○ A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.

○ Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.

And how about some of these homographs?

○ We polish the Polish furniture.

○ He could lead if he would get the lead out.

○ The present is a good time to present the present.

○ I did not object to the object.

Teaching Academic Vocabulary

In a synthesis of twenty years of research on vocabulary instruction, Blachowicz and Fisher (2000) determined four main principles that should guide instruction.

1. *Students should be active in developing their understanding of words and ways to learn them.* Such ways include use of semantic mapping, word sorts (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4), Four Corners Vocabulary Charts (see Figure 3.5), Concept Definition Maps (see Figure 3.6), and developing strategies for independent word learning.

2. *Students should personalize word learning* through such practices as Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) (Ruddell, 2005) (see Teaching Ideas section, p. 80), mnemonic strategies, and personal dictionaries.

3. *Students should be immersed in words in rich language environments that focus on words and draw students' attention to the learning of words.* Word walls and comparing/contrasting words with the same morphemic element (e.g., *photograph, photosynthesis, photogenic*) aid students in recognizing and using the words around them.

4. *Students should build on multiple sources of information to learn words through repeated exposures.* Letting students see and hear new words more than once and drawing on multiple sources of meaning are important for vocabulary development. Students should also use the words in speech and writing.

Following a three-year research study, Manyak (2010, pp. 143, 144) developed a framework of vocabulary instruction for English learners and native English speakers in high-poverty schools. The framework includes four components: (1) providing rich and varied language experiences; (2) teaching individual words; (3) teaching word-learning strategies; and (4) developing students' word consciousness. The fast-paced, weekly instructional plan includes:

1. Providing student-friendly definitions (e.g., "*Indifferent* means not caring or not being interested in something.")

2. Providing examples of use (e.g., "Juan was *indifferent* about going with his friends to the movie because it didn't sound interesting to him.")

3. Prompting students to create examples using the word (e.g., "What is something about which you feel *indifferent*?")

Clearly, there is little benefit to selecting twenty-five to thirty isolated vocabulary terms and asking English learners (and other students) to copy them from the board and look up their definitions in the dictionary (Allen, 2007; Fisher & Frey, 2008b). Many of the words in the definitions are also unfamiliar to these students, rendering the activity meaningless. Although using the dictionary is an important school skill to learn, the task must fit the students' learning and language needs. The number of terms should be tailored to the students' English and literacy levels, and they should be presented in context, not in isolation. Picture dictionaries (definitions are enhanced with pictorial representations) are excellent resources for contextualizing terms. For students with minimal literacy skills, using the dictionary to find words can serve to reinforce the concept of alphabetizing, and it familiarizes them with the parts of a dictionary; however, defining words should not be the only activity used. Effective SIOP teachers support the understanding of dictionary definitions so that the task is meaningful for students. In fact, many effective teachers introduce dictionary skills to students by using words that are already familiar to them.

Teaching Ideas for Building Background

Additional activities that activate prior knowledge, build students' background knowledge, and develop academic vocabulary include the following:

- **Read aloud** a story, article, play, or picture book about the topic to build students' background knowledge, or view a DVD or Internet video on the topic.
- **Digital Jumpstarts (DJs)** (Rance-Roney, 2010). Elsewhere in this book (see Chapter 2: Lesson Preparation), we have referred to the powerful effect of Jumpstarting (also referred to as "front-loading"), where teachers pre-teach a small group of students the concepts, vocabulary, and processes prior to beginning a lesson for the whole class. The purpose is to build background and vocabulary knowledge for students who need extra time and support. Rance-Roney (2010) points out that as effective as Jumpstarting is, it can cause some management issues for those students who are not working with the teacher in the Jumpstart group. Therefore, she created "digital jumpstarts" that allow students who need the extra time and support to work on a computer to play and replay a reading preview, practice new vocabulary words, and so forth. The DJs can be put on DVDs for home viewing or they can be uploaded to free-access Web sites, such as YouTube. "The unique aspect that sets DJs apart from other reading scaffolds is that with DJs, all of the learning components needed to scaffold reading (i.e., vocabulary, cultural sounds and images, the voice of the teacher (pronunciation and prosody), background information, and schema) are integrated in one product" (Rance-Roney, 2010, p. 388). In the article, you will find several examples of DJs created by teachers of English learners.

