



# Vocabulary Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching

*Keith S. Folse*

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In *Vocabulary Myths*, Keith S. Folse breaks down the teaching of second language vocabulary into eight commonly held myths. In debunking each myth, he introduces the myth with a story based on his 25 years of teaching experience (in the United States and abroad), continues with a presentation of what empirical research has shown on the topic, and finishes with a list of what teachers can do in their classrooms to facilitate true vocabulary acquisition.

The goal of *Vocabulary Myths* is to foster a paradigm shift that correctly views vocabulary as fundamental in any second language learning process and demonstrates that research supports this goal—that in fact there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support these views. In addition, an important theme is that teachers have overestimated how much vocabulary students really understand, and as a result, the so-called "comprehensible input" is neither comprehensible nor input.

The second language vocabulary acquisition myths reexamined in this book are:

- \*In learning another language, vocabulary is not as important as grammar or other areas.
- \*Using word lists to learn L2 vocabulary is unproductive.
- \*Presenting new vocabulary in semantic sets facilitates learning.
- \*The use of translations to learn new vocabulary should be discouraged.
- \*Guessing words from context is an excellent strategy for learning L2 vocabulary.
- \*The best vocabulary learners make use of one or two really specific vocabulary learning strategies.
- \*The best dictionary for L2 learners is a monolingual dictionary.
- \*Teachers, textbooks, and curricula cover L2 vocabulary adequately.

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