What Would It Really Take To Improve the Vocabularies of Students' Who Enter School with Very Small Vocabularies? A Framework and Six Specific Suggestions

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INTRODUCTION

Some Students Have Markedly Smaller Vocabularies—1

- Students who may have markedly smaller vocabularies include special students, English-language learners, and students of poverty.
- Hart and Risley (1995, 2003) estimate that by age 3, some less advantaged students have heard 30 million fewer words than their more advantaged peers.
- Hart and Risley further estimate that these children enter school knowing about 1/2 as many words as their more advantaged peers.
- Moats (1999) estimated that linguistically disadvantaged children enter school knowing about 5,000 words compared to the more advantaged children knowing 20,000 words.

Major Purpose of the Presentation

- To describe a five-part program that stands a good chance of improving the vocabularies of students who enter school with very small vocabularies sufficiently that they can succeed in school and in their lives after school.
- To follow this description with six concrete suggestions for such a program, suggestions that would improve the vocabularies of all children.

The Vocabulary Learning Task Is Huge

- The average third grader knows something like 15,000 words.
- The average sixth grade student knows something like 25,000 words.
- The average high school graduate knows something like 50,000 words.
- This means that average students learn 3,000-4,000 words a year.
- This translates to 10 words a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year—with no time off for weekends, summers, or good behavior.

Some Students Have Markedly Smaller Vocabularies—2

- Our data (Graves, Sales, & Davison, 2009), gathered from a project titled The First 4,000 Words, indicate that some students entering school know even fewer words than Moats estimated. For example, the bottom 10 percent of first graders we tested knew only about 1/2 of the 1,000 most frequent English words.
- Unless something is done, this gap will continue to grow throughout both the elementary and secondary years.
What Happens if the Gap Isn’t Closed

A Program Powerful Enough to Promote Such Increased Growth Must Clearly Be Multifaceted, Long-Term, and Go Beyond Vocabulary to Affect the Curriculum as a Whole

- By multifaceted, I mean a program that assists students in learning new words in at least four different ways.
- By long term, I mean a program that lasts not for weeks, not for months, not just from K-5, but from kindergarten through high school.
- By the curriculum as a whole, I mean the content and sequence of the entire curriculum.

A Four Part Vocabulary Program

- Frequent, varied, and extensive language experiences
- Teaching individual words
- Teaching word-learning strategies
- Fostering word consciousness

Much of the Comprehensive Vocabulary Program I’ll Lay Out Today Is Described in These Three Books.

Frequent, Varied, and Extensive Language Experiences

- Immersion in a word-rich environment
- Rich and varied experiences in listening, discussion, reading, and writing
- Participation in shared book reading—for students with very small vocabularies
Immersion in a Word-Rich Environment—1

- By a word-rich environment, I am referring first to the physical environment: the classroom, the school library, the school, the home, and perhaps even the community library.
- The first key here is lots of books and other reading material, attractively displayed, invitingly displayed, on various topics, at various reading levels.
- A second key is words prominently displayed: on a word wall, at other points around the room, on the teacher’s desks, on word cards students have, in the library, around the school, and possibly even at home.

Immersion in a Word-Rich Environment—2

- In addition to a word-rich physical environment, we want to make the classroom a word-rich emotional and intellectual environment that encourages and celebrates rich word usage.
- One vital key here is to make the classroom a place that invites experimentation with words and with ideas—a safe place where a mispronunciation, a malaprop, or a misunderstanding is treated as an opportunity for growth and not something to be ridiculed or in any way derided.

Rich and Varied Experiences in Listening

- We need to consider listening and discussion experiences before reading experiences because most children—except for some ELLs—will not learn many new words from the reading they do in school texts when they are reading in 1st, 2nd, and or even 3rd grade material.
- With children reading at these grade levels, the principal key to exposing them to rich vocabulary is to read to them from books containing more sophisticated words than the books they read themselves.
- Another key—and this is for students at all grade levels—is to sometimes use some fairly sophisticated vocabulary yourself.

Rich and Varied Experiences in Discussion

- The key to getting rich vocabulary into discussion is to get meaty and somewhat academic topics to discuss.
- Another key to getting rich vocabulary into discussion is to study and discuss topics in some depth and over some period of time.
- I have found the “teaching for understanding” literature (Blythe, 1998; Perkins, 1992; Whisk, 1998) helpful in selecting topics.
- It is also the case that discussions of content subjects such as science and social studies often engender some sophisticated vocabulary.

