



Make it Personal: Consolidating Students' Academic Vocabulary Through Individual Activities

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Notes from the Authors

Words don't truly become part of a learner's vocabulary until they get the chance to personalize them. This occurs through reading and writing experiences that allow them to integrate words into their knowledge base, provide repeated exposure to the word, and use them meaningfully as part of their academic language. Instructional activities that allow them to notice to their own learning (also called metacognitive awareness) foster what Don Graves calls word consciousness. In this video, you will see content-area teachers using activities that cause each learner to engage with words. Some of these activities encourage learners to notice their own understanding of words (metacognitive awareness). Others provide time for them to mentally and physically manipulate words as they build schema.

You'll also meet two high school students who give humorous explanations of how they use vocabulary.

Questions for Discussion

- In what ways does individual interaction with words support a learner's conceptual knowledge of the content?
- Why is metacognitive awareness critical to vocabulary development?
- How would you differentiate these activities for students working well above or well below grade level?