

Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS)

The Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy, or VSS (Haggard, now Ruddell, 1982, 1986), is a fundamental way of opening students' minds to the wealth of words they encounter in print and the oral language that surrounds them each day: raising word consciousness. As described by Ruddell and Shearer (2002), the method is implemented as follows.

- Step 1 Students are asked to search their viewing, reading, and home environments for a word to nominate for the weekly class vocabulary list. The nomination process involves telling: a) where they found the word; b) what they think it means; and c) why they think it should be on the class list. The teacher also nominates a word each week, giving the same information.
- Step 2 In discussing each word, definitions are refined, and dictionaries or other sources are consulted as needed.
- Step 3 When the final list of words has been selected, students record the words and definitions in their vocabulary journals.
- Step 4 The words are further studied through the week, using discussion, semantic mapping, semantic feature analysis, and other interactive activities.
- Step 5 At the end of each week, students are tested on their ability to spell each word, explain its meaning, and use it in a sentence.
- Step 6 Every three weeks, past word lists are reviewed, and students are tested on five randomly selected words from past weekly lists.