

Word Lab

Building Word Knowledge Through Literature

Teaching with Word Lab

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Supporting the Reading Skills Practiced in Word Lab

Word Lab is a teaching tool. You will be teaching the “reading approaches” for each of the activities in Word Lab until the majority of your students become independent. Independent readers will quickly become self-taught learners, enriching and expanding their vocabulary. Moderate readers with periodic coaching, will do the same, while strengthening their comprehension skills. Struggling readers, with teacher assistance, will derive great benefit from learning and applying the skills required to complete the reading activities. These students will not just improve their vocabulary, but strengthen their word approach and comprehension skills.

All of the activities in Word Lab are recommended by research as “best practices” for learning new words. They also naturally serve as reading practice, requiring certain logic, decoding, and word-connecting skills. Teaching students to use the strategies that help them solve the many word puzzles in the program will provide them with practice in these skills. As they learn these “reading approaches,” they will become more successful with the program, gain confidence, and improve overall reading comprehension. Experienced teachers will have many ways they choose to model/teach these skills. Some of the following suggestions come from knowing how the activities were designed and can be of great help in assisting students with developing approaches that work. This guide will provide you with the guidelines for monitoring, coaching, and directly intervening as needed while your students, at all levels, use Word Lab.

What is the “Personal Dictionary”

One of the main keys to success for any student using this program is whether he/she has learned to use their “Personal Dictionary” (PD) as a resource. The definitions in the “Personal Dictionary” provide specific clues to help them identify answers for the activities as well as general information about the word. In addition, by constantly referring to their “PD”, student understanding of the word is reinforced and reformulated repeatedly.

This is particularly relevant to challenged readers, as they are the ones that need the most repetition and for whom reconnecting with the word in a variety of ways is most valuable. They are also the ones that will become more easily discouraged if they do not discover the value of using their “Personal Dictionary.” Continuous modeling, teaching, and reinforcing of use of the “Personal Dictionary” will improve student success and motivation. The tips below come from teachers who have worked with the program.

Tips for maintaining the “Personal Dictionary” (PD):

- Provide a simple, lightweight binder, like a paper report cover, in which students are expected to keep their “Personal Dictionaries” organized by chapter, with the most recent chapter of words in the front. Using a report cover that requires that students place each new chapter set of words in the security of a three-hole binding will ensure their organization stays put. Report covers with pockets tend to lose pages.
- Make the “PD” cover lightweight and brightly colored. This makes it easier for students to have it at the computer with them and for you to spot whether they remembered to take it with them.
- While students are learning to use the program, teach them to bring each printout to you after completing Station 1, the minute they get it from the printer. Take a quick glance to be sure it is filled out with sensible ideas. This gives you a chance to see how they are thinking, to put a stop to any “junk” they may try to use as filler, and to remind them to put it in their report cover binder immediately before continuing with the program. Once good habits are instilled, this practice can be dropped.
- Should you find a student has filled in the Word Maps or T-Bar charts with “junk,” give them a paper Word Map blank (copies can be printed from the Administrator under Reports, keep some handy) to fill out by hand. Students rarely repeat “junk” fillers once they have had to fill it out by hand and put it in their “Personal Dictionary” binder along with the other printouts.
- Make it a weekly job for one of the students, or a parent volunteer, to collect and check “PDs” to see that they are complete. I give out weekly stickers to be placed on the binder if all is complete. You will want to print out the “Active Chapter Report” using the Administrator program, to use as a check-list for how many chapters of words should be in their “PD.” Keep in mind that the student that passed both pre and post assessment at 100% for any chapter, will not have needed to print out words for that chapter. This can be recorded inside the front cover of their binder so that the assigned “PD” checker will not expect to see words from that chapter.
- A once-a-month conference with each student, reviewing their “PD,” can be revealing and motivating.
- Have students reprint missing chapters of words to replenish their “PD.” This can be done from their own home page, using the “Reprint” button.
- To add value to their “Personal Dictionary” have students use them during writing and spelling activity times, encouraging them to use the words they have learned.

Teaching students how to use the “PD” as a resource

- Be available. Although independent readers will be able to use the program without your help once they learn the process, struggling readers will need your support and guidance. As they develop techniques for connecting to the words and their activities, they will become more independent.
- Monitor the organization and use of student “Personal Dictionaries” as they work at the computer. They should have them with them at all times.
- The words that have to be replaced in the “Substitute” sentences often come right out of the definition of the target word that are in their “PDs.” Show students how they can locate words in “Substitutes” sentences that match words in the definitions in their “PD.”
- Point out to students that many antonyms are also chosen right out of the definitions in their “PDs” with the word “not” added in front. Ex: supple = flexible. An antonym for supple could be “not flexible.”
- Encourage students to ask for help in the meaning and/or pronunciation of any unknown words in the definitions in their “PDs.”
- Have students read their definitions out loud from their “PD” as they search for meanings that fit with the exercises.
- The “Analogy” activity often uses words from previous chapters in the second part of the analogy. Point this out and show students how they can look these up in their “PD” if they’ve forgotten them.
- As you circulate, have students read aloud their target words from their “PD” to monitor for correct pronunciation.
- Once a student has assigned some of the chapter target words to answers within an activity, teach them to recognize which words are the only ones left to use for the rest of the answers. They can then concentrate on these words only in their “PD.” Process of elimination can be a powerful tool in many of the activities.

Word Lab Activities

Teaching “reading approaches” for each of the activities

All of the activities in Word Lab are recommended by research as “best practices” for learning new words. They also naturally serve as reading practice, requiring certain logic, decoding, and word-connecting skills. Teaching students to use the strategies that help them solve the many word puzzles in the program will provide them with practice in these skills. As they learn these “reading approaches,” they will become more successful with the program, gain confidence, and improve overall reading comprehension. Experienced teachers will have many ways they choose to model/teach these skills. Some of the following suggestions come from knowing how the activities were designed and can be of great help in assisting students with developing approaches that work.

