
Bibliographical information is provided for 50 studies of the teaching of vocabulary. The students involved, length of instruction, methods of instruction, evaluation instruments, and findings are briefly listed. (AA)
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES RELATED TO THE TEACHING OF VOCABULARY: INTERMEDIATE TO ADULT LEVELS (1950-1977)

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Students: Thirty-seven college students in an Educational Psychology course
Length: 5 experiments, 1 session per experiment inferred
Methods compared: Various combinations of "part" and "whole word" learning of unknown words used and compared
Evaluation: Student was supplied with stem or word, and was required to write definition; number of trials needed to reach criterion was considered in evaluating effectiveness of the various approaches
Findings: Some statistically significant superiority indicated for the pre-teaching of stems, but investigator did not consider results "strong enough" to advocate stem teaching


Students: Ninety college freshmen in compulsory remedial reading classes
Length: 14 hours of instruction over an 8-week period
Methods compared: Programmed approach in which exercises involved use of synonyms, context clues and examination of dictionary entry vs directions to write definitions, do completion exercises, and make use of words (Same set of words used in both treatments)
Evaluation: General vocabulary improvement was measured by pre and post vocabulary scores on the California Reading Test
Findings: Both methods considered equally effective in vocabulary improvement


Students: Forty-eight undergraduate college students in an Educational Psychology class
Length: Not given—1 or 2 sessions inferred
Methods compared: Reading definitions orally vs composing sentences as aids to selecting appropriate concept from 4 possibilities
Evaluation: Concept recognition was evaluated by experimenter-made test
Findings: Groups which composed sentences were significantly more accurate in selecting appropriate concept than students who read sentences orally


Students: Seventy volunteers from college undergraduate psychology classes
Length: 8 sessions over 4-week period—6 instructional sessions
Methods compared: Vocabulary expansion activities vs paperback scanning approach in which new words were identified and discussed vs incidental learning (control)
Evaluation: Reading accuracy measured by Carver-Darby Test; and reading vocabulary, comprehension, and rate measured by pre-post forms of the Nelson-Denny Reading Test
Findings: Students using paperback scanning indicated as significantly superior in reading accuracy; no significant differences were found between groups on other variables.


Students: Three progressive studies involving 93, 63, and 63 tenth-grade biology students.

Length: Substudy 1, 7 weeks; Substudies 2 and 3, 5½ weeks each.

Methods compared: SS 1: Variables tested in a program emphasizing vocabulary pre-teaching and extension activities were (1) expanded vs regular directions and (2) rewards based on individual (independent) or group (interdependent) achievement.

SS 2: Pre-teaching of vocabulary, extension activities, and expanded directions were utilized. Experimental variable involved class discussion of terms, small group discussion of terms, or no discussion.

SS 3: Plan in SS 2 repeated and compared with modified plan which (1) included structured overview of words to be used and (2) added extension activities that stressed contextual and structural analysis.

Evaluation: Understanding of biological word relationships and knowledge of biological word meanings tested by use of an experimenter-made test using the words which had been introduced.

Findings: SS 1: Achievement in both word relationships and word knowledge were significantly greater for group with expanded directions.

SS 2: Group discussion (both class and small group) marginally benefitted word relationships and significantly assisted acquisition of word meanings.

SS 3: Modified method marginally significant over method of SS 2 with reference to word relationships and significant with reference to word meanings.


Students: Two hundred fifteen intermediate grade Menominee Indian children.

Length: 7 months—1 hour per school day inferred.

Methods compared: Native-American Culturally-Oriented Vocabulary Approach (NA/COVA) featuring stories fitting selected words into stories slanting toward Menominee culture written by Menominee adults vs Conventional Vocabulary Approach (COVA) in which the same words were included in conventional basal readers.

Evaluation: (1) Reading vocabulary (sight, concept, graded); (2) reading comprehension; (3) vocabulary used in writing; and (4) attitude toward reading (All four criteria were measured by established standardized tests).

