

## Vocabulary Instruction

A Learning -focused Model

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## Introduction

- Research continues to show powerful effects of vocabulary instruction
- Most powerful with low achieving students
- To understand written or spoken words, a student must know 95% of the words

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## **Language Development & Potential Impact at Kindergarten**

- A child from a family **at or below the poverty** line hears **600-700** words per hour at 12-18 months old (first day of kindergarten this child has 5000 receptive language words)
- A child from a **middle income** family hears **1200-1300** words per hour at 12-18 months old (first day of kindergarten = 9000 words)
- A child from an **upper income** family hears **2900-3100** words per hour at 12-18 months old (first day of kindergarten = 15,000 - 20,000 words)
- National Institute of Health, 1999

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**Vocabulary Out of Context**

- Two equal-ability students
- Student A gets 10-12 new vocabulary words per week
- Student B gets none
- End of year
  - Student B = 50th percentile
  - Student A = 62nd percentile

**Vocabulary In Context**

- Two equal-ability students
- Student A gets 10-12 new vocabulary words per week linked to new content
- Student B gets none
- End of year
  - Student B = 50th percentile
  - Student A = 83rd percentile

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**Most vocabulary is learned indirectly**

- Engaging daily in oral language
- Listening to adults read to them
- Reading extensively on their own

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**Generalizations to guide vocabulary instruction**

- Students must encounter words in context more than once to learn them
- Instruction in new words enhances learning those words in context
- One of the best ways to learn a new word is to associate an image with it
- ***Direct vocabulary instruction should be the focal point of learning in every subject area***
- Direct instruction on words that are critical to new content produces the most powerful learning

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### Six Step approach to teaching academic vocabulary

- 1 ■ Brief explanation
- 2 ■ Generate own description
- 3 ■ Construct nonlinguistic representation
- 4 ■ Engage in activities to add to knowledge
- 5 ■ Discuss terms with a peer
- 6 ■ Play games with the terms

4-6: review to  
enhance understanding

#### 1. Description, Explanation or Example

- Direct experiences (field trip, guest speaker)
- Tell a story
- Video or computer images
- Current events
- Describe teacher's mental picture of the term
- Actual pictures

estimation in  
video w/ jar  
of marbles

#### 2. Students restate in their own words what has been presented

- Monitor students' thoughts to clear up confusions
- Initial understanding can be, and probably will be, quite rudimentary
- Restatement should be on paper, written by the student

\* make sure they  
have an accurate  
understanding/  
"definition"

3. Students construct on nonlinguistic representation of term

- Picture
  - Draw the actual thing
  - Draw an example
- Graphic representation
  - Symbols
  - Shapes
- Dramatize the term (cartoon bubbles)
- Use of print materials



☆ consider having kids rate their understanding

→ see handouts following PowerPoint

4. Activities help students add to their basic vocabulary knowledge

- Activities are needed to re-examine and review vocabulary.
- Activities should be planned that engage students explicitly in the focused review of the targeted terms.

• revisit concepts  
- compare / contrast

ex: ~~arrangements~~

H • right angles  
Z • acute angles

Examples of Activities

- Highlight a prefix or suffix
- Identify synonyms or antonyms
- List related words
- Write reminders of common confusions
- Classifying (grouping things that are alike)

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## Comparing Terms

- The sun and the moon are similar because they both:
  - Are in space
  - Shine
  - Are round
- The sun and the moon are different because:
  - The sun is much further away from the earth
  - The sun is made of gases and the moon from rocks
  - The sun influences temperature and the moon the waves

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## Solving Analogy Problems

- A is to B as C is to D
  - Bone is to skeleton as word is to sentence
  - Inch is to foot as millimeter is to meter
  - People are to oxygen as plants are to CO<sub>2</sub>
  - Factor is to product as dividend is to quotient

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## Metaphors

- The process of identifying a basic pattern that connects information that is not related at a surface or literal level.
  - Love is a rose.
  - The internet is a giant flea market.
  - A book is a vacation.
  - Life is a box of chocolates.

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## Graphic Organizers

- Double Bubble
- Matrixes
- Frayer Model
- Concept Maps
- Semantic Mapping
- Compare/Contrast with Summary
- Story Worm

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## 5. Opportunities to Discuss Terms

- Interacting with one another about what we are learning deepens the understanding of everyone involved.
- The more exposure/experience students have with new vocabulary the more they will understand it.
- Discussion allows students to be successful at their own level.

*social aspect of learning...*

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## Think-Pair-Share Strategy

- Think
  - Provide a few minutes of quiet "think time" for students to review vocabulary.
- Pair
  - Organize them into pairs and ask them to discuss the vocabulary meanings.
- Share
  - Invite students to share aloud with the whole class any new thoughts or understandings they discussed in their pairs.

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## "Share" Examples

- Let's hear from a peer on how they would describe "rotation" to us in their own terms.
- Are there any vocabulary words you found confusing as you were discussing them with your partner?
- What is something new you learned about a vocabulary word as you discussed it with your partner?

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## 6. Vocabulary Games

- Involving students in games allows them to play with the terms.
- Students begin to associate having fun with learning new vocabulary words and having multiple exposure to new terms.
- Games can be motivational for students and used as an incentive to reach goals.

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## Favorite Vocabulary Games

- *song with word meaning*
- ★ Jeopardy
- Charades / Role Playing
- Pictionary
- Name that Category
- Memory
- Concentration
- jigsaw puzzles
- BINGO

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## Think-Pair-Share

- What are some additional vocabulary games you have played with your students?

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## SSR

- ▶ Personal vocabulary notebook
  - Ask students to identify interesting words
  - Ask students to try to determine their meanings
- ▶ Have students share these words
- ▶ Integrate these student-selected words with the words you directly teach to the students

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## Word Walls

- A • An ongoing, organized display of key words that provides visual reference for students throughout a unit of study. (content vocabulary)
- B • Promotes independence on the part of young students as they work with words in reading and writing by developing a core group of words for use as reference. (high frequency words)



example of A:

Mrs. Crossman's Word

Wall for Letter of Week

example of B:

Mr. Z's words

★ star  
of are

★ word wall sheets in back...

king  
of -ing

- examples
- guidelines
- adaptations

### Be creative

- Poster board
- File folders
- Curtains
- Roll down blinds
- Piece of vinyl
- Construction paper
- Chalk board/white board



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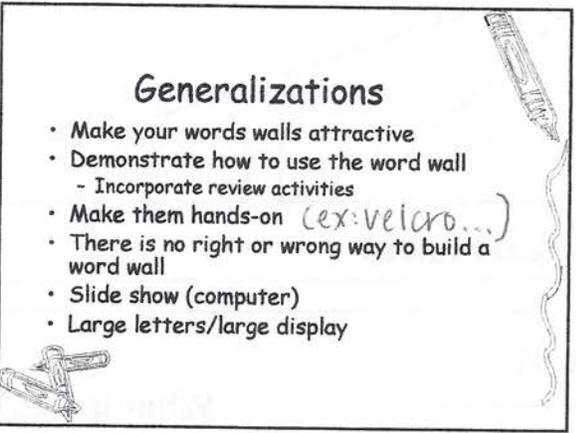
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### Generalizations

- Make your words walls attractive
- Demonstrate how to use the word wall
  - Incorporate review activities
- Make them hands-on (ex: velcro...)
- There is no right or wrong way to build a word wall
- Slide show (computer)
- Large letters/large display



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### Conclusion

Effective vocabulary instruction supports the use of direct, explicit, systematic vocabulary instruction as a means to enhance academic background knowledge.

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