



New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education
Educational Partnership





Background Knowledge & Vocabulary

Establishing the Foundations for Reading Success



Produced by the Technical Assistance Partnership (TAP) for Academics at the University at Albany



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Disclaimer

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Agenda

- **Welcome**
 - Introduction, Inclusion, and Norms
- **Purpose and Outcomes**
- **Review of the Science of Reading**
- **Teaching Background Knowledge and Vocabulary**
 - What are background knowledge and vocabulary?
 - Why teach background knowledge and vocabulary?
 - When should background knowledge and vocabulary be taught?
 - How should background knowledge and vocabulary be taught?
 - Leveraging assessment for effective instruction
- **Wrap-up and Survey**

Slide Marker Icons



Our Staff



Staff Information



Today's Facilitators

Name

Introductions

- Name
- Role
- District
- School
- Population Served

Meeting Norms

- Take care of your needs (water, food, restroom, etc.)
- Speak your truth – Use “I” statements
- Ask what you need to understand and contribute
- Listen with respect
- Push your growing edge
- Participate and struggle together
- Expect a lack of closure
- Respect each other's needs and learning styles
- Strive to start and end on time
- Presume positive intentions
- Be prepared with materials
- Action plan to implement what you are learning

Training Objectives

Participants will be able to answer:

1. What is the legal and ethical importance of providing scientific research-based instruction in background knowledge and vocabulary?
2. What are background knowledge and vocabulary and why they are important to overall literacy development?
3. When and how should you teach background knowledge and vocabulary according to our current knowledge of the Science of Reading?
4. What are the ways in which assessments can be used to improve background knowledge and vocabulary instruction and student outcomes?
5. What are the ways in which students with diverse backgrounds and learning needs can be provided with individualized background knowledge and vocabulary support?

Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities



Self-Advocacy

Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.



Family Partnership

Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.



Specially-Designed Instruction

Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially-designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.



Research-Based Instruction

Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.



Multi-tiered Support

Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.



Inclusive Activities

Schools provide high-quality inclusive programs and activities.



Transition Support

Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.

Purpose and Outcomes

The Urgency Behind the Science of Reading



Appropriate Instruction

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education



“A student shall not be determined eligible for special education if the determinant factor is:

- (i) lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency (including oral reading skills) and reading comprehension strategies”

[8 NYCRR §200.4(c)(2)(i)]

“A school district's process to determine if a student responds to scientific, research-based instruction shall include the following minimum requirements:

- i. appropriate instruction delivered to all students in the general education class by qualified personnel;
 - a. *appropriate instruction in reading* shall mean scientific research-based reading programs that include explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency (including oral reading skills) and reading comprehensive strategies”

[8 NYCRR §100.2(ii)(1)(i)(a)]



Stop & Think



How have background knowledge and vocabulary impacted your ability to:

- Read and comprehend text?
- Engage and participate in personal and professional conversations?

Reviewing The Science of Reading

Foundations of Reading Success



Defining the Science of Reading

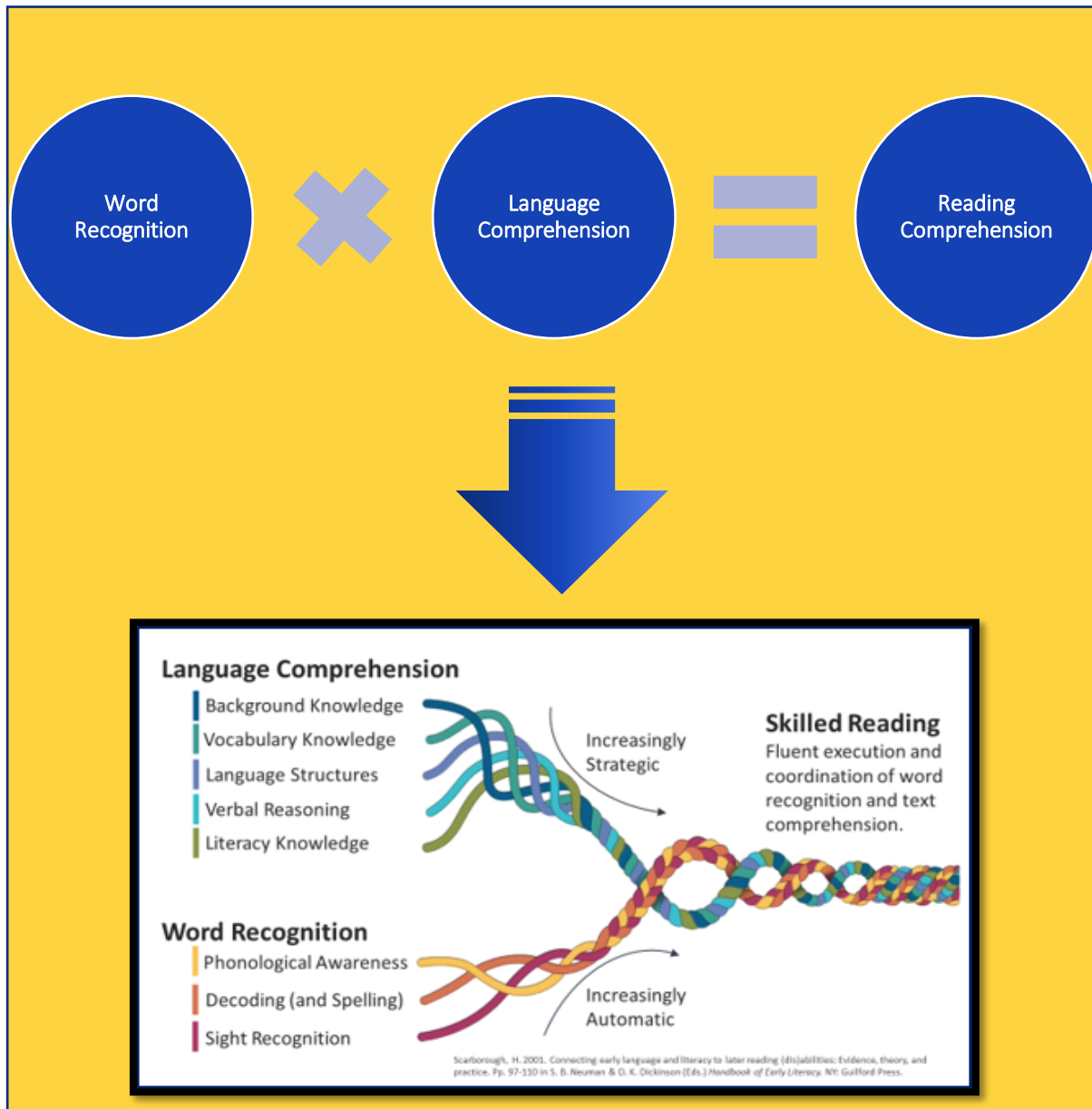
“‘The science of reading’ is a phrase representing the accumulated knowledge about reading, reading development, and best practices for reading instruction obtained by the use of the scientific method.”

Petscher et al., 2020

“The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of *scientifically-based research* about reading and issues related to reading and writing.”

The Reading League (2021)





Key Instructional Areas

Word Recognition

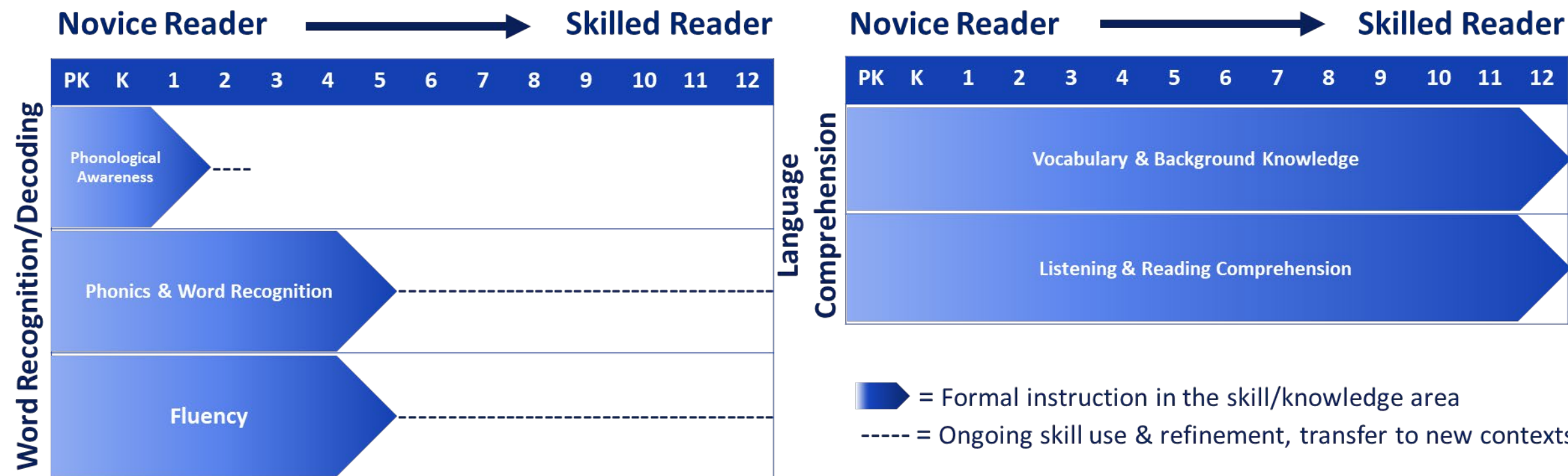
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics & Word Recognition
- Fluency

Language Comprehension

- ★ Vocabulary & Background Knowledge
- Listening & Reading Comprehension
 - Language Structure
 - Verbal Reasoning
 - Literacy Knowledge
 - Reading Comprehension Strategies

Learning Progression for Developing Skilled Readers

Timeline for Key Instructional Areas



Language Comprehension & The Simple View

Reviewing the Science of Reading



- Language comprehension and word recognition **are of equal importance** in proficient reading.
- Difficulty with language comprehension limits reading comprehension **even if word recognition skills are learned to mastery**.
- Language comprehension's role in predicting reading comprehension **increases as children grow older** (Verhoeven & van Leeuwe, 2012).