Findings: The NA/COVA approach proved significantly more effective with reference to concept vocabulary, attitude toward reading, and vocabulary used in writing.


Students: Sixty adults in an Adult Institute.

Length: 3 hours per week for 13 weeks.

Methods compared: "Natural" contextual method featuring wide reading vs "contrived" contextual method using commercial materials vs a language-experience type program referred to as Practical High School English.
Evaluation and Findings: Assessment of vocabulary, comprehension, and total reading gains in a pre-post plan using the "Nelson-Denny Test indicated no significant differences between groups; significant within-group vocabulary gains were cited for "natural" contextual and Practical High School English approaches.


Students: One hundred forty-nine high school students involved in an English Learning Center Program.

Length: Minimum of 12 hours per student over semester—students worked at own rate.

Methods compared: Students introduced to pre-selected list of words through use of an electronic audiovisual device which provided immediate feedback for correct answers on multiple-choice items vs use of exact material reproduced in booklet form.

Evaluation: General vocabulary improvement measured by Ginn Diagnostic Vocabulary Test (Student anxiety levels and introversion-extroversion factors also considered).

Findings: Teaching machine group showed significantly higher gain in vocabulary acquisition but showed slight loss on follow-up retention test; anxiety level and introversion-extroversion factors did not affect results.


Students: Entering university freshmen who ranked in lowest decile on placement test.

Length: Semester program with some time devoted each period (inferred).

Methods compared: Teaching of teacher-made lists from students' texts vs encouraging students to make own lists vs "no treatment" control.

Evaluation and Findings: Assessment of general vocabulary improvement by a University-developed general vocabulary test indicated no significant difference between groups.


Students: (Three programs) Exploration 1: Adults in a vocabulary class (11 weeks; one 1½ hour session per week); Exploration 2: Fifty-three university students in 2 summer sessions; Exploration 3: Seventy-five gifted high school sophomores (one year; 1½ hour per week).

Methods compared: E-1: Use of color films introducing CPD formula for using context, word parts, and dictionary in word learning (no-comparison group); E-2: Text alone vs text plus Pyramid cards to aid visualizing; E-3: Use of Programmed Vocabulary as a supplement vs no-treatment control.

Evaluation and Findings: E-1: Pre-post use of specially designed tests showed improvement in all three aspects of CPD formula: context, parts, and dictionary use; E-2: Specially constructed test to measure memorization, identification, application and generalization with reference to vocabulary acquisition indicated Pyramid system most effective for first three criteria and Programmed Vocabulary best for generalization; E-3: Gains on four-part test significantly superior for experimental group.

Students: Seventy-seven students in seventh grade enrichment classes in a suburban intermediate school
Length: 5 days a week, 35 minutes per day, total of 13 sessions
Methods compared: Word game method vs discussion method in which students also did creative writing
Evaluation: Improvement in recognizing meanings of fifty complex words taught was measured by researcher-developed Enrichment Vocabulary Test supplying multiple-choice items for the 50 words
Findings: No significant difference between groups; both methods considered equally effective for learning complex vocabulary.


Students: Eighty-eight graduate students enrolled in an M.A. admissions seminar
Length: 5 sessions, 20 minutes each
Methods compared: Presentation of 15 most often used words from Nelson-Denny Test in context using: (1) audiovisual approach (video tape) vs (2) audiovisual approach (tape recording) vs (3) visual (printed materials)
Evaluation: Vocabulary and reading comprehension, as measured by Nelson-Denny Test Form A (both pre and post-test)
Findings: No significant differences between experimental groups with reference to sex, age, or major, but highest GRE group gained significantly over lowest group; all three methods indicated equally effective in learning pre-identified words.


