

IMPLEMENTING THE RICH AND INTENSIVE METHOD
OF VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION
FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

by

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To Neil

*in appreciation
of your
assistance, patience, and support*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Background	3
Rich and Intensive Method of Vocabulary Instruction	7
Chapter Two: Literature Review	11
Introduction	11
First Language Vocabulary Instruction and Incidental Learning Vs. Explicit Vocabulary Instruction	12
Incidental Vocabulary Learning	13
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction	14
Rich and Intensive Vocabulary Instruction	16
Second Language Vocabulary Instruction	20
Models of First Language Reading and Vocabulary Instruction	22
Top-Down Model	23
Bottom-Up Model	24
Interactive Model	25
Secondary Language Reading	27
Conclusion	29
Chapter Three: Methodology	30
Research Paradigm	30
Subjects	31
Reading Proficiency of Students	32

Discipline	33
Length of Time	34
Curriculum.....	34
Assessment	39
Conclusion.....	42
Chapter Four: Results	44
Pre-testing.....	44
Pre-test scores	44
The Curriculum.....	46
Tests Taken during Curriculum.....	46
Students' Scores on Tests Taken during the Curriculum.....	47
Post-testing	47
Post-test scores.....	49
Factors Affecting Post-test Scores.....	52
Conclusion.....	53
Chapter Five: Conclusion.....	54
Results	54
Implications for Vocabulary Instruction.....	55
Implications for Further Research	57
Appendix	59
References	79

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 4.1	Student performance on tests	44
Table 4.2	Numbers of students scoring at percentage levels for all tests	49
Table 4.3	Post-test Scores by Question Type	51

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The research question at the heart of this project is: will the rich, explicit, and intensive vocabulary instruction model of Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) that my district has endorsed for general vocabulary instruction be successful for English-language learners as well?

This research question is important for the national conversation around minority-language instruction. The National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth has recently found significant correlations between “English vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension, syntactic skills, and the ability to handle meta-linguistic aspects of language, such as providing definitions of words,” and English reading and writing proficiency among minority-language students (August and Shanahan, 2006, p. 4). These same skills in vocabulary acquisition and comprehension are part of the model developed by Beck et al. (2002) for vocabulary instruction for the general population. This project applies their model to minority-language students and assesses the results.

How many words does an average school-age child learn in a day? Research varies in specific estimates. Joos (1964) estimates three words a day and Miller (1978) estimates 20. Beck et al. (2002) estimate seven as the most commonly cited number for the *average* learner. These numbers don’t represent all children, of course. Beck, et al. found that as few as one or two words are learned in a day, if any at all, for at-risk learners. Furthermore, at school entry, there is a huge discrepancy between vocabulary

skills of middle socioeconomic status (SES) and lower SES children, a gap estimated to be as high as 6,000 words (Hart & Risley, 1995).

The vocabulary deficits of second-language learners (L2 learners), who arrive in the U.S. in later grades speaking no English, represent even *greater* challenges. They begin school at a disadvantage because they have fewer words in their English word bank than most all students whose first language is English. As they move up through the grades, they lag behind even further (Carlo, et al., 2004). Lack of vocabulary affects their reading across the curriculum because they have difficulty comprehending grade-level material. Cumulative vocabulary deficits for English language learners (ELLs) go beyond those of the average native English speaker who enters a grade school classroom and finds that she is ahead of a certain number of her peers and behind others.

Elementary-age English language learners do not keep pace with their mainstream peers in the area of vocabulary acquisition. Why does this matter for ELLs? We know that until recently, they have been accepted as “emerging” readers. They have not normally been expected to be on a level playing field with native speakers until they have had the time to acquire English. This process of catching up to native speakers academically may take five to 10 years (Thomas & Collier, 1995). Under the No Child Left Behind Act, (*No Child Left Behind*, 2001), however, all children are expected to be on grade level by 2014, ELLs included. Schools that do not meet NCLB mandates face unwanted sanctions. Presented with this requirement, teachers may come to see ELLs who are not performing up to par as potential liabilities in the classroom, rather than

students experiencing a natural phenomenon in the learning of a second language. Under the constraints imposed by this legislation, we need to identify a pedagogical answer to the pressure to “hurry up” ELL readers who lag behind their peers in vocabulary and reading ability.

Traditionally, if a student in a classroom does not recognize a word encountered in reading, the teacher may well urge, “look it up in the dictionary.” In the case of the ELL, that task may prove daunting because using the dictionary successfully presupposes a range of sophisticated reading and language skills (Miller & Gildea, 1985) and so an ESL teacher may encourage the student to try to understand the word from the context in which it appears. If that approach does not immediately prove successful, the student may turn to peers for help--but in an ESL classroom, this may simply compound the student’s difficulty. Why? Because ELLs are also not able to use linguistic clues, nor do they have a full command of grammar; these deficits add to reading comprehension problems (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Difficulty with reading comprehension discourages students from reading (Beck, et al., 2002). This is what is referred to as the “Matthew Effect” (Stanovich, 1986): good readers read a lot and progress, while struggling readers read less and don’t progress with either vocabulary or text skills and, thus, get further behind.

What is to be done for such English language learners, who face immense challenges in the area of vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension? With a general classroom population in view, Beck, et al. (2002) suggest a systematic program

of “rich and intensive or in-depth” vocabulary instruction that implements various activities that go beyond the provision of short definitions. They suggest exercises in inferring, idea completion, and connections to students’ lives, to name a few. They believe that schools could do far more in advancing language development for at-risk, and struggling lower achievers. The strategies they discuss are intended for all students to use, but are they practical and usable for English-language learners? Is the approach exactly what ELLs need? Can ELLs easily use this “rich and intensive” method, or are there inherent problems?

Background

In 1998, the inner-city grade school where I taught ESL was targeted under the No Child Left Behind Act as not making adequate yearly progress on standardized tests. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, any school that doesn’t make adequate yearly progress after a certain amount of time faces serious consequences, such as compulsory restructuring.

In 1998, my school district hired a principal to supervise a reform model at my school, and as a specialist in the balanced literacy program (Cambourne, 1995), he advocated for its implementation.

Balanced literacy is a reform model and an offshoot of whole language instruction (Carbo, 1996). Balanced literacy employs letter-sound correspondence and decoding as well as holistic experiences in reading and writing.

Components of balanced literacy include the following:

- reading strategies
- vocabulary development
- language development
- developing independence in reading

Aspects of the program in which we were initially trained included guided reading, running records, and shared reading. In August of 2000, the program was just off the ground and my duties chiefly lay in teaching intermediate guided reading.

Most of the students who were in my groups were really struggling with reading, although their social language skills were good. One particular fourth grade student had reading skills so low that we were hard pressed to get reading books easy enough for him. They were one, two, three, four, or more years behind the native English speakers in reading, according to running records (Fountas, Irene, and Pinnell, 1991). Running records were the recommended means of placement of students in texts for guided reading. Language proficiency was a determining factor, also, for the ELLS. Guided reading, a key component in balanced literacy, really seemed to help these students over the next four years. In guided reading, students are placed in reading books in which they feel comfortable and with which they can succeed until they are ready to go on to the next level of text. Before guided reading was introduced, my students had been taught from a basal reader with all the rest of the classroom students. Many of the ELLs could hardly decode the basal readers, let alone comprehend the material in them. Needless to

say, they generally could not understand the vocabulary in the basal readers except for the very easiest of words.

The balanced literacy model seemed to be instrumental in boosting reading scores in subsequent years on standardized tests, especially in the area of comprehension. Collaboration between classroom and ESL teachers and the inclusion model of instruction have proven to be valuable, too. Even after the fourth year, however, students continued to score poorly in vocabulary in our school and throughout the district as well. This was, therefore, a concern not only for my principal and the teachers in my school, but for administrators, mainstream teachers, and specialists, district-wide. Indeed, the 2006 Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth (August and Shanahan, 2006) finds that vocabulary knowledge, first named among other factors, is linked to English reading and writing proficiency among language-minority students in schools across the United States.

At the suggestion of our principal, I and other teachers in my school decided to study the issue as our group professional development plan. We learned that our district suggests a certain vocabulary approach in instruction. The district has endorsed the rich and intensive method of Beck et al. (2002) for vocabulary instruction. We all read the book and implemented certain aspects of it into curriculum. When I moved on to a junior high ESL reading position, I carried my interest in this particular vocabulary acquisition approach into the junior high ESL reading classroom. On the one hand, I was intrigued

by the methods suggested in the book, but I also wondered if they were applicable to teaching ELLs.

Rich and Intensive Method of Vocabulary Instruction

What does research say about vocabulary instruction? There are differing opinions. Until recently, many educators and scholars did not see explicit vocabulary instruction as effective. Krashen and his colleagues have advocated extensive reading experience for vocabulary acquisition (e.g., Krashen, 1989). However, many others have challenged this position as being alone sufficient. Beck, et al. (2002) say that not all students can learn words from context because of the ambiguity context may pose. They say that proponents of context-only learning are assuming that students are learning vocabulary successfully, but instead of keeping pace with mainstream peers, ELLs are falling behind in vocabulary when context alone is used to teach vocabulary. They maintain that the difficulty is not that there are too many words to be taught--an unmanageable problem--but that the *right* words are not being taught. Beck, et al. call these particular words tier two words. Tier two words are found across domains: words that are found in literature, in science or history texts, and are used by educated people. Words such as relevant, or commend, or autonomous are the types of words to be taught. This, therefore, is a manageable task in the classroom.

Beck, et al. (2002) believes it is necessary to teach these words from context and to teach intensively, that is, to give simple but deep definitions and to build these words into students' vocabulary with activities that promote using the words. The activities

demand critical thinking and engagement on the part of the students. They suggest (2002, p. 89) activities using word relationships: for example, questions that juxtapose two target words, such as, “When would *compensation* not be *sufficient*?” In pairing the two, targeted words, the students are forced to consider whether a relationship exists. The student attempts to connect ideas and make associations. This goes far beyond simply defining a word. Beck, et al. contend that wide reading is fine for good readers in order to increase vocabulary, but for poor readers, learning new words as they read is almost impossible.

Another way in which word instruction can be taught in a rich manner is to look at different facets of words or alternative definitions. The students are given two examples of a word and asked to pick the correct one after being told the definition. For example:

retort

The player comes back with a quick answer after the referee calls a foul on him.

The player complains to the coach after the referee calls a foul on him.

The descriptions are similar but the students must differentiate among meanings (Beck et al., 2002).

Beck, et al. (2002) obviously do not think reading from context is enough to learn words. This is a skill that practiced readers with strong literate backgrounds can do if the conditions are right for the ability to infer. I do not think that my grade school ELLs would have been able to pick up meanings of words from context alone.

