Build Vocabulary with a Word Cloud

Purpose

This prereading routine uses word clouds and open-ended questions to prepare learners to engage with a text by focusing on the vocabulary used in the text. Learners make predictions and practice speaking and listening skills, while the instructor has the opportunity to assess learners' prior knowledge of the vocabulary.

Goal

- Learners are introduced to the topic and vocabulary of a text.
- Learners make predictions about the text based on vocabulary.
- Learners work collaboratively, practicing speaking and listening skills.
- Instructors assess learners' prior knowledge of relevant vocabulary.

Audience

- Intermediate to advanced English learners
- English learners transitioning to adult basic education classes
- Adult basic education learners

Supported Standards

- **CCRS Writing Anchor 4**: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **ELP Standard 8**: Determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.

Materials

- A word cloud created using the words from a text the learners will be reading.
- Open-ended questions to accompany the word cloud.

Procedure

1. Prior to the lesson, the instructor creates a word cloud using the words from a text learners will be reading in class.
2. Learners are put in small groups (two to three learners per group), and each group is given the word cloud and open-ended questions to answer.
3. In their groups, learners discuss and answer the questions. Each group selects one member to report to the whole group.
4. Representatives from each group report their responses to the whole group.
5. After the report, the groups get back together to write one to two sentences using the three words they selected, predicting what the text will be about.

Tips for Getting Started with This Routine

- There are a number of online tools that can be used for creating words, including:
  - WordArt.com
  - WordClouds.com
  - Canva.com/word-cloud-generator
- To create the word cloud, you will need to copy and paste the text into the online tool. Therefore, it is important to have a digital copy of the text you will be using.
- For the final task of writing the sentences, learners may use a dictionary or online tools to determine the meanings of words.
- If teaching remotely, a Google Doc can be used to share the word cloud and have the groups type their responses to the questions. Make sure to adjust the "Share" settings to allow "Anyone with the link" to be an "editor."
- If you would like support with implementing this routine from an instructional coach, email jedwards@tiu11.org.

Example

Subject: ELA/Workforce Development
Unit: Workplace Routines
Topic: Workplace Safety
Text: "General Safety Rules"
Note: Work in groups. Each group should have the question table, as well as an enlarged version of an image.



Question	Group Response
1. **Why do you think some words are larger than others?**	
2. **What words stand out to you? (Select at least three.)**	
3. **What do you think these words tell us about what the main idea of the text will be?**	
4. **What type of text do you think this will be (e.g., literary, news article, technical, speech)?**	
5. **What words are unfamiliar to you?**	

Stop here and select who from your group will report to the whole group. After we report, you will complete the question below.

Using the words you chose in Question #2, write one or two sentences predicting what the text will be about.