

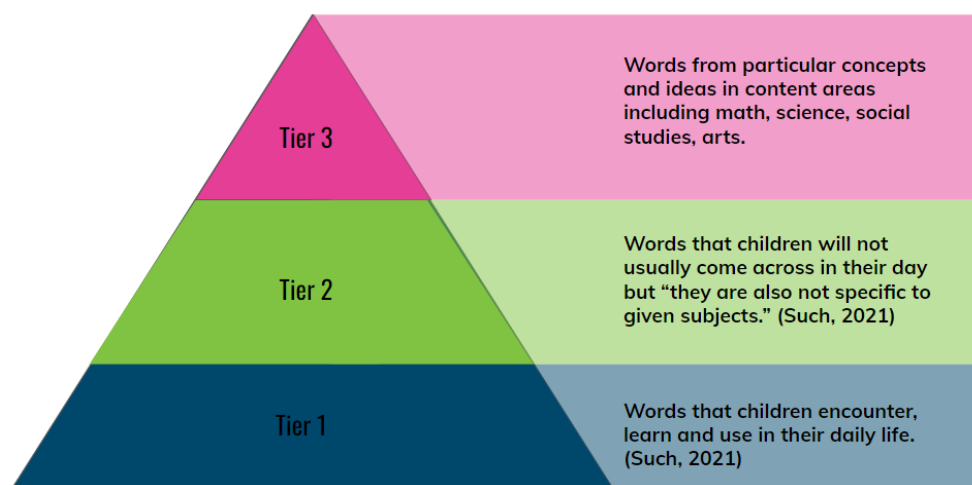
Foundational Skill: Vocabulary

“In order for children to become successful readers, we want to start building their vocabulary skills early.” (Strive for Five, pg, 90)

“Learning the meaning of new words is a particularly important part of children’s language and literacy development. Children must know words and their meaning for speaking and listening as well as for reading and writing.” (NAEYC - Literacy Learning for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers: Key Practices for Educators, pg. 7)

Vocabulary instruction is about building meaning and comprehension. A rich vocabulary supports learning about the world, encountering new ideas, and enjoying the beauty of language. Strong vocabulary fuels comprehension AND strong comprehension helps acquire more vocabulary. Vocabulary instruction looks different from word solving strategies, word family work and other encoding strategies. Students do not need to be proficient readers to engage with rich vocabulary. (SCDSB Literacy - [Explicit Vocabulary Instruction](#))

Tier 1, 2 and 3 Words



Tier 1 Words: Words that children encounter, learn and use in their daily life. (Such, 2021) These words do not usually require instructional attention for students to understand their meanings.

*ML students will have different basic words based on their culture/language, and therefore will need instructional attention if the words are assumed from daily life of Canadian English speakers. **Examples:** Warm, tired, run, dog.

Tier 2 Words: Words that children will not usually come across in their day but “they are also not specific to given subjects.” (Such, 2021). These words are of high use for language learners. They are found infrequently in conversation, therefore students are less likely to learn these words independently compared with tier 1 words. **Examples:** construction, accomplishment, expensive

Tier 3 Words: Words from particular concepts and ideas in content areas including math, science, social studies, arts. Frequency of use is quite low in everyday conversation, and generally limited to content areas. **Examples:** triangle, addition, mammal.

[Tier 1, 2 and 3 Words Chart](#)

In Kindergarten, educators are encouraged to pre-teach 2 to 3 words before a read aloud. When choosing words, select words that are important to comprehend the book, advanced or content specific words and highly useful words that students will encounter again in formal language. (Strive-For-Five, pg. 77, 78)

Multilingual Learners

It is important to build MLLs English vocabulary. This can only be done when we take time to intentionally teach the vocabulary they need for the lesson and/or story. Identifying what are tier 1, 2, or 3 words will help you scaffold your vocabulary lesson and differentiate for your MLs. It is important when teaching new vocabulary for ML students that you make connections to their home language and/or these [home language sounds](#). Building on what a student already knows will help them retain these new words best.

