Using the Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM) to Teach English Vocabulary
Suda Shaman, Washington State University

The Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM) was developed by Emily Calhoun more than two decades ago and has been repeatedly tested in its usage (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2009). It has been defined as "An inquiry-oriented language arts strategy that uses pictures containing familiar objects and actions to elicit words from children's listening and speaking vocabularies," (Calhoun, 1999). This model helps develop primary or early-stage readers' vocabulary, reading and writing skills, through building on what they already know. It has been used with learners in mainstream classrooms—however it can be adapted with ELLs.

How does the PWIM work? First, beginning readers and writers are shown a complex, detailed picture that includes many objects, nouns, verbs, or adjectives as in Figure 1. They are given a few minutes to examine the picture and then are asked to identify what they see in the picture. Next, the instructor draws a line from each identified object in the picture such as, snowman, and hair (Figure 1). The teacher says its name, writes it in the margin, and says it again. The students repeat the word out loud and its spelling. The students then categorize the words based on phonetics, content properties, and structures. For example, string and stick can form a phonetics category because of the, st, same beginning sound. Hat, jacket, and pants can form a content properties category (clothes). Then, learners construct sentences followed by a combination of the constructed sentences to formulate a paragraph. Last, they title the paragraph with help from the teacher (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, 2009). In this way, students expand their vocabularies, learn usage, and sentence to paragraph construction and relationships.

It builds students' sight vocabulary, where they recognize the word by its spelling. This model enables students to transfer the spoken words seen in the picture to the sight words (read and written). In other words, they activate and build their schema, which is connecting what they already naturally know to the new skills such as reading and writing (Scott, 2001). The primary focus of PWIM is on developing reading and writing skills, for both beginning literate and ELL students. It focuses on building inductive thinking skills besides teaching phonics and spelling (Calhoun,
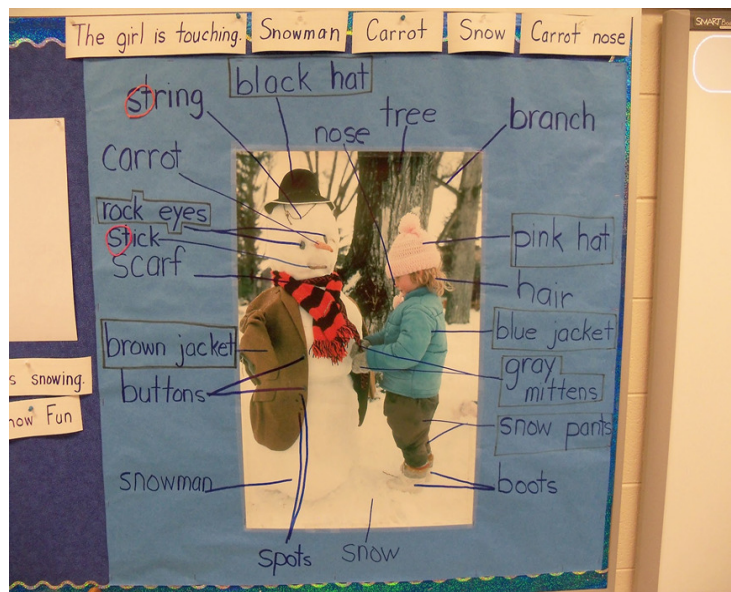

Figure 1. PWIM picture (Thompson, 2013)

1999). While this model assists students to learn reading and writing, through activating students' schema, it also helps to develop vocabulary knowledge and spelling for ELLs.

It can be adapted to work with ELLs. Teachers can follow the same process mentioned above. Teaching through the PWIM, can help introduce ELLs to different cultures. For example, if a Halloween party picture is used, students can learn about it and share similar or different activities that they do in their countries. Further, learners can have the chance to chose a picture or bring a photograph that covers the important concepts or vocabulary to learn. For example, when teaching ELLs about body parts, they can be asked to bring their own pictures and use for the lesson. Choosing a picture would engage and require them to take a role in their learning.

The PWIM helps ELLs practice spelling, phonics and grammar. Teachers can ask students to categorize words by their beginning or ending sound, by the number of letters in each word. It can help develop grammar through asking students to develop a question: *what color is the girl's hat?*

The PWIM is a strategy of teaching that scaffolds the students to a more complex task. Following the steps above to apply the model can help in vocabulary development for both 1st and 2nd language beginning readers and writers.

References

Calhoun, E. F. (1999). *Teaching beginning reading and writing with the picture word inductive model.* Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Joyce, B. Weil, M. & Calhoun, E. (2009). *Models of Teaching.* Boston: Pearson Education.

Scott, N. (2001). Helping ESL students become better readers: Schema theory applications and limitations. *The Internet TESL Journal.* Retrieved January 23, 2014 from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Stott-Schema.html

Thompson, N. J. January 30, 2013. *Reading Through PWIM.* Retrieved from http://mrsthompon429.blogspot.com/2013/01/reading-through-pwim.html

Suda Shaman is currently earning her PhD in Language, Literacy and Technology Education at Washington State University. Shaman holds a master of art degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Washington State University.