Group 1

Group 2 ◎ **The Insert Method** (Vogt & Echevarría, 2008). This activity is appropriate for grades 3–12 and all subject areas. First, give each student a copy of a nonfiction article on the topic you're teaching. In partners, students read the article. While reading, they insert the following codes directly into the text:

   ◎ A check mark (✓) indicates a concept or fact that is already known by the students.

   ◎ A question mark (?) indicates a concept or fact that is confusing or not understood.

   ◎ An exclamation mark (!) indicates something that is unusual or surprising.

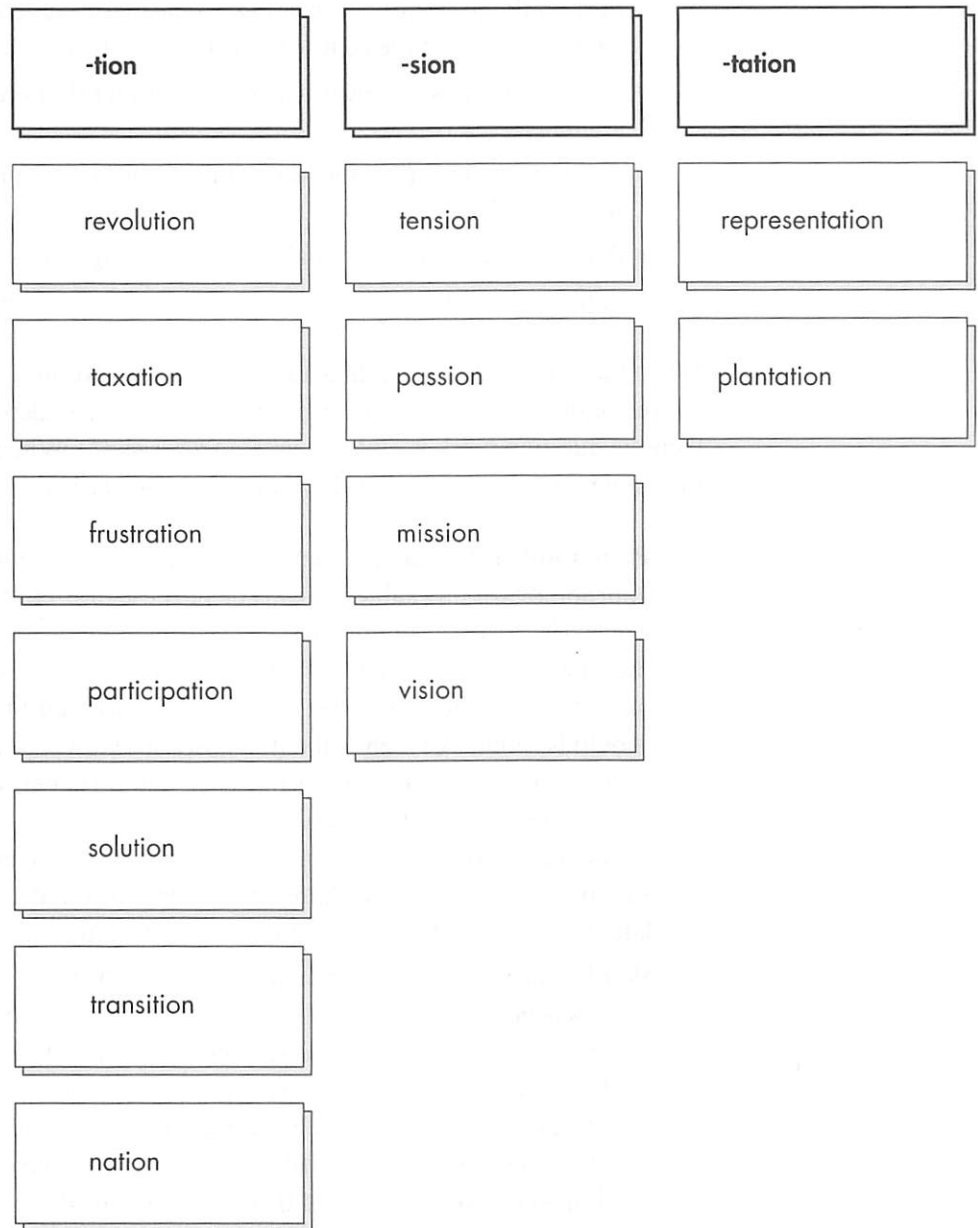   ◎ A plus sign (+) indicates an idea or concept that is new to the reader.

