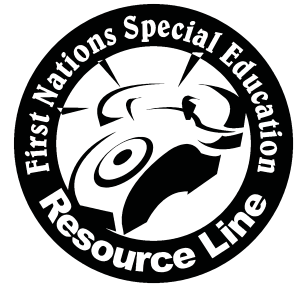


# First Nations Special Education CONNECTIONS



Newsletter of the First Nations Special Education Toll-free Resource Line

Vol. 10, No. 4

Dec. 2009

Working with First Nations  
students in BC?

Have special education  
questions?

Call the Resource Line!

The Resource Line is a free service for  
BC educators and parents.

It can help you brainstorm approaches,  
guide you toward helpful resources,  
help you to understand assessment  
documents, and let you know about the  
latest information on special education.

When you call or email, you will reach  
the Resource Line Coordinator, Holly  
Smith. Holly is available to answer your  
questions, Monday to Thursday, 12:30  
to 4:30 during the school year.

Holly also travels throughout the  
province offering in-school support, so  
if she is away when you call, she will  
follow-up as soon as possible upon her  
return.

**Contact the Resource Line:**

**Toll-free 1-877-547-1919**

**hollys@fnesc.ca**

*Connections* is the monthly newsletter  
of the Resource Line. Back issues of  
*Connections* are available from:

[www.fnsc.ca/resource-line.htm](http://www.fnsc.ca/resource-line.htm)

The Resource Line is a collaborative  
project of the First Nations Education  
Steering Committee (FNESC) and  
the First Nations Schools Association  
(FNSA), made possible thanks to  
financial assistance from Indian and  
Northern Affairs Canada.



*December, a time for concerts, plays, craft nights and excited students.  
Enjoy your break and take a well deserved rest!*

*Holly Smith*

*Special Education Resource Line Coordinator*



**Accessible Resource Centre -  
British Columbia**

**Providing BC Educators with Alternate Format Materials for their  
Students with Perceptual Disabilities**

The Accessible Resource Centre – British Columbia (ARC-BC), funded  
by the BC Ministry of Education, provides BC students with perceptual  
disabilities, and the educators supporting them, with high quality digital  
alternate format materials based on the BC K-12 curriculum. The  
Canadian Copyright Act defines ‘perceptual disability’ as a disability that  
prevents or inhibits a person from reading or hearing a literary work in  
its original format – usually a book – and this includes a disability from  
a visual impairment, a physical disability, or an impairment relating to  
comprehension.

First Nation schools will be able to access this resource in early January  
2010!

To learn more about ARC-BC, go to <http://www.arc-bc.org/> or contact  
the Special Education Resource Line.

# Enlightening Reading

## Oral Language Teaching Series

### Which Vocabulary – Reading or Meaning?

**By Guest Contributor: Ben Perry, FNEC/FNSA  
Speech/Language Therapist**

This article is about directly teaching “oral” or “meaning” vocabulary. It is not about the words a child can read (sometimes called “recognition vocabulary”) but rather, which words a child can use or understand in a conversation.

Beginning in infancy, children learn words at a rapid and accelerating rate in the order of thousands of words per year. By Grade 3, the average student knows 8,000 words and by Grade 12, about 50,000 words. This process happens independently of reading, but reading ability supports vocabulary learning and vice-versa.

Students who are below average in vocabulary tend to fall further and further behind their peers as the years go by. Teaching vocabulary is one way to address that growing gap which effects reading comprehension, access to curriculum and communication ability.

The method described below was very successful at improving vocabulary in research studies. The researchers also published a book explaining their methods (*Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., and Kucan, L. (2002) Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction. New York: Guilford Press.* *Bringing Words to Life* is available from the FNEC/FNSA Special Education Lending Library. See the details on the last page of *Connections*).

#### Teaching Vocabulary

Research has shown that effective teachers tend to teach vocabulary. Two key words in vocabulary meaning are “depth” and “breadth.” “Depth” means going into detail about a word and really spending some time teaching its meaning and making sure students can understand and use it. “Breadth” means widening the context of the word, adding words and ideas that go with it.

Good vocabulary teaching is meaningful to students. It relates the words to them in terms they can understand and encourages them to use the words that are taught.

#### Selecting Words for Direct Instruction

Researchers have suggested directly teaching 400-500 words per year, which is about 10 words per week or 2 per day. Choose words that are not too basic (i.e. burn, big, meat,) or too rare (i.e. conflagrate, commodious, brisket), but rather words in-between (i.e. broil,

enormous, roast). These are words that are useful and unknown to some students.