Rich and Varied Experiences in Writing

The keys to getting rich vocabulary in students’ writing parallel those for discussion:

- Write about meaty and somewhat academic topics.
- Write about topics in some depth.
- Write about matters related to content subjects such as science and social studies, areas in which students have developed some knowledge.

Rich and Varied Experiences in Reading

- Beginning about grade 4, the vocabulary in school texts will be richer, and of course many trade books include rich vocabulary.
- Books, in the words of Steve and Kate Stahl, are “where the words are.”
- Even a little book like Andrew Clements’ Frindle, a book for 3rd or 4th graders, yields words like mania, investment, and disruption.
- As soon as they are able, children need to begin reading complex texts, texts rich in vocabulary and rich in content (Adams, 2010-2011).
Participation in Shared Book Reading: An Intensive Approach for Students with Very Small Oral Vocabularies

- Shared book reading is a well researched and fully described approach that has been shown to work well.
- I’ll first note some general characteristics of the approach.
- Then I’ll briefly describe two versions of it:
  - Biemiller’s Rich and Systematic Instruction
  - Sales & Graves’s First 4,000 Words

Characteristics of Effective Shared Book Reading

- Involves several readings of a number of short books.
- Focuses students’ attention on words.
- Deliberately stretches students and scaffolds their efforts.
- Employs carefully selected words and books.

Biemiller’s Systematic Instruction Approach to Shared Book Reading—1

- Select books that are interesting, enjoyable, and contain the sorts of words you want to teach: 30 books for the year.
- Select words known by some but not all students, 24 words per book. Typical words Biemiller teaches include difficult, hint, immediate, and particular.
- Day 1: Read the book once, including some comprehension questions.
- Days 2-4: Read the book 3 times, defining 8 of the 24 words each time. Definitions should be short and student friendly.

Day 5: Review all 24 words in new contexts but with the same definitions.

A comprehensive list of the words Biemiller recommends teaching is available in Words Worth Teaching. SRA/McGraw-Hill: Columbus, OH.

Biemiller’s Systematic Instruction Approach to Shared Book Reading—2

Sales & Graves First 4,000 Word Approach to Shared Book Reading—1

- The First 4,000 Words is an individualized, web-based program for ensuring that students in grades 1-4 can read the most frequent 4,000 English words (Sales & Graves, 2007, 2009).
- Targeted at English learners, struggling readers, and children of poverty with small vocabularies.
- Uses a multimedia system to diagnose individual student's knowledge of the most frequent words and begins teaching unknown words at the level at which the student knows about 80 percent of them.

Sales & Graves First 4,000 Word Approach to Shared Book Reading—2

- The program includes (1) individualized Web-based instruction presented on the computer, (2) a Web-based monitoring and record keeping system for teachers, and (3) a DVD to prepare teachers to use the program.
- A full description of the program, the words themselves (which make up about 80% of the words in a typical text, and a demo are available at thefirst4000words.com.
- The words on the list are ordered by frequency. The five most frequent words are the, of, and, to, a, five middle frequency file, boots, reflect, custom, background, and the five least frequent abuse, loving, generous, excessive, arteries.
Knowing only the 500 most frequent, a student could read only the words shown here.

Could it be an _______? The year before, _______ had seen one for the first time when his mother took him to a _______ _______ in _______. He had _______ _______ as the _______ a _______ by _______ on the _______ of a _______ that was _______ on the _______. Now _______ an _______ was right here in _______, and about to _______ over his house. Not _______ to _______ a thing, _______ opened the window and _______ up the _______ of the house to its _______. From there he had a good view of the _______. And in the _______, _______ ever_______, he saw the _______.

Knowing the 1,000 most frequent words, a student could read only the words shown here.

Could it be an _______? The year before, _______ had seen one for the first time when his mother took him to a _______ _______ in _______, _______. He had watched _______ as the _______ gave a _______ by _______ on the _______ of a _______ that was _______ on the ground. Now maybe an _______ was right here in _______, and about to _______ over his house. Not _______ to _______ a thing, _______ opened the window and _______ up the _______ of the house to its _______. From there he had a good view of the _______ River, _______ past the _______ place. And in the sky, coming ever _______, he saw the _______.