When the partners finish reading and marking the text, they share their markings with another pair of students. If any misconceptions or misunderstandings are cleared up, then the question mark is replaced with an asterisk (*). When groups finish working, the whole class discusses what they have read and learned with the teacher.

Group 3 ◎ **Pretest with a Partner.** This activity is helpful for students in grades 2–12 and is appropriate for any subject area. The purpose of Pretest with a Partner is to allow English learners the opportunity at the beginning of a lesson or unit to preview the concepts and vocabulary that will be assessed at the conclusion of the lesson or unit. Distribute one pretest and pencil to each pair of students. The pretest should be similar or identical to the posttest that will be administered later. The partners pass the pretest and pencil back and forth between one another. They read a question aloud, discuss possible answers, come to consensus, and write an answer on the pretest. This activity provides an opportunity for students to activate prior knowledge and share background information, while the teacher circulates to assess what students know, recording gaps and misinformation.

Group 4 ◎ **Word Clouds** (Dalton & Grisham, 2011, p. 308). To create a word cloud based on the frequency of words in a text, create a template on Wordle (© Jonathan Feinburg; *www.wordle.net*). Select some interesting text that your students have read, and copy and paste it into the text box on the Web site. You can manipulate the display by selecting a background color, layout, and font. Word clouds enable students to see key words, create headings, and provide prompts for discussion. When students create their own designs, they integrate visual and verbal information, while practicing important digital skills. Like a similar free Web site where students can develop word clouds (*www.wordsift.com*), Wordle provides support in several different languages, which can be especially helpful for English learners. For an example of a word cloud created on Wordle, see Mrs. Ornelas's lesson in this chapter (Figure 3.8). Note that in the word cloud, the larger the word, the more frequently it has appeared in the text selected for the cloud.

Group 5 ◎ **Word Sorts** (Bear et. al, 2011; Helman et. al, 2011). During a Word Sort, students categorize previously introduced words or phrases into groups predetermined by the teacher. Words or phrases can be typed on a sheet of paper (46-point type on the computer works well), or they can be duplicated from masters in the book by

FIGURE 3.3 Word Sorts: American Revolution—Example 1

-tion	-sion	-tation
revolution	tension	representation
taxation	passion	plantation
frustration	mission	
participation	vision	
solution		
transition		
nation		

Bear et al. (2011) or Helman et. al (2011). The teacher or students cut the paper into word strips and then sort the words according to meaning, similarities in structure (e.g., words ending in *-tion, -sion,* or *-tation*), derivations, or sounds.

For example, words related to the American Revolution are listed in mixed order on a sheet of paper: *revolution, tension, frustration, taxation, representation, vision, plantation, mission, participation, solution, passion, transition, nation,* and so on. After you discuss the meanings of the words, have students cut out each of the words and sort them according to spelling pattern (see Figure 3.3). The objectives here would be twofold: to introduce words related to content concepts and to reinforce spellings and word structure.

FIGURE 3.4 Word Sorts: American Revolution—Example 2

People	Weapons	Issues
George Washington	muskets	right to bear arms
Thomas Jefferson	rifles	taxation
Thomas Paine	knives	self-governance
King George	bayonets	freedom of religion
Paul Revere	cannons	democracy

Another example of a Word Sort for the American Revolution might involve words and phrases related to content concepts such as *right to bear arms, muskets, George Washington, rifles, Thomas Jefferson, democracy, Thomas Paine, knives, taxation, King George, bayonets, freedom of religion, Paul Revere, self-governance, cannons.* After students cut apart the words and phrases, they sort them into groups and identify an appropriate label for each (e.g., People, Weapons, Issues) (see Figure 3.4).