Students: Students enrolled in an undergraduate collegiate business communications course
Length: 10-week period, 3 periods per week inferred
Methods compared: Use of commercial programmed vocabulary books vs incidental learning (control)
Evaluation: Pre-post writing samples and performance on Diagnostic Reading Test (Forms A and B) used to measure improvement
Findings: No significant differences between groups in vocabulary or comprehension growth, or in written communication ability.

Students: Seventy-four college freshmen enrolled in a speech class
Length: 3 hours per week for 1 semester
Methods compared: Direct teaching of student-selected words vs incidental learning (control)
Evaluation: General vocabulary improvement evaluated by Diagnostic Reading Test, Forms A and B
Findings: No significant differences in vocabulary growth between experimental and control groups


Students: Eight hundred twenty-three students in grades seven, eight, and nine from two suburban public schools
Length: Thirty 15 minute exercises teaching word meaning over 10 week period
Methods: Discovery method involving classifying of words with related word parts vs direct teaching of word parts
Evaluation: Variables tested included application of word parts, general reading, vocabulary, comprehension, spelling and visual memory—established standardized tests were used
Findings: Discovery method indicated as significantly superior to direct teaching group in general vocabulary, word parts, and five other tested variables


Students: One hundred five ninth and tenth grade students in a remedial reading class
Length: 30 instructional periods, 55 minutes each
Methods: Teacher-directed program involving word parts, words of foreign origin and unusual extraction vs use of programmed vocabulary book
Evaluation: Vocabulary section of the California Test of Mental Maturity was used to measure gains in general vocabulary
Findings: Teacher-directed group made significant gains in vocabulary; group using programmed materials did not

Eisbecker, P.C. Development of an audiovisual program based upon the acquisition of perceptual knowledge to increase college students' vocabulary, 1973. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 101 303).

Students: Eighty-six junior college business education freshmen (three groups)
Length: Pre-test post-testing for all three groups; exact time given for word learning not mentioned
Methods: 3 methods of learning forty words which comprised a pre-test were compared: Group A was directed to study the words; no mention of root words involved was made; Group B was given the same test and directed to note and learn meanings of root words; Group C was exposed to instructor-prepared audiovisual materials designed to stimulate learning of root words
Findings: No significant difference between groups was indicated when pre-test on 40 learned words was repeated as a post-test; group using audiovisual materials performed significantly better on a 100 item application test

Students: Eleven classes of second-year high school typing students.
Length: Five minute sessions for typing paragraphs—number of sessions not indicated
Methods compared: Typing of paragraphs with technical terms included and explained vs typing of paragraphs with technical terms included but not explained vs typing of irrelevant material (control)
Evaluation: Business vocabulary and typing proficiency evaluated by use of Hicks Business Vocabulary Test and Typewriting Achievement Test
Findings: Both experimental methods proved significantly superior with reference to business vocabulary as compared to control group; all three groups made significant gains in typing achievement


Students: Two hundred students in introductory psychology courses
Length: One training session in use of mnemonic devices plus one learning-testing session.
Methods compared: Learning of lists of ten concrete or ten abstract nouns involving (a) use of imagery mediators vs (b) use of verbal type mediators vs (c) learning of words without mnemonic or mediation instruction
Evaluation: Correct responses to instructor-presented cards
Findings: Mnemonic techniques were indicated as helpful in learning concrete nouns, but not in the learning of abstract nouns


Students: One hundred ten third, fourth, fifth, and seventh grade students in four schools drawing from populations with varying ethnic and socio-economic groups
Program length: Eight to ten-minute periods for chanting over a two to three week period
Methods compared: Rhythm chanting vs "traditional" methods selected by four teachers in charge of control groups
Evaluation: Multiple-choice investigator-designed test on thirty pre-chosen words from materials used by students as pre-test; sentence completion also used as a post-test measure
Findings: In all four schools involved, rhythm chanting was indicated as superior to other methods used


Students: Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders in public school social science classes, 12 different classes involved
Length: Five week program
Methods compared: Presentation of pre-selected vocabulary from unit (about 200 words) using visual aids including films, filmstrips, and opaque projector vs presentation of same vocabulary with more usual visual aids such as charts, graphs, bulletin boards, etc.
Evaluation: Teacher constructed multiple-choice test involving key word and four choices
Findings: Students in experimental group made significantly greater gains in vocabulary growth.