Pre-assessment

What is “Pre-assessment”?

In the Pre-assessment section, students demonstrate their knowledge of the target words selected for each chapter. The Pre-assessment portion of the program consists of three screens.

- The first screen, "Pre-assessment: Choose," presents students with a list of 16 to 20 words from within the selected chapter (only half of them are the target words chosen for later practice). Students identify with a click the words they believe they already understand from this list then click "Next" to continue.
- The next screen "Pre-assessment: Definitions," challenges the students to match the correct definition with the words they previously selected as "known." They are presented with one definition at a time and a list of the selected words from the first screen. The student must select (click on) one word to match each definition then click "Next." Students also may select the "No matching word" button if they believe there is no word that matches the definition. They continue until all definitions have been matched. Word Lab will only test students on the words they identified that they knew on the opening screen. Word Lab will automatically include the words **not** chosen as known, as target words in need of practice. The "Next" button takes students to the screen that shows the test results.
- The final screen in the Pre-assessment area is "Pre-assessment: Results." Two lists represent the words students really knew and the ones they did not. The "Done" button takes students back to their student home page.

Teaching Points

Some students find the pre-assessment test confusing. They may be simply poor test-takers. These students often know more words than they can prove in the program’s pre-assessment. First let these students read over the words and definitions of a set of chapter words before taking the pre-assessment test (print out in Word Lab Administrator Reports). They can become discouraged when continually being assigned to learn more words for each chapter than necessary, but a quick review over the words and definitions can alleviate that problem. This approach should only be used if going to an easier book, where more words will be recognized, is not the right option. (See “Coordinating the reading of the book with Word Lab.”) The second

option is to limit the number of words per chapter assigned to this student as target words, even if they miss them all in the pre-assessment. This can be done in the Administrator by choosing the "Edit" button next to the student's name.

Learning Station 1 – Definitions

This station presents the words that students need to learn by giving definitions, samples of use from the book, additional ideas for associations and synonyms, and categorization challenges. It also expects students to put in their own ideas and associations connected with the words, choose categories in which to describe them, and provide more synonyms. Of all the stations, this station requires the most effort and input from students and will take the longest to complete. It establishes a base understanding of the words from which to work, in later Learning Stations, and includes three activities: Word Maps, T-Bar Charts, and Feature Grids. All students print out a "Personal Dictionary" as a result of these activities for reference during the remainder of the program. The activities in Learning Station 1 **are not scored**.

Word Maps

What is "Word Maps"?

When the student clicks on the "Go" button for Word Maps they will be presented with a completed word map and a definition of their first target word. For each target word there will be a sample word map already completed in order to give students some ideas on how to define the word beyond the simple definition. Also represented, is the way the target word was used in the book. Students should read the sample word map carefully to become familiar with the word. They will be able to return to it for help at any time during the creation of their own word map by pressing the "Example" button.

After reading the sample word map, click the "Next" button. Students will see an empty word map with the same the target word and definition at the center, similar to the sample word map. Students may choose the category they wish to use in each text box of the word map. There are 14 categories from which to choose by clicking on the drop-down menu arrow (combo box) above each text box. They must then fill in all the represented text boxes with their own ideas for the target word, satisfying their category choice. At any time they may return to the sample map for ideas by clicking on " Example."

Teaching Points

Show students that "taking" ideas from the sample "Word Map" is a useful and appropriate way to get ideas. Discourage them from spending lots of time staring at a blank "Word Map" when they can't think of anything. Use the "sample!" Another way to borrow ideas is to use words straight out of the definition. Explain that this is not "cheating," only learning from the resources around you. Also, remember, only 2 out of the 3 spaces need be filled out before you can move to the next "Word Map."

"Word Maps" requires the most effort from students and is the first activity they encounter. The first few chapters may feel very demanding to students, but they will learn to speed up their brainstorming skills. By the 3rd or 4th chapter, "Word Maps" will begin to seem less cumbersome to your less verbal students, and by the time they are almost finished with their first book, they will be cruising through them. Continue to remind them to get ideas from the "sample" and also from the definition and use lots of encouragement to get them past this learning curve.

Encourage students to ask for help in understanding some definitions and ideas in the sample "Word Map" the first time they are introduced.

Spelling does not count in “Word Maps.” This is a brainstorming activity. Help students not to worry about spelling that have a tendency to do so.

T-Bar Charts

What is “T-Bar Charts”?

T-Bar Charts are similar to Word Maps in that they provide sample associations for the target word, including one from the novel, and ask for additional student input. The sample ideas given by Word Lab for each target word are included on the same chart that students have to then complete. Once again the dictionary definition is provided for each word. Students are asked to think of one other association with the word (an experience, activity, picture, or thought that comes to mind in association with the meaning of the word) and two other synonyms. The chart already includes two association ideas (one of which comes from the novel) and one synonym. Encourage students to create phrases that act as synonyms when a single-word synonym is hard to come by. They must complete all the blanks before continuing.

Most word processing programs include a **thesaurus** and students find it stimulating and enriching to use these programs to access synonyms for their T-Bar Charts. This is most efficiently done by leaving Word Lab open. In MS Windows, access the word processing program using the "Start" button, click on "Programs," and select the word processing program and the thesaurus of your choice. By holding down "Alt" and pressing the "Tab" key once, students may toggle back and forth between the T-Bar Chart screen and the thesaurus tool. Minimizing the screens will also allow you to go back and forth.