Nowhere is this more the case than with idiomatic speech, which *Webster's New World Dictionary* (1968) defines as “patterns of language having a meaning other than the literal.” When teachers use idiomatic language in the classroom, they unintentionally present impediments to second-language learners who cannot recognize the non-literal meanings of the phrases – “leaving them in the dust,” so to speak. Furthermore, we cannot assume that all native speakers understand idiomatic phrases. Idiomatic phrases can be considered like tier two words—they are used in everyday speech, across domains—yet because they mean something other than the literal sense, the dictionary-definition approach to vocabulary is particularly unhelpful in regard to them. While Beck et al. do not discuss idiomatic speech, the concerns they raise about tier two words with first-language learners can be extended to the difficulties second-language learners have with idioms. This suggests that their methods might be especially appropriate for vocabulary instruction involving idiomatic speech with ELLs.

This is also the case with many ambiguous language structures. Words or phrases such as *although*, *therefore*, or *henceforth* are not always automatically understood by ELLs or native speakers. Many times, they need explanation and practice. Without exposure or practice, these structures can be generated incorrectly.

The research question at the heart of this project is: will the rich, explicit, and intensive vocabulary instruction endorsed by my district for general vocabulary instruction be successful for English-language learners as well? I believe this is a pertinent question to ask, given the fact that almost half of my school district is composed

of ELLs and because we have implemented a collaborative model. This project focuses on tier two vocabulary words in non-idiomatic usage. To the extent that its results indicate a successful method for vocabulary instruction with second-language students, the method might be adapted in future studies for vocabulary instruction in idiomatic speech.

Chapter Two, the Literature Review, looks back to how vocabulary was included in language or reading curriculum and what methods of instruction were used from the early part of the 20th century until now. Chapter Three, Methodology, describes a curriculum I created to determine whether the rich and intensive method described by Beck, et al. (2002) works for ELLs. Chapter Four, Results, evaluates this approach for English language learners. Chapter Five, Conclusion, summarizes the results found using Beck et al.'s methods in class and discusses implications for further study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The research question of this project is: can the rich and intensive method of teaching vocabulary developed by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) for native speakers work for ELLs as well? Does this method go beyond what is currently available for learning new words? Does this method provide what ELLs need in order to comprehend written material?

What does current research say about vocabulary acquisition and teaching for English-language learners? Not much until recently. *Reading* has been the focus of much study and vocabulary knowledge has not. Identifying printed words and spelling have received much more interest than vocabulary even though vocabulary is crucial for success in reading (Baumann, Kame'enui, 2004). In addition, current research focuses on education for *first language* students more than for English language learners, although the need among the latter is greater in terms of language learning. In the last 10 years, however, increasing attention has been given to strategies and interventions related to phonological awareness and word identification skills of children (Baumann, Kame'enui, 2004). In addition, ESL vocabulary acquisition research is no longer “a neglected area” (Meara, 1980).

In typical classrooms, students are asked to look up meanings of words in dictionaries and use them in a sentence (Scott et al., 1998; Watts, 1995). I believe providing students short definitions for long lists of words and then testing them on these is not the answer to word learning; when left to our own devices, however, many teachers resort to just this. Many teachers resort to such unimaginative and unsuccessful methods because of certain approaches to vocabulary instruction inherited from the past. In order to understand the state of vocabulary

instruction today, we must look to the recent past in the fields of linguistics and education. This literature review will focus on the role of vocabulary in areas of first-language vocabulary instruction with mention of implicit and explicit word learning, second-language word acquisition, and models of reading including vocabulary instruction.

First Language Vocabulary Instruction and Incidental Learning Vs. Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

In the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, identification and refining of categories of context clues predominated in first language vocabulary instruction. Promotion of word or concept categories in instruction meant better understanding of word meaning for students (Beck, et al., 2002). This meant that students were presented with new words in sentences and then they were to guess at the meaning of the word by the context of the sentence.

Lexical instruction has been tied to specific linguistic and educational philosophies, opinion, and styles. In particular, the past dominance of transformational linguistics meant a focus on grammar rather than on vocabulary acquisition. Research in the 1960s centered on Chomsky's theories of grammar, not on a breakthrough of thinking about lexis (Decarrico, 2001). Rule-governed behavior and grammatical structure of sentences, rather than appropriate language use, held sway. The implicit consensus before the 1970s and early 1980s was that vocabulary could take care of itself.

Hymes (1971) took the theory of generative linguistics and extended it into the areas of socio-linguistic and pragmatic factors in the effective use of language. He wrote about communicative competence, meaning language for meaningful communication. How did communicative competence research impact teaching? Communicative language teaching

focused on fluency, not on accuracy in speech, so discourse, not the structure of individual sentences, was more important. Vocabulary was still secondary (Schmitt, 2000). Through the 1980s, however, more and more researchers began to question the validity of this view, and the reputation of vocabulary as the poor relation in language teaching was coming to an end (Judd, 1978; Meara, 1980; McCarthy, 1984; Laufer, 1986). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a renewed interest in vocabulary studies because of the increased availability of electronic technology (Decarrico, 2001). The computer aided research by making large amounts of information available for analysis, such as how words behave in actual language use and the difference between written and spoken communication. Mental processes such as memory, storage, and retrieval were analyzed in terms of vocabulary. Research in these areas led to related study concerning vocabulary teaching and learning.

Incidental Vocabulary Learning

Incidental vocabulary learning, implicit learning, indirect vocabulary learning: these are all terms that refer to the process of coming to know a word from encountering it in reading. Incidental vocabulary acquisition is defined as the acquisition of vocabulary as a by-product of any activity not deliberately geared to vocabulary understanding (Laufer, 1986). Proponents of incidental learning of words, such as Nagy and Herman (1987), say the task is just too great to try to teach vocabulary deliberately, and that it is best done through reading rather than wasting school time on something that is not successful.

Learning words from context, although similar to incidental instruction, is not the same thing. Nagy (1988) wrote that learning a word from context is important and should be practiced in the classroom, but is an ineffective method by itself in comparison to other forms of

instruction. He wrote that word learning is an incremental process (Nagy, 1985). He maintains that even if one encounter gives the reader only partial knowledge of a word, learning this way is still the most effective method. The reader gains some knowledge, and with exposure to a large volume of text, the reader enjoys significant vocabulary growth.

Nagy and Herman (1987) posit that the number of words to be learned is too large to be covered in individual word instruction. Limited time allows instructors to focus upon only a fraction of needed vocabulary; the sizeable vocabulary attained by most children must be acquired in some way other than explicit instruction. Very little explicit instruction occurs in most classrooms, according to surveys; so how are the hundreds, if not thousands of words being acquired? Not from vocabulary lessons, conclude Durkin (1979) and Roser & Juel (1982).

When these researchers recommend learning words from context, they mean something other than what that phrase meant in the 1950s, when a teacher would put sentences on the board and students were told to guess meanings from words within these sentences. Researchers such as Nagy believe that most of word learning indeed comes from context, but only over a long period of time, and with many encounters in wide reading.

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Carlo, et al. (2004) maintain that successful explicit vocabulary instruction can increase children's word knowledge by approximately 300 words a year (citing Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). Sometimes called direct or intentional vocabulary instruction, explicit vocabulary instruction is gaining acceptance, even by people who once declared it ineffective.

Nagy (1988) decries traditional methods of explicit instruction that involve either the use of definitions (looking them up, writing them down, and memorizing them) or inferring the

meaning of a new word from sentence context. He writes that neither method, by itself, is a very effective way to improve reading comprehension.

Although he once rejected explicit vocabulary instruction, Nagy has more recently held that there must be a balance between explicit instruction and implicit acquisition. Nagy believes that such methods that can be described as intensive vocabulary instruction go far beyond merely giving context and providing definitions (1988). According to Nagy (1988), a successful program includes these components: integration, repetition, and meaningful use. He defines “integration” as understanding words as they intersect with other domains. This concept includes activities such:

- semantic mapping (brainstorming a word and categorizing related concepts)
- semantic feature analysis (making distinctions between related concepts)
- hierarchical and linear arrays (exercises in how concepts relate to each other in terms of importance or degree)
- emphasis on concepts, rather than labels.

He also contends that students must have repeated encounters with a word. That effective vocabulary instruction requires students to process words meaningfully, that is, make inferences based on their meanings, through tasks that parallel normal speaking, reading, and writing.

Instructional activities should elicit inferences through questions that require the student to use the meaning of the word to make an inference, rather than state the meaning.

Rich and Intensive Vocabulary Instruction

The findings of Beck, et al. (2002) are aimed at native speakers, but maintain that their recommended strategies work well for struggling readers. They are leaders in the field of explicit and intensive vocabulary instruction who believe that integration and meaningful use are important. They realize that wide reading is important, too, but claim that students who find reading difficult cannot successfully derive meaning from words as well as other students. Because these students find reading difficult, they do not read widely. Hence, vocabulary acquisition through a reliance on wide reading is not a useful approach for these students. Furthermore, these authors explain that the prevalence of *misdirective*, *nondirective*, and *general contexts* do not permit ELL students to acquire word meaning from context.

Misdirective contexts actually support an incorrect connotation of a word if only guessed at. For example:

Sandra had won the dance contest, and the audience's cheers brought her to the stage for an encore. "Every step she takes is so perfect and graceful," Ginny said *grudgingly* as she watched Sandra dance. (Beck, et al., 2002 p. 4)

Beck, et al. say that most would guess that *grudgingly* would mean something positive based on the context in which it is found.

Nondirective contexts give no clue to a word's meaning. An example of a nondirective context is:

Dan heard the door open and wondered who had arrived. He couldn't make out the voices. Then he recognized the *lumbering* footsteps on the stairs and knew it was Aunt Grace. (2002, p. 5)

Lumbering could mean anything in this context.

General contexts provide enough information to place the word in a general category. An example of a general context could be:

Joe and Stan arrived at the party at 7 o'clock. By 9:30, the evening seemed to drag for Stan. But Joe really seemed to be having a good time at the party. "I wish I could be as *gregarious* as he is," thought Stan. (Beck, et al., 2002, p. 5)

One could infer that *gregarious* means someone who enjoys parties, but the meaning is not specific. General contexts give only general clues as to word meaning.

Lastly, *directive contexts* lead the student to a specific, accurate meaning of the word.

For example:

When the cat pounced on the dog, he leapt up, yelping, and knocked down a shelf of books. The animals ran past Wendy, tripping her. She cried out and fell to the floor. As the noise and confusion mounted, Mother hollered upstairs, "What's all that *commotion*?"

It is clear what the word *commotion* means from this context.

