

Introduction

As we sit at our desks to plan the lessons for the coming week, we often wish we had a crystal ball in which to see which teaching strategies will have the most impact in making our students successful. What teacher has not wished for that special lesson that will cause students to say, “Of course, now I understand!” Through both the research completed in the recent past and the tremendous amount of brain research available to us now, we have a much clearer picture of which teaching strategies seem to have the greatest effect on student learning (and some that don’t).

Throughout this book, I will identify teaching strategies that are known to improve our students’ learning and understanding when used in the proper format. These strategies should be in every teacher’s toolbox because they work with how the brain learns, understands, processes, and recalls both declarative and procedural information. They help students to see, experience, and hear the information clearer and in a sequence that is more brain friendly than some of the tactics we have used in the past. Most important, they are better for students, and that is music to every teacher’s ears.

One of the most effective ways that we can teach vocabulary to our students is to introduce the vocabulary, have our students provide their own ideas about what the words mean, and then guide them to examine the meanings in context. Form 0.1 provides the vocabulary that will be examined throughout this book. Look at the words to see which ones are familiar and which are not. Write your own definitions in the

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middle column, and adjust your thinking as you read through this book.

A Vocabulary Pre-Test is also provided for you. After you have read the book, you will be given a post-test and the solutions to the tests. The Vocabulary Summary offers additional information about these words and other terms associated with motivation.