Teaching Points

A student that finds brainstorming ideas difficult, should be encouraged to make “Feature Grids” their second choice rather than “T-Bar Charts.” For those that choose this activity, remind them that borrowing ideas from the definition for a “synonym” is very appropriate. Some students like to use the thesaurus in their word processing program to find “synonyms.” This can be opened without losing your web page and minimized to be available as needed.

Feature Grids

What is “Feature Grids”?

Feature Grids asks students to determine whether a word possesses certain qualities from a list. This list includes: parts of speech, emotional impact, visual and auditory attributes, can it be purchased, and does it exist in the present. Once again, answers are based on student experience and not all are considered right or wrong. Students are expected to have a 50% accuracy and will be asked to try again if they do not achieve this percentage. Students click on a combo box arrow to choose how the word connects with each listed quality. These menu choices are: "yes, no, makes no sense, sometimes." After students have selected menu choices for all qualities in this list, students click on “Compare” to see if Word Lab agrees. If they match up with Word Lab's choices, the program reacts with a surprise on the screen. If not, Word Lab indicates what its preferences are and shows the choices that do not agree. If less than 50% of the answers are a match, Word Lab asks the student to try again after looking over the differences. Students click on "Next" to select choices for the next target word.

Teaching Points

Many students don't understand that if a word is used as a "noun" in a sentence, then it cannot also be considered a "descriptor" (adj. or adv.) or an "action" (verb) word. In other words, out of the first 6 items in "Feature Grids," once a word is checked with a "yes" as a noun, descriptor, or action word, the remainder of these top 6 items should be checked as "no." Occasionally, a "noun" can be of 2 types, such as both a "thing" and a "place" but that is the rare exception and it still cannot be identified as a "descriptor" or a "verb." Students may click on the "Example" link to remind themselves how the word was used in the book.

Any word that is not a noun can be identified as "makes no sense" under "Can be bought." Explain to students why this is so.

A series of answers that all match with the computer (100%) gives a surprise rewarding response, but is not scored. Answers that do not match are not necessarily wrong, as they depend on background knowledge. Be sure to explain this to your students.

Pay attention when a student makes a complete match with the computer on any "Feature Grid" by asking to see any that are a complete match, perhaps offering a sticker reward to go in their binder. Since it is inappropriate to score these officially as they are too dependent on personal experience, some recognition for a 100% match encourages students to think hard, which is what you want with this activity.

One of the reasons this activity helps to make personal connections to words, is the very fact that the computer may disagree. Students become incensed when an answer that is "right" for them is considered "incorrect" according to the program database. Emotions are powerful connectors!

Learning Station 2 - Associations

Learning Station 2 gives students practice using their target words in context. The activities include:

- Connect Two
- Substitutes
- True/False

They should have their "Personal Dictionary" with them to refer to as they interpret how to use their words. Many of the clues in these activities use words straight from the definitions, in the "Personal Dictionary." Students who continually refer to their dictionaries find quicker success and learn word meanings more thoroughly.

All activities in Learning Station 2 are scored. These scores can be accessed in the "Reports" section of Word Lab Administrator. Students must earn the average mastery score assigned them in Word Lab Administrator (the default mastery expectation is 80%). The program averages only the best scores from the number of required activities for the station (the default set in Word Lab Administrator is 2 out of 3 activities per station). If a student completes all 3 activities, but was only required to complete 2, the program will compute an average based on the best 2 of the 3 scores.

Once students have completed the required number of activities, the program will display the average. If the average is below the mastery expectation, the program will continue to direct students to the incomplete or the lowest-scoring activity until the average satisfies the mastery expectation.

Connect 2

What is "Connect 2"?

This activity provides one sentence for each student target word. Each sentence has two blanks that must be correctly filled. One blank should be filled from the target word list provided, the other from the "Helper Word" list. The target word may fit in either blank and does not have to be the choice for the first blank in the sentence.

Teaching Points

Be sure that students have their "Personal Dictionaries" with them and that they are up-to-date. Less skillful readers tend to freeze when they reach the first blank, thinking they are expected to know what would go there right away. Teach students to read to the end of the sentence out loud, saying the word "blank" in the place of each blank. Then ask them what they would choose to put in the blanks themselves before they look at the choices provided. Once they have their own ideas, they often recognize the correct word from the list of choices. They must choose one word from each list.

Show students the value of checking off each word they choose in the check boxes before they select it directly into the sentence.

Help students understand the value of selecting the obvious or easier sentences for completion first, hence eliminating some of the choices for completing the harder sentences.

Have students reread their sentence once they have selected words for the blanks, making sure it makes sense. Refer to the PD as needed for understanding.

Once students click on “Compare” the program will show the correct answer for any missed sentences. Teach students the value of reading carefully (out loud, if possible) and trying to make sense of the corrected answer that is shown to them. If the program requires the student to try again, it will be helpful to have seen and read the words used correctly.

Substitutes

What is “Substitutes”?

A sentence for each student target word is presented on the screen. There are no blanks to fill, but one word in each sentence can be replaced by a word from the provided target word list. Students should start with the more obvious word substitutions first.

Teaching Points

As always, students should have their PD available. Often, the structure of the sentence alone gives away which word could be replaced. Teach students to read through the sentence completely then guess which word in the sentence sounds like a likely candidate for replacement. They should then refer to their “PD” and see if that word is part of any of the definitions of their target words, or is similar to the definitions. Many substitute words are chosen right out of the definitions.

Help students understand the value of selecting the easier sentences for completion first, hence eliminating some of the choices for the harder ones.

