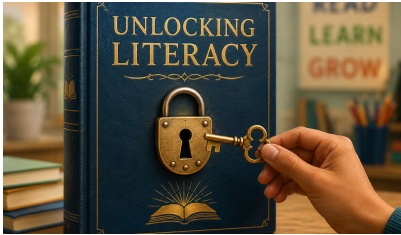


Unlocking Literacy:



Dr. Irene E. Ramos,
Consultant & Founder
Inspire Adult Education

Enhancing Literacy
Instruction Through
Vocabulary Development
and Brain-Friendly Strategies

1

Agreements

- Be willing to step out of your comfort zone.
- Ask questions for clarification.
- Be an active contributor
- Keep the end in mind.
- Be open to build new dendrites.



7/28/2026

2

2

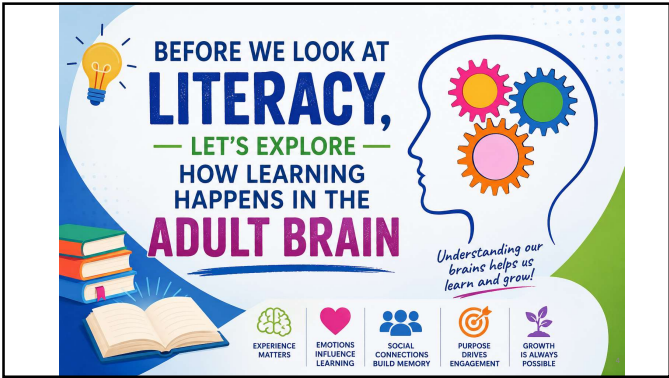
Warm-Up: Literacy Forest



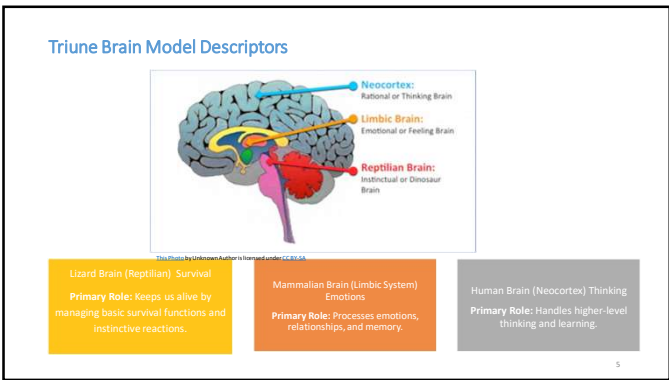
Raise or lower fingers as instructed in the questions.

Then we will stand and circulate, meet someone new and share thoughts after introductions.

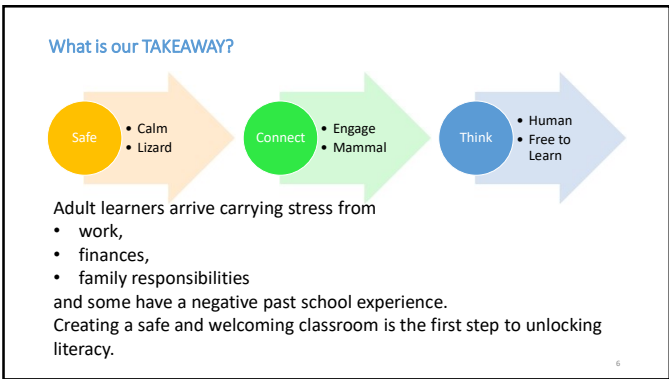
3



4



5



6

Most people can hold about 7 meaningful pieces of information in their short-term memory. Meaningful pieces of information could be numbers, words, faces, objects, or any other "chunks" of information.

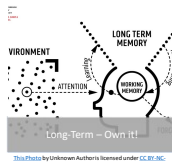
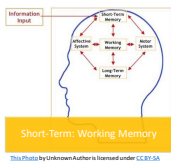


While short-term memory is important, it is long-term memory that really matters when it comes to learning.

How does short-term memory become long-term memory?

7

Moving Information From Working and Short to Long-term



8

Studies show that the adult brain can change due to mental activity

The brain grows in response to experience. Other studies show that different regions of the brain are active during different activities.

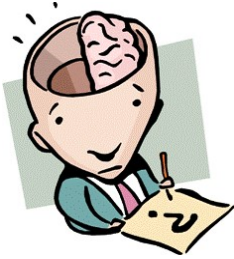
How might various class activities affect growth in the brain?



9

Pause and Post-Brain Check

Share one thing that you have learned so far.



10

Jumping into Vocabulary

Access quality core instruction.



11

What Is Vocabulary?

“... vocabulary is the glue that holds stories, ideas, and content together...making comprehension accessible for children and adults.”

-Rupley, Logan, & Nichols, 1998/1999, p.339

Vocabulary encompasses all the words we must know to communicate effectively.



jperkins@memphis.edu

12

Why Teach Vocabulary?

Research shows that word knowledge:

Links
strongly to
academic
success

is critical to
reading
comprehension

Determines
success in
comprehending
and learning
from
texts

jhparkns@memphis.edu 13

13

There Are Four Types of Vocabulary

- The smallest is our **writing vocabulary**, words we use in writing.
- Next is our **reading vocabulary**, words we can identify and understand when we read print.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA

jhparkns@memphis.edu

14

There Are Four Types of Vocabulary

- **Speaking vocabulary**
- The second largest vocabulary,, is comprised of words we can use when we speak in various conversations.



jhparkns@memphis.edu

15

There Are Four Types of Vocabulary

➤ Listening vocabulary

- The largest, is made up of words we can hear and understand.
- All other vocabularies are subsets of our listening vocabulary.