Explicit and Systematic Instructional Practices

Reviewing the Science of Reading

The most effective approach to teaching reading is through a structured approach that relies on the use of explicit and systematic instruction.

(e.g., Petscher et al., 2020, Gersten et al., 2009)

Explicit

An instructional approach that includes clear explanations, modeling, practice with specific feedback, and a gradual release towards independence until skills are mastered.

(e.g., Hughes et al., 2017)

Systematic

Skills are taught in an ordered manner, such as from less complex to more complex.

(e.g., Castles et al., 2018)

Background Knowledge & Vocabulary

What & Why



Stop & Think: Student Experiences



Read the following passage from the lens of a student.



The first-grade class had been learning about pollinators for several weeks and were working hard to care for their monarch larvae. On Monday morning they arrived at school to find that most of the larvae had transformed into beautiful green chrysalises suspended from leaves and branches. Now all they had to do was wait.

- What **inferences** did you make about the passage?
- What **vocabulary words** were critical to your inferences?
- What **background knowledge** was critical to your inferences?

Stop & Think: Student Experiences



Consider the previous passage...



- Inference:
 - The students are raising monarch butterflies
 - They now need to wait for the larvae to transform into butterflies and emerge from their chrysalises
- Critical **vocabulary words**:
 - Monarch
 - Pollinator
 - Larva/larvae
 - Chrysalis
- Critical **background knowledge**:
 - Caterpillars/larvae eventually turn into butterflies
 - The next stage in the development of the monarch butterfly is the adult or butterfly stage

Defining Background Knowledge

WHAT is Background Knowledge?



Proficient readers use background knowledge in the process of formulating a coherent understanding, or mental representation, of ideas expressed in text.

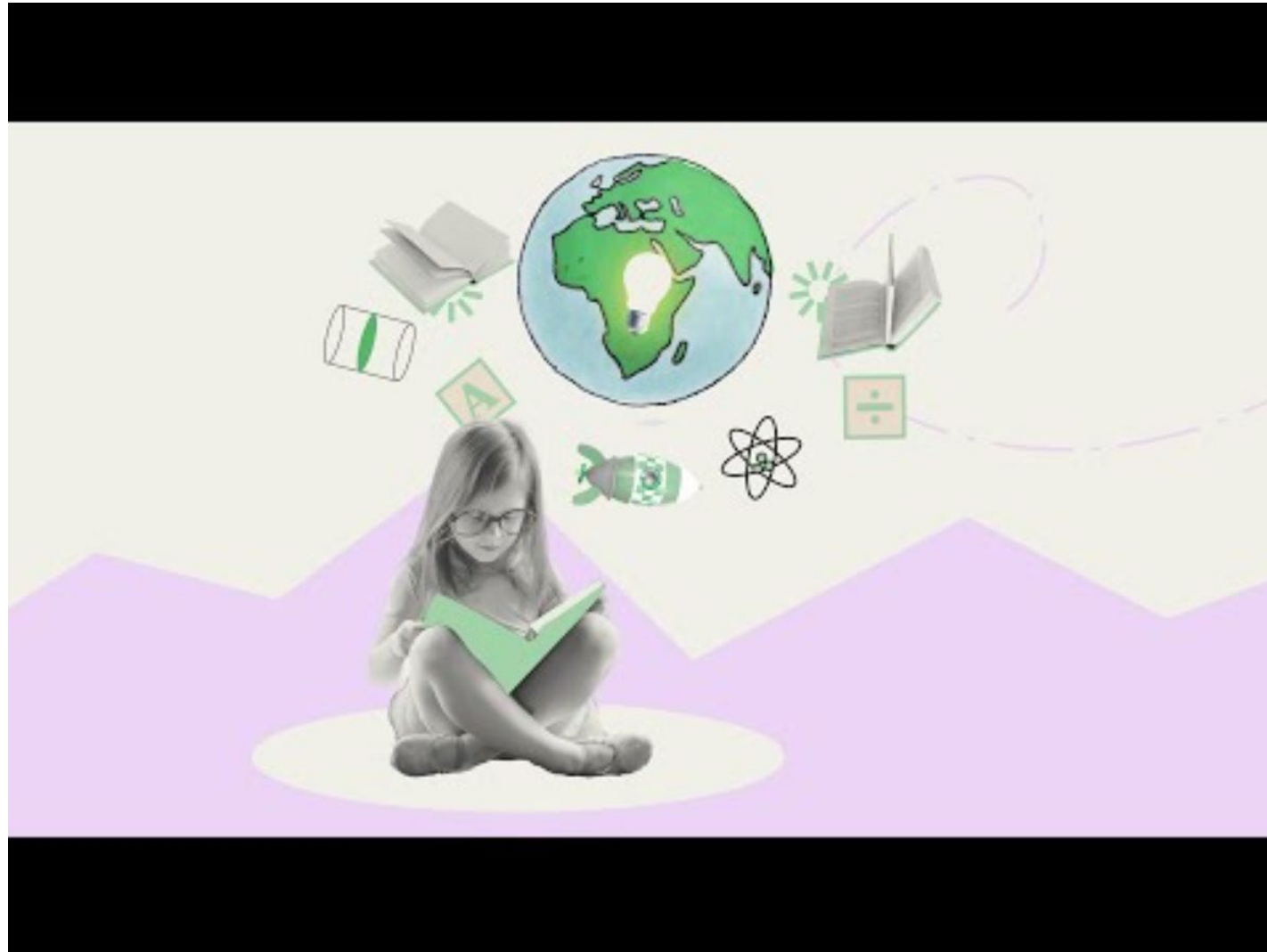
Background Knowledge includes:

- Cultural learning
- Concepts
- Facts
- Personal experiences

Strongly predicts a reader's ability to understand a text.

Writers assume readers have the background knowledge required to comprehend their text.

The Impact of Background Knowledge



Cultural Capital

WHY Teach Background Knowledge?

- *Cultural capital* refers to knowledge of the norms, values, beliefs, and ways of life of groups.
 - The education system reflects the dominant norms in society; therefore, some students enter school with higher cultural capital.
- Research shows that unequal access to cultural capital for students from minoritized backgrounds leads to lower reading outcomes.
- Explicitly teaching the background knowledge needed to fully access texts is an issue of equity.

Importance of Background Knowledge Instruction

WHY Teach Background Knowledge?

“Knowledge is not only cumulative, it grows exponentially. Those with a rich base of factual knowledge find it easier to learn more — the rich get richer. In addition, factual knowledge enhances cognitive processes like problem solving and reasoning.”

Willingham, 2006

- Background knowledge of text has a major impact on whether a reader can comprehend text.
- Across grades and reading ability, prior knowledge of subject area and key vocabulary results in higher scores on reading comprehension measures.

Defining Vocabulary

WHAT is Vocabulary?

Understanding the meaning of words within a text is essential for comprehending the text.

Vocabulary includes:

- Semantics
- Morphology
- Number of known words
- Multi-word phrases, idioms, and figurative language

Vocabulary is necessary for understanding language and correlates with reading comprehension.