- Students: College students enrolled in reading improvement classes and in study skills classes, total of 407 (four experimental and two control classes)
- Length: Program ran for 12 weeks; students worked twenty minutes on vocabulary twice a week
- Methods compared: Experimental study skills and reading class students skimmed materials for words they vaguely knew but felt they could not adequately define and, after location, guessed at meanings, then used dictionary to check; control groups had no specific vocabulary work vs control groups
- Evaluation: Before-and-after achievement in reading vocabulary, comprehension, total reading, and rate were assessed by use of the Nelson-Denny Reading Test
- Findings: Experimental group of "reading class" students made significantly greater gains in vocabulary growth than control groups but "study skills class" students did not; differences in student goals and credit (study skills) vs non-credit basis (reading) were cited as influencing factors. Experimental evidence supported hypothesis that both amount of training and experience of teachers would have a significant effect.


- Students: Six hundred ninety-one 8th grade students from 42 schools
- Length: Thirty week program, two periods per week
- Methods compared: An author designed multi-level vocabulary program involving discussion, dictionary, and sentence use vs a commercial programmed book encouraging dictionary and sentence use vs no-treatment control group
- Evaluation: General vocabulary improvement was evaluated through pre-test testing on Metropolitan Achievement Test, Forms A and B
- Findings: No significant differences between the three groups on word knowledge or reading comprehension gains


- Students: One hundred sixty-four ninth graders--two ninth grade language arts classes in each of four junior highs
- Length: Fourteen week program--time involved per session not directly indicated
- Methods compared: A direct teaching approach in which definitions, context clues, synonyms, and antonyms, and word parts were used to reinforce vocabulary learning vs an interest-in-words approach in which word origins and derivations were discussed and in which students were encouraged to be alert to new and unusual words and keep notebooks vs a wide-reading approach in which students were encouraged to read at least four books in a six week period vs a creative writing group in which attention to vocabulary was only incidental
- Evaluation: General vocabulary change was assessed by pre-post tests using vocabulary sections of Nelson-Denny and Diagnostic Reading Tests
Findings: Interest-in-words group was only group in which significant gains in vocabulary were made, as measured by the Diagnostic Reading Test; all three groups made significant gains as measured by Nelson-Denny Test, but results favored experimental over control groups.


Students: Five hundred eleven students in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade English classes.

Length: Ninety lessons over a ten week period, 10 minutes each day, over two thousand words presented.

Methods compared: Two methods for teaching word parts: a "discovery" method involving analysis and classification vs direct teaching of word parts in which meanings were given to students vs indirect learning (control).

Evaluation: Criteria evaluated included reading comprehension, spelling, knowledge of word parts, general vocabulary, and visual memory; various standardized tests were used.

Findings: Group using discovery method surpassed other groups (significant at .05 or beyond) in knowledge of word parts, vocabulary, spelling, and visual memory. The "discovery" method proved best for boys on all of the subtests and, for girls, on two of the subtests. Some ability level differences were also noted.


Students: One hundred students from four 6th grade classes.

Length: Forty lessons, 15 minutes a day, over an eight week period.

Methods compared: Experimental group students completed a series of forty author-designed lessons emphasizing structural elements, etymology, mnemonic devices, context and sentence structure as aids to word meanings; incidental learning (control) groups had "regular" vocabulary approach, unspecified.

Evaluation: Gains in general vocabulary, comprehension, and spelling were assessed; Metropolitan Achievement Test: Advanced Battery and California Test of Mental Maturity were used.

Findings: Experimental groups made significantly greater gains in comprehension; differences between experimental and control groups on vocabulary and spelling "approached significance".


