Vocabulary Plus:
Comprehensive Vocabulary Instruction for English Learners

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ABSTRACT
Vocabulary Plus is an interactive strategy which links vocabulary development with content area learning for English learners. This strategy uses interactive read-alouds of thematically-connected informational text matched to the grade-appropriate state standards and content of core subjects. When using *Vocabulary Plus*, teachers choose motivating texts and use a tiered system of importance to select target vocabulary appropriate for both language and content area learning. They create graphic organizers and other visuals to illustrate relation-ships among target vocabulary words, and engage students in activities designed to reinforce and expand their understanding of target vocabulary.

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Introduction

Students who are English learners have a tough job. Not only must they learn what their classmates are learning, but they also must learn English. They need English to talk with their friends on the playground, to understand the teachers' directions, and to ask for a straw for their milk at lunch. However, this kind of English is not enough. In addition to learning to speak and comprehend in a new language, they also need the academic English that enables them to participate with their classmates in learning grade-appropriate curriculum (Goldenberg, 2008).

Since much academic content is learned through reading, it is important to examine the relationship of reading ability to content acquisition. All students need to learn to read, as well as read to learn. For English learners, the ability to read in their new language is a key to learning in other content areas.

Some aspects of learning to read pose fewer challenges than others. For example, when the language demands of reading "are relatively low" (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 22), as in the early stages of reading when students are learning letter-sound connections, decoding, and word recognition, English language learners can make progress comparable to that of their English-only peers as long as they are given focused, clear, and systematic instruction (Goldenberg, 2008).

However, as students advance past the beginning reading stages, vocabulary knowledge becomes more important for continued reading success and academic achievement (Goldenberg, 2008). In fact, according to Nagy and Scott (2000), vocabulary knowledge is essential for understanding written text. Adequate reading comprehension requires knowledge of between 90 and 95 percent of the words in text (Nagy & Scott, 2000). Knowing 90 percent of the words in

text makes understanding likely, and increases the probability of learning new words from the text. Conversely, knowing fewer than 90 percent of the words interferes with learning text content and reduces the likelihood of learning new words from the text (Hirsch, 2003).

Since a strong relationship exists between word-meaning knowledge and the ability to comprehend passages which include these words (Anderson & Nagy, 1992), "explicit attention to vocabulary development—everyday words as well as more specialized academic words— needs to be part of English learners' school programs" (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 23). In addition, strategies used for vocabulary instruction for English learners must take into account language limitations which may make vocabulary instruction more challenging.

As a professor of education in a small, private liberal arts college, I teach undergraduate teacher candidates literacy strategies appropriate for instructing students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Often, the strategies I emphasize, while designed initially for all students/EO students, can be modified readily to increase their efficacy for English learners. With this in mind, I reviewed literature about vocabulary development for English speakers and for English learners in preparation for planning my course sessions.

I read with great interest Blachowicz & Obrochta's (2005) article, "Vocabulary Visits: Virtual field trips for content vocabulary development," and noted that this strategy is consistent with many research-based practices that are effective for working with English learners. I identified supplementary research-based practices which, when added to *Vocabulary Visits*, produce a comprehensive strategy for increasing English learners' knowledge of concepts and vocabulary. This new strategy is called *Vocabulary Plus*.

Vocabulary Visits and *Vocabulary Plus*

Vocabulary visits (Blachowicz & Obrochta, 2005) are virtual field trips which use visuals and books for developing concepts and vocabulary. Teachers put together thematically-related text sets which feature a repeated related vocabulary. They create a chart or locate a visual enlarged to chart size to stimulate discussion of the sensory experiences students have during an actual field trip. Teachers involve students in brainstorming to activate their knowledge, active listening to content-related books, and creating a display of conceptually-related words. As they listen, students signal when they hear new words, and can add words from other text-set books to the chart. Students participate in follow-up sorting and writing activities. *Vocabulary Visits* motivate students while providing opportunities to develop oral and written vocabulary (Blachowicz & Obrochta, 2005).