Once students click on “Compare”, the program will show the correct answer for any missed sentences. Teach students the value of reading carefully (out loud, if possible) and trying to make sense of the correct answer that is shown to them. If the program requires the student to try again, it will be helpful to have seen and read the word placed correctly.

True/False

What is “True/False”?

This activity asks students to click a True or False radio button for each statement. There is one True/False statement for each student target word.

Teaching Points

Although students find this activity easier than most, they often get mixed up. Teach students to refer to their “PD” if they have any doubts as to the validity of the T/F statement.

Learning Station 3 - Analysis

In this Learning Station, students practice making logical connections between their target words and other words. It includes the following activities:

- Belong
- Analogies
- Antonyms

This station requires higher level thinking skills and challenges students to think "outside the box." Activity scores and averages are made available in the same manner as in Learning Station 2. Also, as in Station 2, many of the clues in these activities use words straight from the definitions, in the "Personal Dictionary." Students who continually refer to their dictionaries find quicker success and learn word meanings more thoroughly.

Belong

What is "Belong"?

In this activity, students will see three additional words listed beside each target word. They must surmise why only three of the four words (including the target word) belong together and fill in the blank in the clue sentence which hints at "why." Students then click the radio button for the word that **does not** belong.

Teaching Points

Check that students have their PDs. "Belong" can be a confusing activity to learn to use, but once students understand it, they become proficient. The directions suggest a step-by-step process, but in reality, students' minds must toggle back and forth between the list of four words and the clue sentence until it all fits together and they know what the clue is saying and can identify the word that does not belong. If they don't know the meaning of a word in the list of four, they should be encouraged to ask, as that will be crucial to their deciding which words belong together.

Students' scores are only based on correctly choosing the word that does not belong. Choosing a clue word for the sentence that does not match with Word Lab will not be counted as a missed answer. This is because students will occasionally think of a clue word for finishing the sentence that works well but is not in Word Lab's bank of ideas. If students do match all of Word Lab's ideas, a message flashes around on the screen to reward them for their efforts.

Recognition, by verbal or other means, for matching all the words in the clue sentence with the program's choices, can be a great motivator for encouraging students to think hard. Let students know you are interested in whether they can match the program's choices for clue words, even though a complete match does not affect the score.

Analogies

What is “Analogies”?

This activity may take some training for students who are not familiar with analogies. The quickest way to help students understand how analogies work is to have them make their own, challenging other classmates to complete their creations. Example: Hot is to cold as _____ is to white.

Teaching Points

Student Personal Dictionaries will be very useful in this activity. Each analogy creates a type of relationship between the first two words that has to be identified before the second set of words can be paired up. Ask the student if the first two words mean the *same thing*, are *opposites*, does one word *describe* something about the other, or does one word have an *effect* on another. Be sure the student learns to identify which of these best describes the relationship of the first two words before they choose the match for the other pair. Help them think out loud.

Many times, the program uses this opportunity to review words from the previous three chapters. If they see a familiar word but can't remember the meaning, encourage them to look in their “PD” in previous chapters.

Antonyms

What is “Antonyms”?

Students are asked to match each target word with two antonym choices. Many words, especially nouns, do not have straightforward antonyms. For example, the fruit “orange” does not have a direct opposite. In these cases, Word Lab presents a “conceptual” opposite, or something that is “not” an orange – perhaps “stone”. It is very helpful to choose antonyms that are easy to identify first. This process of elimination makes it easier to match the more obscure antonyms with their target words.

Teaching Points

Again, the PD is a must for Antonyms. Sometimes students forget to think in “opposites” because they’ve been trying so hard up until now to think of synonyms, and may need reminding.

Many of the antonyms are taken right out of the definitions, with a “not” added before them. Show students that using the “PD” can be very useful here. Teach them to identify all the easy ones first, then they will have eliminated some of the choices, making words that don't have obvious antonyms easier to match with the most likely candidates.

Learning Station 4 - Affixes

This station has only 2 activities:

- Spelling
- Meaning

Students apply given definitions of affixes to words other than their target words and/or are asked to identify the correct application of affixes as used in different words.

Students will only have to complete the activities in this station if the target words they are working on have affixes incorporated into these exercises. If they are not practicing words with these affixes, the web page will inform them after they press “Go” and an “N/A” rather than “Completed” on the main page next to the activity.

Students often feel out on a limb when asked to identify the correct meaning of an affix with no clue other than their knowledge of the word that uses the affix. Once encouraged to use a sensible guess, they find they are usually right, and become more accustomed to trusting their own judgment. If they miss the correct definition, they get as many additional tries to locate it as needed.

Spelling and Meaning

What is “Spelling”?

Students see two ways to apply an affix to create a word. One is a correct word and the other is an “invented or nonsense” word. They must choose the correctly spelled word (the real word) and identify the definition of the affix from a list.

What is “Meaning”?

Several affixes can often have the same meaning. For example: co, con, com, cor, col all mean “together” or “with.” Students must choose an affix from such a group and correctly apply it to a word in a sentence. They type in their affix choice to complete the word and then must choose the correct definition from a list.

Teaching Points

Although the activities here are based on the affix(es) used in the target words, they have less to do with the meaning of the target word, so the “PD” is not needed here. Students soon learn that any sensible choice for the definition of the affix is acceptable. Encourage them to feel comfortable with a “guess.”

When working on “Meaning,” if the affix choice is not quickly obvious, students should actually type in each affix in the blank and then read the word to see if it sounds familiar. If none of the resultant combinations looks familiar, they should get your help. They may not know the word that they are supposed to recognize and you will have to share it with them.

Chapter Assessment

What is “Chapter Assessment”?

The chapter assessment tests students on all the targets words for the chapter, including those passed in the pre-assessment. It looks simple but is designed to be tricky. Encourage students to take their time to look for the **best** answer, not just a possible one.