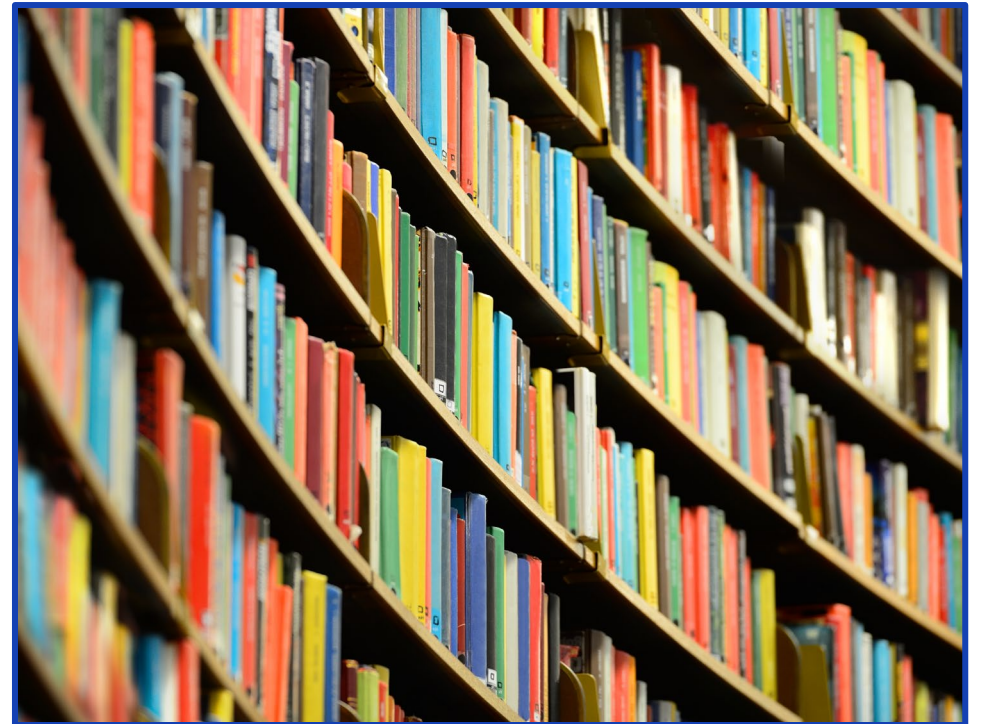


Defining Vocabulary

WHAT is Vocabulary?

"Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world."

Honig, Diamond, Cole & Gutlohn (2008)



Defining Vocabulary

WHAT is Vocabulary?

Vocabulary Forms		
	RECEPTIVE	PRODUCTIVE
ORAL	Listening Words we understand when others speak or read aloud to us	Speaking Words we use when we talk to others
PRINT	Reading Words we understand when we read them	Writing Words we use when we write

The Impact of Vocabulary

Vocabulary and Comprehension



Importance of Vocabulary Instruction

WHY Teach Vocabulary?

"It is clear that a large and rich vocabulary is the hallmark of an educated individual. Indeed a large vocabulary repertoire facilitates becoming an educated person to the extent that vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to reading proficiency and school achievement in general."

Beck, McKeown, Kucan (2002)

- *"Direct vocabulary instruction has an impressive track record of improving students' background knowledge and comprehension of academic content."*

Marzano, R.J., & Simms, J.A. (2013)

- *"...vocabulary knowledge, more than any other factor, is attributed to English learners' (ELs') academic success or struggles..."*

Cardenas-Hagan, E. (2020)



Vocabulary By The Numbers



- Adequate reading comprehension depends on a person already knowing between **90 and 95 percent** of the words in a text. (Hirsch, 2003)
- By first grade, higher Socioeconomic Status (SES) groups are likely to know about **twice as many** words as lower SES children, by 12th grade, high performing students know about **four times** as many words. (Sedita, 2005)
- By the end of high school, college-ready students must acquire about **80,000** words. (Hirsch, 2003)

English Language Learners (ELLs)

The Importance of Teaching Background Knowledge and Vocabulary



Comprehension Correlation

Vocabulary and Background Knowledge Instruction



Knowledge Check



True or False?



Background Knowledge includes:

- Cultural learning
- Concepts
- Facts
- Personal experiences

Knowledge Check



True or False?



The vocabulary gap between struggling readers and proficient readers stays stagnant each year.

Knowledge Check



True or False?



Prior knowledge of subject area and key vocabulary results in higher scores on reading comprehension measures.

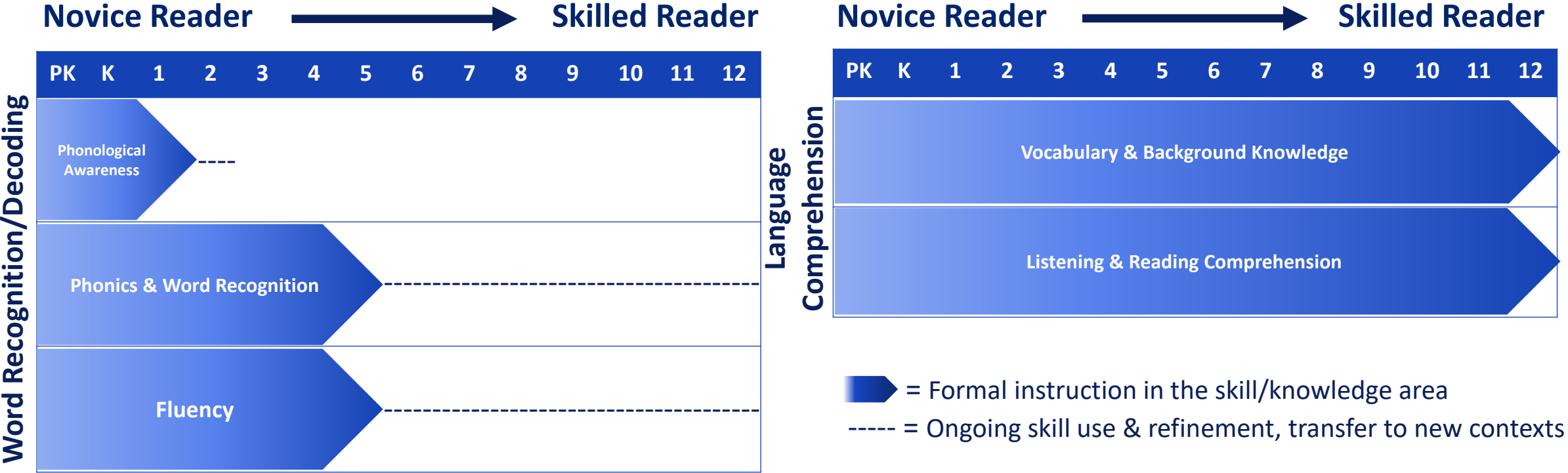
Background Knowledge & Vocabulary

When & How



Learning Progression for Developing Skilled Readers

Timeline for Key Instructional Areas



Next Generation English Language Arts (ELA) Standards

Connecting the Science of Reading to the Standards



Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- STANDARD 4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
- STANDARD 5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- STANDARD 6:** Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening; demonstrate independence in gathering and applying vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- STANDARD 7:** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats.
- STANDARD 8:** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- STANDARD 9:** Analyze and evaluate texts using knowledge of literary forms, elements, and devices through a variety of lenses and perspectives.

Background Knowledge

WHEN & HOW to Teach Background Knowledge

- **When is it typically taught?**
 - Prekindergarten through twelfth grade, across content areas
- **Examples of instructional approaches**
 - Select critical useful, meaningful facts and bodies of knowledge
 - Break content into small, obtainable chunks of information
 - Present a “bit of information” and require a response
 - Input-**Response**-Monitor-Feedback
 - Input-**Response**-Monitor-Feedback
 - Retrieval practice

Background Knowledge Through Vocabulary

WHEN & HOW to Teach Background Knowledge

- **Key Elements of Vocabulary Instruction may be used to build background knowledge**
 - Deliberate selection of words to teach
 - Purposeful use of examples to highlight critical knowledge
 - Intentional connections made to students' prior knowledge