Beck, et al. (2002) point out that when instructional materials are written to teach vocabulary, *directive contexts* are used; in wide reading, however, this is not the case. The authors maintain, therefore, that in wide reading, contexts are not sufficient, sometimes are not even helpful to learn word meaning. The authors say that struggling readers are not successful at vocabulary growth through wide reading. If they can't decode, recognize an unknown word, or infer a word from context, their reading is generally not productive. Consequently, wide reading leaves struggling readers with a vocabulary deficit.

Beck, et al. (2002) contend that even though there are many words to learn, not all words call for attention. They identify three tiers of words in our vocabulary.

- Tier three is comprised of words from specialty domains, such as *clerestory*, *precis*, and *rabbet*. These words are known in architecture, literature, and woodworking, respectively, but the general populace is not expected to know them.
- Tier two words cross subject areas and are frequently seen in writing and speech. These are the words that must be deliberately taught. Some examples are *nullify*, *gravity*, and *erie*.
- Tier one words are words that everyone should know and are heard in everyday speech. Some examples are *table*, *clown*, and *time*. They are words learned early on at home.

Beck, et al. (2002) hold that, despite the fact that there are many tier two words to teach, a systematic program of instruction can improve students' verbal functioning: teaching even 400 words per year would result in better word knowledge and understanding of text. Explicit instruction of tier two words can make a context more comprehensible: the more words understood in a text the more meaning is obtained from a passage. They also advocate deeper instruction of words, using colorful discussions of words, rather than short definitions. They suggest, for example, a game in which students are supposed to find words they have studied in class from other sources such as TV, textbooks, conversations, for example, and tell their classmates the next day how these words were used. Students earn points this way and win prizes for the most examples. The authors stress a philosophy of word instruction as most important.

They say that the teacher, by example, should use colorful words and thereby engage the students' interest in vocabulary acquisition.

Introducing each new word was very important. Beck, et al. (2002) discourage looking up words in the dictionary at the onset of a lesson. They believe it is more important to explain a word's meaning than to define it. They advise first of all to characterize a word's meaning, which involves giving a student-friendly definition of the word and a strongly focused concept of what the word means. In addition, any words used in explaining the word must also be understandable to the hearer. The authors discuss the following example:

covert: kept from sight; secret; hidden (p. 37)

The clearest part, for students might well be the word *secret*. Consequently, students would interpret the word as a synonym for *secret* without realizing that the word is an adjective rather than a noun. This is at odds with the way *covert* is often used to describe secretive. To define *covert* as "secretive or hidden" and *then* give an example of how someone acted covertly makes it much clearer to students how the word is to be applied. Of course, there are other ways to use *covert*, but in the introduction of the word in a vocabulary lesson, the authors recommend focusing on the definition that would fit the context.

Activities for more mature readers include engaging higher-order thinking skills such as:

- Connecting word meanings to students' lives
- Associating word meanings
- Inferring from word relationships

- Integrating words' meanings into contexts
- Looking at multiple meanings

Second Language Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary research and teaching have come a long way in a short time. For the most part, language teaching methodology has focused on language analysis and language use with vocabulary as a second thought. Historically, most approaches relied on bilingual word lists, or have assumed that words would just be acquired naturally, so systematic work in vocabulary did not really begin in earnest until the twentieth century (Schmitt, 2000).

Modern vocabulary research for second language learners goes back to the Vocabulary Control Movement, which was a group of English teachers in Japan in the 1920s and the 1930s. They attempted to identify a minimum core vocabulary in order to maximize their foreign learners' efforts (Schmitt, 2000). They were concerned with word frequency; a term that describes the number of times a given word appears in stretches of naturally occurring language. Names connected with this movement are Harold Palmer, A. S. Hornby, and Michael West, who researched collocations, vocabulary selection, and grading, but who are remembered mostly for their efforts toward the first dictionary for those learning English as a foreign language.

By the 1930s, standardized testing was becoming the norm in the United States. Vocabulary was a common component on these tests, and in 1964, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL™) was created, which also included a vocabulary section. Isolating vocabulary in testing was relatively easy. Vocabulary test questions were usually set in a multiple-choice format, so tests were easy to write. Words were seen as language units suited to objective testing for technical and linguistic reasons (Schmitt, 2000). Vocabulary curriculum

today often resembles these early formats of vocabulary testing, in terms of lists of words, multiple-choice answers, and short definitions.

Since the 1970s, the communicative approach to language research has affected how vocabulary should be taught. Most scholars reject the testing of vocabulary in isolation and believe it should be measured in context (Schmitt, 2000). Krashen (1989) proposed that word meaning is best acquired from reading through context. His theories have had tremendous impact on teaching, more than any other recent theory of second language acquisition. In his input hypothesis, Krashen attempts to account for the process in which languages are learned. He contends that the only way people acquire language is to get comprehensible input, or understandable messages, which are slightly above the learner's level. The primary way to get comprehensible input is through listening or reading (Krashen, 1991).

Even though ELLs appear to pick up language quickly, they remain behind their classmates who have been hearing, speaking, and writing English from infancy. Incidental vocabulary acquisition is fine for avid readers and native English speakers, but remains problematic for ELLs (Carlo et al., 2004). ELLs are less able to rely on context to understand unfamiliar words because the percentage of unknown words in a text is much higher for them than for native English speakers. They are less able to use linguistic clues for word meaning than are native speakers because they lack a full command of English grammar. Consequently, Carlo recommends inferring word meanings of unfamiliar words; instruction in morphological information, teaching cognates, if possible; and instruction in the use of dictionaries and glossaries. Carlo borrows from Beck, et al. (2002) in recommending word games for meaningful use and other techniques; but goes further, however, to include the use of cognate analysis

(2004). Laufer (2003) argues that word-focused tasks, with reading or without reading, are more effective than reading alone for vocabulary acquisition.

Models of First Language Reading and Vocabulary Instruction

There is wide agreement that vocabulary learning is tied to reading. As Decarrico (2001) relates, many researchers in the field of education and linguistics agree that vocabulary acquisition is at the heart of reading comprehension and communicative competence (Coady and Huckin, 1997). Biemiller (1999) contends that successful reading and vocabulary are inextricably entwined. Biemiller observes that there is generally a .70 to .80 correlation between print vocabulary test performance and reading comprehension (ibid, citing Bloom, 1976). Vocabulary correlates with reading scores (Freebody & Anderson, 1983). Biemiller (1999) argues that reading comprehension depends on prior knowledge in deciphering a passage, and on skill in decoding. He maintains that a child's background knowledge and the difficulty of a passage both determine word understanding. A child understanding what is read at grade level has a grade level vocabulary. It follows, then, that it is possible to determine the readability level of a passage by assessing its vocabulary. Thus, vocabulary understanding determines literacy and language ability. Having an adequate reading ability is a prerequisite to academic success (Stanovich, 1986). Although all these studies emphasize a relationship between vocabulary instruction and reading, they imply different models of how reading works.

Three different models of first-language reading have had tremendous impact on instructional methods in education. Each attempts to explain how reading occurs, and although the models do not explicitly address vocabulary acquisition, each model implies a different

understanding of the role of vocabulary acquisition. They are called the top-down reading model, the bottom-up model, and the interactive model.

Top-Down Model

Different models of reading imply different methods of vocabulary instruction.

The word *top* in the phrase *top-down model* refers to higher order mental concepts such as the knowledge and expectations of the reader. *Bottom* in the phrase *bottom-up model* refers to the interaction of the student with the physical text on a page. Reading in the top-down model is not seen as an end in itself, but as a means to gaining information or understanding. The top-down reading model emphasizes that readers bring meaning to a text based on their prior knowledge, experiential background, and interpretive skills when reading (Goodman, 1967). Readers bring their own world experiences to a text as they take in more information, so there is a sense of interaction. The reader starts with hypotheses and predictions and then attempts to verify them in the text. This has been called the “psycholinguistic guessing game” (Goodman, 1967). According to Goodman, readers engage five processes in reading: recognition-initiation, prediction, confirmation, correction, and termination.

The whole-language approach, for example, assumes a top-down model. Instructional methods in the whole–language approach include long periods of time in different types of reading with discussion of concepts and ideas taken from text. Emphasis on higher-order thinking skills is emphasized, such as summarizing, making inferences, analyzing, and synthesizing in these discussions.

The top-down model has had great impact on second language reading instruction. It makes the reader an active participant in the process, unlike the bottom-up model, which

describes a passive linguistic process. There are problems associated with the top-down approach, however, especially for ELLs. ELLs have little knowledge of specific topics and therefore cannot generate predictions. Furthermore, in this model the decoding side of reading is minimized, which is fine for the skillful reader, but not so good for the struggling reader who may need much help with phonics. Vocabulary is gleaned from context clues or background knowledge, while lower skills such as lexical and grammar forms are not emphasized (Eskey, 1988).

Because of the fact that ideas or concepts are to be focused on more than anything else, this top-down model of reading would not consider rich and intensive vocabulary instruction a useful activity. This model would consider wide reading sufficient, and implicit learning of words superior to any other vocabulary method of instruction. With wide reading, there may be many exposures to vocabulary words, something Beck, et al. (2002) believe is necessary, but this is not to say that ELLs would necessarily comprehend them. According to Weber (1984), a fluent reader can benefit from the top-down model, but a struggling reader's needs are not taken into account.

Bottom-Up Model

The bottom-up model of reading stipulates that a text must be decoded and that students are reading when they can phonetically "sound out" words. Putting into sound what is seen on the page is the first step in the sequence of processing text, with higher-level decoding as a natural progression in terms of reading ability. Phonics instruction and explicit vocabulary instruction are methods corresponding to the bottom-up model.

Eskey (1973) maintains that this reading model is inadequate because it does not take into account the contribution of the reader in terms of predictions, prior knowledge, expectation of text, and the processing of information on an individual basis. Poor readers haven't acquired automatic decoding skills. They spend a lot of time processing unfamiliar words rather than automatically recognizing them (Stanovich, 1980). This slows reading down and affects comprehension. Good readers process language in written form without thinking consciously about it, which is called automaticity (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Language learners must learn to do so, too, in order to read fluently and with understanding.

The bottom-up model stresses the importance of explicit vocabulary instruction. This frequently included the method of pre-teaching a list of words from a text with fixed definitions, or in "word work" which was usually phonics instruction. Current thinking maintains, however, that a given word does not have a fixed meaning but a variety of meanings that interact with context and background knowledge (Devine, 1981, 1988). The "rich and intensive" vocabulary instruction method of Beck, et al. (2002) is explicit vocabulary instruction, but they regard as inadequate instructional methods that provide few exposures to words and single fixed definitions of words. They argue for the necessity of frequent encounters with the words, richness of instruction, and extension of word use beyond the classroom, methods that point beyond the bottom-up model.