#### Direct Instruction to Younger Students Through Read-Aloud

An engaging storybook can provide you with two vocabulary words for the day. Here is a research-based method for teaching this way:

1. Read the story, then return to the word in the context of the story and explain its meaning in a way the students can understand using a simple explanation of meaning and other examples outside the story.
2. Ask the students to say the word.
3. Lastly, engage them in a few minutes of interaction with the words. Ask them to answer questions that include the word (i.e. *If I ate all the cookies and none were left, would you be furious?*); have them decide which word applies to a situation (i.e. *I got on a ladder to fix something. Was it an axle or the ceiling?*); ask them to finish a sentence that you start (i.e. *Ren was furious because...*); and ask them to talk about a personal experience with that word (i.e. *Where have you seen an axle before?*).

(Note that none of this requires reading or writing.)

#### Pre-Teaching Vocabulary for Older Students

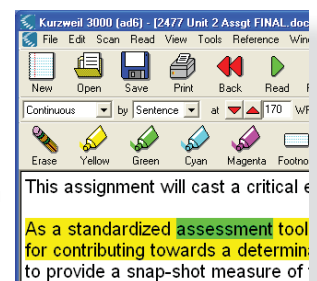
Older students can have vocabulary taught to them before they encounter it. You can teach vocabulary to these students in the context of a read-aloud or for a text that they are going to read themselves. At this stage, you might need to pre-teach five or more words before the students read a particular passage. Not all words need to be taught in depth, and sometimes a simple definition will be enough. Choose those words that are the most important to this text or most important to know in general and spend a few minutes in interactive activities with the words.

*Ben Perry welcomes your comments and questions. You can contact him at [benp@fnesc.ca](mailto:benp@fnesc.ca).*

## Kurzweil 3000

**By Guest Contributor Carol Graham  
SET-BC Consultant**

Many schools have recently received Kurzweil 3000 through FNEC/FNSA. This software is most well known for its scan-and-read features, enabling users to scan documents or book pages from a scanner into the program where it can be read to them. It has a dictionary, highlighting



tools and other study features to support reading. The program has the ability to convert those files to MP3 format, if desired, and to read the web. It also features a talking word processing tool with access to word prediction and a graphic organizer.

Kurzweil 3000 can be useful for students with a range of needs, but it is especially helpful for those who understand grade-level content but are struggling to access that content because of reading and writing limitations.

If you haven't heard, there are some excellent training opportunities to support this software.

- SET-BC provides online training for Kurzweil 3000 and other software titles such as Boardmaker, Clicker 5 and IntelliTools Classroom Suite. For online training, visit the SET-BC website [www.setbc.org](http://www.setbc.org) and look for the Events Calendar link on the front page. Sign up by email and you'll receive directions about how to participate.
- SET-BC's website also offers tutorials, video presentations and short video clips about using the program. This time go to the Learning Centre tab and use the alphabetical index to find Kurzweil 3000 Resources (2003-2009). There's even a self-directed course.
- The Kurzweil website offers good overview videos of the features of the program and even a download site for a trial version of the program [www.kurzweiledu.com](http://www.kurzweiledu.com).
- The High Incidence Accessible Technology (HIAT) website offers tutorials and instructional videos <http://xrl.us/bgfov>.

Another great resource from SET-BC is **Accessible Books!** This project has resulted in a collection of over 800 children's books that have been scanned into PowerPoint, Clicker 5 and other programs, and then recorded with audio narration. In this electronic format, these stories are accessible to students who have difficulty physically turning pages, have a visual disability or have a comprehension disability that makes it difficult to read those stories on their own. To legally use an electronic version of a book, you must have an actual print copy of the book in your possession and be using it with a student with this kind of disability.



The collection is growing all the time and includes many of the favourites of students and teachers in our schools. SET-BC will send a CD containing a free electronic copy of a book with your application. Look for the Accessible Books link on the front page of the website for booklists and an order form. There are also some free books to download there, and instructions on

how to make your own accessible book.

If you would like to keep up with what's new at SET-BC, including training and new resources, you can sign up to **My SET-BC**. On the top right corner of the main webpage ([www.setbc.org](http://www.setbc.org)) there is a place to sign up. It's free and there will be no pesky email reminders, just log in once in a while to see what's going on in This Week in SET-BC. News is posted once a week on Wednesdays.

