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Ways to Build Word Knowledge

- Extensive general vocabularies are critical.
- In the content areas, vocabulary development is essential to understanding the jargon of the subject.
- Vocabulary learned in context is more likely to be remembered, understood, and applied correctly.
- Dictionary and glossary work, by itself, has little educational value.
- Engaging in discussion and utilizing new vocabulary should be done daily.

Tips for Teaching Vocabulary in Context:

- Include vocabulary discussions as part of your morning circle time, prereading and postreading discussions, and as a prewriting activity.

For example:

“Yesterday, I learned a new word....”

Was anyone able to figure out the meaning of ...from the context?

- Encourage the use of personal dictionaries in notebooks or on desktop “sticky notes.”
- Encourage students to be word detectives. “Celebrate” or “validate” word discoveries.
- Encourage students to “try out” vocabulary in new contexts. Provide positive feedback when words are used accurately. Use guiding questions to help students refine word usage when words aren’t exact fits.