It’s Fun To Teach Vocabulary That Empowers

By Dr. Brad Biggs

Many of us are familiar with the ideas of the three tiers of vocabulary, different kinds of vocabulary for different purposes (Baumann & Graves, 2010; Nagy & Townsend, 2012; Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013). At our REG breakfast this winter I shared a bit about how at least these tiers can be a focus for instruction that empowers underserved students. This is fun stuff because it gets to the core of how we can help increase students’ self-efficacy, the belief that they have the power to read, write, and learn, and ultimately, succeed.

Tier 1 is that group of words that students use in their daily lives, like words in the sentences, “I didn’t like lunch today. Ours is, like, the worst cafeteria ever.” Some of our English learners need instruction in some of these words and phrases, but the real empowerment for our underserved students comes with careful selection, explicit instruction, and gradual release of responsibility with Tier 2 words, words like those in this sentence, “She said I had to synthesize the theses from three persuasive essays on this website.”

Words like these, with specialized use for communication in the context of school, are the keys to success for students. When students know what these words are asking of students and how to act on them, students build success and bolster their belief that they can succeed. Many students do not have the advantage of families who know how to navigate the demands of school, so when we select Tier 2 words for instruction, words that are in our lessons frequently and words that are part of important tasks, we are selecting words for instruction that will help our students build their own success. We make an empowering part of schooling visible.
Following is a table of different kinds of Tier 2 words. We can strive to be aware of these words as they come up in our lesson planning, our choice of readings, and our classroom talk, and consider creative ways to teach them explicitly, to work them into practice exercises and assignments for students, and to require students to use them and then give feedback. Below the chart, I’ve included a few of the many good resources out there that help us create good vocabulary instruction.

The fun thing about all this for teachers is that we get to teach vocabulary not because it’s from “that list of important words,” but because it’s a tool to empower our students. Happy teaching!

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References


Congratulations to Janet Bagwell, M.S.
Named Outstanding Alumni for 2016

Department faculty and REG members recognized Janet Bagwell as this year's recipient of the Outstanding Alumna Award. Jan's significant contributions to her campus, profession, and colleagues inspire us all.

Janet completed her M.S. Education with a concentration in Reading at CSUF in 1998. She went on to complete the UC Irvine Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language and was a UC Irvine Summer Writing Institute Fellowship. After teaching college reading classes at Cypress College and Cal State Fullerton, Jan was appointed to a tenured position at Saddleback College. She was named Reading Professor in 2000.

At Saddleback College, Jan served as Department Chair, Academic Reading Center Coordinator, Academic Senator, and BSI (Basic Skills Initiative) Steering Committee Discipline Expert. She developed curriculum for independent reading labs in the Academic Reading Center and “Reading for Anatomy” and “Reading for Physiology” in partnership with the science programs. She partnered with Counseling, Child Development, and Science Departments to create and present Reading Strategies Workshops and worked with the Matriculation Coordinator in the "Freshman Advantage" program presenting a series of summer presentations explaining the importance of instruction in academic reading skills.

In addition, she wrote the course outline for a critical reading class for transfers to University of California and California State Universities and created an online critical reading class. She has presented dozens of faculty professional development workshops for Academic Reading Strategies across the content areas. She also served as a key member of multiple academic success committees and high school outreach committees.

Janet has been an active member of multiple professional associations. She served as Treasurer and President of California Chapter of College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) and Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and President of REG. She was recognized twice as Volunteer of the Year for REG. Janet has made many presentations at CRLA, the Claremont Reading Conference, and CATE Conferences. She was one of the authors of the CRLA position statement on Rights of Adult Readers and Learners. While still in graduate school she conducted tutor training in reading strategies for “America Reads” tutors at CSUF. Ash Bishop dubbed her the Queen of America Reads.

Janet has also, and most importantly, served as a mentor for countless CSUF graduate students who aspire to follow in her footsteps. Both Saddleback students and CSUF graduate students have benefitted in countless ways by the time and effort she takes to provide and implement the informal internship program at Saddleback College for CSUF MS students.