Background Knowledge

Large Group Example – Dr. Anita Archer, 8th Grade Social Studies

- <https://explicitinstruction.org/video-secondary-main/secondary-video-5/>



Building Background Knowledge

Guided Example From Dr. Anita Archer

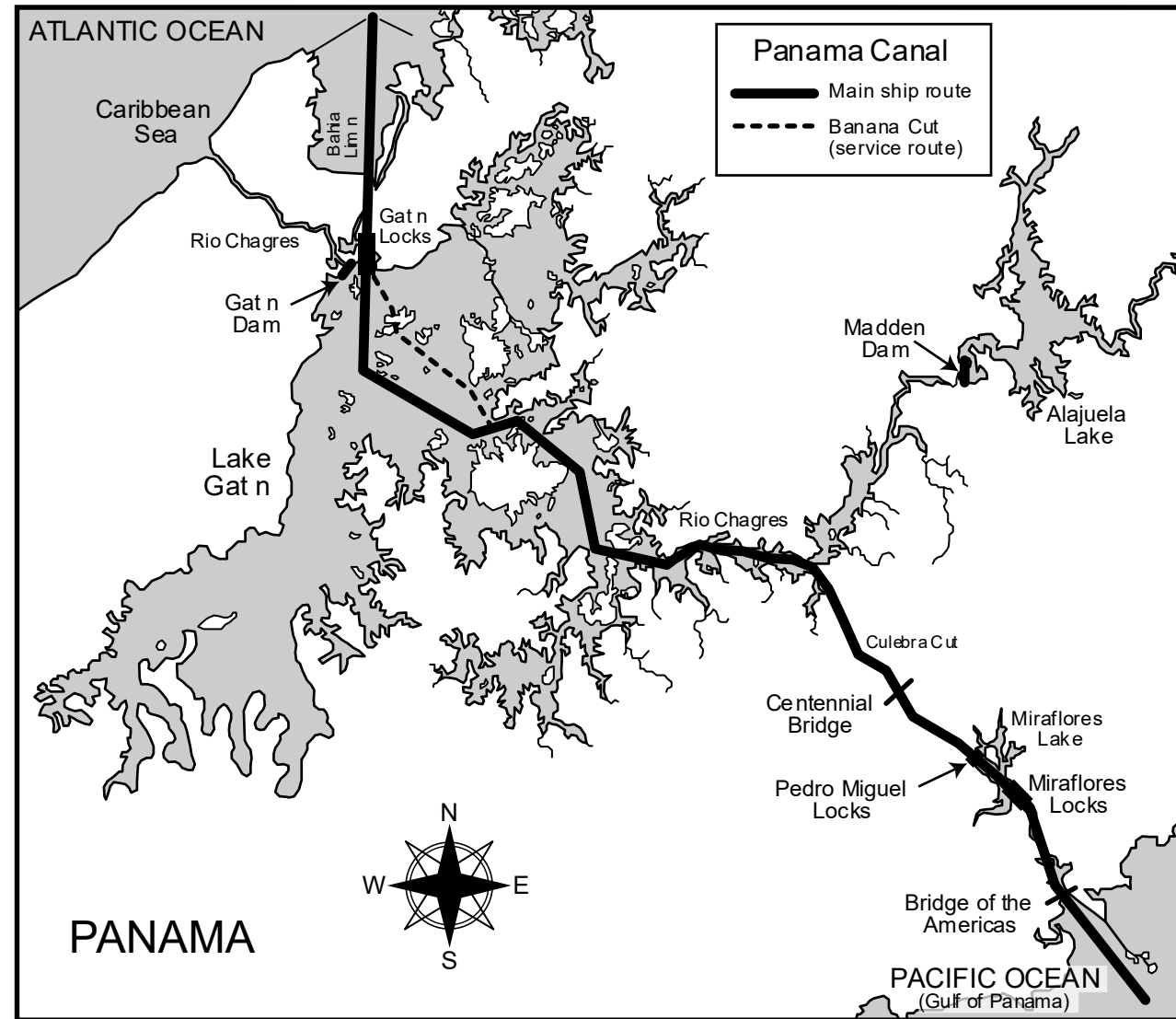
Reading an Informative Text on the Panama Canal

- What do students need to know and understand before reading the article?
 - Where is Panama?
 - What is a canal?
 - Why was Panama chosen for a canal between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans?
 - When was the Panama Canal constructed?
 - What are locks? How do the locks work?
 - Why is the Panama Canal important?

The Panama Canal

A Highway of Water

Where is Panama?



What is a Canal?

A canal is a human-made waterway that provides passage between two natural bodies of water.



The Panama Canal

The Panama Canal is a human-made waterway that provides passage between two natural bodies of water, the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.



Why was Panama chosen for the location of the canal?

- Panama Canal is 51 miles long.
- Dams were built on Chagres River to form Gatun Lake.
- Canal was built by United States (U.S.) from 1904 to 1914.
- Control of Canal:
 - 1914 – U.S.
 - 1979 – Joint
 - 1999 – Panama



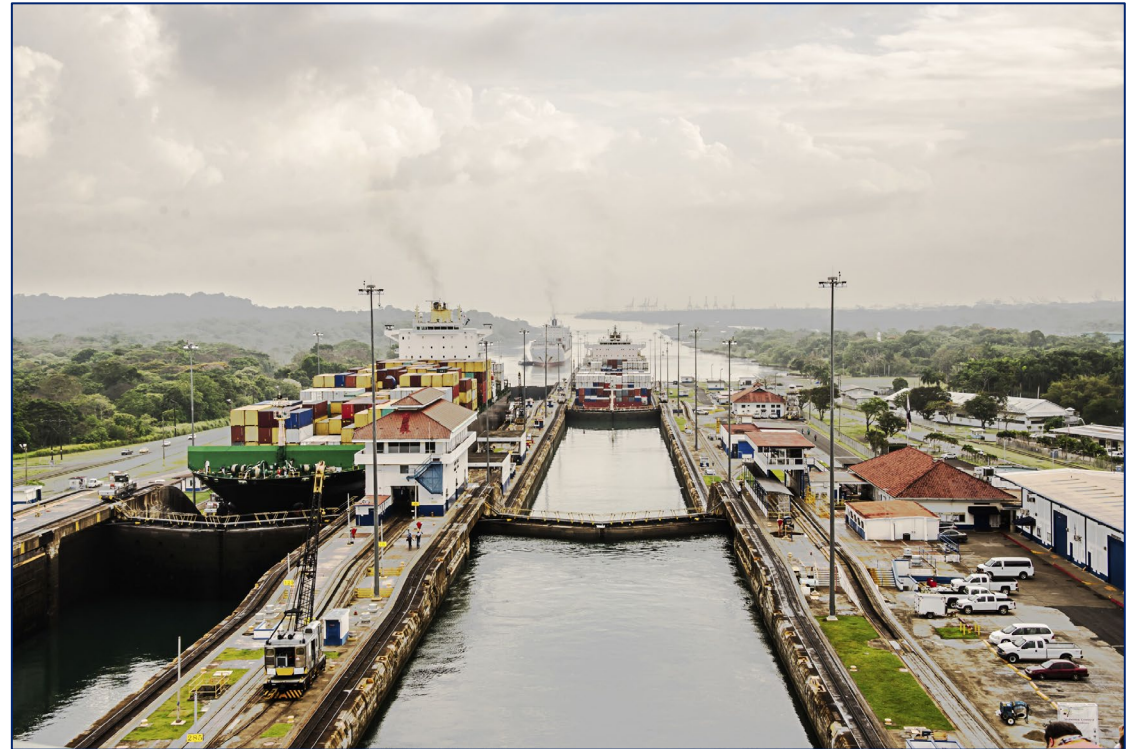
Gatun Lake

- Artificial lake that forms a major part of the Panama Canal.
- Gatun Lake is 85 feet above sea level.



Locks

- Devices used for raising and lowering boats and ships.
- Between different water levels on river and canal waterways.
- One or more pilots guide the ship through the canal.
- A third set of locks was built between 2007 and 2016.

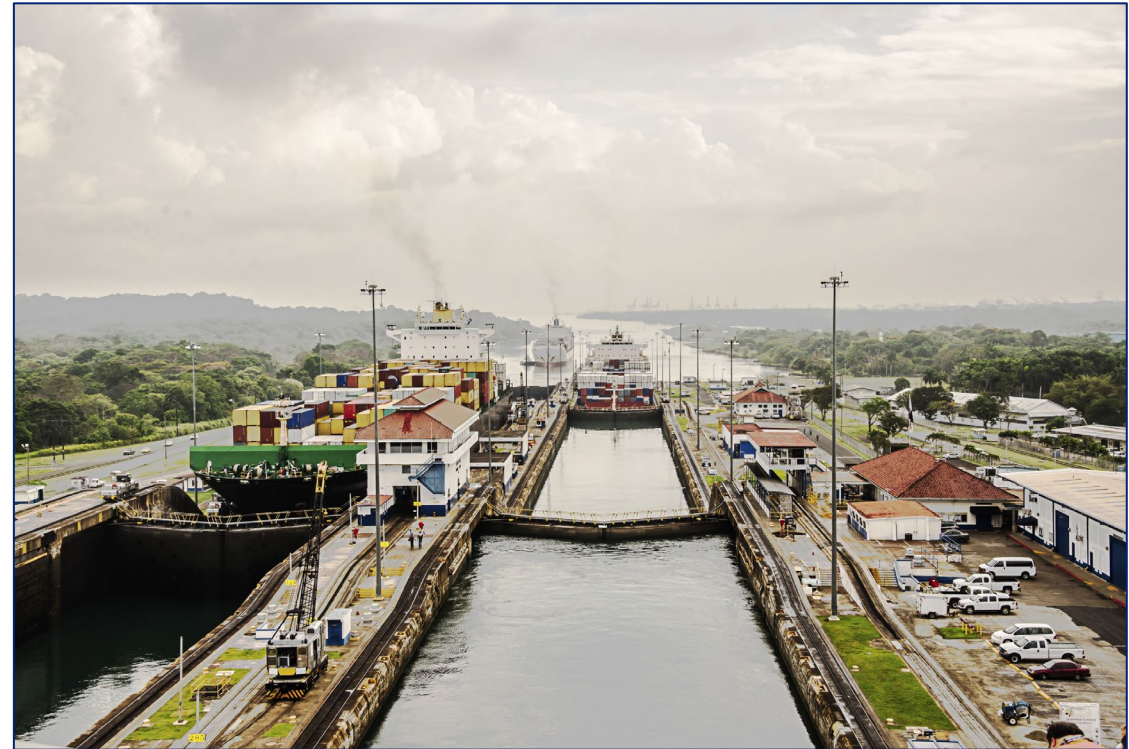


Ships Traveling Through the Panama Canal

Cruise or Cargo Ship?