Students usually understand many more words than they speak, read, or write.

jperkins@memphis.edu

16

Hearing versus Listening

• Hearing

- Accidental
- Involuntary
- Effortless

• Listening

- Focused
- Voluntary
- Intentional

17

17

The Listening Vocabulary

- All other vocabularies are subsets of our **listening vocabulary**.

➤ Do you teach Listening Skills?

- How do you assess listening skills?

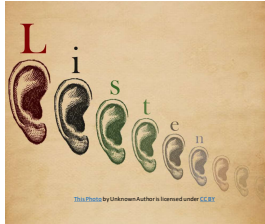


jperkins@memphis.edu

18

Use SLANT

- Sit up
- Lean in
- Ask Questions
- Nod occasionally
- Take notes



19

19

Four Categories of Listening

By Dana Dupuis



- **Connective-**
 - Focus: oriented towards FEELINGS
 - May miss: Facts and Details
- **Reflective-**
 - Focus: How the info may be useful to OWN interest and purpose
 - May miss: relevance to others
- **Analytical-**
 - Focus: Facts, DATA and information to determine course of action
 - May miss: Feelings or cues
- **Conceptual-**
 - Focus: Brainstorm IDEAS, possibilities and what could be
 - May miss: important details along the way

20

Tips to developing and delivering content to satisfy diverse listeners.

- Incorporate Data
- Use stories and anecdotes
- Consider a combined approach to content creation
- Show the benefits
- Ask open ended questions



21

21

Move them through all 4 vocabularies

- Word: Predict
- Listening: "I predict it will rain today."
- Speaking: turn to a partner and say "What do you predict?"
- Reading: Students read sentences or a passage with the word "predict" incorporated.
- Writing: Students complete sentence stems such as
 - "I predict that ____"
- Now, the word has moved through all four vocabularies.

22

22

Target Word: Domestic



23

23

Partner Questions

- Do you have any domestic animals at home?
- What domestic animals did you have when you were a child?
- Why do people keep domestic animals?
- Sentence Frames:
 - I have a _____. It is a domestic animal.
 - A cow is domestic because _____.
 - Domestic animals help people by _____.

24

24

Reading Vocabulary

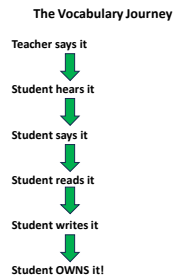
- **Domestic** animals have lived with people for thousands of years. Dogs help protect homes, cows provide milk, and chickens lay eggs. Unlike wild animals, **domestic animals depend on humans for food, shelter, and care.**

25

25

Writing Vocabulary

- Complete the sentence- Beginning
- Write two sentences- Intermediate
- Write a paragraph - Advanced



26

26

Principles of Effective Vocabulary Instruction

- *Effective vocabulary instruction is active, contextual, and on going.*
- *Students thrive when they experience, apply, and revisit new words in meaningful ways.*
- *There are **FOUR** principles of Effective Vocabulary Instruction*



jparkins@memphis.edu

27

Principles of Effective Vocabulary Instruction

➤ **Principle 1:** Vocabulary is learned best through

- Direct Instruction,
- hands-on experience.

➤ **Principle 2:** Teachers should offer both definitions and context during vocabulary instruction.



jperkins@memphis.edu

28

Principles of Effective Vocabulary Instruction

➤ **Principle 3:** Effective vocabulary instruction must include a depth of learning component as well as a breadth of word knowledge.

➤ **Principle 4:** Students need to have multiple exposures to new reading vocabulary words.



jperkins@memphis.edu

29

Methods



Indirect Vocabulary Instruction

- Read to students
- Oral language development
- Morning Message
- Writing/Journals
- Lively Discussions/role play

Direct Vocabulary Instruction

- Pre teaching
- Analysis of words
- Roots or Affixes
- Semantic Mapping
- Concept Map Method
- Word Banks, Word Walls

jperkins@memphis.edu

30

Vocabulary Tips



Words are used as tools

- To access background knowledge
- To express ideas
- To learn new ideas

31

Building Literacy Skills- Wide Reading

Students need to read a balance of informational and literary texts.

At least 50% of what students read is informational. Therefore, our primary focus should be on strategic reading skills. (Workplace documents make great informational text and its contextual)



32

Semantic Mapping

- The teacher writes a word that represents the key concept.
- The students are asked to think of words that relate to the key word.
- These words are grouped around the key word in categories.
- The teacher then presents new words and encourages a discussion about where these words might fit into the map.



33

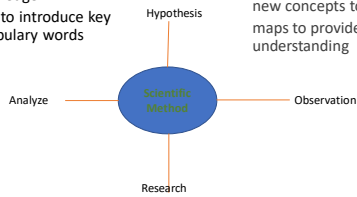
Semantic Mapping

Pre-reading Activity

- used to activate prior knowledge
- used to introduce key vocabulary words

Post-reading Activity

- add words, categories, and new concepts to the original maps to provide understanding



34

Have Fun With Words!



35

Word Sorts- Using the words given create categories.

Butter Control Lunar Parrot
Shore Marred Garlic Dinner
Rumor Spices Look Pigeon Escape Sand
Roses Prance Twister Malice Disciple
Jumbo Hatred Lottery Bookmark Doubtful

36

Fast Poem

1. One noun:
2. Two adjectives:
3. Three adverbs:
4. Four verbs:



Spaghetti
Thin and soft,
Silently, slowly, easily,
Slipping, sliding, slithering,
disappearing.

37

Questions?



38

Thank you!

Irene E. Ramos, J.D.

irenerinspire@gmail.com

Inspireael.com



39
