

Foreword

This book is about *nourishing our students' minds*. This well-crafted book by Lubliner and Scott is an exceptional resource when teaching students vocabulary and concepts. This link between vocabulary and concept development is important to consider here, for when we teach vocabulary we are teaching concepts. Through the routines and activities here, students explore their thinking, and who doesn't like to think about and for themselves? *What do you know?* The activities in this book guide students in a search for what they bring to the vocabulary, and then students get underway to organize the ideas they are studying. Students' abilities to categorize and organize their thinking hierarchically are key to critical thinking, and by exploring vocabulary deeply, students see inside the language to uncover ideas and concepts. This vocabulary instruction also teaches study habits in your discipline by guiding teachers to identify, prioritize, and present vocabulary activities that are interwoven with strategies students will use throughout the year. This book nourishes my thinking and puts a smile on my face!

In that last sentence is the link I want to make in this foreword: the link between the need to teach students vocabulary for logic or thinking (the cognitive), and to teach for students' motivation in learning (feelings, the visceral, the physical). These aspects add up to confidence, confidence that we have in teaching, and confidence that students have in learning. I'll return to the word *confidence* a little later, but for now, consider the idea that students are nourished by the cognitive and physical workings of words and vocabulary instruction.

When we experience a word, there are the physical and the cognitive parts, perhaps like the yin and yang of a word. There in the history or morphology of the vocabulary lies the more complete involvement students can have learning about words, and their meanings. For example, the story of the word *nourish*, the metaphor for vocabulary learning in this book, began with organic and physical aspects from the Latin word for *nurse* and the derived Indo-European root (s)nāu, "to swim," and "to let flow." As the thinking of speakers evolved, the mind connection to the word *nourish* was made. This we see in the surfacing of the word in Old French, 1000 AD to 1300 AD. Today, the word *nourish* has a cognitive denotation in addition to the physical manifestations of the word. Likewise, as students' thinking evolves, they make mind connections as in a cognitive denotation for *nourish*. Students' ideas and thinking are nourished,

as in a healthy diet, nurtured, as ideas exist in the garden of our minds. Vocabulary instruction is nourishment for students' minds.

Before school, vocabulary is nourished at home, and we know how important home language use and interaction are; from researchers like Hart and Risley (1995) we learn that by school age, some children have heard 30 million more words than other children. Teachers also recognize how students respond intellectually and socially to various narrative styles and structures (McCabe, 1997). Culture, feelings, intellect, and interests can join in these early years to form a base for the vocabulary students learn.

Vocabulary development is intertwined with reading achievement, and the relationship between vocabulary and literacy is reciprocal. Vocabulary learning and instruction are closely linked to literacy learning, and this too is an organic link in which students' knowledge of phonics and spelling interacts with their vocabulary knowledge. In beginning literacy, students' oral language and limited phonics and spelling knowledge feed a slow movement through easy reading materials, while sound and spelling forge their orthographic knowledge. Until the time that literacy is a communication that serves the rapid transmission of information, listening—or, as Edmund Henderson said, “language through the ear hole”—is the primary avenue in learning vocabulary. Once students' orthographic knowledge is in command of single-syllable and most two-syllable words, literacy can become the primary avenue for vocabulary learning. The reciprocal relationship between reading and oral language becomes weighted in the direction of literacy feeding oral language: nearly all of the new vocabulary that students learn from the late intermediate and advanced levels of reading, for most, from high school on, comes from literacy.

In literacy development and instruction, vocabulary is part of the word study equation: word study = phonics + vocabulary + spelling. For intermediate and advanced readers, phonic study is influenced by the complexity of the words and the subsequent changes that are made in pronunciation with changes in syntactic function—that is, *invite/invitation* and *confide/confidence*—and the change in the pronunciation of the vowels with changes in syntactic role; that is, verb/noun. Phonics is important as directed by vocabulary and spelling. Vocabulary and spelling join in the study at these upper levels in the study of morphology, and as you will see in this book, grammar study in English and the language arts can be integrated into word study when words are studied deeply. Students' study of morphology begins with easy prefixes and suffixes and gradually includes the harder affixes as well as the roots. Can we help students see that the word *confidence* is a noun with three parts: *con* + *fid* + *ence*, that there is in this word a prefix that means *with* + a root related to words like *fidelity* + *ence*, a noun-forming suffix? Can we also have them look inside of the word root for related words semantically: *allegiance*, *accuracy*, *faith*, *fealty*, and *loyalty*? The same deep word study in vocabulary instruction applies equally well in science in words like *epi*-+*dermal*, or *hydro*-+*electr*+*-ic*.

Students' development suggests how to teach vocabulary; some students need the oral support through the ears, and others read with enough proficiency to use their eyes to bring vocabulary to life. The strategies taught in

this book, with the rich set of templates in Appendix B, make it easy to bring eyes and ears together for students of different reading proficiencies and language backgrounds; your partner studies of vocabulary are a match for the routine and cue cards the authors have created. The chapter on instruction with students learning English, and the teaching experiences with English learners presented in other chapters are informative and soulful because you'll feel for students when there are instructional mismatches, and thoughtful as we look into how to teach students vocabulary as they learn a new language.

What we are doing in vocabulary development is teaching students to see into words, and we are teaching them ways to organize the ideas related to the words. Vocabulary study is a thoughtful process that students use to organize the information in their content area studies. The structural study of words in the morphology is a way of getting the ideas in front of students so that they are prepared to experience the ideas and information in their content studies. Examining related words morphologically and conceptually leads to the internalization of the vocabulary and the generalizations of pattern and meanings.

In teaching vocabulary, educators are on the cutting edge of understanding human thought. The interaction of vocabulary and thinking is truly one of the fundamental areas of language study by scientists and philosophers. For many years, we have wondered if language influences thought or thought influences language. *Cogito, ergo sum*, Latin for "I think, therefore I am" was what Descartes said about the importance of thinking, and, by the way, it is through language that we share ideas and thinking. Vygotsky, the psychologist, demonstrated that learning and language have social roots and ecologies that affect how and what we learn. About the same time, the famous language philosopher Wittgenstein began his career thinking that language could be structured with a logical order and precision of expression that left no ambiguity in the logic or truth of one's ideas. By the end of his career, the rigor of truth and logic through language was supplanted by a social view of language as a series of language games. Similarly, the famous behaviorist B. F. Skinner, of all people, made a vocabulary connection between thinking and feeling in one of his last articles in which he traced the etymologies of eighty words to show how the meaning of words evolved over time from statements of physical conditions to more abstract principles and ideas. He observed of the study of the history of words, that "etymology is the archaeology of thought" (1989, p. 13). Teaching each day, educators probably have an answer to this weighty question. I think that most educators sense that vocabulary encourages thinking, and that thinking nurtures vocabulary and language development. You will find this book an important resource for teaching thinking through vocabulary. I think this book will bring a smile to your face, too, because you will feel a new confidence teaching vocabulary in interesting ways that encourage learning.

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