Vocabulary Plus is a comprehensive strategy for vocabulary instruction which was designed specifically to support the vocabulary development of English learners. Building on the virtual field trips and thematic read-alouds used in *Vocabulary Visits, Vocabulary Plus* uses content- area themes linked to grade-appropriate state standards for core subjects as the focus for instruction, and incorporates instructional practices found to be beneficial for English learners. When using *Vocabulary Plus,* teachers identify a theme matched to grade-appropriate content- area standards, choose motivating non-fiction texts, and use a tiered system of importance to select target vocabulary appropriate for both language development and content area learning from within these texts. They create graphic organizers and other visuals to illustrate relationships among target vocabulary words to structure discussion. Students listen actively to read-alouds, and participate in follow-up activities based on the interactive read-alouds to reinforce their understanding and retention of valuable vocabulary and concepts. *Vocabulary Plus* can be incorporated readily into ongoing classroom activities for both classroom activities

for both English learners and their English only classmates. Figure 1 summarizes the sequence of steps for planning and implementing *Vocabulary Plus.*

Figure 1 – Steps for *Vocabulary Plus*

1. **Identify grade-appropriate content-area standards and select related themes as the focus of instruction.**

2. **Select informational books that are consistent with the standards–based content area theme to create a read-aloud text set.**

3. **Explore the set of thematically-related books to identify core content-area vocabulary.**

4. **Use a graphic organizer to create a poster which provides a visual introduction to core content-area vocabulary and the interrelationships among these words.**

5. **Use poster to engage students in instructional conversation about the interrelationships among core vocabulary.**

6. **Engage students in interactive read-alouds and subsequent instructional conversations and activities using core vocabulary.**

Implementing *Vocabulary Plus* – A step-by step guide:
1. **Identify grade-appropriate content-area standards and select related themes as the focus of instruction.**

In many of today's schools, instructional content is influenced greatly by state-level instructional standards. All students are expected to meet challenging state standards for academic achievement. One objective of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act ((2002) is to "ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic achievement in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet" (p. 266). Academic instructional content must be consistent with these standards and must be cognitively demanding as well as grade appropriate, and should not be "watered down" (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005, p. 79).

Teachers can design content area instruction which corresponds with state-mandated standards by focusing instruction around standards-based themes. For English learners, thematic instruction provides opportunities to use academic English for content area learning in sustained content over a period of time (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

This yields multiple benefits. First, the use of themes creates predictability. Students know in advance that instruction will focus on a target subject. As a result, they often begin to think about the topic outside of the lesson itself, thus bringing to mind relevant background knowledge. Next, thematic instruction increases opportunities for reinforcement. Since the content of each lesson is related, subsequent lessons build upon earlier learnings. Each lesson calls to mind the content of previous lessons, and, accordingly, incorporates review and application. As vocabulary is incorporated into multiple lessons, it is repeated naturally in

different situations. "(S)tudents learn new words better when they encounter them often and in various contexts. The more children see, hear, and work with specific words, the better they seem to learn them" (Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn, 2003, p. 36). Third, teachers can organize instruction around themes based on "big questions" (Freeman & Freeman, 2006, p. 63). This helps teachers to link thematically-related materials and to connect the curriculum to students' lives and interests. Last, the use of thematic instruction provides opportunities to differentiate instruction by varying activities and assignments to involve students at all levels of English proficiency. While instructional content and vocabulary remains consistent, instructional processes – activities in which the student engages to master the content, and products – culminating projects through which students rehearse, apply, and extend what they learned (Tomlinson, 2000), can be varied to match students' abilities.

   To begin the preparation and planning for *Vocabulary Plus* instruction, teachers select specific standards from the range of grade-appropriate standards for a particular content area and identify a corresponding theme for study. Then, they establish content-area objectives within the structure of the unifying theme (Peregoy and Boyle, 2005).

Figure 2 – State standards, theme, key ideas, and objectives

Science Standard 4: The Living Environment – Students will understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment and recognize the historical development of ideas in science.

Theme: Interrelationships within the living environment of the rainforest

Key idea: Plants and animals depend on each other and their physical environment.
Objective: Describe how plants and animals, including humans, depend upon each other and the nonliving environment.

Key idea: Human decisions and activities have had a profound impact on the physical and living environment.
Objective: Identify ways in which humans have changed their environment and the effects of those changes.

