


development. In other schools, you may have to plan to provide virtual experiences when you and your students can be scheduled into the media center or computer lab. Regardless of how accessible technology is in your classroom, your vocabulary introduction will be richer and more engaging if you make use of whatever virtual fieldtrips are possible.



Use Pictures and Other Visuals

In addition to virtual fieldtrips, the Web provides every teacher with an endless source of visuals, including pictures, photos, and other graphic representations. Instead of bulky file folders full of pictures, savvy teachers today compile files of images stored on one slim disc. Because these images are so readily available and easily stored, you don't have to settle for just one picture—you can have a dozen or more images to represent a concept. Search for canyon images, and you will find pictures of both the Grand Canyon and a small unnamed canyon in the Himalayas. Having a variety of images for a new word that is also a new concept allows you to provide a richer introduction to that word and allows your students to broaden their concept from the start.

In addition to the wide range of visual images available on the Web, there is a source of readily available pictures often ignored when teachers think about introducing vocabulary. The text your students are going to read often contains illustrations that clarify the meanings of new words. The PPC lesson template described in Chapter 5 is a very efficient and motivating way to use the pictures in an informational text to introduce vocabulary and teach students how they can use pictures to build new word meanings. You can also use pictures in a more direct fashion by using a picture walk (Clay, 1991) to introduce new vocabulary before students read.

Use Picture Walks to Introduce Vocabulary

After you have decided on the words you want to introduce to students before they read, look at the pictures in the selection and see whether you can use any of them to build the vocabulary. Nouns represented by the pictures will be the most obvious possibilities, but pictures can also help you build meaning for verbs and adjectives. Imagine, for example, that the

students are going to read a selection about volcanoes. The title page shows the volcano erupting and people fleeing the village. Four of your chosen vocabulary words—**volcano**, **eruption**, **evacuating**, and **terrified**—could be introduced using this one picture. Here is a script for the vocabulary introduction you might use for these four words:

“Boys and girls, let’s look at the picture on the title page of our story and think about some vocabulary words that go with it.”

(Teacher points to the volcano in the picture.)

“Does anyone know what we call this?”

(One student responds that it is a volcano.)

“Yes, that is called a volcano. A volcano is a...”

(Teacher shows an index card with the word **volcano** written on it and has everyone say the word **volcano**.)

“Show me a thumbs up if you have heard the word **volcano** before.”

(Most students show a thumbs up.)

“Who can tell me anything you know about volcanoes?”

(Students share experiences with volcanoes, and teacher helps them access whatever knowledge they have by asking questions.)

“Has anyone ever seen a real volcano?”

“Have you ever seen a volcano in a picture or a movie?”

“Are there any volcanoes in our state?”

“Where could you go to see a volcano?”

(Teacher points to fire and debris coming out of volcano.)

“What is happening with this volcano?”

“What is coming out of the top?”

“Does the volcano always look like this, with lava and steam spouting out?”

“Does anyone know the word we use to describe a volcano that has lava and steam spouting out of it?”

(No one volunteers the word, so the teacher shows students the word **eruption** written on an index card.)

"When fire and debris spout out of the top of the volcano like this, we call that an eruption. Everyone say **eruption**."

(Students chorally pronounce **eruption**. Teacher supplies a "kid-friendly" definition of **eruption**.)

"Do you recognize any familiar word parts in the word **eruption**?"

(Students say that they know the **tion** part. Teacher writes the word **erupt** under **eruption** and uses the two words in a sentence.)

"This volcano is erupting. When a volcano erupts, we call that an **eruption**. **Erupt** and **eruption** are related words, just like **collect** and **collection**. If you collect baseball cards, you call this your baseball card...."

(Teacher pauses, and students quickly supply the word **collection**. Teacher gives a few more examples of **tion** words students know.)

"When we connect two things, we call this a...."

"When someone interrupts us, we call this an...."

(Teacher has students pronounce **eruption** one more time and asks them what **eruption** means. Students respond that **eruption** is what you call it when the lava and steam come out of the volcano. Teacher then directs their attention to the people in the picture.)

"Now look at the people. What are they doing?"

(Students respond that they are leaving, running away because the fire is dangerous. Teacher shows the index card with the word **evacuating**.)

"When people leave a place quickly because it is dangerous, we say they are evacuating. Everyone say **evacuating**."

(Students chorally pronounce **evacuating**.)

"We don't have to evacuate our town because of volcanoes, but sometimes we do have to evacuate because of something else that is very dangerous."