Janet Bagwell truly exemplifies the kind of Titan we are proud to acknowledge as our Outstanding Alumna for 2016.
We send bouquets of thanks to the following donors to the Hancock Fund. Your donations support scholarships for children in the Reading Center and graduate students in the Literacy and Reading Education MS Program.

Janet Bagwell  Kathi Bartle Angus  
Mary Ellmann  Debbie Hancock
Margaret Hirsen  Gena Lovett
Leslee Milch  Andrea Sward

Thank you for your generous donations. The opportunity drawing raised $432 for the Hazel Miller Croy Center and Hancock Fund. Thanks also to the breakfast attendees who purchased a record number of tickets!

Teri FitzMaurice for Cookbook Basket
Linda Vander Wende for Curious George Basket
Carlen Le-Hessinger and Matt Harris for Star Wars Basket
Tina Lane for Gardening Bag
Kimberly Mundala for Princess Bride Basket and hand-painted children’s table
Kathi Bartle Angus for Reader’s Basket
Jan Bagwell for Tote Bag of Books and Goodies
Department of Literacy and Reading for 2 CSUF Mugs with Key Chains and Pens
David Reid for 2 Barnes & Noble Gift Cards
Alumni Showcase

Andrea Rodich-Vitek (Class of 2009)
Instructional Coach
Manuel L. Real Elementary School
Val Verde Unified School District, CA

In 2012, after teaching middle school for ten years, I became the instructional coach for Manuel L. Real Elementary School. I oversee my school's Response to Intervention (RTI) process, present for school and district professional development, create curriculum aligned to the Common Core to be used by all district teachers, coordinate events like Read Across America and Career Day, and serve as the school's Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Coordinator. In addition to my role as instructional coach, I provide demo lessons and coach teachers on different teaching strategies, and I am the test site coordinator for all matters related to the California Assessment of Student Performance and Strategies (CAASPP).

I credit my time at CSU Fullerton in the Reading Program as a reason why I have been successful in my job. I also have started a family and I have two sons, Connor and Dillon, ages 3 and 6. They keep me really busy!

To connect, you can reach Andrea at arodich-vitek@valverde.edu

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GET CONNECTED

Reading Program alumni are involved in teaching, leadership, publishing, writing, training, tutoring, and a myriad of other activities that we know you want to know about. REG continues to fulfill one of the main missions of the organization - NETWORKING!

REG would love to hear from you! Please contact Carlen Hessinger at carlen.le@gmail.com and share with the REG community in an upcoming issue your ongoing success since completing the Reading Program.
ATTENTION READING DEPARTMENT
2015 - 2016 GRADUATES

You and your family are invited to a reception to celebrate your graduation from the Department of Literacy and Reading Education. Please join us in The Reading Center, room EC24 at the conclusion of graduation on **Saturday, May 21st**.

*Alumni who are interested in assisting with the reception should contact Teri Fitz-Maurice at tfitzmaurice@cox.net*
REG Winter Breakfast

Congratulations to our scholarship recipients (left to right): Laura Maguire, Tamarah Matrisch, Hanna Cooper, and Susan Finch.

Attendees collaborate on ways to imbed the three tiers of vocabulary as a focus for instruction in order to empower underserved students.

Alumni enjoy great company and attendees receive wonderful gifts from the Opportunity Drawing donated by REG members and the Department of Literacy and Reading Education.

More photos are available on our Facebook page.
Reading Educators Guild Membership

Membership benefits include:
- three newsletters each year filled with alumni, department, and literacy news
- information about REG events (sponsored speakers, social, networking)
- directory of current members
- opportunity to apply for alumni grants
- opportunity to be included on Reading Department Tutor List

In addition your dues support:
- scholarships for Reading Center children
- scholarships for current graduate students
- Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center activities

The REG membership dues enable REG to make significant contributions to Reading Department students and the community through the Reading Center.

For more information about joining, renewing, or donating, please contact Matt Harris, Vice-President of Membership, at matt80s@yahoo.com or visit http://ed.fullerton.edu/reg/join-us/

Has your contact information and address changed? Please take a moment to update your information, if necessary. Contact Matt or visit the REG website.

Follow the Department of Literacy and Reading Education & The Reading Educators Guild on...

Visit the REG website: http://ed.fullerton.edu/reg/