

**Intention: Vocabulary Development**

**Words of our World (WOW) (Early Childhood–Grades PK–2; Upper Elementary Grades 3–6)**

Words of our World (WOW) is a vocabulary program which addresses the use of cognates and common roots in Spanish and English to further develop word knowledge. Students in bilingual and/or dual language programs can benefit from this program. Students who are interested in learning Spanish can use their knowledge of English to develop Spanish vocabulary.

In addition, students who are native Spanish speakers can use their native language to further develop their English vocabulary skills. Lessons include graphic organizers, visual aids and a “hands-on” approach for working with and discovering new words.

Words of our World can be used with students who are English language learners. The lessons are designed to help students who are native Spanish speakers understand the similarities of words and word origins within and across the two languages. Sixty percent of the English language is derived from Latin. Spanish speakers can expand their English vocabulary skills by making use of their existing word knowledge and applying this knowledge for learning new words in English.

From: <http://www.valleyspeech.org/wow.html>

## Intervention: Vocabulary Development

### Academic Vocabulary (All Grade Levels)

**What is Academic Vocabulary?** Academic vocabulary is the vocabulary **critical to understanding the concepts of the content taught in schools**. In identifying academic vocabulary for instruction teachers must remember that **not all terms are of equal importance**.

- Some terms are critically important.
- Some terms are useful but not critical.
- Some terms are interesting but not useful.

**Why teach Academic Vocabulary?** According to Marzano (2005) the strongest action a teacher can take to ensure that students have the academic background knowledge to understand the content they will encounter is providing them with direct instruction in these terms. When students understand these terms, it is easier for them to understand the information they will read and hear in class.

### Factoids

- **Vocabulary** assessed in first grade predicted over **30%** of reading comprehension variance in **11<sup>th</sup> grade** (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1977).
- While **four encounters** with a word did not reliably improve reading comprehension, **12 encounters did** (McKeown, Beck, Omanson, and Pople, 1985).
- One of the **most critical services** a teacher can provide, particularly for students who do not come from academically advantaged backgrounds, **is systematic instruction** in important academic terms (Marzano and Pickering, 2005).

- The same student placing at **the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile** in reading comprehension, with no direct vocabulary instruction, placed at **the 83<sup>rd</sup> percentile** when provided specific instruction in academic vocabulary (Stahl and Fairbanks, 1986).

### **ELL Students and Academic Vocabulary**

Marzano and Pickering (2005), emphasize the importance of teaching ELL academic vocabulary in a systematic approach. They suggest that vocabulary programs that emphasize high-frequency terms fail to provide the background knowledge needed for student success in the content areas. Students learn high-frequency words through wide reading of fiction and informational text.

### **Six step process for teaching Academic Vocabulary**

The process of teaching Academic Vocabulary includes six steps. The focus of steps 1-3 is on introducing new terms and steps 4-6 offer ways to review the terms providing students with a deeper insights.

1. Provide a description, explanation, or example of the new term. If working with ELL students the teacher should first provide the description in the native language and a visual representation of the word.
2. Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words. ELL students may write their definition in their native language.
3. Ask students to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic of the term. This activity is critical for ELL students.
4. Engage students every other week in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms.
5. Every other week ask students to discuss the terms with one another.
6. Once a week involve students in games that allow them to play with the terms.

## References

Cunningham, A. and Stanovich, K. (1977). Early reading acquisition and its relation to reading experience and ability 10 years later. *Developmental Psychology*, 33, 934-945.

Marzano, R. and Pickering, D. (2005). *Building academic vocabulary: Teacher's manual*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

McKeown, M., Beck, I., Onanson, R., and Pople, M. (1985). Some effects of the nature and frequency of vocabulary instruction on the knowledge and use of words. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20, 522-535.

Stahl, S. and Fairbanks, M. (1986). The effects of vocabulary instruction: A model-based meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 56, 72-110.

*Note: Vocabulary lists in English & Spanish by Grade Level can be found at link to website shown below.*

From: <http://www.u-46.org/roadmap/files/vocabulary/acadvoc-over.pdf>