Teaching Points

If you have chosen to require a password (highly recommended) before students can go on to the final assessment, and have not shared that password with students, you will be the one to type it in. Students will be at all stages and rarely will you have simultaneous requests. By having to type in the password yourself, you are assured of being aware that this student is taking his/her final test. You will be able to check that they have put their “PD” away, and reinforce a serious attitude towards this final assessment.

Book Assessment

What is the “Book Assessment”?

Students take another type of assessment when all of the chapters have been completed. The book assessment is a review of 50 of the target words that the student learned while working through the Workbook chapter activities. If the student did not have to learn as many as 50 words, the program will still provide 50 test items. This test does not require students to remember a definition of a word, but instead to recognize its correct use in context. Students practice applying their heightened ability to use context clues and their long term memory, as they choose the sentence that uses the word correctly. Students may study their "Personal Dictionary" pages from each chapter as review or jump right in as seems appropriate. Or they could have their "Personal Dictionary" pages with them at the time of the test for reference, if that approach is preferred.

Teaching Points

At the end of every “Workbook” is a final assessment that tests students’ long-term memory. This will give you an idea as to how much they have retained. Encourage them to ask for help in reading any words that are unfamiliar so those words do not interfere with their ability to demonstrate understanding of the correct use of target word.

Word Lab Challenge

What is Word Lab Challenge?

Word Lab Challenge is available only for completed workbooks. Once a student finishes a workbook, the title will appear in the selection choices in the Word Lab Challenge section of the first page after login. To take a Word Lab Challenge, the student must ask you to enter the 'password'. This password is the same password used for assessments. We have instituted a required password to prevent unauthorized use of Word Lab Challenge.

Word Lab Challenge comes in two varieties: a timed version and an un-timed version. Both versions keep track of the number of correct and incorrect answers, but the timed version also tracks the number of seconds used to take the challenge. This way students can compete both on word score and time score.

The top five scores, collected from all students within your school, for each category of challenge are listed on the Word Lab Challenge Start Page.

Teaching Points

Students may take the Word Lab Challenge on a completed book as many times as they like to work their way into recognition as a top scorer. This is a competitive activity and additional recognition can be useful.

Be sure the student has enough time to complete all the words in a book in one sitting. The program requires all questions be answered and will not save data on an incomplete challenge. For instance, there are 210 words to get through for *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (one of our larger workbooks). This could take 45 minutes to complete!

Writing Assignment

What is “Writing Assignment”?

At the end of each chapter, students may write a short piece using at least five of the target words they had to learn from the chapter. They may choose a topic from the selections offered or create their own topic. They are provided with a list of their target words for that chapter, as well as the remaining words they already knew, should they need more choices.

This writing assignment may be accessed by the teacher at any time and comments and/or a “grade” added. The teacher may request the student rework the assignment and resubmit as needed.

Teaching Points

Writing is one of the primary ways in which students can be encouraged to process word meanings in an active and generative way. Even most reluctant writers can be motivated if focus remains on vocabulary use and familiar word choices are provided. Use this as an opportunity for students to become more comfortable with using writing without providing explicit writing instruction.

Once again, encourage students to refer to their Personal Dictionary for ideas. Comments may be added to the assignment using your Admin site and a status of “Rework” or “Done” assigned to the writing piece, as well as an optional score or grade.

Assignments may be reworked by the student directly on the computer or printed out and reworked on paper. Should a student want to expand the writing piece, applying it to a fuller story, they may copy and paste it into a word processing document. This activity is most successful when used as an opportunity to improve expressive use of vocabulary rather than for direct instruction in language mechanics.

Teachers may view all writing assignments of any status all at once or choose to view only those ready for “Review.” All writing assignments for all workbooks remain accessible from the teacher’s Admin page for the school year. Students may retrieve their own writing assignments for any particular active Workbook, but once a Workbook is completed, they will no longer have access to those pieces associated with the particular workbook.

Students access writing assignments to rework and/or view comments or grades by clicking on the Writing Assignment icon at the top right of their home page.

Coordinating the reading of the book with Word Lab

You can help students gain confidence using Word Lab first by placing them in a **very** easy and short book, such as one of our picture books. Once they are more comfortable with the mechanics of Word Lab, the best way to ensure that your students learn at a pace that fits their needs is to have them using a Workbook that matches their vocabulary knowledge. This means that they should already know 3 to 5 of the words, on average, targeted for each chapter. Once you have picked a book at the right reading level, assign it to your student. You will then be able to use the Administrator program to print out the report called "Chapter Words" for several chapters. Assessing these targeted words will give you a better idea as to whether you have made a good choice for that student. Word Lab has Workbooks based on books ranging from 2rd to 11th grade reading level and we are increasing the choices as fast as we can. To get an update on the latest list of available Workbooks and to make suggestions for future Workbooks, visit our site at <http://www.logixlab.com>. New books are automatically added to Word Lab and available to you as soon as they are added to our site. Choosing the right level book for your student can provide a more positive experience for your student and require less coaching from you.

The "Academic Word List"

The Academic Word List is the only vocabulary that does not connect directly with a single particular piece of literature. It includes ten units of sets of words most frequently found in school text books of all types, hence applying to non-fiction. Students are not expected to read any particular text or literature before working on an Academic Word List unit.

"The Academic Word List, compiled by Coxhead (2000), consists of 570 word families that are not in the most frequent 2,000 words of English but which occur reasonably frequently over a very wide range of academic texts. These 570 words are grouped into ten sublists that reflect word frequency and range. A word like analyze falls into Sublist 1, which contains the most frequent words, while the word adjacent falls into Sublist 10 which includes the least frequent (amongst this list of high incidence words)...knowledge of the most high-incidence academic words in English can significantly boost a student's comprehension level of school-based reading material."