(Students immediately think of hurricanes and how they have had to evacuate their homes along the coast and go inland when a strong hurricane was coming. They eagerly share their experiences with hurricanes, and the teacher encourages them to use the new

word **evacuating** to describe the very well-known concept of leaving their homes when a hurricane approaches.)

"There is one more word we can use this picture to help us build meaning for. Look at the faces of the people who are evacuating because the volcano is erupting. Show me with your faces what their faces look like."

(Students eagerly mimic frightened expressions and explain that the people look like this because they are worried and scared and frightened.)

"Exactly. They are worried and scared and very frightened. Here is a word that means not just a little scared and frightened but very, very scared and frightened."

(Teacher shows the word **terrified**, and students pronounce it.)

"Were you terrified when you had to evacuate because the hurricane was coming? Have you ever been so scared or frightened by anything that if someone looked at your face he or she would say you were terrified?"

(Students eagerly share experiences of being really frightened. Teacher responds by using the word **terrified** to describe their feelings.)

"I bet you were terrified when you watched that scary movie all by yourself."

"I would be terrified, too, if I were camping and I saw a bear outside my tent."

In this Picture Walk example, the picture on the title page of the book provided visual support for the introduction of four vocabulary words. Many times, you may want to use several different pictures on different pages to introduce vocabulary. Imagine that your students are about to read an informational selection about animals. You have chosen several animal names to introduce to your students along with the word **habitat**. Your Picture Walk introduction might sound like this:

"Boys and girls, look at the animal on this page. Do you know what this animal is called?"

(If a student names the animal, teacher agrees. If not, teacher continues.)

"This animal is called a buffalo."

(Teacher shows the word **buffalo** and has the students pronounce it. To get them to use the word **buffalo**, you ask them to compare a buffalo to another animal they know. Teacher continues.)

"In what ways does the buffalo look like other animals?"

(Students respond.)

"The buffalo has horns like a deer."

"The buffalo has hair like a horse."

"The buffalo has hooves like a cow."

"Very good. Now look at the animal on this page. Can anyone name this animal?"

You continue drawing students' attention to all the animals whose names you have chosen to introduce. For each one, you turn to the page with the picture of the animal and ask whether anyone knows the name. If someone knows the name, you acknowledge that and show the index card with the animal name on it and have everyone pronounce the name. You then provide students an opportunity to explore the attributes of this animal and use the animal name by asking them to compare the animal to other animals they know. After comparing each animal, tell students that they will learn lots more about the animal when they read about it and they will share that information after reading. It is not necessary to introduce all the animal names in the book—only the ones you think many of your students don't know.

To introduce the word **habitat**, draw students' attention to several pictures in the book that show where each animal lives. Show them the word **habitat** on an index card and tell them that an animal's habitat is where that animal lives. Let students describe the habitat for the pictures you are looking at by starting each sentence with the animal's name and the word **habitat**:

"The buffalo's habitat is the...."

"The giraffe's habitat is the...."

"The peacock's habitat is the...."

When you do a Picture Walk with students, you make use of the pictures in the selection to connect new words to old concepts and to build new concepts. For many of the students about to read the story about the volcano, the words **volcano** and **eruption** were new words for new concepts. Most students had experienced evacuating and feeling terrified. For them, the words **terrified** and **evacuating** were new words for known concepts. For students who have no experience with the animal names you introduced, these words would be new words for new concepts. Because most students have the concept of “the place where you live,” the word **habitat** is probably a new word for a known concept.

Real and Visual Word Connections—Essential for English Language Learners

Using real and virtual experiences and visuals to introduce vocabulary is important for all children, but it is critical for children who are learning English. The majority of the words English language learners need to learn are new English words for those concepts they already know in their native languages. Using real and virtual experiences and pictures allows your students who are learning English to connect what they know because they can see the concept being taught. Whenever possible, ask your English language learners to tell you the word in their language. Unfortunately, even kid-friendly definitions are not apt to be very informative for children learning English because although they may have the concept, they may not know many of the words you use in your explanation. If you have English language learners in your classroom, redouble your efforts to find or create a real, virtual, or visual introduction to new meaning vocabulary.

For Teaching Vocabulary, Pictures Are Worth 1,000 Words

The “Goldilocks” vocabulary you choose to introduce to your students is always apt to be a combination of new words for new concepts and new words for old concepts. Because your students have had different



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Patricia M. Cunningham

Wake Forest University



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