Number of Vessels

- 1914 - 1,000 vessels
- Present-day – Between 13,000 and 14,000 vessels
- Daily average of 32.5 vessels



Important Trade Routes



Facts About the Panama Canal

- Number of People Who Died Building Panama Canal
 - French Workers — More than 22,000 people
 - U.S. Workers — Estimation 5,609 people
- Time to Cross Panama Canal
 - 8 to 10 hours
- Toll (Cost to use Panama Canal)
 - Average toll = \$150,000
- The Panama Canal has been designated as one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World.

Retrieval Practice – Brain Drain



- Topic: The Panama Canal
- Write what you remember about the Panama Canal. Use complete sentences.



Building Background Knowledge

Setting the Foundation for Reading Comprehension

Teachers must intentionally build student knowledge while helping students learn from text.

- Additional effective strategies include:
 - Teaching words in categories
 - Using contrasts and comparisons
 - Using analogies
 - Encouraging topic-focused wide reading
 - Embracing multimedia

Basic Understandings

- Vocabulary learning is incremental.
- Vocabulary learning is both **incidental** and **intentional**.
- Vocabulary instruction is everyone's responsibility.

VOCABULARY



Components of Effective Vocabulary Instruction

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Incidental Vocabulary Learning

Rich Oral Language Experiences
Including High-Quality Classroom
Language

Wide Reading
Teacher Read-Alouds
Independent Reading

Intentional Vocabulary Teaching

Specific Word Instruction
Rich and Robust Instruction of
Words in Text

Word-Learning Strategies
Dictionary Use
Morphemic Analysis
Contextual Analysis
Cognate Awareness (ELLs)

Word Consciousness: Adept Diction, Word Play, Origins

What NOT to do in Vocabulary Instruction

Non-Examples



- Assign students to look up words in the dictionary and write the definitions as your primary vocabulary instruction.
- Teach all the vocabulary words for the unit at the very beginning of the unit.
- Have students "guess" what the word meaning is when students may lack the proper background knowledge to discern correct from incorrect guesses.

Incidental Vocabulary Learning : Rich Oral Language Experiences

WHEN & HOW

- **When is it typically occurring?**
 - Prekindergarten through twelfth grade
- **Examples of instructional approaches**
 - Educators should use words that are not common words in dialogue
 - “The **meteorologist** said we might have a blizzard this weekend.”
 - Provide a quick explanation of the unknown word’s meaning. This is known as *fast-mapping*.
 - “Don’t **procrastinate** on your assignment. Procrastinate means to put off doing something.”

The Importance of Oral Language Development

The ELL Classroom



Incidental Vocabulary Learning: Wide Reading

WHEN & HOW

- **When is it typically occurring?**
 - Prekindergarten through twelfth grade
- **Examples of instructional approaches**
 - Engaging through listening to books read aloud
 - Independent reading to expand word knowledge
 - Talking through tasks
 - Describe surroundings and activities (for younger children)

Teaching Vocabulary Intentionally

How to Bridge the Gap



Intentional Vocabulary Teaching: **Specific Word Instruction**

WHEN & HOW to Teach

- **When is it typically taught?**
 - Prekindergarten through twelfth grades
- **Examples of instructional approaches**
 - Selecting words to teach
 - Rich and robust explicit instruction
 - Introduce words before, during or after reading

Guidelines for Selecting Vocabulary

Words to Teach

- Select a **limited number** of words:
 - 4-5 words per session, additional words may be given a "lighter touch".
- Select words that are **unknown**.
- Select words that are **critical** to understanding the passage or unit of instruction.
- Select words that can be used in the **future**.
- Select **difficult words** that need interpretation:
 - Words not defined in the text;
 - Words with abstract referents (justice, optimism, empathy).

Guidelines for Using the Three-Tier System

Tier 1	Ask yourself... <i>Is it a basic word that most students are likely to already know?</i> Examples - table, dresser, sad, glad, apartment, car Instructional recommendation: These words rarely require direct instruction, <u>exceptions might include ELLs.</u>
Tier 2	Ask yourself... <i>Is it a word students are unlikely to know?</i> <i>Is it a word that is generally useful, that students are likely to encounter across domains?</i> <i>Can the meaning of the word be explained to students using words and concepts that are familiar to them? What is the word's instructional potential? Is its meaning necessary for text comprehension?</i> Examples – analyze, dignity, splendid Instructional recommendation: <u>These words are candidates for explicit instruction</u>
Tier 3	Ask yourself... <i>Is it a word whose meaning students are unlikely to know?</i> <i>Is it a specialized word that doesn't appear frequently in written or oral language?</i> <i>Is the word specific to a particular concept or subject area?</i> Examples – anthracite, endothermic, shoal Instructional recommendation: These words are explained at the point of contact or as need arises

Word Selection

Guided Activity



- Look at the list of potential vocabulary words.
- Which 4-5 words would you choose to explicitly teach to your class?

<i>Enemy Pie</i> by Derek Munson Second Grade Read-Aloud		
perfect	disgusting	nervous
trampoline	earthworms	invited
enemy	ingredients	relieved
recipe	horrible	boomerang

Rich and Robust Vocabulary Instruction

Instructional Routine: Four Steps for Success

Step 1: Introduce the word's pronunciation.

Step 2: Introduce the word's meaning.

Step 3: Illustrate the word with examples
(and non-examples when helpful).

Step 4: Check students' understanding.



Vocabulary Instruction

Whole Class Example – Dr. Anita Archer, 6th grade ELA

- <https://explicitinstruction.org/video-secondary-main/secondary-video-3/>



Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

- **Step 1. Introduce the word's pronunciation**
 - a) Write the word on the board or display it on-screen.
 - b) Read the word and have students repeat the word.
 - c) If the word is difficult to pronounce or unfamiliar, have students repeat the word several times OR have students tap out the oral syllables in the word.
 - d) Have students orally spell or write the word.

*“This word is **compulsory**. What word?”* compulsory

“Tap and say the syllables in compulsory.” com pul sor y

“What word?” compulsory

“Spell compulsory.” com pul sor y

Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 2. Introduce the word's meaning

- Option # 1. Present a student-friendly explanation.
 - Tell students the explanation
OR
 - Have them read the explanation with you

*“When something is **compulsory**, it is required, and you must do it. So, if it is required and you must do it, it is _____.”*

Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 2. Introduce the word's meaning

- **Option # 2. Break definition into critical attributes.**

Gross National Product (GNP) is the final value of goods and services produced by a country during a year.

Gross National Product (GNP)

- final value
- of goods and services
- produced by a country
- during a year.

Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 2. Introduce the word's meaning

- Option # 3. Introduce the word using morphemes (meaningful parts of words).

Autobiography

auto = self

bio = life

graph = letters, words, pictures

An autobiography is a book written by the person it is about.

Dehydration

Hydro = water

Inspection

Spect = see

Telephone

Tele = distant

Phone = sound

Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 3. Illustrate the word with examples.

Option # 1: Concrete examples

- Show the object
- Act out the definition

Ecstatic means extreme happiness and excitement.

Here is a girl who looks ecstatic.



Show me how you might look if you were ecstatic about something.

Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 3. Illustrate the word with examples.

Option # 2: Visual examples

Compulsory (education)

Compulsory education laws differ from state to state, with the required ending age varying between 15 and 18.



Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 3. Illustrate the word with examples.

Option # 3: Verbal examples

- *Stopping at a stop sign when driving is compulsory.*
- *Paying taxes is compulsory.*

Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 4. Check for student's understanding

- Option # 1. Have students discern between examples and non-examples.

Tell me compulsory or not compulsory.

*Attending school in 8th grade?
compulsory*

How do you know it is compulsory? It is required.

Going to college when you are 25 years old? not compulsory

Why is it not compulsory? It is not required. You choose to go to college.

Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 4. Check for student's understanding

- Option # 2. Have students generate examples.

There are many things at this school that are compulsory. Think of things that are compulsory for students.

Sentence Starter:

One thing that is compulsory is ...

Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 4. Check for student's understanding

- Option # 3. Ask deep processing questions.

*Many things become compulsory.
Why do you think something
becomes compulsory?*

Sentence Starter: *Something
becomes compulsory because ...*

Designing a Vocabulary Lesson

A Guided Example from Dr. Anita Archer

Step 4. Check for student's understanding

- Option # 4. Compare/Contrast

Compare and contrast these vocabulary terms:

compulsory and essential.

Partner One(s): How are these words similar?

Partner Two(s): How are they different?

Vocabulary Instruction Example

Designing for Delivery



- Consider a vocabulary word from one of the grade level list handouts
- Build a plan for how you might teach the word to your students.
- Fill in the provided planning organizer with your ideas.
- Share with a partner.



Intentional Vocabulary Teaching: Word Learning Strategies

WHEN & HOW to Teach

- **When is it typically taught?**
 - Prekindergarten through twelfth grade
- **Examples of instructional approaches**
 - Dictionary Use
 - Morphemic Analysis
 - Contextual Analysis
 - Combined Morphemic and Contextual Analysis

Word Learning Strategies

Dictionary Use

"If students have the task of learning tens of thousands of words and we can only teach them a few hundred words a year, then they have to do a lot of word learning on their own."

