3

Integrating Vocabulary and Reading Strategy Instruction

✔ PREPARE YOURSELF

Prepare yourself by evaluating your own knowledge. Rate your ability to answer some of the key questions for this chapter. Check the boxes that best describe your prereading knowledge.

Key Concept Questions	Well Informed	Aware	Need Ideas
1. What is strategic reading and how is it developed?	❏	❏	❏
2. How do you integrate vocabulary and reading strategy instruction?	❏	❏	❏
3. What are some classroom-tested examples for connecting vocabulary and reading strategy instruction —through graphic organizers? —through writing? —through drama? —through student self-evaluation?	❏	❏	❏

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ STRATEGY OVERVIEW GUIDE

This chapter presents background, ideas, and strategies to help you understand how vocabulary learning can be integrated with reading instruction that focuses on strategy development. Strategies such as prediction, verification, self-questioning, previewing, and other metacognitive processes naturally incorporate and build vocabulary knowledge. This type of instruction typically takes place in guided reading and involves teacher modeling and scaffolding. In this chapter, we introduce strategies using graphic organizers, writing, drama, and student self-evaluation that develop word knowledge at the same time they build effective reading strategies. The following chart can help you choose suitable instructional strategies for your classroom.

Instructional Strategy	Goal—Use when you want to . . .	Comments
Story structure (p. 48)	Identify and classify selection vocabulary.	Useful for both teacher and students.
Vocab-o-Gram (p. 49)	Organize vocabulary from a narrative selection and make predictions.	Can be used by "vocabulary directors" in literature circles.
Story impressions (p. 53)	Have students write before reading.	Great nudge for creativity.
Word plays (p. 54)	Involve the kinesthetic in learning.	Useful for creating comprehensible input for ELL students.
Knowledge rating (p. 56)	Have students do their own evaluation.	Works best with expository selections.

■ ■ ■ DEVELOPING STRATEGIC READING

What Is Strategic Reading?

A major goal for all classrooms is comprehension development. Teachers want to help their students not only understand specific content materials, but also develop independent strategies for comprehension. For example, imagine a student reading this passage:

> Jesse was dressed in her best party dress and carrying a brightly wrapped package. When she reached Tracy's front door, she rang the bell and waited . . . and waited . . . and waited. After 10 minutes of waiting, she ran home, sobbing.

For most students, this passage is composed of familiar, easy words. However, comprehension involves more than just decoding the words: the reader needs to call up prior knowledge and to make some predictions and inferences to comprehend this simple passage. Prior knowledge of "dressing up" and carrying wrapped packages suggests that some sort of celebration, such as a birthday, is taking place. Making a cause-and-effect connection across the sentences in the passage suggests to most readers that Jesse is crying because she expected a party and there isn't one. Using prior knowledge of cause and effect and motivation, several scenarios can be

suggested: Jesse got the date wrong; Jesse is at the wrong house. These are only two of several options, none of which is explicitly stated by the author. If we predicted that Jesse got the date wrong, we might have to change our predictions when we read the next sentence:

> As she left, Tracy and the other kids snickered behind the door.

We'd have to change our predictions, based on our knowledge of motivation and behavior, to one involving Tracy and the other kids playing a trick on Jesse.

Research on good readers reveals that they use what they already know, and they understand that reading is more than just "getting the words." They recognize that reading also involves reasoning and adding information from their own knowledge. Good readers make predictions based on their prior knowledge and their first impressions from surveying something they are about to read. They use titles, pictures, headings, vocabulary, and other cues from the author to ask themselves questions or make predictions ("I think she came on the wrong day"). As they read, good readers collect new information. This information combines with what they already know and allows them to make inferences about what the author doesn't tell them explicitly ("Hmmm, presents, dress up—it might be a birthday").

Good readers also monitor their reading. They keep track of their hunches, change them when needed ("If they snickered, they must be playing a trick"), and seek help when they can't resolve difficulties. This process of monitoring their own thinking is called **metacognition.** Lastly, good readers respond personally to what they read. They make personal judgments ("That was mean to do to Jesse" or "Maybe she had done something mean to Tracy"), respond personally ("I'd never do that"), and relate reading to their own lives ("Something like this happened to me once"). Their personal response makes the reading experience richer and also enhances comprehension. These actions that assist the reader in interacting with the text are referred to as **reading strategies,** comprehension strategies, or the hallmarks of strategic reading. They are also the components of problem solving.

How Is Strategic Reading Developed?

Instruction aimed at developing these strategies in young readers actively involves them in the actual strategic processes while the teacher provides models and scaffolds learning as needed (see Figure 3.1). The idea is to support students by calling on them to survey the selection, activate prior knowledge, make predictions, gather

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Survey/Activate. To get a basis for prediction, the reader's prior knowledge is activated by something in the text—a title, picture, vocabulary word, or something known about the type of book or the author.

Predict. Make some hypotheses about the topic, the structure, and the content of what will be read based on survey information and what is already known.

Gather data. Read, research, and think to gain information.

Monitor/Refine. Use data, knowledge, and inferences to decide if you are on the right track. Should you change predictions, rethink, or continue with the same ideas?

Respond. Take a personal view. What does this mean to me?

Repeat the cycle.