Coxhead, Averil. (2000). A new academic word list. TESOL Quarterly, 34, 213-238.
Averil Coxhead's website: www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/div1/awl

Using a single book for the whole class

Most classes represent a wide range of reading levels and students are likely to need more than one book-level choice. However, if you decide to use the program with a full-size class that has a wide range of ability, and have everyone using the same book, it can be done. Don't feel you have to read only one chapter at a time and wait for everyone to finish the words for that chapter before you read on. The momentum of a good book should be valued by reading on as time allows.

Don't feel obliged to stop working in a Word Lab Workbook if the novel is finished. The benefits of reading the book will last, while students continue to work on their vocabulary

Let your students go ahead at their own pace; it's easier to manage. It is by no means essential that everyone finish the Workbook. Slower students will still benefit greatly from the exposure to the words they learn, even if they don't finish the Workbook. Remember that those students may have had to learn as many words (or more) as the more knowledgeable students who finished the Workbook earlier. The final book assessment at the end is not essential and can be skipped, as well as unfinished chapters. If you decide you want more of your students to finish the workbook, keep in mind that those who finish a workbook ahead of others are usually independent workers you can count on to work on other things while you help slower students. You may also reduce the number of activities required to allow challenged students to move more quickly.

Choose a very easy book to get students started. Allow at least three chapters of activities for students to gain some independence with the program. Expect to have to encourage and nudge your challenged readers through these first three chapters, and of course teach the skills required.

If students can spend one period a week or more in a lab, where everyone gets to work at Word Lab at once, this will give you a chance to circulate through all of them and evaluate who is struggling and needs more training and support. You will also want to refer to the reports accessed through your Administrator program. They will tell you which activities certain students are repeating and struggling over. If you set up your profile in the Administrator Home page to receive email intervention alerts, you will know as soon as you check your email who is struggling.

Give more time on your classroom computers to those who need it, on a daily basis. Use the "Active Chapter Report" to see where they are. Using the classroom computers half an hour a day and the lab for an hour once a week will get the majority of your class through an average Workbook in about two months. Independent reading comprehension test scores have demonstrated that there is a correlation between times spent on Word Lab and improvement in reading comprehension. By providing a minimum of 1.5 hours a week of Word lab time for each student you will be more likely to achieve the 1.7 to 2.6 years of gains we have seen in one school year.

Have an independent activity available for those who are not at the computers that will allow you to help those working on Word Lab. Since it is often the more independent readers who are less frequently at the computers in the classroom at this time, they are often available and quite happy to read aloud to the rest of the class during this half hour.

Using a variety of Workbooks

Choose the Workbook for each student based on their reading level and vocabulary knowledge after Word Lab proficiency is reached, as mentioned above. Let students work at their own pace and keep track of difficulties and progress by using the reports in your Administrator and email interventions. Monitor, and support as you circulate. Some students may need more time on the computers than others. Referring to the "Active Chapter Report" or "Ranking by Word Bank Report" is the quickest way to know who is ahead and who needs more time. Move students on to Word Lab Challenge (can only be taken for completed workbooks), or a new workbook when they have completed the one they are on.

Using the lab every week and the classroom computers half an hour or so a day, will keep everyone active and moving ahead. Develop a system for rotating computer access if you prefer, rather than assigning by amount of progress or need. Since they will not as easily be able to compare each other's paces, less emphasis can be put on who is "ahead" or "behind" in an individual Workbook.

Have an independent activity available for those who are not at the computers that will allow you to help those working on Word Lab.

Read aloud, reading groups, or independent reading?

Any of these approaches will work. "Read aloud" is most practical when the whole class is doing the same Workbook, although some students could still be working in another Workbook, reading their book choice independently in school or for homework, while still enjoying the "read aloud" book choice that other students may be using for Word Lab. "Independent reading" is the hardest to keep track of, and assigning chapters or pages to be read with deadlines is often needed. Remember, it is okay to be ahead in the book. If students are still working on chapter 1 words in Word Lab but are reading chapter 5, it will not diminish the value they derive from the program. "Reading groups" that are working on the same workbook can work well when some students are using different Workbooks. Choose your approach based on what the students can best handle and is most manageable for you.

Changing mastery levels and/or activity requirements to adjust to student needs.

Some students may struggle to the point of frustration with some of these activities or have to repeat too many times. No matter how hard you work with them, or how carefully you choose the Workbook level, they continue to feel inadequate and confused. For example, "Connect Two" requires a reading competency that some student users have not yet acquired. The expectations of the program can be adjusted. For these readers, it is recommended that the number of activities required at each station be lowered to one. This gives the student the opportunity to choose the activity he/she finds the easiest, and build up confidence. The mastery percentage can be lowered so that mastery is achieved with fewer repetitions. Once confidence is gained, gradually increase mastery expectations. As reading skills improve, increase the required number of activities per station. Teach these students specific strategies as needed for using each added activity. Encourage these students to ask for help in understanding the meanings of words that are part of the activities and are preventing them from understanding the context within which they are working. Resort to this adjustment in expectations only if you have already chosen an appropriate level of Workbook and have taught the skills to manage the activities, but student frustration is still high. These students will not gain as much at first, as is to be expected with lower expectations, but they need the chance to build up their skills more slowly. Adjusting to their needs will give them the chance to succeed.

If a student can manage the activities but is burdened with too many words to learn for each chapter, check the level of the workbook first. Is it too hard? If the answer is "No", refer to "Teaching Points" under Pre-assessment, where it is suggested you share the meanings of words before a student takes a pre-assessment or limiting the assigned words using your Administrator.