Students: Two hundred eleven college students in reading improvement program.

Length: Pre and post tests plus "approximately one hour spent in instruction in use of the context over a period of seven weeks".

Methods compared: Three methods for learning and applying five types of context clues were compared: (1) deductive method in which classes were lectured on the names and uses of the five clues involved; inductive method in which students worked 100 exercises "without hint of clues or clue-names"; and (3) combination "deductive-inductive method in which classes were given explanations and clue-names, and worked the exercises. A no-treatment control group was also used.

Evaluation: Experimenter-designed test to measure ability to give correct meanings for stimulus words in context.

Findings: All groups made gains in text scores; no significant differences were found. (The 5 types of clues involved were: definition, experience, comparison and contrast, synonym, and summary.)

Students: Total of 138 college students in psychology classes
Length: One session
Methods compared: Five methods for teaching concepts involved with four "easy" words and four "difficult" words were compared: (1) definition, (2) sentence writing, (3) classification, (4) synonyms, and (5) a combination of the first four; A no-treatment control group was also included
Evaluation: Experimenter-made test included writing of definitions, sentence completion, and ten-alternative multiple-choice items involving classification was used to determine the relative effectiveness of the various methods
Findings: Group having mixed treatment performed better than any single treatment group; no significant differences found between the four single treatment groups; all experimental groups surpassed control in concept identification


Students: Eighth graders, total of 268, in 12 language arts classes
Length: Eighteen lessons over a 5 week period; 25 minutes per day
Methods compared: Programmed method (commercially prepared) for teaching pre-identified vocabulary words was compared with conventional (teacher-directed) method for teaching same words; a morphological approach was emphasized in both treatments
Evaluation: Pre, post, and post-post tests were programmer-prepared, and directly related to words taught
Findings: No significant differences between groups using same materials but different presentation methods; students in "highest" and "lowest" groups on intelligence scores achieved significantly better with teacher-directed method


Students: Fifty-two college freshmen in a first semester social science course
Length: Forty-one class sessions (approximately 160 words taught)
Methods compared: Words pertinent to material being studied were presented and explained to experimental group and outside dictionary study was encouraged; no special attention was given to vocabulary in control groups
Evaluation: Pre-post test, teacher-prepared, included American history background and specific knowledge of words from text; a measure of general vocabulary and reading comprehension was also used
Findings: Results favoring experimental over control group were not significant; however, the experimental group made consistently greater gains in specific vocabulary (significant at .01) and in general vocabulary (significant at .05)


Students: One hundred sixty-three sixth graders
Length: Three periods per week for seventeen weeks
Methods compared: Group studying multiple-meaning abstract words vs group studying words chosen from study skills texts vs group studying key words in World Book Encyclopedia reprints.

Evaluation: "Three types of preand post-measurement were made using the Durrell-Sullivan Tests of Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension, Intermediate" and "the Lorge-Thorndyke Intelligence Test".

Findings: All three groups improved significantly in comprehension and vocabulary scores; between group differences were not significant. No significant differences were found in total group gains in thinking ability, as measured by intelligence test, but the lower third of group using multiple-meaning abstract words showed significantly more improvement than lower thirds of other two groups.


Students: Forty-two fifth grade students in private school setting; IQ scores ranged from 100-150; IQ was used as basis for matched pairs.

Length: Forty lessons, twice a week for twenty weeks; approximately five words presented per session relevant to an ongoing unit on mythology.

Methods compared: Direct experiences such as field trips, projects, and audio-visual presentations as well as exercises involving classification and comparisons were emphasized with experimental group; Conventional vocabulary group (control) studied same words using word lists, dictionary definitions, derivations, etc.

Evaluation: Gains in reading achievement were assessed by pre-post test use of a combined score involving word meaning, sentence meaning, and comprehension scores on Iowa Reading subtests; gains in concept achievement were measured by evaluation of student's verbatim responses to twenty selected words (Definitions were judged as "concrete," "functional" or "involving abstraction" and were rated accordingly; pre and post ratings were compared).