Group 6
- **Contextualizing Key Vocabulary.** SIOP teachers peruse the material to be learned and select several key terms that are critical to understanding the lesson's most important concepts. The teacher introduces the terms at the outset of the lesson, systematically defining or demonstrating each and showing how that term is used within the context of the lesson. Experienced SIOP teachers know that having students understand the meaning of several key terms completely is more effective than having a cursory understanding of a dozen terms. One way of contextualizing words is to read with students in small groups and, as they come across a term they do not understand, pause and explain it to them, using as many examples, synonyms, or cognates as necessary to convey the meaning. Another way is to embed a definition within a sentence when introducing and reviewing a new word or concept, e.g., *The migratory birds, those who flew in a group from one place to another in autumn, stayed near our lake for several days before flying on.*
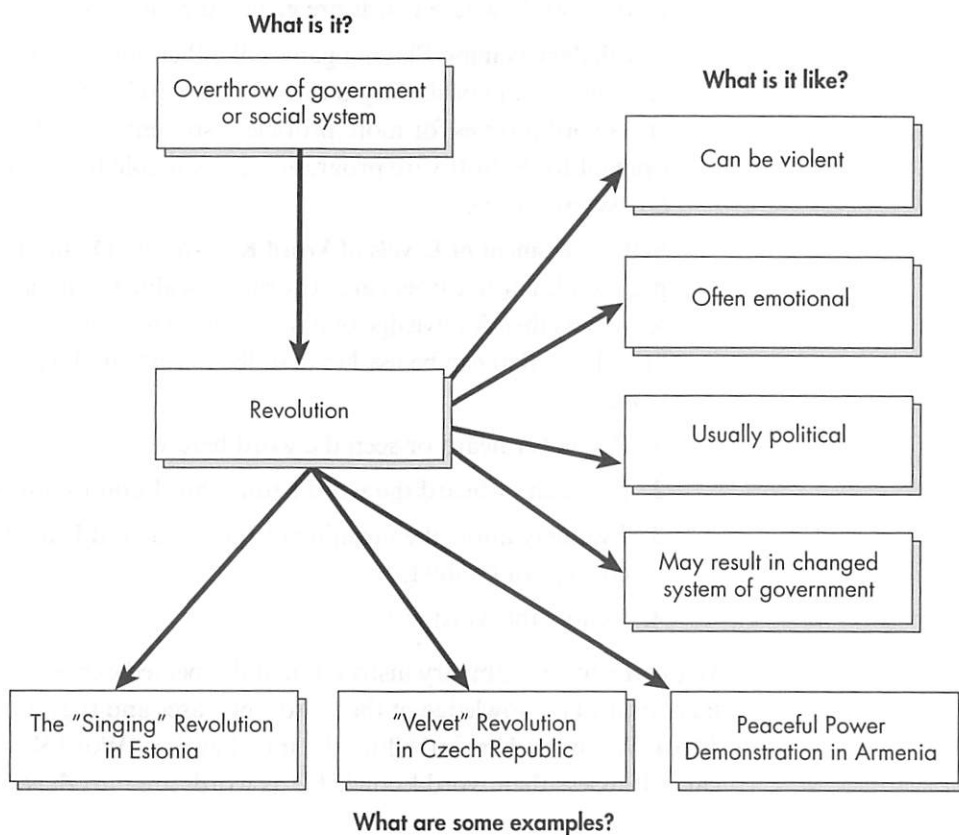
Group 7 ⊚ **Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS)** (Ruddell, 2007). Following the reading of a content text, students self-select several words that are essential to understanding content concepts. Words may be selected by individuals, partners, or small groups, and they are eventually shared and discussed by the entire class. The teacher and students mutually agree on a class list of vocabulary self-collection words for a particular lesson or unit, and these words are reviewed and studied throughout. They also may be entered into a word study notebook, and students may be asked to demonstrate their knowledge of these words through written or oral activities. Ruddell (2007) has found that when students are shown how to identify key content vocabulary, they become adept at selecting and learning words they need to know, and, given opportunities to practice VSS, comprehension of the text improves (Ruddell & Shearer, 2002; Shearer, Ruddell, & Vogt, 2001; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). The VSS is an effective method for teaching and reviewing content vocabulary because students learn to trust their own judgments about which content words are the most important to learn. This approach is most appropriate for students who are high-intermediate and advanced English learners, and for elementary, middle, and high school students.

Group 8 ⊚ **Word Wall.** During a lesson, key vocabulary is reviewed with a word wall where relevant content vocabulary words are listed alphabetically, usually on a large poster, sheet of butcher paper, or pocket chart (Cunningham, 2004). Originally designed as a method for teaching and reinforcing sight words for emergent readers, word walls are also effective for displaying content words related to a particular unit or theme. The words are revisited frequently throughout the lesson or unit, and students are encouraged to use them in their writing and discussions. Cunningham (2004) recommends that teachers judiciously select words for a word wall and that the number be limited to those of greatest importance. We would add that teachers should resist the temptation to have multiple word walls in one classroom because the walls quickly become cluttered with words that are difficult to sort through, especially for ELs. One word wall, carefully maintained and changed as needed, is what we recommend.

