy (1991) pointed out “there are precise words children may need to know in order to comprehend particular lessons or subject matter.”
- **Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important.** Stahl (2005) cautioned against “mere repetition or drill of the word,” emphasizing that vocabulary instruction should provide students with opportunities to encounter words repeatedly and in a variety of contexts.
- **Vocabulary words should be those that the learner will find useful in many contexts.** Instruction of high-frequency words known and used by mature language users can add productively to an individual’s language ability (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). Research suggests that vocabulary learning follows a developmental trajectory (Biemiller, 2001).
- **Vocabulary tasks should be restructured as necessary.** “Once students know what is expected of them in a vocabulary task, they often learn rapidly” (Kamil, 2004).
- **Vocabulary learning is effective when it entails active engagement that goes beyond definitional knowledge.** Stahl and Kapinus (2001) stated, “When children ‘know’ a word, they not only know the word’s definition and its logical relationship with other words, they also know how the word functions in different contexts.”
- **Computer technology can be used effectively to help teach vocabulary.** Encouragement exists but relatively few specific instructional applications can be gleaned from the research (NICHD, 2000).
- **Vocabulary can be acquired through incidental learning.** Reading volume is very important in terms of long-term vocabulary development (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). In later work, Cunningham (2005) further recommended structured read-alouds, discussion sessions and independent reading experiences at school and home to encourage vocabulary growth in students.
- **Dependence on a single vocabulary instruction method will not result in optimal learning** (NICHD, 2000).
There is also a list of critical nouns and verbs that students must know in order to be successful with the common core:


http://www.vocabulary.com/lists/296271

Word Walls MUST be present in your classroom:

http://fvhs.wcpss.net/Current_forms_documents/Literacy%20Light/Literacy%20Light%2008%20FVHS.pdf

Common Core Vocabulary Standards:
http://www.learningunlimitedllc.com/2013/07/5-steps-vocabulary-instruction/

**Vocabulary words should come from reading and content.**

6th Grade Vocabulary Standards
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.4
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on **grade 6 reading and content**, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.4.A
Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.4.B
Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *audience, auditory, audible*).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.4.C
Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.4.D
Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5.A
Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5.B
Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5.C
Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *stingy, scrimping, economical, unwasteful, thrifty*).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.6
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

7th Grade Vocabulary Standards
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.4
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.4.A
Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.4.B
Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., belligerent, bellicose, rebel).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.4.C
Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.4.D
Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.5.A
Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical, and mythological allusions) in context.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.5.B
Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.5.C
Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.6
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
7th Grade Vocabulary Standards

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4.A
Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4.B
Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4.C
Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4.D
Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5.A
Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5.B
Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5.C
Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.