Findings: Both groups made significant gains in both reading and concept achievement; experimental group emphasizing experimental approach achieved significantly higher gains in concept achievement; reading gains favoring experimental group were not significant.


Students: College students assisting in project designed to expedite vocabulary acquisition through computer use.

Methods compared: Conceptually important terms were selected from text chosen for purpose; blocked-presentation and spaced-presentation methods were compared.

Evaluation: Performance on experimenter-prepared tests.

Findings: Spaced-presentation was indicated as more effective (Author considered implications for computer-assisted instruction (CAT) as most important contribution of study).

Students: One hundred fourteen college students in five introductory psychology classes
Length: One class period for study and initial test; part of class period two weeks later
Methods compared: Three methodology groups (repetitive, mnemonic, and unspecified) as well as two study times (five minutes vs unlimited time) compared with reference to effectiveness of learning 35 "difficult vocabulary words"
Evaluation: Experimenter-designed recall and recognition tests on words studied immediately following acquisition and two weeks later (retention)
Findings: No significant differences between three methodology groups; group given "unlimited time" proved superior to five minute learning time on both recall and recognition immediately after acquisition, and on recognition two weeks later


Students: Eighty-eight 6th grade middle-class students
Length: Six children who had difficulty with root word identification were tutored one hour per day for one week to analyze problems and subskills involved; materials were then prepared to teach the necessary subskills. After materials were developed, instructional time per student was approximately 30 minutes.
Methods compared: A diagnostic procedure for learning root words which involved analysis of instruction relative to the subskills that seemed to be deterring the student from effective work with roots was compared to: (1) a standard method in which diagnosis was ignored and students were given no subskill training; (2) an "improved" method in which treatment was still standard for all, but in which "how to do" exercises were included; and (3) dictionary use

Evaluation: Investigator-designed tests to measure gains in root identification and recall and ability to apply knowledge in the definition of derivatives
Findings: Mixed, all experimental groups indicated as superior to controls on criteria measures; diagnostic treatment significantly more effective with reference to time required to complete instruction; investigator concluded diagnostic process and materials proved helpful as an "enabler" for poorer students who ordinarily had difficulty in using root analysis in vocabulary development


Students: Four hundred twenty-nine sixth grade children representing 16 classes from two communities which differed considerably in socio-economic factors
Length: Twenty days, 30 minutes per day
Methods compared: Presentation of pre-selected multiple meaning vocabulary by: (a) large-group instruction using transparencies; (b) large-group instruction using every student response sheets as well as transparencies, and (c) small-group method in which worksheets were substituted for transparencies to convey same information
Evaluation: Berwick Test of Multi-Meaning Vocabulary was used as pre-test, post-test, and retention test five weeks after instruction (Forms A, B, C)

Findings: No significant differences between groups on acquisition, but B was found most successful with reference to retention; community and intelligence levels seemed to be influencing factors with reference to which treatment worked best, but differences were not significant


Students: One hundred fifty 4th graders from four schools in which individualized instruction was characteristic in centers designated as High Intensity Learning Centers

Length: Average of 60 clock hours over a five-month period

Methods compared: Students in Group A were given intensive vocabulary instruction including compound words, contractions, prefixes, suffixes, roots and affixes, inflected endings, homonyms, synonyms, antonyms, conceptual vocabulary, context clues to word analysis, use of words in basic comprehension, and use of words in recall of details. Students involved in Group B were encouraged to read trade books extensively; comprehension skills were stressed; conferences were used to evaluate progress

Evaluation: "Two subtests in vocabulary achievement, one from the SRA Achievement battery and one from the Stanford Achievement battery," were used as the dependent variables

Findings: Post-test scores favored Group B, wide-reading, but differences were not significant


Students: Seventy-two fifth grade children

Methods compared: Three methods for learning pre-identified word lists: (1) exercises worked individually, (2) exercises worked in pairs, (3) writing of sentences using identified words