(Graves, 2000)

Students should receive instruction in HOW to use what they find in a dictionary.

- Teachers model:
 - How to look up the meaning of an unfamiliar word, and
 - How to choose the appropriate definition to fit the context
- Students need to learn to use dictionaries for:
 - Unknown words
 - To further their knowledge of words

Dictionary Use

Examples of HOW

- **Teach and model** appropriate dictionary use

Guidelines for Using the Dictionary:

- 1) The first entry that you find for a word might not be the one you are looking for. Make sure you have found and read all the entries for a word.
- 2) When you find the right entry, read all the different meanings, or definitions that the dictionary gives for the word. Do not read just part of the entry.
- 3) Choose the dictionary meaning that best matches the context in which the word is used. One meaning will make sense, or fit better, than any other.

Word Learning Strategies

Morphemic Analysis



- Focus on morphemes, the meaningful units within the word.
 - Root words and word families
 - Compound words
 - Affixes
 - Greek and Latin roots
 - Cognate awareness

Word Learning Strategies

An Example



Word Learning Strategies

Contextual Analysis

- Inferring word meaning by analyzing surrounding text
- Helpful context clues:
 - Definition
 - Synonym
 - Antonym
 - Example
 - General
- Unhelpful context clues:
 - Misdirection
 - General

Word Learning Strategies

Combined Morphemic and Contextual Analysis

The Vocabulary Strategy

1. Look for context clues in words, phrases and sentences surrounding the unknown word.

2. Look for word-part clues within the unknown word.

- a) Try to break it into parts.
- b) Look at the root word. What does it mean?
- c) Look at the prefix. What does it mean?
- d) Look at the suffix. What does it mean?
- e) Put the meanings of the parts together. What is the meaning of the whole word?

3. Guess the word's meaning (use steps 1 and 2)

4. Try out your meaning in the original sentence to check if it makes sense or not in context.

5. Use the dictionary, if necessary, to confirm your meaning.

Vocabulary: Word Consciousness

WHEN & HOW to Teach

- **When is it typically taught?**
 - Prekindergarten through twelfth grade
- **Examples of instructional approaches**
 - Adept diction
 - Word play
 - Word histories and origins

Word Consciousness Strategies

Adept Diction/Models

- **The skillful use of words in speech and writing:**
 - In teacher's word choice
 - In reading texts
 - In student's speech and writing
- **Language Categories**
 - Synonyms, antonyms, homographs
- **Figurative Language**
 - Simile, metaphor, idiom

"The teacher who is alert to opportunities for using sophisticated, interesting, and precise language is probably the most important element in a word-rich environment."

- Beck, 2002

Word Consciousness Strategies

Word Play

"Word play is accomplished through the manipulation of meanings, arrangements, sounds, spellings, and various other aspects of words" (Johnson et al, 2004)

- **Expressions**
 - Idioms (break the ice)
 - Proverbs (an apple a day keeps the doctor away)
 - Slang (junk food)
- **Names**
 - Eponyms (after a person – watt after James Watt)
 - Toponyms (after a place – sardines after Sardinia)
- **Word Formations**
 - Acronyms (ELL)
- **Word Games**
 - Puns (what does the baby computer call its dad? data)
 - Tongue twisters (Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers)
- **Word Manipulations**
 - Anagrams (formed by rearranging the letters of another word, i.e., act - cat)
 - Palindromes (reads the same forward and backward, i.e., mom, dad, noon)

Word Consciousness Strategies

Word Histories and Origins

"Words like living things have histories that change over time"

Diamond (2007)

- **Greek**

- Specialized words used mostly in science and technology
 - *Astronaut, geology, automatic, barometer, phonograph, telephone*

- **Latin**

- Longer, more sophisticated words used in formal contexts, such as content-area texts and literature
 - *Audible, dictate, pedal, transport, inspect, construct*

- **Anglo-Saxon**

- Short, everyday words used frequently in ordinary conversation and beginning reading texts.
 - *House, happy, play, boy, girl*

Word Consciousness

Making Words Meaningful

"Children learn best when they have strong personal interest and are actively and interactively involved with learning...It is important that we incorporate word and language play activities in the classroom to stimulate, sustain, and recapture that natural interest."

Johnson, Johnson, & Schlichting (2004)



Vocabulary Development for ELLs

"To foster real literacy development among ELLs and Multilingual Learners (MLs), educators must adopt a broader, more inclusive perspective that values student assets over deficits, community knowledge over assumptions, and home language as a resource rather than an obstacle."

Socorro G. Herrera, Ed.D. (2025)

Learning New Vocabulary in English

- It is critical to shift from a deficit perspective to an asset-based approach.
- ELLs require explicit teaching of new vocabulary, along with repeated chances to practice and apply those words in both speaking and writing. This also applies to academic vocabulary.
- A strong understanding of academic terms is essential for comprehending texts across subject areas, including textbooks, assessments, newspapers, and magazines.



Vocabulary Strategies for ELLs

Application Activity for Classroom Strategies



- Review the vocabulary strategies for ELLs in your Participant Packet
 - What strategies are applicable for ALL learners?
 - What strategies might you use to supplement your instruction to support ELLs in your classroom?
 - Note which strategies are particularly impactful for vocabulary instruction for ELLs.



Considerations for Extending Vocabulary

Deepening Understanding and Concepts

Possible extension ideas:

- Synonyms (same)
- Antonyms (different)
- Word family
- Word parts
- Multiple-meaning words
- Graphic organizers
- Vocabulary logs
- Semantic mapping



Weaving It Together – Vocabulary Extensions

Building out Meaning

1. Introduce the parts of speech.
2. Introduce synonyms (same) and antonyms (different).
3. Tell students when and where the word is used.
4. Introduce the etymology (history and/or origin) of the word.

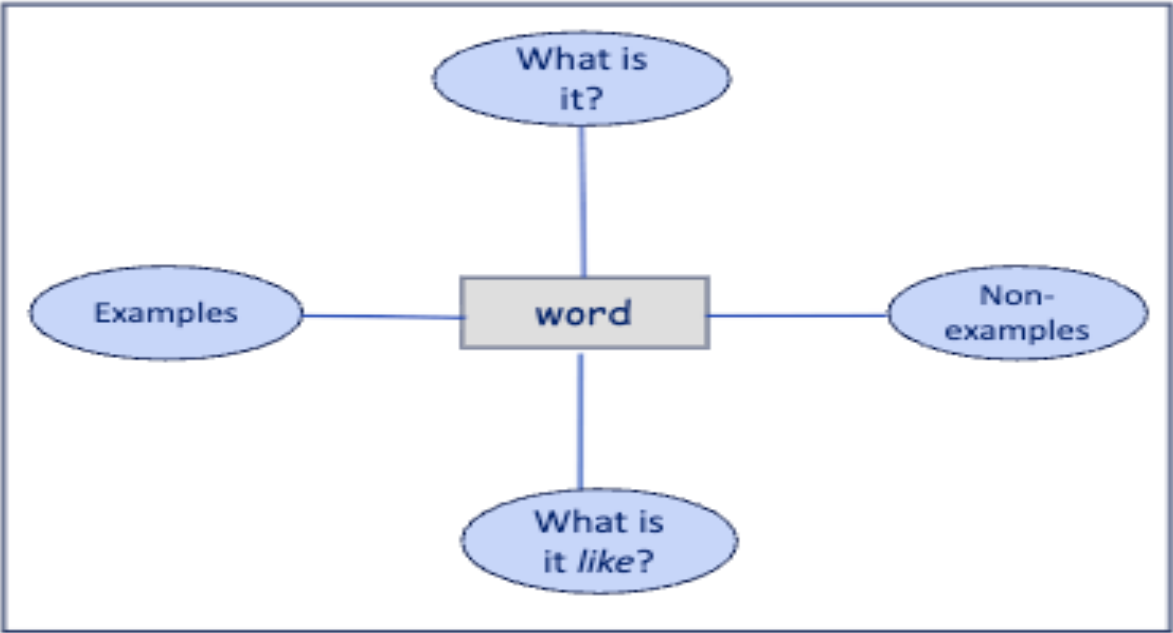
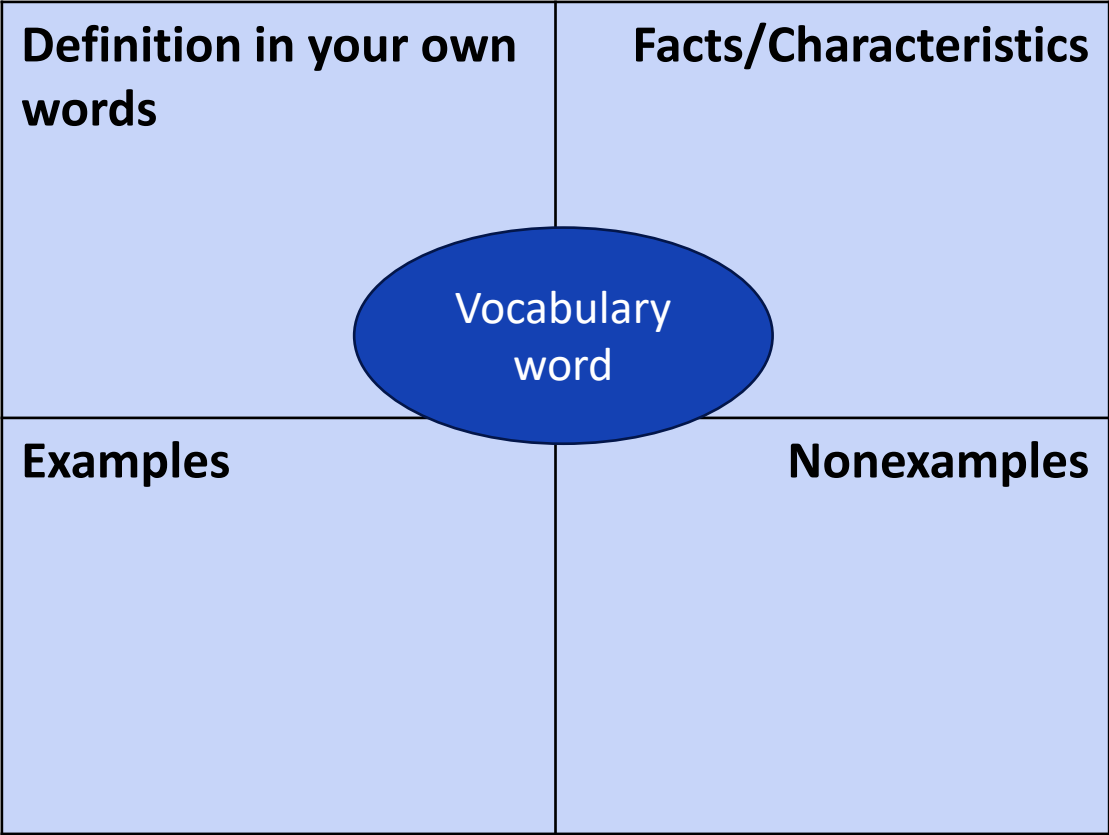
Compassion