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2. **Select informational books that are consistent with a standards–based content area theme to create a read-aloud text set.**
   Well-crafted informational trade books are an effective resource for content area instruction for English learners because they provide a clear pattern of organization, are rich in content in the areas that are interesting to children, and are written in child-friendly language. When selecting texts for content area instruction, teachers select books which are well-written, have accurate content and illustrations, and are suited to students' age level (Moss, 2006).

   Teachers combine texts to create a text set: a collection of five to fifteen texts that are related conceptually through similar themes, text types, or topics (Short, Jerome, & Burke, 1996). The use of text sets provides students with sustained content, resulting in a systematic buildup of content knowledge from multiple sources and different perspectives (Stoller, 2002).

   Text sets also provide opportunities for vocabulary learning. As students encounter vocabulary across multiple texts, they begin to generalize meanings. They use and extend new

vocabulary as each successive book is read (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004). As students encounter a word repeatedly over a period of time, they become more comfortable with using the word, and their knowledge about the word expands (Lubliner & Scott, 2008). According to Shanklin, 2007, if children are to understand a word clearly, they need to consider the word in context, and then try the word in different contexts. As they encounter the word in a variety of contexts, they build up information about the word (Lubliner & Scott, 2008).

   Vocabulary Plus uses engaging informational trade books linked together into a text set as the focus for thematic content-area instruction. Books are used as interactive read-alouds, and, accordingly, provide English learners who may have not yet mastered grade-appropriate word identification skills with grade-appropriate content while their word identification abilities are developing. Read-alouds foster both content area and language learning; they serve as a model for fluency and expressive oral reading while conveying thematic information and vocabulary.

Figure 3 – Sample texts

Berkenkamp, L. (2008). *Discover the Amazon: the world's largest rainforest*. White River
        Junction, VT: Nomad Press.

Cherry, L. (1990). *The great kapok tree: a tale of the Amazon rain forest*. San Diego:
        Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Knight, T. (2001). *Journey into the rainforest*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Yolen, J. (1993). *Welcome to the green house*. New York: Putnam

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3. **Explore the set of thematically-related books to identify core content-area vocabulary.**
   Content area vocabulary is often identified as a common obstacle for students who are English learners (Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000). According to Peregoy and Boyle (2008), English learners must develop a vocabulary that includes both general high-frequency words and academic content words which occur less frequently, but are essential for learning subjects such as math, science, history, and literature. According to Saville-Troike (1984), "(v)ocabulary knowledge in English is the most important aspect of oral English proficiency for academic achievement" (p. 216), and that, accordingly, vocabulary instruction for English learners should be closely related to students' subject area classes. For students studying English for academic purposes, academic vocabulary can be viewed as high frequency vocabulary (Nation, 2001).

   When teaching English learners, teachers cannot provide instruction for every content area vocabulary word. In today's classrooms, since instructional time is divided among a myriad of curricular demands, selecting vocabulary words for English learners requires careful consideration. It is important to focus instruction on vocabulary words which students are likely to encounter often in oral and written language, but which are difficult for them to learn independently.

   To help determine which words will be the most useful additions to English learners' vocabulary repertoire, teachers can use the idea of levels, or tiers, as a lens for looking at words (Beck, et al., 2002). For English learners, Tier 1 words often express concepts that are familiar in their primary language. However, although the concept is known, the English label may be

unfamiliar. Often, these words can be taught by pointing to a picture (e.g., of a "butterfly"), or by demonstrating (e.g., "walk"). Cognates which are high frequency words in English and Spanish (e.g., family/familia) are Tier 1 words, and can be clarified readily. Tier 1 words, however, including those which are difficult to illustrate or demonstrate (e.g., "uncle"), multiple meaning words (e.g. "march"), everyday expressions (e.g., "once upon a time") or idioms (e.g., "make up your mind") require greater explanation.

Tier 3 words are often domain-specific and are found mostly in content area texts. Tier 3 words, (e.g., "peninsula" or "isotope") can be selected for instruction based on their importance for understanding the texts students are reading, and are best explained as needed at point-of-contact (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005).