Findings: Two groups working with exercises had significantly superior performances to group writing sentences


Students: Sixty-eight Air Force personnel enrolled in remedial reading program

Length: Vocabulary instruction, one hour each day for four weeks; remedial reading program was also conducted one hour per day

Methods compared: Program featuring multi-media approach which included filmstrips versus identical material presented without audiovisual aids

Evaluation: Woodcraft Vocabulary and Follow-up Tests were used to evaluate word recognition and reading comprehension

Findings: Multi-media approach was indicated as having significant effects on word recognition achievement; no significant differences were found on reading tests


Students: Five hundred eighty-five seventh graders in English classes

Length: Thirty lessons, approximately ten minutes a day (each lesson stressed one prefix or root word)
Methods compared: Direct teaching of prefixes, roots, and related words vs incidental learning (control)

Evaluation: Reading gains were measured by the Gates Reading Survey; vocabulary, spelling, and gains on specific prefixes and words taught were measured by unpublished tests

Findings: Experimental group was superior in post-test covering specific prefixes and words learned; no significant differences between groups were found on a general vocabulary test


Students: Two hundred 10th grade biology students (matched pairs)

Length: Three months instruction in connection with an ongoing biology program; testing for retention after six months

Methods compared: Use of vocabulary books especially prepared to stress structural elements in actual textbooks used in conjunction with an ongoing program vs classroom instruction without vocabulary element

Evaluation: Unpublished matching test on terms presented given after each unit; retention test included items from all units

Findings: Experimental group significantly superior in acquisition of vocabulary and in retention of terms; results indicated experimental groups became more proficient in dealing with vocabulary as units progressed

Romano, L. The role of sixteen millimeter motion pictures and projected still pictures in science unit vocabulary learning at grades five, six; and seven. Journal of Experimental Education, 1956, 25, pp. 49-58.

Students: Fifth, sixth, and seventh grade public school children in two science classes

Length: Semester program inferred; several units of instruction involved

Methods compared: Vocabulary emphasis using audiovisual materials including movies and slides vs vocabulary emphasis including audiovisual materials but excluding movies or slides (Rotational system was used so that in one unit one class had the expanded audiovisual program and the other, the regular vocabulary program; this was reversed for the next unit, etc.)

Evaluation: Approximately 250 vocabulary words were stressed in each unit; tests to measure gains on each unit included 50 multiple-choice items (recognition level)

Findings: Students in experimental groups showed greatest vocabulary gains; intelligence test scores did not seem to be a significant factor relating to gains

Schoenholz, B.L. An analysis of effective teaching behavior as related to vocabulary instruction in grades seven, eight and nine. (Doctoral dissertation, Hofstra University, 1975). Order No. 75-20,016.

Students: Three hundred sixty students in seventh, eighth, and ninth grade social studies and science classes—fifteen different teacher student groups

Methods compared: Groups used essentially the same methods of vocabulary presentation; teaching sessions were filmed and verbal and non-verbal teacher behaviors were analyzed

Evaluation: Flander's Interaction Analysis Scales were used for analyzing verbal behaviors; Gallo's Nonverbal Scale was used to analyze nonverbal behavior; findings were compared to student vocabulary achievement as measured by unpublished test on the predetermined vocabularies taught

Findings: There were significant differences between achievement and percent of teacher talk; percent of implementary behavior; and percent of personal
behavior. An analysis of differences between the most and least effective teachers based on vocabulary achievement of students indicated that the more successful teachers spent more time praising and encouraging students, more time in questioning and encouraging student responses to teacher-initiated questions, more time to giving directions, and more attention to relating vocabulary introduced to the content area being studied.


