

# Word Wall Research

Using a Word Wall as a teaching tool began as a way for teachers to motivate children as they worked to internalize newly learned terminology (Green, 1993). In early childhood classrooms, Word Walls are used to increase children's working vocabularies as we strengthen their conceptual development. Older children learn a wealth of new words as they read independently (Anderson & Nagy, 1992). Younger children learn new vocabulary through listening, talking, singing, and exploring new words. ELLM/Plus asks each teacher to set up a Word Wall before the school year begins, to provide their classrooms with an instructional tool that will promote daily purposeful conversations with children.

Research tells us that early vocabulary and concept development is especially critical for children from low- and moderate-income homes (Snow, 1999). Using a Word Wall to provide daily, systematic instruction is one way ELLM/Plus helps teachers achieve this. According to research, providing systematic vocabulary instruction significantly increases vocabulary development (Stahl, 1999). This booklet contains activities designed to help teachers engage children in learning new concepts and words daily.

Young children learn words best when vocabulary instruction is integrated into their classroom routines (Xue & Meisels, 2004). For print in classrooms to be useful, children must attend to and interact with it daily. By implementing activities from the different sections of this book, your children will develop a routine of regularly using the Word Wall as an instructional tool. Word Walls prove to be useful by encouraging children's active involvement in the learning process, rather than their passive reception of information (Shapiro & Kirby, 1998). The activities in this book will help you actively engage your children in expanding their vocabularies.

Incorporating physical activity into instruction increases children's learning (Kong, 1999). Three ways to make your Word Wall active is through *movement*, *music*, and *modeling* its use. Movement promotes children's thinking as it helps their brains grow and develop (Diamond, 2000). Simply standing up and moving increases blood flow and oxygen to the brain by 15% (Jensen, 1998). Music stimulates attention, increases energy levels, and integrates thinking and creativity (Biller, 2003). Model using the Word Wall during your lessons while incorporating music and movement. The more actively you engage children in using Word Wall words during your lessons, the more your children will use them independently.

Building working vocabularies and conceptual development in young learners can be facilitated through social interactions (Winters, 2004). The more fun and game-like the activities appear to be, the more your class will learn from one another as they learn these new words. Developing a Word Wall and using it during instruction daily will provide a common group of words for you and your children to discuss and explore, while making learning visible to your children.

# References

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