FIGURE 3.1
Integrative Reading Strategies Used by Good Readers

data from reading, make inferences, and monitor their understanding to refine or change their predictions as they go forward, respond to, and use new information. This process is cyclical and takes place repeatedly during reading.

The teacher's goal is to support the development of these processes in readers by asking questions, providing examples and models, and directing attention with questions or cues. Although the teacher is active in providing these guides and cues, the goal is to lead students through the actual processes, much as a parent helps a child get the feel of riding a bike by running alongside and providing support and guidance. Many types of instruction can help to develop students' abilities to read strategically. The directed reading-thinking activity, or DR-TA (Stauffer, 1969), the know-want-learn, or KWL (Ogle, 1986), and reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) all involve students in these activities and have been shown to develop good reading strategies. The literature on instruction from the past 15 years is rich with ideas for developing strategic readers in the classroom (see Tierney, Readence, & Dishner, 2000, for example). These strategic approaches to reading instruction offer new ways of approaching vocabulary as well.

Why Connect Vocabulary and Strategic Reading Instruction?

Vocabulary instruction is naturally connected with strategic reading instruction. For starters, as you can see by connecting what you read in Chapter 1 with what we've said about developing strategic reading in this chapter, the problem-solving processes for learning new vocabulary are directly related to the processes of strategic reading. Using what you know (prior knowledge), making initial predictions about meaning, and gradually refining that meaning are essential processes in gaining new word meaning and reading strategically.

Second, vocabulary itself can often drive prediction. Those things that help readers cue up prior knowledge are often particular terms and vocabulary. For example, in the sample passage at the beginning of this chapter, the words *brightly wrapped package* and *party dress* may have cued up the prediction *birthday* for many readers. Analyses of classroom comprehension instruction have suggested that prereading attention to developing and activating prior knowledge is critical to good comprehension (Beck, McKeown, McCaslin, & Burkes, 1979; Durkin, 1978–1979). Good instruction emphasizes that talking, thinking, and planning before reading enhance comprehension as they aid readers in developing strategic approaches. Vocabulary stimulates prereading thinking and is an excellent initiator of the prediction process.

Lastly, important instructional benefits can be gained by connecting vocabulary with reading strategy instruction. Making vocabulary instruction an important part of the prereading component of the lesson provides for a more integrated lesson. Traditional lesson organization that has a vocabulary presentation separated from the start of the lesson is time consuming and fragments the lesson. "Collapsing" vocabulary and the prereading segment of the lesson not only saves time, but also makes sense. Using vocabulary as a "reading starter" also allows the teacher to quickly assess students' prior knowledge. Knowledge of vocabulary is a key indicator of prior knowledge and can help a teacher determine when more prereading concept development is needed for a particular selection, chapter, or book.

In conclusion, we can say that the same processes useful for developing a strategic approach to vocabulary are also useful for learning new words. And considering vocabulary as a part of strategic reading lessons not only results in good learning, but provides assessment information and makes efficient use of instructional time.

In Chapter 5 on content reading, we present specific ideas for developing content vocabulary that can be used when you want students to master a specific body of words related to some chapter, selection, or textbook they will be reading. This chapter focuses on developing vocabulary in the context of independent reading strategies.

■ ■ ■ VOCABULARY IN STRATEGIC READING INSTRUCTION

There are many different starting points for developing good predictive strategies. The teacher can start with graphic organizers, writing, dramatization, self-assessment, or any other strategy that suits the selection, the needs of the students, and the teacher's purpose. No matter what format or modality is chosen, lessons integrating vocabulary with strategic reading instruction share the characteristics of strategic reading:

- Select vocabulary that is important to students' comprehension and ability to make predictions.
- Encourage students to survey vocabulary before they read to activate their prior knowledge. Encourage students to make predictions from vocabulary.
- Remind students to gather data to evaluate their predictions and build knowledge.
- Set up postreading discussions so students can practice making inferences necessary for monitoring and refining vocabulary meaning.
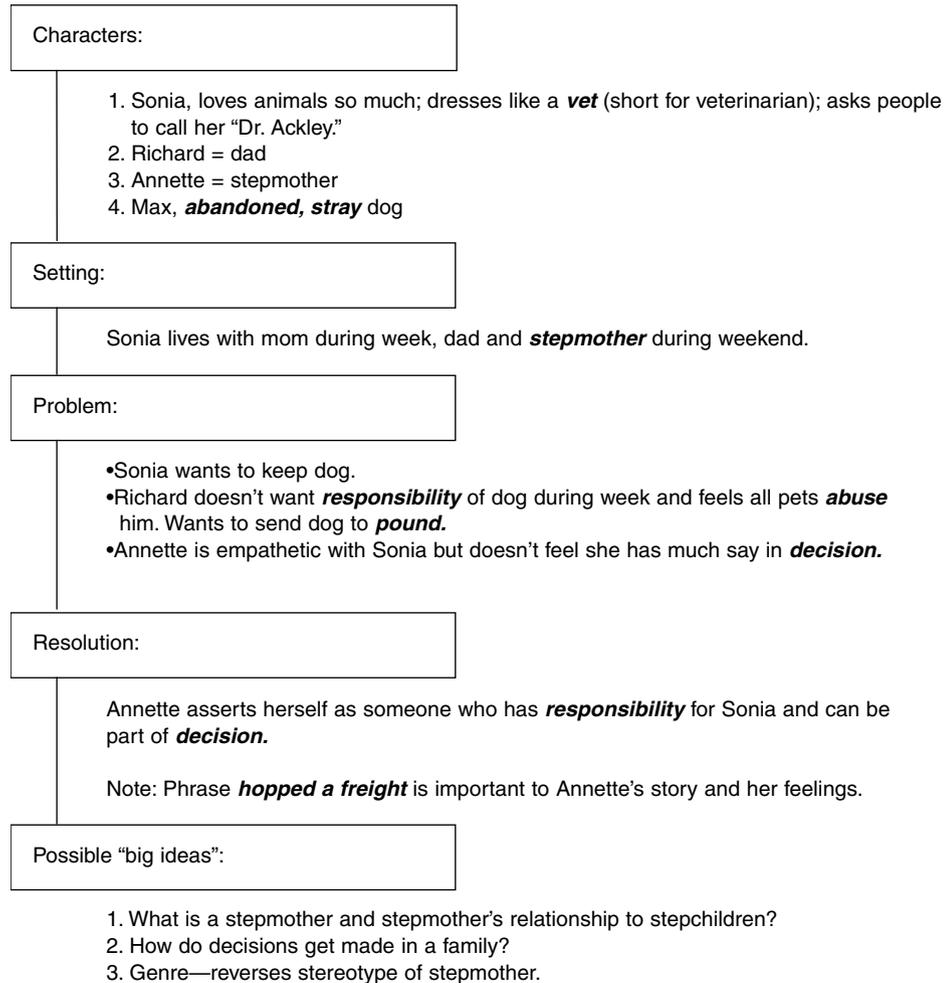- Arrange for activities that allow students to respond and use vocabulary (discussion, reading, writing).

The sections that follow provide some specific ideas for implementing these strategies in the classroom.

Select Important Vocabulary. First of all, when choosing vocabulary to use for reading strategy instruction, focus on words that are important to the selection and can be used in discussing, explaining, summarizing, or responding to the material. For example, for the book *No One Is Going to Nashville* (Jukes, 1992), used in a fourth-grade classroom, the teacher first constructed the story structure map of the selection shown in Figure 3.2. Then she identified vocabulary that related to understanding the selection and would be useful for the students in discussion or response as well. From this trade book she chose to focus on *vet, veterinarian, stepmother, abandoned, stray, responsibility, abuse, dog pound, decision,* and *hopped a freight.*

Have Students Survey for Activation and Prediction. Design an activity that will activate what kids already know and will help them make predictions about the selection. These activities can include writing, drama, mapping and charting, or other experiences—several classroom examples follow this section. These prereading activities should use vocabulary to get students both to think about what they already know and to make some hypotheses. Discussion, either whole class or in cooperative groups, is critical. Students need to talk about and experiment with the words.

It's also essential that some of the vocabulary be familiar to give students a topic or other conceptual peg on which to begin to make predictions about the other words they know less well or not at all. Too often, students are faced with a large

FIGURE 3.2   Map of *No One Is Going to Nashville* with Target Vocabulary Italicized and Boldfaced

Characters:

1. Sonia, loves animals so much; dresses like a ***vet*** (short for veterinarian); asks people to call her "Dr. Ackley."
2. Richard = dad
3. Annette = stepmother
4. Max, ***abandoned, stray*** dog

Setting:

Sonia lives with mom during week, dad and ***stepmother*** during weekend.

Problem:

•Sonia wants to keep dog.
•Richard doesn't want ***responsibility*** of dog during week and feels all pets ***abuse*** him. Wants to send dog to ***pound.***
•Annette is empathetic with Sonia but doesn't feel she has much say in ***decision.***

Resolution:

Annette asserts herself as someone who has ***responsibility*** for Sonia and can be part of ***decision.***

Note: Phrase ***hopped a freight*** is important to Annette's story and her feelings.

Possible "big ideas":

1. What is a stepmother and stepmother's relationship to stepchildren?
2. How do decisions get made in a family?
3. Genre—reverses stereotype of stepmother.

list of unknown words without any way to begin to classify or relate the terms. For example, consider these words:

mandan

casa colonica

trullo

It would be difficult for most adults to make any predictions about these words in the context of a list. Consider the same list when embedded with a few more familiar terms (as we see in a classroom example later in this chapter):

mandan	manor
high rise	villa
casa colonica	cá d'oro
tipi	

Even though *high rise, manor,* and *villa* are not overly familiar words to most readers, students can begin to make predictions about these words as "dwelling related"

and begin asking some questions as is fully explored in the classroom example on knowledge rating.

These activation and prediction activities are useful for cooperative groups because the sum of the knowledge of the group is greater than the knowledge of each individual in the group. The group members can begin to learn from each other before reading. This activity helps the teacher preassess the class's level of prior knowledge. If their knowledge level is low, the teacher can do some concept building at this point rather than going directly into reading.

Remind Students to Gather Data. Remind kids to gather data as they read. This can be as simple as paying attention to words that were unfamiliar or might involve jotting down a page number or some bit of relevant information. If a graphic organizer is used to start the process, it can provide a framework for jotting notes during or after reading.