If it is imperative that students get through chapters more quickly, lowering the default activity requirement to one activity per station can speed up progress through the Learning Stations. With less repetition, students that need additional drill may not learn the words as well, but some students will also be able to learn just as well and move ahead more quickly. This can be useful for the quick student who gets easily bored and has strong verbal skills.

Lowering the default activity requirement to one per station gives the students with faster word knowledge acquisition skills a chance to move ahead at a pace more suitable to their learning style. Do this only after you have data from about four chapters so you can look for changes in the student's ability to demonstrate new word acquisition. Watch chapter assessment scores and "words learned" reports using the new lower activity requirement. Compare these scores from the

first four chapters with the scores from the next four chapters. If a student shows no significant change, they should be able to continue learning well with only one activity required per station.

All of these requirements can be individualized using Word Lab Administrator.

Students Working in Teams

Most students will prefer working alone at the computer. Some students, however, learn better if they have the opportunity to think out loud with their peers. For these students, two partnering options are available. For either option it is best if the partners are equal in skill and reading level.

Two students can be regularly scheduled to work side by side, each with their own page and computer, but staying on the same activity as they work. They should be instructed to go through the pre-assessment and post-assessment independently, but to share ideas for the rest of the activities. In other words, they may “copy “ each other’s ideas for Word Maps, Feature Grids, etc., and of course talk amongst themselves about the answers. They will have to take turns deciding which activities at each Station they will do, then help each other decide the answers, entering those answers each on their own page. Naturally, care will have to be taken to choose partners that can work together productively.

Two students may work together as one, under a team name. Choose a Workbook that is slightly more challenging than you would if they were working alone. With the background knowledge of two minds, they will already know more words from the pre-assessment and have more ideas to contribute to the activities. When it comes to test time, print out the test page, and have them each take their own test on paper. This is the score you will want to use as a record of their individual learning. Once they have taken their paper tests, they should take the one in the program together, so the program will allow them to continue. The score they get jointly will be recorded in the Word Lab database, but you will want to save the one they got individually on paper. This requires a bit more record-keeping on your part, but the results can be worth the effort.

Summary of Intervention Approaches

Interventions may include:

- Teaching the student to refer to the personal dictionary regularly in order to repeatedly reprocess new word meanings
- Modeling how to use the activities to improve new word learning.
- Providing for peer interaction by teaming 2 students
- Choosing a different workbook level
- Increasing or decreasing the number of activities required, or the mastery level to provide more or less exposure to use of the words or to speed things up.
- Limiting the number of words for study

Using Word Lab Administrator Reports to Track Progress, Improve Performance, and Guide Teacher Interventions

General Reports

Student Ranking by Word Bank

This report ranks students by study words learned in all Workbooks. It is useful for comparing progress between students and deciding which students need more time on the computer.

Assigned Workbooks – Time Spent

This report lists all students in a class and the Workbooks they have been assigned, the date they started the workbook, and how much time they have spent in that workbook so far. This report lets you know how much time has been invested in the amount learned and can help identify the need for interventions.

Average Activity Time per Word

This report lists students in the class alphabetically. The average minutes per word is displayed for each student. This value is calculated as the total time spent in Word Lab divided by the total number of target words studied and mastered. For example, if a student has spent 2 hours in Word Lab and mastered 10 target words, their time per word would be 12 minutes. This information can identify students that are struggling or unable to focus.

Active Chapter

Lists all students in a class, the title of the workbook assigned, the chapter within which the student is currently working, and the date the chapter was started. This report is useful, along with “Ranking by Word Bank” for identifying which students need more time on the program and perhaps some interventions.

Total Time Spent

This report lists the students in a class and their total time spent using Word Lab. This can help you gauge whether students are fitting in the proposed 1 and ½ hours a week needed to show progress.

Word Lab Challenge – Repetitions

Look here to see how many times a student has taken the Word Lab Challenge test on any particular Workbook.

Blank Word Map Forms

Print these forms out if you would like students to practice creating word maps on a hard copy before starting the program, if a student needs extra practice, or word maps have been lost or done incompletely and the student needs to complete them for her/his target words. This can be especially helpful if a student starts putting “junk” in his/her word maps. In such a case a student can redo her/his words by hand then add it to their Personal Dictionary along with the computer printouts.

Words Learned by Class

This report gives you the most accurate overall picture of how much students are learning. It lists all students for a class, their average chapter assessment score for all chapters in all books, their total study words and their total words learned. The final column indicates the ratio of words learned to study words expressed as a percentage. This is an appropriate percentage to use for grading as it represents what each student truly mastered. Note that you may put in the parameters of the time period for the information, making it easy to match with a variety of grading periods. The chapter assessment average differs from the study words percentage. The chapter assessment tests the student on **all** the chapter words when a chapter is completed. The study word percentage tells you which of the assigned target words (assigned based on the preassessment) the student mastered.

Writing Assignments

Here you can review the writing assignments students have worked on. When you choose the “Needs Review” option, you will see all student pieces not yet viewed and those that are supposed to be or have been reworked. Choosing the “All” option shows you all pieces of all students for the year, including those designated as “Done.”

Once you select one of these options, you will choose “View” by the desired student and workbook/chapter, then you may make comments and score the piece as you prefer. Remember to select the status of “Rework” or “Done” after reviewing the piece.

You may return to add comments as much as you like. Once a student has reworked a piece and submitted it, you will see the changes made by using this report feature again.

The purpose of the writing assignment is to further internalize word meanings and provide more experience with the use of expressive vocabulary in writing. Students find focusing on writing using the required target words motivating. This option is not designed to teach writing mechanics, and success will be most likely if comments are focused on content. You may choose any scoring/grading system you like or leave out that type of assessment.