Knowing the 2,000 most frequent, a student could read only the words shown here.

Could it be an airplane? The year before, Charles had seen one for the first time when his mother took him to a flying _______ in _______, Virginia. He had watched _______ as the _______ gave a _______ by _______ on the _______ of a _______ that was _______ on the ground. Now maybe an airplane was right here in _______, and about to fly over his house. Not _______ to _______ a thing, Charles opened the window and climbed up the _______ roof of the house to its _______. From there he had a good view of the _______ River, _______ past the _______ place. And in the sky, coming ever closer, he saw the plane.

Knowing the 4,000 most frequent, a student could read all the words shown here except those in grey.

Could it be an airplane? The year before, Charles had seen one for the first time when his mother took him to a flying _______ in Fort Myer, Virginia. He had watched, _______, as the pilot gave a _______ demonstration by dropping oranges on the outline of a _______ that was traced on the ground. Now maybe an airplane was right here in Minnesota, and about to fly over his house. Not _______ to _______ a thing, Charles opened the window and climbed up the sloping roof of the house to its peak. From there he had a good view of the Mississippi River, flowing _______ past the _______ place. And in the sky, coming ever closer, he saw the plane (Giblin, 1997, p. 3).
The Setting for Shared Book Reading: The Cozy Cave

Shared Book Reading: Level 1

Mike Graves, Univ of Minn 31 32

Shared Book Reading: Level 2

Sample Game Format

Mike Graves, Univ of Minn 33 34

Story Level Listening Post Assessment: The Tree House Studio

Mike Graves, Univ of Minn 35 36
TEACHING INDIVIDUAL WORDS

Topics Dealt with in Teaching Individual Words
- Characteristics of Effective Instruction
- Rich and Powerful Instruction
- Introductory Instruction
- Repetition and Review

Some Characteristics of Effective Instruction for Individual Words
- Instruction that involves both definitional information and contextual information is markedly stronger than instruction that involves only one of these.
- Instruction that also involves activating prior knowledge and comparing and contrasting meanings is stronger still.
- More lengthy and more robust instruction that also involves students in actively manipulating meanings, making inferences, searching for applications, and frequent encounters is still stronger.
- BUT—STRONGER INSTRUCTION TAKES MORE TIME! With the number of words to be learned we very often do not have more time.

Three Types or Intensities of Instruction
- Introductory Instruction
- Rich and Powerful Instruction
- Repetition Review

INTRODUCTORY INSTRUCTION
- Pointing out words to be learned
- Providing glossaries
- Using pictures
- Context/dictionary/discussion
Pointing Out Words To Be Learned

Given the huge number of words that students need to learn, it is clearly impossible for you to teach all of them.

One thing you can do that takes less of your time than any sort of teaching is to identify some words in an upcoming selection that are important but that students may not know and just give students a list of those words telling students that they need to learn those they don’t already know them.

Students should be able to handle such a task beginning in about grade 3.

Not only does this save you valuable time, it gets students doing something they should be doing—looking for unknown words and learning them.

Providing glossaries

Probably the next least time-consuming and least intrusive thing you can do to assist students with the vocabulary of selections they are reading is to provide glossaries of important terms.

tsu-na-mi. A large wave that can occur after an underwater earthquake

Using Pictures

Solar system. The nine planets that revolve around our sun make up our solar system.

Someday it may be possible for humans to explore all the planets in our solar system, but that will not be soon.

Definition Plus Rich Context

Give students a definition for the word.

Give students the word in a rich context, typically one you create.

If time permits, discuss the definition, the context, and some other contexts in which the word might be used.

mandate

In a democratic government, a mandate is the authority granted by the people for government officials to act as their representatives.

President Obama believed that he had a mandate from the people to pursue health care reform.