Design Postreading for Drawing Inferences, Monitoring, and Refining. Come back to vocabulary in postreading discussion. If the vocabulary is chosen sensibly, this will happen naturally. For example, for *No One Is Going to Nashville* (Jukes, 1992), a fourth grader's summary looked like the following:

> Sonia wanted to be a *veterinarian* and loved animals. Max was a *stray* dog and she wanted to keep him. her dad didn't like animals much, 'cuz they always *abused* him, like biting him. He wanted to send Max to a dog *pound* but her stepmother helped her dad make a *decision* to keep the dog.

As is frequently the case when words are chosen to reflect the story line or key concepts of a selection, students must use them when responding after reading.

Another teacher using the same trade book planned postreading questions using the vocabulary that required students to refine and monitor their predicted meanings. She asked: "Who was the *stray?* Why wouldn't Sonia want Max to go to the *pound?* Would Sonia be a good *vet?*" In asking these questions, she gave her students practice in interpreting and using these keywords based on the supporting information in the selection. The questions also gave her a means of assessing their knowledge after reading. Then she could decide if they needed to gather more information or if she needed to use direct instruction.

Use contextual look-backs and semantic analysis to help students refine and monitor their understanding of words that are still unclear after prediction, reading, and discussion/response. Research suggests that most vocabulary instruction occurs before reading, with little attention to word learning after reading (Blachowicz, 1986). Because our focus is on developing students' problem-solving abilities, it is critical that time be devoted after reading to help students flesh out and consolidate their knowledge of words and to make inferences based on what they knew before they read and on the information provided by the author. This should be done in a format where they can experiment with the words and receive feedback on their learning.

For example, one teacher using the trade book *No One Is Going to Nashville* thought that student responses suggested they still were unclear about the meaning of *pound* as used in *dog pound*. She asked students to locate and read the parts of the selection where the author used the word *pound* and to analyze what information about the word meaning they could abstract. They found and analyzed

Richard wanted to send Max to the *pound.*
(A *pound* is a place.)

"We'll keep the dog as long as the *pound* would. . . . "
(A *pound* keeps animals.)

Richard called the *pound.* They only kept dogs 5 days.
(There's a time limit on how long animals are kept.)

From these examples, the teacher led the students to conclude that an animal *pound* is a place that keeps unwanted animals for a limited time. They then discussed why this situation was so distressful to Sonia. Alternatively, the teacher could pose, or have students pose, a series of questions that would have readers respond on the basis of their understanding of the semantic features of the word. For example, a teacher might ask, "Does a *pound* need walls? Explain." "Would a dog want to go to the *pound?* Explain."

Set Up Activities for Meaningful Use and Response. Use the words in integrated experiences. By this point in a lesson, the readers would have seen, heard, read, and used the vocabulary in many ways. Because the selection integrates what would otherwise be an unrelated set of words, a teacher might let the use of the words emerge in response activities. For example, in a dramatization of this trade book, Richard, the father, explains, "Those animals all *abuse* me. One bit my foot. The other tore up my slippers. And the worst is that *stray,* Max." Another teacher has students make a silent video with explanatory title cards. Characters were labeled, "Sonia, a would-be *vet*." "Max, the *stray*." Before the final scene, the title card read "The *Decision*." These five guidelines are critical components of vocabulary development integrated with reading strategy instruction. Most often, when words are well chosen, these processes happen naturally in reading strategy lessons so that few words need major attention after reading. In any event, view these components as guides to use when instruction doesn't flow naturally rather than rigid guidelines for instruction. The following examples from classrooms give a clearer picture of how some lessons might look.

■ ■ ■ CLASSROOM EXAMPLES

Starting with Graphic Organizers: Vocab-o-Grams

There are many types of **graphic organizers,** or visual and spatial formats for classifying or relating words, with which teachers can work with vocabulary. In Chapter 5 on content reading, we discuss maps and webs, which have great utility in content area classes where content classification, relationships, or hierarchies provide an organizing principle. Because so many teachers use narratives as the bases for reading strategy instruction, we talk about a type of organizer that uses the structure of narratives as its organizing principle—story structure.

Story Structure. Many narratives, stories, and descriptions of real events share the same basic elements. They have settings and characters, the characters have a problem they want to solve or a goal they want to reach, some actions take place, and there is a resolution. These elements often constitute what is referred to as a **story structure** or **story grammar,** the elements of a well-formed story in Western literature. Narratives of other cultures also have structures that share some, but not all, of these characteristics. When developing comprehension, one productive strategy

is to use our anticipation of such structures and our knowledge of other stories to help us predict what the author might be likely to tell us. For example, for a story that begins "Once upon a time," a reader might make these predictions:

Setting:	A fairy-tale land with castles.
Characters:	Princes, princesses, magical characters.
Problem/Goal:	A task, a quest.
Actions:	Some sort of magic will happen or something not like real life.
Resolution:	Happily ever after!

Story structure is also a good conceptual peg to help students organize and re-member vocabulary that might not fall into nice, neat classifications (Blachowicz & Leipzig, 1989). A basic sense of story is usually fairly well developed by the upper primary grades.

Many suggestions for making story structure visible to students involve story maps or webs, which we discuss at length in Chapter 5. The first technique we dis-cuss works off a graphic form and may help develop vocabulary as well as a sense of structure.

