RESEARCH TAKE-AWAYS

(1)  To enjoy/grasp reading (AND to be able to learn new vocab from context) – need to already know ~97% of vocabulary

(2)  be conscious word frequency – a place to start for vocab teaching (which words DO we teach?  Where are they on the frequency lists? what are the most frequently used words that we don’t teach but should? [however, without, etc.])

(3)  teach “skeletal” words (verbs) for more complex communication and reading comprehension

(4)  brain remembers vocab NOT in semantic lists but in narrative, meaningful, repeated contexts (tied to experience, or story)

(5)  importance of extensive, self-selected, accessible (not too hard!) readings for students to improve reading ability – conclusion: we should include graded/leveled readers, not just “authentic texts”

(6)  vocab learning through reading: also happens with words students already “know” but learn to use in different ways (lots of levels of knowing vocab)

(7)   not a bad idea for students to have the English translation right there (“friendly definition”)

(8) students need LOTS of encounters with words - lots of different strategies (lexemes/word maps, collocations, making associations, quick retrieval strategies) - explicitly teach with focus on meaning and structure, can support with extensive, easy reading

(9) encourage experimentation with vocabulary but don’t expect perfection along the way (learning isn’t always linear!  just because they don’t retrieve/use perfectly after you “teach” a word, doesn’t mean they’re not getting input/making meaning, etc.)

(10) create a “word-curious” space - playful, rich, comprehensible + extra

(11) the spectrum of learning vocab: initial encounters, recognition while reading, “owning” and able to use creatively - reading is an essential step of moving along the spectrum

STRATEGIES:

(1) word-sorting - by spelling patterns, by parts of speech, by meaning

(2) Quick word-retrieval ideas: (from Folse)

* class read list of expressions aloud in target language (pronunciation)
* read list of vocab, have students practice recognition by calling out # next to item
* provide definitions/synonyms and have students say word (practice recognition before recall)
* connect form with meaning – ask students to make observations about the words (NOT a thematic list) – make mental links between distinguishing features of the word and the word itself
* give English translations, have students say word
* learn collocations (other words that naturally occur with target words) – have students make up sentences, explain what other words are most often associated
* group items in vocab list differently, based on meaning, spelling, or grammar

(3) TPRS (for lots of levels!  advantages: multiple opportunities for input/word retrieval + meaningful context of a story)

(4) word-mapping (a la Astrid: word in middle; then English, synonyms, antonyms, picture)

(5) Choose “before” words (words to explictly teach before reading), “during” words (give gloss during reading), and “after” words (words you might want to teach later) [Flanigan]

(6) decide goal of reading before have students read: makes it easier to choose which words you want students to learn

(7) start year off with list of “words to talk about a text” (opinion, etc.) to recycle all year

(8) use visuals (pictures/ objects) (for verbs, not just nouns) (wordle activity)

(9) micro-vocab activities/ exposures/ games BEFORE reading (limit to essential words)

(10) Basic comprehension vocab questions in target language (circling questions) to scaffold for struggling readers

(11) First level Games: Bingo, flyswatter, stained-glass word identification competition, pictionary, hangman, clay, charades, Memory, Matching, Chutes and Ladders, connect four, tic-tac-toe

(12) Explain-a-word games (second level games): Circumlocution games, Definition Puzzle, Bloquealo, Word strom (Laura activity)

(13) TPR: Acting out words, personalized questions, match action to a word

(14) personalized vocab journal: how are we to structure this journal?/ collect it occasionally to check in

(15) Create art based on vocabulary

(16) Flash cards practice

(17) Word sorting using index cards: sort the vocab according to verb forms, spelling, descriptions: size, color, likes, relationships, etc