Students: Six hundred ninth grade students from two public schools
Length: Pre-test and post-test sessions plus possibly two instructional sessions
Methods: Presentation of the 10 and 20 most difficult words from a vocabulary pretest using 1 of 3 methods: (1) supraliminal projection using video tape; (2) subliminal projection using video tape; and (3) tape with visual presentation missing (control)
Evaluation: Cooperative English Test—Vocabulary section, was used as pre and post-test; words taught were directly from test; same form was used as post-test
Findings: Performance of both experimental groups superior to control group on post-test covering words learned; differences in gains between experimental groups was not significant


Students: Four hundred twenty-nine eighth and tenth grade students in urban inner-city school
Length: Twenty-five lessons—every day in 1 group; every other day in other
Methods: Vocabulary lessons designed to improve qualitative vocabulary through rewriting of paragraphs using synonyms vs placebo lessons; two different time schedules
Evaluation: Quantitative and qualitative vocabulary evaluated by pre-post tests on: Lorge Thorndyke, Stanford-Binet Vocabulary Test adapted; Metropolitan Reading Test and Kuglov Qualitative Vocabulary Test
Findings: Experimental groups attained significantly higher scores in qualitative vocabulary; timing of lessons was not a significant factor


Students: Two hundred ten students in grades 4, 5, and 6 from nine classes in one elementary school
Length: Sixteen class periods, 45 minutes each over period of 5 weeks
Methods compared: Purpose of study was to see whether learning of difficult words from reading passages would result in significantly improved comprehension scores. Students randomly assigned to Groups A, B, and C were given materials featuring words from Reading passages in Forms A and B of the California Achievement Test, and from words in a word list not included in these tests.
Evaluation: Vocabulary and comprehension tests from California Achievement Tests, given initially, were repeated for all students. Tests were also given on words learned
Findings: Vocabulary improved significantly; comprehension did not improve

Students: Three hundred ninety-four 5th graders in 24 arithmetic classes
Length: Variation of twenty to twenty-four weeks, depending on class involved
Methods compared: Four techniques were used in experimental group: initial presentation, class discussion, explanation by the teacher, and use of the dictionary
Evaluation: Gains in reading comprehension, arithmetic concepts, arithmetic problem solving, and vocabulary were assessed through use of Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (Alternate forms were used for pre and post-test data)

Findings: Students trained in quantitative vocabulary scored significantly better on tests measuring arithmetic problem solving and arithmetic concepts but not on tests of general vocabulary or comprehension. Sex differences were not apparent, but ability differences were.


Students: Six secondary school general science classes (147 students)
Length: Pre-tests and post-tests given Mondays and Fridays—instruction three days per week; number of weeks uncertain
Methods: Three different combinations of visual aids used in the presentation and review of vocabulary were compared
Evaluation: Performance on weekly pre-post tests and on retention tests one month later

Findings: All three groups made significant gains and proved equally effective in promoting vocabulary growth in science; all methods tested were also equally effective in teaching farm or non-farm children and with teaching boys and girls


Students: One hundred fifty-three culturally different fifth grade students
Length: Thirty-five days, one hour per day
Methods compared: Effectiveness of student developed materials and commercially developed materials was compared
Evaluation: General vocabulary gains were assessed by use of California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS); attitude toward reading assessed with Estes Reading Attitude Scale (pre-test)

Findings: Group using commercial vocabulary scored significantly better at beginning of program; both groups performed equally on post-test; both groups made significant vocabulary gains—no change in attitude toward reading was indicated

Students: Seventy-five community college freshmen required to enroll in a remedial reading course.

Length: Six weeks of instruction, 3 times a week, 20 minutes per period.

Methods Compared: Learning of a specific reading vocabulary with students practicing by writing sentences vs practice by completing multiple-choice items.

Evaluation: Application of vocabulary work to writing was assessed through analysis of 3 pre-treatment themes, 3 post-treatment themes, and 6 delayed themes for each student.

Findings: Practice through sentence writing indicated as most facilitative with reference to use and retention of words learned or words of same level; no significant gains occurred in use of words of a more complex nature.