Vocabulary in your classroom for English Language Learners

Best Practice-Jill Dalzell

Here are some ways to use vocabulary in your classrooms:

- **Word walls**- post the words in the room.
  - Use an actual space on the wall to post words on paper/sentence strips/etc.
  - Write the words on the board
  - Use post-it paper and hang the posters up in the room
  - Write on the walls (using washable crayons)

- **Pre-teach vocabulary**
  - Prior to reading, give the kids a list of vocabulary words/phrases (with the definitions/meanings) they may encounter in the reading.
  - Prepare a PowerPoint with the words, definition, and some type of picture to show what it means. You can also include the word in a sentence to show how to use it properly.
  - Review the vocabulary several times to make sure the kids know the meaning of the words AND how to apply it. It is much more important for them to know how it is used than to simply memorize a definition.
    - Have them explain the definitions in their own words
    - Create a picture or symbol for the word
    - Make flashcards

- **Review**
  - Bingo games, board races, jeopardy, etc.

*Remember:*

- They need **multiple** exposures to vocabulary in order to really understand the terms!
- Try to incorporate the vocabulary as much as possible so they can see the vocabulary used in context.

> “Because each new word has to be studied and learned on its own, the larger your vocabulary becomes, the easier it will be to connect a new word with words you already know, and thus remember its meaning. So your learning speed, or pace, should increase as your vocabulary grows.” -- Johnson O'Connor

> “We think with words, therefore to improve thinking, teach vocabulary.” -- A. Draper and G. Moeller