



PEIRCE CENTER

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VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT AND PICTURE BOOKS

as presented by Lori Zorn (transcribed by Ashley Messner)

Why is teaching vocabulary important in a structured literacy class? It improves reading comprehension--that's pretty obvious. Research has shown that kids need to understand actually 98%--not 80%-- of what they read in order to fully comprehend, so improving those vocab skills will actually improve their overall understanding of novels, textbooks, things that you [teachers] give them. Why is vocabulary important for language development? Children that develop rich vocab tend to be deeper thinkers, they can express themselves better, and they read more. Improving language and literacy skills early in life will help them be more successful academically and communicatively.

Successful communication, or saying what you mean, is dependent upon a good vocab base, so using the right words when talking makes you a more effective communicator.

Vocab is important for expressing one's self. Having a good vocab to draw from can help you become more effective at writing. Students need to use a more formal tone sometimes in their writing--when you require them and ask them to do a writing assignment; to do that, they need that richer vocab to tap into in order to use those words that we don't normally use when we speak.

Vocab is so important for occupational success. I know you're not thinking about your 4th and 5th graders as adult, but they will be adults. They will be those people who are running the government and in charge of different things in the world when you get old, so there's a lot of research around the fact that a person's vocab level is a strong predictor of occupational success. Therefore, you can say that success in the business place actually depends upon strong, effective communication skills.

What are some vocab activities you can do in your classroom to help these kiddos? Previewing the new vocab. You probably do that already. Activities that actually make those connections help build that prior knowledge, so making connections between known and unknown words

(continued on the next page)

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Explicit instruction of these vocab words is so important because if they're going to read them, it is so important to take a few moments to explicitly instruct that vocabulary word. Taking that 30 seconds and not just exposing them to it, but actually working it out.

And last, the use of context. We usually do that already, right? Using the context. But the word parts, that's the morpheme part of the vocabulary word. Breaking those words into different parts and morphemes actually creates that more solidified neural pathway. Using that word again in their communication, whether they're speaking or writing or reading.

I want to do a plug for something I love, and that is read-alouds. Now I know picture books aren't a big thing in 4th and 5th grade, but I was doing some research, and even when I was getting my reading specialist degree, this is something that is very dear to my heart. I love picture books And sometimes people think, "Oh picture books are for lower elementary," so they pass them over, or "our curriculum doesn't give us time," but there are a lot of books out there that you can use to help supplement in your curriculum to help bring that concept to life for your kids. Picture books are one of the most overlooked resources for engaging middle-school kiddos, upper elementary kiddos. Many educators like librarians and parents believe that once they leave the elementary grades, that they don't use picture books that much anymore.

But today, when you think about kids today--4th, 5th grade, middle school--they're growing up in a highly visual environment. Think about it: Tiktok, Youtube. All these different things that they use. And they're drawn to that combination of text and image. And there's a skill called visual literacy. That's an important one, and one that can be enhanced with the ability to interact with information in stories. So not only are picture books useful tools for introducing vocab, but also great for introducing sensitive ideas, concepts, and topics. There's an endless range of subject matter presented in picture books, and they provide many opportunities to explore paths for learning and getting excited about reading and information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- [March 1: Setting Up a Sound Wall for Early Learners \(edWeb Webinar\)](#)
- [March 6: Extended School Year Parent Meeting with RMU Trees Network](#)
- [March 13: AIM Institute 11th Annual Research to Practice Symposium: Why is Reading Comprehension so Difficult to Comprehend?](#)
- [March 16: ADHD \(What It Is and How to Help in the Classroom\)](#)
- [March 31: Science of Reading: Knowledge Course \(PaTTAN Training Course\)](#)

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ANNOUNCEMENT FROM PROVIDENT CHARTER

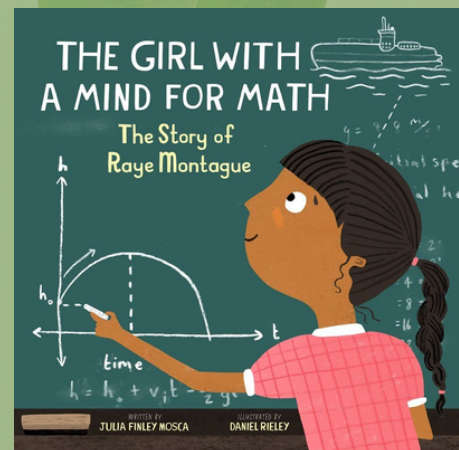
Provident Charter School (PCS) West was granted its charter in Baden and plans to open their school in the former Quigley Catholic High School Building. PCS West is slated to open August 2023 with Grades 1-4.

For questions concerning enrollment at PCS Central in Troy Hill or PSC West in Baden , please email jewing@providentcharterschool.org.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

- [Picture Books are a Powerful Tool for Teen Readers \(AdLit Article\)](#)
- [Picture Books with Rich Vocabulary \(Book List\)](#)
- [Meaningful Read Alouds for Vocabulary and Oral Reading Comprehension \(Cox Campus Free Course\)](#)
- [Vocabulary Course Module at Reading Rockets \(includes Articles and Videos\)](#)
- [Embedding Vocabulary and Comprehension Instruction in All Subjects \(Grades 4-12\) Webinar](#)

BOOK OF THE MONTH



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