Interactive Model

The interactive model (Rumelhart, 1977; Stanovich, 1980) maintains that both decoding from the written page and what a reader brings to the process are necessary. That is, the reader's interaction with the text requires both top-down and bottom-up skills. This interactive model of

reading assumes that skills at all levels interact to produce the successful processing of text (Grabe, 1988). If one mode of processing text is over-emphasized to the neglect of the other, reading difficulties for L2 learners can occur (Carrell, 1988). While most native speakers of English have language ability established early on—with control over syntax, a vocabulary of about 5,000 words at age six, and a phonological system that can communicate their needs—many SL readers do not (Singer, 1981). If sufficient vocabulary or basic syntactic structures are not there, reading as an interactive process cannot successfully take place (Eskey, 1973, and Clark, 1979). Carrell (1988) sees two basic kinds of difficulties: over-reliance on text or over-reliance on context. Adhering to either the bottom-up or top-down model is not useful to second-language reading students. The interactive model seems to make sense for them, but may still be not enough. The Report of the National Literacy Panel on Minority-Language Children and Youth emphasizes “instruction in the key components of reading is necessary—but not sufficient—for teaching language-minority students to read and write proficiently in English.” The Report concludes that “vocabulary and background knowledge should be targeted intensively throughout the entire sequence” of second-language English instruction (August and Shanahan, 2006, pp. 4-5).

Balanced literacy is an approach that flows from the interactive model. Balanced literacy is composed of different methods such as shared reading, guided reading, and word work. This approach includes instruction in phonics as well as summarizing, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from text. It is a blend of bottom-up and top-down reading models. The interactive reading model incorporates word work, which includes phonics or explicit vocabulary instruction. The emphasis of Beck, et al. (2002) on learning words from context, tying word

instruction to comprehension of the text, and explicit focus on words assumes a connection to the interactive model more than any other model.

ELLs can only benefit from the interactive model of reading. They need phonics, decoding, and vocabulary instruction, *and* they need to learn how to comprehend text.

Secondary Language Reading

A second-language reader is like any reader: she brings a first-language framework to any text she is reading (Bernhardt, 1991). This framework includes orthography, grammatical structures, and the social nature of access to literacy. With a second-language learner, however, all or some of this framework can be problematic in terms of understanding text in the second language.

For example, reading from left to right, as opposed to right to left, imposes a huge challenge to an Arabic-speaking learner of English. This single example in itself is not as far-reaching as grammatical structures. Bernhardt (1991) cites articles and what follows them in contrasting languages: to an English speaker, an article such as a, an, and the signal a noun or a noun phrase. For example, native English speakers need the noun after the article in *the apple is falling from the tree*. This is not necessarily true in German. Germans may put an article in front of a prepositional phrase, such as in *der von dem Baum fallende Apfel* (the from-the-tree falling- apple). Rules such as these enable readers to anticipate information coming in when reading. We are hardwired linguistically to encounter and understand quickly what is being offered in text. However, if the hardwiring is different, complications arise and cognitive restructuring is necessary to comprehend.

Reading is also a social process. Texts consist of implied value systems and can be seen as cultural artifacts (Bernhardt, 1991). A second language learner and a native speaker reading the same text do not have the same experience. Backgrounds are different; so the language learner's perception is skewed (Wells, 1985). If different cultural contexts imply different sets of values, different interpretations of the texts would follow as a matter of course.

A good example of this is a personal experience I had with a second language reader. She had been in the grocery store and had looked at a tabloid by the checkout counter. The blazing headline read, "Laura Is Leaving George." My L2 friend then told us later in all seriousness that the Bushes were divorcing because she had seen it in the newspaper. We tried to tell her that the tabloid was not a reliable source, but to no avail. She had fine linguistic skills, but not the necessary socio-cultural skills to comprehend this particular situation. "Supermarket tabloid" meant nothing to her, but would mean something very specific to many living in the United States speaking English from infancy.

Hence, conflicts arise in comprehension in terms of graphical confusion (handwriting or print), grammatical structures, and the social nature of literacy for those second language learners reading text in an unfamiliar language. Bernhardt maintains that reading should be a form of cultural exploration.

Bernhardt (1991) focuses on what a second-language reader brings to a text. This is true in terms of vocabulary understanding. She maintains that L2s' understanding of words is usually unidimensional in nature and this is because of the type of vocabulary instruction they receive in second-language teaching. She does not recommend initially presenting readers with every possible meaning of a word but also argues against the alternative.

Beck, et al.'s vocabulary acquisition strategies, flowing from the interactive reading model, addresses the needs of second-language students, which Bernhardt describes. The students need explicit word instruction, taught in a richly complex and meaningful way, so that they may understand the different culture in which they find themselves.

Conclusion

There is evidence that language learners need strong and organized vocabulary curriculum. Only in last few decades, especially in Carlo and Nagy's work, has there been systematic research in this area of word acquisition. Reading programs lacked any focused strategies of substance. In fact, many leading researchers of the field have seen vocabulary as something to be acquired solely through reading. If second-language students are to understand words in their myriad ways, how can we best provide instruction? If understanding of text happens as a result of knowing culture and values, how can vocabulary presentation and instruction rise to the occasion? Can rich and in-depth instruction do this for our English language learners?

In the next chapter, I will describe a research project involving a program of instruction based on Beck, et al.'s research, testing whether rich deep vocabulary instruction works for language students.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to ascertain whether Beck, McKeown, and Kucan's method of vocabulary acquisition (2002) is successful for English-language learners. In this chapter, I will explain how I implemented many aspects of Beck, et al.'s rich and intensive vocabulary instruction approach in my middle school classroom. I will explain what type of research was used, who the subjects were in my classroom, and describe the curriculum I created, the pre- and post-assessments I used, and the complete length of time for the unit. I will also explain the reasons why I chose to use this type of curriculum with English language learners.

I kept a journal while implementing the curriculum. The journal detailed the day-to-day struggles with discipline, adolescent issues, and whole-school problems, as well as my teaching and the class's learning. I felt that all these issues were extremely important in the success of the curriculum and the students' success in learning vocabulary. I do not include a copy of the journaling, but reflections throughout this paper are the result of these daily journal entries. Matters I considered before beginning this project were subjects, curriculum, assessment, and length of time in which to complete the study.

Research Paradigm

To my knowledge, Beck et al.'s rich and intensive method (2002) has not been applied in ELL classrooms. Consequently, I know of no existing curriculum applying their method for the ELL classroom, and no existing reports of previous research. Because of this, I could not carry out the sort of quantitative research that would compare my results with the results of previous studies. Given that I could not do quantitative comparisons, and that my classroom-research

project focused on the small population of a single classroom, norm-referenced research was not possible. This project is therefore an exercise in criterion-referenced research (Colman, 2001).

Further, because Beck et al. (2002) emphasize a rich and intensive method that incorporates student learning outside of the classroom, it is neither possible nor necessary to isolate and compare the efficacy of individual strategies. The point is to see how the holistic approach works. Action research, described as a less stylized and more situational form of classroom research (Brown and Rodgers, 2002), appropriately describes my project. In this research paradigm, I studied the effect of the combination of a range of strategies designed to apply the rich and intensive model.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) outline the following steps as action research:

Phase I: Develop a plan of action to improve what is already happening. I sought a vocabulary acquisition method that held promise for working with ELLs. I adapted the method of Beck, et al. (2002) and wrote a new curriculum based on it.

Phase II: Act to implement the plan. I had my class participate in using the curriculum.

Phase III: Observe the effects of action in context. I analyzed data from tests given before, during, and after the curriculum.

Phase IV: Reflect on these effects. I determined in advance that the strategies would be successful, in my professional opinion, if the majority of my students scored an 80% or better on the post-test. My reflections are written up in the Conclusion of this chapter.

Subjects

I followed Hamline University's human subjects procedures in getting permission from my principal, the school district, and Hamline University to do this research project. I wrote a

letter to all my students' parents asking permission for their children's participation in this project which I obtained.

The subjects for this project were level 4 junior high ELLs in an inner-city mid-western middle school classroom. The school had approximately 700 students, one-third of them were labeled ESL, but only 100 of them were given direct instruction. The rest performed well enough on standardized testing and other means of placement so that direct ESL instruction was not considered necessary. There were thirteen students in my fifth hour level 4 ESL class. Nine were Hmong and of these five were female (Nou, Doua, Ja, Candy and Molly) and 4 male (Xa, Ka, Her and Tou). There were four Latinos: one female (Kiki) and three male (Oliver, Andre, and Geraldo). Candy, Ka, and Geraldo were receiving special education services. Nou was repeating the class because she had not passed it the previous year. I changed the names of my students to protect their privacy. I taught this fifth hour class every day from 11:20 to 12:40. This hour was long because it encompassed lunch, which lasted 30 minutes. In retrospect, I would not choose that hour again because they were regularly hungry before leaving mid-point in the class for lunch which was a distraction, and regularly sleepy after lunch to the point that at least one or two fell asleep everyday! I considered them average in reading proficiency among all my groups, and consequently, representative of ELLs in general.

Reading Proficiency of Students

Mine was a level 4 classroom, but the students were not strong readers. They had been in ESL classes previously, even though most of them had been born in the U.S. or had been here many years. Most of them were eighth graders who had had ESL in seventh grade and in elementary school. They were eligible to receive ELL services because they had tested far below

the state average in reading and writing on standardized test scores and they also qualified because of their scores on the Minnesota Test of Emerging Academic English (TEAE). Possible reasons for their low performance on tests could be that three out of 13 students were receiving special education services and many had moved repeatedly and had attended several different schools. I concluded that they needed help in vocabulary instruction because vocabulary was a part of the reading scores of TEAE and other standardized tests. Further, I saw that vocabulary instruction needed to be systematic and comprehensive if they were to gain in word acquisition and understanding of text.

Discipline

Behavioral issues were challenging in this school. It took a portion of class time for the students to calm down each day to be able to concentrate on the work before them. Inappropriate behavior in the hallways, such as confrontations and fighting, resulted in the students' inattentiveness and distraction in the classroom. Also, the students were used to inappropriate speaking out and chaos in other classrooms, and they assumed the same would be the case in mine. I also discovered that approximately five of these students wrote in and vandalized a number of books throughout the day. I put a system in place to know who had read the book, period by period, and this stopped the destruction, but a portion of class time was taken up by this process. I believe these issues impacted how much the students were able to attend to and absorb information.

