

Vocabulary Learning Center Activity: Pictionary

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a. Introduction

- According to Reading Rockets, vocabulary is defined as the words we need to understand in order for us to communicate effectively. (Reading Rockets, 2016)
- Vocabulary is an important aspect of reading because it plays a fundamental role in the reading process. Vocabulary contributes greatly to the student's ability to comprehend what they're reading. Students cannot understand a passage or text if they don't know what most of the words mean. Our students typically learn the meanings of words indirectly through everyday experiences with oral and written language. They also learn words through instruction such as games or center activities that provide students with various opportunities for practice.

b. Body

The activity I chose for my vocabulary center was *Pictionary*. This game has students split into two teams. One student from each team has the opportunity to roll a die to get a 1,2,3, or 4. Depending on the number they roll they will draw out that specific word on the card. So if I roll a 3 and the category is people's jobs I look at the third word on that list and draw it out for my team to guess. Whichever team yells out the correct word first earns a point. This game requires students to know the vocabulary words in order for them to draw them out. It also helps students remember their vocabulary words because they're associating them with pictures.

c. Conclusion

- Answer the question "So What?"

Developing vocabulary in young readers is important because the more vocabulary words they know, the better they are able to comprehend what it is they're reading. Vocabulary isn't only important for comprehension of text, it also helps students understand others when they speak and helps them express their own ideas. Knowledge of vocabulary is connected to effective reading and writing skills. Research shows that students with limited vocabularies tend to be poor readers which means they read less and less as the vocabulary in passages becomes more difficult. To help prevent this cycle, teachers use direct instruction such as games or center activities.

- Synthesize, don't summarize

According to *Effective Vocabulary Instruction* by Joan Sedita, vocabulary is the glue that holds stories, ideas, and content together. What she means by this is that vocabulary is what makes

comprehension accessible to students. Without vocabulary students are unable to understand what they read because most of the words are unfamiliar to them. When a student is unable to understand the passage, it becomes frustrating for them. When students find reading frustrating they opt out of reading which is one of the most important ways for them to develop and learn their vocabulary. Word knowledge is not only important for comprehension, studies have shown that there is a strong correlation between academic success and word knowledge. Students who have large word banks are able to understand new ideas and concepts quickly. If teachers don't help students adequately and steadily grow their vocabulary then their student's reading comprehension will be affected in the long run.

- Redirect your readers

Students word knowledge varies depending on the amount of reading they are exposed to as emergent readers. As teachers we have to remember that our students don't all know the same words so we have to be able to help minimize the gap that exists in their vocabulary through direct instruction. Building vocabulary knowledge in our students doesn't necessarily mean having them use the word in a sentence. As teachers we can create new fun and interesting ways to teach vocabulary such as charades, Pictionary, or even vocabulary bingo. If we as teachers help students build their vocabulary they will see improvement in comprehension and fluency. We have to remember that we are trying to move from learning to read to reading to learn.

d. References

Reading Rockets. (2016, April 14). Fluency. Retrieved March 22nd, 2018 from <http://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/vocabulary>

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