RICH AND POWERFUL INSTRUCTION

- Semantic mapping (Heimlich & Pittleman, 1986)
- Frayer method (Frayer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969)

Semantic Mapping

1. Put a word representing a central concept on the board, overhead, lcd, smart board, etc.
2. Ask students to work in groups listing as many words related to the central concept as they can.
3. Display students’ words grouped in broad categories.
4. Have students name the categories and perhaps suggest additional ones.
5. Discuss with students the central concept, the other words, the categories, and their interrelationships.
### Semantic Mapping Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Run down</td>
<td>Hard to reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Make good money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowded</td>
<td>Don’t live there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drab</td>
<td>Often don’t care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Tenants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not cheap</td>
<td>People without a lot of money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower than some places</td>
<td>New immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too high</td>
<td>City people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Frayer Method

1. **Define the new concept.**
2. **Distinguish between the new concept and similar concepts it might be confused with.**
3. **Give examples, and explain why they are examples.**
4. **Give non-examples, and explain why they are non-examples.**
5. **Present students with examples and non-examples, and ask students to distinguish between them.**
6. **Have students present examples and non-examples, explain why they are one or the other, and provide feedback.**

### Frayer Method Partial Example—1

1. **Perseverance** is a trait that a person might possess. A person demonstrates **perseverance** when he or she remains constant to some purpose or task over some extended period despite obstacles.
2. **Perseverance** differs from **stubbornness** in that **perseverance** is typically seen as a positive quality and the goal toward which one **perseveres** is typically a worthwhile one. Conversely, **stubbornness** is usually seen as a negative quality, and the goal pursued by a person who is being **stubborn** is often not a worthwhile one.
3. A person who graduates from college despite financial responsibilities that require him or her to work full time while in college would be demonstrating **perseverance** because the goal is worthwhile and it takes a long and steady effort to reach it.

### Frayer Method Partial Example—2

4. Someone who goes fishing a lot just because he or she enjoys it is not demonstrating **perseverance** because there is no particular purpose here and no obstacles.
5. [examples and non-examples]
6. [student-generated examples]

### REPETITION AND REVIEW

Regardless of how well you teach a word initially, if you want students to have that word in their vocabularies over time, repetition is critical. Richek (2005) has suggested several approaches, two of which I’ll describe here.

- **Anything goes**
- **Connect two**

### Anything Goes

Display the words to be reviewed where everyone in the class can see them and explain to students that occasionally you are going to point to some of the words displayed and ask questions about them. From time to time, ask students to do something with the one or more of the words. They might:

- **Define the word**
  - Give two of its meanings
  - Use it in a sentence
- **Give an example of the thing named by the word**
  - Say where you would find the thing named by the word.
  - Note other words or concepts to which the word is related
- **Explain the difference between two of the words/concepts on the list**
Connect Two

Give students two columns of 5-10 words each and ask them to identify relationships between a word in column one and a word in column two.

bayonet hoarse muffled exuberant exposed pondered
insignificant ruefully roll splendor courier musket

TEACHING WORD-LEARNING STRATEGIES

Word-learning strategies are conscious and flexible mental processes that readers use in an effort to infer the meanings of unknown words they meet while reading.

Word-learning strategies are tools we teach students to use as they are reading.

When students master word-learning strategies they become increasingly independent and mature readers.

Without word-learning strategies, students are not likely to master the 30,000 words that competent readers learn by the end of 5th grade or the 50,000 words they learn by the end of high school.

The Principal Word-Learning Strategies

- Using context
- Learning and using word parts
- Using glossaries and the dictionary
- Recognizing and using cognates (for Spanish speakers)
- Recognizing and dealing with idioms (for all ELLs)
- A combined strategy for dealing with unknown words

When to Teach Strategies

Prior to grade 3, I would teach strategies rather casually and informally in the context of reading. Call this introductory instruction.

In the 3rd grade, I would begin more formal instruction.

In an ideal world, initial instruction would be largely concluded by grade 5.

However, if older students have not had quality instruction in word-learning strategies, they are likely to profit from instruction in at least some elements.

General Guidelines for Instruction in Word-Learning Strategies

Realize that teaching word-learning strategies requires significant time and effort on both your part and students’ part.

If you cannot teach all strategies, teach one or two strategies well rather than more strategies less well.

Use direct explanation as your basic instructional approach.

Temper the direct explanation approach with some constructivist elements.
Principles of an Approach That Combines Direct Explanation and a More Constructivist Approach-1

Give students opportunities to construct knowledge.
Motivate students to use the strategy, explaining and discussing its value.
Provide a description of the strategy and information on when, where, and how it should be used.
Model use of the strategy for students on a text the class can share.
Work with students in using the strategy on a text the class can share.