Group 9 ⊚ **Four Corners Vocabulary Charts** (Vogt & Echevarría, 2008). These charts provide more context and "clues" than typical word walls, because they include an illustration, definition, and sentence for each vocabulary word (see Figure 3.5). For academic words that are challenging or impossible to illustrate (e.g., *discuss* or *summarize*), simply take a photo of your students during a discussion or when summarizing, and insert the photos as a reminder in the illustration box.

Group 10 ⊚ **Concept Definition Map.** The Concept Definition Map is a great way to learn and remember content vocabulary and concepts (Buehl, 2001). Even though it is a simple graphic, it can be used to discuss complex concepts. For example, students are comparing how several of the countries in the former Soviet Union earned their independence through revolution. To clarify the meaning of *revolution,* the class completed a Concept Definition Map, as shown in Figure 3.6. The Concept Definition Map also provides an excellent prewriting activity for summarizing. Students can begin the summarizing process by organizing content concepts in the graphic organizer. Then sentences can be created from the information in the Concept Definition Map and subsequently written into paragraph form.

FIGURE 3.5 Four Corners Vocabulary Chart

Illustration (1)	Sentence (2)
	The fluffiest clouds, that look like cotton, are called *cumulus* clouds.
Definition (3)	Word (4)
A white billowy cloud type with dark, flat base (from the Latin *cumulus*, meaning a "heap.")	cumulus

Vogt & Echevarría, 2008, pp. 40–41

FIGURE 3.6 Concept Definition Map

What is it?

Overthrow of government or social system

↓

Revolution

What is it like?

Can be violent

Often emotional

Usually political

May result in changed system of government

The "Singing" Revolution in Estonia

"Velvet" Revolution in Czech Republic

Peaceful Power Demonstration in Armenia

What are some examples?

Group 11 ◎ **Cloze Sentences.** Cloze sentences can be used to teach and review content vocabulary. Students read a sentence that has strong contextual support for the vocabulary word that has been omitted from the sentence. Once the meaning of the word is determined and possible replacement words are brainstormed, the teacher (or a student) provides the correct word. For example, "During a_____, which can be violent or peaceful, a group of people tries to overthrow an existing government or social system." *(revolution)*

Group 12 ◎ **Word Generation.** This activity helps EL students and others learn and/or review new content vocabulary through analogy. For example, write *-port* on the board. Invite students to brainstorm all the words they can think of that contain *port*. Examples might include *report, import, export, important, portfolio, Port-a-Potty, Portland, deport, transport, transportation, support, airport,* and so on. Analyze the meaning of each brainstormed word and ask students what they think the root *port* means ("to carry"). Then go back and revisit each word to see if the definition "to carry" has something to do with the word's meaning. Note that we did not define *port* first; rather, we recommend that students generalize meanings of content words from words that they already know that contain the same syllable or word part. Many of the roots found in Figure 3.2 can be used for Word Generation.

Group 13 ◎ **Word Study Books.** A Word Study Book is a student-made personal notebook containing frequently used words and concepts. Bear et al. (2011) recommend that the Word Study Book be organized by English language structure, such as listing together all the words studied so far that end in *-tion, -sion,* and *-tation.* We support this notion and believe that Word Study Books can also be used for content study where words are grouped by meaning.

Group 14 ◎ **Vocabulary Games.** Playing games like Pictionary and Scrabble can help students recall vocabulary terms. Word searches for beginning students and crossword puzzles for more proficient students are additional vocabulary development tools. Software programs are available for teachers or students to create crossword puzzles.

Group 15 ◎ **Self-Assessment of Levels of Word Knowledge** (Diamond & Gutlohn, 2006, p. 5). As English learners are acquiring vocabulary, it may be helpful for them to self-assess their knowledge of new words. Dale (1965) described four levels of word knowledge that can be used to describe the extent of a person's understanding of words:

1. I've never heard or seen the word before.
2. I've seen or heard the word before, but I don't know what it means.
3. I vaguely know the meaning of the word, and I can associate it with a concept or context.
4. I know the word well.