The format of the curriculum was discussion of the words, and writing short answers to the questions in a curriculum packet. The students were rather careless in this operation; again, I believe this was a function of that school's behavioral climate. In retrospect, the students

performed well on the curriculum and the tests, given the chaotic tenor of the final days of the school year. At the time, I was more aware of the daily challenge of behavior than how well they had done.

Length of Time

The students began the curriculum in May and the post-test was given a few days before the final day of school. Each chapter took a day to complete. There were 17 chapters and so I knew it was necessary to devote at least a month to the project. I tried to figure for unanticipated events, testing, and the showing of the movie at the end of the project. It was a major project in terms of the amount of time spent on it. Again, I believe that I would have the students do this curriculum in the beginning of the year, rather than at the end because of their lack of motivation and focus.

Curriculum

Beck, MeKeown, and Kucan's strategies of vocabulary acquisition (2002) can be used in discussion, in writing, or as assessment. I chose to create a packet of activities to accompany the book, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis (1950). I chose *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* because the movie version of the story had just come out, so I hoped that this would stimulate interest in the reading of the book. Furthermore, the reading level was appropriate for this group of students, and this book was full of good tier two words for them to learn. This book had 17 chapters and each chapter took one day, so I knew I had to have 17 full school days in which to complete the book. This translates into a whole month including pre- and post-testing, and accounting for days in which the students would not be in class due to extra-curricular activities. I implemented shared reading, with me reading aloud and students

following silently along, except in certain places in which choral reading was effective, such as in songs or poems in the book. I believe that silent reading on the students' part while listening to a native speaker read is an effective way to teach pronunciation. I identified tier two words in the narrative, or words that cross domains, before the shared reading of the book, and prepared a packet using Beck, et al.'s suggestions for multiple exposures to words (2002). I had a word wall, and everyday I would put two new words from a chapter on the word wall. Beck, et al. advise against using more than two words a day.

Also following Beck, et al.'s recommendations (2002), I used the game *Word Wizard*, which will be explained later in this chapter. This game also provides multiple word meanings for the targeted words and provides an extension of classroom learning.

The curriculum included these activities:

- *Word Associations* Students are to associate a new word with a presented phrase or word. An example for the word *modest* would be, "Which word in the list goes with response to a compliment?"
- *Have You Ever?* Students learn new words based on experiences in their own lives. In an activity, for example, they are asked to "Describe a time when you were *snappish* with someone."
- *Applause, Applause* Students are asked to clap in order to show how much they would like to be described by the target word such as: *distressed* (not at all, a little bit, a lot). Then they explain why they would feel that way.
- *Differentiation of words* Choose an example and non-example for the word *tidy*: "A teacher's room before the home room period." "A teacher's room after sixth period."

- *Relationship of words* Posing a question using two targeted words, for example, “For which kind of *property* do you need a *document*?” Correct answers would include car and house. The targeted words would be *property* and *document*. This exercise forces students to make inferences about new words.
- *Alternative definitions* The targeted word is brought up again but with a slightly different definition to explain its complexity. For example, *inquisitive* can mean simply curious but can also carry the negative connotation, nosy.
- *Idea Completion* The student is asked to integrate a word’s meaning into a context in order to explain a situation. For example, “Lucy felt *distressed* when Edmund said he had not seen Narnia because _____”
- *Time constraints* This is a version of “Beat the Clock” in which students are given two minutes to complete a number of items related to the targeted words. For example, students identify statements as true or false: “A computer is an *apparatus*” or “You go to the *mortuary* to buy new shoes.”

It is important to explain to students why a particular word was chosen by the author for a particular context. For example, I chose the word *inquisitive* as one of the targeted vocabulary words from Chapter One of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. In this directive context, Lucy enters a room to find one object in it: a wardrobe (there is an illustration of a wardrobe in the book). She is *inquisitive* when she approaches it, looks into it, and enters it. I explained to the children that she really wanted to know what was in it, she wondered what was in it, and she could not help going over and looking in it. Hence, she was *inquisitive*.

In writing the curriculum, certain words seemed to lend themselves to certain strategies. For instance, I asked the students to describe a time when they felt *inquisitive*. I believed that this was an excellent word to use with the strategy of connecting words to students' lives. Another question asked the students if they had a problem that deserved their *consideration*, should they use *logic*? Why? The words *consideration* and *logic* can be used very easily in this strategy of relationship among words, which calls for inferring on the students' part. Another question asked why Edmund felt snappish when he could not have any more Turkish Delight. This question was open-ended, forcing them to integrate meaning with context.

Using the word multiple times is key, so I designed the curriculum to expose the students to each word a minimum of eight times. We read a chapter daily from the book, and in each chapter we encountered two targeted words. At the end of the chapter, I gave them student-friendly definitions and talked about the words from the text. For instance, the book describes Edmund as being *spiteful*. We talked about how that word described how he was treating Lucy. I then related an anecdote or painted a picture with that word to provide an additional context of use (Beck, et al. p. 42). Regarding *spiteful*, for example, I related how my older sister had once torn up a drawing another sister had made after they had had an argument. Because this was a very special drawing, and because my sister had acted in anger, the act was *spiteful*. Because my younger sister valued the drawing, she had taped it and stored it away, so I was able to bring the drawing into the classroom to provide *realia* for the lesson. I explained that anytime someone wants to cause pain or annoyance, such as my sister and Edmund did, they were being *spiteful*.

Each successive day the students learned two more words, with short, easy-to-understand meanings and in directive context, and then did explicit activities with all words from the

previous day. This happened every day, so that in the middle of the book, 12 activities were done per day, which only took about ten minutes total. Including the reading of the book, the whole lesson took only about one half hour.

Beck, et al. (2002) recommend selecting 10 words per week using daily activities with the words, including eight to ten instances of focusing on each word. They emphasize that the day-by-day activities must be engaging to students, forcing them to deal with information regarding each word by mentally, manipulating it and generating responses involving the word's meaning multiple times. Passive vocabulary instruction, in which the students do not generate responses, is not as effective. The curriculum was typed out and the students filled in the blanks in the packet, but much of the work was done by discussion.

The authors describe a game, *Word Wizard*, to take instruction beyond the classroom. Daily, students bring in examples of targeted words from their worlds if they've encountered them. They might hear the word on TV, on the radio, in conversation, or in whatever they're reading. They must be explicit in what they heard and describe the situation. Each successful description wins a point, which is recorded. At the end of the instructional time, a reward is given to the person with the most points. Nou won at the end of the book, bringing in eight examples of words that she had found in her world. For example, she quoted a Bible verse, which she memorized from Sunday school, which had the word *eternal* in it. I have had students play this game at both the elementary and middle school level and have found that students are much freer and less self-conscious on the grade school level! Despite that, the middle school students participated and listened intently when others brought an example of hearing the word to class. I consider the game to be very valuable in learning targeted words.

Assessment

My curriculum for *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* teaches 34 words. Students took a pre-test, involving simple matching of all 34 words to definitions, before starting the curriculum. This pre-test measured how many targeted words the students knew initially, and was used later to compare how much they had learned after the project using the post-test. After students had started the book and curriculum and had been exposed to ten words, I gave them a multiple-choice test on those words. This measured students' word understanding, though on a superficial level, and provided the students an additional exposure to each word, something Beck, et al., recommend (2002). I gave the students a multiple choice test twice more, after the next sets of ten words and after a final set of fourteen words. I decided that these preliminary tests should be simple matching word to definition questions, and that the post-test would be more sophisticated. Beck, et al. maintain that the simpler type of test can measure word knowledge to a limited extent. I believed it was not necessary to test in a deeper level until the curriculum was finished.

On the post-test, and in the curriculum itself, I used a number of strategies that Beck, et al. (2002) recommend. These techniques require students to generate their own ideas, to make inferences, and generally to engage in a deeper level of thinking than definition-matching exercises do. For example, the students had to find relationships between words, connect words to their own lives, perform idea completion through inferring, and perform differentiation of concepts. These methods of assessment, like the methods of instruction used throughout my curriculum, correspond to the day-by-day kinds of activities that Beck, et al. recommend. I

designed the curriculum so that most of the particular teaching and testing strategies were eventually employed for each vocabulary word.

For example, regarding the targeted words *distressed* and *hoax* I posed an idea-completion question:

1. A person would feel *distressed* when another played a *hoax* on him because _____.

One of my students answered this question saying, “The guy who played (a) hoax on him made him feel upset because the guy made fun of him.” Idea-completion questions require the student to make a connection between the words and to explain the connection. Beck, et al. (2002) maintain that such activities engage students with the words, or force students to mentally manipulate information regarding the words, rather than using short, limited definitions.

Student-use-of-the-word questions ask the students to make connections with their own experience; for example,

Describe a situation that could be described as a *hoax*.

Beck, et al. write that this technique allows the teacher to measure the student’s comprehension of the word.

Hence, both the instruction and the assessment in my curriculum were designed to be richer, deeper, and more complex, leading to better understanding of the targeted vocabulary. I had made the professional judgment previously that the majority of students would need to score an 80% on the post-test to determine that this type of vocabulary instruction is successful with ELLs.

Judging the accuracy of their answers on the post-test was complex, for several reasons. First, special education issues had to be considered. For instance, when talking about the word *gloat*, I described how people sometimes say, “Ha, ha, I beat you.” Geraldo remembered the “ha, ha” part of the conversation and when asked on the post-test to describe a time when someone *gloated*, he answered, “When someone told me a joke.” Obviously, this was not accurate enough and I counted it as incorrect, but Geraldo is very cognitively impaired and I really had a hard time not accepting his answer. He also wrote, “A person would *snarl* over a piece of *chess*” in a relationship of words question. I counted it wrong, but realized subsequently that he meant *cheese* which I would have counted correct, but I did not realize at the time it was a simple spelling mistake. I also asked, “When my friend and I romp we _____.” In many discussions, we had talked about the type of play that would define romp—physically active play such as children do on the playground. Geraldo’s answer was “play video games” and I also counted this as incorrect. He simply remembered that *romp* was a type of play and this was what he knew. Despite these occasional incorrect answers, Geraldo did well on the test overall, scoring a 79%. Similarly, the three students receiving special education services did very well on the post-test overall.

In addition, my second-language learners missed the nuances of words at times on the post-test. For example, we studied the word *consideration*, meaning not hastily deciding to do something, but giving something a lot of thought before acting. One question on the post-test was written, “I showed consideration when I _____.” Ja answered this question with “. . . am doing my work at school.” I regarded this answer as inadequate, but understood that she meant that she routinely gave her schoolwork a lot of thought. This was also

difficult for me to count as incorrect. In general, however, the students performed very well on the post-test despite the language barrier.

For all these students, my use of a more sophisticated form of assessment allowed me to measure different levels of understanding that simple matching word-to-definition questions could not have shown.

