# What's the Big Deal About Words?

- Research clearly shows that vocabulary knowledge is the single most important factor contributing to reading comprehension.

- Teachers need to give students an opportunity to read, but we need to offer direct instruction on how to learn new words.  Learning words from context is not enough.

- Students will learn around 1000 new words each year from context alone.  With direct instruction, students can learn up to 3000 new words each year.

- Knowing how to decode a word and even what it means is of no value if the word isn't understood and doesn't become part of the student's vocabulary.

- Teachers tend to use traditional practices of teaching vocabulary because they are not familiar with research in the field.

- Research states that learning definitions of words (look up, define, write a sentence, and test) does not improve reading comprehension.

- Students use words they hear from television, radio, and friends.  Therefore teachers should constantly use the words they want their students to know.

- There are three aspects of content area vocabulary that differentiate it from vocabulary used in literature class:
    - Content area vocabulary usually supports a lesson or unit.
    - Terms are rarely associated with concepts already known to students.
    - Content area words are often linked or related in such a way to support increased comprehension.
- Students need to be explicitly taught words that matter most for academic purposes, including both standards-based lesson terms and high-utility academic vocabulary.
- Students need to be taught vocabulary across content areas.
- Students need to be taught words in a contextualized manner, drawing upon familiar language and accessible examples.
- Students benefit from being in a highly structured and guided daily vocabulary instruction model which holds them accountable for using target vocabulary in speaking and writing.

# So What's So Great About a Word Wall?

- Word walls keep words in sight for students to refer to during instruction.

- Word walls can be interactive and colorful.

- Words can be saved for use later.

- Words can be cut out with the shape of the word to stress look and sight words.

- Words can be used to write found poems, word hunts, categorizing, or making personal connections.

- Word walls can be divided between content and important academic words

- Word walls help students focus on what is important.

- Over 50% of prefixed words use un-, re- or in/im/il,ir(not).  What a great way to illustrate and teach affixes!

- Word walls can be set up to be alphabetical or categorical

- Students and teachers can constantly add to wall

- Symbols or placement on the "wall" can help clue students in to understanding.

- Concept maps can become word walls where students  move words to create meaning and create categories during study.

- Black on white- block letters – work best.

- Word walls can be cut in shapes to provide configuration cues for students.

- Words can be removed and kept for review once they are mastered.

- Color coding can help students sort words.

Information from Kate Kinsella , and Billmeyer and Barton