Definition: A feeling of sharing another's suffering that leads to a desire to help.

1. Part of speech = noun
2. Synonyms = kindness, sympathy, understanding; Antonyms = cruelty, heartlessness
3. This word is used when describing a feeling someone is showing for someone in pain, "The woman felt compassion for the lost child."
4. Compassion comes from a Latin word meaning "to suffer with another."

Frayer Model and Word Map

Introduce and Record Important Concepts



Vocabulary Log Example

Concept:	
Analysis of word:	
Part of speech:	
Critical Attributes:	
Examples	Non-examples
Associations	Synonyms
Members of word family:	
Your sentence:	

Flooding Classrooms with Words

Create a Word Wall in Your Classroom

- **Post a reminder of the context**
 - Copy of the cover of the read-aloud book
 - Copy of the first page in the story
 - The topic in science or social studies
- **Post the vocabulary words**
- **Incorporate the words into your classroom language**
- **Encourage students to use the words when speaking and writing**
- **Translate the words into the home languages of students in your classroom (ELLs and MLs) and add the translations to the word wall**

Extension activities can help deepen student understanding and knowledge of new words. Consider the examples offered on the slides and in your participant packet.

- **Have you ever seen/used any of these extension ideas before in your lessons?**
- **How might you incorporate using one of these into your next unit?**
- **Are there other ideas for extending vocabulary lessons/concepts that you want to share?**



Extending Vocabulary Instruction to Deepen Understanding and Concepts

Check for Understanding



Agree or Disagree?



1. Vocabulary is essential for reading, listening, comprehension, and expressing ideas through writing and speaking.
2. Children enter school with different levels of vocabulary, making effective vocabulary instruction a school priority.
3. When teaching a new vocabulary term, these steps will be adequate: introduce the word's meaning and check student understanding.
4. To understand text, students need to know the meaning of 75% to 80% of the words.

Assessment to Inform Instruction



Support & Strengthen Background Knowledge and Vocabulary

Vocabulary Assessment

Important Considerations

- **Measuring vocabulary is not easy!**
- **Word knowledge is not a discrete or all-or-nothing skill.**
- **Vocabulary develops incrementally over time and is multi-componential (Snow and Kim, 2006).**
 - Background Knowledge
 - Word Meaning and Context
 - Morphology and Syntax
 - Spelling and Pronunciation
- **Vocabulary is a “large problem space”.**

Vocabulary Assessment

Important Considerations

- **It is important to distinguish whether students:**
 - Understand the concept
 - Can use the word
 - Understand the concept and its corresponding label
 - Understand the word in context
- **Clarify what type of vocabulary is being assessed.**
 - Tier 1, 2, or 3
 - Content Specific
 - Oral vs Written
 - Receptive vs Expressive

Core ELA Instruction: Assessment Types

What can we use to inform our core instruction of vocabulary

Universal Screening

- Strong evidence they are reliable and valid assessments of current skill levels
- Predict the likelihood of future reading difficulties
- Allow for valid decisions to be made about the effectiveness of the instructional environment

Classroom Assessments

- Determine the group's mastery of specific skills taught in previous lessons
- Not necessarily evaluated for reliability and validity

Vocabulary Assessment

Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring Curriculum-Based Measures (CBMs)

- **easyCBM Vocabulary**

- Evaluates Word Knowledge in Context
- General Outcome Measure (GOM)
- Grades 2-8
- Online/Paper and Pencil
- 10-15 minutes

Vocabulary 3_1

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

1. To be a good basketball player takes lots of **practice**. Here **practice** means:
A. sleeping B. watching C. training
2. To be safe, Sam walks on the ____ instead of the street.
A. highway B. sidewalk C. road
3. The farmer grows **wheat** for bread. Here **wheat** means a:
A. food plant B. toy tractor C. hot cereal

Vocabulary Assessment

Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring CBMs

- **FastBridge AUTOreading**

- Evaluates Encoding/Decoding, Word Knowledge and Morphology Skills
- GOM
- Grades 1-12
- Subtests include:
 - Grades 1-4: Encoding, Word Identification, and Vocabulary
 - Grades 5-12: Word Identification, Decoding, Matching Synonyms, and Morphology
- Online
- 6-8 Minutes

Vocabulary Assessment – Initial

Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring CBMs



- **Acadience Reading Pre-K: Preschool Early Literacy Indicators (PELI)**
 - Assessment of Essential Pre-Literacy and Oral Language Skills Needed for Kindergarten
 - Measures Alphabet Knowledge, Vocabulary-Oral Language, Comprehension, and Phonological Awareness
 - Storybook-Embedded Assessment
 - Two Book sets: Ages 3-4 and 4-5
 - 15 minutes

Vocabulary Assessment

Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

- **CORE Vocabulary Screening Test:**

- * Free resource

- Skill assessed: Synonym Identification
 - Measures how well students know the meaning of print-based, grade-level vocabulary words they read silently
 - Grades 1-8
 - Individual or Group
 - 10-20 minutes



Next Steps: reading material with a rich vocabulary (read aloud to student, paired reading, independent), specific word instruction, and instruction in word learning strategies

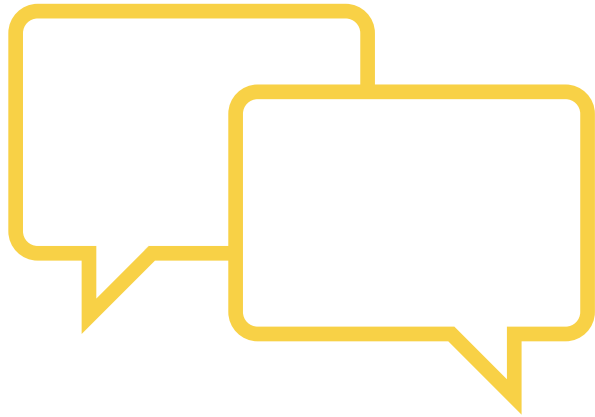
Vocabulary Assessment

Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

- **Critchlow Spanish Verbal Language Scale:**

- *Free resource

- Skill assessed: Antonym Identification
 - Measures one aspect of a student's vocabulary in Spanish
 - Grades K-8
 - Individual
 - Oral Language
 - 15 minutes



Next Steps: more intense support in developing other underlying reading skills, further assessment to determine areas of need

Vocabulary Assessment

Universal Screening Computer Adaptive Tests (CATs)

- **iReady Inform (formerly Diagnostic) for Reading**
 - High-Frequency Words and Vocabulary
- **Star Reading and Star Early Literacy**
 - Word Meaning, Antonyms/Synonyms, and Vocabulary Application (Star Reading)
 - Word Relationships, Structural Analysis, Antonyms/Synonyms, Multiple Meaning Words (Star Early Literacy)
- **MAP Growth Reading**
 - Word Recognition and Structure, Contextual Understanding, Vocabulary in Informational Text, and Vocabulary in Literature



