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Teachers' Perceptions in Developing Robust Vocabulary Instruction at an American International School

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M.S., Walden University, 2009

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Abstract

At an international school in Taiwan, English learners have struggled to meet the U.S. national average in vocabulary on standardized testing instruments. This problem has become more significant since 2009. The purpose of this research was to conduct a case study on successful vocabulary teachers to determine their perceptions of effective teaching. Knowles' andragogy, Brookfield's self-directed, experiential learning, and Vygotsky's social constructivist framework provided the conceptual framework for this study. The research questions focused on teachers' perceptions of why they were successful in teaching vocabulary in English. The study site had access to quantitative data regarding previous standardized testing results; however, there was little information about what was causing these teachers to be successful. The primary data collection method was individual interviews with 5 teachers whose success in teaching vocabulary in English was determined by previous students' standardized testing results and the administrator's recommendation. The teachers' perceptions were analyzed using a structural coding process to derive key words, categories, and themes. Findings revealed the needs for increased scaffolding for teachers and students, a purposeful and supportive learning environment, and meaningful context and comprehensible content. This study also included developing a professional learning workshop to enhance the knowledge of all teachers regarding vocabulary instruction. Enhanced knowledge could result in teachers implementing best practices to enable all students, especially English learners, to improve their vocabulary development, which over time may lead to proficiency and mastery in academics and empower students to succeed academically.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Language is the primary means of communication between individuals. Through communication, a message is conveyed and meaning is received. Whether that communication takes place orally or in a written form, the message is conveyed using words. Language is the means of input and output in comprehension (Krashen, 1981). Input refers to tasks that learners do to take in the message while output is what learners do to produce the language (Krashen, 1981). Within language teaching, reading and listening are usually labeled as input and speaking and writing as output (Krashen, 1981). Comprehension is essential in deciphering a message. Krashen (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 1993) introduced the term comprehensible input to signify the importance of making the input understandable before learners can make meaning out of it. Specifically, comprehension encompasses the three critical components of background knowledge, context, and language (Lynch, 1996).

Though first and second language acquisition might share some similarities, second language acquisition is different from first language acquisition in terms of learners' characteristics and learning conditions. The four learning theories of second language acquisition are behaviorism, the cognitive theory, the interactionist theory, and the creative construction theory (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). Behaviorists argued that learning takes place through habit formation (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). Through input and positive rewards, learners form new habits when learning a new language. Cognitive theorists purported that learning a second language is building up knowledge to such a

point that knowledge can be accessed automatically when needed for input, output, and comprehension (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). The interactionists stressed the importance of modified input for second language learners in the language acquisition process (Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

The creative constructivists suggested that second language learners could operate the internal processing mechanisms independently of the output mechanisms (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). That is, acquisition of a new language can occur internally entirely based on the input of reading and listening. The output of writing and speaking is seen as merely a result of learning, rather than an integral part of learning. One of the main proponents of creative construction theory is Krashen (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 1993) who developed the monitor model. Three hypotheses within the monitor model are noteworthy in the field of second language acquisition. Within the natural order hypothesis, Krashen stated that second language learners follow a predictable sequence in acquiring a new language. He further asserted that input must be comprehensible for messages to be understood in the input hypothesis (Krashen, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 1993). The affective filter hypothesis described the influences of motives, attitudes, and emotional states in promoting or inhibiting the growth of learning (Krashen, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 1993). Krashen's hypotheses reminded educators to ensure the tasks planned are comprehensible and are at the appropriate difficulty level so they are conducive to learning in a welcoming environment.

Traditionally, second language programs focused on the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Lynn, 1996). Grammar and pronunciation were

emphasized over vocabulary (Allen, 1983). Vocabulary teaching and learning were often relegated as an incidental part of a language course. At best, vocabulary words were chosen and studied primarily based on the reading texts, with an emphasis on the bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorization (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In recent years, vocabulary has taken on more of a central role in language teaching and learning as applied linguists could access the vast lexical corpora and became cognizant of the notion that vocabulary should be integrated into the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Nation, 2002). Nation (2013) further elaborated the need of four equal strands of a well-balanced language course. They are meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, fluency development, and language-focused instruction (Nation, 2013). Similar to Krashen (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 1993), Nation (2013) stressed the need for comprehensibility in language learning. Meaning-focused input refers to providing comprehensible reading and listening input to the learners with the focus being on the main ideas of the messages (Nation, 2013). Meaning-focused output involves producing comprehensible writing and speaking by the learners to others. Fluency development refers to practices that will enable the learners to become fluent users of their known language skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Nation, 2013). Practices like speed-reading is a prime example of fluency development in which learners work on increasing their reading speed over time (Nation, 2009). Language-focused instruction occurs when direct instruction of language features is provided in spelling, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

Definition of the Problem

At the study site in Taiwan, the last 6 years' standardized testing instruments showed that the students are lagging behind the U.S. national average in the vocabulary section of the Stanford assessment (Pearson Assessment, 2015). Teachers at the study site struggled with knowing how to develop robust vocabulary instruction to help the students improve their vocabulary acquisition in English. Some of the possible reasons why teachers struggled with helping the students improve their vocabulary learning in English could be due to lack of time for explicit vocabulary instruction, insufficient knowledge of vocabulary strategies, uncertainty about how to choose the right words to study, and how to close the gap between second language learners and native English speakers.

I aimed to explore the perception of the teachers who were effective in vocabulary instruction to garner a systemic understanding of how to address the statistical evidence of student vocabulary underachievement at the study site. In order to affect changes in student vocabulary learning, my focus in this study was on understanding the perception of teachers in developing robust vocabulary instruction.

The goal of effective teaching is to develop student understanding (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2009). Specifically, as an English Language Learning teacher at an *international school* overseas, effective teaching means preparing *English Language Learners* (ELLs) to meet the rigorous standards needed to perform competently in the other subjects. As language is the primary medium of instruction and communication, its influence on student understanding and learning cannot be ignored.

To compound this challenge of mastering a new language, ELLs also encounter unfamiliar content in different subject areas (August, Branum-Martin, Cardenas-Hagan, & Francis, 2009; Vaughn et al., 2009). Mastering the English language is critical to the *success* of the students as they complete their secondary schooling and begin their college education (Francis & Vaughn, 2009; Nation, 2013; Snow, Lawrence, & White, 2009).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

English is highly valued in Taiwan as proficiency in English is viewed as a channel to success (Halic, Greenberg, & Paulus, 2009). Over 80% of the students at the study site are Asian and are motivated to learn as ELLs. Close to 80% of the staff are hired from North America and might come with a different set of expectations for ELLs based on their prior experiences in North America. Expectations arising from different cultures can affect student learning.

Halic et al. (2009) noted that cultural identity is central to the academic experience of nonnative speakers. The interdependency among culture, language, and academic identity cannot be ignored. Concerning language, it usually requires 5 to 7 years for ELLs to gain academic proficiency in English (Cummins, 2011). Culturally, Chinese students are taught to value collective good above personal gains (Zhang & Pang, 2016). Moreover, respect of one's teachers is deemed as more important than expressing one's view (Zhang & Pang, 2016). Academically, ELLs are familiar with drill and practice, or rote memorization, from their previous schooling (Hou & Xie, 2007). This is where mastery of content is highly desirable and the students are subjected to

weekly, sometimes daily, testing to ensure that the content is learned well (Chen, 2013; Chen, Ramirez, Luo, Geva, & Ku, 2012). Realizing that ELL students have language, cultural, and academic needs, teachers who are cognizant of these needs and who strive to address these needs will be more effective in their teaching, thus enabling the ELLs to achieve their full potential.

ELLs are the fastest growing population among the U.S. school-age students (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). ELLs might appear to have proficient oral conversational skills in English but they lack the vocabulary and *academic language* needed to be successful at school (Moore & Klingner, 2014). On the standardized academic achievement tests like the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), ELLs often score lower than their native-speaking peers (NCES, 2016). This disparity of scores is known as an achievement gap, which is the difference between the average scores of two student groups (NCES, 2016). ELLs performed significantly lower than the native English speakers on the 2013 reading NAEP assessments in Grades 4, 8, and 12 (NCES, 2015b). Perhaps even more troubling is the fact that this reading achievement gap widened by grade. ELLs were behind by 39 points in Grade 4, 45 points in Grade 8, and 53 points in Grade 12 (NCES, 2015b).

Despite the urgent need to address the achievement gap in reading between native English speakers and the ELL students, teachers might wait too long before getting help for the ELLs (Moore & Klingner, 2014). By then, the interventions will not be effective in meeting the language needs of the ELLs and the ELLs could be misidentified and further placed in the special education program (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). Clearly,

intentional, specific intervention needs to take place so ELLs' language needs can be addressed in younger grades to avoid misidentification and overrepresentation into the special education category.

ELLs might also face teachers who are inadequately prepared to work with ELLs (Orosco & Klingner, 2010). Teachers might not have received the training in second language instruction and are unfamiliar with the effective instructional practices for ELLs. Effective instructional practices tend to be applied with a one-size-fits-all mentality without consideration of context and targeted student population (Moore & Klingner, 2014).

Teachers might assume that learning to read in English as a second or third language is the same as learning English as the first language. The National Reading Panel was asked to conduct research on reading instruction to improve reading achievement back in 2000 (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000). The report was instrumental in formulating policies such as Reading First and *No Child Left Behind* (Moore & Klingner, 2014). Though the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) stated in its introduction that it did not address issues relevant to second language learning, their recommendations were touted as beneficial reading development for all.

One of the challenges of vocabulary teaching is how to cement vocabulary words in the students' minds. The number of words that the native speakers know, understand, and apply in their daily life is overwhelming for ELLs to grasp (Graves, August, &

Mancilla-Martinez, 2013). This deficit in vocabulary development and retention is usually confirmed on the annual standardized test results (Pearson Assessment, 2015).

As language teaching is used to scaffold learning for the ELL students, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction to ensure that it is meeting the students' needs. It stands to reason that if the vocabulary instruction is effective, then student achievement will improve. The information from the interviews administered in the case study will also be utilized to make changes to improve the vocabulary instruction for subsequent school years.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Established in 1952, the study site is a college-preparatory, international school in Taiwan. This school is recognized as one system with three campuses and is jointly accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Additionally, the study site is registered with the Taiwan government as a not-for-profit foreign school. Taiwan government stipulates that as a foreign school, the study site can only admit students with foreign passports in order to avoid competing with the local schools' enrollment.

With three locations situated in the North, Central, and South of Taiwan, the study site serves over 910 students from 31 nationalities. The northern campus offers kindergarten through tenth grade and serves over 220 students. The southern campus serves over 220 students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Many students transfer to the central campus to complete grades 10 to 12. The central campus serves about 450 students from kindergarten through 12th.

As an international school in Taiwan, the study site attracts students from diverse backgrounds. Some students come from expatriate families in which their parents have been temporarily relocated to Taiwan due to work. Others are from Taiwanese families whose parents returned to Taiwan after having lived overseas for a period of time. Sixty-nine percent of the students who attend the study site hold a passport from North America, while the rest come from South Korea, Philippines, and other surrounding countries. Specifically, 49% of the total student population is female and 51% is male. Ethnically, 82% of the students are Asian, 9% are Caucasian, and 9% are from a multiracial background.

The study site employs over 130 instructional staff with an average turnover rate of 8.7 years. Forty-three percent of the teaching staff has a bachelor's degree and 51% has a master's degree. Seventy-seven percent of the teaching staff is from North America, 15% is from Taiwan, and the rest are from surrounding countries. At the southern campus, the study site has over 36 instructional staff teaching K-12.

The administration of the study site had been increasingly concerned about the proficiency levels of the students in vocabulary development. From 2009-2015, the annual standardized testing scores showed that students at the southern campus of the study site struggled with vocabulary (Pearson Assessment, 2015). In 2009-2010, 29% of the ninth grade (G9) class performed below average in the vocabulary section of the Stanford assessment. In 2010-2011, 33% of the eighth grade (G8) class performed below average in Stanford's vocabulary. In 2011-2012, 24% of the G9 class was below average and in 2012-2013, 21% of the sixth grade (G6) class was below average. In 2013-2014,

27% of the G8 class performed below average and in 2014-2015, it was 22% of the seventh grade class (Pearson Assessment, 2015). Test data clearly indicate that student vocabulary achievement has not shown significant improvement.

Despite the fact that the students are lagging behind the U.S. national average in the vocabulary assessment of the last 6 years' standardized testing instruments (Pearson Assessment, 2015), teachers were uncertain as to how to best help the students improve their vocabulary achievement. The purpose of this study was to understand the perception of effective vocabulary teachers in developing *robust vocabulary instruction*.

Definitions

Academic Language: Language that is used in classroom and texts much more often than in social, informal settings (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014). It includes general academic words and content-specific words (Baker et al., 2014).

Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS): Conversational aspect of language proficiency; can have a range of cognitive demands and contextual support (Cummins, 2000).

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP): Academic aspect of language proficiency; can have a range of cognitive demands and contextual support (Cummins, 2000).

English Language Learners (ELLs): Students for whom their first, or native, language is not English (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Generative Word Knowledge: Vocabulary knowledge that can transfer to the learning of new words (Nagy, 2010).

International Private School: A school that exists outside of the U.S. and is serving students in grades K-12. It is operated by an agency other than a state or the federal government and is usually not supported by public funds (Baker et al., 2014).

Language Minority Students (LMSs): Students whose home language is not English (NCES, 2016).

Limited English Proficiency (LEP): Students whose English level cannot meet the state's proficient level of achievement as specified under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCES, 2016).

Robust Vocabulary Instruction: Rich and deep vocabulary instruction that prompts students to interact with the words and their multifaceted meanings (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013). Robust vocabulary instruction should progress from word knowledge to higher verbal processing, and eventually to expressive word knowledge (McKeown, Beck, & Sandora, 2012).

Success: Students will be able to achieve the average level on the vocabulary section of the Stanford Achievement Test (Pearson Assessment, 2015).

Significance

English language learning is a topic attracting more attention in the U.S. About 4.5 million ELLs are enrolled in PK-12 public schools across the U.S. (NCES, 2016). Specifically, with regard to ELL students, in the period between 1994-1995 and 2013-2014, ELLs enrolling in U.S. public schools increased dramatically by 45% or from 3.1 million to 4.5 million (NCES, 2016). During that same period, the PK-12 enrollment growth only increased by 4.8% or from 47.7 million to 50.0 million (NCES, 2016). The

growth of the ELL population is significantly greater than the growth of the overall school-aged population. Teachers are tasked with the challenging task of helping the ELLs not only learn a new language but also master new academic content through English.

One in 10 of the public school students are second language learners and are faced with the daunting task of learning English (NCES, 2016). It is not surprising then, that ELLs lag behind their native peers in their academic performance. According to the Nation's Report Card (NCES, 2015b), students in Grades 4, 8, and 12 were given the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessments in 2013. Vocabulary questions were integrated in the NAEP reading assessment since 2009 and they measure student ability to apply word understanding to develop passage comprehension. One of the salient findings reported that the ELLs scored lower than their native peers in vocabulary performance at all three grades (NCES, 2015b). Reading is an active process of understanding the text, developing meaning from the text, and making sense of the text (NCES, 2015b). Vocabulary is seen as a fundamental component of the reading comprehension process and is closely linked to reading performance. For instance, students who performed well on NAEP vocabulary questions also scored higher in reading comprehension. Similarly, students who performed poorly in reading comprehension scored lower in vocabulary (NCES, 2015b).

Not only are the ELLs lagging behind native speakers in the U.S., students with an immigrant background elsewhere in the world are also struggling. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international assessment that measures

reading, math, and science literacy of 15-year-old students every 3 years (NCES, 2015a). Within the study that compared the indicators of education in the U.S. and other G-20 countries utilizing PISA, the results showed that immigrant students scored lower on the PISA 2012 reading scale than their native peers (NCES, 2015a).

In Malaysia, after 33 years of using Bahasa as the language of instruction at school, English was reinstated as the language of instruction in 2003 (Md-Ali, 2015). Math and science teachers were nonnative speakers of English but they had to teach math and science in English (Md-Ali, 2015). These teachers were recommended by the State Education Department as participants for observation, yet they struggled with explaining the content clearly to their students in English (Md-Ali, 2015). From the video recording of the lessons, the teachers reported that their actual words were quite different from what they had intended to use (Md-Ali, 2015). One reason was that the teachers had to translate the content from Malay to English during instruction (Md-Ali, 2015) and the wrong selection of vocabulary by the teachers might have hampered the quality of the delivery of the lesson content. This code switching is encouraged among ELLs and also between teachers and students as it helps to clarify and reinforce lesson content (Md-Ali, 2015).

Similarly, in China, English is considered a foreign language. The traditional vocabulary teaching method of rote memorization has left Chinese ELLs at a disadvantage (Hou & Xie, 2007). It was reported that their breadth, size, and depth of vocabulary knowledge were quite limited (Ma, 2012). Even with the words that the Chinese ELLs learned from rote memorization, they struggled with utilizing them

appropriately in an authentic language context (Ma, 2012). This was due in part to the educational system that demanded passing English written entrance exams for junior high, high school, and college (Ma, 2012). Students came to view English as a subject to be memorized, not a language to be utilized in communication.

Globalization has thrust English to the forefront of Taiwan's education scene as a highly desirable language skill to have (Kung, 2015). International companies and corporations are looking for people with language skills to succeed in the global market (Kung, 2015). Having a certain level of English is perceived as a valuable asset in Taiwan that will offer better job opportunities in the future. In Taiwan, English is considered a foreign language. That is, English is not widely used in Taiwan and it is not the medium of communication outside school (Lin & Johnson, 2016). Even in schools, English is not an official language of public education (Lin & Johnson, 2016). Taiwanese children have limited exposure to English outside of the school environment (Lin & Johnson, 2016). Most Taiwanese parents do not feel comfortable speaking English with their children as they themselves are not proficient at English (Lin & Johnson, 2016). Recently, a study was done in Taiwan to examine the receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge of preschoolers (Lin & Johnson, 2016). The findings demonstrated that on average the Taiwanese students who were enrolled in an English immersion program had significantly smaller receptive and expressive vocabulary in their first and second languages than their monolingual peers (Lin & Johnson, 2016).

Research Question

Reading is a crucial component to learning especially for students to succeed in school, which sets the stage for their future success. Vocabulary is the very foundation of learning (Beck et al., 2013). Understanding words will present students with tools to access their background knowledge, comprehend current reading, express their thoughts in writing and speaking, and enable them in learning new concepts (Beck et al., 2013). Vocabulary knowledge is positively related to the students' academic success as it helps unlock the meaning of a reading text (Graves et al., 2013). Comprehension encompasses more than understanding individual words and remembering their meanings, it also entails possessing a sufficient amount of background information in order to make sense of the context (Graves et al., 2013). However, without understanding the meanings of a sufficient amount of the words in the text, comprehension will be hampered, if not distorted.

Poor readers struggle with having a sufficient amount of vocabulary to make sense of what they read. As a result, these students tend to avoid reading for pleasure, as reading is difficult for them (Graves et al., 2013). This leads to a cyclic process known as "Matthew Effects" (Stanovich, 1986; Walberg & Tsai, 1983, as cited in Joshi, 2005, p. 213) in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Good readers enjoy reading and tend to spend more time in reading (Graves et al., 2013). As they read more, they learn more words and become even better readers. Poor readers struggle with reading and tend to spend less time in reading (Orosco & Klinger, 2010). As they read less, they learn fewer words and become poorer readers. Instead of closing the gap between the good

and poor readers, the gap actually widens over time if no intervention is provided (Orosco & Klinger, 2010). The outlook on the poor readers with limited vocabulary is grim as their situation only worsens over time.

I explored how vocabulary instruction was being considered and implemented by teachers in the study site in the local context where I teach as an ELL teacher. To explore this phenomenon, I examined how teachers perceived and taught vocabulary instruction. The research question for this project study was: What is the perception of the teachers on why they are successful in teaching vocabulary in English? In addition to this research question, the following questions were addressed:

1. What factors do teachers perceive as important to be successful in vocabulary instruction?
2. How can other teachers best replicate the process of robust vocabulary instruction?

Review of the Literature

In order to review the research related to vocabulary instruction, procedures to identify the related research included in this study were employed. These procedures included searching subject indices and citations, browsing, footnote chasing, and citation chaining from Google Scholar. The literature review included information from books, peer-reviewed journals, U.S. Government websites, and professional education network websites. Searches for peer-reviewed articles were conducted in Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), ProQuest Central, Education Research Complete, Science Direct, and the Walden University online library to locate appropriate studies.

Descriptors for the computer search included *second language acquisition, second language learning, second language teaching, foreign language education, English language learners, language minority students, vocabulary learning, vocabulary teaching, vocabulary instruction, vocabulary development, academic achievement, literacy,* and *language instruction.*

Conceptual Framework

In order for the teachers to improve vocabulary with the students, they will first need to reflect on their own teaching. Teachers are adult learners. By taking on the learners' role, teachers will be able to analyze their own teaching and become cognizant of their areas of improvement.

Knowles's (2012) conceptual framework of andragogy, or adult learning, guided this study and provided the foundation for the case study (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012). For learning to take place for adults, there are certain characteristics that accompany it. Knowles espoused a set of seven principles of practice in andragogy that guide adult learning practice (Knowles et al., 2012). According to Knowles et al. (2012), adults are intrinsically motivated, self-directed learners but they need to know the reason for learning. In addition, Knowles et al. underscored that rich experiences provide the foundation for adult learning, while readiness and orientation to learn are positively related to the immediate relevancy of real-life application.

Analogous to the principles found in Knowles's andragogy, Brookfield (2004) further expanded Knowles's seminal work on adult learning by elucidating on the importance of self-directed, experiential learning (as cited in Galbraith). The concept of

learning to learn is emphasized as a crucial element in adult education. More importantly, Brookfield (2005) highlighted the area of critical reflection as a cyclic process that is embedded in effective adult learning. While Knowles (Knowles et al., 2012) focused on learner involvement, Brookfield heightened the importance of critical reflection. Both components are pertinent in facilitating effective principles of practice and in meeting the various learning needs of adult learners.

My study was also grounded in a social constructivist framework (Vygotsky, 1978). Three conceptual assumptions also guided my study with ELLs. First, teachers who work with ELLs need to be cognizant of the second language acquisition pedagogy. That is, a lack of understanding of comprehension and proficiency in English is not a reflection of the students' cognitive abilities. Nor does student hesitation reflect a lack of motivation. Inaccurate or partial understanding of the second language acquisition process might result in teachers evaluating their students unfavorably and might mislead teachers to refer ELLs for testing of special learning needs (Moore & Klingner, 2014). Second, teachers need to understand that culture and language interact with learning (Orosco & O'Connor, 2014). Vygotsky (1978) purported that learning and development were influenced by the interrelated cultural, historical, and social contexts. Third, teachers need to review their practices to ensure they are aligned with similar populations (Orosco & Klinger, 2010). Instructional and assessment practices that are proven to be effective with native English speakers might not be effective with ELLs (Orosco & Klinger, 2010). Without this understanding, ELLs are at a higher risk of being misidentified into the special education categories.

Some people termed the sociocultural theory as the sociocultural theory of second language acquisition (Lantolf, 2000). This sociocultural theory aims at helping ELLs in the learning process. ELLs are viewed as active participants and become an integral part of the learning process. Two fundamental principles undergird this sociocultural theory, that is, the zone of proximal development and the concept of scaffolding (Lantolf, 2000). First, the zone of proximal development is defined as the difference of task performance between the learners' optimal level of performance with extra scaffolding and the learner's current, individual level of performance (Lantolf, 2000). Second, scaffolding refers to providing support to students and gradually lessening the level of support as students become more independent (Baleghizadeh, Memar, & Memar, 2011).

Language Needs of ELLs

Researchers need to be aware of the fact that how ELLs learn to read in English is different from how their native-speaking peers acquire English. As such, the language needs of ELLs will differ from the language needs of their monolingual peers. Proven instructional methods that work with native English students might not be effective with ELLs. Students who grew up in native English-speaking families have already had the exposure to a rich, varied vocabulary bank of English words from natural interaction with family, friends, and the environment. This rich, varied experience of exposure could be true for ELLs regarding their home language, but not with the language of instruction, English. For languages that share cognates, words that have similar spellings and meanings in two languages like English and Spanish, it would be useful to provide explicit instruction on the cognates to the ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006). For

languages that are vastly different from English, ELLs can practice the phonemes in English that do not exist in the home language (August & Shanahan, 2006).

In teaching ELLs, phonics and isolated word reading tend to be emphasized over vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension (August & Shanahan, 2006). ELLs are more likely to have strong at-level word decoding skills but struggle with oral language and comprehension (August & Shanahan, 2006). The result is a discrepancy of skills between word reading and other literacy skills (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011). Within the other literacy skills such as vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension, ELLs require more support with vocabulary and oral language in order to benefit from comprehension instruction (Moore & Klingner, 2014).

As vocabulary words are made up of letters, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness have been found to have medium to large predictive power to later literacy development (NICHD, 2010). That is, the development of later literacy skills is strongly influenced by early literacy development. One of the later literacy skills developed is vocabulary. Vocabulary knowledge is positively correlated with reading comprehension and is found to have large predictive power to later reading comprehension development (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2008). Unfortunately, vocabulary development is not emphasized in school (Graves et al., 2013).

Vocabulary and Reading

The reports from the National Reading Panel and the National Early Literacy Panel seemed to have reignited recent interest in vocabulary development in the last 10-15 years (NICHD, 2010). Joshi (2005) asserted that vocabulary is crucial within

comprehension by emphasizing that "[a] well-developed meaning vocabulary is a prerequisite for fluent reading, a critical link between decoding and comprehension" (p. 209). Perfetti and Stafura (2014) also affirmed that vocabulary is the link between word identification and reading comprehension. Alemi and Lari (2012) purported that a positive correlation existed between vocabulary development and reading comprehension and fluency. In fact, both vocabulary breadth and depth are correlated with reading comprehension (Binder, Cote, Lee, Besette, & Vu, 2016).

Joshi (2005) observed that poor readers tend to learn fewer new words and at a slower rate than the good readers. Good readers are more willing to take risks and challenge themselves when encountered with unfamiliar words, thus learning more words that are new (Joshi, 2005). The logic follows that poor readers will lag further behind as good readers excel, commonly known as the Matthew Effect where "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" (Stanovich, 1986; Walberg & Tsai, 1983 as cited in Joshi, 2005, p. 213). Without any explicit instruction to help the poor readers, the gap of vocabulary knowledge between the good and poor readers widens.

More recently, other research studies have also shown the importance of vocabulary in terms of its effect on reading comprehension. Wanzek (2014) asserted that without adequate instructional time on vocabulary, reading progress will be hampered. Conversely, Daskalovska (2016) purported that extensive reading can improve vocabulary knowledge in the areas of spelling, meaning, and collocation. In a 4-year longitudinal study, Oakhill and Cain (2012) concluded that vocabulary is an important

predictor of reading comprehension development. Clearly, having strong vocabulary affects the trajectory of future reading progress.

Vocabulary and ELLs

Not only is vocabulary positively correlated to reading development, it also affects second language development (Hu & Nassaji, 2016) and is an integral part of English proficiency (Okamoto, 2015). Perkins and Blythe (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2009) underscored the importance of teaching for understanding by being cognizant of the generative topics within a discipline. Perkins and Blythe (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2009) posited the following four features in a generative topic: central to a discipline, accessible to students, connected to other topics, and engaging to students. As students encounter vocabulary across different content areas, vocabulary instruction is a generative topic. The importance of robust vocabulary instruction in preparing second or third language students to acquire proficiency in academic English cannot be overlooked (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014; Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Zheng (2016) argued that in order to succeed in second language learning, having a substantial vocabulary repertoire is crucial.

Baumann, Ware, and Edwards' (2007) yearlong formative experiment addressed both the receptive and expressive vocabulary by investigating the effects of a comprehensive vocabulary instruction program as outlined by Graves. The four components of effective vocabulary instruction outlined in Graves's program were providing deep and extended language experiences, teaching specific words, teaching vocabulary-learning strategies, and promoting word consciousness (Graves et al., 2013).

August, Carlo, Dressler, and Snow (2005) heightened the need for sustained vocabulary development of ELLs. August et al. reviewed the research in vocabulary development of ELLs, which indicated that ELLs are at a disadvantage when comparing their breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge with the native speakers. The researchers identified three challenges when implementing vocabulary instruction for ELLs, they were choosing the right words to study, closing the gap in ELLs, and remediating the lack of time for vocabulary instruction (August et al., 2005).

Vocabulary development is a complex issue and a multi-faceted process (Jalongo & Sobolak, 2011). Chung (2012) stressed the importance of vocabulary acquisition in language learning. Learning a word involves not only understanding the various shades of meanings of the word, but also being able to deeply process it so it can be readily applied in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Hu & Nassaji, 2016). If the general academic and content-specific vocabulary words are not taught explicitly, they affect reading comprehension and the ELL population is at a distinct disadvantage (Ardasheva, Newcomer, Firestone, & Lamb, 2016). It points to an urgent need to support vocabulary development of all students, especially those who are second language learners.

In order to maximize vocabulary learning, it is important to incorporate vocabulary instruction in the prereading, reading, and postreading stages (Watkins & Lindahl, 2010; Wessels, 2011). August, Artzi, and Barr (2016) argued that although extended vocabulary instruction is more effective than embedded vocabulary instruction in helping students acquire vocabulary, both approaches should be utilized as the embedded approach has one distinct advantage of requiring less time to implement.

Students need direct interaction with word meanings and word relationships that were connected with the texts they were reading (Dalton, Proctor, Uccelli, Mo, & Snow, 2011). Other factors that seem to affect vocabulary acquisitions are: length of residence in an English-speaking country (Chen et al., 2012), appropriateness of materials (Chen, 2013), motivation (Rezaei & Dezhara, 2011), input-based versus output-based tasks (Shintani, 2011), and teaching methods (Ma, 2012). While many factors might affect vocabulary acquisition of the ELLs, vocabulary is an integral part of language learning.

Promoting Vocabulary Development

Finding ways to promote students' vocabulary growth throughout the school years is critical (Graves et al., 2013). Vocabulary has several dimensions. Listening vocabulary encompasses all the receptive words that are heard and understood (Nation, 2008). Speaking vocabulary refers to the productive words that are needed in speech (Nation, 2008). Reading vocabulary includes the receptive words that are read and understood (Nation, 2008). Writing vocabulary is made up of productive words that can be used in writing (Nation, 2008). Both listening and reading are commonly known as receptive while speaking and writing are regarded as productive avenues (Nation, 2008). The relationship between receptive and productive vocabulary learning can be summarized by these characteristics. As production is more challenging than reception, the receptive learning tends to precede the productive (Waring, 1997). Also, the receptive domain is usually larger than the productive (Laufer, 1998).

Extensive reading aids with language acquisition and can be a useful tool for vocabulary learning in a second language (Nation, 2008). Though extensive reading is

encouraged for ELLs, there are several limitations. When encountering unfamiliar words in extensive reading, ELLs might be taught to infer the meaning from the context (Graves et al., 2013). However, due to the limited repertoire of vocabulary knowledge, the ELLs might make inaccurate inferences (Ma & Sin, 2015). Vocabulary gains made from extensive reading usually refer to meaning recognition, not in production (Horst, Cobb, & Meara, 1998). Also, the vocabulary retention rate from extensive reading is quite low at about one to five new words per text (Horst et al., 1998). This is due to the fact that multiple exposures are needed for a word to be retained (Beck et al., 2013). In a recent study, Pellicer-Sanchez and Schmitt (2010) suggested that more than 10 encounters with the target words are required for retention to occur. However, even in graded readers, Nation and Wang (1999) noted that not many words are repeated 10 times or more. The paucity of exposures to the target vocabulary further compounds the challenge that the ELLs face in second language acquisition.

Lexical Thresholds

When encountering unfamiliar words, it is possible to ignore some words that are not crucial to the text (Beck et al., 2013). While some words can be inferred from context, others can be looked up in a dictionary. Insufficient vocabulary knowledge of the text can hamper adequate comprehension (Beck et al., 2013). According to Laufer (2013), lexical threshold refers to the minimal percentage of familiar vocabulary in a text and the minimal vocabulary size of a reader required in understanding a text. This lexical threshold is important to understand as vocabulary knowledge is a strong predictor of

reading proficiency and ELLs need a certain level of vocabulary and grammar knowledge in order to apply the reading skills effectively (Nation, 2006).

Several studies were conducted to discover the minimal percentage of familiar vocabulary to reach adequate text comprehension. Laufer (1998) suggested readers should possess 95% of lexical coverage to reach adequate comprehension of a nonfiction text. Adequate comprehension was defined as scoring 55% on a reading test. Hu and Nation (2000) purported 98% of lexical proficiency as the necessary benchmark for adequate comprehension of 71% on the reading tests. More recently, Schmitt, Jiang, and Grabe (2011) also noted 98% of lexical coverage as the optimal level for a score of 70% on a reading test. The two different lexical coverages, 95% and 98%, represent different expectations of adequate comprehension on reading tests. ELLs are expected to have a high level of familiar vocabulary knowledge in order to understand a text accurately.

Breadth and Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge is viewed in its breadth and depth (Li, 2015). The breadth of lexical competence refers to the quantity that learners know and the depth suggests the quality of knowledge regarding that word (Li, 2015). The breadth of vocabulary knowledge, sometimes referred to as vocabulary size, is positively correlated with vocabulary depth, and reading comprehension (Cameron, 2002; Li, 2015). Vocabulary size is found to be influenced by variables such as age, education, and multilingualism (Keuleers, Stevens, Mandera, & Brysbaert, 2015). In relation to multilingualism, the vocabulary gained in related languages seems to add to the native language and mitigate the loss of native language due to decreased exposure (Keuleers et al., 2015).

One of the ways to assess learners' vocabulary size is to administer Nation's (1990) Vocabulary Levels Test. It consists of five word levels at the 2,000, 3,000, 5,000, 10,000, and University Word List and contains four equivalent forms (Nation, 1990). It was designed to measure the vocabulary knowledge of the common words (Nation, 1990). At each level, students are presented with 10 sets of six words and three definitions (Nation, 1990). Of the six words presented, three are target words while the other three are distractors (Nation, 1990). Students need to match the three definitions to the appropriate target words (Nation, 1990).

Cameron's (2002) study showed atypical results of ELLs in acquiring vocabulary. Her study consisted of 63 ELL students who had on average of over 10 years of English instruction (Cameron, 2002). Utilizing Nation's (1990) Vocabulary Levels Tests, the ELLs demonstrated gaps in their knowledge of the more frequent words and even greater difficulty with the less frequent words (Cameron, 2002). When compared with their native speaking peers using the mean scores, significant differences were observed between the native-speaking peers and the ELLs at the 3,000 and 5,000 word levels (Cameron, 2002).

Another study was conducted by Kamimoto (2001) with Japanese university students who were learning English. After administering Forms A and B of the 2,000, 3,000, and 5,000 word levels to the 196 Japanese university students over a two-week interval, results indicated that ELLs did not learn vocabulary in the order of English word frequency (Kamimoto, 2001). Loanwords, words that are adopted by the speakers of one language from a different language, proved to play a significant role in the 2,000 and

3,000 word level tests. Kamimoto (2001) also noted that the 2,000 and 3,000 word lists needed to be updated and revised to reflect more current word frequency.

In terms of depth of vocabulary knowledge, a few studies explored how well the learners knew the words and the related forms of word knowledge. Schmitt and Meara (1997) studied how grammatical suffix knowledge and word associations evolved over time. Webb, Newton, and Chang (2013) studied how the forms and meanings of collocations can be learned incidentally through repeated, meaningful exposures in context. To this end, ELLs need to ameliorate both the depth and the breadth of their vocabulary knowledge.

Vocabulary and Second Language Acquisition

Several themes emerged when conducting the literature review on vocabulary development. It is crucial to understand how vocabulary knowledge is developed within the context of second language acquisition. Without this understanding of vocabulary learning or vocabulary development, teaching efforts aimed at helping ELLs will be limited, if not futile.

Within second language acquisition, vocabulary instruction can be described as explicit or incidental (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011). Explicit vocabulary instruction refers to specific target words that are presented through multiple exposures within rich language contexts (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011). Selection of target words for instruction are based on tiers, its usefulness, and importance for the learners (Beck et al., 2008), and has shown to increase the vocabulary knowledge in native English students (Blachowicz, Fisher, Ogle, & Watts-Taffe, 2006) and in ELLs (Carlo et al., 2004).

Conversely, incidental vocabulary learning suggests that students learn words from the context and can increase their vocabulary knowledge through extensive, multiple reading experiences (Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1987). Extensive reading and multiple, meaningful encounters with text underpin the concept of incidental vocabulary learning (Krashen, 1985). Both incidental and explicit vocabulary learning are needed in the vocabulary development of ELLs.

Incidental Vocabulary Learning

Proponents who argued for incidental vocabulary learning that occurred within extensive reading stressed that explicit vocabulary instruction alone could not cover all the essential words that the ELLs need to know in order to function proficiently in the classroom (Graves et al., 2013). Native adult speakers of English might know about 17,000 word families (Goulden, Nation, & Read, 1990) and advanced students might know about 5,000 word families (Horst, 2013). The vocabulary sizes of the ELLs are around 1,000 to 2,000 word families (Laufer, 2000). This discrepancy between words expected to learn and words actually known further underscored the need for another source of language input, extensive reading.

Daskalovska (2014) designed a study to investigate if advanced ELL students can learn vocabulary from reading an authentic text. Eighteen Macedonian university students read and listened to the first eight chapters of *Pride and Prejudice* (Daskalovska, 2014). Results showed that there were some gains in vocabulary learning; participants learned about one in four words, approximately 24% of the unknown target words (Daskalovska, 2014). There were no significant differences in acquisition rates between

learners with different vocabulary sizes (Daskalovska, 2014). The study also showed that words that appeared more frequently in the text were more likely to be learned (Daskalovska, 2014).

Similarly, in a study by Pellicer-Sanchez and Schmitt (2010), 20 advanced ELL university students in Spain read an authentic novel, *Things Fall Apart*. A multi-aspect word knowledge test was administered to assess participants' spelling recognition, part of speech recall, meaning recall, and meaning recognition (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010). The largest gains were made in meaning recognition, 43%, and the least in meaning recall, 14% (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010). That is, incidental vocabulary learning is more likely to have a greater impact on meaning recognition, rather than meaning recall (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010). Another interesting finding was the effect that frequency of word occurrence had on incidental vocabulary acquisition (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010). There was little variance in word learning at one to four occurrences (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010). A significant increase in learning occurred at five to eight exposures (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010). However, the most significant increase occurred at 10 to 17 exposures (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010). After more than 10 exposures, the participants were able to recognize the meaning and spelling for close to 80% of the target words, and recall the meaning for 55% of the target words (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010). This study confirmed the notion that students can make meaningful gains in vocabulary knowledge from reading an authentic text.

Ma and Sin (2015) designed a quasi-experimental research with 25 third grade elementary ELL students in Hong Kong to investigate if reading-based lessons helped the young ELL learners acquire new vocabulary. Students were placed in two conditions. The first was reading with receptive learning exercises, while the other was reading with both receptive and productive learning exercises (Ma & Sin, 2015). The results showed that reading with just the receptive exercises led to meaning recognition (Ma & Sin, 2015). Reading with both receptive and productive exercises led to greater vocabulary retention in students (Ma & Sin, 2015). Participants were also able to move from meaning recognition of the new vocabulary to applying it in a sentence (Ma & Sin, 2015).