Vocab-o-Gram. A **Vocab-o-Gram** (Blachowicz, 1986) is a generic classification chart that reflects the categories of story structure. It is used with a charting process that asks students to organize vocabulary in relationship to the structure of the selection. To use a Vocab-o-Gram, place the story framework on the board or on a transparency (see Figure 3.3) and have each student construct a work copy. Then place the vocabulary words on the board and ask students, working in pairs or groups, to share what they know about the words and to classify them according to their predictions of how the author might use them. For example, for the trade book *Greyling* (Yolen, 1991), the teacher placed the following on the board:

greyling	wail	stranded
fisherman	baby	townsfolk
roiling seas	shallows	joyously
sandbar	grief	slough off
selchie		

She then asked the students to work in teams to share what they knew about the words and to classify them according to the clues they gave about the upcoming selection. Working as a team, Jim and Monica produced the Vocab-o-Gram shown in Figure 3.3.

The contents of the Vocab-o-Gram became their predictions about the selection, and the question was a purpose-setting one. Each team brought its Vocab-o-Gram to a large-group session where the teams shared their ideas, placements, and reason-ing. At this point, all predictions are acceptable and the initial discussion helps the teacher gauge the state of class knowledge so more direct instruction can be used if it is appropriate. After groups shared their knowledge of individual words and their predictions, the teacher decided that their level of word knowledge was sufficient for them to jump right in to reading *Greyling.*

After reading and the comprehension discussion following the selection, the teacher asked the students to refine their Vocab-o-Grams in another color pencil. Jim and Monica's revision looked like the one shown in Figure 3.4. They had refined

FIGURE 3.3   Jim and Monica's Initial Vocab-o-Gram

Vocab-o-Gram	
Use vocabulary to make predictions about . . .	
(May be used more than once)	
The setting townsfolk roiling seas sandbar	What will the setting be like? little town by the sea
The characters fisherman greyling baby wail townsfolk	Any ideas about the characters? There's a big wail. Maybe the fisherman is related to baby. Greyling is a fish.
The problem or goal	What might it be? Somebody gets stranded on sandbar.
The actions	What might happen? Fisherman saves baby. Fisherman is saved.
The resolution	How might it end? Joyously or sad (grief) both sad and happy; bittersweet
What question(s) do you have?	What happens to the baby?
Mystery words: selchie, slough off	

FIGURE 3.4   Jim and Monica's Revised Vocab-o-Gram

Vocab-o-Gram	
Use vocabulary to make predictions about . . .	
(May be used more than once)	
The setting townsfolk roiling seas sandbar	What will the setting be like? little town by the sea Wail was sound of wind
The characters fisherman greyling baby wail townsfolk	Any ideas about the characters? ~~There's a big wail.~~ Maybe the fisherman is related to baby. Greyling is ~~a fish.~~ selchie.
The problem or goal	What might it be? Somebody gets stranded on sandbar.
The actions	What might happen? Fisherman saves baby. (r) Fisherman is saved.
The resolution	How might it end? Joyously or sad (grief) both sad and happy; bittersweet
What question(s) do you have?	What happens to the baby? return to the sea
Mystery words: selchie, slough off ↓ ↓ seal child what the seal child did with skin	

their knowledge of *wail,* built knowledge of *slough off,* and confirmed knowledge of the other words. The teacher decided that no further work with the words was necessary and, as an extension activity, had them use their Vocab-o-Grams as keys to write a summary of the book. Teaching Idea File 3.1 provides a summary of the Vocab-o-Gram strategy.

Vocab-o-Grams are excellent for use with cooperative groups because the sum of the group's knowledge is always greater than individual knowledge. Some teachers also use them with large groups or whole classes. In these cases, the teacher might place the words on the board and use the Vocab-o-Gram on a transparency to guide supportive questioning and to facilitate direct instruction. For example, one teacher in a bilingual sixth-grade classroom first had students provide Spanish synonyms for some of the words (grief = *dolor*) before asking them to make predictions about the selection based on the vocabulary. As they predicted, the teacher used their Vocab-o-Grams for assessment and realized that several keywords were unfamiliar. As a result, the teacher worked with definitional and contextual information for the words *stranded* and *sandbar* before letting the group begin to read. After reading and comprehension instruction, the teacher decided that *stranded, sandbar, grief,* and *wail* were still confusing to a small group of students. So she had the students locate these words in the book, did reader's theater on the sections in which they were located, and did some visualizing experiences as well. **Reader's theater** involves the oral interpretation of scripts by two or more readers (Tierney et al., 2000). Interpretation, not memorization, is the goal. Vocal and facial expressions and gestures are used to suggest character as the readers interpret the script. Scenery and costumes are typically not used; the audience must "fill in the blanks" as the readers create the scenes. The students ended by illustrating key scenes related to *stranded,*

Teaching Idea File 3.1

Vocab-o-Gram

(Blachowicz, 1986)

1. Select a vocabulary list from a narrative selection that reflects story grammar and present it to students by writing the words on the board or using an overhead projector.
2. Have students, working in teams, decide which words give clues to setting, characters, problem/goal, resolution, and feelings. Include a "?" category as well.
3. Discuss placement. Words may typically be placed in more than one category. Share knowledge about words.
4. Make predictions.
5. Have each student formulate a personal question to answer.
6. After reading, refine vocabulary. Go back to the selection to clarify or use references.
7. Use in further oral or written work. Students may use Vocab-o-Gram as an organizer for summarizing.

