Vocabulary: Actively Processing Words

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Objectives

• Deepen knowledge about how to select words to explicitly teach in content area classes.
• Deepen knowledge about how to explicitly teach words.
• Help students actively process words using the Frayer Model.
What is Vocabulary Knowledge?

• The knowledge of words and word meanings.
• The ability to pronounce, understand and use a word effectively and appropriately to foster communication and comprehension.
What is Vocabulary Instruction?

- Direct instruction of word meanings.
- Direct instruction in strategies that students can use to foster word meanings on their own.
Why Teach Vocabulary?

- Strong connection between vocabulary and reading comprehension (NICHD, 2000; Rand Study Group, 2002; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) which affects students’ success in school (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).

- Understanding text requires knowledge of word meanings (Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

- Older students often encounter increasingly difficult and unfamiliar vocabulary in texts, especially content-area texts (Baumann et al., 2003).
Turn and Talk

What are some reasons for vocabulary difficulties?
Reasons for Vocabulary Difficulties

• Lack of exposure to words (through reading, speaking, and listening).
• Lack of background knowledge related to words.
• Lack of explicit vocabulary instruction of specific word meanings.
• Lack of explicit vocabulary instruction of independent word learning strategies.
# Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful Readers</th>
<th>Struggling Readers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are exposed to a breadth of vocabulary words in conversations and print at home and at school from a very early age.</td>
<td>Have limited exposure to new words. May not enjoy reading and therefore do not select reading as an independent activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand most words (at least 90 percent) when they are reading and can make sense of unknown words to build their vocabulary knowledge.</td>
<td>Read texts that are too difficult and thus are not able to comprehend what they read or to learn new words from reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn words incrementally, through multiple exposures to new words.</td>
<td>Lack the variety of experiences and exposures necessary to gain deep understanding of new words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have content-specific prior knowledge that assists them in understanding how words are used in a particular context.</td>
<td>Often have limited content-specific prior knowledge that is insufficient to support word learning.</td>
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Boardman et al. (2008)
How Much Vocabulary Do Students Need?

- Good readers in grades 3-9 read about 1 million words of text per year (Nagy & Anderson, 1984).

- Teaching 400 words per year (8-10 words/week) would make a significant contribution to an individual’s comprehension (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).
The Third Question Becomes...

How do we help students actively process these words?
The Frayer Model

- Four-square graphic organizer
- Purpose is to teach word meanings
- Consistent with evidence-based practices for explicit vocabulary instruction and meta-analysis supporting the use of graphic organizers
- Allows teachers to incorporate the elements of vocabulary instruction previously discussed
The Frayer Model in the Classroom

• Using the Frayer Model helps
  – Facilitate deep discussions about the word/concept
  – Contextualize words
  – Actively process information
  – Experience multiple exposures to words
The Frayer Model

- Definition
- Characteristics
- Word/Concept
- Examples
- Non-examples
Use a Frayer Model: Explicitly Define and Contextualize Words

- **Definitions**: Student friendly definition of the term.

- **Examples**: Synonyms, concrete applications, or relevant illustrations of the characteristics of the term.

- **Non-Examples**: Antonyms, inappropriate applications, or relevant illustrations that do not fit the characteristics.

- **Characteristics**: features that help students to recognize, identify, or distinguish the term.

Use Student Friendly Definitions

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<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Dictionary Definition</th>
<th>Student Friendly Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune,</td>
<td>Showing great care and concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(My Turn)</td>
<td>accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule (Our Turn)</td>
<td>Exercise ultimate power over another (an area and its people)</td>
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<td>Rule</td>
<td>Exercise ultimate power over another (an area and its people)</td>
<td>Control; dominate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plundered</td>
<td>Take goods from (a place or person), typically using force and in a time of war or civil disorder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples (My Turn)

Example: Compassion
Non-examples (My Turn)

Non-example: Compassion
Examples (Our Turn)