Tier 2 words have particular importance. Because these words are increasingly prevalent in written texts as students move through the grades, knowledge of Tier 2 words will have an impact on students' text comprehension and, accordingly, should be the focus of most vocabulary instruction. Tier 2 words are more complex than those in Tier 1, and are often words for which students understand the overall concept but lack the knowledge of words to use to describe the concept specifically and precisely (Beck, et al., 2002). Many can be used across varied contexts.

When choosing words to use as the core vocabulary for *Vocabulary Plus*, teachers read through the informational texts selected as part of the thematic text set. They identify both high-use Tier 2 words and Tier 3 words which will enhance students' listening comprehension and which have utility specifically for ongoing content-based discussions about the topical text.

Figure 4 – Sample vocabulary

huge (Tier 1)	**crowns (Tier 2)**	**forest floor (Tier 3)**
cover (Tier 1)	**bromeliads (Tier 3)**	**layers (Tier 2)**
decay (Tier 2)	**canopy (Tier 2)**	**emergent layer (Tier 3)**
understory (Tier 3)		

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4. **Use a graphic organizer for creating a poster which provides a visual introduction to both the instructional content and the interrelationships among core vocabulary words.**

Graphic organizers help English language learners to understand grade-level text while keeping the meaning, academic, and cognitive levels of the content intact. They modify difficult text so that content is illustrated in a meaningful way (Calderon, 2007). For English learners, graphic organizers serve as a visual link between language and content.   They provide a visual display for illustrating concepts and the interrelationships among these concepts within a text (Armbruster & National Institute for Literacy, 2001), and help English learners to learn concepts without depending solely on language for understanding (Diaz-Rico, 2004). Graphic organizers assist all children, especially those who are English learners, in recognizing essential information as well as its relationship with supporting ideas.   The use of graphic organizers reduces the amount of text for English learners while retaining lesson concepts.

Graphic organizers also assist English learners in understanding concepts while reducing the short-term memory concept load. When concepts are displayed visually, English learners can focus more on language learning. Graphic organizers often form a connection between students' prior knowledge in their first language by linking content and language. The use of graphic organizers for teaching concepts effectively engages students in discussion and enables them to use meaningful context for vocabulary learning (Alberta Education, 2007). Using organizers facilitates access and recall of information through rehearsal (the presentation again or reformulation of information to either oneself or to others) – by requiring a "deeper level of processing information" (Peragoy & Boyle, 2008, p. 368).

The patterns of graphic organizers used include:

- *Hierarchical* organizers - linear organizers that include a main concept along with levels of subconcepts;
- *Conceptual* organizers - made up of a central idea with supporting examples and/or characteristics;
- *Sequential* organizers - arrange events in a chronology with a specific beginning and end, problem and solution, cause and effect, or process and product;
- *Cyclical* organizers - display a series of events in a circular format in continuous or successive sequence with no beginning or end (Calderón, 2007).

In *Vocabulary Plus*, teachers use graphic organizers to structure and illustrate relationships among target vocabulary and concepts. This organizer is a visual representation/overview of key topical ideas. For example, for a *Vocabulary Plus* unit about the rainforest, the names and locations of the various layers are important for understanding the ecosystem. Teachers construct a graphic organizer for the central idea of "rainforest," which depicts the sky-to-ground locations of the layers, i.e. canopy, understory, shrub layer, and forest floor. They place core vocabulary words and pictures strategically on the poster to indicate their relationships to one or more of the rainforest layers. As students begin to learn about the rainforest, this visual displays of knowledge facilitates discussion and sharing of information as they make connections among their prior knowledge and the new information.