Multilingual learners need intentional support in language comprehension to become successful readers. In addition to explicit vocabulary instruction, adding visual aids, such as picture vocabulary cards and physical gestures are effective tools to support multilingual learners. Another strategy is connecting the English word or concept to a word or concept in their native language that has similar spelling, pronunciation and meaning. (Strive-For-Five, pg 81).

Strategies and Activities to Embed Vocabulary Development

W - whole group

S - small group, one-on-one support

P - play

R - routines



Vocabulary Games (W, S)

Games to support building your students' vocabulary

- [Amazing Words](#)
- [Candy Lane](#)
- [Vocabulary Words for Candy Land and Amazing Words](#)
- [Leaning Tower](#)
- [Choose and Chat](#)
- [About Me](#)
- [Multiple Meaning Bugs](#)
- [Transportation Key Sort](#)
- [Another Word](#)

Word of the Day (W, T)

Come up with your own words that connect to class inquiries, use [Tier 2 vocabulary words](#), or use books for ideas, such as “Merriam-Webster's Word of the Day” or “Collins A Word a Day: 365 words for curious minds.” It is important to build meaning by pairing the word with familiar words that the students already know and use, using the word in context (e.g., in a sentence), and using actions, movement and/ or pictures or images to support meaning

[Repeated Interactive Read Aloud](#) (W, S, P)

Repeated interactive read alouds, a systematic method of reading aloud, allow teachers to scaffold children's understanding of the book being read, model strategies for making inferences and explanations, and teach vocabulary and concepts. A storybook is read three times in slightly different ways in order to increase the amount and quality of children's analytical talk as they answer carefully crafted questions. During the first reading, teachers introduce the story's problem, insert comments, ask a few key questions, and finally ask a “why” question calling for extended explanation. This is accompanied by elaborations on a few key vocabulary words. Second reads capitalise on children's growing comprehension of the story by providing enriched vocabulary explanations and asking additional inference and explanation questions. Third reads consist of guided reconstruction of the story in which children recount information as well as provide explanations and commentary.

[A Day at the Pumpkin Patch](#)

[Beetle](#)

[Big Words for Little People](#)

[Face to Face with Frogs](#)



[Giraffe and Bird](#)
[Owen and Mzee](#)
[Scaredy Squirrel](#)
[Stanley's Party](#)

Modelling of Tier 2 Vocabulary during Conversations (W, S, P, R)

When noticing and naming and extending student learning, educators can model the use of [Tier 2 vocabulary](#).

Examples:

- “I notice that you put the animals into different sections.”
- “Why is your second structure more stable than your first?”
- “When you use the straw, it makes really big bubbles in the water.”

Use new words in daily conversations, so that students can hear and use them in context.

Examples:

- “You helped the plant survive by making sure it got water everyday.”
- “Can you throw the ball and hit the target?”

[Five Steps for Small Group and Individual Tier 2 Vocabulary Support](#)

1. Choose read-alouds with rich vocabulary versus high-frequency words.
2. Identify target vocabulary words. Include nouns, verbs, adjectives. These should reflect general academic language that are unfamiliar to students, yet commonly found in other resources. Start with 3 words per book. Make word meanings explicit and clear.
3. Script vocabulary introduction and reinforcement activities.
 - a. Use child-friendly language.
 - b. Make word meanings explicit and clear.
 - c. Provide examples of the word in different everyday contexts.
 - d. Think about what specific elements make the word different from other words.
 - e. Develop a script including definitions, example sentences.
 - f. Develop student-friendly explanations for discussing word meanings
 - g. Put words on sticky notes where the words are found in the books.
4. Prepare multiple exposures throughout the week. Get students actively involved with thinking about and using the meanings right away.
5. Assess student learning. It is important to monitor student progress in developing target skills and language

Picture Vocabulary Cards

How to Teach using Picture Cards

1. Say the word
2. Define and explain the word
3. Act out the words or use it in a sentence
4. Revisit and reteach the word

Learning Words in Meaningful Categories

Studies show that learning words in meaningful categories is helpful for children (Hadely et al, 2019; Neuman, Newman, & Dwyer 2011). Teaching words in meaningful categories (e.g., different types of foods, different emotions and ways to move our legs) through play and experiences assist children in making connections between words and concepts.