Please don't hesitate to call or email me if you have specific questions or need more information on these or other matters related to technology support for students with special needs. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Carol Graham, FNEC/FNSA/SET-BC Project  
cgraham@setbc.org, P: 250-507-3922*

## The Canadian Reader & What in the World?

### Monthly Current Events Resources for Canadian Classrooms

[www.lesplan.com/main.html](http://www.lesplan.com/main.html)

Because most information on current events is usually only available at an advanced reading level, many students with special needs do not have a good understanding of what is happening in the wider world.

Welcome to *The Canadian Reader* (Grades 3-5) and *What in the World?* (Grades 6-10), which are complete, monthly current events units created by and for Canadian elementary and secondary classroom teachers. With twenty-four pages of articles, maps, and activities in each issue, these resources suit many teaching and learning styles and situations. Each issue focuses on the month's top news stories and includes:

- articles
- vocabulary assignment
- comprehension questions
- extension questions and activities
- maps
- puzzles
- quizzes

To download a sample copy, or to subscribe, visit the website above.



## FNESC/FNSA Special Education Lending Library

The FNESC/FNSA Special Education Lending Library has many valuable resources for your work with First Nations students with special needs. Please note that the lending library is available to FNSA member schools only.

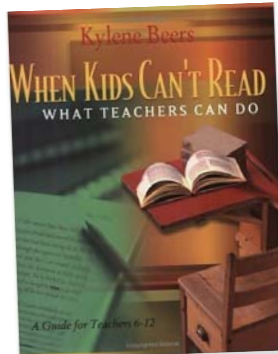
Browse through the library's special education materials online by visiting the website <http://www.fnesc.org:88/>. To request materials contact Patti Yamamoto at the FNESC office at P: 1-877-422-3672, F: 604-925-6097 or email [pattiy@fnesc.ca](mailto:pattiy@fnesc.ca).

Available through the Lending Library...

### When Kids Can't Read--What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12

By Kylene Beers

How do we help middle and high school students who can't read? The author, a high school English teacher, brings her twenty-three years of teaching experience to answer that question.



This comprehensive handbook is filled with practical strategies that teachers of all subjects can use to make reading skills transparent and accessible to struggling adolescents. Blending theory with practice throughout, Kylene Beers moves teachers from assessment to instruction by describing dependent reading behaviours to suggesting ways to help students with:

- comprehension
- vocabulary
- fluency word recognition
- motivation and more.

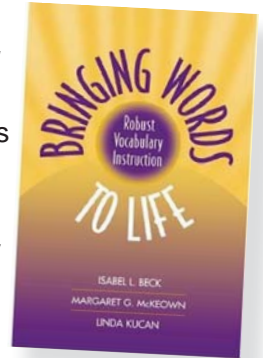
Filled with student transcripts, detailed strategies, reproducible material, and extensive booklists, this guide to teaching reading both instructs and inspires.

### Bringing Words To Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction

By Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown and Linda Kucan

(See this month's article by Ben Perry, which references this book)

*Bringing Words to Life* helps educators to appreciate the importance of meaningful, engaging vocabulary instruction. It offers valuable insights and strategies for teaching vocabulary in all classrooms, elementary through high school. The book is filled with great ideas, research-based instructional activities and even a few games. *Bringing Words to Life* is an ideal resource to help develop a love of language in your students.



### Mark Your Calendars

**January 9, 16, 23 (3 Saturdays), Vancouver.**

Hands-On Training in Verbal Behaviour for Therapists. This workshop is designed to provide teachers, special education assistants, therapists and parents who serve as their child's primary therapist with guided practice in implementing Verbal Behaviour methodology – an approach to Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) illustrated with excellent video. You must have a background in ABA and understand the terminology of Verbal Behaviour to register for this workshop as it requires a significant amount of knowledge and practical experience.

<http://www.actcommunity.net/>

**January 11-15, Delta.** Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders-Practical Applications (ASD). The training program includes practical hands-on training through instructor demonstration and coaching and application exercises of critical elements in teaching students with autism and ASD.

<http://www.autismoutreach.ca/training/course-calendar>

**January 18-21, Delta.** Introduction to Applied Behaviour Analysis. Completion of this course provides the participant an overview of ABA history and theory, but the emphasis will be on practical hands-on coaching and training.

<http://www.autismoutreach.ca/training/course-calendar>

See the 2009/2010 *Connections* Professional Development Issue on the FNSA website for more opportunities...

<http://www.fnsc.ca/specialed.htm>