From Blachowicz and Fisher, *Teaching Vocabulary in All Classrooms,* 1996, p. 47.

sandbar, grief, and *wail.* Vocab-o-Grams can also be used individually once students are familiar with the process, but it is critical that prereading and postreading discussion, monitoring, and refinement of meaning take place.

Starting with Writing: Story Impressions

Connecting reading and writing is an important concern in all classrooms. We know that reading and writing develop together and are mutually enhancing as students gain proficiency. We often think of writing *after* reading, but writing *before* reading can engage students more completely in reading, and it can give them another way to make predictions. These can help the teacher gauge what they already know and point out strengths as well as misconceptions. Writing before reading can also help students think about how a well-formed story might develop and give them a basis for later comparison of their choices and author choices.

Story impressions (McGinley & Denner, 1987) is a technique that calls on students to survey a set of vocabulary words and get some general impressions about the setting, characters, problems, and actions that might be described. Then they write their own version before reading. Thus their version becomes their prediction or possible selection. For example, before students read the trade book *Saint George and the Dragon* (Hodges, 1984), the teacher placed the following words on the board:

legend	princess	bellowed
noble knight	hermit	ancient spring
foe	patron saint	severed
dragon	in vain	victorious

Then students were asked to work alone, in pairs, or in groups to give their impressions of the story they were to read. They could do this either by writing a story suggested by the vocabulary or by listing what their separate impressions were.

David and Jake wrote,

> Our impression is that this story takes place in the past and is a famous *legend.* A *noble knight* has to fight a dragon. A small *hermit* crab sits on his shoulder and acts as his *patron saint.* But the knight falls, stabbed by an *ancient spring* with poison on it and the dragon is victorious.

Jesse and Jeni wrote,

> Once upon a time there was a noble knight who loved a princess who was scared by a dragon. But the knight is a *hermit* and doesn't want to come out and fight the dragon. The dragon is vain and lives *bellowed* an *ancient spring.* When he comes out to look at his face several times each day, the princess cuts off his head and is victorious.

After groups prepare their stories or impressions, they compare and contrast. The similarities between these stories were:

> The setting—times of knights and ladies.
>
> The characters—a knight, a princess and dragon.
>
> The problem—someone has to fight the dragon.

The resolutions differed, as did the students' predictions about the words they weren't sure about: *ancient spring, patron saint, bellowed,* and *severed.*

Teaching Idea File 3.2

Story Impressions

(McGinley & Denner, 1987)

1. Choose vocabulary words from the selection that give an impression of some of the aspects of story grammar: setting, characters, problem/goal, actions, resolution, and feeling. Place the words on the chalkboard or overhead projector.
2. Ask students to use the words to write the story they would write if they were the author. For unknown words, they can take a guess, ask a friend, or put them aside.
3. After writing, share stories as a group. Compare and contrast across student stories to look for similarities and differences.
4. Read the selection to compare the author's choices with students' choices.
5. After reading, refine vocabulary. Go back to the selection to clarify or use references.
6. Use in further oral or written work. Students may use knowledge rating as an organizer for studying.

From Blachowicz and Fisher, *Teaching Vocabulary in All Classrooms,* 1996, p. 49.

The teacher then had all of the students read *Saint George and the Dragon* as retold by Margaret Hodges (1984) and come back and compare their stories with the text. The setting and characters were the same, but the actions and resolutions were quite different. First, students completed a comprehension discussion for the selection. Then, as a vocabulary follow-up, the teacher asked them to compare, in their vocabulary journals, what they learned about the terms *hermit, spring, bellowed,* and *patron saint* as they were used in the book. Some of the students wrote:

> The *hermit* in the story was some person who lived high in a mountain all by himself.
>
> The *ancient spring* wasn't a metal *spring* but a *spring* of water, like a bubbling stream.
>
> *Bellowed* is a loud sound the dragon made when wounded.

Patron saint remained the most elusive, and the teacher did a short lesson on this concept using St. Patrick as an example. Teaching Idea File 3.2 provides a summary of the story impressions strategy.

For some students, simpler brainstorming techniques may be useful (Allen, 1999). But for most, Story Impressions is an excellent technique for involving writing, vocabulary, and strategic reading where working with story structure is required, and it is appropriate for all ages.

Starting with Drama: Word Plays

Rather than beginning with writing or graphics, you might like to start with oral language activities, especially for younger students. Using drama is an excellent way to

motivate learners to make predictions about the possible use of words in an upcoming selection (Duffelmeyer, 1980). For students for whom English is a second language, such dramatization gives them chances to experiment with using words in their own speech and in vignettes of their own creation before having to comprehend them in print. Drama activities are also excellent choices for cooperative group work.

To do a word play, select your words in the same way you did for any of the previous activities and place them on word cards, preparing one set for each group. Having several groups do the same sets of words provides the fun of comparison as well as the possibility of seeing similarities suggested by the same sets of words. Students are given a specified length of time to discuss the words and to prepare a play using them. Each student must speak, and each word must be used at least one time. The teacher, a reference book, or other groups can be consulted about the meanings or pronunciation of any of the words.