Conclusion

Specific issues need to be addressed in relation to using a rich and intensive method of vocabulary instruction to ELLs. An instructor may not wish to hold special education students to as strict a standard as others. Language barriers have to be taken into consideration. Overall, students who receive special education services did very well with this type of curriculum. I judge this was because of the repetitive nature of the curriculum. Providing students with many exposures is very reinforcing for students who struggle. Despite the fact that there were many exposures to the targeted words, some of my English-language learners still did not understand nuances of the words. This leads me to conclude that one exposure is definitely not enough for them.

The action research paradigm fit appropriately with the desire to know whether rich and intensive vocabulary instruction works for ELLs in my classroom. My ELLs struggle with reading comprehension and need extra help in understanding concepts and vocabulary. Posing this research question, implementing a curriculum, and testing the students in order to ascertain the efficacy of the strategies of Beck, et al. (2002) are steps in active research, and these research steps helped me to arrive at an answer to my research question.

In the next chapter, I will give the results of the testing that I administered in this classroom. I will explain the assessments and also describe how the students performed using this type of vocabulary teaching and whether this type of vocabulary instruction works with ELLs. I will also describe the process of teaching this type of vocabulary instruction to my students.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

In this chapter, I will be analyzing the results of this research project. At the heart of this project is the question: does the rich and intensive method of vocabulary instruction designed for native speakers set forth by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) work for middle school English language learners? The results of the final assessment will gauge whether the students were successful or not. The final assessment was written following the suggestions of Beck, et al. in designing sound vocabulary curriculum. This chapter includes sections on pre-testing, application of the curriculum, testing taken while working the lessons in the curriculum, and most importantly, post-testing.

Pre-testing

I gave the students a pre-test, containing all of the targeted words I intended to teach from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, in order to gauge how many of the targeted words were familiar to them. The students had not studied these words in any previous way and the test was an exercise to ascertain how well the students knew the vocabulary about to be studied.

Pre-test scores

I determined in advance that a score of 80% on the *post-test* for the majority of my students would be an indicator that the curriculum had been successful, but had no score in mind for the pre-test. The average score on the test was 16% correct, and only one person scored above 50%. None scored at the 80% line I had set for the indicator of project success. Nou got a 53% on the pre-test and this was the best score. Nou was repeating the class, and had been through this curriculum before. She had had a very difficult time in my class the previous year,

and even though I was pleased with her abilities the second year, she was usually not the highest performing student in the group. Doua got a 47%, the next-best score, but for the most part, the students showed that they were not familiar with the targeted words.

Table 4.1 shows the percentages scored by each student across all tests.

Table 4.1

Student performance on tests

Student	Pre-Test	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Post-Test
Nou	53%	80%	100%	100%	85%
Doua	47%	60%	100%	83%	91%
Ja	12%	90%	42%	83%	94%
Candy	24%	50%	100%	100%	97%
Molly	3%	30%	25%	67%	79%
Xa	0%	40%	67%	100%	70%
Ka	0%	40%	67%	67%	91%
Her	0%	40%	67%	100%	65%
Tou	6%	100%	83%	100%	97%
Kiki	18%	70%	100%	100%	85%
Oliver	24%	80%	67%	100%	79%
Andre	12%	100%	67%	100%	62%
Geraldo	15%	50%	83%	83%	79%

The pre-test was just a simple matching short-answer test of all 34 words. I used not dictionary definitions, but student-friendly short definitions, which is a recommended strategy of Beck, et al. (2002). I tried not to include any words in the definitions that the students might not

know. The students did not take long to complete the test because, for the most part, they did not know the words. Even though they did not take long to complete the test, they were conscientious in completing it. The students' performance on the post-test were compared to these scores.

The Curriculum

See Appendix 1 for the curriculum used *with The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. The packet is composed of lessons on the targeted words and reflects strategies of a rich and intensive vocabulary instruction. The packet has 17 sections reflecting each chapter of the book and in each section two words from a chapter are studied. Each word is studied a minimum of eight times. I tried very hard to phrase each question in ways that reflect the strategies Beck, et al. write about in order to teach vocabulary successfully. The packet was started two years before I used it with my middle school students but it had been carefully revised a lot in the intervening time.

The students were engrossed by the book and liked being read to. I asked them frequently if *they* wanted to read aloud and they almost always refused. The students answered the questions readily in the packet. They were somewhat confused as to why there was so much repetition of working with the same words but accepted my explanation of the necessity of many exposures. I don't think the curriculum was too challenging for them at all. In fact, they said throughout that it was very easy. However, when tested, they did not score 100 percent. I designed the packet to be partially written in and I think that was a good choice. I could have designed it for discussion solely, but I decided that having them write in it would be more

engaging, and therefore, a better method of remembering the words. I know I will use the packet again in the future.

Tests Taken during Curriculum

I decided that a part of the vocabulary curriculum would include testing after every 10 words studied. I did this for two reasons: too long a time would elapse if I only had pre- and post-testing, and I wanted the students to have additional exposures to the words through this testing, in addition to their curriculum. On the first round of testing, there were 10 matching words with short definitions. On the second and third rounds, I threw in two words each time with which the students had had the most difficulty to provide additional exposure. Results of Test 1 are also shown in Table 4.1.

Students' Scores on Tests Taken during the Curriculum

It is apparent that as time went on the students performed better on the tests taken during lessons in the curriculum. I believe they became familiar with the lessons and performed better as a result. Their level of engagement may have contributed to increasingly better test scores. The curriculum including repeated exposures, studying words in engaging and thought provoking ways, and playing Word Wizard helped the students learn the targeted words effectively and resulted in better performance.

Post-testing

For the post-test, I did not use the simple matching with definition assessment I used on the pre-test. The pre-test was just to find out initially how well they knew the targeted words of this vocabulary instruction project. I wrote the post-test using the same strategies I had used when designing the packet curriculum. I decided that if I were to really understand how well

they knew the words after studying them in an intensive and rich way, the final assessment should also be intensive and rich in design. This would show if they knew the words in a deeper way, not in a quick and shallow manner. For instance, I asked questions regarding words based on students' experiences in their own lives.

Question #7 asks, "Something that seems eternal to me is _____."

Kiki wrote as a response, "The school year."

Students would simply insert a short definition instead of an example on the post-test on occasion. Xa's answer to the *eternal* question was to write, "Never ending." I did not count this as incorrect, but providing a short definition was not what the question required. I wanted examples, but the students were not always able or willing to do that. Some might say that I was lenient in not marking the answers wrong, but, technically, they were not wrong. The students showed understanding of the words.

I posed another question showing relationship between two targeted words by asking, "A person would be *distressed* when another played a *hoax* on him because _____."

Ka answered this question by writing "the person would laugh and laugh at the person who just got hoaxed." Post-test scores are shown in Table 4.1. Table 4.2 compares number of students scoring at different percentage levels for all tests.

Table 4.2

Numbers of students scoring at percentage levels for all tests

Percentage	Pre-test	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Post-test
90-100%		3	4	8	5
80-89%		2	2	3	5
70-79%		1			1
60-69%		1	5	2	2
50-59%	1	2			
40-49%	1	3	1		
30-39%		1			
20-29%	2		1		
10-19%	4				
0-9%	5				
<hr/>					
Percentage of students scoring at 80% or above ^a	0%	46%	54%	85%	77%

^a On pre-test and post-test, a score of 79% (29 correct out of 34 questions) was counted at the 80th percentile.

Post-test scores

On a post-test with 34 possible points, the nearest score to the 80% mark that I had initially decided would be the threshold for measuring individual student success was 27 correct (79.4%). Ten out of thirteen students in the class (about 77%) scored at or above this mark, well above my initial criterion for determining the overall success of this vocabulary instruction project with English language learners. I believe the overall success rate would have been even

higher except for several environmental and circumstantial factors such as school discipline problems and end-of-the-year lack of motivation.

All of the post-test questions but two were based on Beck, et al.'s strategies and were written according to their recommendations. Questions number 29 and 30 were simple definition questions (matching word to definition). I used simple definition because the students had had problems with the word *snappish*, and I chose to include the word *dispute* as well. The results were quite surprising: only 62% of the students got these two questions right. As Table 4.3 shows, average scores for the other categories of questions correlative to Beck et al.'s (2002) rich and intensive strategies—Student Use of Word, which is forcing students to look at a word based on their own experiences; Relationship between Words, inferring meaning from a new word based on knowledge of a word already learned; and Alternative Definitions, studying the multiple meanings of a word—were much higher. In part, this might be the statistical result of having more questions in these three categories than in simple definitions, but it is also true that students scored very high on a number of questions in the rich and intensive strategy categories. I think the difference in these percentages is significant and points to the greater effectiveness of the rich and intensive strategies.

Table 4.3
Post-test Scores by Question Type

Post-test questions, grouped by strategy	Number of students answering question correctly	Percent of students answering question correctly	Average percent correct, by strategy
Student use of word	Note, some numbers indicate partial credit given		
Question No. 1	8	62%	81%
2	12	92%	
3	11.5	88%	
7	10.5	81%	
9	13	100%	
10	13	100%	
11	11.5	88%	
14	7.5	58%	
15	7	54%	
16	11	85%	
18	10.5	81%	
20	11	85%	
22	13	100%	
23	13	100%	
24	11	85%	
25	12	92%	
27	9	69%	
Relationship between words			
Question No. 4	13	100%	79%
21	9	69%	
28	11	59%	
Alternative definitions			
Question No. 5	8	62%	79%
6	11	85%	
7	12	92%	
12	6	46%	
13	7	54%	
17	13	100%	
19	13	100%	
26	12	92%	
Simple definition			
Question No. 29	8	62%	62%
30	8	62%	

Factors Affecting Post-test Scores

Again, this unit was given in May, with the final assessment given close to the end of the school year. I believe that this was not an optimal time in the year. The students were not as motivated at the end of the year as they had been earlier on in the year. I believe this is reflected in scores by Andre, Oliver, and Her, who had done much better on previous tests. Andre may have been distracted because he was leaving for Mexico the day after the test. I have mentioned that school climate was a factor in how the students had performed throughout the curriculum, and as the year went on, discipline issues grew more serious. For instance, the fire alarm was set off repeatedly the last two weeks, three times in one day. This proved to be quite disruptive to say the least.

The three students who received special education services did well on the post-test. I believe this curriculum was especially helpful to them because of the many exposures to the words, the examination of multiple meanings of words, the tying of words to their experiences, and the enjoyable aspect of the game, Word Wizard, or bringing in examples of words heard outside of the classroom. Coming at a word from so many angles and the repetition reinforced their understanding of the vocabulary.