Collocations, multi-word units that have a strong co-occurrence association (Webb, Newton, & Chang, 2013), made up a large portion of language (Shin, 2007; Shin & Nation, 2008). Erman and Warren (2000) argued that collocations occurred in over 58% of spoken discourse and 52% of written discourse. Webb et al. (2013) designed a study to investigate if collocations could be learned incidentally through reading while listening to a modified graded reader. A total of 161 university students from three universities in Taiwan were separated into four experimental groups and one control group (Webb et al., 2013). A posttest measured the receptive and productive knowledge of the collocations (Webb et al., 2013). The results indicated that collocations could be learned incidentally through simultaneously reading and listening to a modified graded reader (Webb et al., 2013). Also, repetition played a positive role on students learning

the form and meaning of collocations incidentally and at 15 encounters, significant learning gains could occur (Webb et al., 2013).

Though extensive reading can contribute to incidental vocabulary acquisition for ELLs, it is not without its limitations (Graves et al., 2013). Different types of tests produce different results. Extensive reading has a greater impact on word form recognition and meaning recognition on a multiple-choice test rather than on translating word meanings (Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008). Also, though some studies reported substantial lexical gains made through extensive reading (Ma & Sin, 2015; Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010; Webb, Newton, & Chang, 2013), the effects of vocabulary learned from extensive reading are not long lasting (Waring & Takaki, 2003) or the learning gains were attributed to prior vocabulary knowledge (Webb & Chang, 2015). Incidental vocabulary acquisition from extensive reading is influenced by a myriad of factors, which makes it challenging to predict the extent of vocabulary learning (Nation, 2008). ELLs can have modest lexical gains from extensive reading provided they get enough exposures (Nation, 2008).

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Intentional word learning will always be the most effective approach (Laufer, 2005). Nation (2006) reported that ELLs need to know 6,000-7,000 word families for spoken discourse and 8,000-9,000 word families for written discourse in order to function adequately in English. Nation (2006) suggested that the highest frequency vocabulary, the first 2,000-3,000 word families, should be explicitly taught to the students. While the

lowest frequency words, the ones above the 9,000 word families, can be left unknown as they occur so infrequently (Nation, 2006).

Academic Language Instruction

Vocabulary development, the foundation for reading in the content areas, has become a salient topic in language teaching (Calderon, 2011). Currently, the emphasis is on providing explicit, direct vocabulary instruction and connecting the new, unfamiliar words to students' prior knowledge and experiences (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010).

Cummins (2011) suggested two distinct types of language proficiencies, namely, *basic interpersonal communicational skills* (BICS) and *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP). BICS is the social language used in school that often occurs within a context-embedded setting (Cummins, 2011). CALP refers to the language skills that students encounter in a school setting such as reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and concept development in a context-reduced environment (Cummins, 2011). CALP, or academic language, once mastered, will enable students to access their grade-level content areas and handle the cognitive demands that come with it (Cummins, 2011). Academic vocabulary is a crucial component within academic language that aids with comprehension of academic texts (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014; Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Academic vocabulary includes the general, cross-discipline, words, and the content-specific words (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011).

Within the area of academic vocabulary, Townsend, Filippini, Collins, and Biancarosa (2012) noted a lack of research of academic English in academic achievement. Academic vocabulary refers to word knowledge that students need in order

to achieve academic success across disciplines (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014; Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Townsend et al. measured the variance in general academic word knowledge for middle school students. The findings highlighted the fact that a gap existed in general academic vocabulary knowledge and in the overall breadth of vocabulary knowledge between the average ELLs and the lower ELLs (Townsend et al., 2012). General academic word knowledge played a substantial variance in academic achievement (Townsend et al., 2012). A focus on the academic vocabulary intervention program also resulted in significant gains in certain aspects of vocabulary knowledge, including multiple meanings of taught words, morphological awareness, and words that usually appeared in expository text (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2012a; Lesaux, Kieffer, Faller, & Kelley, 2010).

Morphological awareness is a unique predictor of vocabulary and it is also indirectly related to reading comprehension (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2012a). For ELLs, when reading academic textbooks, morphological awareness is essential to comprehend and decipher the meaning of the text (Carlo et al., 2004). Morphological awareness refers to an understanding of how complex words are formed and how the smaller units and roots contribute to the words' meaning (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2012b). In their quasi-experimental study, Kieffer and Lesaux (2012b) investigated the effects of morphological awareness on the ELLs and native English speakers in grade six. An 18-week academic language intervention program was launched (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2012b). The results showed that the ELLs improved in their relational, decomposing real words, and syntactic aspects,

deriving nonwords, of morphological awareness and demonstrated greater gains in syntactic aspect than their native speaking peers (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2012b).

Taboada and Rutherford (2011) studied the effects of comprehension instruction and content area learning for ELLs. In a formative experiment involving 20 fourth grade ELLs in the USA, two instructional frameworks were employed (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011). One was contextual vocabulary instruction (CVI) that focuses on incidental vocabulary instruction whereas the other, intensive vocabulary instruction (IVI) reinforces explicit vocabulary instruction (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011). Participants within the CVI framework received instruction in reading comprehension strategies and motivational practices while participants within the IVI framework received explicit instruction of academic science vocabulary (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011). Based on the multiple-choice tests and expository writing samples afterward, findings indicated that the participants' academic vocabulary knowledge increased more under the IVI framework, an effect that lasted for three weeks even after the intervention was over (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011). Clearly, for student academic language to improve, intentional and focused instruction is needed.

Writing and ELLs

Vocabulary knowledge affects student understanding of the written text that gets more complex as the expository text is introduced (Nation, 2008). Word frequency is seen as a reliable and valid assessment of lexical or vocabulary knowledge in writing (Crossley, Cobb, & McNamara, 2013). From the receptive perspective, words with high frequency usage, articles like 'the, a, an,' are recognized and named more rapidly than

low frequency words found in subject-specific textbooks (Nation, 2008). The production of words follows a similar pattern as high frequency; less complex words will appear first in ELL writing (Nation, 2008). Writing that contains more frequent words is indicative of the learner's writing proficiency (Laufer & Nation, 1995). That is, writing that is scored low tends to contain more frequent words than high proficiency writing (Laufer & Nation, 1995). Crossley et al. (2013) conducted a study to investigate if frequency-based analyses of learner writing can predict language proficiency levels. Their study analyzed writing produced by 30 native English speakers and 100 ELLs (Crossley et al., 2013). The results of their study indicated that frequency-based analyses were able to differentiate various proficiency levels of writing as beginning, intermediate, and advanced with a 58% accuracy (Crossley et al., 2013).

In providing support, or scaffolding, to ELLs in writing, Baleghizadeh et al. (2011) conducted a study consisting of 114 adult Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who were functioning at an elementary level of English. By providing three different types of scaffolding – high-structured, low-structured, and nonstructured help, researchers discovered that the low-structured group outperformed the other two (Baleghizadeh et al., 2011). This study validates one of the key tenets of sociocultural theory that providing the right amount of scaffolding is crucial to not stifle student exploration and creativity (Lantolf, 2000). That is, too much guidance might actually hinder student progress and too little support will not be sufficient to propel students toward their zone of proximal development (Lantolf, 2000). In terms of teaching vocabulary, teachers need to be mindful to provide guided instruction in vocabulary

learning, yet allow students to experience some challenges within their zone of proximal development.

Implications

Despite the ability to decode words, ELL students lack the background knowledge to make sense of what they read in English which, in turn, limits their intake of new vocabulary and word knowledge (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2010; Mancilla-Martinez, & Lesaux, 2011). This underscores the need for explicit vocabulary instruction (Graves et al., 2013). Providing vocabulary intervention and increased attention to vocabulary instruction seemed to promote ELL student language development (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011; Marulis & Neuman, 2010; Neuman, Newman, & Dwyer, 2011).

The ability to adequately address the vocabulary needs of the students was a challenging task even in the perception of the teachers who were effective in vocabulary instruction. While there were many obstacles noted by the teachers, these teachers recognized the value and the importance of emphasizing vocabulary in their instruction. The perceived effectiveness of their vocabulary instruction depended on the intentionality and commitment by the teachers.

Based on the data analysis, one common theme noted was the paucity of resources in terms of materials and colleagues. Teachers noted a scarcity of collaboration among similar grade levels humanities teachers. Also lacking was the vertical alignment of what robust vocabulary instruction should look like at the different grade levels in the elementary, middle school, and high school divisions. The data from my study might

raise the consciousness of administration and staff at the study site regarding the importance of vocabulary instruction. It might also provide the impetus for administration to develop and provide professional development training specifically designed to establish a common understanding among the teaching staff regarding what robust vocabulary instruction should look like.

Another common theme was the uncertainty of the teachers regarding the effectiveness of their vocabulary instructional methods. This underscored the need for a professional development event to address the needs of the teachers (See Appendix A). August and Shanahan (2006) noted the challenges that teachers had when teaching to ELLs and suggested that a professional development training might remedy the obstacles that teachers encountered in teaching vocabulary.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to conduct a case study on the perceptions of successful teachers on the reasons why they were successful in vocabulary instruction. The standardized testing instruments since 2009 showed that the students have been lagging behind the U.S. national average in the area of vocabulary (Pearson Assessment, 2015). The administrator was eager to break the cycle of students lagging behind the U.S. national average in vocabulary. A case study helped determine the factors teachers perceived as being important to be successful in vocabulary instruction. It also described teachers' perceptions of how best to be successful in teaching vocabulary. The analysis of the data collected from a case study also yielded important information about changes that could be made to the vocabulary instruction for future years of implementation.

Section 2 of this study details the qualitative research methodology, data collection, data analysis, and the subsequent findings of key words and themes. Section 3 describes the project of a professional learning event, the literature supporting the professional learning event, a plan of implementation, and an evaluation system. Section 4 includes reflection and recommendations for further action.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

This section includes a rationale for the research design and the methodology, an overview of the sample population, the sampling strategy, and the sample size. Measures for ethical protection and the role of the researcher are addressed. Findings are also presented. A discussion of the qualitative validity, reliability, and generalizability of the study concludes this section.

As stated in Section 1, ELLs have struggled academically to meet the U.S. national average in the area of vocabulary acquisition. The results from the standardized testing since 2009 indicated that ELLs were performing below average and the administration is interested in addressing this issue by improving the vocabulary scores on the standardized tests (Pearson Assessment, 2015). In order to address this issue, an exploration of the vocabulary instruction of five teachers might help to unmask some of the issues surrounding vocabulary teaching. Once teachers understand how to effectively develop robust vocabulary instruction, they can then adapt their methods and modify their practices to promote, optimize, and maximize vocabulary learning for the students. Students might be able to master learning in all content areas and score higher than the U.S. national average in the area of vocabulary on the standardized tests.

The research question that guided this project study was: What is the perception of the teachers on why they are successful in teaching vocabulary in English? The subquestions were: What factors do teachers perceive as important to be successful in

vocabulary instruction? How can other teachers best replicate the process of robust vocabulary instruction?

Qualitative Research Design

In this research project the goal was to understand and analyze the experiences of the five teachers who are deemed successful in teaching vocabulary at an international school in Taiwan. Creswell (2013) suggested that it is appropriate to conduct qualitative research when the goal was to explore an issue or a social phenomenon. As such, this project fits into the inductive method of interpretive, qualitative research which focuses on giving voice to the perceptions of the participants, understanding how the participants interpret their experiences, and attaching meaning to them (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010; Merriam, 2009).

Creswell (2013) further identified the five qualitative approaches as narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Narrative research has its focus on exploring the life of an individual by telling the stories of that individual's experiences (Creswell, 2013). As the focus of this project was not on developing a retelling of stories of individual experiences, narrative research was not appropriate in this situation. I briefly considered the use of a phenomenological approach to understand the life experiences of the successful vocabulary teachers. However, a phenomenological approach is best suited for studying intense human emotions (Merriam, 2009) and as the focus of this project was not on studying the intense human emotions of the vocabulary teachers, it renders this approach inappropriate.

Grounded theory has its goal of generating a theory regarding the phenomenon studied (Creswell, 2013). Due to time constraints, it was not feasible to pursue a grounded theory study. Ethnography emphasizes describing the experiences of a group and the interaction with their culture (Creswell, 2013). As such, it was beyond the scope of this project to pursue an ethnographic study. The case study approach aims to provide an in-depth understanding of a case (Creswell, 2013), which aligns with the research question of this study to explore the perception of the teachers on the reasons they are successful in teaching vocabulary in English.

According to Yin (2014), three sets of screening lenses need to be considered when deciding on the most appropriate research method. These are the research question, the role of the researcher, and the focus of the events (Yin, 2014). Yin asserted that the direction of one's research question essentially drives the research design. For the research questions that focus on who, what, where, how many, and how much, survey and archival analysis are the most appropriate methods (Yin, 2014). For the research questions that explore the how and why aspects, the experiment, history, and case study methods are deemed as more appropriate. In this research project, the goal was to understand why the five teachers are successful in teaching vocabulary, which fulfills the first criteria of employing a case study method.

The next screening lens examines the role of the researcher (Stake, 1995). Only the experiment research method offers the researcher control of behavioral events. The survey, archival analysis, history, and case study methods do not require the researcher to control the behavioral events (Yin, 2014). I do not hold any supervisory role thus she

does not have any control over the other five teachers. This meets the second expectation of choosing a case study research method.

The last set of screening lenses considers the focus on contemporary or historical events (Yin, 2014). Understandably, the history research method only investigates historical events (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Archival analysis can focus on either contemporary or historical events. The experiment, survey, and case study research methods focus solely on contemporary events (Merriam, 2009). The focus of this study was on the current teaching practices of the five teachers in vocabulary instruction, which aligns with the third requirement of a case study method.

Various types of designs exist within the case study method. Yin (2014) categorized the different types of case studies as descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory. Descriptive focuses on describing a phenomenon, explanatory's purpose is to explain how and why certain conditions exist, and exploratory's aim is to explore future research questions (Yin, 2014). Yin further delineated between single- and multiple-case studies. Stake (1995) identified the different types as collective, instrumental, and intrinsic. Collective is, in essence, a multiple-case study, instrumental's goal is to gain understanding of a particular situation, and intrinsic refers to the intent to understand the case as the primary focus (Yin, 2014). Given the purpose of my study in describing and analyzing the perception of the five teachers on effective vocabulary instruction, this research was an instrumental, explanatory single-case study.

Setting and Sample

The setting for this investigation was a K-12 international school in Taiwan. This college-preparatory school is registered in Taiwan as a school for foreigners and is accredited by both the ACSI and WASC. For the last 40 years, the southern campus has served over 210 students from kindergarten to 12th grade. With close to 82% of the total student population being ethnically Asian, language proficiency is an issue at the school. To add to the challenge of teaching a substantial percentage of ELLs, close to 80% of the teaching staff is from North America and they have limited exposure to teaching Taiwanese students prior to coming.

Vocabulary is an integral component of the reading comprehension process and is closely linked to reading performance (NCES, 2015b). It is not surprising that ELLs lag behind their native-speaking peers in vocabulary development and have performed below the U.S. national average in vocabulary acquisition on the annual standardized test (Pearson Assessment, 2015). It leads to reason that effective vocabulary instruction has the potential to improve student learning and achievement. This instrumental, explanatory single-case investigation explored how the five teachers implemented effective vocabulary instruction in helping their ELLs improve their achievement.

Case study method is an in-depth understanding of a case within a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). For this study, the unit of analysis, in the bounded system is the perception of the five teachers on the reasons they were successful in teaching vocabulary in English. The criteria for selecting the five successful teachers were based on previous standardized testing results and the recommendation by the administrator as effective

vocabulary instructors. These five participants are native English speakers and provided a unique and key perspective for how effective vocabulary instruction can be used in the future by others.

Following the formal approval of the study by the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB number: 05-13-15-0063077) and the study site, I employed purposeful sampling method to identify possible participants. Patton (2002) argued that purposeful sampling is beneficial when the study's purpose and resources call for information-rich cases. The five successful vocabulary teachers met this criterion. Given the limited pool of native English speakers who teach vocabulary at the school, a maximum of five teachers participated in the study in order to allow for an in-depth description and analysis of this investigation.

An initial recruitment email (See Appendix B) was sent to six potential participants who were identified as successful vocabulary instructors based on previous standardized testing results and the recommendation of the administrator. The initial recruitment email included an overview of the study, purpose, procedure, and method. Of the six potential participants, five accepted the invitation to participate in a face-to-face interview. When a teacher agreed to participate in the study, a consent form was given to the participant. No interviews were conducted without the completion of the consent form. Once the consent forms were received, a tentative interview date and location were set up. An email message was sent a day prior to the interview to confirm the appointment time and location.

Researcher's Role

As the primary researcher of this study, I needed to be aware of my own subjectivity and how it might influence the data (Stake, 1995). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) argued that it would be impossible to completely eliminate research biases. It would be achievable to limit them by acknowledging research biases (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Several safeguards for limiting biases are embedded in the qualitative research process, which are the data should withstand the test of different opinions and prejudices (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Also, the purpose of a qualitative study is to add to the knowledge rather than to judge a phenomenon superficially as good or bad (Merriam, 2009).

The participants in this study were my colleagues and I who hold no supervisory positions over them. My role as a nonparticipant (Creswell, 2013) limited the effects that subjectivity might have on the data. Having taught ELL for over 20 years, past work experiences might have hindered my ability to objectively describe and analyze the data. Research biases were minimized by ensuring the interview protocols consisted of open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013).

In order to combat any biases, the interview questions were reviewed by a colleague who is a nonparticipant in the project. The transcripts of the interviews were checked by the interviewees to ensure the accuracy of the content. After the initial data analysis, another colleague who was not involved with this study was invited to go over the findings to provide feedback. This peer reviewer acted as an extra security measure.

I employed these strategies in order to minimize any possible biases that might have occurred.

Measures for Ethical Protection

The IRB has been set up to ensure that all research aligns with the ethical standards set out in its regulations. This study followed the Walden IRB process. As the study site did not have an IRB process, a formal, written consent letter from the superintendent was provided to authorize this qualitative study. It is imperative that the IRB standards were followed in order to be mindful of the risks that the participants might be put under in the data collection process. It also helped to illuminate blind spots in the thinking and planning.

Whether it is qualitative or quantitative research, ethical consideration is the underlying principle. Careful attention to the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants ensured the interview data are valid and reliable (Patton, 2002). Rich data can be mined from interviews by choosing the right people to interview at a suitable time and place, following the interview protocol, maintaining neutrality, and recording and transcribing the interview data.

All participants are native English speakers and all interviews were conducted in English. Though the participants were recruited through purposeful sampling, no interviews were conducted without a signed, completed consent form. The signed consent forms were kept in a secure location. The interview date and location were set up at the participants' convenience. Participants were given pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. None of the participants' names were disclosed to

any person other than me. The participants' identities were not directly or indirectly disclosed.

To maintain the confidentiality of the study, all data collected were stored in a locked file cabinet. The peer reviewer only accessed the de-identified data. All electronic files are password protected on my personal computer. Data will be maintained for 5 years and after that, all files and documentation will be deleted.

Data Collection

With input from the administrator, a purposeful case sampling method was employed to identify possible participants. As there were fewer than 20 potential participants who teach vocabulary, a maximum of five teachers participated in the study in order to allow for a detailed analysis of this investigation. Interviews were conducted on the campus of the study site at a time and location that was convenient for the participants. The interview itself lasted approximately 45 minutes.

Within qualitative research, in order to garner first-hand hard data, interviewing research participants is a viable option (Creswell, 2013). Successful interviews take careful planning that includes purposefully selecting the right participants, choosing an appropriate time and location, utilizing the interview protocol, employing effective probes, striving for neutrality, and recording and transcribing the interview data (Creswell, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010; Spaulding, 2008). The foci of these interviews were to cultivate a deeper understanding of the perception of the teachers on why they were successful in teaching vocabulary in English, the factors that the teachers perceived as

being important to be successful in vocabulary instruction, and how other teachers could best replicate the process.

Lodico et al. (2010) asserted that following the protocols for drafting the interview questions and beginning and ending the interviews would ensure that a certain level of standardization would be reinforced during the data collection process (See Appendix C). In order to ensure accuracy of the interview, an audio recording device was employed that allowed me to add details and quotes. Afterward, I transcribed the recorded interviews for further analysis.

Informed consent and agreement were both obtained prior to the interview. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) noted that establishing rapport is the critical first step in the interview process. Restating the research purpose and reassuring confidentiality did not only help put the participants at ease but also ascertained that ethical considerations were followed. A semistructured interview with open-ended questions allowed researchers to ask follow up questions and probe further when needed (Creswell, 2013).

The recorded interviews were transcribed for analysis and to allow study participants to review the transcript. This process of peer-reviewing transcripts and data analysis reinforced internal validity. An optional follow-up opportunity was provided for the participants to add further comments and for me to ask questions for clarification and elaboration.

Interview Questions Alignment

The interview questions (See Appendix C) were aligned with the guiding research question and the subquestions that were identified in Section 1 of this project. The interview questions and their anticipated probes were:

1. What language-related issues might arise when teaching (content area) to ELLs?
2. What vocabulary words in (content area) might be challenging for ELLs?
3. How can a (content area) teacher adjust his/her instruction to take into consideration the language issues that might arise when teaching ELLs?
4. What do you think are the major obstacles that you have encountered in teaching vocabulary?
    a. How have you overcome those challenges?
    b. What obstacles could you not overcome? Why?
5. What support do you think that the school can provide that will help you be more effective in teaching vocabulary?
6. What factors do you think contributed to your success in teaching vocabulary?
7. What specific vocabulary instructional methods do you currently use?
8. How do you know that your vocabulary instructional methods are actually effective?
9. What else would you like to tell me about your experience here at the school that may have contributed to your success?
    a. Colleagues

b. Administrator

c. System Services

d. Students

While the responses answered the research question and sub questions, they also contributed to the understanding of the perception of teachers in developing robust vocabulary instruction with the ultimate goal of designing a professional learning opportunity to support the teachers. Table 1 demonstrates the relationship between the research questions and the interview questions.

Table 1

Relationship of Interview Questions to Research Questions

Research question	Interview question
RQ 1: What is the perception of the teachers on why they are successful in teaching vocabulary in English?	IQ 1: What language-related issues might arise when teaching (content area) to ELLs? IQ 2: What vocabulary words in (content area) might be challenging for ELLs? IQ 3: How can a (content area) teacher adjust his/her instruction to take into consideration the language issues that might arise when teaching ELLs? IQ 4: What do you think are the major obstacles that you have encountered in teaching vocabulary? a. How have you overcome those challenges? b. What obstacles could you not overcome? Why? IQ 5: What support do you think that the school can provide that will help you be more effective in teaching vocabulary?
SQ 1: What factors do teachers perceive as being important to be successful in vocabulary instruction?	IQ 6: What factors do you think contributed to your success in teaching vocabulary? IQ 7: What specific vocabulary instructional methods do you currently use? IQ 8: How do you know that your vocabulary instructional methods are actually effective?
SQ 2: How can other teachers best replicate the process of robust vocabulary instruction?	IQ 9: What else would you like to tell me about your experience here at the school that may have contributed to your success? a. Colleagues

	b. Administrator c. System Services d. Students

Findings

With input from the administrator, a purposeful case sampling method was employed to identify five possible participants. Purposeful case sampling is appropriate when the study's purpose is to examine information-rich cases. Given the limited pool of native English speakers who teach vocabulary at the school, I originally planned to interview no more than six teachers in order to allow for an in-depth investigation. The five successful vocabulary teachers met this criterion and they all agreed to participate in the interview process.

The interviews were conducted in a private room at the study site. At the beginning of each interview, I reviewed the IRB consent form and highlighted the voluntary and confidentiality nature of the interview. After the interviews, I transcribed each interview and the transcripts were sent to each participant for review to ensure accuracy. None of the participants returned the transcripts with further comments.

Coding Procedure

The conceptual frameworks of andragogy (Knowles et al., 2012), self-directed and experiential learning (Brookfield, 2005), social constructivist framework (Vygotsky, 1978), and sociocultural theory of second language acquisition (Lantolf, 2000) provided the foundational lenses with which I first analyzed the data. According to Lodico et al. (2010), coding is the process of synthesizing information by grouping similar parts

together and labeling them into various broad categories. After the interviews, I transcribed the audio recordings of the five interviews into text data. The coding process entailed multiple readings of the transcript and highlighting different sections for comparison. Each code was assigned a different color and this color-coding template was applied to all text data. Codes were derived from the repeated words and phrases that the participants emphasize in describing their experiences. It was necessary to ensure that the code categories are aligned with the research question (Saldaña, 2013).

Given the explanatory nature of this study, the elemental methods (Saldaña, 2013) were employed. The elemental methods are the primary mode of qualitative data analysis that lay a foundation for future coding cycles, and offer focused filters for examining the data (Saldaña, 2013). Within the elemental coding methods, structural coding (Saldaña, 2013) was employed. Structural coding allows the data to be coded and is particularly useful in situations that have multiple participants, semistructured protocols, and interview transcripts (Saldaña, 2013). Through the use of line by line scanning, I identified 10 key words (Table 2) through the process of structural coding (Saldaña, 2013). With the key words identified, I then surveyed all the interview transcripts to grasp an overview of the data collected.

Multiple readings of the interview transcripts ensured that I was familiar with the data. I then color coded the key words within all the interview transcripts in order to study the different contexts in which the same key word appeared (See Appendix D). This color coding system provided an in-depth analysis of each key word in context that allowed me to garner insights that eventually led to the development of the final themes

(Creswell, 2012). The eight major categories were: (a) insufficient vocabulary knowledge of students; (b) gap between native English speakers and ELLs; (c) teacher enthusiasm; (d) student motivation; (e) support from colleagues; (f) students lack exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language; (g) emphasis on direct vocabulary instruction; and (h) student usage is key. I then synthesized these major codes to develop the themes that captured the essence of the data as depicted in Table 2 (Creswell, 2012).

Table 2

Codes and Themes

Codes – Key Words	Codes – Key Words in Context	Themes
1. Challenge (22) 2. Obstacle (22) 3. Struggle (9) 4. Factors (13)	1. Insufficient vocabulary knowledge of students 2. Gap between native English speakers and ELLs	Increased scaffolding for teachers and students
5. Effective (16) 6. Success (30) 7. Instruction (24) 8. Colleague (13) 4. Factors (13)	3. Teacher enthusiasm 4. Student motivation 5. Support from colleagues	Purposeful, supportive learning environment
9. Content (18) 10. Context (19) 11. Assessment (13) 7. Instruction (24)	6. Students lack exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language 7. Emphasis on direct vocabulary instruction 8. Student usage is key	Experiencing language in meaningful context and comprehensible content for the students

Data Analysis

Creswell (2012) noted that the purpose of the coding process is to make meaning out of the text data. By highlighting the key words with color codes, I then examined the codes for overlap or redundancy. The code categories were formed by examining the key words in context (Creswell, 2012). Code categories are mutually exclusive (Merriam, 2009), related to concepts and issues (Lodico et al., 2010), and represent the perceptions of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this qualitative research study, I grouped together the categories to form themes. Creswell posited that the initial 30 to 50 codes could be reduced to five to seven themes at the end. Within this inductive process of narrowing data into a few themes, data that did not provide evidence for the themes were disregarded (Creswell, 2012).

It was crucial to achieve saturation point in the data analysis process (Creswell, 2012). I was able to achieve this saturation by reviewing the interview transcripts and examining the transcripts line by line. Repeated words and phrases formed the basis of the key words (Saldaña, 2013). Subsequent multiple readings took into consideration the different perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 2012). This process ensured that I fully synthesized the available data from the interview transcripts. The code categories were aligned with research and interview questions (Saldaña, 2013) and possible themes emerged that might shed light on the perception of teachers on successful vocabulary teaching. These code categories and themes were then sent to the participants for their feedback. Only one participant replied with a minor suggestion in word choice.

Themes

During the coding process, three major themes emerged: (a) increased scaffolding for teachers and students; (b) purposeful, supportive learning environment; and (c) experiencing language in meaningful context and comprehensible content for the students. These themes highlighted the experiences of the participants as they grappled with the issue of developing robust vocabulary instruction at the study site (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Their responses provided the framework for the development of professional learning event that I will describe in Section 3.

Theme 1: Increased scaffolding for teachers and students. Theme 1 was developed through an analysis of the interview responses to Questions 1 to 5 that asked the teachers to reflect on the challenges and obstacles in vocabulary instruction. It also included questions for broader language related issues and school support services that

might have helped teachers in becoming more effective in teaching vocabulary. When asked what language-related issues might arise when teaching to ELLs, all of the participants mentioned that vocabulary was one of the areas that was particularly challenging for ELLs. All of the participants reported similar findings with students struggling in learning due in part to insufficient vocabulary knowledge. ELL learners lack knowledge of vocabulary words. As Donald, a pseudonym, explained:

> When they read the short story, it's not just the text that will often identify the words that are harder and we look at those but there are just so many words that they don't know in the short stories. We also teach vocabulary that is geared to grade X level-ish and that vocabulary is hard for them to tackle. They also have to read books from the library. They can choose books at their level and that helps but it's still just a challenge for them.

This lack of vocabulary knowledge seemed to hamper student progress in reading. Donald's remarks highlighted both the enormity of the challenge and the seemingly small effect of what the teachers could have on the students. He acknowledged the uncertainty about how to choose the right words to study when he noted:

> The English language is so huge and no matter what lists you choose of words, it's just a random sample. It's just a little slice here and it's not going to teach the words that they're actually going to encounter. So much of language is just learned by absorption. So that's an obstacle because I can't teach all the words.

Donald further observed:

> That helps to a degree but it's still a drop in the bucket. The short story that is 10 pages long, or 5 pages long, those 10 words are just a little sample of maybe the hardest words that doesn't help them with the other words that are so hard.

This sense of coming to terms with the enormity of the challenge was echoed by Susan when she concluded, "We can't help everybody. Some students cause they're too busy to meet one-on-one and schedules don't work. I guess I can only help them so far."

The fact that students struggled with insufficient vocabulary knowledge, compounded by the enormity of the numbers of words to study in the English language, has led the teachers to grapple with the ever-increasing gap between native English speakers and ELLs. A response referencing the gap between native English speakers and ELLs by one participant best captured the daunting challenges that teachers encountered in teaching. Alice reflected:

> I think one huge obstacle in a main classroom, is you have the students try to find a balance between how slow you go for your English Language Learners but that you still have the students, maybe English is their first language, and so how to balance between those two worlds for those students. Because you don't want to leave one student behind but then you also need to have enough content, enough things that are moving on to challenge those students so I think in the classroom that's always probably one of the largest obstacle to overcome and I think as a teacher you just… each year you have different students, you have different ranges of where they are and try to always find that balance to challenge those top

students who have English foundation and yet those students who don't have the foundation do not overwhelm them.

Table 3 includes examples of participant responses related to Theme 1.

Theme 2: Purposeful, supportive learning environment. Theme 2 emerged from an analysis of Questions 6 to 8 that prompted the participants to reflect on the factors that contributed to their success in teaching vocabulary. Participants were also encouraged to examine the vocabulary instructional methods they employed. Interestingly, even though these teachers were recommended by the administrator as the ones who are effective at developing robust vocabulary instruction, two of the five participants expressed uncertainty when asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their own vocabulary instruction. One participant commented, "I'm not sure at this stage that I'd consider teaching vocabulary extremely successful in my X grade class." Another participant also remarked, "I'm not sure if I've been successful. I put a lot of work and strain into it but it's still been kinda only moderately successful."

Upon analyzing the responses to the questions, the participants were attributing their success in teaching vocabulary to internal and external factors. Four out of the five participants attributed success to at least an internal factor that is teacher-related. Some of the participants attributed their success to what they have done in strengthening their vocabulary instruction through personal dictionaries, weekly vocabulary program, working with the students individually, and allowing the students to experience

Table 3

Theme 1: Increased Scaffolding for Teachers and Students

Context	Sample Responses
Vocabulary knowledge of students	1. "I think some of the major issues that arise when teaching content area to ELLs sometimes they don't understand a lot of the content specific vocabulary…" 2. "…it really will slow down the process if they don't understand the underlying vocabulary for it." 3. "They don't understand a lot of the vocabulary and then they are not able to make a lot of the inferences and connections. So that's challenging." 4. "Their writing is very awkward and the vocabulary is poor…" 5. "With speaking, they just don't have the vocabulary and even the confidence to speak clearly." 6. "…a lot of my students do have fairly low vocabulary…" 7. "Another problem with just, I think, vocabulary. They just didn't have the vocabulary to express their ideas, so sometimes it would be simple. Or, they would try to use really complicated vocabulary that they looked up in a thesaurus but it didn't fit. It was the wrong word choice." 8. "I find that the words that are the most challenging for them are the ones that are related to Social Studies or Science because those ones are very content specific and so if those words aren't explicitly taught then they can be challenging for them."

Gap between native English speakers and ELLs	1. "The students that are English language learners, they don't have that and so for them, they need to ask those questions or they just don't understand. There might be some gaps in learning." 2. "I think that sometimes there are kids who... they know the vocabulary so they can just move on, they can go deeper. But there's, maybe a small pocket of kids who really need that extra instruction and sometimes there is just not that time to take them to the side and work with them one-on-one every single week or day." 3. "They're at varying degrees of English abilities." 4. "I think my students are at so many different levels. Some have grown up speaking English in the home. And some come into my class as second or third English language learners. The other challenge I think with the lower ones, it was just hard sometimes for me to understand how to help them. With their writing especially, they would make the same mistakes over and over again on a lot of essays and I would correct it but it didn't seem like they knew how to fix it."

vocabulary in context. Tom's statements best exemplified the importance of teacher enthusiasm to the success of vocabulary instruction. Tom recalled:

> Like it's just getting kids pumped up. It's super fun that you learn vocab and getting excited when kids use vocab in context, high-fiving kids, just kind of creating an energy about learning new words so that you sound smart and that you can effectively communicate your ideas to others.

Apart from teacher enthusiasm, student motivation to learn is a powerful external factor that contributed to the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction. Most of the students are Asian and getting good grades in school is very important to them and to their parents. While this Asian mentality fuels the drive to succeed for some of the

students, others have a desire to learn and are taking an initiative to ask teachers for help. Miranda noted:

> I feel like it's the kids who are the most proactive that learn the most. Because there are students who will come up to me after class and they'll say, "Can you explain this word?" and I'll kind of explain each of the words to them. But, I noticed that if the kids are proactive, then I'll give them that time but then it's hard to know who needs it, who doesn't. And, if they're not as proactive, or they just go over their heads, then I feel like those are the kids that are at a bigger disadvantage.

The importance of garnering support from one's colleagues cannot be ignored. Alice emphasized:

> Working here, one thing that I like about the school is that the administration and colleagues are very supportive in just about every area. Also just if I find resources that I thought would be helpful in my classroom; it's very easy to ask for those resources.

While sharing resources among colleagues could be helpful, another benefit of having supportive colleagues is the opportunity to discuss and dialog common topics of interest. Miranda recalled:

> I feel like the year I had the most success was when we had that little small group study thing. Colleagues got together and we talked about vocabulary once a week in the morning. And that was a really unique experience because we went through a book called "Creating Robust

> Vocabulary Learners" or something like that. But anyway, it was neat to just go over chapter by chapter and brainstorm ideas and be able to talk back and forth with colleagues. You know, the members of the group, and it was different, some were high school teachers, others elementary and it was just neat to have that dialogue. And I think that was the year that I felt like I made a really good effort in vocabulary that year.

It is interesting to note that as a result of the focused discussion with her colleagues on the topic of vocabulary instruction, Miranda felt like her own vocabulary teaching practices were sharpened and solidified.

Table 4 provides samples of participant responses supporting Theme 2.

Table 4

Theme 2: Purposeful, Supportive Learning Environment

Factors	Sample Responses
Teacher enthusiasm	1. "Well, for the lower students, I actually met with a few of them one-on-one just to go over the grammar structure they keep struggling with. One student really had struggle with subject-verb agreement so we went over some subject verb agreement and also just expanding his ideas into full thoughts instead of just phrases. And also, just writing a complete paragraph instead of a sentence, just helping him come up with more. So, yeah. I'm going to be meeting with him a couple times this summer to help him do that." 2. "I think that in the past, when I've done a vocab program and it's very consistent that kind of thing, then there is more progress." 3. "I think the personal dictionaries are a success… I think a success with that has been that they got a pattern of looking up words."
Student motivation	1. "The biggest thing is kids being extremely motivated by the grade." 2. "I think the work ethics of these students really help. They all want to strive to do better and the ones who do want to do better will read the comments and try to make an improvement and motivation is a main factor." 3. "With some kids they really get into it and they want to boost their vocab. Others don't, so figuring out how to deal with those kids who

	don't really care about their vocab skills is a challenge. Because in my mind if you're not intrinsically motivated to build your vocabulary, it's going to be really hard for you to do so." 4. "When it's also kids are encouraged to use the vocabulary in the daily language or daily speech, it's a success because the kids will be on the lookout for those words. At one point I did a thing where we had vocabulary words and whenever they heard it in the story that we read or they heard it in a video or anytime it was mentioned, they could mark it down and they would win a prize. So that really encouraged them to just be on the lookout for the words and use them more." 5. "…generally the ELL kids want to learn the language. And generally their learning attitude is good…"
Support from colleagues	1. "… I know like with the ELL teachers and other teachers like the learning specialist, they always ask "What help do you need?" And they're willing to come alongside if needed, you know. And, yeah, they're willing to kind of help out with content area if needed so that's one way that they support us." 2. "Probably the biggest contributor to my success is colleagues." 3. "I had a meeting with the other language arts teachers and we talked through how we teach vocab and the social studies teachers were involved with that too. Just talked about how we teach vocab at each of the different levels." 4. "I think the previous teacher helped me a lot and having a lot of the resources in place and having the workbook already picked out. Talking to other colleagues and previous teachers too, they can tell me the levels of the students, and tell me what has helped them in the past work with these students."

Theme 3: Experiencing language in meaningful context and comprehensible content for the students. Theme 3 arose from an analysis of Question 9 that asked the participants to consider other factors that might have contributed to their success in vocabulary teaching. The end goal is to glean from the experiences of these teachers so other teachers can replicate the process of robust vocabulary instruction. Teachers recognize the challenges of the effective vocabulary instruction. Not only is it impossible to teach all the words, but as Donald put it, "learning a word is hard." Donald explained

that the definition might have multiple phrases in it but the students "will just latch on to the one phrase and then misuse the word." He went on to describe that this challenge is further compounded by:

> Another challenge is that English words often have multiple meanings. Some of those multiple meanings are related and sometimes they are not related at all. So when [the teachers] have them look up the definitions to define the words, they often put the wrong definition in.

Some teachers also reported a struggle with the lack of time in their teaching. Alice observed:

> I think there are times when you can have the time to pull students aside and really work with them. I think also large classroom sizes will sometimes really inhibit that. So say you have 25 kids in a classroom and then the time's element, I mean that's one obstacle that you give as much to it as you can but I don't think you can actually ever overcome that unless you have more one-on-one time to work with them.

Another teacher further explained, "I think that it's kind of hard because I mean with time, I don't know if we could add more time into the school day." In spite of these challenges with the limited instructional time and the complexity of word selection, word teaching, and word learning, teachers still seemed resolute to develop robust vocabulary instruction.

Language acquisition is incremental. For the ELLs, while they might be familiar with the content in their native language, they often struggle to understand similar content

in English due to lack of vocabulary exposure. Tom's statements best described the situation that the ELLs are in. He noted:

> They're not exposed to a high degree of English language at home. A lot of the words that I think of as reasonable – these might appear on the news, these might appear on a TV show, these might appear in the newspaper that they might see, still are quite hard. While they might think so, ones that are still used today aren't actually that antiquated. But a lot of my students don't really see those in their outside experiences because they aren't just inundated with English language because we live in Taiwan.

