

Literacy Strategy

Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS)

Readence, Bean, & Baldwin (2001) state that the purpose of the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (Haggard, 1982) is to help students generate a list of words to be explored and learned and to use their own prior knowledge and interests to enhance their vocabulary. This strategy can be used to stimulate growth in word knowledge. Because the list is self-generated, an internal motivation is utilized. This strategy can help students become fascinated with language and thus, increase their enjoyment of the subject.

VSS involves the following steps:

- Selecting the words
- Defining the words
- Finalizing the word lists
- Extending word knowledge

Students are put into cooperative groups and asked to go through the assigned reading (for example a chapter in their book) to identify words that they think ought to be studied further. Students are to find words that are important to understanding the content of a particular text selection. The meaning and importance of the words can be discussed in cooperative groups prior to sharing them with the whole class.

Next, a class list of words is developed. Each team submits one word from their list to the class, giving its meaning and why they consider it important. The word is recorded for display. Each other group then submits a different word. This action is repeated until all selected words are on display. The teacher can also submit a word to the list. The teacher then leads a discussion for clarification and expansion of the meanings of the terms. A dictionary or the index of the text can be checked for word meanings when necessary. Students' prior knowledge is applied in the discussion.



When the list is complete, the class may choose to delete some words for various reasons, such as duplication, words already known, or words the students do not desire to study. The definitions of the final vocabulary list are discussed for any needed clarification and then recorded in the students' individual journals.

Students may choose to add some of the deleted words to their individual journals.

Follow-up activities can refine and expand the meanings of the self-collected words. The words can be referred to as content is addressed. An assessment on the chapter can include the spelling, application, and definition of the new vocabulary terms.

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