Should you want to take a certain piece of writing further, perhaps develop it as part of a story or spend time on mechanics as a separate activity, you can print out a hard copy or ask the student to do this from their own main page. Otherwise, students can make additions or changes directly using Word Lab and resubmit for your ‘Review.’

Parent Report as PDF for All Students in Class

This option prints out (through Adobe Acrobat) a class set of individual reports ready to send home to parents. It gives a brief description of Word Lab and compares the student's learning to the class average in five areas:

- Study Words required
- Words mastered
- Percentage of Study Words mastered
- Average time spent per word
- Word Lab Challenge scores

If you click on the report without setting date parameters, you will see data from the beginning of the year to the present.

Workbook Level Reports

These reports give information based on all the data that has been processed within a single selected Workbook for a whole group. Before choosing a report select a workbook from the drop down menu.

Assessment Summary Report

Includes two key data totals useful in summarizing progress, for every student in the class within a selected Workbook. Along with the student name, each row contains the average of Chapter Assessment scores so far (an average of assessments taken on all words for the completed chapters, not an assessment of the specific study words the student was expected to learn) and the Book Assessment score if completed.

Class Progress Report

Lists the current chapter for each student in the specified Workbook. Use this report to track class progress within a certain Workbook. The report lists student names alphabetically, the number of the student's currently active chapter and the title of the student's currently active chapter.

Ranking by Total Word Count

This report lists the total count of target words students have missed on their pre assessments so far. These represent the study words for that student for the selected workbook. It is not a word count of the study words that were mastered. The report is sorted from the greatest to the fewest number of words. Report columns are the student name and the total number of words missed on the pre assessment tests within a Workbook. If you want to quickly see how many words per chapter a student is studying, this is the report to check.

Words Learned

The Words Learned report gives you the most accurate picture of what students are learning for a selected workbook. It numbers the target words a student was expected to learn (study words) within a certain workbook and tells you how many of these the student has actually mastered (words learned). It also provides the percentage that represents the student's new "words learned." Also provided is the overall chapter assessment score for all the words. This score can appear different from the percentage-learned score, as it is based on how well the student demonstrated knowledge of meaning on all the chapter words in the assessment, not just on the new ones they were expected to learn.

The percentage of "words learned" is an indicator of how well the student is using the program to gain new word knowledge and can signal the need to intervene if low.

Chapter Reports

These reports give information based on all the data that has been processed within a single selected chapter for an entire class. Before choosing a report, select a workbook and a chapter in the locations provided.

Student Activities Scores

This is the most complete report for a chapter. It includes data for every student from a selected group within a selected Workbook's chapter. It is useful for judging if mastery and activity requirements are working for each student and particularly useful for comparing the skill levels of students working within the same Workbooks.

The data presented in this report are the number of words the student had to learn for the selected chapter, the number of repetitions required by the student to reach mastery level at each station, the final score achieved for each activity in a station and the final assessment score for the selected chapter

Ranking by Chapter Assessment Percent

This report lists the chapter assessment scores of every student in the selected class for the chosen chapter, by rank.

Ranking by Chapter Target Word Count

This report lists the number of words missed in the pre-assessment for every student in a selected class for a chosen Workbook's chapter. The information is presented by rank from most to least words, making it useful for assessing students' prior knowledge. This report is also helpful in pairing students with similar knowledge to work as a team.

Chapter Words

This report lists all the words chosen for the selected Workbook's chapter activities along with their dictionary definitions (based on the context of the novel). Print this out to review words

before or while a class reads a chapter as extra exposure, or for review and writing activities afterwards as desired.

Student Progress in Chapter

This report includes no scores but simply indicates where every student is located in the progression from Station 1 activities to the post-assessment in a selected Workbook's chapter. It is useful for identifying student progress through a chapter's set of activities.

Each activity is marked with a Y (yes) or N (no) or X (n/a) to indicate whether the activity has been completed.

Student Reports

These reports provide information on a specific student within a selected workbook. Before choosing a report, select the student, the workbook, and the chapter in the provided locations as needed.

Student Detail Report

Includes data for each chapter completed by a selected student within a selected Workbook, acting as an overall progress report, especially useful for looking for patterns of difficulty with struggling students. Use it along with "Student Activity Scores" to make decisions about interventions needed for specific activity types in the form of additional coaching. It can also indicate a need to change Workbook levels, mastery expectations, or activity requirements. Share this with parents who seek detailed information about their child's progress.

Student Target Words

This report lists all the target words (study words) and definitions a selected student is required to learn for the chosen chapter, based on their pre-assessment. Print this out and give to students who have lost their Word Map and T-Bar Chart printouts and are for some reason unable to print them out for use in their "Personal Dictionary."

Word Lab Challenge – Scores

This report shows all the Word Lab Challenge tests taken by all students within the entire school, identifying the student, Workbook, time taken, number of correct answers, and percentage correct.

Student History

Refer to this report when a student has been promoted to another class and is starting a new year. Promoted student's data is summarized for teacher. Included is the student's previous classroom, name, Workbooks completed, time spent per word, number of new words learned, and the percentage of study words mastered.

Parent Report or Parent Report as a PDF

If you refer to retrieve an single Parent Report for a selected student, rather than a class set, use this option. You may choose to print out a web-based version or a PDF copy. If you do not include date parameters, the report will include data from the beginning of the year to the present.

Certificates of Achievement (accessible from an individual student's entry page only)

Students print out certificates themselves from the initial entry page. These indicate the total number of words learned and lists each of them. Certificates provide a valuable communication mechanism with parents. Encourage students to take their certificates home to show their successes.