Working with adolescents is difficult. When asked about curriculum, most junior high students will give random answers that may or may not truly reflect how much they were engaged in a lesson or how much they enjoyed it. However, two very shy students handed letters to me on the last day of class both writing glowingly how they had so enjoyed the class all year. I was very surprised because these students had not shown much interest or delight in the class work previously.

Conclusion

The results of the post-test were very good. I was pleased with the students' performance, except for the fact that in some instances they used short definitions instead of examples on questions. This may have been because they could not think of examples and they could readily think of the definitions, or because they were not focused on the test but on getting out of school in a very short while. I believe that the results of the test are significant. The majority of students got an 80% on the post-test which was my criterion for judging the success of Beck's vocabulary acquisition method with my students.

In the next chapter, I will discuss implications of using the rich and intensive method of vocabulary acquisition, implications for further research, and reflections on the process of finding a vocabulary acquisition method suitable for English-language learners.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Would Beck, McKeown, and Kucan's (2002) rich and intensive method of vocabulary instruction, written for native speakers, be suitable for English-language learners? As an ESL teacher working with elementary and middle school students who struggled to comprehend what they read, I sought a successful vocabulary instruction method. I had never really encountered an approach to teaching words that was either engaging or reliable. In any curriculum I had seen, it was up to the students to simply memorize a list of words and then take a test afterwards. Knowing how my ELLs labored to understand most text, I believed this method was inadequate.

I decided to create a curriculum based on the book, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by C. S. Lewis (1950), integrating a number of the strategies suggested in Beck, McKeown, and Kucan's, *Bringing Words to Life, Robust Vocabulary Instruction* (2002). I created activities for 34 vocabulary words from the book, making sure that the students were exposed to each targeted word at least eight times in the curriculum as they read the book. As an extension to class work, I implemented a word game in which the children could win prizes depending on who recognized each targeted word most often in conversation, books, classroom work, or print or electronic media outside of the ELL classroom.

Results

I tested the students on targeted words from the book before, at mid-point, and after the curriculum. I had determined at the outset of the project that the performance of half of the students at the 80% level would be the criterion for the project's success. An overwhelming

majority of my students, 77 percent, scored at or above the 80% level. (This level translated into 27 out of 34 points on the post-test, or 79.6%.) I conclude from these scores that the vocabulary acquisition methods put forth by Beck, et al. were valuable and worked well with ELLs. I believe student performance would have been even higher except for environmental impediments to the students' learning. School-wide discipline problems, end-of-school lack of motivation, and adolescent issues impacted the entire project.

Implications for Vocabulary Instruction

The literature about the teaching of vocabulary acquisition presents conflicting opinions on how students best learn words. Research in the 1960s focused on grammar (Decarrico, 2001), and for mainstream students, reading rather than vocabulary had been the focus of research until the 1980s (Judd, 1978; Meara, 1980; McCarthy, 1984, Laufer, 1986). If vocabulary was discussed, it was in terms of whether there should be implicit or explicit instruction. Before the late 1980s, foremost researchers such as Nagy and Herman believed that the only effective way to learn vocabulary was to read widely and a lot (Nagy and Herman, 1987), which is implicit or incidental learning. Carlo, et al. (2004) maintained that direct (or intentional or explicit) vocabulary instruction could increase children's word knowledge considerably, however. Many researchers now agree that repeated encounters with words are necessary, and that students should process words in meaningful ways.

The results of my classroom research have shown that explicit teaching is effective for successful learning of vocabulary words. ELLs need extra support in learning vocabulary in terms of integration and meaningful use. This is especially important for reading comprehension.

My research shows that the rich and intensive instruction strategies proposed by Beck et al. are particularly effective toward these ends.

Nagy's research involving semantic mapping, semantic feature analysis, hierarchial and linear arrays, and an emphasis on concepts is a step in the right direction. However, Beck et al.'s delightful strategies emphasizing "relationships of words" and "alternative definitions" are so much more appealing, especially to young students. The teaching of the curriculum was effortless, and most all of the students thought it simple. There was a lot of repetition in using the exercises so students became familiar with the program quickly. The multiple exposures of words were very reinforcing. My opinion is that the students found the strategies fun, easy to do, and engaging.

This curriculum was effective for my students receiving special education services. All three students scored well on the post-test. The many exposures to the words and the processing of the targeted words in such a well-rounded manner insured success for them on the test.

My ELLs were not always able to generate the many nuances of a word, even after studying the words with their many meanings. All people learn words the same way: on a continuum. We are presented with a word, learn a simplified version of it, hear it used a number of times and, hopefully, generate it correctly in our own speech and writing, Beck, et al. (2002). However, I believe they did well on the post-test because of the structure of the curriculum. I do not believe this is the fault of my curriculum but of the very nature of learning a language.

This method of vocabulary acquisition is painless for students. However, the curriculum packet required significant planning and preparation on the instructor's part. I believe that with

repeated practice and management, daily curriculum preparation and planning could be carried out with less effort.

Implications for Further Research

As I stated in the introduction of this paper, ELLs need an intensive approach to learning vocabulary words. Beck, McKeown, and Kucan recommend particular strategies of vocabulary instruction regarding tier two words. Because ELLs face particular challenges with idiomatic speech that first-language speakers do not face, I believe the strategies proposed by Beck, McKeown and Kucan and implemented in my curriculum could be profitably extended to instruction in idiomatic language for ELLs.

As I read through *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* in preparation of this curriculum, I encountered idioms that I knew could be very confusing to my ELLs. In speaking of the White Witch, for example, Mr. Tumnus, the faun, says, “She has got all Narnia under her thumb.” I cannot assume that my ELLs will understand this to mean that the White Witch controls Narnia. Again, when in the story the children are sent to the Professor’s house in the country because London is being bombed, Peter says, “We’ve fallen on our feet and no mistake.” This is the British version of the American idiom “landing on one’s feet” so, in a sense, it is doubly confusing for a second-language learner. Similarly, other language structures in conversation or text that inform the reader of relationships between parts of sentences, such as “be that as it may,” “notwithstanding,” or “nevertheless,” are usually assimilated by native speakers and pose no challenge to comprehension, but are not readily understood by second-language learners. Such phrases present an impediment to reading comprehension.

Beck, et al. (2002) designed a vocabulary acquisition method for native speakers who need to learn tier-two words (words that cross domains and are found in educated conversation, or in many kinds of textbooks in school). Their method only goes that far, however. My students' success in a curriculum using a rich and intensive approach suggests that the development of a wider curriculum focusing on the needs of ELLs could be an important next step in similar classroom situations. The results of this project also suggest that the strategies Beck, et al. propose could be used for teaching idiomatic speech and language structures, as well. Developing such curricula remains an important task for the future.

The results of this project are illuminating and will guide my refinement of this curriculum and development of new curriculum for my ELL students. The results also bear important implications for other professionals who teach vocabulary. I look forward to opportunities both to design similar curriculum with other teachers in a collaborative venture and to communicate the basics of this approach with other professional colleagues in the near future.

Appendix

Curriculum for Vocabulary Instruction
using

*The Lion, the Witch,
and the Wardrobe*
from *The Chronicles of Narnia*
by C. S. Lewis

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Chapter 1

1. inquisitive- pg. 7 wanting to learn about something, especially by asking questions, curious

Have You Ever.....?

Describe a time when you felt inquisitive in a situation.

2. glossy- pg. 8 shiny, smooth, and polished looking

Example and Non-example of glossy

A wooden coffee table rubbed with furniture oil.

A wooden coffee table left undusted for months.

Write

Summarize the first chapter.

Chapter 2

1. eternal- pg.13 forever the same, or never stopping

Students' Use of the Word

Describe a situation in which you could use the word eternal.

2. distress- pg.19 great pain or suffering, feeling very upset

Idea Completion

I was in great distress when

Applause, Applause!

Clap to indicate how much you would like to be described as inquisitive.
(not at all, a little bit, a lot)

Relationship among Words

Why would you be distressed if your hair was not looking glossy?

Write

Describe Mr. Tumnus' cave and tell if you like it or not, and why.

Chapter 3

1. hoax- pg.27 a trick or joke played on someone

Have You Ever . . . ?

Describe a time in which you were the victim of a hoax.

2. spiteful- pg.28 being mean, hurtful, or very annoying to someone to cause them to be unhappy

Relationship among Words

Describe how a hoax could be done spitefully.

Applause, Applause

Clap to indicate how much you would like to be distressed.

Idea Completion

Something that seems eternal to me

is _____

Word Associations

Which word goes with freshly shampooed hair?

Example and Non-example of inquisitive

How you feel when your birthday present is sitting before you wrapped up.

How you feel when you have opened all your birthday presents.

Write

Why did Edmund sneer and jeer at Lucy in a spiteful way?

Chapter 4

1. dominions- pg.36 all the land under a ruler, such as a king or queen

Relationship of Words

Describe a situation in which a ruler would be distressed because of something concerning his dominions.

2. snappish- pg.43 feeling irritable so that you answer someone in short, rude words

Example and Non-example of snappish

How you feel when someone compliments you on your new outfit.

How you feel when someone teases you about your new outfit.

Word Associations

Which word goes with Mrs. Elliott's sister, Jeannie, and the drawings of the Beatles?

Students' Use of the Word

Describe a situation that could be described as a "hoax."

Word Associations

Which word goes with how my sister, Julie, felt after her drawings were torn up.

Example and Non-example of eternal

How long the school day feels.

How long lunchtime feels.

Example and Non-example of glossy

Children's hair in the sunshine.

Old people's hair in the sunshine.

Alternative Definition of inquisitive

Too curious about something or full of questions that leads others to be annoyed with you.

Write

Why does the White Queen ask Edmund about his brother and sisters? What does it mean to her?

Chapter 5

1. consideration- pg.51 taking a while to think through something

Idea Completion

The point that deserved consideration

was _____

2. logic- pg.52 a science of correct thinking

Idea Completion

The professor said that they were to use logic in this way: Lucy

was _____

Have You Ever....?

Describe a situation in which you felt snappish.

Word Associations

Which word goes with the word queen's castle?

Example and Non-example of spiteful

Stealing your best friend's boyfriend is spiteful.

Stealing a dollar out of your own piggy bank is spiteful.

Word Associations

Which word goes with feeling like a fool.

Students' Use of the Word

Describe a situation in which you felt distressed or had to deal with distress. (adjective and noun)

Word Associations

Which word goes with religious promises?

Write

What did the Professor tell the children when asked if he thought something was wrong with Lucy?

Chapter 6

1. suitable- pg.61 correct for the situation, appropriate

Idea Completion

The children thought the coats were suitable to the landscape
because _____

2. brisk- pg.62 quick, energetic

Students' Use of the Word

Describe a situation and place where you walked briskly.

