

Two great ways to use visual displays to boost student's use of **advanced vocabulary**:

# WORD WALLS and WORD BANKS

**Word Walls** can make it easy and exciting for students to try their hand at using new and better words. If they're done well. And we think you can and should do a lot more than just the basic posting of some useful words on a bulletin board. **To make a word wall sing:**

**Teach words first with a bit of depth**, before you post so kids know how to use them well. By "teaching with a bit of depth" we mean give students a good definition and then ask them to use and apply the word often in playful and interesting ways. We call this **active practice**. You can read more here: <http://teachlikeachampion.com/blog/active-practice-key-vocabulary/>.

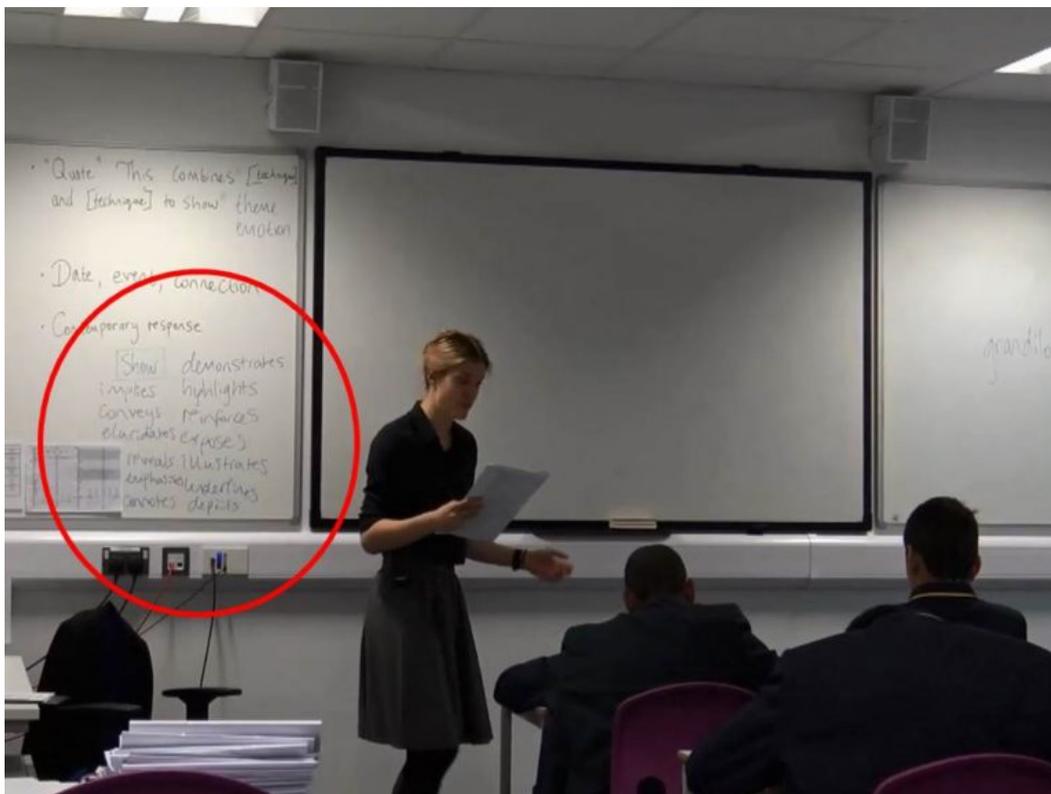
**Link the word to a picture.** As part of your teaching link the word via a story to an engaging and memorable picture. For example you might define the word "conspicuous" as "designed to stand out from the crowd" or "something that stands out from the crowd on purpose."



Then you might show students this picture and ask, "How is this man's behavior conspicuous? How is his clothing conspicuous? Is a red sweatshirt always conspicuous? Why is it in this particular case?"

Then when you were done you would **post the picture** with the word "conspicuous" under it in large print so students could recall their discussion about it. This would cause them to access their memory of the word. Importantly, though, they would have to recall the meaning from the picture which would help them to remember it more than just seeing the definition. And having used it several times they could now sprinkle it into conversation. Maybe they'd even sprinkle it into conversations *conspicuously* 😊.

**Word Banks** are temporary groups of words to use. For example, in this picture you can see Jo Facer teaching her English class at the Michaela school in London. On the board she's written a group of words that students can use when discussing literature, instead of the word, "shows." You'll find that we've also included her "SHOW" Word Bank for you within this Grab and Go. The idea is to help your students to be less repetitive and more precise in their speaking and writing. So anytime during the class Jo can refer students, verbally or with a point of her finger, to the list and let students build familiarity using new words for a common purpose. When we blogged about this several teachers wrote to say that they have a word bank like this posted above their white board. We think that's great. And we also love the bespoke nature of what Jo's done and there are some advantages in doing it this way... having the same list of words above the board all year might gradually become invisible or uninteresting to students unless you use it constantly. In writing the word bank on the whiteboard, Jo can update and change the words she asks students to use, solicit ideas from them for the word banks, tailor the words to a day's lesson, etc.



## **TIER TWO and TIER THREE**

Many of us have been socialized—via our love for Isabel Beck's work on vocabulary—to value teaching Tier Two vocabulary words. Tier Two words are those that appear mostly in print but are general and tend to re-occur in a variety of settings—"conspicuous," for example. We're big fans of tier two words. But we also love **domain specific vocabulary**—Tier Three words, according to Beck—and think it's hugely valuable to teach and post them as well. After all, rich background knowledge is a game-changer in any classroom and one of the most useful pieces of background knowledge you can provide is technical vocabulary to describe the ideas in a specific academic domain. So post "conspicuous" and "vociferous" but also post "juxtaposition" and "foil" as well.

# Terms of academic discourse

*Instead of "shows:"*

**IMPLIES**  
**CONVEYS**  
**DEMONSTRATES**  
**HIGHLIGHTS**  
**ELUCIDATES**  
**REVEALS**  
**EMPHASIZES**  
**CONNOTES**  
**REINFORCES**  
**ILLUSTRATES**  
**DEPICTS**  
**EXPOSES**  
**UNDERLINES**