Consequently, he concluded, "That natural, corrective, societal role of vocab instruction is missing entirely." This lack of exposure to the English language implies that students also lack knowledge of some the basic vocabulary the teachers might assume they should know. Alice recalled:

> There are vocabulary words aren't the primary vocabulary words and if they miss two or three of those, then they really struggle with the overall meaning of what you're trying to teach. So it's not just the main vocabulary words that may be sent home for them to study, but sometimes it's the basic vocabulary words they don't know so they really struggle with the comprehension of what you're trying to teach them.

The fact that ELLs lack exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language underscores the need for direct vocabulary instruction. All of the participants stressed the

importance of direct vocabulary instruction in their teaching. Donald explained his process of direct vocabulary instruction best when he said, "I'll teach the word, the definitions, the synonyms, tap dance it out to give a sentence, have them make sentences with their partners, draw pictures of them." The multiple exposures to the words are important for the students to experience them in various meaningful contexts. Alice echoed the importance of teaching vocabulary in context. She reported:

> I think you try to teach it in context is really challenging. At any point you're teaching a literature unit on a certain book and then you can cover some words as you come to them. I think I struggle if I have to teach vocabulary in isolation - how are they actually going to seek help with that.

Instructional time is also spent on clarifying misunderstanding that the students might have of the unfamiliar words. Tom remarked, "In class, we go over it, talk through each of the words, talk about where kids went wrong with their analysis of the word."

It is not enough for the students to experience comprehensible content of the English language in meaningful context. Teachers are considered to be effective in vocabulary instruction if there is evidence of students actually using the words appropriately. Without this last important link, it would be quite challenging to measure the effectiveness of the teacher's vocabulary instruction. For the measure of authentic effectiveness of vocabulary instruction is not on what the teachers do but rather on what the students can do as a result. One participant succinctly summarized it best when he

expressed, “A big one for me is use. I think that’s where you really see if vocab instruction is working.”

While all the participants emphasized the necessity of student usage, the instruments of measuring student usage can vary. One teacher suggested that a measurement of this effectiveness is:

> When you do an assessment and they are scoring better and better on the assessment. In addition, I think that you know that vocabulary instructional methods are OK when they actually understand the content… they prove on the assessment that they understand the content and also that their reading level kind of increases over time.

While assessment results can be utilized as a yardstick to measure the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction, other teachers pointed out the potential risk of solely relying on the assessment results. Tom clarified:

> Kids being extremely motivated by the grade and so it’s very easy to think I’m doing a good job in vocab assessment when I say here’s a bunch of words, memorize them, and then give an assessment and everybody gets 100%. Cause it seems like, wow great, you’re teaching vocabulary really well! But the reality of it is that kids almost immediately forget all of that information and they have no idea how to use those words.

Consequently, Tom explained that:

> I really try to tailor my teaching to how my kids learn and just seeing my original vocab instructional methods stink was probably the biggest thing

> that contributed to my success, realizing that it isn't working and I need to change things up a little bit. I constantly tweak how I do things just because of their success or failure.

Tom further commented on his current vocabulary instruction practices:

> I think, is just, insisting kids really understand the deep level of words, enforcing them in assessments, to really be able to demonstrate that they really understand the word. I think that has done a lot in helping kids go beyond simple memorization, cause they can't. They have to get used to thinking about words in their context, not just by the definition.

Other participants concurred with the true measurement of the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction as one participant pointed out the deciding factor is "… are they really grasping the vocabulary enough so they're able to integrate it in their lives." Another teacher shared his concern, "One is still the battle of once the word is in their brains for the test, then knowing that it's being used and actually becoming part of their vocabulary is a difficult one."

Alice further asserted:

> One of the really big factors that might contribute to success is just trying to find ways to give your students a chance to experience language in context so that it's usable and they're really thinking, "Oh, I can really use this in my life. I can understand something because I understand the vocabulary." So the biggest factor is making sure that it's in context of ways they can actually use it.

Table 5 offers additional participant responses applicable to Theme 3.

Table 5

Theme 3: Experiencing Language in Meaningful Context and Comprehensible Content for the Students

Source	Sample Responses
Students lack exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language	1. "One area of vocab words that are challenging are Level 3 (Stage 3) words. They are very specific to cultural experiences they haven't experienced and a lot of times end up on vocab lists and they'll never be used again because they just have no context to use them in." 2. "… sometimes on a quiz or test, there might be a word that they don't understand and so they can't get the answer. It could just be a word that I assume they know but they might have never heard of it before. So when they raise their hand, I kind of have to give a synonym, for example, without giving an answer to it." 3 "Another obstacle that I can't overcome is just the home life with kids. Kids are not exposed to a massive volume of vocabulary..." 4. "One thing I really notice is if we went over a bunch of words in class, kids would learn the words and I'd listen to them studying for during study hall, or right before a class and I'd hear them pronouncing words totally incorrectly. That was a significant challenge, because then again there is no exposure. They are not saying to their parents 'Hey, can you help me with my vocab quiz?' and hearing their parents say it. It's just all about, they're on their own and so making sure they can pronounce them correctly too."
Emphasis on direct vocabulary instruction	1. "…a challenge as a language instructor with vocab has been in helping them to understand the deeper levels of meaning of words and to actually use them." 2. "I try to go over some of the words that we're using, like democracy, fascism, or totalitarianism, big words, so they have an idea." 3. "I find words that are in the context of what we're reading.. When we're going through a list of words, I use those words myself so the kids can see them being used practically. 4. "One thing that I have done in the last few years is more preteaching of the vocabulary so those words that are highlighted in the textbook so the five or ten words in the story. I preteach those and even have them studied them in Quizlet." 5. "…I use the Word Work. In addition to being a spelling program, we go over those words as vocabulary as well and go over their meanings and how to use them…"

	6. "…direct instruction to preteach the words that are in the short stories.
Student usage is key	1. "…or if they do know a lot of words, a lot of times they struggle to apply those words to their writing and speaking." 2. "For me the biggest thing is use – just getting kids exposed to use. And the second thing is just shades of meaning and applying it in different contexts." 3. "But where I think actual vocab building is evident is in performance in daily life." 4. "That they're trying out new words just even in everyday dialogue and yeah they basically understand more reading and writing and speaking." 5. "… in terms of use, I think what might be better is selecting words not only from a text but which kids can use in discussion about a text." 6. "And how to choose words that would be challenging to their vocabulary because I feel like if they can do it in context of their reading and their writing, it becomes more meaningful to them." 7. "…if they're learning vocabulary words, they're actually having an opportunity to not just say "Oh, I know what this word means" but I can actually use it. I can use that vocabulary; I can use it in context with whatever we're learning. So, I'd like to develop more ways that they can actually use the vocabulary that they are learning."

Validity

As qualitative data are collected and analyzed through the various lenses of the participants and the researchers, the issue of validity might come into question (Lodico et al., 2010). After spending prolonged time in the field and being cognizant of one's biases, how one researcher makes sense of, or interprets, the myriad of experiences might differ from another (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Various terms are used to describe the different components of qualitative validation such as construct validity, external validity, and reliability (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) further offered several validation strategies that qualitative researchers employed to strengthen the validity of one's study.

Construct Validity

Construct validity refers to the accuracy of what a case aims to study mirroring the concepts studied (Yin, 2014). It is considered a complex type of validity and is viewed as the overarching type of validity (Lodico et al., 2010). At the onset of data collection, the interview questions were validated by utilizing peer debriefing. This process of having a peer debriefer who reviewed and analyzed the appropriateness of the interview questions added construct validity to the process (Creswell, 2009).

After the interviews were conducted, I employed member checking to ensure that the participants were given an opportunity to reflect on the accuracy of the interview transcripts and my data analysis. A peer reviewer acted as an external check and provided another pair of eyes in examining the research process (Yin, 2014). This process of having a peer reviewer examined the data augmented construct validity (Yin, 2014). Another strategy to strengthen construct validity was through utilizing external audits (Creswell, 2013). Though it was not employed in this case, external personnel could be hired to examine if the findings are supported by the data (Creswell, 2013).

External Validity

External validity refers to the extent that the findings from this current investigation can be generalized to other situations (Yin, 2014). Though it is problematic to suggest transferability within qualitative research, it is up to the readers to take the findings of this study and apply them in their own situation (Merriam, 2009). By providing rich, thick description of the case, readers can draw their own conclusion and evaluate if the current findings are applicable in their unique context (Creswell, 2013).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research procedures (Yin, 2014). In this project study, detailed transcribed data gathered through audio recording of interviews augmented reliability. Interview transcripts were reviewed by a peer reviewer. Reliability was achieved in this study through inter-coder agreement as there was stability of responses to multiple coders analyzing transcript data (Creswell, 2013).

Conclusion

In Section 2, I outlined the proposed case study method that was employed to understand and analyze the effective vocabulary instruction of the five teachers. This section also described the research design, setting and sampling, and the role of the researcher. Ethical considerations were explained, along with data collection and findings. The protocols of validity and reliability were discussed. Through this instrumental, explanatory single-case study, I aimed to document vocabulary instruction of the effective teachers with the goal of improving the vocabulary learning for all ELLs.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In Section 3, I will describe the project and how it addresses the problem identified in Section 1. I will also present the literature supporting the professional learning event, a plan of implementation, and an evaluation system. The section will conclude with a discussion on the implications of social change.

The objective of this qualitative case study was to explore the factors that teachers perceived as being important to be successful in vocabulary instruction. By probing into areas of difficulties or challenges of the teachers, I gleaned insights into the obstacles that teachers faced in teaching vocabulary. Participants shared their successes and struggles in trying to overcome their obstacles in teaching vocabulary. Through examining the factors and methods involved that contributed to their success in teaching vocabulary, I was able to garner insights and themes into how to develop robust vocabulary instruction. I also sought information relevant to understanding how colleagues and students affected their teaching. The guiding research question was: What is the perception of the teachers on why they are successful in teaching vocabulary in English? The subquestions were: What factors do teachers perceive as being important to be successful in vocabulary instruction? How can other teachers best replicate the process of robust vocabulary instruction?

The results of the data analysis revealed several themes that not only captured the essence of the data, but also helped answer the guiding research question and the subquestions. Participants noted a general sense of insufficient vocabulary knowledge of

students in teaching with the gap between native English speakers and ELLs widening. Students, especially ELLs, struggle in reading comprehension in part due to insufficient knowledge of vocabulary words (Graves et al., 2013). In addition, the participants grappled with the enormity of the challenge to equip students with the much needed vocabulary knowledge but yet at the same time were uncertain about how to choose the right words to study given the voluminous number of words in the English language.

Upon reflecting on the factors that contributed to their success in teaching vocabulary, the participants pointed to both external and internal factors. The single internal factor of teacher enthusiasm was the nexus for the other external factors of student motivation and support from their colleagues. Teacher enthusiasm acted as a catalyst that brought about the changes in the reluctant students and colleagues. Students got motivated into learning vocabulary and colleagues were willing to share resources and dialoged on the common topics of interest. Participants noted that the support from their colleagues, student motivation, and their own enthusiasm all contribute to the success of their vocabulary instruction.

Recognizing the complexity of word selection and the challenge of teaching the various nuances of meanings in the words, the participants acknowledged that ELLs' lack of exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language as the primary reason behind the widening gap between the native English speakers and the ELLs. This double deficit of the English language severely hampered the progress of the ELLs as they struggle with understanding some of the basic vocabulary. In order to address this lack of exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language, teachers emphasized the importance of

direct vocabulary instruction in their teaching. In addition, multiple exposures to the words are crucial for the students to experience the words in different meaningful contexts and for the teachers to clarify misunderstanding the students might have with the unfamiliar words (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011).

A final link to measure the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction is on what the students can do as a result. Student usage is the authentic measure of the success in vocabulary instruction (Manyak, 2012). The instruments to measure student usage can vary from short term assessment results to long term word application. Even with the short term assessments, teachers need to rethink how to assess vocabulary knowledge so students are not simply memorizing the word meanings for the tests and with no understanding of how to apply the words in context. The assessments should allow the students to demonstrate that they truly understand the words in context and their various nuances and not just a regurgitation of the word definitions (Pearson, Hiebert, & Kamil, 2012). The ultimate goals in this endeavor are for the students to experience language in meaningful context and to own the vocabulary words by integrating them in their lives beyond the school environment.

The data analysis from this study led to the development of a professional learning event to address the needs of the teachers (See Appendix A). The primary objective of the proposed professional learning event is to inform the teachers on the current research on vocabulary development, thus establishing a vertical alignment of what robust vocabulary instruction should look like at the elementary, middle school, and high school divisions. A secondary objective is to develop a network of collegial support

through this professional learning event. The intentionality and commitment of the participants in this study to develop robust vocabulary instruction underscored the need for more collaboration in order to maintain and expand the positive effect it has on themselves and other teachers in this endeavor.

Description and Goals

Section 1 of this study outlined the struggles of the students at the study site in Taiwan as they have been lagging behind in the U.S. national average in the vocabulary section of the Stanford assessment in the last 6 years (Pearson Assessment, 2015). The standardized testing instrument results from 2014-2015 were particularly discouraging as 22% of the seventh grade class was below the U.S. national average in vocabulary (Pearson Assessment, 2015). Analysis of qualitative data in Section 2 collected from the teachers who were deemed effective in vocabulary instruction revealed common themes related to scaffolding for teachers and the need for a supportive learning network.

While the successful vocabulary teachers interviewed in the study were resolved to helping students improve in their vocabulary learning, they all commented on the enormity of the task and the uncertainty of the results in their efforts. The complexity of word selection, coupled with the challenge of teaching the nuances of word meanings, the panoply of vocabulary assessment methods, and the struggle to cement vocabulary words in the students' minds all point to the need of a professional learning event. While the issues surrounding vocabulary instruction are complex, the suggested project attempts to provide a single source of information for teachers regarding the latest research on

vocabulary instruction. It also provides a platform for teachers to dialogue and collaborate with other colleagues in improving their teaching.

The proposed professional learning event will emphasize on topics like the language acquisition, second language learning, vocabulary development and instruction, and assessment methods. While there are various ways to support teachers in their vocabulary teaching practices, the use of a professional learning event to convey these topics appears to be the most effective method. The proposed professional learning event will provide teachers with a clear understanding for developing robust vocabulary instruction in their practices.

Rationale

The data analysis that was completed in Section 2 revealed that students, especially ELLs, generally lag behind their native-speaking peers as the ELLs as the ELLs lack exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language. The participants in this investigation were teachers who were deemed to be effective in vocabulary instruction by the administration. However, throughout the interviews, most of the participants voiced their concerns over the enormity of the task of vocabulary instruction given the vast number of words in the English language. Not only did the participants feel overwhelmed with the task, they also expressed uncertainty regarding which words to choose to teach. Interestingly, even after implementing the strategies, some of them were unsure about the effectiveness of their strategies.

The project of developing a professional learning event has two goals. The first is to disseminate information on current research on vocabulary development thus helping

teachers to make informed decision of what robust vocabulary instruction should look like at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. This dissemination of information ensures that there is vertical alignment for students to receive effective vocabulary instruction as they advance through the grades. While the first goal of this project enables and equips teachers with the tools to improve their robust vocabulary instruction, the second goal is to develop a network of collegial support through this professional learning event. Several participants mentioned in the interviews that they were motivated to invest time and resources in vocabulary instruction because of collegial support and enthusiasm. A professional learning event offers teachers an opportunity to connect with other like-minded colleagues and provides them with a common platform to share resources and dialog regarding their experiences. This professional learning event enables teachers to not only improve, but also sustain, their robust vocabulary instruction.

Review of the Literature

When investigating the research related to professional learning, I followed a similar procedure as in Section 1. In order to identify related scholarly literature, procedures such as subject indices, browsing, footnote chasing, and citation chaining from Google Scholar were employed. Research databases were utilized to discover relevant information related to faculty development, teacher learning, and school improvement. The literature review included information from books, peer-reviewed journals, and professional education network websites. Searches for peer-reviewed articles were conducted in online research databases such as Educational Resources

Information Center (ERIC), Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete, ProQuest Central, and the Walden University online library. Keyword search terms included *teacher development, teacher learning, professional development, professional learning, professional learning communities, in-service education, in-service training,* and *teacher professional practices*.

Conceptual Framework

The development of a professional learning event is guided by the conceptual framework of Knowles's andragogy (Knowles et al., 2012), Lantolf's sociocultural theory (2000), Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist framework, and Brookfield's critical reflection (2005). Knowles et al. (2012) stressed the importance of acknowledging the rich experiences in the adult learners and applying the new learning in an immediate, relevant situation. For the teachers, as they are highly involved in learning, they can glean insights into how to improve their vocabulary instruction through the professional learning event and then applying that learning to solve the obstacles they face in teaching.

As the goals of the proposed professional learning event are to facilitate discussions and develop collegial support, they aligned with Lantolf's (2000) sociocultural theory that suggested learning should take place with scaffolding and within the zone of proximal development. In order to improve student learning, a key component is the teacher change. Professional learning events offer opportunities for teacher learning and relearning, and in some cases unlearning before new learning can take place, with the end goal of applying their knowledge in practice to support student

learning (Guskey, 2002). From a constructivist perspective, teachers learn and develop from the interactions with their environment (Vygotsky, 1978). As teachers construct meaning from their experiences, a deeper understanding takes place as teachers make sense of their new learning.

Brookfield's (2005) critical reflection represented the nexus to sustained change in adult learning. Without reflection, teachers will not be able to evaluate their own learning and take appropriate actions to realign the path if needed. Professional learning events offer teachers opportunities for experiential learning (Brookfield, 2005). While schools are for student learning, professional learning events are for teacher learning. Brookfield further emphasized the concept of learning to learn that best describes the basis of professional learning. This professional learning event will inform the teachers on the current research on vocabulary development thus enabling them to reflect on their own vocabulary instruction.

The History of Professional Learning

It is commonly accepted that what the teachers do at the classroom level has an effect on student learning (Guskey, 2002). If teacher behaviors are keys to changing classroom practice and teacher effectiveness is perceived as a predictor of student outcome, then changing teacher practices can ultimately have implication for systemic school improvement. It leads to reason that professional learning is an effective mean to affect changes in teacher practices.

Hargreaves (2000) purported that professional learning underwent four historical stages. They are the preprofessional age, the age of professional autonomy, the age of

collegial professional, and the age of postmodern professional. Hargreaves further added that professional learning is most effective when it is embedded in the existing routine of the school, when it has the full support of the administration, and when it is a collaborative effort.

Guskey (2002) defined that professional learning efforts seek to bring about changes in three areas, namely, classroom practices, teacher attitudes, and student learning. While professional development is often touted as the beacon of light for improving student learning, Guskey cautioned that some professional learning initiatives have failed due to overlooking two critical components of teacher motivation and the change process. Teachers are motivated to participate in professional learning activities as they view them as an avenue to expand their knowledge and skills, better their teaching practices, and enhancing student learning outcome (Guskey, 2002). Teachers, however, will quickly lose their interest and motivation if the professional learning activities are deemed as impractical and too general or abstract (Guskey, 2002).

In the past, professional learning activities would aim at changing the teacher's attitude and beliefs (Guskey, 2002). It is believed that one's attitude will bring about changes in the teaching practices, which will ultimately lead to improved student learning (Guskey, 2002). However, Gusky (2002) argued that instead of focusing on teacher beliefs, the new focus of professional development should be on changing classroom practices. Once the teachers observed that the new or modified classroom practices brought about improvement in student learning, teachers' beliefs and attitudes will follow suit. The catalyst that will ignite or set off a series of more permanent change is the

observable difference in student learning (Guskey, 2002). Commitment from teachers comes as a result of, not as the cause of, improved student learning (Guskey, 2002). In essence, the emphasis of professional learning should focus on training and implementation of new or modified classroom practices, rather than on changing teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

The idea of professional communities has gained much popularity within the education field in the past three decades. Lomos, Hofman, and Bosker (2011) pointed out that the concept of professional communities is associated with many interrelated terms like teacher networks, collegiality, collaborative inquiry, teacher or professional learning, teacher development, and teacher effectiveness. Instead of calling it as professional development, similar expectations could be coined as professional learning communities. This name change signifies a shift in thinking. Professional development activities are often top-down initiatives, which are temporary and receive reluctant acceptance from the teachers (McMillan et al., 2016).

While professional learning communities are more bottom-up with initiatives led by the teachers (Labone & Long, 2016). Hord (1997) defined professional learning communities as communities of continuous inquiry and improvement. Several interrelated variables within the professional learning communities are having a shared vision, constructive dialogue, reflective teaching practice, on-going feedback, and an end goal of improved student learning (Lomos et al., 2011). In an ideal situation, a professional learning community pulls together willing participants with a shared vision who are committed to collaboration, continuous learning based on trusting relationships

(Lomos et al., 2011). With teachers taking the initiative to improve their own teaching, student learning will undoubtedly improve.

Challenges Faced in Professional Learning

Kennedy (2014) reported that the existing literature focuses on the contexts and models of professional development, the characteristics and impact of effective professional learning, and the policies guiding the professional learning practices. While that is true, Kennedy commented on the paucity of longitudinal studies on the impact of professional learning on the classroom practice of teachers. Also lacking is a synthesis of the current available research on professional learning to offer a more complete picture of applying theory in context (Kennedy, 2014).

While applying theory in context is one challenge, another one is dealing with different expectations of teachers. Phelps and Spitzer (2015) investigated how prospective teachers viewed their own teaching. Interview results of six American university students demonstrated that though they recognized the value of learning from teaching, all six participants placed less value on improving their own teaching than other teaching goals like incorporating different learning styles and utilizing engaging activities (Phelps & Spitzer, 2015). Their misguided beliefs stemmed from thinking that improvement in teaching practice will naturally occur over time without the need of intentionally or systemically working on it (Phelps & Spitzer, 2015). The participants also had the misconception that teaching improvement was solely focusing on the teachers instead of the needs of the learners (Phelps & Spitzer, 2015).

The amounts of experiences teachers have also affect their preferences when undertaking in professional learning. Dengerink, Lunenberg, and Kools (2015) analyzed the survey data from over 250 participants of school-based and university-based teachers in the Netherlands. The results showed that less experienced school-based teachers primarily focus on coaching skills and prefer learning from their colleagues in a more structured learning environment (Dengerink et al., 2015). Not surprisingly, the more experienced school-based teachers have a lesser need for structured learning arrangement (Dengerink et al., 2015). They instead value learning by reading professional journal articles and participating in action research with the foci on curriculum and policy issues (Dengerink et al., 2015).

Herbert and Rainford (2014) studied the process of professional development of a single teacher in an urban secondary school within a Caribbean context. The barriers Herbert and Rainford (2014) identified were a top-down approach to professional development and the power difference between the teacher trainers and the participants in that culture. Herbert and Rainford (2014) cautioned that without ownership and involvement of the teachers, professional development will have limited results.

This was further confirmed by Gemeda, Fiorucci, and Catarci (2014) when they noted that professional learning is not as effective when it is a top-down, one-time lecture approach event. Unless learning is translated into practice that improves student learning, professional development remains stagnant. In order to explore teacher development in three Ethiopian secondary schools, a case study was employed to examine the lived experiences of the participants (Gemeda et al., 2014). Gemeda et al. identified several

barriers to the government designed and implemented professional development program. These barriers ranged from a managerial approach to professional learning to a lack of consideration of staff needs and motivation that coupled with an increase in teacher workload and unsupportive leadership (Gemeda et al., 2014). These barriers ultimately prevented teachers from developing the way they were supposed to.

Professional Learning in the International Setting

In a study that examined professional learning within the international context, Jäppinen, Leclerc, and Tubin (2015) studied the notion of collaborativeness as the critical element in professional learning communities in Canada, Finland, and Israel. This collaborativeness permeates all aspects of the school and is characterized by continuous learning that is both deep and mutual (Jäppinen et al., 2015). Jäppinen et al. argued that this collaborativeness is manifested in five domains of empowering teachers, capacity building, having sufficient quality time, nurturing teachers, and mutual respect and trust.

This collaborativeness can be forced or genuine. Wang (2015) investigated how two urban secondary schools in China conducted professional development. It was reported that with coordinated, structured planning and organizational support, teachers could experience genuine collegiality in professional learning (Wang, 2015). Wang argued that the difference between forced and genuine collegiality lied in how the administration mandated the professional development structures by considering the local context and specific priorities. Without doing so, the professional development efforts might have been hampered or even failed.

The importance of taking the local context into consideration cannot be understated. Lee and Lee (2013) cautioned that the history and culture could significantly influence the conceptualization of teacher development. While providing clear guidelines can be desirable, being overly prescriptive in the teacher development activities can lead to apathy and contrived collegiality (Lee & Lee, 2013). In the single case study of a school in Singapore, Lee and Lee noted the challenge that change is incremental and is usually reflected in qualitative, not quantitative means.

In order to effect qualitative changes in teaching practices, Chen, Lee, Lin, and Zhang (2016) examined the relationship among the four factors that were important for measuring effective professional learning in Taiwan. They are supportive leadership, shared visions, collegial trust, and shared practices (Chen et al., 2016). Using a questionnaire, 444 high school teachers participated and the results demonstrated that collegial trust is positively related to shared practices (Chen et al., 2016). With supportive leadership and shared visions as the foundation, collegial trust is the deciding factor that enables staff to share and collaborate (Chen et al., 2016).

Sustaining Professional Learning

Though collegial trust is the deciding factor that initiates the process for staff to collaborate, teacher motivation is one of the key factors in sustaining professional development (McMillan, McConnell, & O'Sullivan, 2016). In a study carried out in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, McMillan et al. (2016) concluded that motivation occurred in three levels - personal, school, and system. At the core are the intrinsic factors that teachers want to improve in their craft and hone their skills as

teachers (McMillan et al., 2016). Some of the external factors are having collaboration with their peers at the school level and having professional development mandated as part of the school policies at the system level (McMillan et al., 2016). McMillan et al. (2016) positioned that professional development is the most effective when all three levels of motivation are considered, teachers are engaged, and their voices are heard.

Mak and Pun (2015) examined how to sustain professional development in an ethnographic study of eighteen teachers of English as a second language in Hong Kong. Over a period of ten months, Mak and Pun observed the tensions and dissonances gave way to a sense of collaboration. Though this sense of collaboration diminished after the teachers returned back to their schools, it was still an indicator that with strong commitment it could work in a different situation (Mak & Pun, 2015). It proves that commitment of the participants to collaborate is another catalyst for sustainable professional development.

In addition to teacher motivation and commitment, Labone and Long (2016) analyzed the effectiveness of system-based professional learning at three case-study schools in Australia. Analyzing data from the teacher and administrator interviews and teacher and student surveys, Labone and Long suggested six elements that are critical to sustain professional learning. They are focus, participant-driven learning initiatives, feedback, collaboration, length of implementation of more than one semester, and degree of implementation within the school (Labone & Long, 2016). Of which, the degree of implementation, or coherence, yields the greatest benefit within system-based professional learning (Labone & Long, 2016). Also noteworthy is another critical factor

that emerged in sustaining changed practices was the leadership commitment to professional learning (Labone & Long, 2016).

Implementation

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

The most important resource needed to implement the three-day learning event is the project itself (Appendix A) with a detailed plan and an outline of materials needed. Kennedy (2014) argued that learning takes place not only as a by-product of the planned teacher development events, but also as a result of the interactions among the participants. Mutual accountability is created among all participants to ensure shared ownership by all. For this project of a three-day professional learning event, all the teaching staff members are equal participants who can and will be the potential resources and existing supports for each other. Interactions will be encouraged among the participants, as there is shared ownership of learning and teaching.

For teacher learning to take place, teachers will need to work collaboratively together toward shared goals that aimed at improving teaching and learning (Hairon, Goh, Chua, & Wang, 2015). Hairon, Goh, and Chua (2015) noted that teacher leaders who are intentional can influence the breadth and width of the discussions and dialogues in teacher learning. A source of support and resource is from the teacher leaders at the study site. This leadership team consists of team leaders from the elementary school, middle school, and high school, the site learning coach, and the administrator. As the leadership team encourages the teaching staff to work collaboratively toward a shared

goal of improving vocabulary instruction, they are in essence providing the leadership support needed to effectively implement this learning event.

Potential Barriers

While teachers generally desire to improve their teaching practices and help students in their learning, potential barriers still exist. With the change in leadership, the new administration might not support this project or might not feel that this professional learning event is needed at this time. Or, instead of showing lack of support and commitment, the new administration might decide to undertake a managerial approach and direct the specifics of this professional learning event.

For the teaching staff, they might feel that this professional learning event does not apply to them if vocabulary learning is not a focus in their content area. Teachers might also feel overwhelmed with their workload already and might choose not to participate. If teachers are forced to participate, results will be hampered. Tam (2015) observed that teachers' beliefs were fundamental in changing one's teaching practices and served as the lenses with which the teachers viewed professional development tasks and activities. The teachers, who do not believe in or support collaborative learning and professional development, will approach professional learning with a closed mindset and so collaboration will be contrived with limited teacher learning. With a lack of teacher buy-in, it would be challenging to effect any significant changes in the teaching practices.

Lofthouse and Thomas (2015) cautioned that the collaboration might be discouraged within a performative school culture. As a private international school, the study site prides itself in having rigorous academic standards. This could be a potential

barrier to focus primarily on student test scores instead of encouraging teacher collaboration. One final potential barrier could be time constraints. Though the project is designed to be offered as a three-day professional learning event, it could be broken up as six half-day professional learning events that are offered twice a month for three months.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

In order for the study site to offer a professional learning event related to vocabulary teaching and learning, the administration will need to vet the content. Following the formal approval of the findings by Walden University, I will brief stakeholders and gather input for the professional learning event. Table 6 presents the proposed timetable for implementation.

Table 6

Implementation Timeline

Date	Action	Outcome
August 2017	Submit findings to the administrator at the study site	Receive administration guidance for implementation
September 2017	Brief the leadership team: The Administrator, Site Learning Coach, and the Team Leaders	Gather site stakeholder input
October 2017	Present findings and recommendation to staff at the Professional Learning Days	Evaluate the presentation and gather feedback for future changes from the participants
November 2017	Debrief with the leadership team: Reflect on the effectiveness of this professional learning event	Gather site stakeholder feedback and propose changes for future professional learning events if appropriate

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

My initial responsibility for implementation will require a submission of the findings to the administrator at the study site to receive administration guidance for

implementation. After that comes a briefing to the leadership team at our school for the purpose of gathering stakeholder input and addressing their concerns. The leadership team consists of the administrator, the site learning coach, and the team leaders of elementary, middle school, and high school. Perhaps the most crucial responsibility that I have lies with communicating the results of the study by presenting the findings and recommendation to the staff at the Professional Learning Days. My final responsibility will be to debrief with the leadership team afterward in order to reflect on the effectiveness of the professional learning event.

The administrator and the rest of the leadership team have the responsibility to facilitate the dissemination of the information about the project and allocate the necessary resources to implement the project. These resources include personnel, scheduling, and financing. As this project originated from the findings of the study and the literature supporting professional learning, I believe that this professional learning event will benefit the teaching staff at the study site.

Project Evaluation

Although the literature agrees on the importance of professional development and learning, there is much less clarity on how it should be assessed. This lack of clarity of what evaluation should look like has been described as the weak link in the professional learning chain (King, 2014). Earley and Porritt (2014) noted a similar weakness in monitoring and evaluation of professional learning. It seems that the impact of professional learning is often presented in anecdotal records and is subjective in nature. As a result, Earley and Porritt argued that there needed to be an evidential baseline of

current teaching practice and student learning in order to objectively assess the effectiveness of the professional learning. It is important to note that Earley and Porritt are not against anecdotal records in essence, but rather, they pointed out the significance of establishing a baseline for the purpose of accurately evaluating the effectiveness of the professional learning.

Vanblaere and Devos (2015) examined the learning outcomes of professional learning by focusing on the perceived changes in classroom practices and in competence. Vanblaere and Devos concluded that reflective dialogue, as a professional learning community characteristic, is the only significant perceived change in classroom practices while self-efficacy, as an individual teacher characteristic, is rated positively with regards to perceived changes in classroom practices and in competence.

Multiple data sources will be employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning event (Earley & Porritt, 2014). The nature of the project lends itself to an outcome-based evaluation of teacher learning. In order to establish an evidential baseline, teachers will be asked to fill out a survey to assess their current teaching practice. After participating in the professional learning event, teachers will be asked to fill out a similar survey. The teacher surveys will serve as one data source. Teachers will also participate in a reflective dialogue within a small group setting prior to the professional learning event. Afterward, teachers will engage in a reflective dialogue regarding their learning and their self-efficacy in classroom practices. Student learning can also be documented by evaluating their vocabulary test scores prior and after the professional learning event. The quantitative data will corroborate with the results of the

reflective dialogues and the teacher survey. These three measures will objectively assess the effectiveness of the professional learning event. In the event that the program will need to be provided again, future evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the program can follow this similar three-prong approach of utilizing pre-and-post teacher surveys, reflective dialogues, and student vocabulary score results.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

This entire study and subsequent project were written to address the low vocabulary scores of the students on standardized tests. Having low vocabulary will not only hamper the students' reading and writing abilities but also limit their listening and speaking abilities to carry out a meaningful conversation with others (Beck et al., 2013). Having teachers who are well versed in vocabulary teaching will arguably benefit the students at the study site. The literature review confirmed the positive outcomes of professional learning events and warranted the development of such an event to disseminate the findings and resources garnered from this study. Much of the current literature focuses on the teacher development in Anglo-American contexts (Zhang & Pang, 2016). As such, this paucity of literature that focuses on nonwestern cultural contexts makes studying teacher development in Taiwan even more significant. This study might contribute to the understanding of how professional development works in an Asian context.

Far Reaching

Dimmock (2016) asserted that there is a great disconnect among research, practice, and school policies. Research seems to exist primarily in the academic arena with findings seldom accessed by the teachers (Dimmock, 2016). Teachers often rely on their own experiences and tacit knowledge to guide their teaching practice (Dimmock, 2016). Similarly, even when school policy makers are investing resources in research, they are hesitant to apply the research findings when forming school policies (Dimmock, 2016). A professional learning event will help bridge the divide between research and practice, allowing the research to penetrate into teaching and inform the teaching practices. While influencing the direction of school policies is beyond the scope of this project, the findings of this project might lead the administrators to consider how to address the gap between native English speakers and ELLs, which will lead to improvement in student learning.

Conclusion

According to andragogy (Knowles et al., 2012), adult learners are motivated to find practical solutions to their problems. They also prefer having an input in the planning of open-ended learning activities (Knowles et al., 2012). With their wealth of life experiences, adult learners utilize them as a filter to make sense of the new information (Knowles et al., 2012). Professional learning is an avenue to improve teaching practice (Zhang & Pang, 2016). Teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning can influence their teaching practice (Tam, 2015). With professional learning, it stresses the active role that teachers are taking part in their learning that has the potential to

change their teaching practices. The goal is to afford changes in teaching practice, which will then lead to improved student learning. As a result, professional learning events should be job-embedded, characterized by a sense of ongoing support and collaboration while at the same time focusing on instruction (Hargreaves, 2000). Relevant and authentic professional learning events will increase the likelihood of teaching learning and application (Wang, 2015).

In Section 3 of this project I presented the rationale for developing a professional learning event. The literature supported the professional learning event. I included an implementation timetable, analysis of resources and barriers, and an evaluation plan.

In Section 4, I will provide an analysis of this project, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and personal development as a researcher and scholar.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

I began this research project with the goal of improving the vocabulary knowledge of students at an international K-12 school in Taiwan. English learners have struggled to meet the U.S. vocabulary national average on standardized testing instruments (Pearson Assessment, 2015). Vocabulary is seen as the prerequisite skill for fluent reading and is a vital connection between decoding and comprehension (Joshi, 2005). Developing vocabulary knowledge in students is a complex process and it involves an integration of a myriad of skills like background knowledge, context, and language skills (Beck et al., 2013). Lack of vocabulary knowledge hampers the students' development in reading and can affect their success in academics (Oakhill & Cain, 2012).

The literature reviewed in Section 1 of this study revealed that explicit vocabulary instruction is more effective than simply encouraging extensive reading. This is very crucial in light of the fact that vocabulary is positively correlated with reading comprehension and has large predictive power to later reading development (Oakhill & Cain, 2012). Explicit vocabulary instruction also has the potential to address the ever widening gap between the good and poor readers known as Matthew Effects (Stanovich, 1986). In order to address this concern, some of conceptual frameworks to guide this study and the final project development were Knowles' andragogy (Knowles et al., 2012), Brookfield's (as cited in Galbraith, 2004) self-directed, experiential learning, Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist framework, and Lantolf's (2000) sociocultural theory of second language acquisition.

I conducted this study at an international K-12 school in Taiwan utilizing a qualitative single case study method to understand how successful vocabulary teachers approach vocabulary instruction to facilitate vocabulary learning for their students. Five teachers participated in the semistructured recorded interview process (Appendix C). The results of the investigation confirmed much of what is already known about vocabulary development and instruction from the literature review. Three general themes emerged from the data, stressing the need for increased scaffolding for teachers and students; a purposeful, supportive learning environment; and meaningful context and comprehensible content for students when experiencing language. A 3-day professional development program was developed as the final project based on the data analysis results and the literature review (See Appendix A).

As the goal of the project was to enhance the knowledge of all teachers regarding vocabulary instruction, the data analysis results supported a professional learning workshop on the topic of building a foundation of effective vocabulary instruction. As the final project is vetted through the various stakeholders, such as the site administrator and learning coach, the school administration will likely approve the proposed professional learning workshop. If approved, the teachers will benefit from an enhanced knowledge of vocabulary instruction. Ultimately, the future students will benefit from teachers who implement best practices in vocabulary instruction enabling the students to improve in their vocabulary development and vocabulary proficiency resulting in mastery in academics. In this section, I will discuss the project's strengths, remediation of

limitations, recommendations for future research, and my personal development as a scholar.

Project Strengths

As an ELL teacher, I have observed for several years that ELL students struggle with insufficient knowledge of vocabulary words. This deficiency is due to the fact that ELL students lack exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language (Graves et al., 2013). The gap between native English speakers and ELLs also widens as students progress from elementary to secondary schools (NCES, 2015b). As I observed their struggles in vocabulary development and its effect on their reading comprehension, it became evident that the study site needed to address this issue by enhancing the knowledge of teachers regarding vocabulary instruction.

The interview and data collection phase allowed the teachers the platform to share and document their own successes and obstacles encountered in vocabulary instruction. Through the interview questions, the participants were afforded a chance to reflect on their own teaching and the factors involved that made them effective vocabulary teachers. This research documented the complexity of the factors involved in vocabulary development and learning by the students and vocabulary instruction by the teachers. The findings underscored the need for a professional learning workshop as a judicious method of dissemination.

This project study stemmed from the low vocabulary scores that the ELLs exhibited on standardized testing instruments. A strength of this project study is documentation that the teachers need more guidance and training in the area of

vocabulary instruction. Having a professional learning workshop will address the concerns that teachers have. The goal of creating a professional learning workshop is to inform the K-12 teachers of the current research on vocabulary development to increase the effectiveness of their vocabulary teaching. Also, this project proffers the teachers a platform to develop a network of collegial support and collaboration in order to combat the sense of isolation found commonly in the teaching profession. This project offers a unique method to enable teachers to help students with their vocabulary learning and tackle the widening gap between ELLs and the native English speakers.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

This qualitative single case study was conducted to investigate the teaching of successful vocabulary teachers and to determine what they perceived made them effective. The data garnered from the interviews of a sample size of five teachers at the study site represent one limitation of the study. As such, the findings of the study and the professional learning workshop are applicable only to the study site.

Another limitation is the lack of diversity in the participants. These were specific teachers who taught language arts and were recommended by the administrator as effective vocabulary teachers. The selection criterion limited participants to a particular group of teachers who taught the same subject matter. I could have remedied this situation by expanding the participant pool to include teachers of other subject areas. While that might have addressed the issue of lack of diversity, these additional teachers might not have offered the deep insights concerning the struggles that ELLs experienced in vocabulary learning.