With effective vocabulary instruction and repeated exposures to unfamiliar vocabulary, students' knowledge of the words increases and they move up the levels from 1 to 4. When teachers introduce the four Levels of Word Knowledge to students, they can self-assess their word knowledge as words are introduced and studied.

Differentiating Ideas for Multi-Level Classes

Nearly all of the teaching ideas in the previous section provide ways to differentiate instruction while developing students' background and vocabulary knowledge. The following idea is geared specifically to differentiating according to English learners' levels of English proficiency. (If you need to refresh your memory of these stages, please see the Glossary, p. 311, where they are described.)

○ **Differentiated Signal Words.** Signal Words (see Vogt and Echevarría, 2008, p. 36) are an effective way to provide English learners (and other students) with words related to particular language functions, such as comparing/contrasting, determining cause/effect, sequencing events, summarizing, drawing conclusions, making generalizations, etc. Rothenberg and Fisher (2007, pp. 153–154) suggest that signal words can be differentiated for varied levels of language proficiency. For example, for sequencing events, beginning speakers are encouraged to use in their writing and speaking: *first, second, next, later, then.* In addition to these signal words, intermediate speakers are encouraged to use: *while, before, now, after, finally, in the past...* Advanced speakers add the following to their repertoire while writing and speaking about sequential events: *prior to, previously, since, eventually, subsequently.* See Rothenberg and Fisher (2007) for additional examples.

The Lesson

SHORT STORY: *Two Were Left*
by Hugh B. Cave (Sixth Grade)

Three teachers in an urban middle school with a large population of English learners are teaching a well-known and suspenseful short story by the author Hugh B. Cave. Although it was written in 1942, it remains an exciting, suspenseful, and intriguing story for upper elementary and middle school students. Each of the teachers' self-contained classes in literature includes English learners with a variety of levels of English proficiency. The classes are heterogeneously mixed with native English speakers and English learners, and all students are reading at a variety of reading levels. This story is part of a larger literature unit focusing on stories and poetry, with the theme of "Decisions and their Consequences."

The short story, *Two Were Left*, begins with a description of a boy named Noni and his devoted husky, Nimuk, stranded on a floating ice island in the sea. It is not evident from the text exactly how they got there, but it is implied that the boy and dog had been with village hunters, and the ice they were on had broken away from the others. Noni and Nimuk had been there for an undetermined time, and both were exhausted, hungry, and increasingly wary of each other. Noni's leg had been hurt at a previous time and he was wearing a simple brace made of a harness and iron strips. The boy decided

(continued)

SHORT STORY: *Two Were Left* by Hugh B. Cave (Sixth Grade) *(continued)*

to make a weapon in case the starving Nimuk decided to attack him. In Noni's village, it was not uncommon to use dogs for food in times of hunger. The story continues as Noni works on making a knife, and boy and dog become increasingly weak. The suspense builds as Noni considers the consequences of attacking his dog. Eventually, he decides he can't possibly kill his beloved dog, and he flings the crude knife away from both of them. It lands point first in the ice some distance away. Nimuk growls in a frightening way, but eventually licks Noni's face and falls, exhausted, by his owner. Sadly, boy and dog cuddle together, unable to save themselves any longer. Not much later, an airplane pilot sees two figures on the ice island and swoops in for a closer look. He settles his plane on the ice and saves an unconscious Noni and his dog, Nimuk. What had caught the pilot's attention was the reflection of a quivering knife stuck in the ice.

In their state, the language arts teachers in grade 6 are expected to address the Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2010). The following relate to this lesson.

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Teaching Scenarios

The teachers have prepared their own lesson plans for teaching the short story, *Two Were Left* by Hugh B. Cave. Their individual instructional approaches and SIOP ratings follow.

Miss Saunders

Miss Saunders began her lesson by reviewing with her students the lesson's content objectives (connecting the day's story to the theme of "Decisions and Consequences") and language objectives (reading a story; locating and defining vocabulary words) that were written on chart paper. Next, she asked the table groups to turn over the four photos that were face down on their tables. Each was a photo of Alaska: one was of a glacier, another was of the tundra, the third was of the sea with large, broken pieces of ice floating in it, and the fourth was of an Inuit village. Miss Saunders asked her students to do a Think-Pair-Share and consider what they observed in the photos, what they had questions about, and what they thought life must be like for the people living in the village. She then described her experiences on a vacation to Alaska and showed some of her photos.