For example, for a simple first-grade selection, the teacher chose four keywords: *quack, drip, mother,* and *hole.* Then he set simple directions with some story grammar questions: "You should describe a story. I want to know what kind of day it is, whom the story is about, and what the main character's problem is. How does it all work out?"

The first graders took the cards back to their groups and first pronounced and discussed what the words meant, although the teacher had pronounced them as he presented them. Then they planned a drama suggested by the words. One sounded like this:

Child 1: Once upon a time, there was a little duck who loved to quack.

Child 2: It was a rainy day and the rain was falling "Drip, drip, drip."

Child 3: The duck's mother said she had to go to the store and reminded him not to go outside.

Child 4: But as soon as his mother left, the duck decided to go outside and play anyhow.

Child 1: Right when he walked out of the door, he fell into a big deep hole.

Child 2: The rain went drip, drip, drip on top of him.

Child 3: The duck went, "Quack quack," to call for help.

Child 4: His mother got him out, but she was mad and made him stay in the rest of the day.

A second group also had a duck (the quack gave that away), but this duck's problem was a hole in his rubber boots that made his feet all muddy so when he came in he dripped all over the floor, resulting in another mad mother. Group 3 had the duck with the problem of a hole in his umbrella, and so forth.

After their performances, when the groups compared the dramas, which the teacher had videotaped, they noticed the setting of a rainy day was shared by all their dramas, as was the mischievous duck and the angry mother (stereotypes in kids' drama as well). Not only had they been able to predict a possible story, but they had each heard, used, and encountered the words many times in meaningful settings. See Teaching Idea File 3.3 for a summary of how to use word plays.

Word play can be varied in many ways. Students can pantomime words for another group who holds the word cards. They can videotape scenarios that suggest, but don't use, a particular word on the class list and play them back for class guessing. In all these approaches, it is then important to compare their uses and interpretations of the words with the author's choices and uses after reading.

Teaching Idea File 3.3

Word Play

1. Choose a short list of vocabulary words (three to five words) from the selection that gives an impression of some of the aspects of story grammar: setting, characters, problem/goal, actions, resolution, and feeling. Place the words on index cards. Make a set of cards for each group of students.
2. Give each team a set and ask them to construct a 3-minute skit based on the vocabulary. As they plan, circulate to provide information and clarification as needed.
3. Share the skits. Compare and contrast across student skits to look for similarities and differences.
4. Read the selection to compare the author's choices with students' choices.
5. After reading, refine vocabulary. Go back to the selection to clarify meaning or use reference works.
6. Use the words in further oral or written work.

From Blachowicz and Fisher, *Teaching Vocabulary in All Classrooms,* 1996, p. 50.

Starting with Student Self–Evaluation: Knowledge Rating

Another way to integrate vocabulary with reading strategy instruction is to use student self-evaluation as a starting point for learning. This process follows the same strategic model as presented earlier in the chapter. Vocabulary is surveyed to activate prior knowledge. Some preliminary predictions are made, with the teacher's supplying some focusing questions. Students gather data while reading and then monitor and refine their insights after reading. Take the following example from an eighth-grade social studies class getting ready to read a chapter with this vocabulary:

tipi	dascha
villa	trullo
casa colonica	mandan
apartment	lean-to
high rise	yurt

The teacher and class went through the following process:

Survey Words to Activate Prior Knowledge. The teacher gave each student a Knowledge Rating Sheet (see Table 3.1) and asked each student to rate his or her level of knowledge about each term. Students were asked to rate the terms as very familiar ("I could give a definition or use in an illustrative sentence"), somewhat familiar ("I have seen or heard this word before and may have some association with it"), or unfamiliar ("I don't know anything about this word"). The teacher had placed the students in small groups and encouraged them to talk to each other about the terms as they worked. As the groups talked and worked, the teacher circulated to get a sense of the students' knowledge before going further.

Check your knowledge level for each of these terms:			
	3	**2**	**1**
Term	**Can Define/Use**	**Heard It**	**Don't Know It**
tipi			
villa			
casa colonica			
apartment			
high rise			
dascha			
trullo			
mandan			
lean-to			
yurt			

TABLE 3.1
Knowledge Rating
Sheet

Make Predictions. After giving the students adequate time for self-evaluation, the teacher encouraged students to share their knowledge and predictions about the words with the larger group. She used an overhead transparency to record notes (see Table 3.2). For this group of students who lived in a suburb of a large city, *tipi, apartment,* and *high rise* were well-established terms. *Villa, lean-to,* and *dascha* were somewhat familiar, and the rest were unknown.

The teacher then asked some focusing questions related to the structure of the chapter. She wanted to get students to think about the topic (in this case, dwellings) and what the author might logically want to tell readers about the topic (location, description, people who used them, time of use). The goal was to get the students to make predictions about the words and the chapter that would form the purposes for reading. The class dialogue looked like this:

> T(EACHER): OK, you know something about several of these terms, but let's see if we can use all the terms to get some ideas and predictions about the chapter we're going to read. Looking at these terms, what do you think the topic of the chapter is?
>
> S(TUDENTS): Houses, homes
>
> T: OK, all in the United States?
>
> S: No.
>
> T: Why not?