Though I did not hold any supervisory role over the participants, I was still their colleague. A possible limitation could be that the participants were hesitant to speak candidly with me by not sharing all their struggles and challenges faced in teaching vocabulary. This possibility of receiving only partial information exists in many types of research. I feel that my colleagues were honest in their descriptions given the similarities of their responses and my knowledge of them.

Scholarship

Mezirow (1998) suggested that reflection was a turning back to experience. He further proposed that critical reflection, whether implicit or explicit, involved an examination of one's own assumptions (Mezirow, 1998). While I conducted many implicit critical reflections on the importance of scholarship in this doctoral journey, this final writing of Section 4 afforded me the chance to explicitly and critically reflect on the journey as a whole.

Schön (1998) delineated the difference between knowing-in-practice and reflecting-in-action. Schön stressed the importance of reflecting-in-action as effective teachers who tried to discover new ways of reaching students in the middle of teaching. Conversely, knowing-in-practice refers to teachers who, through reflection, might gain new insights from previous repetitive practices. The scholarly work conducted in this project study represents the work of reflecting-in-action as I had ample opportunities to reflect throughout my doctoral journey and adjust accordingly. I also had chances to practice knowing-in-practice as I wrote Section 4.

This project study has allowed me to expand my horizon when I delved into the academia of scholarly writing. The two literature reviews were very daunting as I was and still am a novice at conducting literature reviews. Having to tackle scholarly writing written by others, I then needed to synthesize the vast amount of information in order to produce scholarly work myself. This process of scholarly writing takes a considerable amount of practice. My learning has affected how I teach and approach challenges. I now understand a bit more about researching and I value finding relevant resources, including reading journal articles, which might offer answers to how students learn and how we teach. My passion for solving challenges to what I am facing in my daily classroom has increased.

Project Development and Evaluation

Prior to beginning my doctoral journey, I had very little experience in the development of professional learning workshops. My administrator posited that I should plan the professional learning workshop similar to how I would teach my students. His comment helped ease some anxiety as I embarked on this new and unfamiliar task of designing a professional learning workshop. Though this was my first time developing a professional learning workshop for teachers, the process was less daunting when I took on the mindset that I was planning a series of lessons for students.

Planning the professional learning workshop and ensuring that it is doable, practical, and applicable to the teachers are actually two separate issues. I was fortunate enough that not only did I have my administrator vetting my plans, but also the learning coach proffered her valuable, candid feedback to help revise my plans. Without her

insights, my plans might have looked possible on paper but they would not be practical or relevant for the teachers. While there are still revisions to be made before fully implementing the professional learning workshop, I believe that this project is a judicious method of dissemination of research findings.

Leadership and Change

Throughout the interviews of the five participants, I was struck by the fact that these teachers demonstrated reflecting-in-action and knowing-in-practice. Their resilience and alacrity to help the students improve motivated them to keep looking for answers when their lessons did not go as planned. They were open about their struggles and challenges faced in teaching. From their sharing, I learned that change is possible and can become transformative.

Lingenfelter (1996) suggested the inductive method of observation, interpretation, and application in examining the process and outcome of how an individual can be an agent of transformation. Through the process of conducting the research, interviewing the participants, and analyzing the results, I was afforded the chance to observe, interpret, and now apply my learning in the professional learning workshop. It is my hope that as I apply the new learning and understanding in my teaching, I can truly become an agent of transformative change in the lives of my students.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

At the beginning of the doctoral journey, I was uncertain about my abilities to meet the rigorous standards of scholarly writing. I purchased a software product that provided writing help and looked into hiring an editor for my paper. In the end, I realized

that the software was not as beneficial as I thought nor was an editor needed. These two, insignificant incidents forced me to put in more effort in acquiring the scholarly vocabulary required to complete this project.

Aids with my academic writing also come in other forms. My professors and the Walden Writing Center gave valuable feedback along the way and helped hone my writing skills as a scholar. Reading a plethora of other journal articles written by other scholars also helped refine my writing skills. As a result, journal articles do not evoke the same feelings of apprehension in me as they used to. I discovered that reading journal articles could be useful and beneficial when trying to locate current research to support topics of interest.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

One of the main reasons of pursuing a doctoral degree in higher education and adult learning was my own lack of training and experiences in working with adult learners. My last 20 years of teaching has been with elementary and middle-school students. When I examined the different types of training that I received, I realized that in order to work with adult learners in the future, I would first need to receive training in teaching adults.

Throughout this endeavor, I cultivated a deeper sense of appreciation and understanding of the adult learners, including myself as an adult learner. At the same time, I was able to empathize with the online students at my school when they experienced hiccups in their online learning. I was fortunate enough to be able to reflect on my journey by deconstructing the doctoral experience to understand the underlying

assumptions and influences and how it affects my practice (Hickson, 2011). I can truly say that now at the end of my doctoral journey, I am motivated to engage my students in class and challenge them to a deeper understanding of their learning.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

Prior to developing this project, I had very little experiences in designing a professional learning workshop for teachers. As I was developing the various tasks and activities for teachers to complete, I envisioned myself as a participant and asked myself if I would have enjoyed or learned from the tasks. This reflective practice enabled me to utilize my many years of prior experiences as a participant in professional learning initiatives to gauge the usefulness, applicability, and relevancy of the different tasks.

My project was based on the research conducted in this study. As a result, I had to integrate research knowledge with practice in a meaningful way. My research became the underlying knowledge foundation with which new learning can be built (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Additionally, I noticed that my passion for vocabulary instruction increased after designing this project. I have always been interested in vocabulary instruction, and by investigating this topic, I have come to realize the urgency of equipping my students with the tools that they need so they can overcome the vocabulary gap with confidence. The information gathered in this study will help them in the future.

Potential Impact on Social Change

A recent conversation with a colleague who teaches high school students reaffirmed the urgency to address this vocabulary gap observed in the ELLs (P. D'Brass, personal communication, March, 2017). He commented on the lack of breadth of

vocabulary in the ELLs. While ELLs might not comprehend the vocabulary words in class, they are very hesitant to take the initiative to ask the teachers for clarification. The teacher only realized some key vocabulary terms were not clearly understood when a student who struggled with the assignment asked a question. Though this issue was quickly resolved, it underscored the impediment that ELLs experience in the classroom when they lack exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language.

Vocabulary is usually embedded in the four main strands of learning a language, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nation, 2013). Teachers struggle to find sufficient time to devote to vocabulary instruction. Given the limited instructional time, their focus is on ensuring the students understand the word definitions and student usage is often determined by utilizing the new vocabulary word in sentences. While that might be sufficient in some cases, vocabulary learning has been relegated to rote memorization. Vocabulary assessments that consist of matching or multiple choice questions only assess a superficial knowledge of the words. Vocabulary instruction needs to go beyond simply rote memorization of word definitions for which teachers need to assume a mindset of helping students see the richness of the words in the language interacting with their lives.

The professional learning workshop will benefit the teachers as they become more intentional in teaching and assessing vocabulary within a meaningful context. The ultimate benefactors of this project are the students as the breadth and depth of their vocabulary knowledge will be expanded and deepened. As a result of this work, students

might not only improve in their vocabulary development, but might also become empowered to succeed academically.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

One of the limitations of this study was the small sample size taken from only one K-12 international school in Taiwan. Compounding the small sample size is the lack of diversity in participants as all five participants were teachers of the same subject area. Potential future research could include similar investigations being replicated at other international schools in Taiwan and beyond with a larger sample size of teachers of various subject areas. The possibility exists that the teaching experiences of other international school teachers might be quite different from the experiences described in this study.

Apart from the vocabulary gap, the ELLs also experience other language challenges in school. Several participants in this study expressed that ELLs struggled with reading, writing, and grammar. Potential future research can be extended to include other aspects of the teaching experiences that address the challenges that ELLs experience in reading, writing, and grammar.

After the implementation of the professional learning workshop, a separate qualitative case study using a program evaluation model would evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop and could provide salient information regarding how to best meet the professional learning needs of the teachers. Professional learning initiatives are often mandated from the administration and are influenced by the needs to meet the requirements of the accreditation process (McMillan et al., 2016). While the decision

making of the administration and the accreditation process might be driven by data, the voice of the classroom teachers can often be marginalized, if not lost, in this process. A qualitative study will provide opportunities to the teachers by giving them a voice, allowing them to articulate, interpret, and attach meaning to their own experiences (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009).

Conclusion

In Section 4, I reflected on the project by examining its strengths, remediation of limitations, and my personal development as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. The results of this project led to the development of a professional learning workshop for teachers with the goal to enhance the knowledge of all teachers regarding vocabulary instruction. While this project was developed based on the findings of the research, there are limitations in this study that should be noted. The impact on social change can be observed through the teachers and the students. The teachers will not only be well-versed on the current research of vocabulary development to increase the effectiveness of their vocabulary teaching, but they are also afforded a platform for collegial support and collaboration in their own journey of professional development. The future students are the ultimate benefactors as they experience increased success in vocabulary learning and are empowered to succeed in academics.

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Appendix A: Professional Learning Workshop

Project: Professional Learning Workshop for Current K-12 Teachers

Building a Foundation of Effective Vocabulary Instruction

By

Cathleen S. M. Lee

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

Table of Contents

Background

English learners at an American international school in Taiwan have struggled to meet the U.S. national average in vocabulary on standardized testing instruments. A qualitative case study was conducted to collect data on teachers who were successful in the area of vocabulary instruction and to determine what they perceived made them effective. The research questions used in the research focused on the perception of the teachers as to why they were successful in teaching English vocabulary. The primary data collection method was through individual interviews of five successful teachers and was validated by using member checking. The teachers' perceptions were analyzed to derive key words and themes. Some of the key words in context suggested the struggles and challenges that students faced was due to an insufficient vocabulary knowledge and the gap between native English speakers and ELLs. It was clear that teacher enthusiasm, student motivation, and support from colleagues were factors associated with success in vocabulary instruction. While students lacked exposure to and prior knowledge of the English language, they could benefit from an emphasis on direct vocabulary instruction with student usage as the key component. The analysis of the data collected during this research revealed three themes. The three themes were the need for increased scaffolding for teachers and students, a purposeful and supportive learning environment, and meaningful context and comprehensible content for students when experiencing language.

This project of a professional learning workshop entitled Building a Foundation of Effective Vocabulary Instruction is the result of the study findings. Developing a

professional learning workshop has the potential to enhance the knowledge of all teachers regarding vocabulary instruction. Teachers will also receive extra scaffolding in a supportive, collegial environment. As a result, teachers are more likely to implement the best practices in vocabulary instruction which will then enable students to improve in their vocabulary learning and experience increased success at school.

Professional Learning Workshop for Current Teachers

Teachers often teach in isolation and are tasked with covering the benchmarks in the curriculum. In addition to their teaching responsibilities, teachers are expected to participate in professional learning meetings, get involved in extra-curricular activities, and maintain regular communication with the parents regarding any issues that arise in student learning. With the increasing demands on their time, teachers might be hesitant to initiate any action research due to lack of time, energy, and/or resources.

Purpose

The purpose of this 3-day professional learning workshop is to enhance the knowledge of all teachers at an international school regarding vocabulary instruction. The workshop will include a review of the recent research on vocabulary learning and teaching and discussions on strategies for applying the research in their teaching. The workshop will include activities, learning tools, and discussions for the K-12 teachers who are involved in vocabulary instruction. Though not all teaching staff members are language arts instructors, English is the language of instruction at the school and as such, students might struggle with some of the content specific vocabulary. This workshop should benefit all teachers.

Target Audience

All current K-12 teachers will be invited to participate in the planned professional learning event. If everyone accepts the invitation, there will be approximately 25 people.

Goals

The goals of this professional learning workshop include the following:

1. To inform the K-12 teachers of the current research on vocabulary development to increase the effectiveness of their vocabulary teaching.
2. To develop a network of collegial support and collaboration in order to combat the sense of isolation found commonly in the teaching profession.

Learning Outcomes for the 3-Day Workshop

Day 1

1. Explain vocabulary development in native speakers and ELLs
2. Define effective vocabulary instruction
3. Develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the usefulness of the vocabulary words
4. Complete reflection and evaluation

Day 2

1. Explain different approaches to teaching the list of words
2. Discuss different strategies available in vocabulary teaching
3. Develop a list of vocabulary words to study across multiple disciplines and grade levels based on a common topic
4. Complete reflection and evaluation

Day 3

1. Explain assessment
2. Discuss assessment of vocabulary learning
3. Develop vocabulary assessments across multiple disciplines and grade levels based on a common topic
4. Complete reflection and evaluation

Implementation

This professional learning workshop will be held during the Professional Learning Days in late 2017 or early 2018. The 3-day workshop will be offered to all current K-12 teachers. Approximately 25 teachers will be invited to attend. Some staff members express the challenge of identifying common planning periods for professional learning meetings (J. Torgerson, personal communication, November, 2016). By planning the professional learning workshop during the Professional Learning Days in late 2017 or early 2018, all K-12 teachers will be able to attend. Teachers will receive an email (Attachment A) in advance informing them of this workshop. The school library will be reserved in advance as the meeting room can hold all invited attendees and has wireless internet access and audio-visual display. Participants will be asked to bring their laptops on all three days. In addition, participants will be asked to bring one of their current textbooks that will be used on Days 1 and 2, one sample vocabulary activity that they have developed that will be used on Day 2, and one sample vocabulary assessment task that they have developed that will be used on Day 3. I will prepare all the handouts, materials, and activities with copies of the handouts made on campus. Participants will

be responsible for their own breakfast. Lunch and light snacks will be provided at the workshop with the cost covered by the professional learning funds.

Day 1

Material Day 1

Presenter will provide:

- Note pads, pens, and pencils for each participant
- Whiteboard and whiteboard markers
- Post-it notes
- Computer access in the library
- Handouts of PowerPoint presentations, schedules, Attachment C (Myths of Language Learning), Attachment D (How to Choose Words to Study), Attachment F (Criteria Used in Evaluating Words), Attachment G (Reflection Worksheet), and Attachment H (Workshop Evaluation)

Participants will bring:

- Laptop computer
- One textbook that they are currently using in their own classroom

Instructor Guidelines Day 1

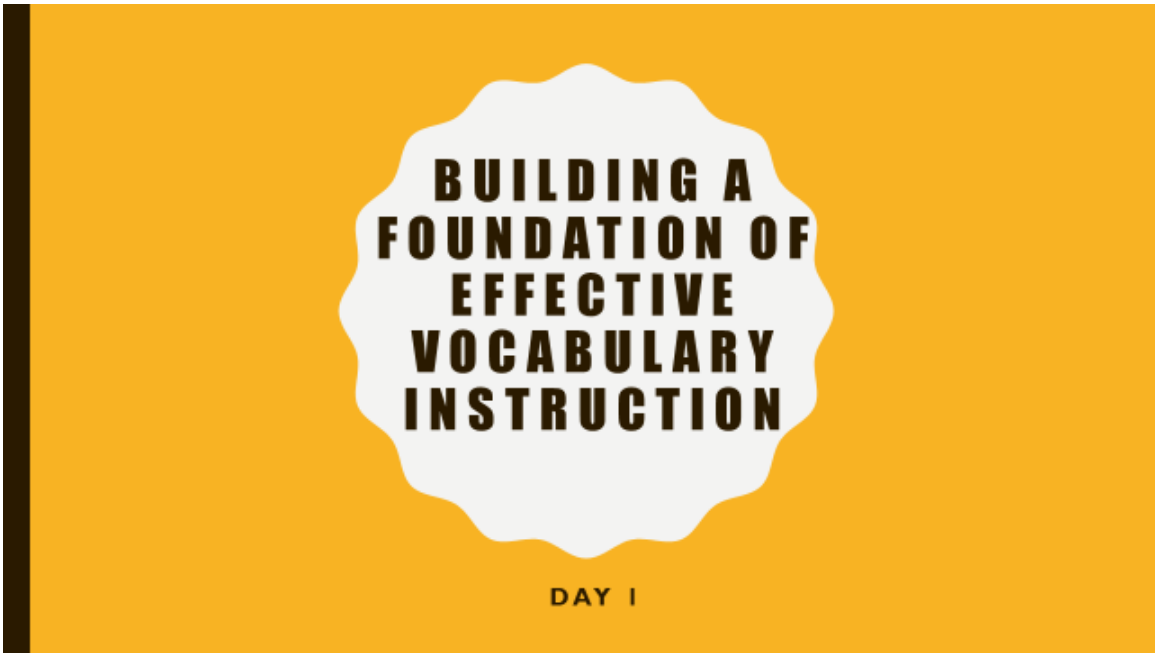
- Welcome participants and ensure everyone has signed in for the day
- Describe the purpose and goals of the program
- Review learning outcomes
- Encourage participation and engagement

- Review schedule for the day
- **Learning Activity #1**: A small panel of 4-5 recent high school graduates will be invited (Attachment B) to participate in a question and answer session. They will each introduce themselves and describe their experiences in learning vocabulary. They will also describe what teachers did in vocabulary instruction that was useful and effective.
- **Learning Activity #2**: Given 10 statements (Attachment C) participants will evaluate the myths of language learning as either true or false.
- **Power Point Presentation**: Explain vocabulary development and vocabulary instruction.
- **Learning Activity #3:** Participants will bring a current textbook that they are using in their own classroom. Using the textbooks that they have, participants will explain how they currently select words to study. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment D).
- **Learning Activity #4:** A foreign language teacher will teach a simple 20-minute lesson on food vocabulary in a foreign language (Attachment E).
- **Learning Activity #5:** Participants will develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the usefulness of the vocabulary words. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment F).
- **Learning Activity #6:** Participants will fill out a reflection worksheet (Attachment G) by choosing three out of the six sentence starters to complete.

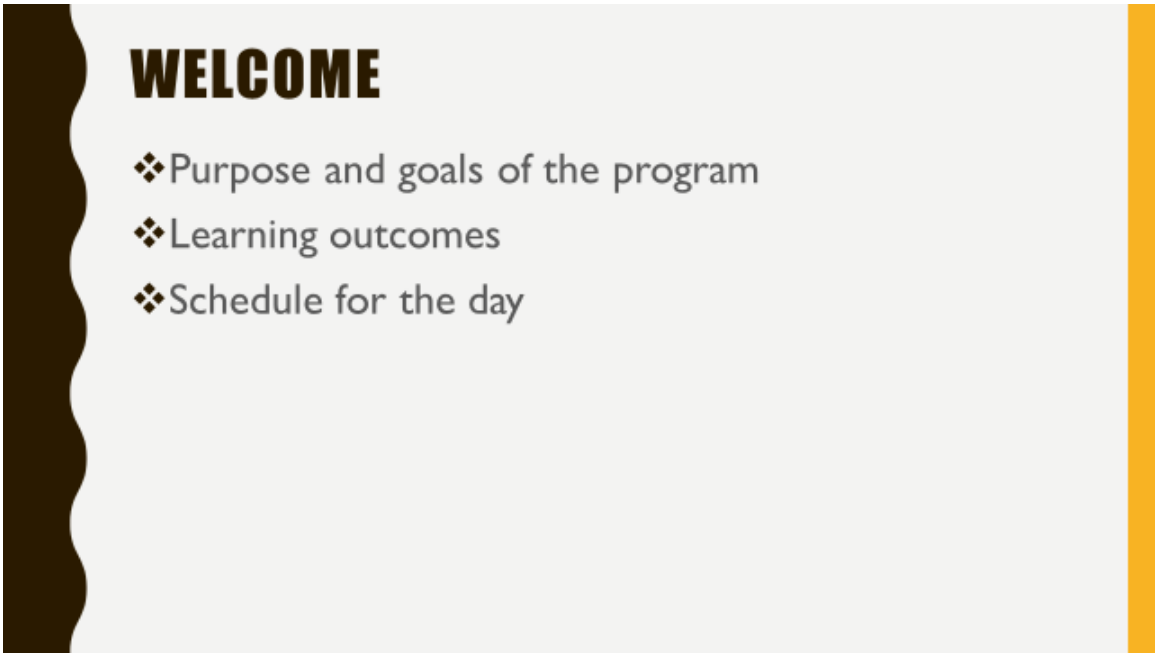
Presenter will review Day 1 with all participants. Participants will fill out a workshop evaluation (Attachment H).

Event Descriptions Day 1

Day 1 – Introduction of the Workshop



Be enthused and positive as we start this 3-day workshop.



Purpose:

- To enhance the knowledge of all teachers at an international school regarding vocabulary instruction

Goals:

1. To inform the K-12 teachers of the current research on vocabulary development to increase the effectiveness of their vocabulary teaching.
2. To develop a network of collegial support and collaboration in order to combat the sense of isolation found commonly in the teaching profession.

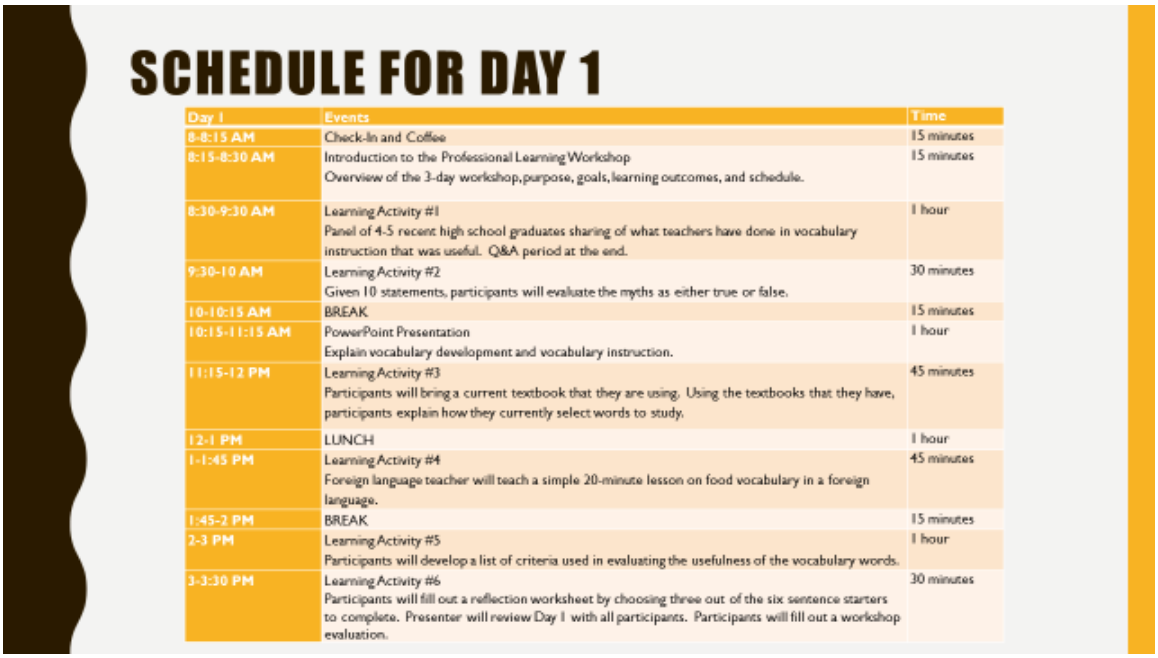
Learning outcomes for Day 1:

1. Explain vocabulary development in native speakers and ELLs
2. Define effective vocabulary instruction

3. Develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the usefulness of the vocabulary words
4. Complete reflection

Schedule is on the next slide.

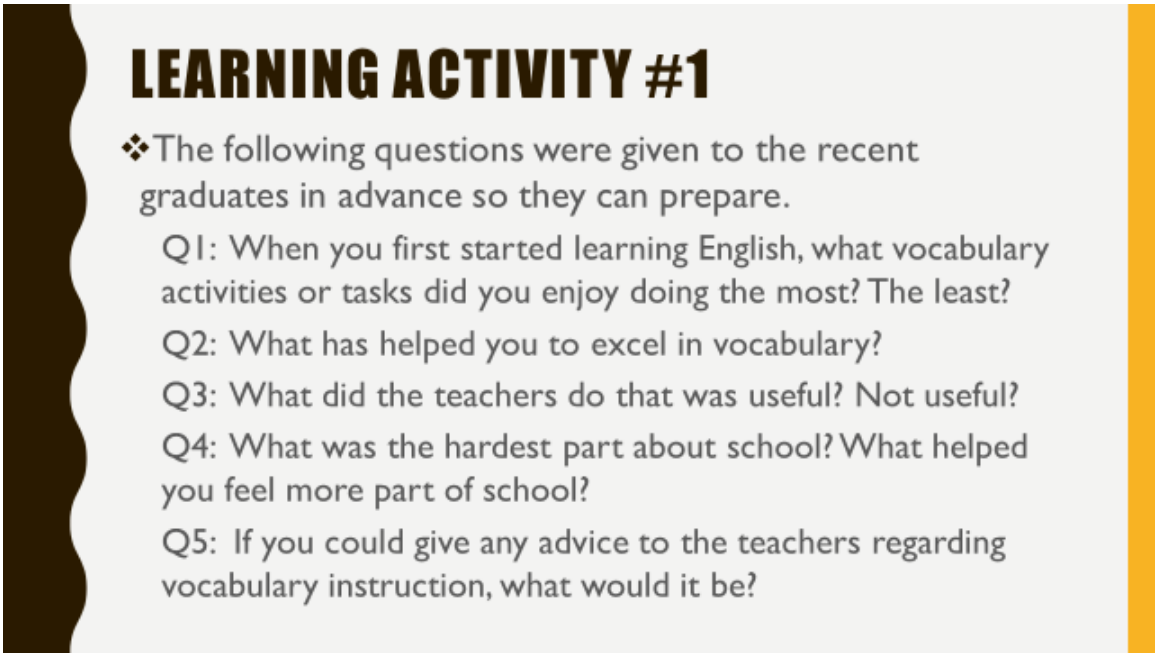
Remind participants to take ownership of their own learning. Encourage participants to ask questions and be engaged in the workshop!



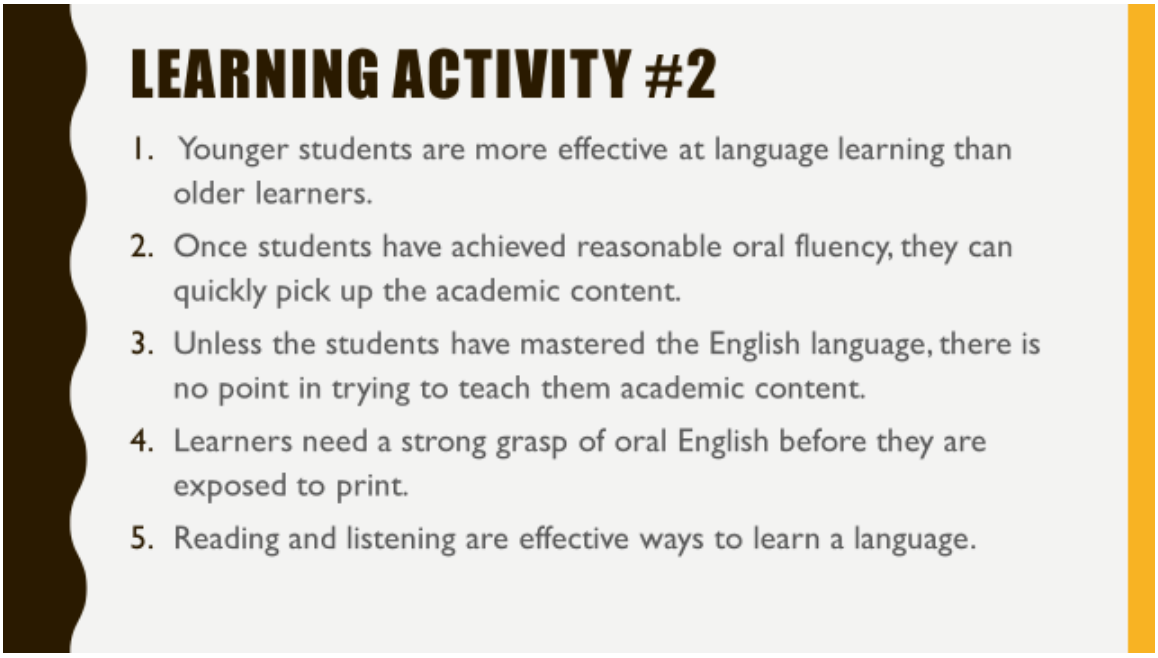
SCHEDULE FOR DAY 1

Day 1	Events	Time
8-8:15 AM	Check-In and Coffee	15 minutes
8:15-8:30 AM	Introduction to the Professional Learning Workshop Overview of the 3-day workshop, purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and schedule.	15 minutes
8:30-9:30 AM	Learning Activity #1 Panel of 4-5 recent high school graduates sharing of what teachers have done in vocabulary instruction that was useful. Q&A period at the end.	1 hour
9:30-10 AM	Learning Activity #2 Given 10 statements, participants will evaluate the myths as either true or false.	30 minutes
10-10:15 AM	BREAK	15 minutes
10:15-11:15 AM	PowerPoint Presentation Explain vocabulary development and vocabulary instruction.	1 hour
11:15-12 PM	Learning Activity #3 Participants will bring a current textbook that they are using. Using the textbooks that they have, participants explain how they currently select words to study.	45 minutes
12-1 PM	LUNCH	1 hour
1-1:45 PM	Learning Activity #4 Foreign language teacher will teach a simple 20-minute lesson on food vocabulary in a foreign language.	45 minutes
1:45-2 PM	BREAK	15 minutes
2-3 PM	Learning Activity #5 Participants will develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the usefulness of the vocabulary words.	1 hour
3-3:30 PM	Learning Activity #6 Participants will fill out a reflection worksheet by choosing three out of the six sentence starters to complete. Presenter will review Day 1 with all participants. Participants will fill out a workshop evaluation.	30 minutes

Also make copies of this schedule as handouts for the participants.



Entire group (all participants): Panel of 4-5 recent high school graduates will share what teachers did in vocabulary instruction that was useful. Facilitator will introduce members of the discussion panel. Question and answer period at the end.



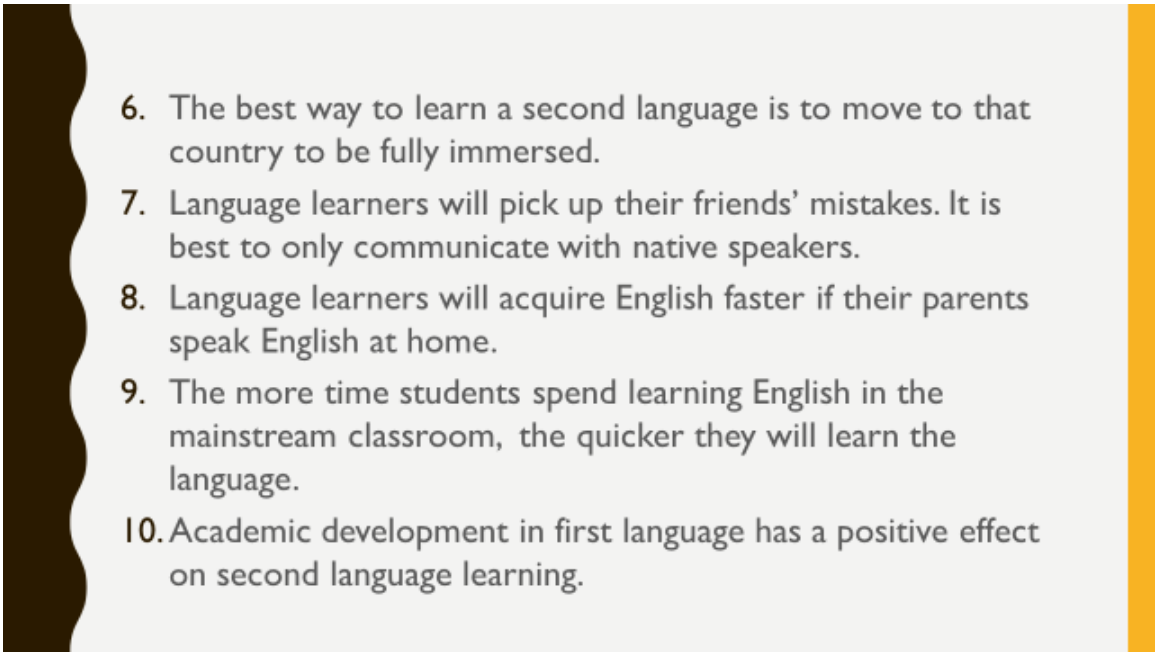
This is Attachment C (Myths of Language Learning). Please make copies of this to hand out.

Participants will evaluate the myths of language learning as either true or false. Whole group discussion will follow.

Answers:

1. False. While younger language learners may learn to pronounce a new language with little or no accent, older language learners are often much more efficient learners.
2. False. While basic interpersonal communicational skills (BICS) are generally acquired within 2 years of learning, cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) takes 5-7 years to develop.
3. False. ELL students need to continue their content education while learning a new language. Both need to happen concurrently.

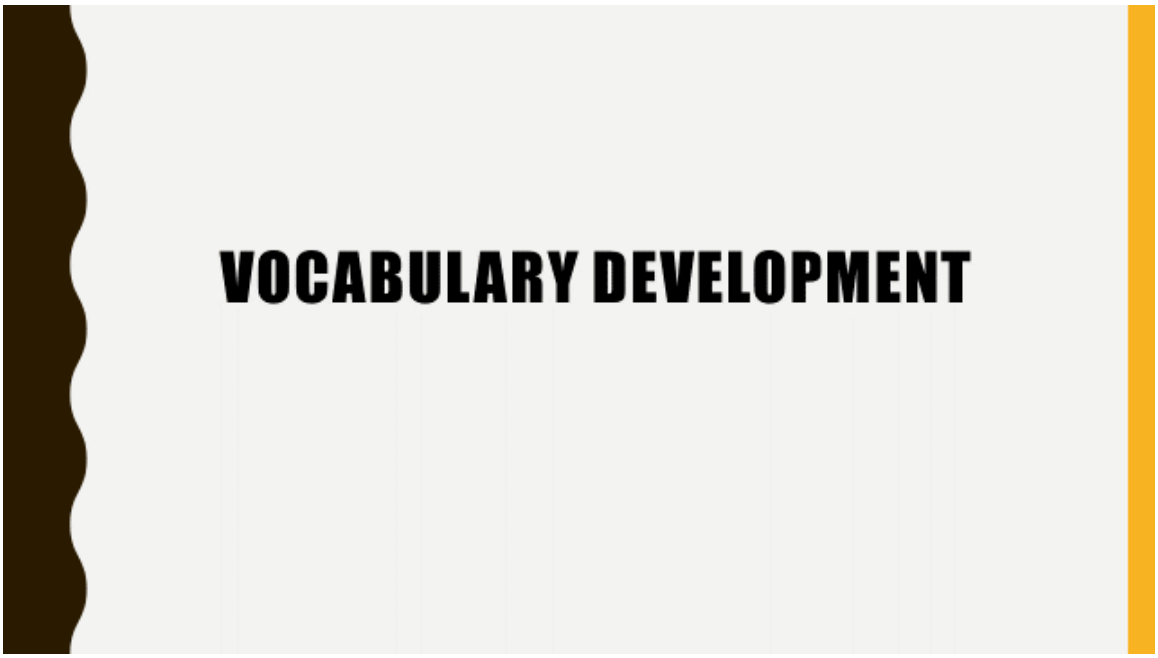
4. False. ELL learners should be exposed to a rich print environment from early on in their English learning. Learning a language is not a sequential process. New learning can take place while old learning can be relearned/deepened.
5. False. Though it is possible to learn a language through reading and listening, input, output, and interactions are all needed.



Answers:

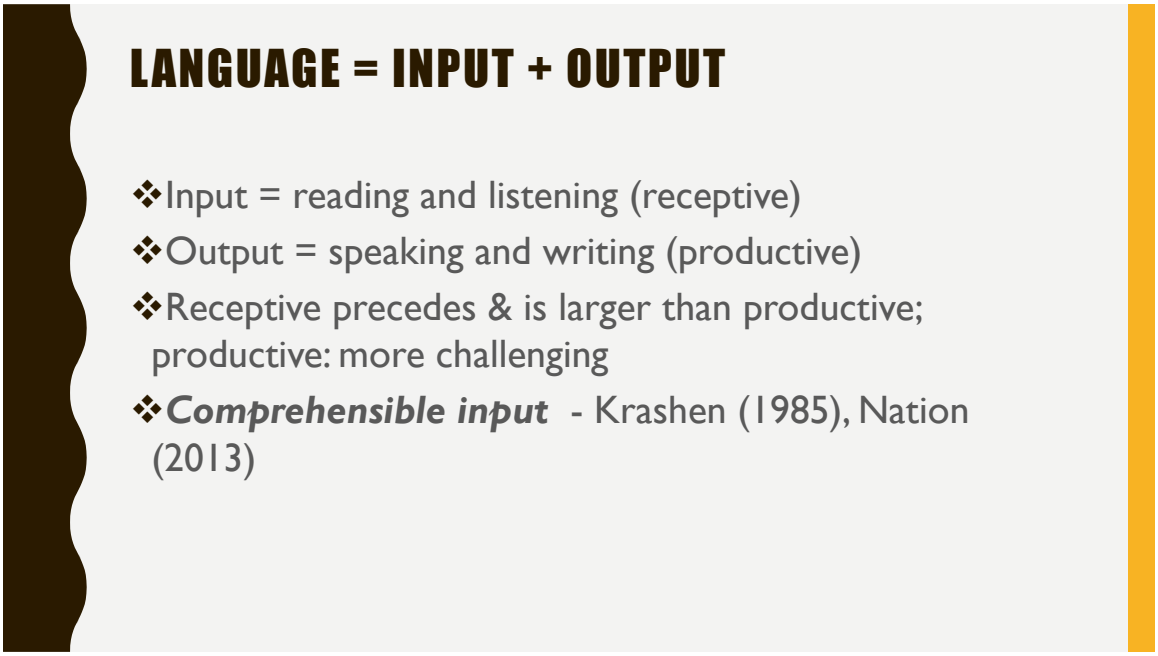
6. False. Though it certainly helps with using the target language, living in another country does not guarantee that the target language will be learned. Think 'living in your own bubble.'
7. False. Learners practice negotiation of meaning when speaking with friends.

8. If their parents feel comfortable with speaking English, then yes. If the parents do not feel comfortable, then it is better for them to speak in the native language with their children because the native language will be richer and more complex.
9. Though time in the mainstream classroom helps with increased exposure to the target language, students need comprehensible input in order for learning to occur.
10. True. Academic development in first language helps with second language acquisition.