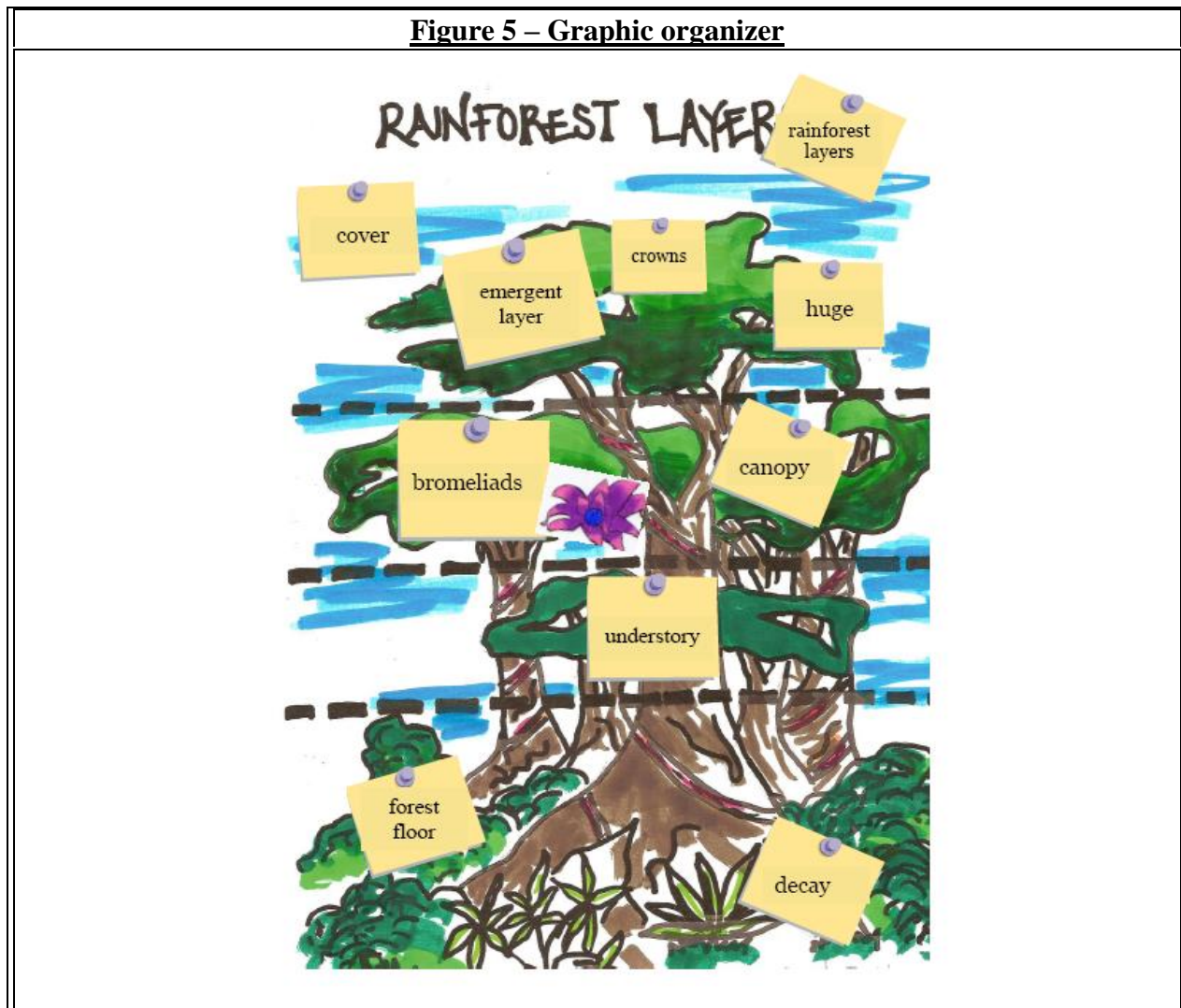Figure 5 is an example of a conceptual graphic organizer for use with the rainforest theme.

Figure 5 – Graphic organizer

Illustration by Lauren Pollack

5. **Use the poster to engage students in a conversation about the meaning of and interrelationships among core vocabulary before they engage in read-alouds.**

Vocabulary knowledge can have a significant impact on students' comprehension. "Preteaching unfamiliar vocabulary enhances children's comprehension of ideas related to the vocabulary (Wixson, 1986, p. 317). As Nagy (1988) suggests, "(v)ocabulary knowledge is fundamental to reading comprehension; one cannot understand text without knowing what most of the words mean… "(p. 1).

Preteaching or front loading (Dutro & Moran, 2003) can prepare English learners for future learning by developing background knowledge and vocabulary related to the content they will encounter (Roit, 2006). By front loading target vocabulary, teachers help English learners to generate a feeling of familiarity about the content, develop a sense of success (Roit, 2006) and create a belief that they will be able to understand and participate in discussions about content material.