Term	**Where?**	**Used Now?**	**Looks Like?**	**Who?**
tipi				
villa				
casa colonica				
apartment				
high rise				
dascha				
trullo				
mandan				
lean-to				
yurt				

TABLE 3.2
Prediction
Transparency

S: Well, there are some here that sound kind of foreign.

T: Like what?

S: Like *dascha* and *illa*.

S: And *trullo* and *casa colonica*.

S: *Mandan*.

S: I think *mandan* is from here because I remember it from something about the Native Americans we studied.

S: There's a mandan house in the museum . . . you know, that big earth lodge.

T: Well, interesting. It seems as if we think some are not in the United States, but let's put a question mark next to *mandan* and watch for that especially (puts a red question mark next to *mandan*). Do you think all of these are dwellings people live in now?

S: No, people don't live in tipis now.

S: I don't know about that. When we went to Mt. Rushmore, we saw tipis.

S: Yea, but that was probably just tourist stuff.

S: No, I think they lived in them.

T: Let's put another question mark next to *Used now* and *tipi*. What about the other terms?

S: (Many suggestions concluding the class is not sure. They place a question mark next to the question "used now?")

T: Before we read, let's try to think like a textbook author. If you were going to write this chapter about types of dwellings, what would you tell about each one?

S: Who lives in them.

S: What they look like.

S: Where they are.

S: When they were lived in.

T: OK, we've got some good ideas about these and some predictions about the chapter. Let's read, thinking of these issues and questions, and come back after reading to talk about them.

Gather Data. The students then read their chapter so they could encounter terms in their "natural" environment. Although the students did not know specifics about each word, they had a topic to help them organize their thinking and several questions to answer about each word. They recorded their data during and after reading on a personal record sheet that looked like the transparency the teacher used to focus predictions with the addition of the questions they added.

Make Inferences to Monitor and Refine Predictions and Knowledge. After reading, the teacher used the transparency version of their record sheet to record student findings about the terms. She followed up on some of the questions from the prereading discussion. Students reflected on their earlier hypotheses to find that the dwellings were not, indeed, all located in the United States. However, they were all in current use as dwellings, a fact that surprised students.

Respond and Use. The students were called on to use the words in their summary of the chapter and subsequent projects on dwellings.

Teaching Idea File 3.4

Knowledge Rating

(Blachowicz, 1986)

1. From the selection, choose a list of vocabulary words that cluster in some way. Place the list on the chalkboard or overhead projector.
2. Ask students to copy the list and to rate their knowledge of the words as: 1—Don't know anything. 2—I've heard or seen this word but I'm not sure what it means. 3—I know this word well enough to use it or define it. Students may share their knowledge as they work.
3. Use the ratings for group discussion. Lead students to make appropriate predictions (e.g., who, what, where, what the author will include).
4. Read the selection, watching for the vocabulary.
5. After reading, have students rerate themselves. Then refine vocabulary. Go back to the selection to clarify words or use reference books.
6. Use the words in further oral or written work. Students may use knowledge rating as an organizer for studying.

From Blachowicz and Fisher, *Teaching Vocabulary in All Classrooms,* 1996, p. 54.

When students still lack information to refine their hypothetical meanings, the teacher sends them back to the text to reread or refers them to reference works. In the case of the word *mandan,* for example, students looked back in their social studies book from the previous year. Students can then "claim ownership" of the terms by using them in the normal social studies activities that extend a lesson. See Teaching Idea File 3.4 for a summary of knowledge rating.

All these techniques for integrating vocabulary instruction into reading strategy lessons reflect a similar philosophy for learning. Using an approach stressing hypothesizing and hypothesis testing is consistent with general problem-solving models of learning. As such, both vocabulary knowledge and useful strategies are developed simultaneously. Second, techniques such as these do double duty—both for vocabulary introduction and for reading preparation. Last, all techniques such as those presented in this chapter inject fun into learning at the same time strategies are being developed.

■ ■ ■ LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD

In this chapter, we described strategic reading, an important component of the reading curriculum, and we discussed the ways in which it connected to vocabulary instruction. Several classroom examples integrating vocabulary and reading strategy instruction were shared, including those focusing on graphic organizers, writing, drama, and student self-evaluation. Along with strategy reading, reading instruction has a strong emphasis on literature-based reading. Many teachers are using literature circles, novel units, or cooperative literature groups in their classroom. Chapter 4 focuses on vocabulary learning in literature-focused instruction.

For Further Learning

Allen, Janet. (1999). *Words, words, words*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Retrieved September 20, 2004, from www.CIERA.com (Web site with many early literacy documents relevant to strategies)

Blachowicz, C. L. Z. (1986). Making connections: Alternatives to the vocabulary notebook. *Journal of Reading, 29,* 643–649. (Describes Vocab-o-Gram and other predictive vocabulary activities)

Duffelmeyer, F. A. (1980). The influence of experience-based vocabulary instruction on learning word meanings. *Journal of Reading, 24,* 35–40. (Good ideas for dramatizing vocabulary)

McGinley, W. J., & Denner, P. R. (1987). Story Impressions: A prereading/writing activity. *Journal of Reading, 31,* 248–253. (A clear description of story impressions with good examples)