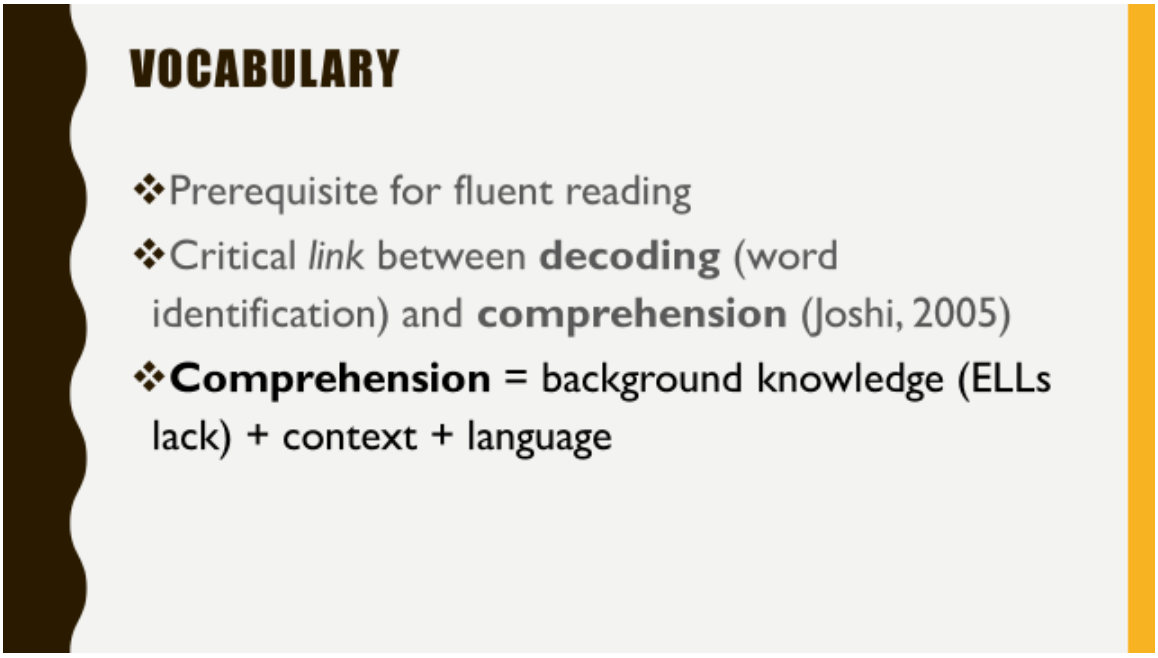


PowerPoint Presentation

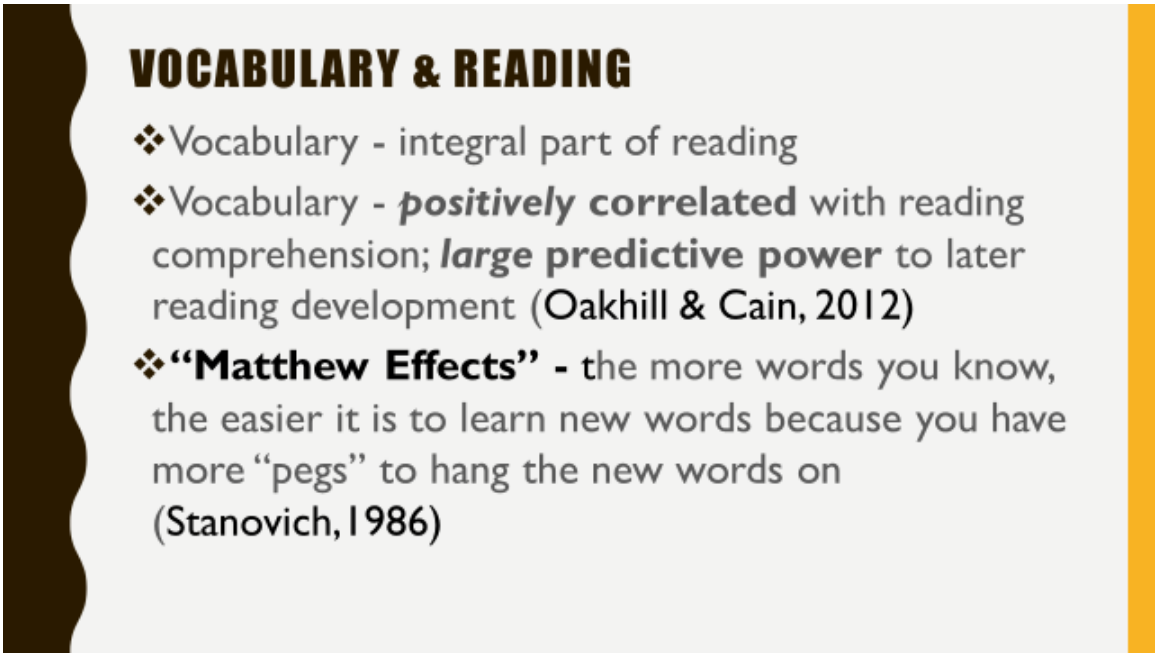
Here is some background information about vocabulary development. Some of it you might have known. Some of it could be new. Think about your teaching situation and see if it makes sense. (Encourage participants to be actively engaged by asking questions.)



Comprehensible input simply means that for language learners to understand (comprehend) something, that something needs to be 'comprehensible' (understandable). Otherwise, no real learning will take place. As teachers, we need to make sure we make the content understandable to our students.



The role of vocabulary cannot be overestimated. It is the prerequisite for fluent reading. It is the crucial link between decoding and comprehension. That is, if I can decode the word /d/ /o/ /g/, but I have no knowledge of what a dog is, I do not really know/understand/comprehend what I am reading. It goes to reason, then, that comprehension is really the result of background knowledge (that ELLs might lack in many instances because of lack of exposure) along with an understanding of the text context AND the language itself!



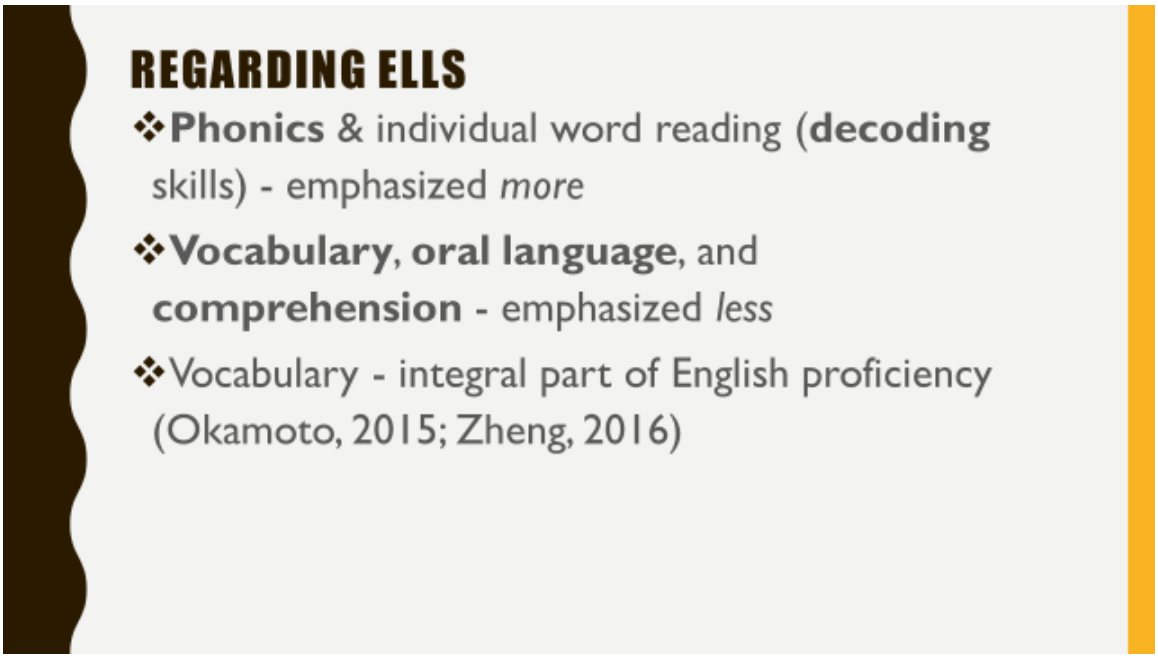
Now that we have established the importance of vocabulary in language learning. Let us examine how vocabulary is related to reading.

Positive correlation simply means that the two variables move in tandem. So, when one variable decreases, the other variable will decrease. Or, if one variable increases, the other will increase.

Large predictive power means that if one has a large, robust vocabulary bank, one will be more successful at reading.

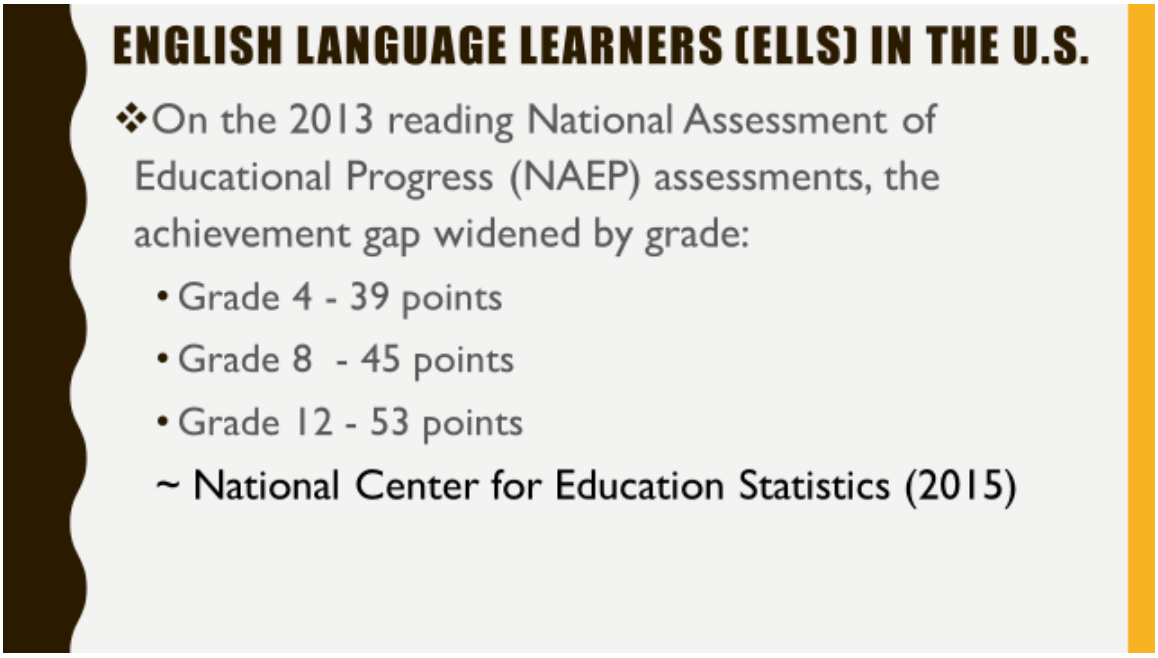
Matthew Effects or *accumulated advantage*: Good readers enjoy reading and tend to spend more time reading. As they read more, they learn more words and become even better readers. Poor readers struggle with reading and tend to spend less time reading. As they read less, they learn fewer words and become poorer readers. Instead of closing the gap between the good and poor readers, the gap actually widens over time if no

intervention is provided. The outlook on the poor readers with limited vocabulary is grim as their situation only worsens over time.



Now that we know the importance of vocabulary in language learning and in relation with reading, let us look at the ELL learners.

ELLs require *more support* with **vocabulary** and **oral language** in order to benefit from **comprehension** instruction.



Achievement gap = difference between the average scores of two groups (ELLs and native English speakers)

NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) - standardized academic achievement test of Grades 4, 8, and 12 students

Vocabulary questions have been integrated in the NAEP reading assessment since 2009 and they measure student ability to apply word understanding to develop passage comprehension.

ELLS AT OUR SCHOOL

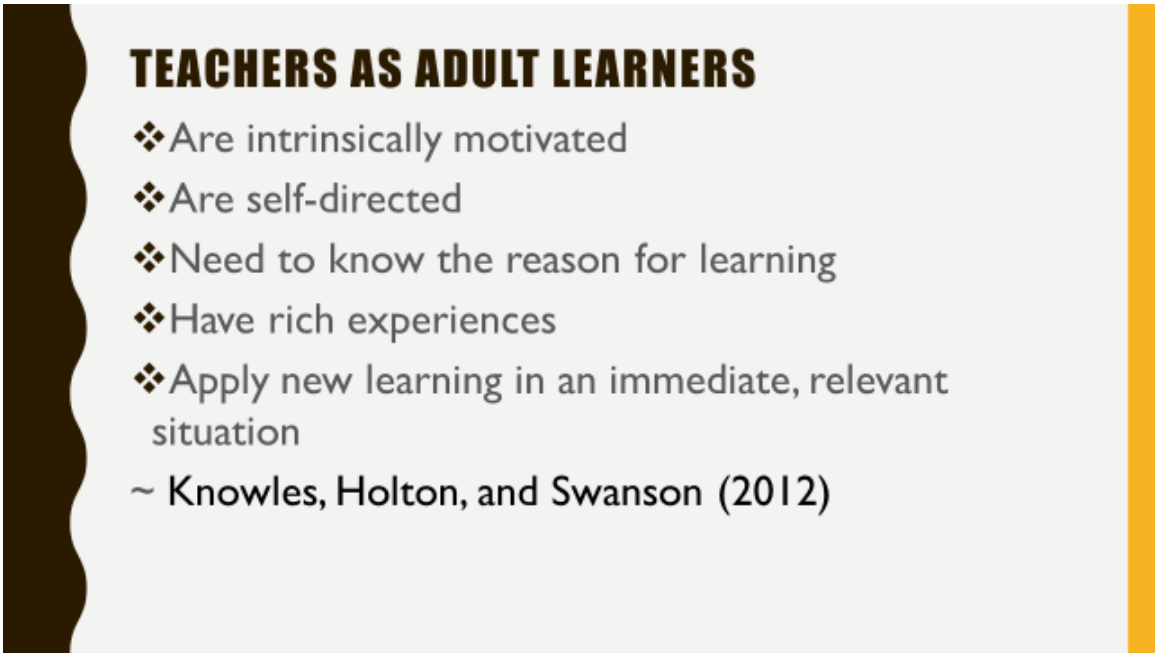
❖Stanford assessment – vocabulary section

(*below* U.S. national average)

- 29% of G9 (2009-2010)
- 33% of G8 (2010-2011)
- 24% of G9 (2011-2012)
- 21% of G6 (2012-2013)
- 27% of G8 (2013-2014)
- 22% of G7 (2014-2015)

~ Pearson Assessment (2015)

VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

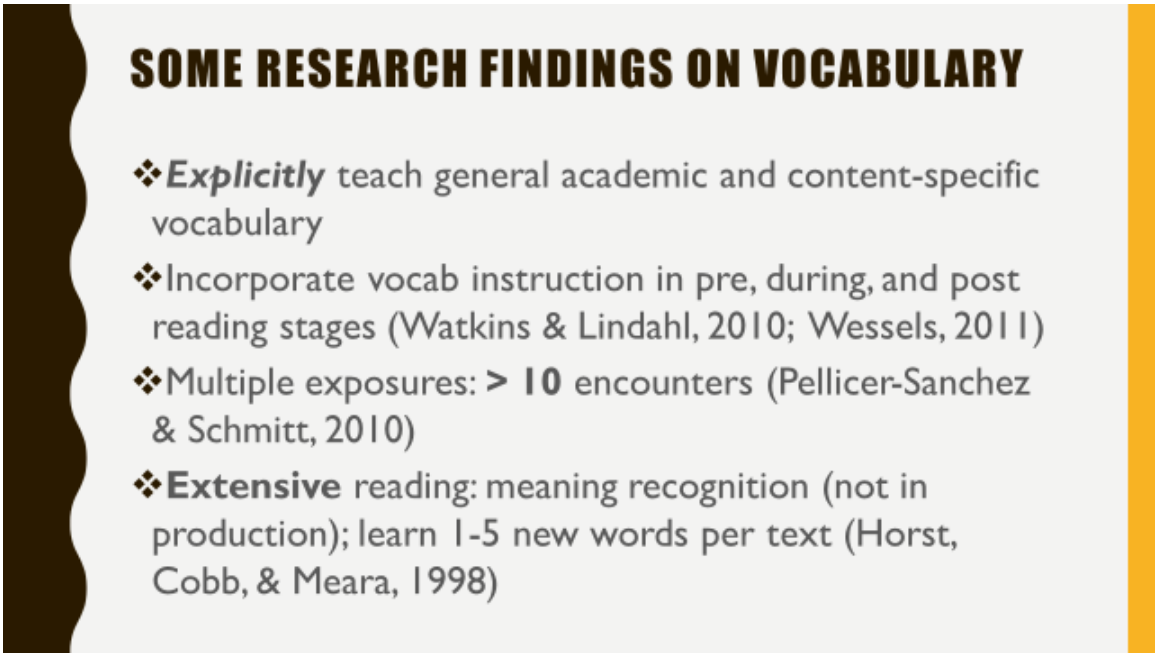


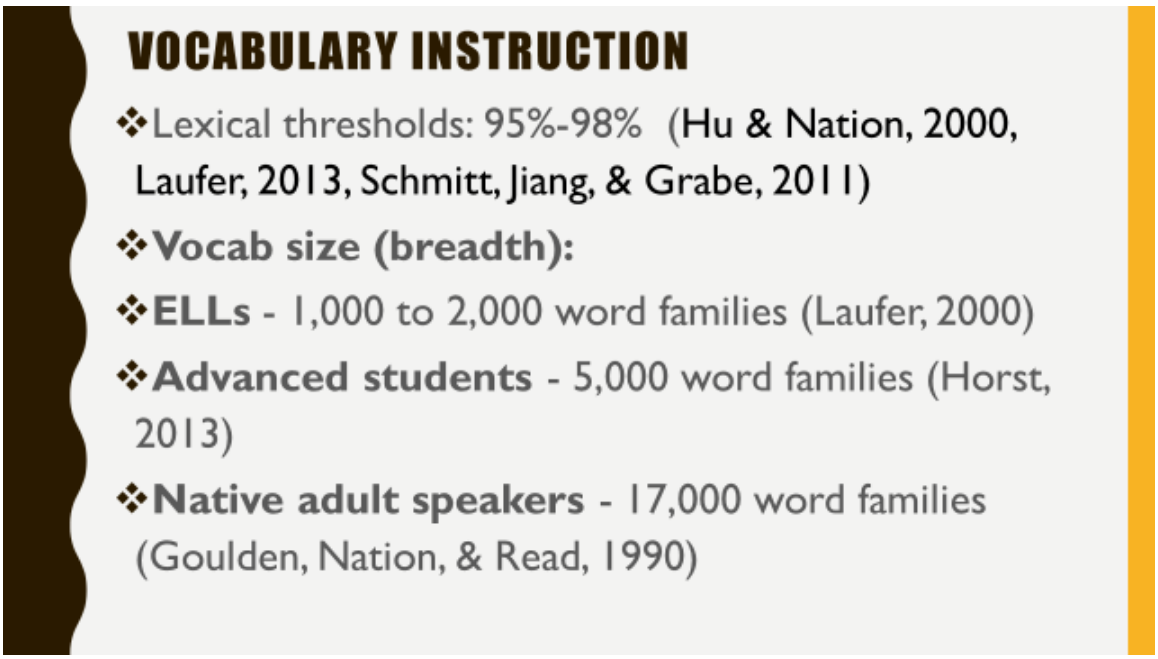
In order for the teachers to improve vocabulary with the students, they will first need to reflect on their own teaching. Teachers are adult learners. By taking on the learners' role, teachers will be able to analyze their own teaching and become cognizant of their areas of improvement.

Knowles = learner involvement

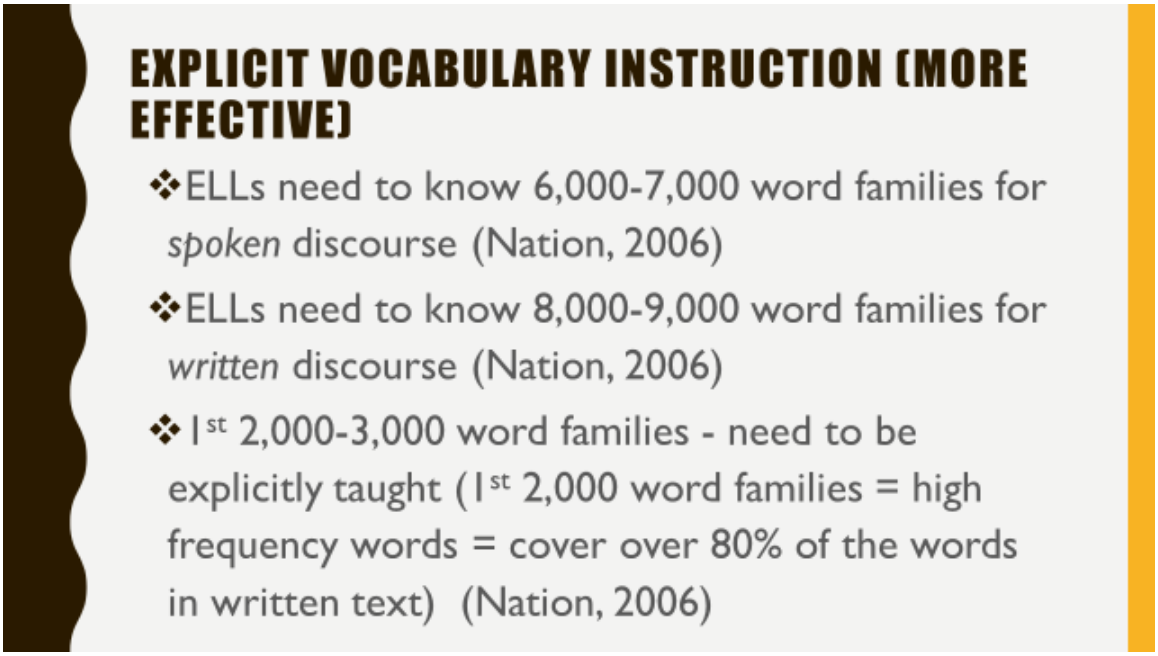
Brookfield = critical **reflection** (cyclic process); *learning to learn*

Lantolf =Sociocultural theory (zone of proximal development; scaffolding)

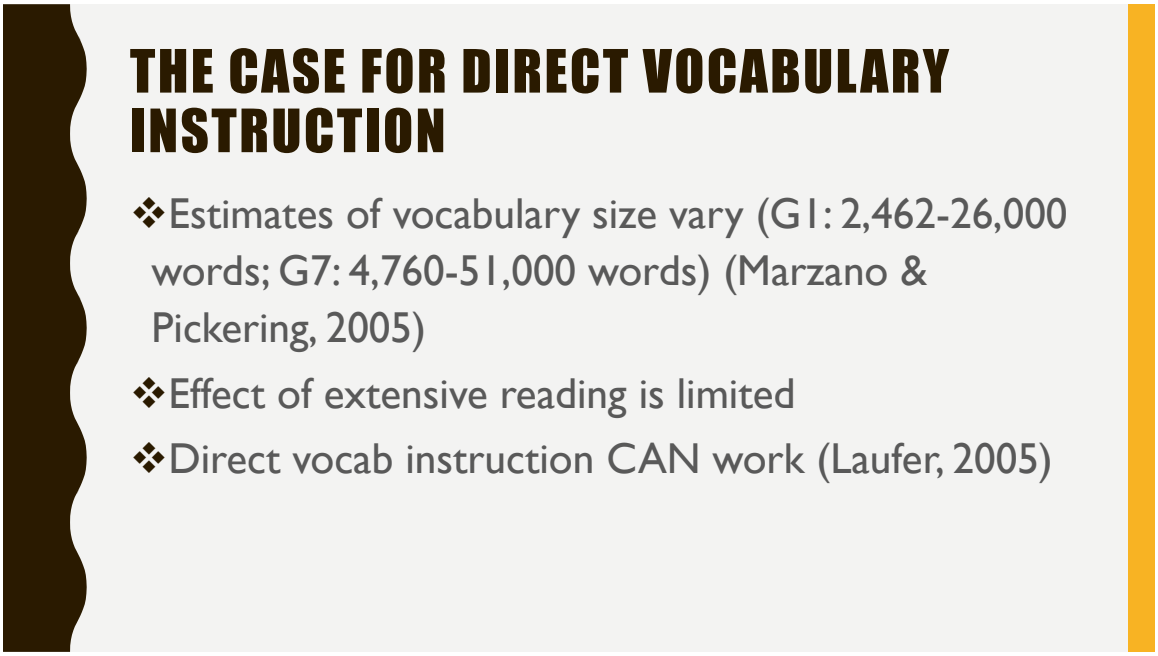




Lexical threshold refers to the minimal percentage of familiar vocabulary in a text and the minimal vocabulary size of a reader required in understanding a text.



Intentional word learning will always be the most effective approach.



3 CHALLENGES IN VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION FOR ELLS

- Choosing the right words to study
- Closing the gap in ELLs
- Remediating the lack of time for vocabulary instruction

~ August, Carlo, Dressler, and Snow (2005)

TIER 1 WORDS

THE 3 TIERS OF VOCABULARY

- Common, everyday words that most students entering school should know already
- About 8,000 word families
- Sight words, nouns, verbs, adjectives, and early reading words
- Ex: Book, girl, sad, clock, baby, dog, and orange
- Check to see if ELLs know them in English!

~ Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2013)

TIER 2 WORDS

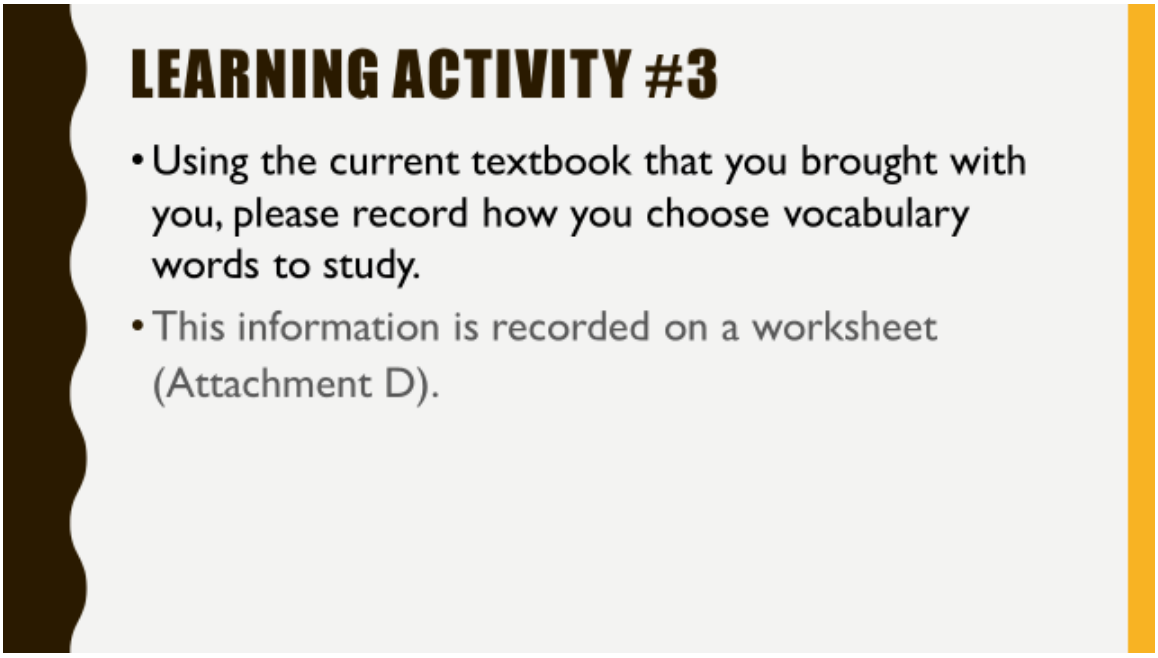
- Used in a variety of subject areas
- Usually have multiple meanings
- Necessary for reading comprehension
- Characteristic of a mature language user
- High-frequency, academic words
- Ex: Analyze, evaluate, compare
- TEACH them!

~ Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2013)

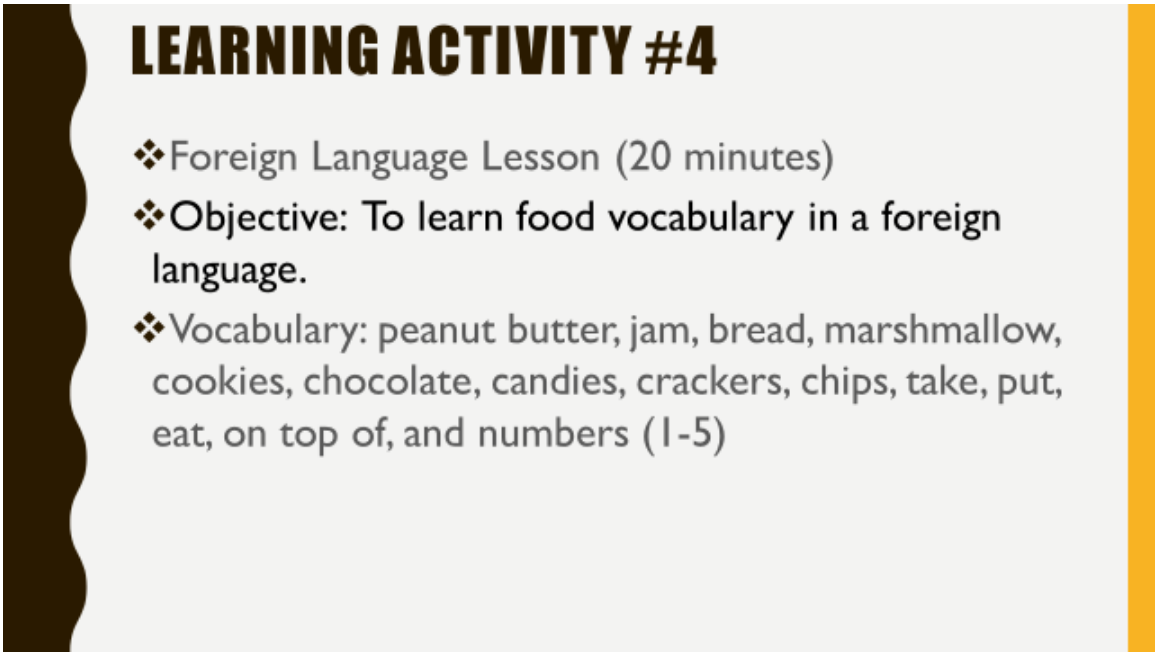
TIER 3 WORDS

- Content-specific vocabulary - defined in textbooks or glossaries
- Important for teaching ideas during lessons and helping to build students' background knowledge
- Practical use and frequency is low; used for brief periods of time ONLY when studying particular content
- Ex: Science, Social Studies, and math terms

~ Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2013)



This is Attachment D (How to Choose Words to Study). Please make copies of this to hand out.

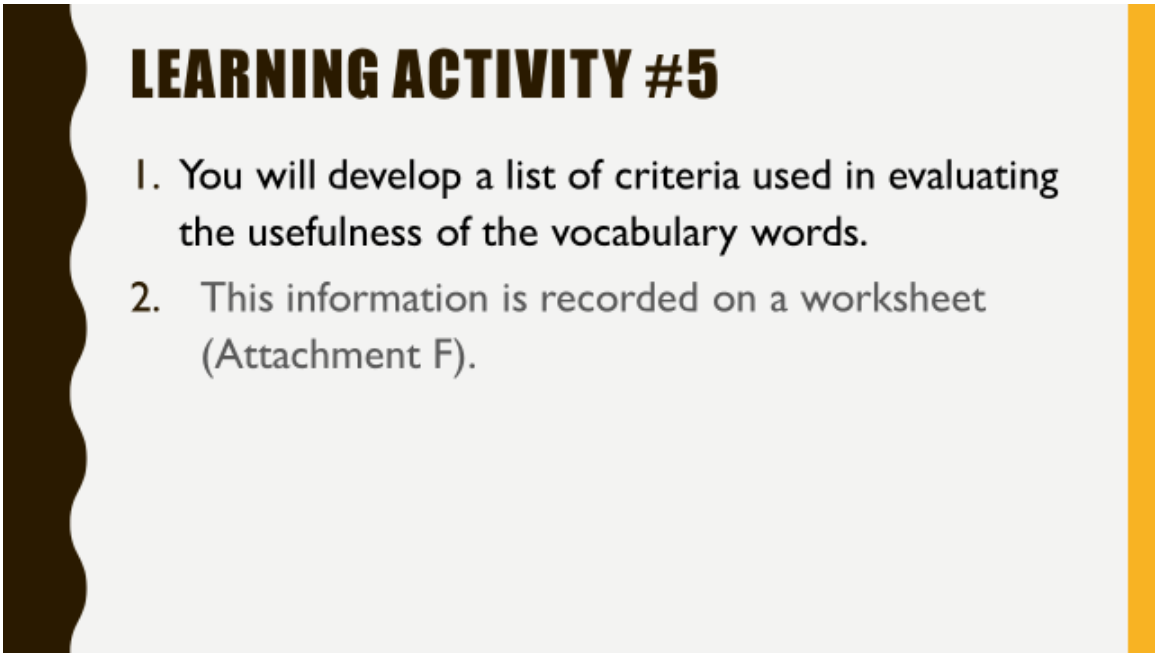


A foreign language teacher will teach a simple 20-minute lesson on food vocabulary in a foreign language (Attachment E).

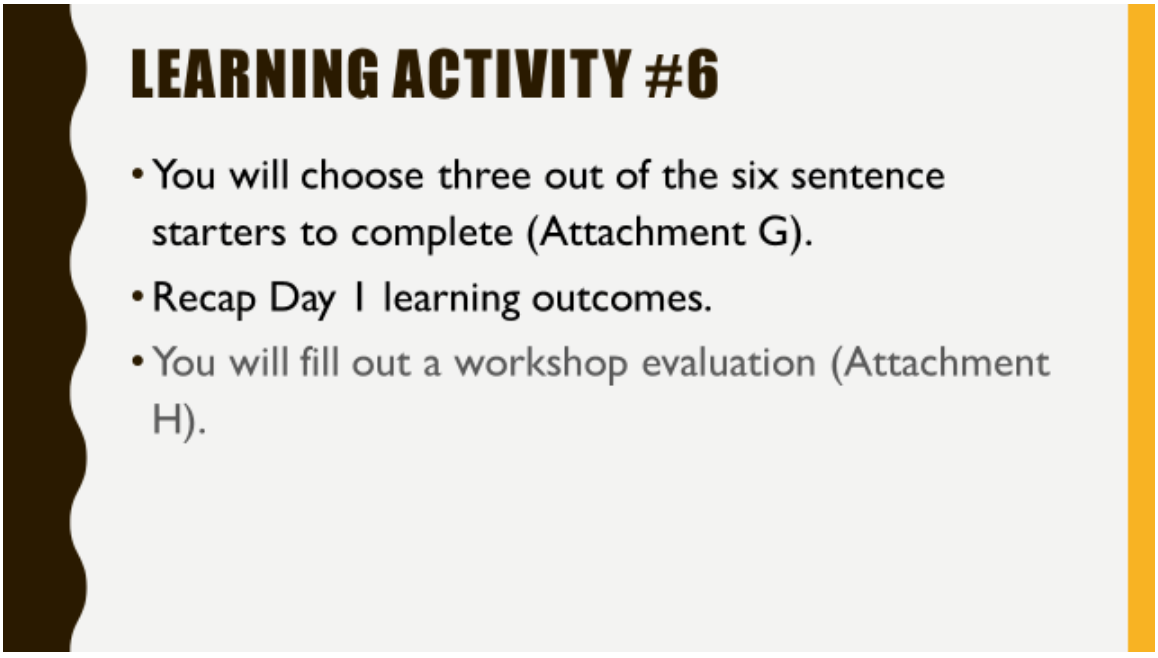
Foreign Language Teacher - prepare pictures of the vocabulary items or bring the actual food items for demonstration if possible.

Steps:

1. Preteach vocabulary words with real objects and gestures.
2. The foreign language teacher picks up an item and the participants label the item in the foreign language.
3. The foreign language teacher says a phrase (ex. Put peanut butter on the bread) and have 1-2 participants listen to the instructions and perform the actions. Do this 3-4 times and have different participants take turns performing the actions.
4. (Optional) Increase the complexity of the language demands by including multiple objects in one sentence (ex. Put one candy and one chocolate on a cracker.) Do this 3-4 times and have different participants take turns performing the actions.



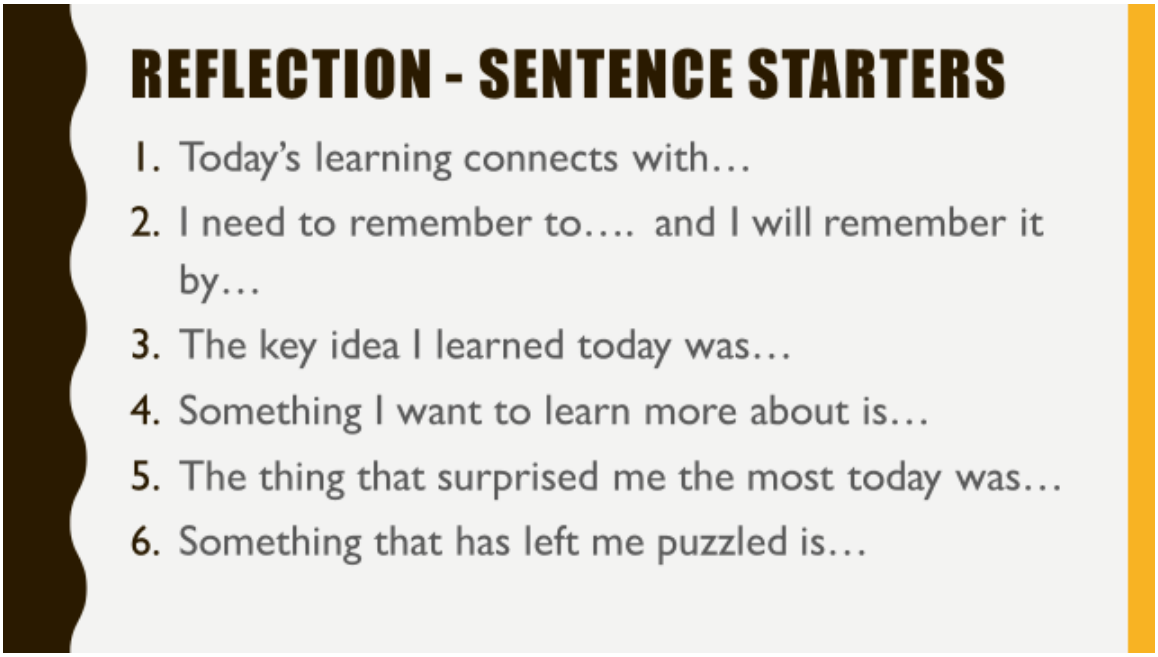
This is Attachment F (Criteria Used in Evaluating the Usefulness of Words). Please make copies of this to hand out.



These are Attachment G (Reflection Worksheet) and Attachment H (Workshop Evaluation). Please make copies of Attachments G and H to hand out.

Review Learning outcomes for Day 1:

1. Explain vocabulary development in native speakers and ELLs
2. Define effective vocabulary instruction
3. Develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the usefulness of the vocabulary words



This is Attachment G (Reflection Worksheet).

This is Attachment H (Workshop Evaluation).