Relationship among Words

If you have a problem that deserves your consideration, should you use logic? Why or why not?

Idea Completion

Edmund felt snappish when he could not have any more Turkish Delight
because _____

Applause, Applause

Clap to indicate how much you would like to be a ruler of vast dominions.

Students' Use of the Word

Describe a situation in which someone was spiteful to you or you were spiteful to someone else.

Example and Non-example of hoax

A surprise birthday party.

Someone inviting you to a party that was never going to happen.

Write

What did Edmund say that made the others know he had been lying all along? Find the exact words.

Chapter 7

1. sensation- pg.74 feeling

Idea Completion

Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror when Aslan's name was mentioned because _____

_____.

2. modest- pg.76 showing a humble opinion of yourself or your abilities

Idea Completion

Mr. Beaver had a modest expression on his face when they were admiring his dam, but they knew he felt _____.

Example and Non-example of brisk walking

Trying to catch the bus when you are late.

Getting off the bus and walking home when you are tired.

Example and Non-example for suitable

Wearing a swimsuit on a beach.

Wearing a ball gown on a beach.

Example and Non-example of logical

Deciding not to steal a candy bar from the store because you know it is wrong and you could get in a lot of trouble.

Deciding to steal the candy bar because you want it.

Example and Non-example for consideration

Giving an important decision twenty seconds of thought.

Giving an important decision a month before you decide.

Students' Use of the Word

Describe the last snappish thing you heard in the hall today.

Idea Completion

It would be better to have all the dominions of Russia than to have all the dominions of Estonia because _____

Write

How do you explain the mysterious feelings the children had when they heard the name of Aslan?

Chapter 8

1. reign- pg.89 the period of time of ruling by a king or queen

Idea Completion

During the White Witch's reign, all of Narnia
was _____

2. treacherous- pg.92 not to be trusted, traitorous, disloyal

Idea Completion

Mr. Beaver said that Edmund was treacherous
because _____

Alternative Definition for modest

Not showy or fancy: a palace is not a modest house

Students' Use of the Word

Describe a situation in which you had a tingling sensation in your fingers.

Alternative Definition for brisk

Invigorating, keen, sharp: the air was brisk and cold

Example and Non-example of suitable

Whispering in a city library.

Shouting in a city library.

Relationship of Words

Explain why it isn't logical to be a treacherous friend.

Alternative Definition of consideration:

Caring or kindness for someone: I appreciated my husband's consideration for me when I was ill.

Write

What does Mr. Beaver mean when he says that Aslan is good but not necessarily safe?

Chapter 9

1. scheme- pg.98 A plot or a plan that is not shown openly to people because they might not approve of it.

Idea Completion

What Edmund was planning was a scheme because he was thinking _____
_____.

2. gloating- pg.103 To feel victorious over someone in a bad way. To say “ha-ha” at someone when you feel like they’ve been beaten at something.

Idea Completion

Edmund was gloating at the stone lion because _____
_____.

Word Associations

Which of our words goes with Benedict Arnold?

Example and Non-example of reign
Queen Victoria’s time on the throne.
President Bush’s time in office.

Word Associations

Which of our words goes with compliment?

Have You Ever.....?

Describe a time when you had a numb sensation in your feet.

Example and Non-example for briskly

A stroll through the park on a Sunday afternoon.
Quickly walking down a path to get home on time.

Students’ Use of the Word

Describe a time in which you felt you dressed suitable to the occasion.

Write

Why did the thought of Aslan give Edmund a horrible feeling?

Chapter 10

1. solemn- pg.117 feeling both serious and impressed at the same time

Idea Completion

The Beavers and the children felt solemn before Father Christmas because _____

2. restore- pg.119 to bring back to a normal condition

Idea Completion

Father Christmas said that if a person were wounded he could be restored if he drank a few drops of the _____.

Students' Use of the Word

Describe a situation when someone gloated over you.

Example and Non-example for scheme

A plan to rob a bank.

A plan to go to the bank.

Alternative Use of treacherous

Not to be trusted as in: The roads were treacherously icy last night.

Relationship of Words

Is it logical that a king would enjoy a long reign if he were good to his people? Why?

Relationship of Words

When is it suitable to speak modestly?

Alternative Use of sensation

A feeling of excitement or interest in a group as in: The movie caused a great sensation.

Write

Which present from Father Christmas was the best? Why?

Chapter 11

1. repulsive- pg.122 disgusting, causing someone to dislike or almost get sick because of something

Idea Completion

The dwarf gave Edmund a repulsive grin
because _____

2. self-indulgence- pg.126 giving yourself anything you want, whether it's food, things, etc.

Idea Completion

The White Witch accused the animal party of self-indulgence
because _____

Example and Non-example for restore

What people do to old paintings to make them look good again.

Going to look at old paintings in a museum.

Example and Non-example for solemn

How you would describe a baptism.

How you would describe a food fight.

Relationship of Words

Why would someone get snappish if a friend gloated over beating him at a game?

Have You Ever.....?

Describe a time when you schemed and were successful.

Relationship of Words

If a friend were treacherous with you, would it be logical to maintain the friendship?

Alternative Use of reign:

To rule (verb): The White Witch reigned in Narnia.

Write

Describe why the journey with the White Witch was very disappointing to Edmund.

Chapter 12

1. slab- pg.137 a big, flat, thick piece of something like a rock

Idea Completion

The slab of gray rock was called
the _____.

2. snarl- pg.143 to growl with bared teeth, or angrily saying something harsh

Idea Completion

The Wolf was snarling at Susan
because _____.

Students' Use of the Word

Describe a time when you spent money self-indulgently on yourself.

Students' Use of the Word

Describe something that you think is repulsive.

Example and Non-example of restore

Friendship can be restored after an apology.

Friendship can be restored during a bad argument.

Applause, Applause

Clap to indicate how much you like feeling solemn.

Word Associations

Which word goes with braggart?

Relationship of Words

When can a scheme be distressing to someone?

_____.

_____.

Write

Is Aslan how you imagined him? Is he more or less than what you thought he would be? Why?

Chapter 13

1. dispute- pg.153 argue

Idea Completion

Aslan said that they would not dispute about names
because _____

2. renounce- pg.158 give up

Idea Completion

Aslan said that the White Witch
renounced _____

Applause, Applause,
Clap to indicate how much you like someone to snarl at you.

Example and Non-example of slab

A thick piece of cheese.

Thick whipping cream.

Have You Ever.....?

Describe a time you were self-indulgent with food.

Word Association

Which word goes with looking away from something in horror.

Relationship of Words

How would you restore a friendship after a dispute?

Students' Use of the Word

Describe a time when you felt solemn.

Write

Tell in your own words why Edmund's life is forfeit to the White Witch.

Chapter 14

1. proceed- pg.161 to go on with, or to continue to do something

Idea Completion

Aslan and everyone proceeded to

2. summon- pg.165 to call someone to yourself, to say "Come here."

Idea Completion

The Wolf

summoned _____

Word Associations

What word goes with Lent?

Relationship of Words

When can a snappish comment cause a dispute?

Alternative Definition of snarl

A tangle or a jumbled mess: When traffic cannot move, it is snarled.

Word Associations

What word goes with a great big steak?

Relationship of Words

If you wanted to renounce some form of self-indulgence, what would you give up?

Word Associations

What word goes with feeling sick to the stomach?

Write

Why did Aslan have to be brought so low? Why did he have to suffer humiliation like that?

Chapter 15

1. noble- pg.175 a word to describe a person who is good, generous, and who does good, generous, and right things, not low or vulgar things

Idea Completion

Aslan is described as noble in the book because

2. romp- pg.179 play in a noisy way by running and jumping

Idea Completion

Aslan, Susan, and Lucy romped
because_____

Have You Ever.....?

Describe a time when you were summoned somewhere.

Example and Non-example of proceed

Taking a test.

Finishing a test.

Relationship of Words

Should your dad proceed to light up a cigarette if his doctor tells him to renounce smoking?

Why or why not?

Alternative Definition of dispute

Argued about: A hotly disputed topic in schools is whether students should wear uniforms.

Example and Non-example of snarling

An angry bear.

A sleeping bear.

Relationship of Words

Would a slab of cheese on a sandwich be repulsive to you?

Write

How did it come to be that Aslan was brought back to life? Explain it in your own words.

Chapter 16

1. dazzling- pg.185 so shinningly beautiful it's hard to look at

Idea Completion

The birds had dazzling plumage which means _____

2. transparent- pg.185 clear or able to see through

Idea Completion

Transparent green was worn by the _____.

Have You Ever.....?

Describe a time when you romped happily with someone.

Relationship of Words

Would a noble person be repulsive?

Relationship of Words

Would you be distressed if you were summoned to the principal's office?

Relationship of Words

What is the logical way to proceed if the fire alarm goes off in class?

Relationship of Words

Is it a noble decision to renounce lying?

Relationship of Words

Is it suitable to dispute loudly with the teacher in class?

Write

What happened when Rumblebuffin asked for a handkerchief?

Chapter 17

1. alliance- pg.201 a close agreement or connection between countries or people

Idea Completion

The new queens and kings of Narnia would never have an alliance with the White Witch because _____

2. remarkable- pg.205 unusually or noticeably impressive, deserving of praise

Idea Completion

The Professor was remarkable because _____

Example and Non-example for transparent

Glass in a window.

Glass in a mirror.

Example and Non-example for dazzling

Actress's gowns on Oscar night.

Actress's sweat clothes after a long run.

Example and Non-example for romp

Two kids rolling around on the couch.

Two kids playing video games on a couch.

Alternative Definition of noble

Someone who belongs to the nobility: The nobleman's castle was large and beautiful.

Alternative Use of the Word for romp

Rompers: the little baby wore his rompers while playing on the playground.

Relationship of Words

Tell what you might snappishly say to your friend if she distressed you with an insult. _____

Example and Non-example for proceed
 To start making a pie.
 To take the pie out of the oven.

Have You Ever.....?
 Describe a person you thought was remarkable and why.

Example and Non-example for alliance
 U.S.A. and Israel
 U.S.A and Iran

Alternative Definition of transparent
 Obvious, not fooling anyone: The lie the student told was so transparent the teacher laughed.

Alternative Definition for dazzling
 Impressive: The dazzling skill of the piano playing really impressed us.

Applause, Applause
 Clap to indicate how much you want to be remarkable.

Students' Use of the Word
 Tell whom you have an alliance with.

Relationship of Words
 Whose alliance is remarkable in your opinion?

Example and Non-example of transparent
 Butterfly wings
 Bird wings

Write
 What part of the book did you like, and what part didn't you like and why?

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