Vocabulary Assessment

Standardized Norm-Referenced Tests

- **Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 5th Edition (PPVT-5)**
 - Measures *Receptive* Vocabulary in Standard American English
 - Individually Administered
 - Oral Language
 - Ages 2 years 6 months to 90+ years
 - 10-15 Minutes
- **Expressive Vocabulary Test, 3rd Edition (EVT-3)**
 - Measures *Expressive* Vocabulary and Word Retrieval in Standard American English
 - Individually Administered
 - Oral Language
 - Ages 2 years 6 months to 90+ years
 - 10-15 minutes

Vocabulary Assessment

Standardized Norm-Referenced Tests

- Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, 3rd Edition (KTEA-3)
- Oral and Written Language Scales, 2nd Edition (OWLS-II)
- Test of Language Development, 5th Edition (TOLD-5)
- Test of Preschool Early Literacy (TOPEL)
- Test of Reading Comprehension, 4th Edition (TORC-4)
- Test of Written Language, 4th Edition (TOWL-4)
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, 4th Edition (WIAT-4)
- Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Oral Language
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, 3rd Edition (WRMT-3)

Vocabulary Assessment

Classroom Assessments

- **Used by teachers to measure specific vocabulary knowledge and learning gaps.**
 - Academic, i.e., Tier 2, Words
 - Word Lists
 - Dolch
 - Fry
 - Subject Specific Vocabulary
- **Criterion Referenced**
- **Published Instructional Materials or Teacher Created**

Vocabulary Assessment

CBM Vocabulary-Matching

- Useful for Assessing Content Area Specific Vocabulary Knowledge
- Teacher Developed
- Use Key Vocabulary Terms and Definitions from Curriculum Materials
- Identify Terms for Additional Instruction/Intervention
- 15-20 Vocabulary Terms with Several Distractors
- Individual or Group Administration
- Approximately 5-10 minutes

Vocabulary Assessment

CBM Vocabulary-Matching Example

-
- 1) Panama
- 2) Canal
- 3) Slides
- 4) Afloat
- 5) Locks
- 6) Isthmus
- A) A man-made waterway used for boats or irrigation
- B) A narrow strip of land bordered by water on both sides between two larger areas of land
- C) Floating on the water
- D) A barrier used to contain the flow of water
- E) A country located in Central America
- F) A rapid downward descent of earth or rock
- G) An enclosure used to control the water level in a waterway

Assessment & Linguistic Diversity

Assessment to Inform Instruction

- How can screener data inform and misinform our sense of the effectiveness of literacy curricula/programs used with ELLs and MLs in our school(s)?
- What does the data in your Educational Organization (EO) indicate about our current implementation of Science of Reading to support ELL and ML students' successful attainment of school and life goals?
- What plan does your EO have to address teaching literacy to ELLs and MLs? What if any changes should be made to improve support for these students?

Aligning Assessment to Intervention

	Basic Reading	Advanced Word Reading	Reading Comprehension
Reading Profile	Difficulties in basic (beginning) reading – student struggles with reading simple words and text, linking letters and letter combinations to sounds, phonemic awareness, and/or spelling words.	Difficulties with more advanced word reading skills – student can read simple words and texts but struggles to read longer, more complex words with accuracy and efficiency.	Difficulties primarily involve reading comprehension and may be due to gaps in vocabulary and linguistic comprehension, background knowledge, and the skills and strategies to integrate language and knowledge with text.
Intervention	• Early literacy gaps (integrate phonemic awareness with print) • Decoding and spelling, integrate vocabulary • Practice reading words and text to build accuracy and efficiency	• Decoding strategies for complex words • Integrate vocabulary • Practice reading words and text to build accuracy and efficiency	• Language (especially vocabulary) • Background knowledge • Text structure, other strategies as needed • Practice reading text to integrate knowledge and make inferences

Reading Interventions

Basic Reading

Integrating Word Meaning within Decoding Instruction

Example for teaching irregular words:

- 1st -Prompt the student to sound out the word (*reinforces this as the go-to strategy*)
- 2nd - If mispronounced, teacher immediately gives correct pronunciation and student repeats (*demonstrates how to adjust or "fix-up" pronunciation so may add to their oral vocabulary*)
- 3rd - Teacher gives brief definition of word or uses it in a familiar sentence (*helps the student establish the connection between the word's spelling, pronunciation, and meaning*)
- 4th - Have the student spell out the word

- TEACHER: (*while pointing at was in clear view of the student*) Here is a new word, sound it out.
- STUDENT: Wwww...aaaaa...sss...wasss.
- TEACHER: Almost! That word is was. What word?
- STUDENT: Was.
- TEACHER: Good. Was. Like, "I was so hungry." or "Yesterday was Monday." Now spell was.

Reading Interventions

Advanced Word Reading

- **Morpheme-Based Strategies**

- 1st – teach students a set of common morphemes (pronunciation and meaning)
 - Teach each morpheme explicitly, similar to how students are taught to decode simpler words
 - Review previously taught prefixes, suffixes and roots
- 2nd- (*once students can read a few morphemes*) have students identify morphemes in the word by underlining and identifying word parts they know
- 3rd- have students read those sections individually and then put them together to read as a whole word
- The interventionist provides support in affirming correct responses, adjusting pronunciations as needed, and providing corrective feedback

Reading Interventions

Reading Comprehension

- **Instructional Principles and Weekly Structure of Robust Vocabulary Instruction**
 - 6-10 new words introduced on the first day of the week
 - Display the words on the board or on individual cards
 - Provide student-friendly definitions of the words (students should understand the words but not memorize them)
 - Teacher engages in interactive activities that foster students' ability to:
 - Understand the word when it is used in text or speech
 - Evaluate when it is used appropriately or not
 - Be able to use the words themselves in conversation or writing

Case Example

Third Grade Classroom: easyCBM Vocabulary

Student	EasyCBM Vocabulary (% rank)
A	14
B	30
C	32
D	36
E	38
F	40
G	44
H	50
I	78
J	83
K	91

3rd Grade Classroom Case

Instruction-Curriculum-Environment (ICE) Plan Example

Grade-Level Implementation Plan (Part 2: ICE Elements)					
ICE Area	Description & Action Steps		What?	Who?	When?
Instruction	What we do:	Students are assigned to look up the chapter vocabulary words in the glossary and write the definitions in their notebooks. Vocabulary is not explicitly taught, and lessons do not focus on decoding strategies for more complex words.	Implement explicit instruction in vocabulary and morphemic analysis during ELA instruction daily	All Teachers	By 9/30/26
	What else we need to do:	We need to explicitly teach Tier 2 words (<i>related to what they are learning</i>) and explicitly teach how to decode multisyllabic words. Focus will be on morphemic analysis; teaching students the meanings of word parts, how to disassemble words into word parts and how to reassemble word parts to derive word meanings.			
Curriculum	What we have:	We provide students the list of chapter vocabulary words highlighted in their lesson for the week.	Create and distribute materials (PEEL OFF posters, Frayer Model graphic organizers etc.) for vocabulary activities.	Teacher 2	By 9/15/26
	What we need:	We need to review the chapter lesson for the week and select 6-10 (multisyllabic) <i>Tier 2 (academic vocabulary)</i> words and introduce every Monday. We need to incorporate engaging vocabulary activities (PEEL OFF Strategy, Frayer Model etc.) throughout the week.			
Environment	What we do:	We use Tier 1 PBIS to promote readiness behaviors.	Maintain current Office Discipline Referral rate		
	What else we need to do:	We do not need additional support currently.			
Other Considerations (e.g., Community Engagement, Assessment): Many students attend an after-school enrichment program with college students who provide tutoring. We will provide training for tutors on how to use engaging vocabulary activities and morpheme-based strategies with students.					
Date plan completed: <u>9/10/26</u>			Date of next review meeting: <u>11/15/26</u>		



Assessment to Inform Instruction

Stop & Think



- How are you currently assessing different aspects of vocabulary? (e.g. receptive vs expressive)
- What are some important considerations when it comes to vocabulary assessment?
- How are you assessing and providing intervention for vocabulary outside of the ELA block?

Culminating Activity



Background Knowledge – Plan for an upcoming lesson. Generate a list of 5-10 questions students will need to answer to help build their knowledge of the topic. How will you teach the background knowledge needed for comprehension?



Vocabulary Planning – consider an upcoming lesson. Select 6-10 critical words students will need to know and understand. How you will explicitly teach these words? What extensions can you incorporate?



Article - Read the article, *Effective Vocabulary Instruction* by Joan Sedita. Highlight 5 important points to share.

Questions and Answers



Check In



How are you feeling after today's training?

- If you feel overwhelmed, you're not alone!
- Here are some possible next steps...
 - Pick one thing you want to incorporate into your classroom.
 - Select one of the resources provided to read or learn more about.
 - Attend the training again – it's a lot of information!
 - Ask any follow-up questions you need. We are here to help!

Contact Us



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