Schedule Day 1

Day 1	**Events**	**Time**
8-8:15 AM	Check-In and Coffee	15 minutes
8:15-8:30 AM	**Introduction to the Professional Learning Workshop** Overview of the 3-day workshop, purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and schedule.	15 minutes
8:30-9:30 AM	**Learning Activity #1** Panel of 4-5 recent high school graduates sharing of what teachers have done in vocabulary instruction that was useful. Q&A period at the end.	1 hour
9:30-10 AM	**Learning Activity #2** Given 10 statements, participants will evaluate the myths of language learning as either true or false.	30 minutes
10-10:15 AM	**BREAK**	15 minutes

10:15-11:15 AM	**PowerPoint Presentation** Explain vocabulary development and vocabulary instruction.	1 hour
11:15-12 PM	**Learning Activity #3** Participants will bring a current textbook that they are using in their own classroom. Using the textbooks that they have, participants explain how they currently select words to study.	45 minutes
12-1 PM	**LUNCH**	1 hour
1-1:45 PM	**Learning Activity #4** Foreign language teacher will teach a simple 20-minute lesson on food vocabulary in a foreign language.	45 minutes
1:45-2 PM	**BREAK**	15 minutes
2-3 PM	**Learning Activity #5** Participants will develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the usefulness of the vocabulary words.	1 hour
3-3:30 PM	**Learning Activity #6** Participants will fill out a reflection worksheet by choosing three out of the six sentence starters to complete. Presenter will review Day 1 with all participants. Participants will fill out a workshop evaluation.	30 minutes

References Day 1

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Day 2

Material Day 2

Presenter will provide:

- Note pads, pens, and pencils for each participant
- Whiteboard and whiteboard markers
- Post-it notes
- Computer access in the library
- Handouts of PowerPoint Presentations, schedules, Attachment I (How to Teach Vocabulary Words), Attachment J (Identifying Tiers 1, 2, and 3 Words), Attachment K (Identifying Tiers 1, 2, and 3 Words of the NATURE Unit), Attachment L (Developing Learning Activities for the NATURE Unit), Attachment G (Reflection Worksheet), and attachment H (Workshop Evaluation)

Participants will bring:

- Laptop computer
- One textbook that they are currently using in their own classroom
- One sample vocabulary activity that they have developed

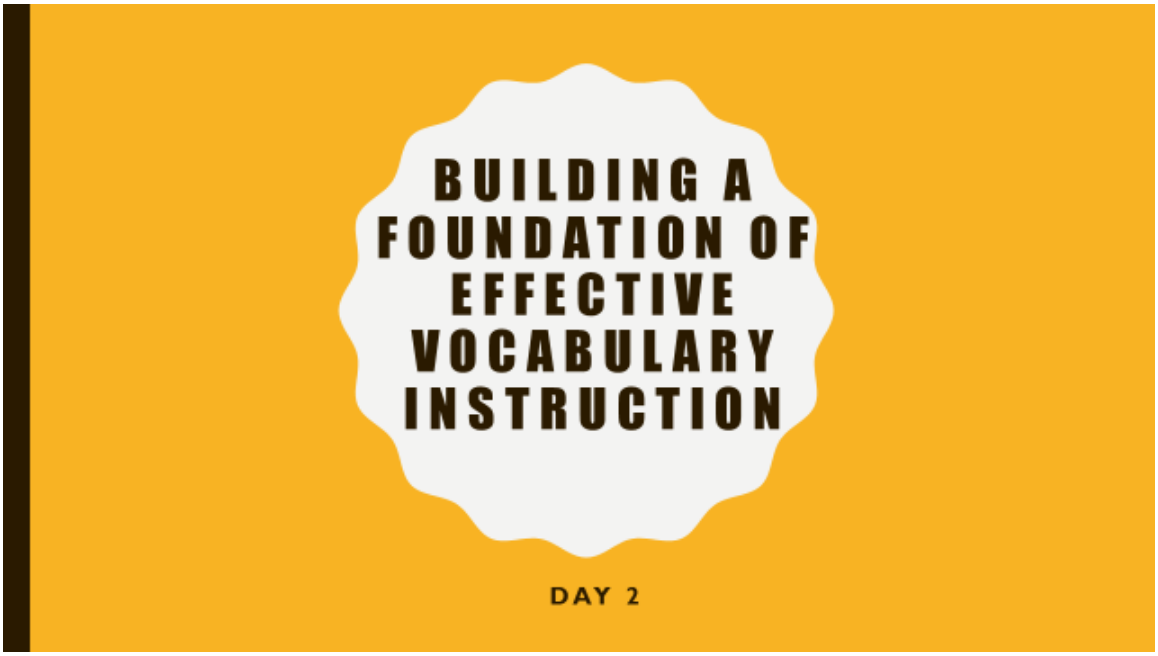
Instructor Guidelines Day 2

- Welcome back participants
- Review learning outcomes for Day 2:
    - Explain different approaches to teaching the list of words
    - Discuss different strategies available in vocabulary teaching

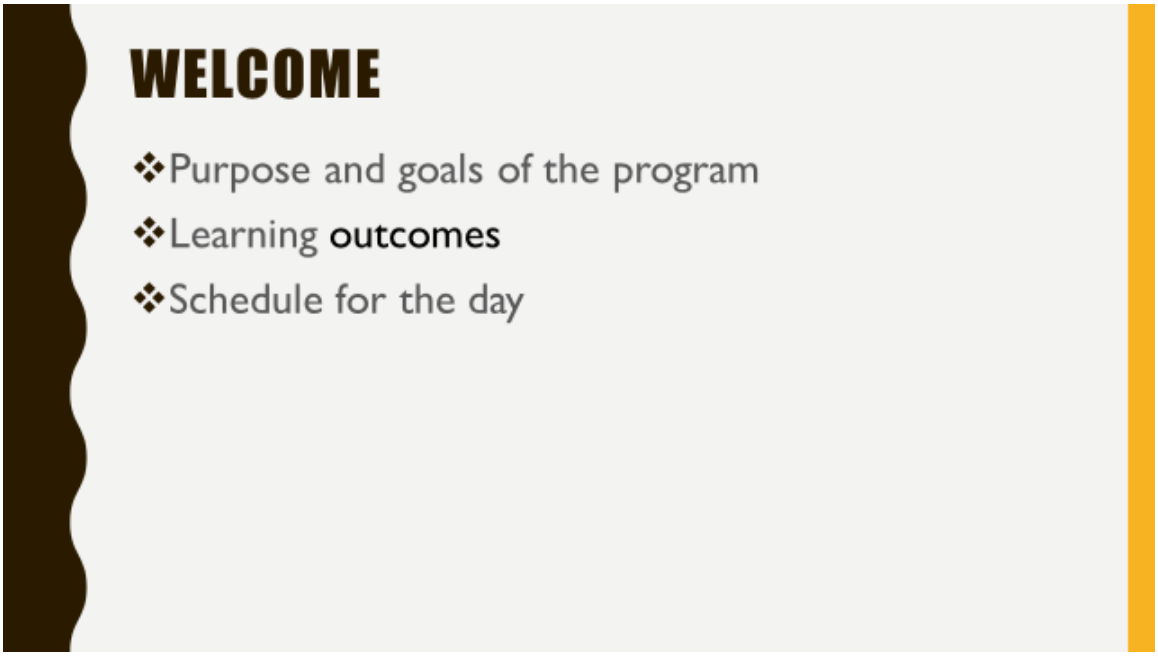
  - Develop a list of vocabulary words to study across multiple disciplines and grade levels based on a common topic
  - Complete reflection and evaluation
- Encourage participation, input, and engagement
- Review schedule for the day
- **Learning Activity #1**: Participants will bring one sample vocabulary activity that they have developed. Using the sample vocabulary activities that they bring with them, participants will explain how they teach vocabulary words in the classroom. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment I).
- **PowerPoint Presentation**: Explain different approaches and strategies in vocabulary instruction.
- **Learning Activity #2**: Participants will bring a current textbook that they are using**.** Using the textbooks that they have, participants will identify 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment J).
- **Learning Activity #3**: A common topic will be given to all the participants. The topic is: NATURE. Participants will identify 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment K).
- **Learning Activity #4:** Using the common topic of NATURE, participants will develop 2-3 concrete learning activities to demonstrate how they will teach the Tiers 1-3 words to their grade level/content area students. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment L).

- **Learning Activity #5:** Participants will present the 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3 (Attachment K). They will also explain the 2-3 concrete learning activities they have developed for teaching the Tiers 1-3 words (Attachment L).
- **Learning Activity #6:** Participants will fill out a reflection worksheet (Attachment G) by choosing three out of the six sentence starters to complete. Presenter will review Day 2 with all participants. Participants will fill out a workshop evaluation (Attachment H).

Event Descriptions Day 2



Be enthused and positive as we start the second day.



Purpose:

- To enhance the knowledge of all staff teachers at an international school regarding vocabulary instruction

Goals:

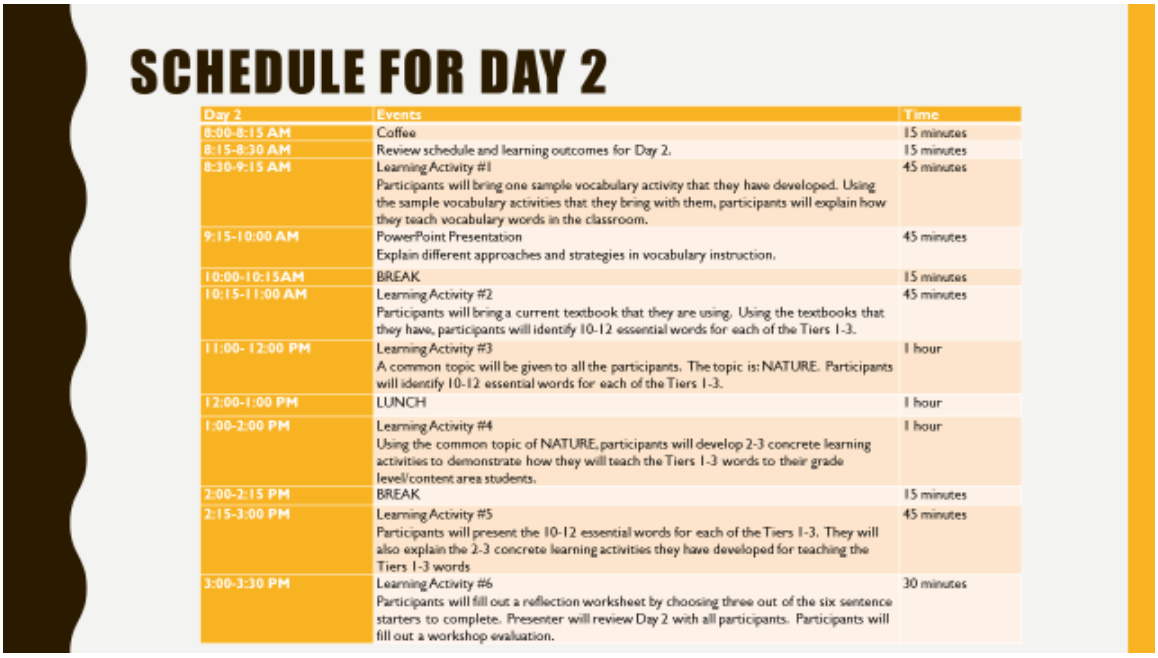
1. To inform the K-12 teachers of the current research on vocabulary development to increase the effectiveness of their vocabulary teaching.
2. To develop a network of collegial support and collaboration in order to combat the sense of isolation found commonly in the teaching profession.

Learning outcomes for Day 2:

1. Explain different approaches to teaching the list of words
2. Discuss different strategies available in vocabulary teaching
3. Develop a list of vocabulary words to study across multiple disciplines and grade levels based on a common topic
4. Complete reflection and evaluation

Schedule is on the next slide.

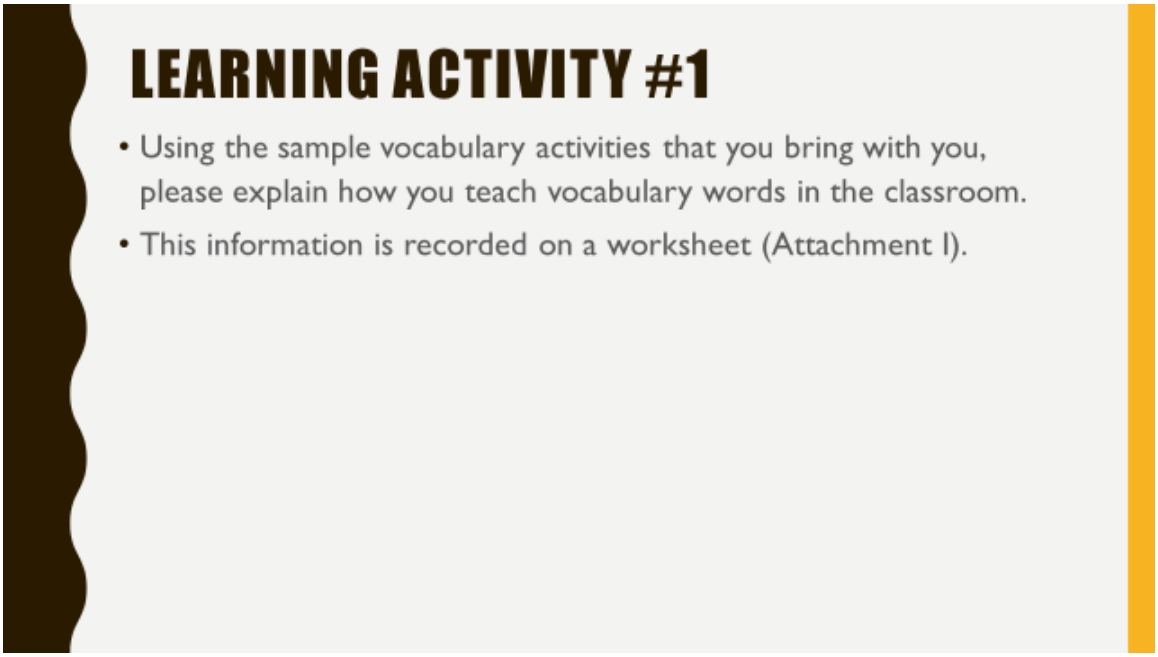
Remind participants to take ownership of their own learning. Encourage participants to ask questions and be engaged in the workshop!



SCHEDULE FOR DAY 2

Day 2	Events	Time
8:00-8:15 AM	Coffee	15 minutes
8:15-8:30 AM	Review schedule and learning outcomes for Day 2.	15 minutes
8:30-9:15 AM	Learning Activity #1 Participants will bring one sample vocabulary activity that they have developed. Using the sample vocabulary activities that they bring with them, participants will explain how they teach vocabulary words in the classroom.	45 minutes
9:15-10:00 AM	PowerPoint Presentation Explain different approaches and strategies in vocabulary instruction.	45 minutes
10:00-10:15AM	BREAK	15 minutes
10:15-11:00 AM	Learning Activity #2 Participants will bring a current textbook that they are using. Using the textbooks that they have, participants will identify 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3.	45 minutes
11:00- 12:00 PM	Learning Activity #3 A common topic will be given to all the participants. The topic is: NATURE. Participants will identify 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3.	1 hour
12:00-1:00 PM	LUNCH	1 hour
1:00-2:00 PM	Learning Activity #4 Using the common topic of NATURE, participants will develop 2-3 concrete learning activities to demonstrate how they will teach the Tiers 1-3 words to their grade level/content area students.	1 hour
2:00-2:15 PM	BREAK	15 minutes
2:15-3:00 PM	Learning Activity #5 Participants will present the 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3. They will also explain the 2-3 concrete learning activities they have developed for teaching the Tiers 1-3 words	45 minutes
3:00-3:30 PM	Learning Activity #6 Participants will fill out a reflection worksheet by choosing three out of the six sentence starters to complete. Presenter will review Day 2 with all participants. Participants will fill out a workshop evaluation.	30 minutes

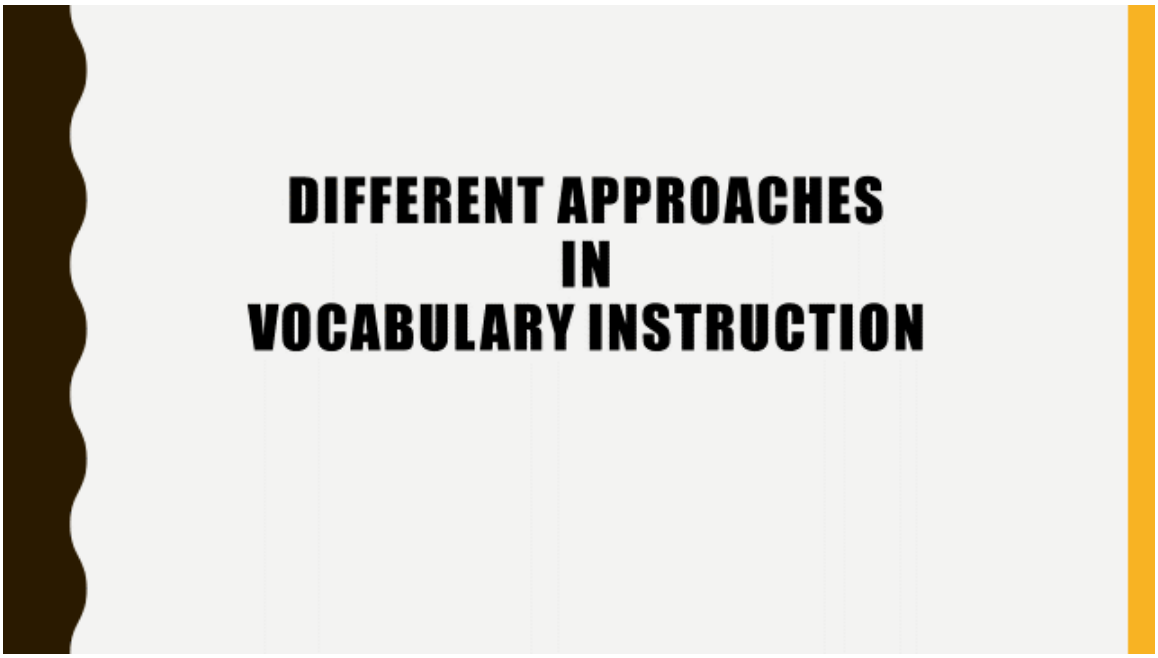
Also make copies of this schedule as handouts for the participants.



LEARNING ACTIVITY #1

- Using the sample vocabulary activities that you bring with you, please explain how you teach vocabulary words in the classroom.
- This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment I).

This goes with Attachment I (How to Teach Vocabulary Words). Please make copies of Attachment I to hand out.



PowerPoint Presentation

Here is some background information on the different approaches in vocabulary instruction. You might already be familiar with the different approaches. Think about what you are currently doing and the approaches you have tried. (Encourage participants to be actively engaged by asking questions.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

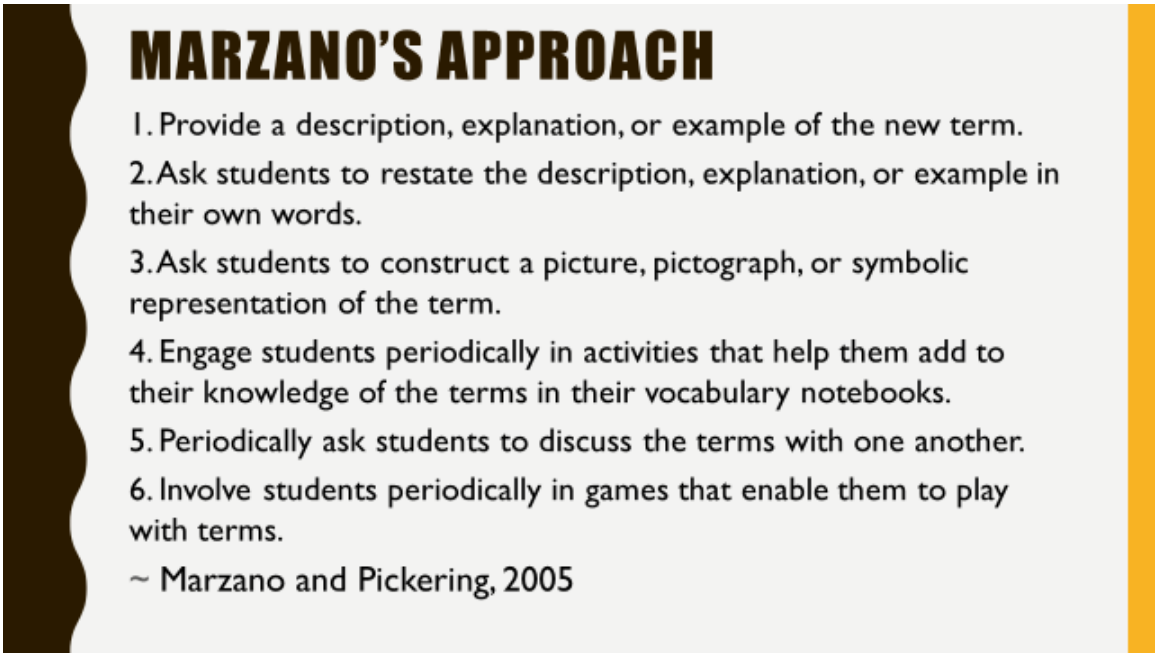
- Vocabulary words need to be contextually presented and practiced; allow gradual shaping of meanings
- Process of vocabulary instruction: exposure to, practice with, and mastery of
- Ultimate goal of vocabulary instruction is transfer

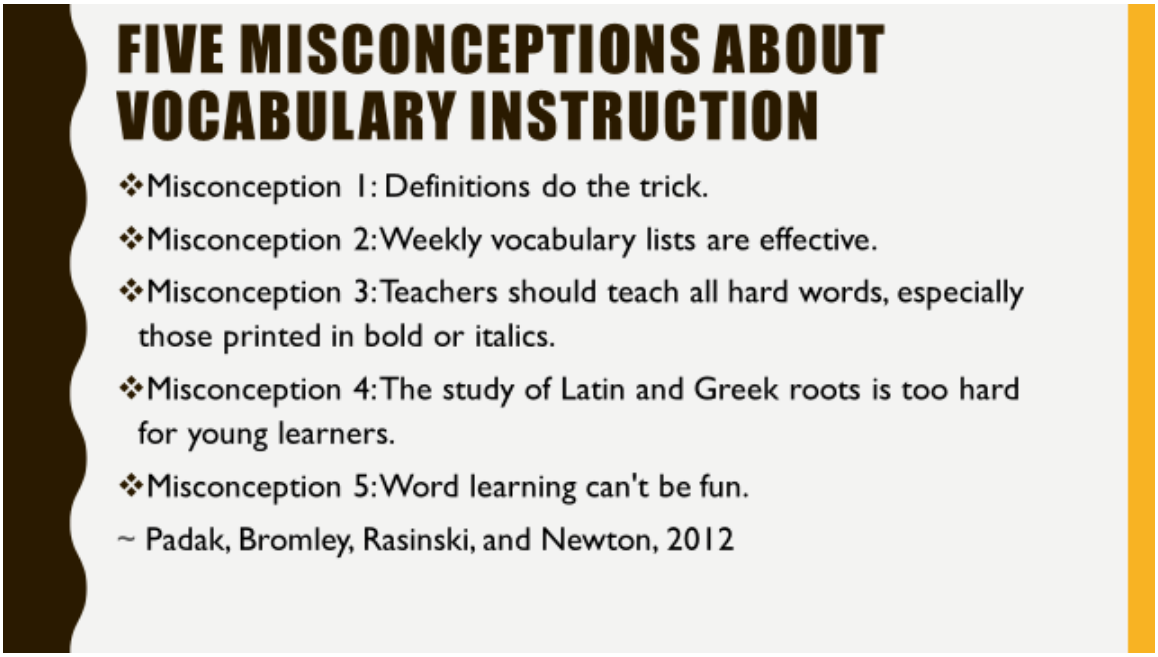
~ David, 2010

GRAVES' APPROACH

1. Providing deep and extended language experiences
2. Teaching specific words
3. Teaching vocabulary-learning strategies
4. Promoting word consciousness

~ Graves, August, and Mancilla-Martinez, 2013





Misconception 1

How is the definition explained? How are the students practicing, learning, and applying the definitions? Define *trick*.

Misconception 2

Where do the lists come from? How are they generated? Are the words pulled from the texts that the students are reading? How many words are included on the lists? How many lists do the students get each week from the core classes (language arts, science, math, Social Studies)? How are the lists being explained, taught, and/or learned?

Misconception 3

Do students know the word already?

Is the word essential to understanding the selection at hand?

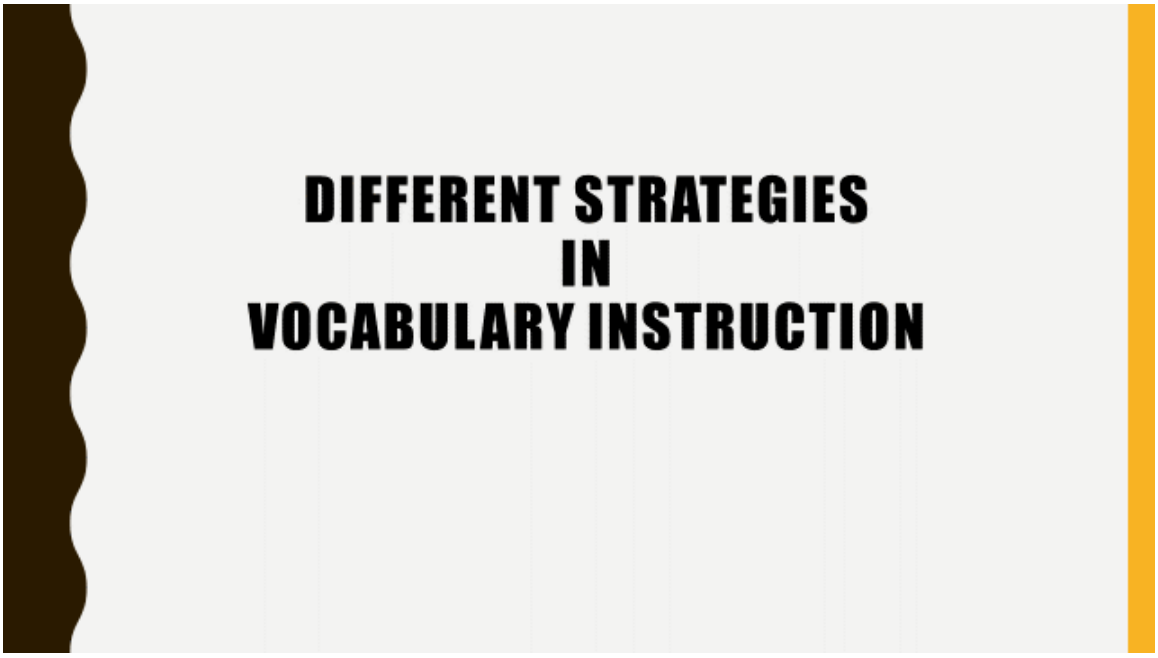
Will the word appear in future readings?

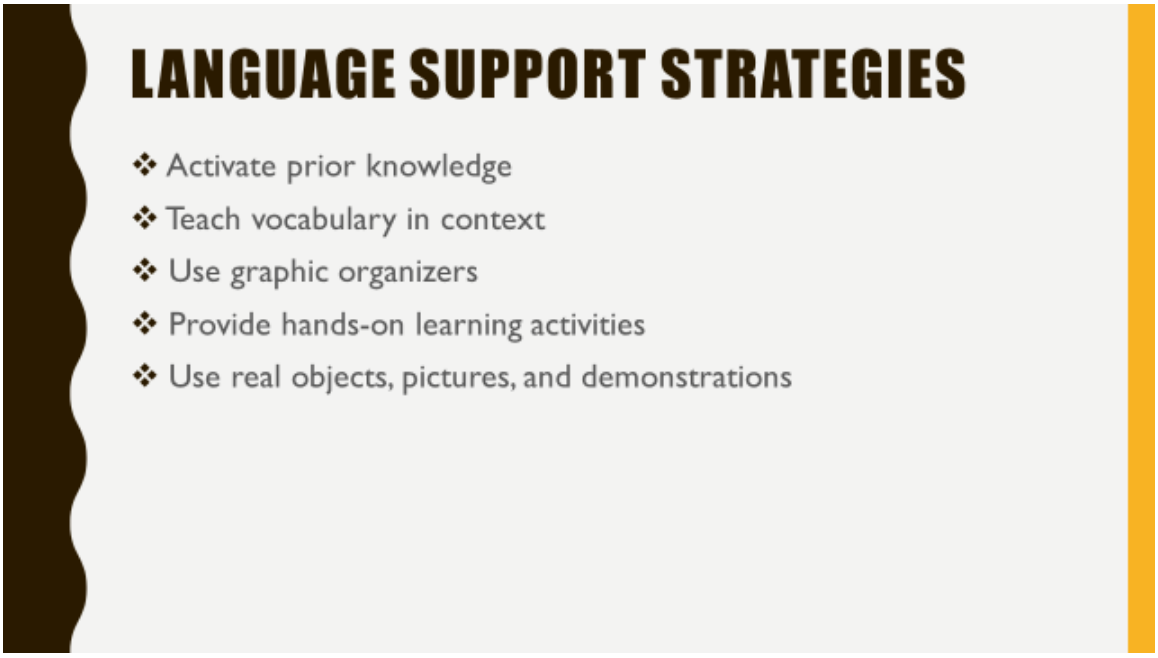
Misconception 4

Roots and affixes should be taught because they represent simple, familiar concepts and their meaning is stable.

Misconception 5

Word games are a wonderful way to expand the breadth and depth vocabulary knowledge of students. Ex: Scrabble, Boggle, and Pictionary.



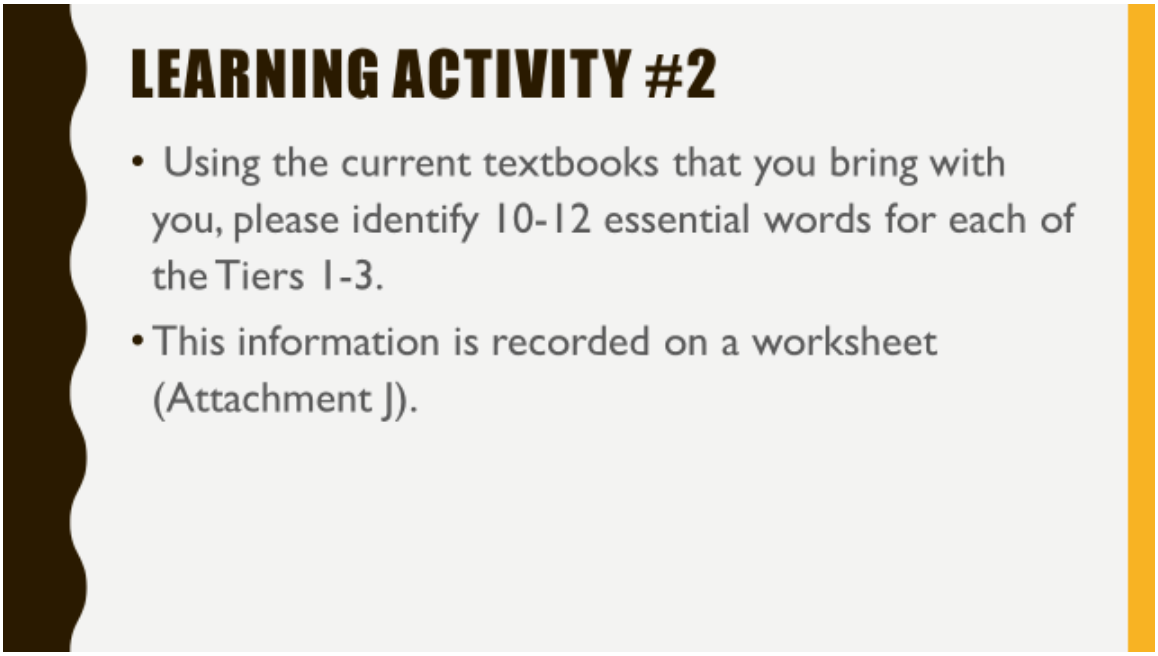


Ask the participants, “Are there any other examples you can think of?”

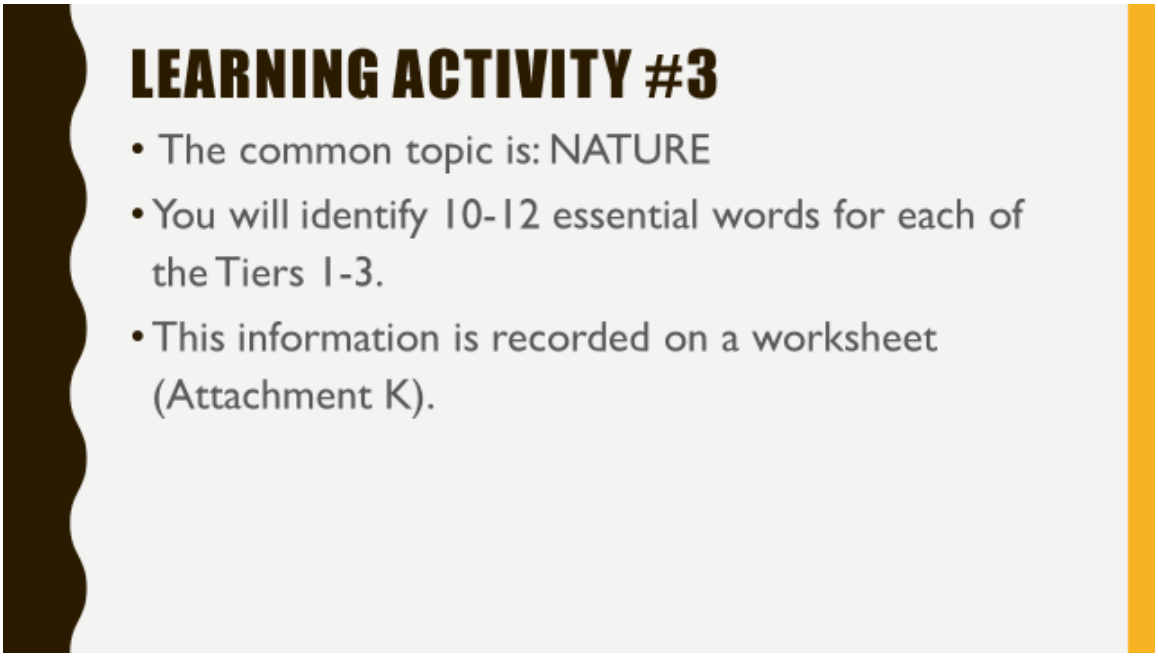
Discourse refers to written or spoken communication.

Ask the participants, "Are there any other examples you can think of?"

Ask the participants, "Are there any other examples you can think of?"



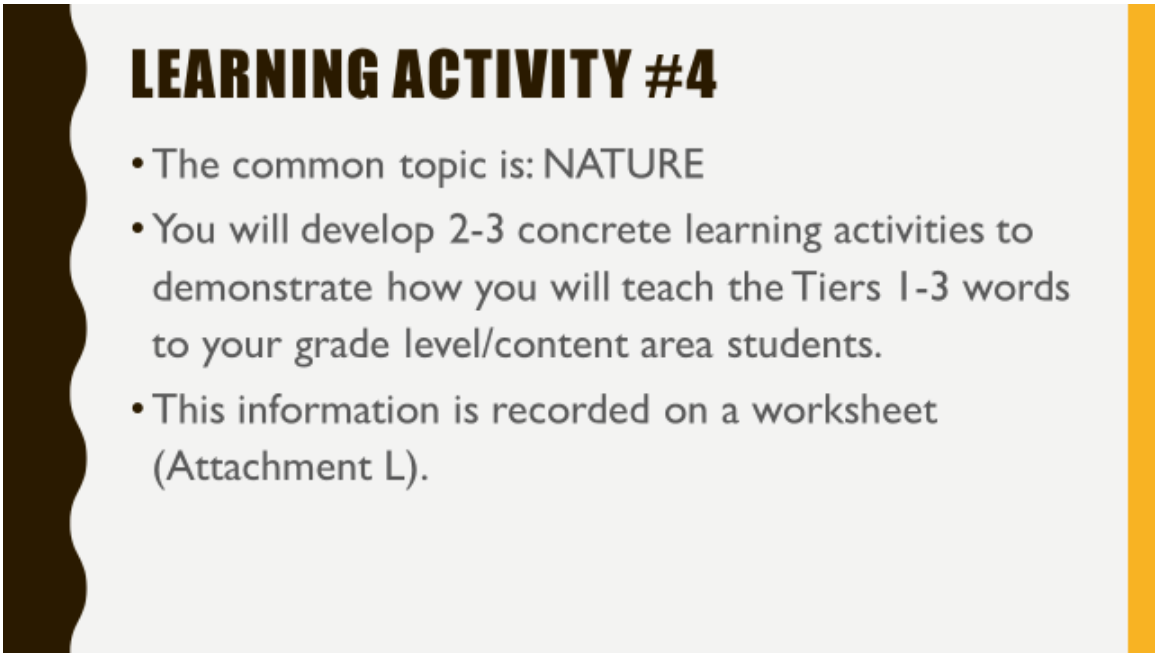
This goes with Attachment J (Identifying Tiers 1, 2, and 3 Words). Please make copies of Attachment J to hand out.



This goes with Attachment K (Identifying Tiers 1, 2, and 3 Words of the NATURE Unit).

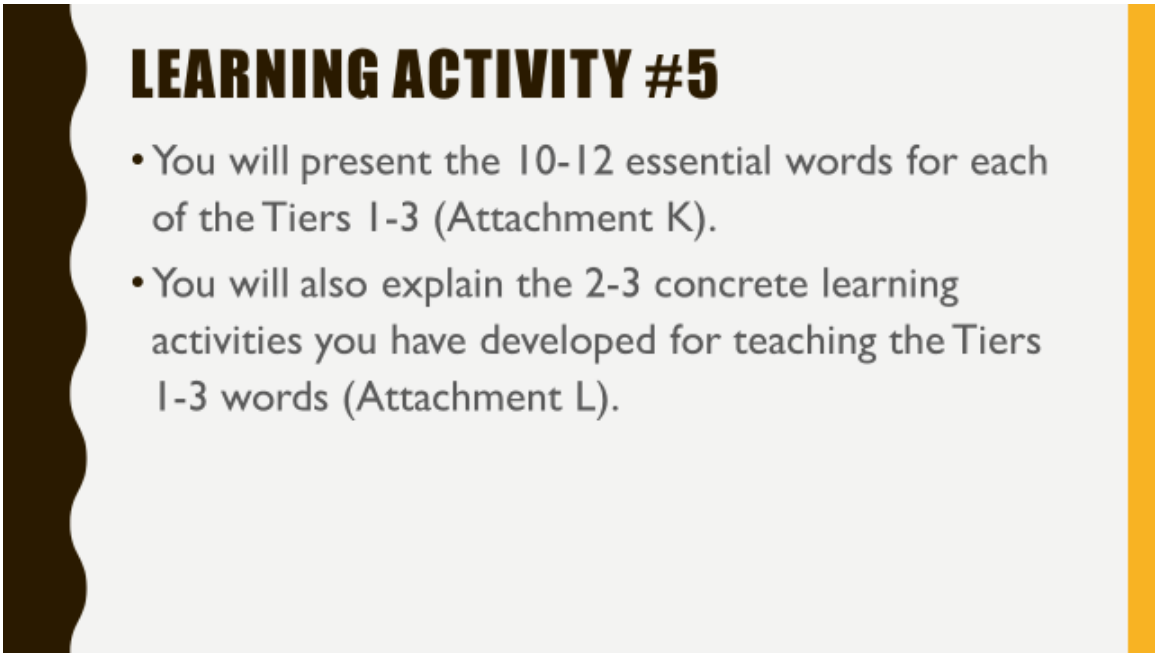
Please make copies of Attachment K to hand out.

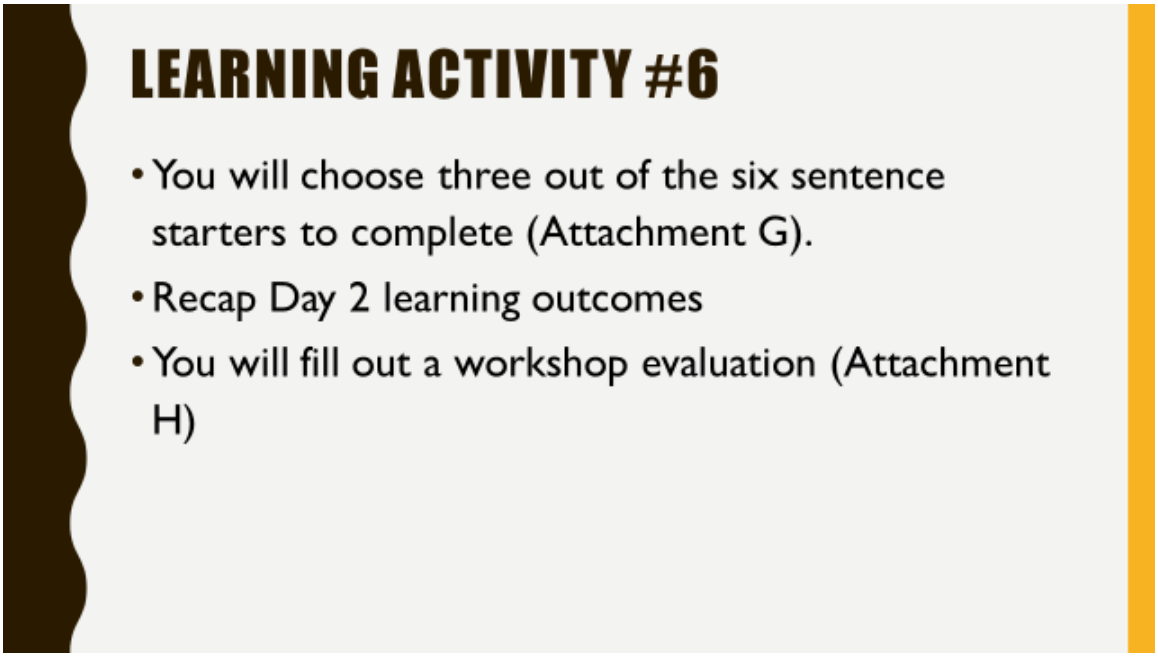
Please keep this worksheet for Day 3 (Learning Activity #3).



