Developing Academic Vocabulary: Purposeful selection, creative solutions

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Vocabulary Acquisition and Use (Anchor standards):

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.6**
  
  Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Dr. Mora-Flores, 2011
“I don’t like the word listen, because every time I hear it, it means I am in trouble.”
Jimmy and his friends split 6 cans of soda. How many cans did each of them get?

2

It’s because so there was 2, 2s and made a four then 2 more made a 6.
Sam bought 12 Hershey candy bars and 18 Snicker candy bars. How many candy bars does he have?

30

It’s because a 2 and, and 8 make 10 and then the 10 and the 10 make 20.
Kevin Saved $25 for a new bike. He decided to spend $12 on a new video game. How much money does he now have left?

13

*I started with 25, so first you have 5 ones and you take away 2 ones, it leaves you with 3 ones. And I took away a 10 from the 20 and had 1 ten and 3 ones left so that made 13.*
The issue is not whether we should have vocabulary instruction, but how to make the vocabulary instruction have meaning beyond assigned word lists. - Janet Allen, 2007
Selecting Words to Teach: Words for Comprehension and Words for Retention

Dr. Mora-Flores, 2011
Vocabulary

- Content vocabulary (language of the discipline) “Domain Specific”-(Baumann & Graves, 2010)
- Can be low frequency, but supports students’ access to the curriculum
- Vocabulary for comprehension

*ACADEMIC AND CONTENT VOCABULARY CONNECT at the level of input and output.

Mora-Flores, 2011
Vocabulary

- Academic vocabulary “General Academic Vocabulary” (Baumann & Graves, 2010)
  - Words that are valuable for academic purposes
  - High utility words
  - Students need direct, recognizable, and accountable instruction of high utility vocabulary- Kinsella, 2005
Tiering vocabulary
Beck and McKeown, 2002

Tier 1: Basic words that rarely require instruction

Tier 2: high-frequency words for mature language users
  - Importance and utility
  - Instructional potential
  - Conceptual understanding

Tier 3: low frequency often limited to specific domains

Mora-Flores, 2011
Why Teach Academic Vocabulary?

- Students need to learn the language of written text and academic content areas through direct, explicit instruction.

- Most students do not come to school prepared to comprehend academic language therefore it must be taught explicitly with students having access to numerous practice opportunities.

- Academic English is NOT a natural language to most students. It must be directly TAUGHT.
So many words…

- How many words do we expect students to learn?
- How many words can students actually learn and what teaching methods are most effective?
- How many words can we expect to teach explicitly and for which words can we give immediate, brief explanations?
- How can we increase student knowledge of words as well as the number of words they actually learn?
Vocabulary Casserole

Ingredients Needed:
- 20 words no one has ever heard before in his life
- 1 dictionary with very confusing definitions
- 1 matching test to be distributed by Friday
- 1 teacher who wants students to be quiet on Mondays copying words

Put 20 words on chalkboard. Have students copy then look up in dictionary. Make students write all the definitions. For a little spice, require that students write words in sentences. Leave alone all week. Top with a boring test on Friday.

Perishable. This casserole will be forgotten by Saturday afternoon.

Serves: No one.

Adapted from *When Kids Can’t Read, What Teachers Can Do* by Kylene Beers

Linda Palenchar, 2008
Vocabulary Treat

Ingredients Needed:

- 5-10 great words that you really could use
- 1 thesaurus
- Markers and chart paper
- 1 game like Jeopardy or BINGO
- 1 teacher who thinks learning is supposed to be fun

Mix 5 to 10 words into the classroom. Have students test each word for flavor. Toss with a thesaurus to find other words that mean the same. Write definitions on chart paper and let us draw pictures of words to remind us what they mean. Stir all week by a teacher who thinks learning is supposed to be fun. Top with a cool game on Fridays like jeopardy or BINGO to see who remembers the most.

Serves: Many

Adapted from *When Kids Can’t Read, What Teachers Can Do* by Kylene Beers
Extending and accelerating language
Our voices echoed through the halls.

She reiterated her main points to the committee.

The teacher asked the class to repeat after her.

She had to repeat the assignment twice.

Can you please restate your question?

Repeat your answer to everyone can hear you.

Repeat for effect

Clarification
Let’s play

- Whatz-it
- Tri-Bond
- Word Pyramid
- Blurt-it
- Secret Word
Word knowledge

- Descriptive
- Contextual
- Conceptual
- Analogies
- Imagery
- Categorizing
- Depth (pragmatics)
Planning for Vocabulary Instruction

Core text:
- Select Tier 3 words for frontloading or clarification
- Select 6-10 great words (Tier 2 Academic vocabulary)
- Explicitly teach words
- Practice using words in context
- Have fun with words!

Dr. Mora-Flores, 2011
Vocabulary is a lifelong pursuit….

“Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime.” (Vocabulary Handbook, p.2)
Recommended Books

- Cobb, C.; Camille Blachowicz, Nell K. Duke and Ellin Oliver Keene (2014). *No More "Look Up the List" Vocabulary Instruction (Not This But That).*
- Edward J. Kame'enui Phd and James F. Baumann (2012) _Vocabulary Instruction, Second Edition: Research to Practice_
- Leslie Montgomery and Margot Holmes Smith (Feb 13, 2013). *Word Nerds: Teaching All Students to Learn and Love Vocabulary* by Brenda J. Overturf