Principles of an Approach That Combines Direct Explanation and a More Constructivist Approach-2

Discuss with students how the strategy is working for them, what they think of it thus far, and when and how they can use it in the future.
Guide and support students as they use the strategy over time. At first, provide a lot of support. Later, provide less and less. Work over time to help students use the newly learned strategy in various authentic in-school and out-of-school tasks.
Review the strategy and further discuss students' understanding of it and responses to it from time to time.

A Combined Strategy for Dealing with Unknown Words Met in Context

Recognize that an unknown word has occurred
Decide whether you need to understand it to understand the passage.
Attempt to sound it out using your phonics skills.
(Consider that it might be a cognate.)
Attempt to infer its meaning using context.
Attempt to infer its meaning using word parts.
(Consider that it might be an idiom.)
Ask someone or consult a dictionary.

The One-Semester Sequence, Word Learning Strategies, My Colleagues and I Are Currently Developing.

- Compound Words: 1 week
- Prefixes: 3 weeks
- Inflectional Suffixes: 1 week
- Derivational Suffixes: 2 weeks
- Context: 4 weeks
- Dictionaries: 2 weeks
- A Combined Strategy: 3 weeks

A Poster from Our Word Learning Strategies Program

FOSTERING WORD CONSCIOUSNESS
Fostering Word Consciousness

The term "word consciousness" refers to an awareness of and interest in words and their meanings (Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002). Word consciousness integrates metacognition about words, motivation to learn words, and deep and lasting interest in words.

• Although fostering word consciousness differs from grade to grade, doing so is vital at all grade levels.
• There are some time consuming word consciousness activities, but for the most part fostering word consciousness does not take a lot of your time or your students’ time.

Word Consciousness

word consciousness n
1. an awareness of words
2. a positive disposition toward words
3. interest in learning words and learning about words
4. knowledge of various aspects of words

Some Types of Word Consciousness Activities

• Creating a Word-Rich Environment
• Recognizing and Promoting Adept Diction
• Promoting Word Play
• Fostering Word Consciousness Through Writing
• Involving Students in Original Investigations
• Teaching Students about Words

(Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2008)

Creating a Word-Rich Environment: Stocking a Classroom Library

Books about Words:
For 2nd Graders: Monalisa DeGross’s Donovan's Word Jar
For 3rd or 4th Graders: Andrew Clements's Frindle
For 5th or 6th Graders: Norman Juster’s The Phantom Tollbooth.
For All Ages: Roni Schottler’s picture book The Boy Who Loved Words

Creating a Word-Rich Environment: Encouraging Students To Define Words for Free Rice

freerice.com—a website run by the United Nations World Food Plan—donates 10 grains of rice to the World Food Program for each word a user correctly defines.
There are 50 levels of difficulty, and will pronounce words.
It requires using Firefox or Internet Explorer
Here are items from level 1 and level 10.

1. battle means: woods
   Margin means: pupil
2. rug means: edge
   Movie means: swirl
3. fight means: inconsistency

Recognizing and Promoting Adept Diction

1. Make it a point to use some sophisticated—but not exceedingly rare—vocabulary, and sometimes comment on your word choices.
2. Point out adept word choices in the material students are reading, listening to, or viewing.
3. Compliment student on their adept word choices in their discussions and their writing.
4. Have students keep some sort of personal record of new and interesting words they encounter.
**Promoting Word Play**

Play commercial games like I Spy, Baldenlash, Taboo Junior, Scrabble, and Taboo.

Play well-known homemade games like Hangman, Word Bingo, or Dictionary. (billsgames.com has a nice version of Hangman.)

Engage in word play activities with idioms, clichés, and puns.

Play Synonym Toast on [http://www.scholastic.com/wordgirl/synonym_toast.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/wordgirl/synonym_toast.htm)

Construct word play activities from books like Richard Lederer's *Pun and Games* or *Get Thee To a Punnery.*

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**Fostering Word Consciousness Through Writing: For Example, Focus on Vocabulary During Revising**

Is this the best word to get across my meaning?

Is the word precise enough?