Feel free to use your devices to take pictures and create learning activities. Some possible apps are: Aurasma, Shadow Puppet, and Jeopardy. ThingLink and Padlet are wonderful platforms for brainstorming and consolidating your ideas! You are welcome to use the basic art supplies in the art room. Skits, songs, and dances are creative means to teaching and learning and can be included!

This goes with Attachment L (Developing Learning Activities for the NATURE Unit). Please make copies of Attachment L to hand out.

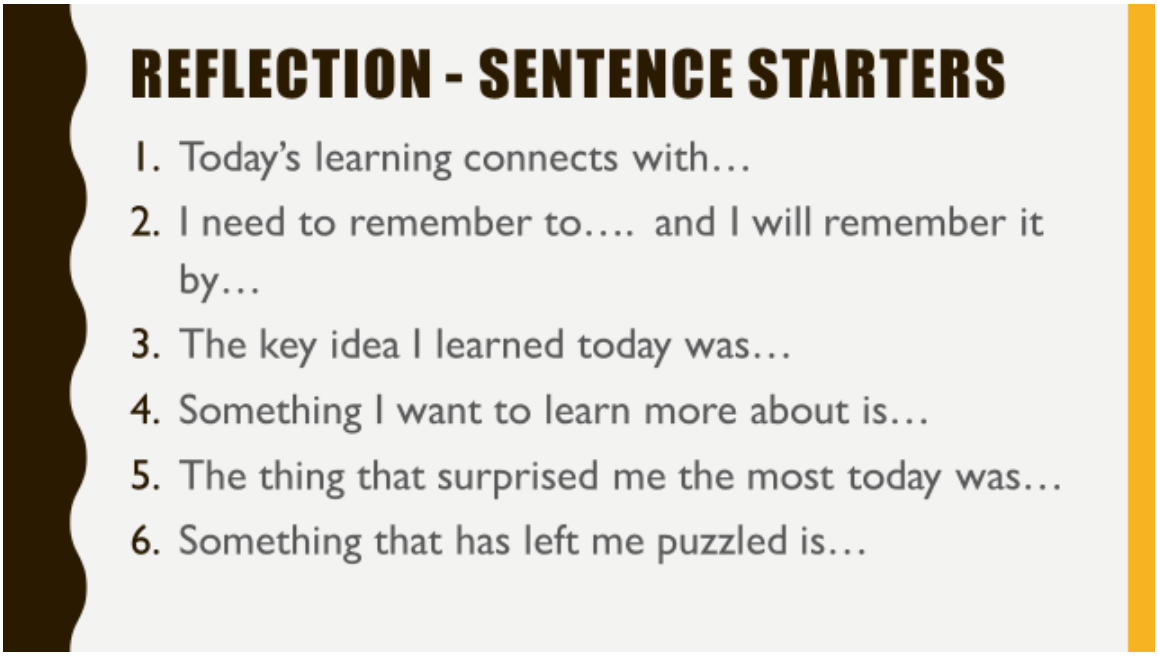




These are Attachment G (Reflection Worksheet) and Attachment H (Workshop Evaluation). Please make copies of Attachments G and H to hand out.

Review Learning outcomes for Day 2:

1. Explain different approaches to teaching the list of words
2. Discuss different strategies available in vocabulary teaching
3. Develop a list of vocabulary words to study across multiple disciplines and grade levels based on a common topic



This is Attachment G (Reflection Worksheet).

This is Attachment H (Workshop Evaluation).

Schedule Day 2

Day 2	**Events**	**Time**
8:00-8:15 AM	Coffee	15 minutes
8:15-8:30 AM	Review schedule and learning outcomes for Day 2.	15 minutes
8:30-9:15 AM	**Learning Activity #1** Participants will bring one sample vocabulary activity that they have developed. Using the sample vocabulary activities that they bring with them, participants will explain how they teach vocabulary words in the classroom.	45 minutes
9:15-10:00 AM	**PowerPoint Presentation** Explain different approaches and strategies in vocabulary instruction.	45 minutes
10:00-10:15AM	BREAK	15 minutes
10:15-11:00 AM	**Learning Activity #2** Participants will bring a current textbook that they are using**.** Using the textbooks that they have, participants	45 minutes

	will identify 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3.	
11:00- 12:00 PM	**Learning Activity #3** A common topic will be given to all the participants. The topic is: NATURE. Participants will identify 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3.	1 hour
12:00-1:00 PM	LUNCH	1 hour
1:00-2:00 PM	**Learning Activity #4** Using the common topic of NATURE, participants will develop 2-3 concrete learning activities to demonstrate how they will teach the Tiers 1-3 words to their grade level/content area students.	1 hour
2:00-2:15 PM	BREAK	15 minutes
2:15-3:00 PM	**Learning Activity #5** Participants will present the 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3. They will also explain the 2-3 concrete learning activities they have developed for teaching the Tiers 1-3 words	45 minutes
3:00-3:30 PM	**Learning Activity #6** Participants will fill out a reflection worksheet by choosing three out of the six sentence starters to complete. Presenter will review Day 2 with all participants. Participants will fill out a workshop evaluation.	30 minutes

References Day 2

David, J. (2010). What research says about closing the vocabulary gap. *Educational Leadership, 67*(6), 85-86. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership

Graves, M. F., August, D., & Mancilla-Martinez, J. (2013). *Teaching vocabulary to English language learners*. New York: Teachers College Press, in conjunction with the Center for Applied Linguistics, the International Reading Association, and the TESOL International Association.

Marzano, R. J., & Pickering, D. J. (2005). *Building academic vocabulary: Teacher's manual*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Padak, N., Bromley, K., Rasinski, T., & Newton, E. (2012, June). Vocabulary: Five common misconceptions. *Educational Leadership Online, 69*. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership

Day 3

Material Day 3

Presenter will provide:

- Note pads, pens, and pencils for each participant
- Whiteboard and whiteboard markers
- Post-it notes
- Computer access in the library
- Handouts of PowerPoint Presentations, schedules, Attachment M (How to Assess Vocabulary Words), Attachment N (Criteria Used in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Vocabulary Assessments), Attachment O (Identifying Types of Assessments for the NATURE Unit), Attachment P (Developing Assessment Tasks for the NATURE Unit), Attachment Q (Final Reflection Worksheet), and Attachment R (Workshop Evaluation)

Participants will bring:

- Laptop computer
- One sample vocabulary assessment task that they have developed

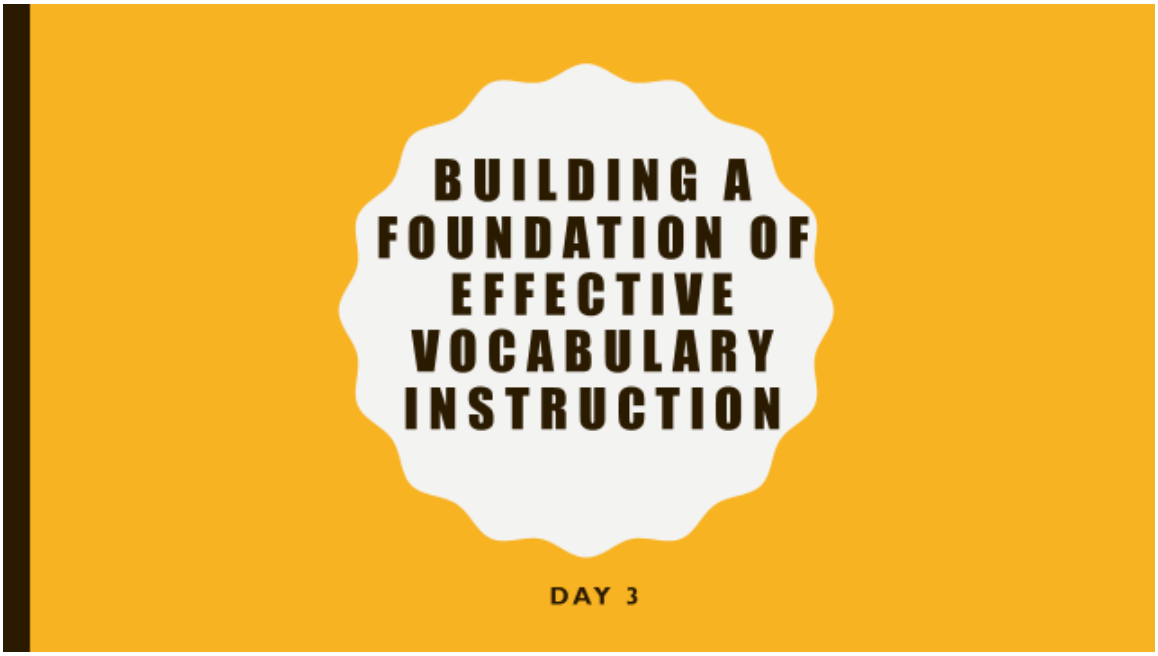
Instructor Guidelines Day 3

- Welcome participants to the final day of the program
- Review the learning outcomes for Day 3:
  - Explain assessment
  - Discuss assessment of vocabulary learning
  - Develop vocabulary assessments across multiple disciplines and grade levels based on a common topic
  - Complete reflection and evaluation
- Encourage participation, input, and engagement
- Review the schedule for the day
- **Learning Activity #1**: Participants will bring one sample vocabulary assessment task that they have developed. Using the sample vocabulary assessment task that they bring with them, participants will explain how they assess vocabulary in the classroom. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment M).
- **PowerPoint Presentation**: Explain different approaches in assessing vocabulary learning.
- **Learning Activity #2:** Participants will develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the effectiveness of the vocabulary assessments. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment N).
- **Learning Activity #3**: Using the common topic of NATURE, participants will identify the types of assessments needed to assess student learning of the

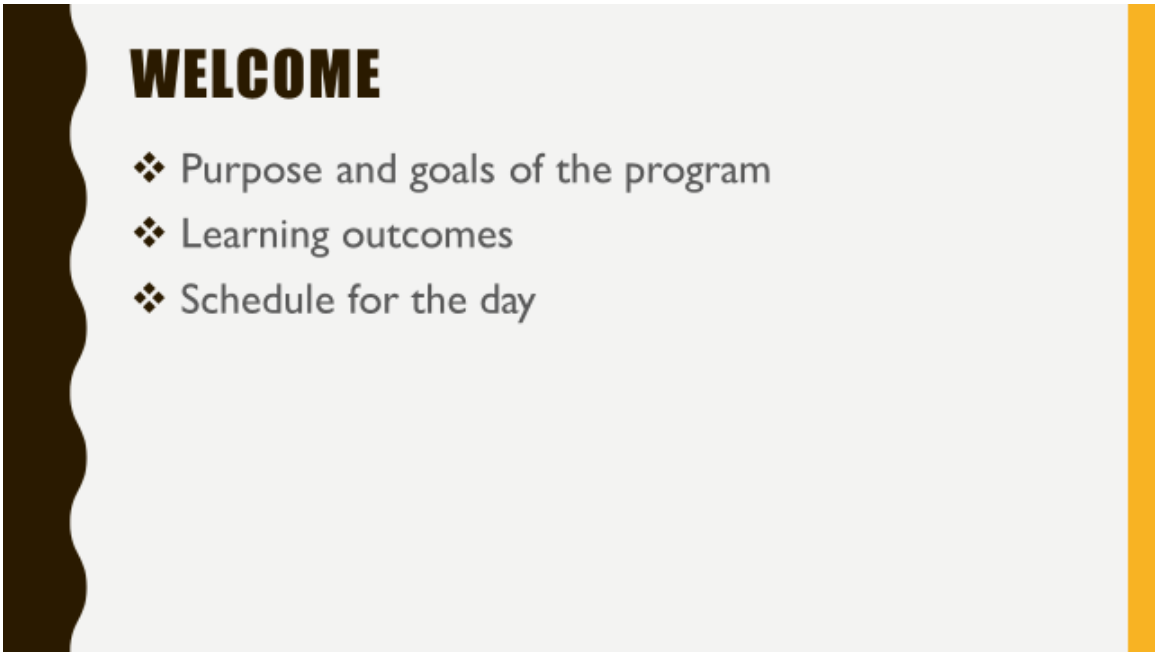
vocabulary words introduced on Day 2. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment O).

- **Learning Activity #4:** Using the common topic of NATURE, participants will develop 2-3 assessment tasks to assess student learning of the vocabulary words introduced on Day 2. This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment P).
- **Learning Activity #5:** Participants will explain which types of assessments they use and why (Attachment O). They will also explain and demonstrate how the 2-3 assessment tasks that they have created assess the vocabulary words (Attachment P).
- **Learning Activity #6:** Participants will fill out a final reflection worksheet (Attachment Q) by completing three sentence starters. Presenter will review Days 1-3 with all the participants. Participants will fill out a workshop evaluation (Attachment R).

Event Descriptions Day 3



Be enthused and positive as we start the third day.



Purpose:

- To enhance the knowledge of all staff teachers at an international school regarding vocabulary instruction

Goals:

1. To inform the K-12 teachers of the current research on vocabulary development to increase the effectiveness of their vocabulary teaching.
2. To develop a network of collegial support and collaboration in order to combat the sense of isolation found commonly in the teaching profession.

Learning outcomes for Day 3:

1. Explain assessment
2. Discuss assessment of vocabulary learning
3. Develop vocabulary assessments across multiple disciplines and grade levels based on a common topic
4. Complete reflection and evaluation

Schedule is on the next slide.

Remind participants to take ownership of their own learning. Encourage participants to ask questions and be engaged in the workshop!

SCHEDULE FOR DAY 3

Day 3	Events	Time
8:00-8:15 AM	Coffee	15 minutes
8:15-8:30 AM	Review schedule and learning outcomes for Day 3.	15 minutes
8:30-9:15 AM	Learning Activity #1 Participants will bring one sample vocabulary assessment task that they have developed. Using the sample vocabulary assessment task that they bring with them, participants will explain how they assess vocabulary in the classroom.	45 minutes
9:15-10:00 AM	PowerPoint Presentation Explain different approaches in assessing vocabulary learning.	45 minutes
10:0-10:15 AM	BREAK	15 minutes
10:15-11:00 AM	Learning Activity #2 Participants will develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the effectiveness of the vocabulary assessments.	45 minutes
11:00- 12:00 PM	Learning Activity #3 Using the common topic of NATURE, participants will identify the types of assessments needed to assess student learning of the vocabulary words introduced on Day 2.	1 hour
12:00-1:00 PM	LUNCH	1 hour
1:00-2:00 PM	Learning Activity #4 Using the common topic of NATURE, participants will develop 2-3 assessment tasks to assess student learning of the vocabulary words introduced on Day 2.	1 hour
2:00-2:15 PM	BREAK	15 minutes
2:15-3:00 PM	Learning Activity #5 Participants will explain which types of assessments used and why. They will also explain and demonstrate how the 2-3 assessment tasks that they have created assess the vocabulary words.	45 minutes
3:00-3:30 PM	Learning Activity #6 Participants will fill out a final reflection worksheet by completing the three sentence starters. Presenter will review Days 1-3 with all the participants. Participants will fill out a workshop evaluation.	30 minutes

Also make copies of this schedule as handouts for the participants.

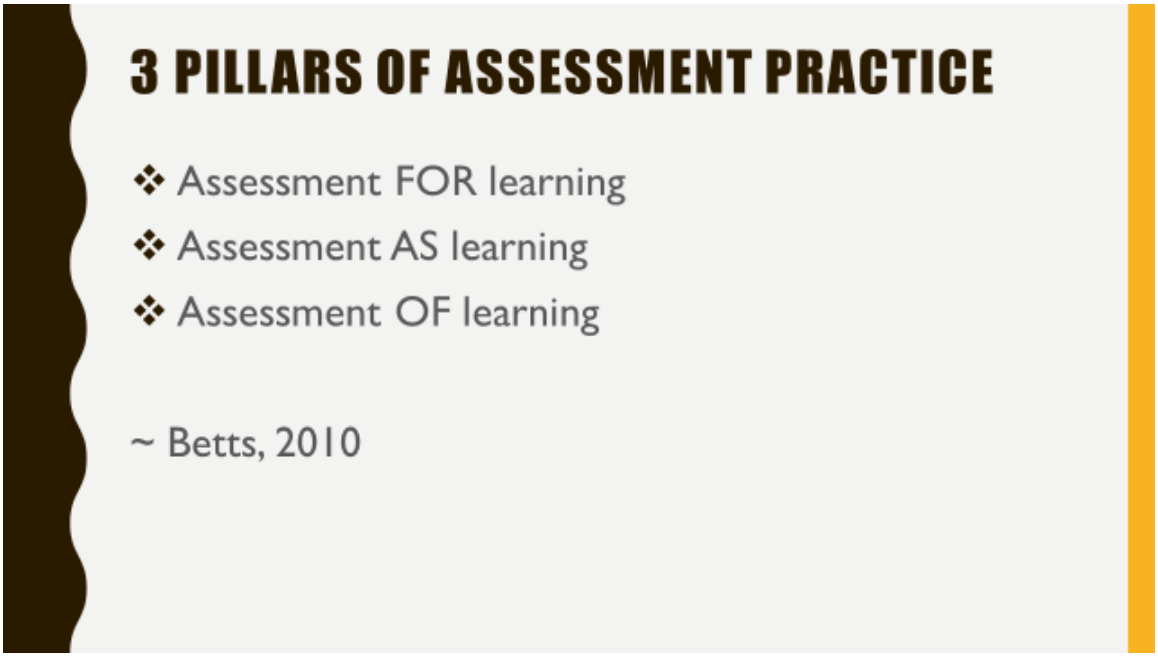
LEARNING ACTIVITY #1

- Using the sample vocabulary assessment task that you bring with you, please explain how you assess vocabulary in the classroom.
- This information is recorded on a worksheet (Attachment M).

This goes with Attachment M (How to Assess Vocabulary Words). Please make copies of Attachment M to hand out.

PowerPoint Presentation

Here is some background information on assessment. You might already be familiar with it. Think about what you are currently doing. (Encourage participants to be actively engaged by asking questions.)



Embed these practices in **planning** to support the intended learning!

Assessment FOR learning = formative assessment

Purpose: For **teachers** to gather data on student learning in order to *adapt instruction* to meet student needs. Teachers also provide *feedback* to students about their learning and how to improve.

Assessment AS learning

Purpose: For **students** to learn about the *content* and their own *learning process*

Students use *self and peer assessment* and *teacher feedback* to further their own learning by:

- reflecting on their own learning
- identifying areas of strength and improvement
- setting their own goals

Assessment OF learning = summative assessment

Purpose: For **official reasons,** to report on a student's level of achievement against specific learning goals and standards - ex. report cards.

Ongoing ~ formative assessment, formal or informal, checking for understanding

- Assessments that are given during the learning process; show how students are progressing; provide immediate feedback to students and teachers

Chunks ~ unit tests, culminating projects or performances

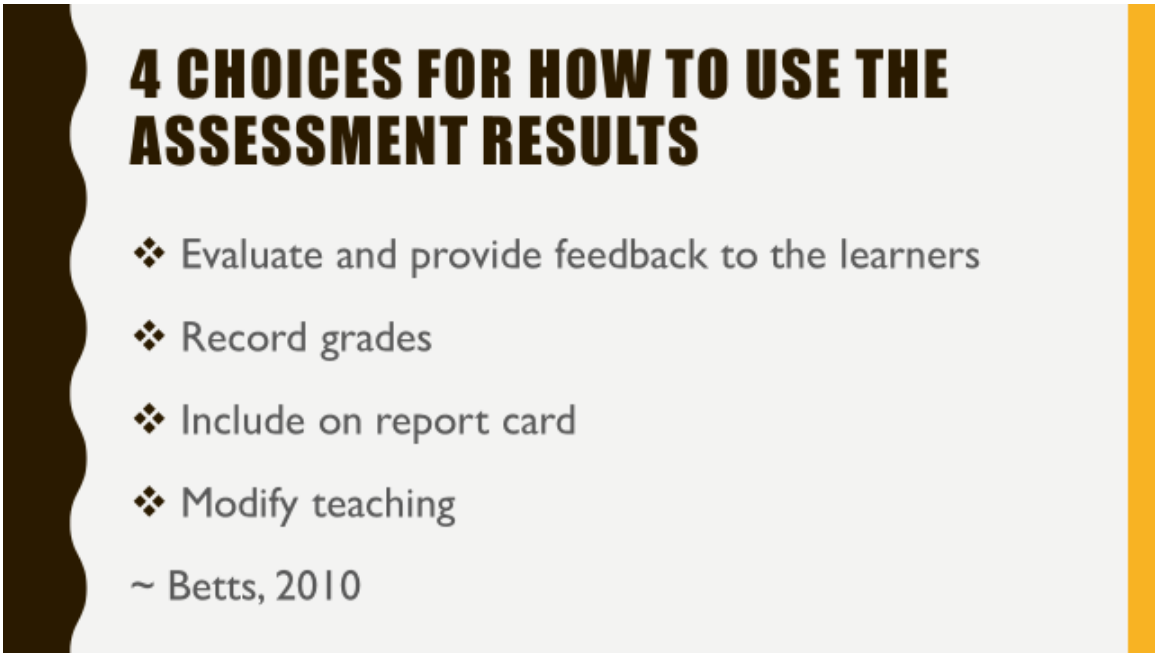
- Assessments that are given at the end of a unit or 'chunk' of learning

Common

- Assessments that are created, evaluated, and revised collaboratively by teachers of the same course or grade level.

External

- Assessments that are developed by external educational sources. Ex. SAT, PSAT, PISA, ITBS, MAP



Assessment cannot be thought of as a last, separate component in the learning process. Rather, assessment should be included in the early stages of planning a lesson (or a unit). Backwards design poses five questions that lead us through a holistic way of planning for, teaching, and assessing student learning.

Responses to the five questions above:

1. Select intended learning standards and benchmarks
2. Design assessment tasks
3. Develop criteria
4. Develop a rubric
5. Create a teaching plan

In Backwards Design, Question 1 asks, “What do we want learners to achieve?”

In order to answer Question 1, we need to differentiate the four types of learning. What is our clear intended learning?

Declarative

- Facts, concepts

Procedural

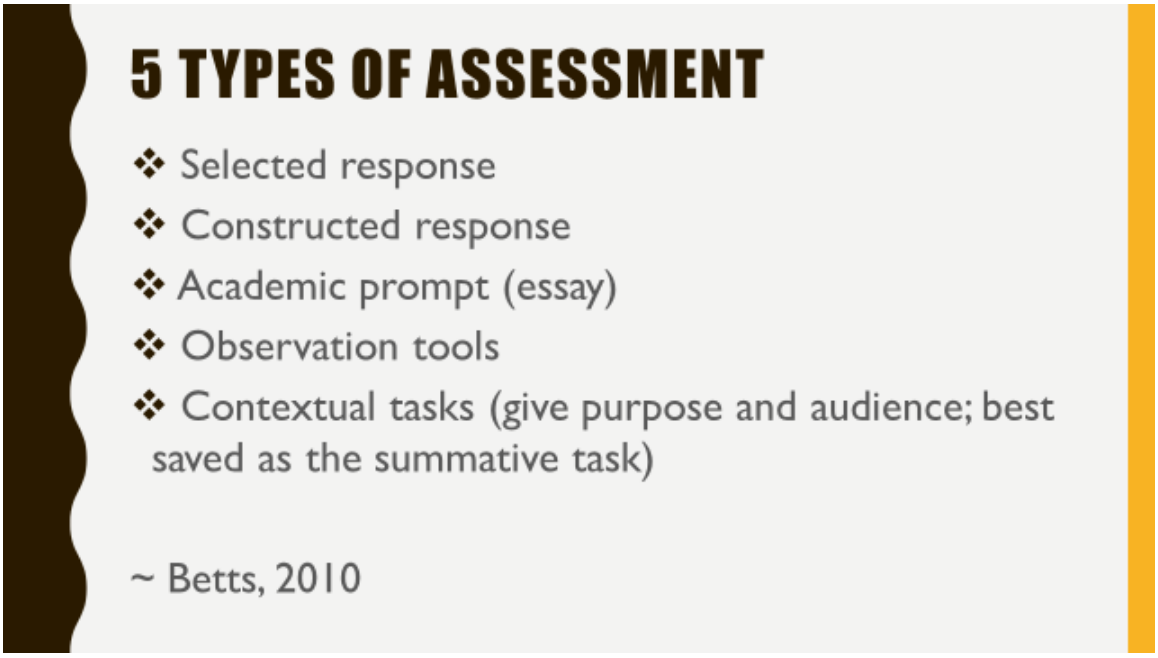
- Skills, processes

Thinking

- A big idea that has lasting value

Attitude

- A disposition



In *Backwards Design*, Question 2 asks, "What assessment tasks will provide BEST evidence of our intended learning?"

In order to answer Question 2, we need to differentiate the five types of assessment.

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT MATRIX

What type of assessment will provide the most valid evidence of learning?

	Selected response	Constructed response	Academic prompt	Contextual tasks	Observation
Declarative (facts, concepts)					
Procedural (skills, processes)					
Thinking					
Attitude					

~ Betts, 2010

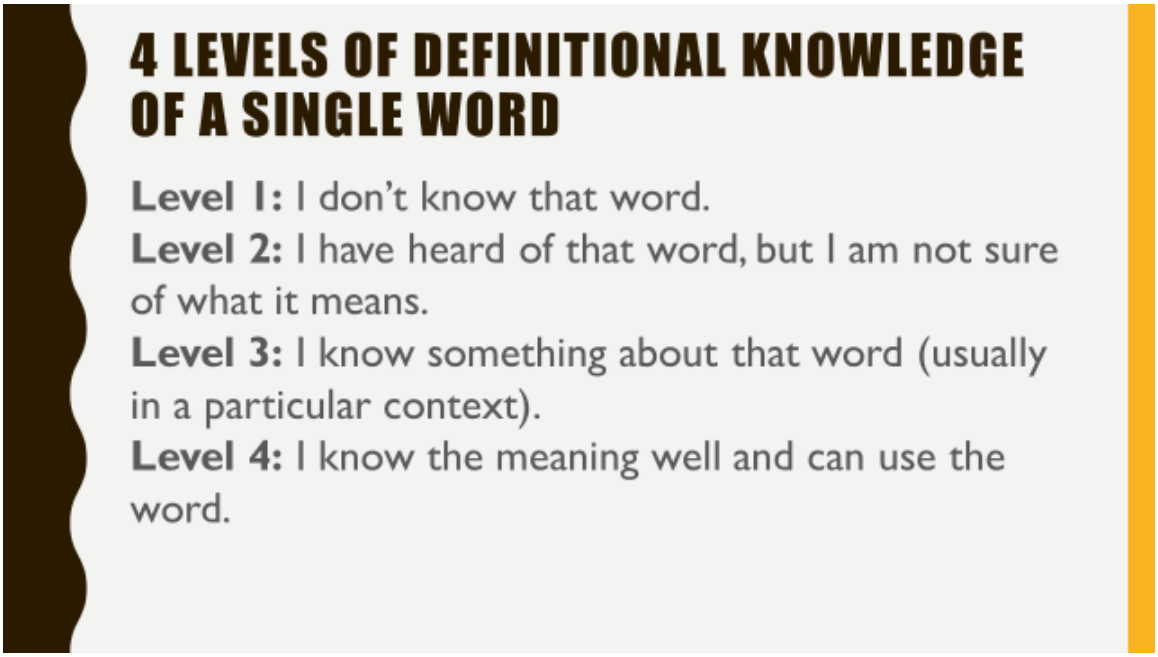
How can we *align* assessment tools with intended learning?

The key is ALIGNMENT, not variety.

ASSESSMENT OF VOCABULARY LEARNING

PowerPoint Presentation

Here is some background information on assessment of vocabulary learning. You might already be familiar with it. Think about what you are currently doing. (Encourage participants to be actively engaged by asking questions.)



In *Backwards Design*, Question 4 asks "How will we distinguish degrees of achievement?"

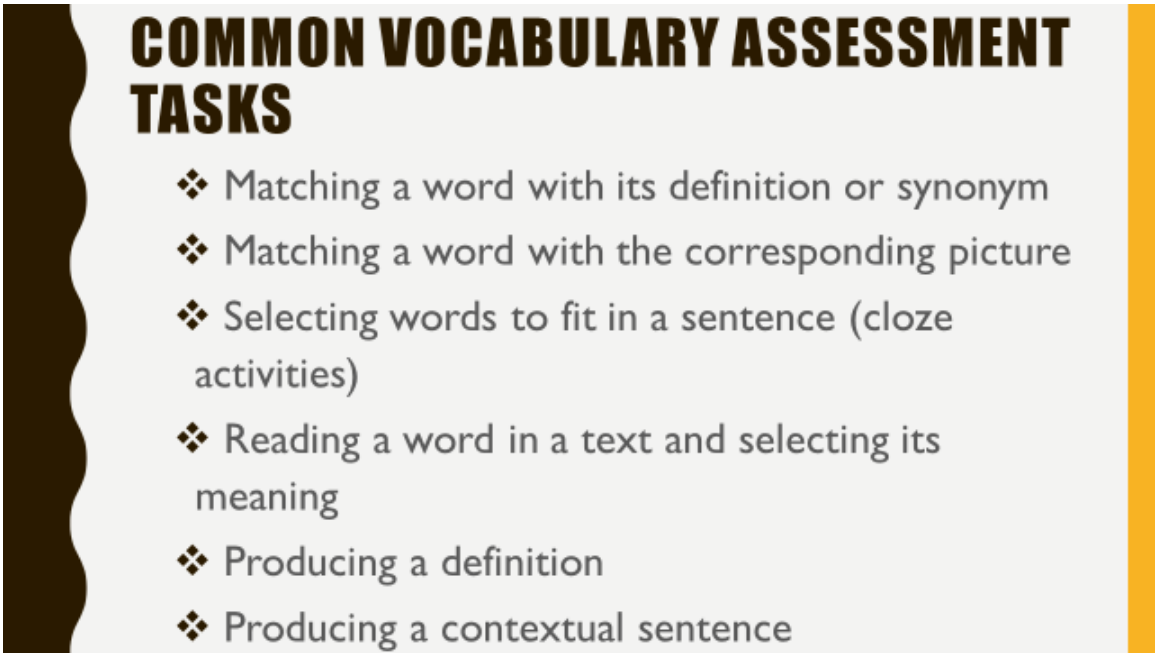
Here is a sample of four levels of definitional knowledge of a single word.

Level 1 - Students are unable to pick out the real word.

Level 2 - Students can identify the real words but can't give a meaning.

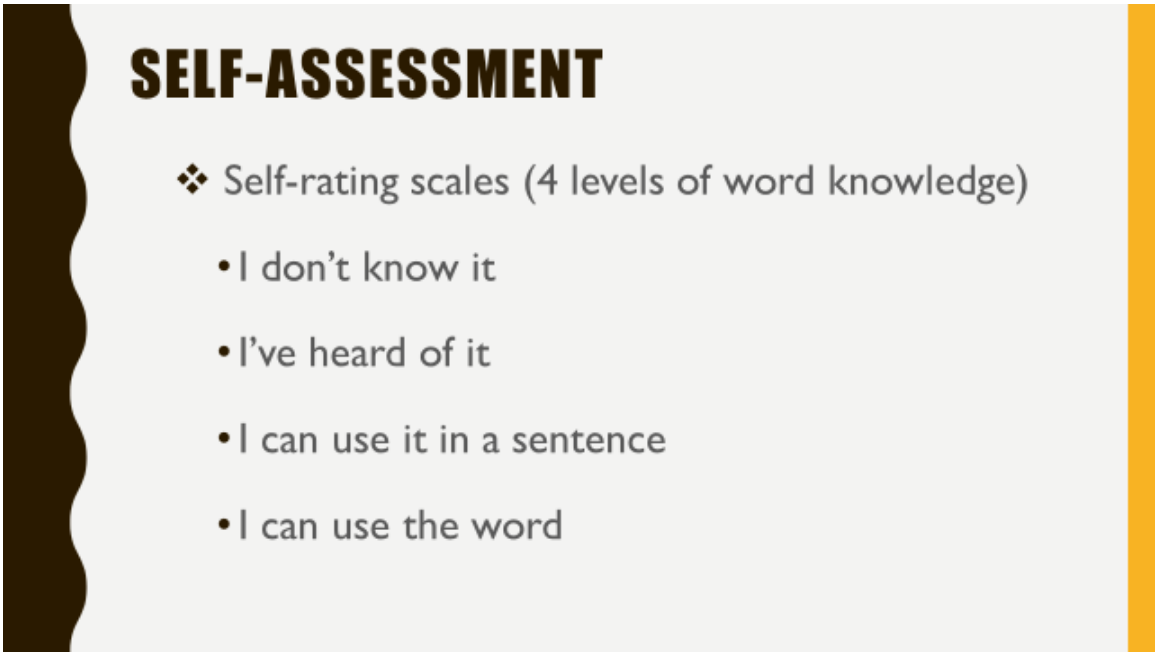
Level 3 - Students can state a particular meaning of the word.

Level 4 - Students can give a synonym or define a word.

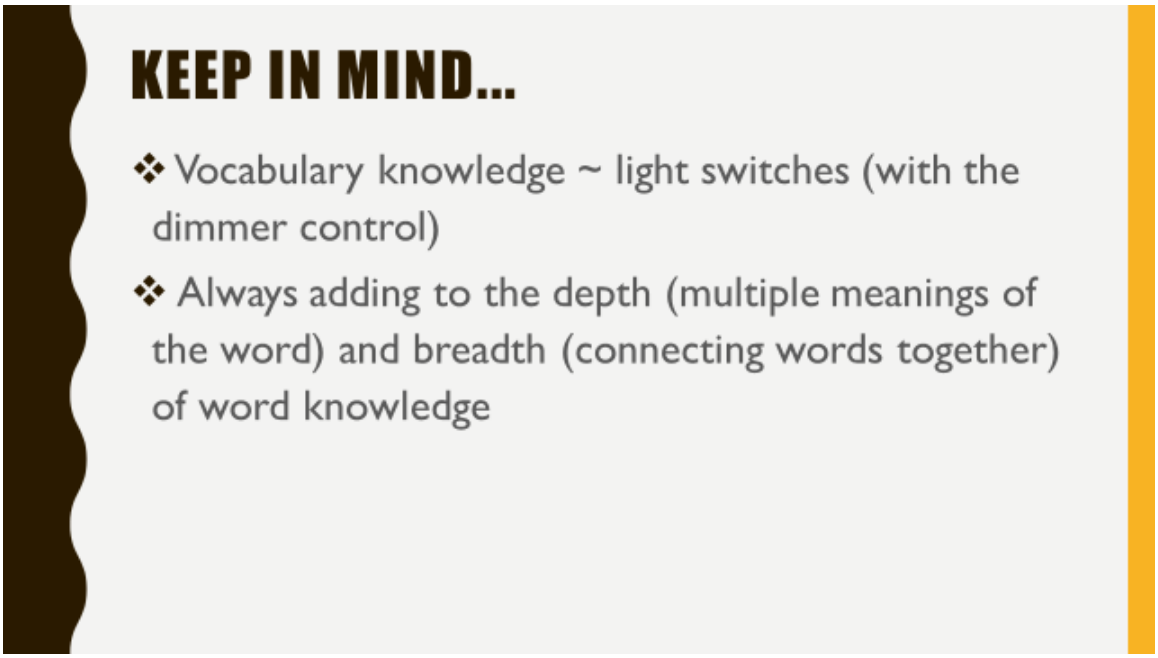


What are the pros and cons in using them?

Any other common vocabulary assessment tasks you can think of?

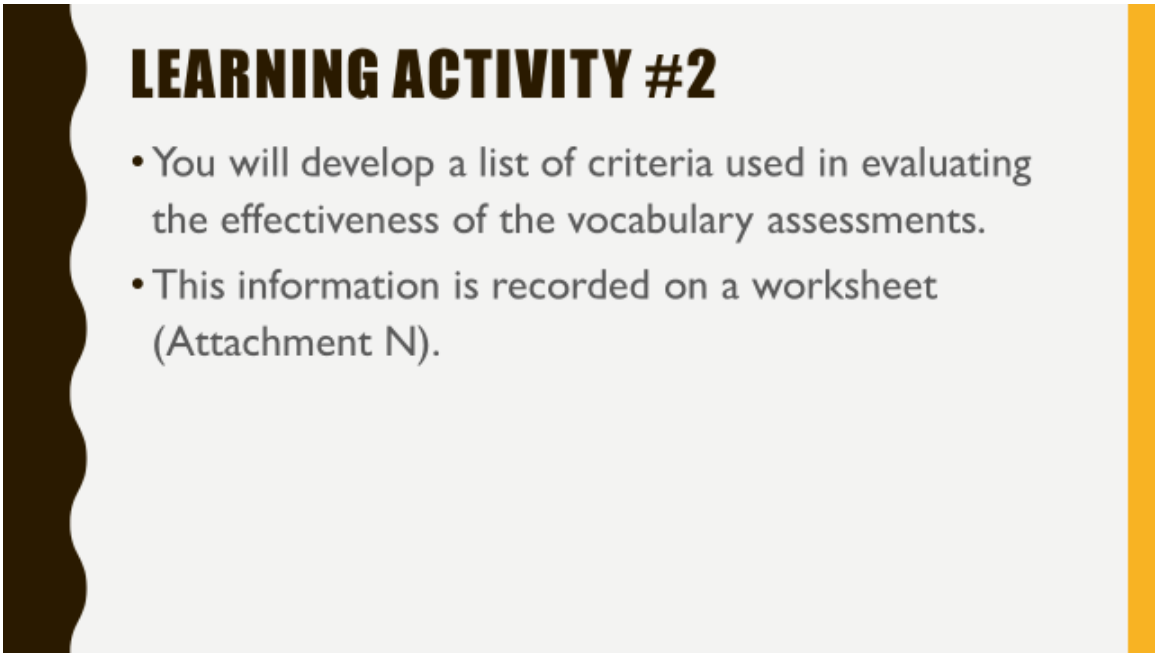


- More diagnostic in nature, provides an indication of the *breadth* of word knowledge
- What are the pros and cons in using self-assessment tools?