Example: Rule
Examples (Our Turn)

Example: Rule
Non-examples (Our Turn)

Non-example: Rule
Examples/Non-examples (Your Turn)

Work with your colleagues to choose some examples and non-examples of ‘plundered’. Record them on your Frayer Model.
Characteristics (My Turn)

- Compassion:
  - Thoughtfulness
  - Being kind
  - Being helpful
  - Giving
  - Taking care of people when they are in need
Characteristics (Our Turn)

• Rule:
  – ???
Characteristics (Our Turn)

• Rule:
  – Dominating someone
  – Telling people in an area what they have to do by force
  – Taking control and not necessarily taking anyone else’s opinions about a matter
Characteristics (Your Turn)

Work with your colleagues to choose some characteristics of ‘plundered’. Record them on your Frayer Model.
The Frayer Model: Introduction to Students

• Initial instruction is heavily teacher-directed.
  – Modeling: If the teachers hasn’t done so already, she will need to explicitly teach what information should go in each section.
  – Discussion: How to use textbooks and other subject-matter materials to generate & discuss the information for each section.

• Not intended as a worksheet for homework.
“A word that is important to understand the text is compassion. Everyone say compassion: compassion. In the text, we will read about how Gandhi showed compassion towards many people in the world. In the text we will read the sentence: Mohandas Gandhi is known throughout the world for his compassion, dedication to peace, and commitment to nonviolence.

Compassion is just a sophisticated synonym, or a fancy way of saying to show great care concern for someone or something. I’m going to record that friendly definition on my Frayer Model. (Model Recording Information).
Frayer Model

Definition
Great care or concern for other people

Characteristics

Examples

Non-examples

COMPASSION
Compassion: I Do

An example of showing great concern is when someone shares their food with a homeless person who is greatly in need. I’m going to record that on my Frayer Model. (Model Recording Information).

Next, I want to think about what some characteristics of compassion might be. I know that when someone gives food to someone in need they are really demonstrating thoughtfulness and being kind, helpful, and giving. The person showing compassion would be taking care of a person in need. Watch as I record this on my Frayer Model. (Model).
Frayer Model

**Definition**
Great care or concern for other people

**Characteristics**
- Thoughtfulness
- Kind, helpful, giving
- Taking care of a person in need

**Examples**
Sharing food with a homeless person who is in great need

**Non-examples**
Finally, I need to consider some non-examples for the term compassion because non-examples help me understand the boundaries of the word. I remember that yesterday a man helped my mom bag her groceries at the store. This was very nice, but it wasn’t really showing compassion because I know that compassion means showing great care or concern for someone who is very much in need and he was just being nice and doing his job and my mom wasn’t really in need—she could have done it herself! So, I am going to record this as a non-example of the word compassion so I can remember not only what compassion is, but also what it is NOT.
**Frayer Model**

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<td>Sharing food with a homeless person who is in great need</td>
<td>When a person bags your groceries for you</td>
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**COMPASSION**
Turn and Talk

• By filling out the Frayer Model with their classes, teachers can help students...?
• Teachers help students
  - Contextualize terms
  - Actively process information
  - Provide multiple exposures to terms
Experimental studies examining the effectiveness of interventions designed to build vocabulary indicate that research-based strategies used with first-language learners are effective with second-language learners (Calderon, August, Slavin, Duran, Madden, & Cheung, 2005, p. 117).
English Language Learners

• Word learning takes place when students engage in purposeful talk with others that embeds the target words and displays their uses (Corson, 1995).

• Meaningful contexts must be provided for functional use of language with opportunities for practice and application (Dutro & Moran, 2003).

(Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002)
Final Thoughts

• “A richer vocabulary does not just mean we know more words, but that we have more complex and exact ways of talking about the world, and of understanding the ways that more complex thinkers see the world” (Stahl, 1999, p.1)

• Words guide our thoughts, so the more words we know, the better our understanding is about the world.