Is it appropriately formal or informal?

Is it a word my reader will know?

Is it a word my reader will find interesting?

Have I used it too much? Should I use a synonym?

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**Involving Students in Original Investigations**

Because students are surrounded by words, vocabulary makes an excellent topic of investigation. Some possibilities include:

- The use of slang versus more formal vocabulary.
- The vocabulary of different groups: Short order cooks, movie people, sportscasters on TV, hucksters on TV or at fairs.
- The vocabulary of different age groups: Younger children, adolescents, parents, grandparents.
- The vocabulary that is appropriate in different settings: School, home, church, the cafeteria.
- The use of terms of address such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., Dr.
- The use of first names: on TV and in the newspaper, for females versus males, for children versus adults.

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**The Fifth Part of a "Vocabulary" Curriculum: The Curriculum as a Whole**

My comments here were particularly prompted by Marilyn Adams' excellent article, "Advancing Our Students’ Language and Literacy," which is the lead article in the current issue of *American Educator.*

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**A Sequential, Coherent, Spiral Curriculum—1**

If we really want all students to build powerful vocabularies, we need to attend to more than vocabulary.

As important as vocabulary is, we need to recognize that it is merely the tip of the iceberg. The iceberg itself, the factor that underlies thinking and reasoning, is knowledge.

Sixty years ago, Bruner proposed a spiral curriculum, a curriculum that began in the primary grades with some rudimentary knowledge on topics like social studies, science, and math, and systematically built on that knowledge across the years of schooling.

Such a curriculum would require that students learn about a topic at a certain level and then be put in a position to use that knowledge in their subsequent studies.

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**A Sequential, Coherent, Spiral Curriculum—2**

Although we have done better in adopting such a curriculum in some areas—notably math and science—we often have not done a very good job of it.

The students who are most likely to get a spiral curriculum in math and science are those in elite schools and courses; social studies seldom if ever presents a spiral curriculum, and language arts and reading seldom ever approach one.

Let me give an example of the sort of curriculum I am talking about using a snippet from a curriculum I was recently working with.

The program is called the Seeds of Science, and it is the result of a very large project sponsored by the National Science Foundation.
I was looking at it because I was writing a paper on selecting vocabulary to teach and was looking for an expository text.

What I found was daunting. The sixth book in the 2nd-3rd grade unit contained the following potentially unknown content words:

absorb  adaptation  burrow  clitellum  cocoon  decomposer  droppings  earthworm  habitat  hatch  moisture  nutrient  organism  predator  protection  reproduce  root  segments  soil  survive

HELP? Not only do these 20 items represent four or five times as many words as I believe I can teach at one time, but these are not only new words, not just labels for existing concepts, but word representing new and complex concepts that will require a good deal of instruction and work by the students.

But because this is a truly spiral curriculum, not all of these words need to be taught. This is the sixth book of ten books in the unit, and many of these tough words/concepts have been taught as part of previous lessons. In fact, the only words/concepts that are new here are borrow, clitellum, earthworm, and segments.

This illustrates the essence of a spiral curriculum, and it is an excellent example of what we need to do more of if students are to learn the vocabulary—and more important the concepts and strategies—that they need to learn to succeed.

1. Beg, borrow, or steal a sequential, coherent, spiral curriculum, one that begins with a small set of knowledge and skills and systematically introduces students to increasingly complex knowledge and skills that build on that original set. The most recent American Educator deals with this topic.

2. Immerse students in a language rich environment. Particularly, critical here are language-rich discussion and language-rich reading, and some of that reading needs to be challenging.

3. Provide a program of interactive oral reading for those primary grade children with very small oral English vocabularies. Doing this will require something like 30 minutes per day over an extended period of time.

4. Teach individual words using both rich and powerful and introductory instruction. And don’t forget to review the words taught.

5. Teach word learning strategies including context, word parts, the dictionary, cognates (for Spanish speakers), and idioms (for all ELLs). Identify the grade levels where this will be done—probably 3, 4, and 5—and be certain that this instruction is sequential and coherent and represents a spiral curriculum.

6. Foster word consciousness—students’ interest, awareness, and positive disposition toward words—in every way possible. This does not take much of your time, it does not take much of your students’ time, and it should be fun for everyone.