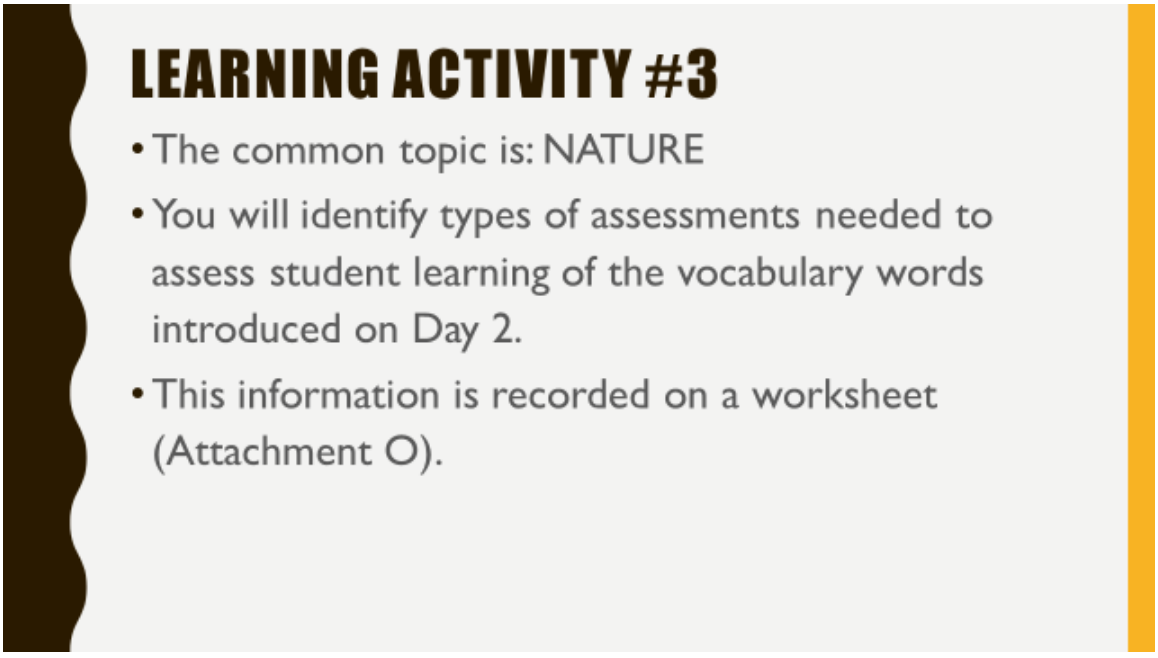


Students' vocabulary knowledge is more like a light switch with a dimmer control; not the kind with 'on/off' button.

As teachers, we should always keep in mind to add to the **depth** and **breadth** of word knowledge of our students.



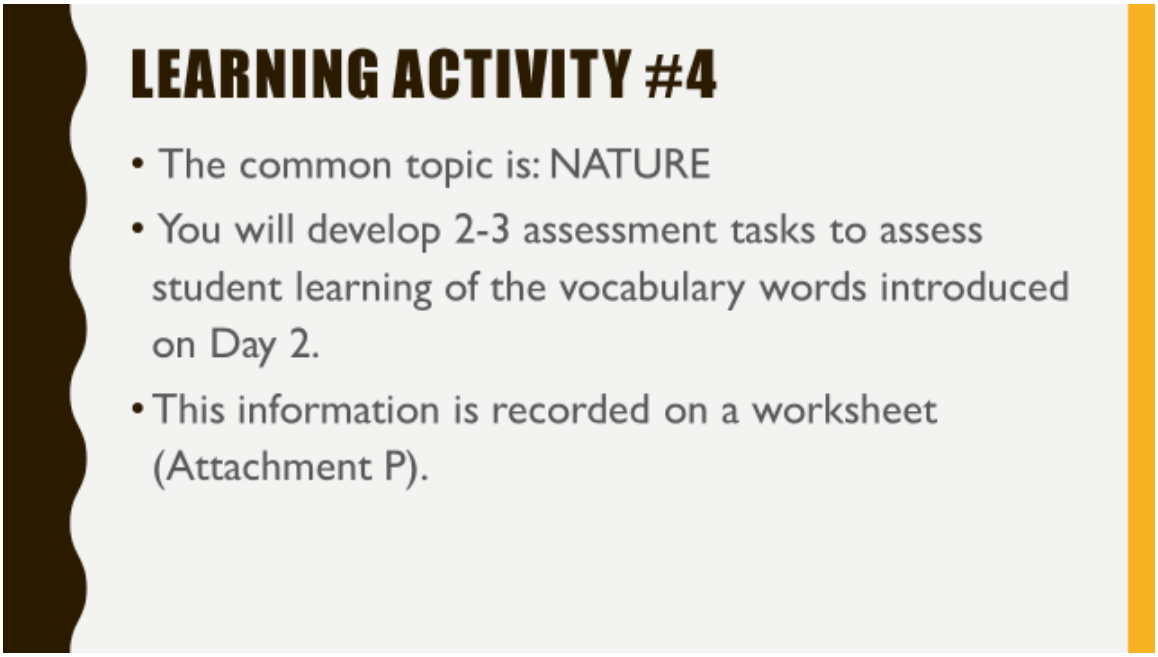
This goes with Attachment N (Criteria Used in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Vocabulary Assessments). Please make copies of Attachment N to hand out.



Please refer back to Attachment K (Identifying Tiers 1, 2, and 3 Words of the NATURE Unit) from Day 2.

This goes with Attachment O (Identifying Types of Assessments for the NATURE Unit).

Please make copies of Attachment O to hand out.



Feel free to use your devices to create assessment tasks. Some possible apps are: Aurasma, Shadow Puppet, Jeopardy, Kahoot, Plickers, Quizlet, and Spelling City.

This goes with Attachment P (Developing Assessment Tasks for the NATURE Unit).

Please make copies of Attachment P to hand out.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #5

- You will explain the types of assessments used (Attachment O).
- You will also explain the 2-3 assessment tasks you have developed for assessing the vocabulary words (Attachment P).

LEARNING ACTIVITY #6

- You will fill out a final reflection worksheet by completing three sentence starters (Attachment Q).
- Recap Days 1-3 learning outcomes
- You will fill out a final workshop evaluation (Attachment R).

This goes with Attachment Q (Final Reflection Worksheet) and Attachment R (Final Workshop Evaluation). Please make copies of Attachment Q and Attachment R to hand out.

Review Days 1-3

Purpose:

- To enhance the knowledge of all staff teachers at an international school regarding vocabulary instruction

Goals:

1. To inform the K-12 teachers of the current research on vocabulary development to increase the effectiveness of their vocabulary teaching.
2. To develop a network of collegial support and collaboration in order to combat the sense of isolation found commonly in the teaching profession.

Learning outcomes for Day 1:

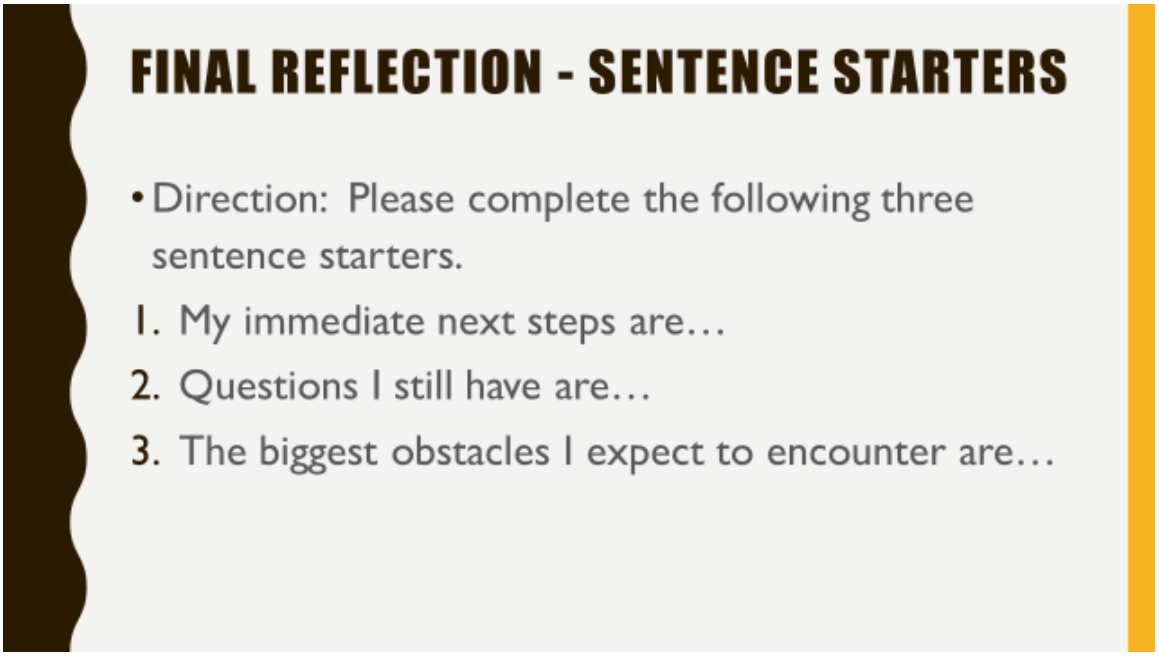
1. Explain vocabulary development in native speakers and ELLs
2. Define effective vocabulary instruction
3. Develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the usefulness of the vocabulary words

Learning outcomes for Day 2:

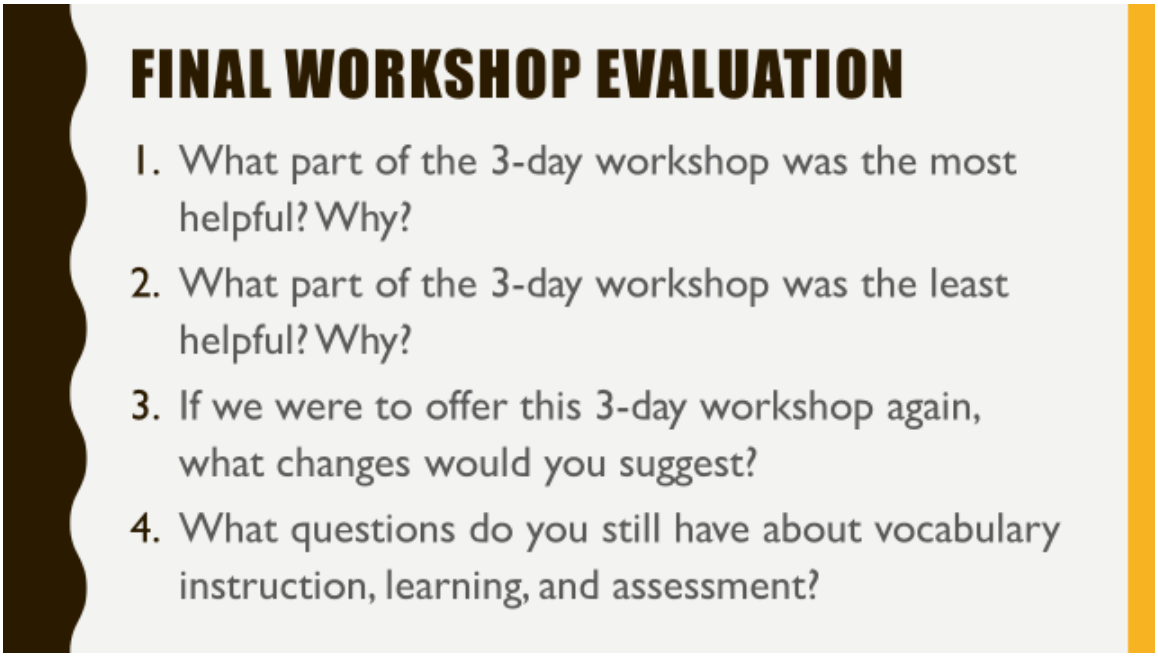
1. Explain different approaches to teaching the list of words
2. Discuss different strategies available in vocabulary teaching
3. Develop a list of vocabulary words to study across multiple disciplines and grade levels based on a common topic

Learning outcomes for Day 3:

1. Explain assessment
2. Discuss assessment of vocabulary learning
3. Develop vocabulary assessments across multiple disciplines and grade levels based on a common topic



This is Attachment Q (Final Reflection Worksheet). Please make copies of Attachment Q to hand out.



This is Attachment R (Final Workshop Evaluation). Please make copies of Attachment R to hand out.

Schedule Day 3

Day 3	**Events**	**Time**
8:00-8:15 AM	Coffee	15 minutes
8:15-8:30 AM	Review schedule and learning outcomes for Day 3.	15 minutes
8:30-9:15 AM	**Learning Activity #1** Participants will bring one sample vocabulary assessment task that they have developed. Using the sample vocabulary assessment task that they bring with them, participants will explain how they assess vocabulary in the classroom.	45 minutes
9:15-10:00 AM	**PowerPoint Presentation** Explain different approaches in assessing vocabulary learning.	45 minutes
10:0-10:15 AM	BREAK	15 minutes
10:15-11:00 AM	**Learning Activity #2**	45 minutes

	Participants will develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the effectiveness of the vocabulary assessments.	
11:00- 12:00 PM	**Learning Activity #3** Using the common topic of NATURE, participants will identify the types of assessments needed to assess student learning of the vocabulary words introduced on Day 2.	1 hour
12:00-1:00 PM	LUNCH	1 hour
1:00-2:00 PM	**Learning Activity #4** Using the common topic of NATURE, participants will develop 2-3 assessment tasks to assess student learning of the vocabulary words introduced on Day 2.	1 hour
2:00-2:15 PM	BREAK	15 minutes
2:15-3:00 PM	**Learning Activity #5** Participants will explain which types of assessments used and why. They will also explain and demonstrate how the 2-3 assessment tasks that they have created assess the vocabulary words.	45 minutes
3:00-3:30 PM	**Learning Activity #6** Participants will fill out a final reflection worksheet by completing the three sentence starters. Presenter will review Days 1-3 with all the participants. Participants will fill out a workshop evaluation.	30 minutes

References Day 3

Betts, B. (2010). *EARCOS Workshop 2010*: *Assessment for Improving Learning*. Taichung, TW: Teacher Training Center for International Educators.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2011). *The understanding by design guide to creating high-quality units*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Budget

The costs below are based on a 3-day session for approximately 25 participants.

Item	**Cost (in US$)**
Use of the library and internet access	No charge
Printing, pens, and miscellaneous supplies	No charge
Light snacks (coffee, nuts) for 3 days	100
Lunches for 3 days	300
Total cost	**400**

This cost will be covered by the school's professional learning fund. In the event that the professional learning fund is not available, snacks and lunches will not be provided.

Attachment A: Electronic Invitation to Current Teachers

(To be emailed to all staff)

Dear Staff,

Are you wondering how to better help the ELL students in your class? Are they experiencing difficulties in grasping new vocabulary words?

We invite you to attend a 3-day professional learning workshop on vocabulary instruction! This professional learning workshop is open to all current teachers. The workshop will include current research on vocabulary development and opportunities to collaborate with other colleagues on this important topic!

Dates: Wednesday, November X, 2017 through Friday, November X, 2017

Times: 8 AM to 3:30 PM

Place: School Library

Lunches and snacks are provided!

What to bring? You need to bring your own laptop computer to the 3-day workshop. In addition, please bring one current textbook that you are using on Days 1 and 2, one sample vocabulary activity that you have developed on Day 2, and one sample assessment task that you have developed on Day 3.

Please respond by October X, 2017.

Any questions? Please email XXX@mail.com.

Attachment B: Electronic Invitation to Recent Graduates

(To be emailed to all recent graduates)

Dear Recent Graduates,

We invite you to participate in a discussion panel as part of a 3-day professional learning workshop for teachers on the topic of vocabulary instruction. Your past experiences as a language learner would be valuable for teachers to understand and reflect on their vocabulary teaching practices.

You will be asked to introduce yourself and describe your experiences in learning vocabulary, especially what teachers did in vocabulary instruction that was useful and effective. In order to help guide the panel discussion, here are the five questions that you can prepare in advance.

Q1: When you first started learning English, what vocabulary activities or tasks did you enjoy doing the most? The least?

Q2: What has helped you to excel in vocabulary?

Q3: What did the teachers do that was useful? Not useful?

Q4: What was the hardest part about school? What helped you feel more part of school?

Q5: If you could give an advice to the teachers regarding vocabulary instruction, what would it be?

Date: Wednesday, November X, 2017

Times: 8:30-9:30 AM

Place: School Library

Please respond by October X, 2017. We know our teachers will greatly benefit from the experiences you can share with them.

Any questions? Please email XXX@mail.com.

Attachment C: Myths of Language Learning

Direction: Please evaluate each statement as true (T) or false (F).

1. Younger students are more effective at language learning than older learners. _____
2. Once students have achieved reasonable oral fluency, they can quickly pick up the academic content. _____
3. Unless the students have mastered the English language, there is no point in trying to teach them academic content. _____
4. Learners need a strong grasp of oral English before they are exposed to print. _____
5. Reading and listening are effective ways to learn a language. _____
6. The best way to learn a second language is to move to that country to be fully immersed. _____
7. Language learners will pick up their friends' mistakes. It is best to only communicate with native speakers. _____
8. Language learners will acquire English faster if their parents speak English at home. _____
9. The more time students spend learning English in the mainstream classroom, the quicker they will learn the language. _____
10. Academic development in first language has a positive effect on second language learning. _____

Answers:

1. **False**. While younger language learners may learn to pronounce a new language with little or no accent, older language learners are often much more efficient learners.
2. **False**. While basic interpersonal communicational skills (BICS) are generally acquired within 2 years of learning, cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) takes 5-7 years to develop.
3. **False**. ELL students need to continue their content education while learning a new language. Both need to happen concurrently.
4. **False**. ELL learners should be exposed to a rich print environment from early on in their English learning. Learning a language isn't a sequential process. New learning can take place while old learning can be relearned/deepened.
5. **False**. Though it is possible to learn a language through reading and listening, input, output, and interactions are all needed.
6. **False**. Though it certainly helps with using the target language, living in another country does not guarantee that the target language will be learned. Think 'living in your own bubble'.
7. **False**. Learners practice negotiation of meaning when speaking with friends.
8. If their parents feel comfortable with speaking English, then yes. If the parents don't feel comfortable, then it's better for them to speak in native language with their children because the native language will be richer and more complex.
9. Though time in the mainstream classroom helps with increased exposure to the target language, students need comprehensible input in order for learning to occur.
10. **True**. Academic development in first language helps with second language acquisition.

Attachment D: How to Choose Words to Study

Direction: Using the current textbook that you bring with you, please record how you choose vocabulary words to study.

Name	Content Area and Grade Level	Method of Selecting Vocabulary Words

Attachment E: Foreign Language Lesson

- Objective: To learn food vocabulary in a foreign language.
- Vocabulary: peanut butter, jam, bread, marshmallow, cookies, chocolate, candies, crackers, chips, take, put, eat, on top of, and numbers (1-5)
- Foreign Language Teacher - prepare pictures of the vocabulary items or bring the actual food items for demonstration if possible.

Steps:

- Preteach vocabulary words with real objects and gestures.
- The foreign language teacher picks up an item and the participants label the item in the foreign language.
- The foreign language teacher says a phrase (ex. Put peanut butter on the bread) and have 1-2 participants listen to the instructions and perform the actions. Do this 3-4 times and have different participants take turns performing the actions.
- (Optional) Increase the complexity of the language demands by including multiple objects in one sentence (ex. Put one candy and one chocolate on a cracker.) Do this 3-4 times and have different participants take turns performing the actions.

Attachment F: Criteria Used in Evaluating the Usefulness of Words

Direction: You will develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the usefulness of the vocabulary words.

Criteria	Why we think this is important?

Attachment G: Reflection Worksheet

Direction: You will choose three out of six sentence starters to complete.

1. Today's learning connects with…
2. I need to remember to…. and I will remember it by…
3. The key idea I learned today was…
4. Something I want to learn more about is…
5. The thing that surprised me the most today was…
6. Something that has left me puzzled is…

Attachment H: Workshop Evaluation

Direction: Please fill out this workshop evaluation. We appreciate your honest feedback!

1. What part of today's workshop was the most helpful? Why?

2. What part of today's workshop was the least helpful? Why?

3. If we were to offer today's workshop again, what changes would you suggest?

4. What other questions do you have?

Attachment I: How to Teach Vocabulary Words

Direction: Using the sample vocabulary activities that you bring with you, please record how you teach vocabulary words in the classroom.

Name	Content Area and Grade Level	Method of Teaching Vocabulary Words

Attachment J: Identifying Tiers 1, 2, and 3 Words

Direction: Using the current textbook that you brought with you, please identify 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3 from a unit of your choice.

Name: _____ Grade Level/Content Area: _____ Unit: _____

Tier 1 **Common, everyday words**	**Tier 2** **Academic words**	**Tier 3** **Content-specific vocabulary**
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		

Attachment K: Identifying Tiers 1, 2, and 3 Words of the NATURE Unit

Direction: Using the common topic of NATURE, please identify 10-12 essential words for each of the Tiers 1-3. Please keep this worksheet for Day 3.

Name: _____ Grade Level/Content Area: _____ Unit: NATURE

Tier 1 **Common, everyday words**	**Tier 2** **Academic words**	**Tier 3** **Content-specific vocabulary**
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		

Attachment L: Developing Learning Activities for the NATURE Unit

Direction: Using the common topic of NATURE, you will develop 2-3 concrete learning activities to demonstrate how you will teach the Tiers 1-3 words to your grade level/content area students.

Name: _____ Grade Level/Content Area: _____ Unit: NATURE

Learning Activity #1

Benchmarks:

Time needed:

Materials needed:

Tier 1 vocabulary used:

Tier 2 vocabulary used:

Tier 3 vocabulary used:

Steps:

1. Hook:
2. Presentation:
3. Practice/application:

Learning Activity #2

Benchmarks:

Time needed:

Materials needed:

Tier 1 vocabulary used:

Tier 2 vocabulary used:

Tier 3 vocabulary used:

Steps:

1. Hook:
2. Presentation:
3. Practice/application:

Learning Activity #3

Benchmarks:

Time needed:

Materials needed:

Tier 1 vocabulary used:

Tier 2 vocabulary used:

Tier 3 vocabulary used:

Steps:

1. Hook:
2. Presentation:
3. Practice/application:

Attachment M: How to Assess Vocabulary Words

Direction: Using the sample vocabulary assessment task that you bring with you, please record how you assess vocabulary words in the classroom.

Name	Content Area and Grade Level	Method of Assessing Vocabulary Words

Attachment N: Criteria Used in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Vocabulary Assessments

Direction: You will develop a list of criteria used in evaluating the effectiveness of the vocabulary assessments.

Grade Level: _____ Subject Area: _____

Criteria	Why we think this is important?

Attachment O: Identifying Types of Assessments for the NATURE Unit

Direction: Using the common topic of NATURE, please identify types of assessments needed to assess student learning of the vocabulary words introduced on Day 2. Please refer back to Attachment K (Identifying Tiers 1, 2, and 3 Words of the NATURE Unit) from Day 2. Place the vocabulary words identified in Attachment K in the desired boxes below.

Name: _____ Grade Level/Content Area:_____ Unit: NATURE

	Selected response	Constructed response	Academic prompt	Contextual tasks	Observation
Declarative (facts, concepts)					
Procedural (skills, processes)					
Thinking					
Attitude					

Attachment P: Developing Assessment Tasks for the NATURE Unit

Direction: Using the common topic of NATURE, you will develop 2-3 assessment tasks to assess student learning of the vocabulary words introduced on Day 2. Please refer to Attachment O as reference.

Name: _____ Grade Level/Content Area: _____

Unit: NATURE

Assessment Task #1

Purpose: ____ Assessment FOR learning; ____ Assessment AS learning;

____ Assessment OF learning

Category: ____ Ongoing; ____ Chunks; ____ Common; ____ External

Assessment results: ____ Evaluate and provide feedback; ____ Record grades;

____ Include on report card; ____ Modify teaching

Type of learning: ____ Declarative; ____ Procedural; ____ Thinking; ____ Attitude

Type of assessment: ____ Selected response; ____ Constructed response;

____ Academic prompt; ____ Observation tools; ____ Contextual tasks

Design Assessment Task:

Grading Rubric:

Assessment Task #2

Purpose: ____ Assessment FOR learning; ____ Assessment AS learning;

____ Assessment OF learning

Category: ____ Ongoing; ____ Chunks; ____ Common; ____ External

Assessment results: ____ Evaluate and provide feedback; ____ Record grades;

____ Include on report card; ____ Modify teaching

Type of learning: ____ Declarative; ____ Procedural; ____ Thinking; ____ Attitude

Type of assessment: ____ Selected response; ____ Constructed response;

____ Academic prompt; ____ Observation tools; ____ Contextual tasks

Design Assessment Task:

Grading Rubric:

Assessment Task #3

Purpose: ____ Assessment FOR learning; ____ Assessment AS learning;

____ Assessment OF learning

Category: ____ Ongoing; ____ Chunks; ____ Common; ____ External

Assessment results: ____ Evaluate and provide feedback; ____ Record grades;

____ Include on report card; ____ Modify teaching

Type of learning: ____ Declarative; ____ Procedural; ____ Thinking; ____ Attitude

Type of assessment: ____ Selected response; ____ Constructed response;

____ Academic prompt; ____ Observation tools; ____ Contextual tasks

Design Assessment Task:

Grading Rubric:

Attachment Q: Final Reflection Worksheet

Direction: Please complete the following three sentence starters.

1. My immediate next steps are…

2. Questions I still have are…

3. The biggest obstacles I expect to encounter are…

Attachment R: Final Workshop Evaluation

Direction: Please fill out this workshop evaluation. We appreciate your honest feedback!

1. What part of the 3-day workshop was the most helpful? Why?

2. What part of the 3-day workshop was the least helpful? Why?

3. If we were to offer this 3-day workshop again, what changes would you suggest?

4. What questions do you still have about vocabulary instruction, learning, and assessment?

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

EMAIL

Date

Dear _____,

My name is Cathleen Lee and I am conducting a research project to learn about the teachers who are effective in vocabulary teaching. I am inviting you to join this research project. I am a doctoral student at Walden University working on my degree in Higher Education and Adult Learning. You might already know me as an English Language Learning teacher, but this research study is separate from that role. Your role in this study will be to participate in an interview to answer some questions about your experience in teaching vocabulary at the study site.

You do not have to participate in this research project and if you decide now that you want to join the project, you can still change your mind later. If you agree to be in this project, everything you tell me during this project will be kept private. Please contact me if you would be interested. After I have received your response, I will schedule an interview time with you and forward to you the required participation documents.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this project.

Sincerely,
Cathleen Lee

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Research Study: Perception of Teachers in Developing Robust Vocabulary Instruction at an International School in Taiwan

Date and Time of Interview:

Place/Pseudonym:

Interviewee/Pseudonym:

Review signed consent form:

Interview questions with anticipated probes:

Related to the research question of the perception of the teachers on why they are successful in teaching vocabulary in English

1. What language-related issues might arise when teaching (content area) to ELLs?
2. What vocabulary words in (content area) might be challenging for ELLs?
3. How can a (content area) teacher adjust his/her instruction to take into consideration the language issues that might arise when teaching ELLs?
4. What do you think are the major obstacles that you have encountered in teaching vocabulary?
    a. How have you overcome those challenges?
    b. What obstacles could you not overcome? Why?
5. What support do you think that the school can provide that will help you be more effective in teaching vocabulary?

Related to the sub question of the factors teachers perceive as being important to be successful in vocabulary instruction

6. What factors do you think contributed to your success in teaching vocabulary?
7. What specific vocabulary instructional methods do you currently use?
8. How do you know that your vocabulary instructional methods are actually effective?

*Related to the sub question of **given these factors**, how other teachers can best replicate the process of robust vocabulary instruction*

9. What else would you like to tell me about your experience here at the school that may have contributed to your success?
    a. Colleagues
    b. Administrator
    c. System Services
    d. Students
10. Closing protocol
    a. Thank you for your participation
    b. I will write your responses to the questions and send them to you by email for your review.
    c. Contact me with any other thoughts that might come to mind about our interview. This might include things that you think would be important for me to write in my report.

Appendix D: Sample Coded Interview

Research Study: Perception of Teachers in Developing Robust Vocabulary Instruction at an International School in Taiwan

Date and Time of Interview: May 25, 2015 at 8 AM

Place/Pseudonym: classroom

Interviewee/Pseudonym: Tom

Review signed consent form: 5/25/2015

Interview questions:

1. What language-related issues might arise when teaching your content area to ELLs? Even though they're not in the ELL program, they are still second, or third, language learners.

Right now I teach English 2 and English 3 (10th and 11th graders). Probably the vast majority of my students in each class have learned English as a second language or English is not their mother tongue. A number of them have been in the ELL program at our school. Language-related issues that come up - there are lots of them. In writing, right now I meet with a junior every week who entered the school system fairly late and his writing is very difficult to understand. So just clarity in word usage is a big issue. And a lot of times that is not one particular language issue that you can put your finger on, it's just a whole host of different misunderstandings of words and what their roles should be in a sentence. So, clarity is a big one. A lot of my students who are quite proficient in English struggle significantly still with article use cause that's not something that… it's different than how it works in Chinese.

Another big one is verb tense. Because verb tense is not something that… is a part of Chinese language. And so that's probably the biggest struggle of most of my students. If we are talking about a specific grammatical issue, another one is subject-verb agreement. Again, that's a verb issue between English and Chinese so that's a big one as well. In addition to that, a lot of my students do have fairly low vocabulary or if they do know a lot of words, a lot of times they struggle to apply those words to their writing and speaking. In vocab learning, also, a lot of my students are really good at rote memorization and so a challenge as a language instructor with vocab has been in helping them to understand the deeper levels of meaning of words and to actually use them. Not just memorize them in a text which is a big temptation for a lot of our students when it comes to vocab – short term memory cram.

2. What vocabulary words in your content area might be challenging for the ELL learners?

One area of vocab words that are challenging are Level 3 (Stage 3) words. They are very specific to cultural experiences they haven't experienced and a lot of times end up on vocab lists and they'll never be used again because they just have no context to use them in. So, that's just a matter of selection of vocab words. Another challenge is, in my mind, that they're not exposed to a high degree of English language at home. A lot of the words that I think of as reasonable – these might appear on the news, these might appear on a TV show, these might appear in the newspaper that they might see or what not. still are quite hard. While they might think so, ones that are still used today aren't actually that antiquated. But a lot of my students don't really see those in their outside

experiences because they aren't just inundated with English language because we live in Taiwan. So, that is a challenge. They have to take my word for the words that I select are ones that people actually use.

3. How can you adjust your instruction to take into consideration the language issues that might arise when teaching ELLs?

For me the biggest thing is use – just getting kids exposed to use. And the second thing is just shades of meaning and applying it in different contexts. So, one thing that I've tried to do is when we go through vocab lists related to the texts that we're reading is… first of all, I try to select words out of the text that we are reading. I don't have a list, a predetermined list that someone has decided that this is good for 11th graders or 10th grade to learn. So I try to find words that are in the context of what we're reading. Because there is limited exposure to the fact that these words are actually used, I try to find them in their context in the text that we're reading. So, they can see, yes, they're actually used. I also try to use them in my own teaching. So when we're going through a list of words, I try to use those words myself so the kids can see them being used practically. I also have a big word wall so we'll put our vocab words on the wall and kids get points. They can write their name on particular words that they have used in actual discussions so if we're having a seminar discussion, for example, and if a kid uses a vocab word that we're working on in that unit, then they get a 'ding, ding, ding' and they get to write their name on the word wall. Or if they use it in homework assignments, I ask them to bold it and they get points for that. Or, if they are talking at lunch, or during a 5-minute break, or during a class activity and they use the word, they get to write their

name on the board. And that's actually really helped as my students are mostly pretty nerdy and they really get into that.

Another thing that I try to do with shades of meaning is in my assessments of vocab words I generally avoid matching and word bank entirely. I do have a word bank, I guess. But the whole idea of matching, or, here is the definition, here is the word, can you match it is gone. I did that a little bit when I first came here but I quickly realized that it was a poor instructional strategy or assessment strategy cause my kids just dominated it. And then days later I'd ask them the meanings of words and they'd have no clue. Cause it's all short term memory and low memorization tricks. So I've significantly changed my assessments to be based on students researching a word and its different shades of meanings – putting it in a sentence, drawing a picture, trying to get a bunch of different understandings, looking at the etymology of that word. For preparation they really explore one word and they create a collective study guide on all those words based on their research. And we discuss that in class and we talk a lot about context and different examples and have kids take notes. And then in the assessments, it's all about comparing one word to another word, how is this word different from this word, how is this word similar to this word. Can you use it in a sentence, can you draw a picture of this word, that sort of thing. So it's much more focused on use than memory of definitions.

4. What do you think are the major obstacles that you have encountered in teaching vocabulary?

a. How have you overcome those challenges?

I already touched on some of those so this might be kinda quick. The biggest thing is kids in this context, in this school, it's different elsewhere, but here is… kids being extremely motivated by the grade and so it's very easy to think I'm doing a good job in vocab assessment when I say here's a bunch of words, memorize them, and then give an assessment and everybody gets 100%. Cause it seems like, wow great, you're teaching vocabulary really well! But the reality of it is that kids almost immediately forget all of that information and they have no idea how to use those words. So, that's been a big one.

Another one (that I'm not as good at dealing with but I'm slowly getting better at) is helping kids with pronunciation. One thing I really notice is if we went over a bunch of words in class, kids would learn the words and I'd listen to them studying for during study hall, or right before a class and I'd hear them pronouncing words totally incorrectly, just destroying the words. And so, that was a significant challenge, because then again there is no exposure. They are not saying to their parents 'Hey, can you help me with my vocab quiz?' and hearing their parents say it. It's just all about, they're on their own and so making sure they can pronounce them correctly too. As a result I start having them in their study guide make a pronunciation guide for each of the words in a very understandable way, not in old-school phonetic ways that most students don't understand. And then in class, we all say the words together and make sure we can pronounce them correctly.

b. What obstacles could you not overcome? Why?

Lots. One is still the battle of once the word is in their brains for the test, then knowing that it's being used and actually becoming part of their vocabulary is a difficult one. With some kids they really get into it and they want to boost their vocab. Others don't, so figuring out how to deal with those kids who don't really care about their vocab skills is a challenge. Because in my mind if you're not intrinsically motivated to build your vocabulary, it's going to be really hard for you to do so.

Another obstacle that I can't overcome is just the home life with kids. Kids are not exposed to a massive volume of vocabulary so as a result the ability for them to apply vocab and to fail at using vocab and to be teased by people who are smarter than them and forced figure it out quickly is gone. That just doesn't happen, that natural, corrective, societal role of vocab instruction is missing entirely. So that's a challenge that I have and I haven't overcome, and I don't know how to overcome that other than invite kids to my home every day so we can speak English.

I want to say too that another thing that I've made a mistake on in vocab instruction is, as I said earlier, that a lot of times I select words from the text so that students can see them in the context in which they're used. But one strategy of word selection that I'd like to do more of next year is instead… I think there is some value to that and I think I'll continue to do that for maybe 50% or 60% of the words that I choose… but in terms of use, I think what might be better is selecting words not only from a text but which kids can use in discussion *about* a text. So, for example, say we're reading the Great Gatsby. A word that I chose this year was 'harlequin,' which is probably a terrible word to choose cause it's not going to be used very often. But it was

in the text so I thought that's a word they don't know so I'll choose that. But if I would have chosen a word that relates *to* the Great Gatsby, that a kid can use in a conversation about the book, then I think that word would be better chosen because it would come up in class discussion more than a word that is actually from a text.

5. What support do you think that the school can provide that will help you be more effective in teaching vocabulary?

One thing, the main thing for me is… time for all the humanities teachers to get together. If not all the humanities teachers, especially all the language and literacy teachers to get together and talk through vocab instruction which happens and also have somebody in the room who can have a sort of authority or jurisdiction and say you know what, here is how we're going to do it systematically and get a common form of assessment and just a method to the madness. So that when I get kids their… I'm not sort of teaching them a new thing about vocab learning but I know what they've learned about vocab instruction through the pipeline. And I think that would be helpful. It's tricky though because I feel like kids learn vocab in different ways. So one teacher's method of vocab instruction might really help one kid and be a real drag for another. So, yeah, I think finding the happy medium is necessary. But I don't think we have enough discussion about what that happy medium looks like in different grade levels.

6. What factors do you think contributed to your success in teaching vocabulary?

Um, I guess, two things. One, is just personal enthusiasm – a go, go, rah, rah kind of attitude about vocab. Anyway, just personal enthusiasm about vocab. Like it's just getting kids pumped up. It's super fun that you learn vocab and getting excited when kids

use vocab in context, high-fiving kids, just kind of creating an energy about learning new words so that you sound smart and that you can effectively communicate your ideas to others.

Another factor, I think, is just insisting kids really understand the deep level of words, enforcing them in assessments, particularly, to really be able to demonstrate that they really understand the word. I think that has done a lot in helping kids go beyond simple memorization, cause they can't. They have to get used to thinking about words in their context, not just by the definition.

7. What specific vocabulary instructional methods do you currently use?

I touched on a number of these so I'll be brief. One is word selection, I talked about that. It's usually… almost always from the text. The second one is I have a vocab word sheet and so at different times through the unit I hand out a list of vocab words to my students. I try to keep it about 10-15 words a week-ish and I hand out this list and each of them has a sheet to complete for one or two words. It has a bunch of different elements on it like I mentioned before, etymology, pronunciation, draw a picture, put it in a sentence, use it in a text, what's the word that is similar to it, different from it, and how are they similar or different, all that sort of thing. So, they complete that sheet and I put them all together in one big pdf and mail it out to everyone so that's their study guide. In class, we go over it, talk through each of the words, talk about where kids went wrong with their analysis of the word, etc, etc. And then, on the test, the assessment then is similar to the study guide in that kids have to… I'll pick maybe two words from the list, say how are these words similar, how are they different? And, I'll do that on the majority

of the test and then draw picture; put it in a sentence, all that sort of a thing, on the test. I don't do multiple choice, unless it's which of these sentences is the word used correctly or incorrectly and then as we go, I try to have a word wall. I've done the word wall only with my sophomore class, however, so the kids can be using the words in context as they went through the unit.

8. How do you know that your vocabulary instructional methods are actually effective?

A big one for me is use. I think that's where you really see if vocab instruction is working. It's… are kids using the words in real life and I don't know how to assess that other than anecdotally. I spend a lot of time, probably way too much time with my students cause I coach them and I'm also their class sponsor, that sort of thing. And not all of my students, but many of my students are regularly using the words that we go over in class. We'll be doing soccer warm-ups, and a kid will bust out a vocab word in a previous unit and get high-fives from his friends. And, that happens frequently. A lot of times, kids will use the vocab words in their writing because they know they can get an extra bonus point. Anyway, I see them using it. I also see them trying to use the words ineffectively. So then, I'm like hah, you used it but that doesn't work there because of this. So, that's really the main reason, or the main way, that I can see the effectiveness of my vocab teaching. If it's just on the vocab scores, then for some kids my vocab instruction isn't super hot cause a lot of my students don't do well on the vocab quizzes cause they are really hard. But where I think actual vocab building is evident is in performance in daily life.

9. What else would you like to tell me about your experience here at the school that may have contributed to your success? Colleagues, administrator, System Services, and/or students?

Probably the biggest contributor to my success is colleagues. A couple of years ago, this lady sitting across the table from me decided to do a vocab PLC and in the mornings on Wednesdays we met weekly. We talked about vocab instruction. We read a book together about best practices. Actually the most that I got out of that was about word selection and how important it is to select good vocab words. Also, I had a meeting with the other language arts teachers and we talked through how we teach vocab and the social studies teachers were involved with that too. Just talked about how we teach vocab at each of the different levels. That was a good discussion to sort of hear how other people do it. But mostly it was sort of like… eh, some of the practical application stuff was good but I think we could have done a lot more there. But I think it was good to sort of put vocab instruction at the forefront of my mind.

Students, honestly, students are the biggest contributor to my success cause I really try to tailor my teaching to how my kids learn and just seeing my original vocab instructional methods stink was probably the biggest thing that contributed to my success, realizing that it isn't working and I need to change things up a little bit. I constantly tweak how I do things just because of their success or failure. So, colleagues and students.