Examples:

- Sorting the food in the dramatic play area into different categories, such as fruits, vegetables, meat etc.
- Sorting the animals into different categories, such as zoo, farm and underwater animals.
- Matching different facial expressions to the different zones of regulation (e.g., tired and sad are both blue zone feelings)

Nurturing Word Consciousness (W, S, P)

As educators teach more words, students become increasingly word conscious and interested in learning and using new words. You can get your students interested about words by playing games where they put their thumb up when they hear a specific “new” focal word. Remember to provide a visual reminder of the focal words.

Run & Touch Game (W, S, P)

Provide students with a variety of different descriptive words and have them run and touch different objects in their environment that correspond with each word. For example, touch something that is green or flat, sit on something that is a built structure, stand on something natural ...* Encourage students to return to you on the agreed upon signal.

Four Square Vocabulary Map (S)

Use informational texts about topics of interest/inquiries and fill out the vocabulary map with your students (e.g. word, What is it?, What are some examples?, and What is it like?)

Concept Picture Sorts (S, P)

Students store words in their brain by grouping words that have similar meaning. As a result, categorising words, pictures and concepts assist students in recalling words.

- Choose a category (e.g., animals, things that have legs)
- Introduce the concept and help students brainstorm items that belong to the category (e.g., things that are alive)
- Assist students in contrasting the concept with items that do not fit the category (e.g., things that are not alive)
- Provide pictures for student to sort into categories

Variation: Provide students with a group of pictures and instruct them to find all of the pictures that fit a given category. Students can also group pictures according to their own categories/groupings.

Cloud Watching (W, S, P)

Have students lie on their back and watch the clouds. Then have them orally describe their observations and draw the shapes and pictures of what they see

Additional Outdoor Learning activities

[Mud Painting](#)

[Getting to know a Puddle](#)

[Washing Nature](#)

[Exploring Mini-Beasts](#)

[Autumn Colour Bingo](#)

[Colour Bingo](#)

[Spring Bingo](#)

[Winter Bingo](#)

Scavenger Hunts (W, S, P)

Create or find a simple scavenger hunt including vocabulary related to different items that students might find inside or outside. You can work as a class or put students into groups and see how many things they can find. At the end, use a sharing circle to discuss your findings.

Variation: You can have students co-construct the scavenger hunt based on what they think they might find.

[Seasonal Nature Scavenger Hunt - Using your Senses](#)

[Using your Senses Scavenger Hunt](#)

[Community Scavenger Hunt](#)

[Scavenger Hunt Examples](#)



Word Association (S)

Word association is an effective strategy for building vocabulary. Have one student say a word, and the next student must quickly say a word that is associated with it. Continue with all students in the group without repeating words.

Talk a Word (S)

Say a vocabulary word that the students have learned along with a prompt from the content the students are learning. Have students engage in a discussion with their partner about the word and topic. Encourage students to say at least one sentence using the word.

Variation: You can use photos to help stimulate discussion using target vocabulary words.

[Discovery Hike Cards](#) (W, S, P)

Students are introduced to a variety of describing words and are encouraged to find examples of these words in their environment. For example, find things that are dry: leaves, grass.

[Discovery Hike Card Instructions](#)

Listening Walk

Read “The Listening Walk” by Paul Showers aloud. Follow up by taking the class or a group of students on a listening walk around the school or in their community. Walk and stop in various locations, staying perfectly quiet for 1 minute at a time to listen/hear sounds in the environment. Have students share their observations with a partner or a small group of students.

Example: I hear the birds chirping at each other and I hear bees buzzing in the flowers as they get nectar.”

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