As teachers focus attention on the *Vocabulary Plus* poster, they guide students in using visual cues and the organizational structure of the graphic organizer for identifying the relationships of target words to each other and to the larger topics before the students listen actively to read-alouds. They also guide students in learning vocabulary by connecting familiar examples in context to less familiar examples in thematic context. In this way, English learners use their background knowledge as a foundation for learning topic-specific word meanings. This front loading enables English learners to better use text context, increases their focus on new vocabulary, and strengthens their content area listening abilities.

When introducing a new meaning for a target word during *Vocabulary Plus*, teachers pronounce the word, and then ask students to repeat it. This familiarizes students with the sound of the word and provides the auditory clues to enable students to notice the word when it occurs during read-alouds. Teachers present the word first in a meaningful and familiar context, and then in a content-specific context. See Figure 6 for an example based on the rainforest theme.

Figure 6 – Introducing a new context for familiar word

Teacher: Say "floor."
Students: Floor.
Teacher – (familiar context): When we talk about a floor, we mean the part of the room we walk on. We look down to see the floor.
Teacher – (thematic content area context): In the rainforest, the floor is the bottom layer. Let's look at our poster of the rainforest layers. The layer down at the bottom of the trees is the forest floor.

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6. **Engage students in interactive read-alouds and subsequent instructional conversations and activities about the read-alouds using target/core vocabulary.**

Interactive read-alouds

Listening as adults read aloud to them is an effective way for English learners to learn vocabulary (Antunez, 2002). By reading aloud non-fiction books, teachers expose English learners to varied texts which range across content areas and include illustrations and photographs to support textual content (Cappellini, 2005). Both text and visuals within the book provide a rich context for discussing the meanings of target vocabulary.

English learners make substantial gains in vocabulary simply by listening to read-alouds (Elley, 1997). However, although listening to adults read aloud fosters children's learning of word meanings, verbal interactions expand their knowledge. Children learn word meanings best when the read-aloud is interactive, i.e., when the reader pauses to define unfamiliar words during reading, and engages children in text-based conversations. The discussions that enhance English learners' knowledge of topical vocabulary go beyond simple conversation. Conversations that are structured and focus on relevant academic content strengthen English learners' comprehension and help them to learn the words needed to participate in class discussions.

In *Vocabulary Plus* instruction, teachers and students participate in interactive informational read-alouds in which they connect each book to their own experiences, to other texts, and to their knowledge of the world. Teachers model the ways in which expert readers make sense of the

text and how they form connections, and then guide students in making their own text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections.

During each read-aloud, teachers highlight a limited number of words so that they can help English learners to learn target words at the deeper level of understanding needed to sustain vocabulary growth. Some researchers suggest that teachers present seven or fewer words with which students can work for a relatively long time period (Gersten & Baker, 2000). To strengthen students' vocabulary knowledge, teachers and students engage in conversations about the meaning of and interrelationships among words. They identify the theme of the poster as the focus of discussion, and students share related background information and experiences. The teacher refers to the organizational patterns of the poster to provide students with visual cues for noting the connections among words and the ways in which words are linked to the focus topic. Teachers guide students' use of text visuals, including pictures, diagrams, and charts; and context clues. Teachers use explanations in student-friendly language, synonyms and antonyms, and gestures and facial expressions. Students and the teacher participate in a conversation about word meanings and the ways in which core vocabulary words relate to the overarching topic and to each other. They respond to what others have said, and build upon each other's ideas.

Reinforcement activities

Following the interactive read-aloud, teachers engage students in activities designed to reinforce and expand their understanding of target vocabulary. Opportunities to work with the words within a variety of activities provide repeated exposure and active engagement in multiple contexts. Activities for reinforcement incorporate varied modalities, since as children hear, see and work with specific words, their learning seems greater (Armbruster, Lehr., & Osborn, 2003).

Knowledge of vocabulary includes breadth, or knowing the varied uses and meanings in different contexts of words, and depth, or understanding fully the meaning of the word (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). In *Vocabulary Plus*, teachers engage English language learners in reinforcement activities to increase their familiarity with instructional vocabulary. The following are examples of activities that can be used after read-alouds:

Sentence stems. English learners may benefit from scaffolding to assist them in formulating oral responses. Using sentence stems (Hickman, et al., 2004) limits task demands by allowing English learners to complete partially finished sentences rather than generate the entire sentence (Gray & Fleischman, 2004). This activity may increase English learners' participation by enabling those with more limited English proficiency to contribute to conversations along with their more proficient peers. For example, when students are discussing the layers of the rainforest, the teacher says, "Let's think about the layers of the rainforest. The layer at the top of the rainforest is the _____ (canopy). The layer at the bottom of the rainforest is the _____ (forest floor)."

Questioning. English language learners can use target vocabulary by answering "engagement questions" (Blachowicz, Fisher, & Watts-Taffe, 2005) such as the ones listed below. Responding to these questions accurately requires receptive understanding and a minimal "yes" or "no" expressive response. To increase opportunities for students to use relevant expressive language, teachers can ask students to explain or justify their responses.

1. Do plants *decay* on the *forest floor*?
2. Do *seedlings* grow in the *emergent layer* of the rainforest?
3. Does the *understory* protect the *canopy* from strong sunlight?

Concept sorts. Concept sorts (Bear, Helman, Templeton, Invernizzi, & Johnston, 2007) . require students to divide a set of pictures or words into related groups. For example, for the

rainforest unit, students can sort pictures or word cards (with pictures on the back if desired) for the following: *bromeliads, crown, canopy, understory, seedlings, forest floor* into categories of *rainforest layers* and *rainforest plants.* Students need not label each picture expressively to complete the sort. They can verbalize the English vocabulary they do know and request assistance for naming the rest. As students describe their sorts, teachers can assess their vocabulary knowledge. Performing sorts capitalizes on participation and sharing (Helman, 2004), and provides opportunities to enhance students' topical knowledge and oral language.

Vocabulary word wall. Teachers and students can create a thematic word wall using word and picture cards for the target vocabulary. The word wall can serve as a reference for oral and written language activities. Teachers select the words that are most important (Cunningham, 2004) for the current topic, and can use students' input to decide periodically about which words and pictures are no longer needed on the wall (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2009). The removed cards can be kept for future reference.

Graffiti boards. A graffiti board (Short, et al., 1996) is a motivating way of using pictures and words for unstructured brainstorming. Students work in groups with each group member taking a portion of a large piece of chart paper to draw or write her thoughts (Gilmore & Day, 2006), and connections about the read-aloud and target vocabulary. Then, group members share their graffiti with one another. This activity enables students to discuss ideas in a small

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Figure 7 – Rainforest role play

   Welcome to the rainforest! You are a team of explorers on your first visit to the rainforest. You have several jobs. First, you must walk through the rainforest and look around. Then, you must talk to each other about what you see happening in each layer. Next, you must name and describe animals and plants that you see in the emergent layer, canopy, understory, and forest floor. Last, you must talk about how you can use plants from the rainforest at home. Good luck!

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group setting which may be more comfortable for some, and learn from one another.

Vocabulary role play. Vocabulary role play (Herrell, 2000) connects English language learners' prior knowledge, current content area learning, and target thematic vocabulary that is new or being used in a novel way. After students have worked with the target vocabulary through front loading and interactive read-alouds, they use the vocabulary in context through role-playing. Students work in groups to create and perform skits during which they use and demonstrate vocabulary. Frequently, several groups receive the same vocabulary words but develop different skits, demonstrating multiple uses of the same set of words in different contexts. Through vocabulary role plays, English learners have an opportunity to see and experience the vocabulary in different contexts, and to compare and contrast these contexts.

Conclusion

   For English learners, the ability to read and comprehend in English is key to acquiring grade-level academic content. Their ability to read and understand English text is influenced by their knowledge of vocabulary. Accordingly, learning English vocabulary is essential for academic learning.

   When learning English vocabulary, students benefit from participating with peers in motivating, multi-sensory activities that emphasize oral language. *Vocabulary Plus* involves students in actively listening to and discussing engaging informational trade books focusing on grade-appropriate content area themes. As students participate in a wide variety of pre-reading,

during reading, and post-reading activities, they use target vocabulary repeatedly in varied contexts.

    Vocabulary Plus is a productive strategy for active vocabulary learning within the context of familiar classroom practices. This strategy provides an effective link between language and content learning, while promoting the peer collaboration essential for classroom success.

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