



Using Explicit Vocabulary Instruction to Support Content Area Learning: An Overview (Grades 4-12)

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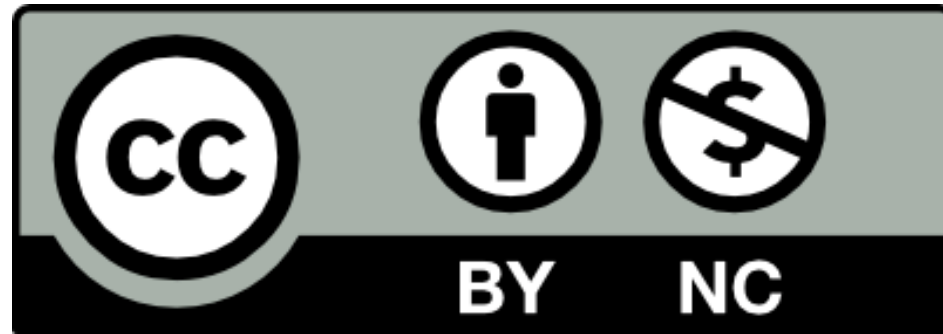


Acknowledgments

The content for this training day was developed based on the work of:

- Dr. Anita Archer
- Archer, A., & Hughes, C. (2011). *Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching*. NY: Guilford Publications.
- Videos that illustrate explicit instruction can be found at:
www.explicitinstruction.org

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Purpose

This session will provide an overview of an instructional routine to support vocabulary instruction in secondary classrooms

Agenda

- 1.0 The Importance of Vocabulary
- 2.0 What words should I teach?
- 3.0 How should I teach vocabulary?
- 4.0 Closing

1.0 The Importance of Vocabulary

The Power of Words

“Words are not just words. They are the nexus—the interface between communication and thought. When we read, it is through words that we build, refine and modify our knowledge. What makes vocabulary so valuable and important is not so much the words themselves so much as the understandings they afford.”

Adams, 2009

Vocabulary Unlocks Comprehension

- “One of the most enduring findings in reading research is the extent to which students’ vocabulary knowledge relates to their reading comprehension” (Osborn & Hiebert, 2004)
- “Adequate reading comprehension depends on a person already knowing between 90% to 95% of the words in a text.” (Nagy & Scott, 2000)
- “50-60% of reading comprehension variability can be attributed to knowledge of individual words.” (Nagy & Stahl, 2006)

An Existing Need

- 69% of 8th-grade students are below proficiency in their ability to comprehend grade-level texts
- “...even high school students with average reading ability are currently unprepared for the literacy demands of many workplace and postsecondary educational settings.”

Kamil et al., 2008



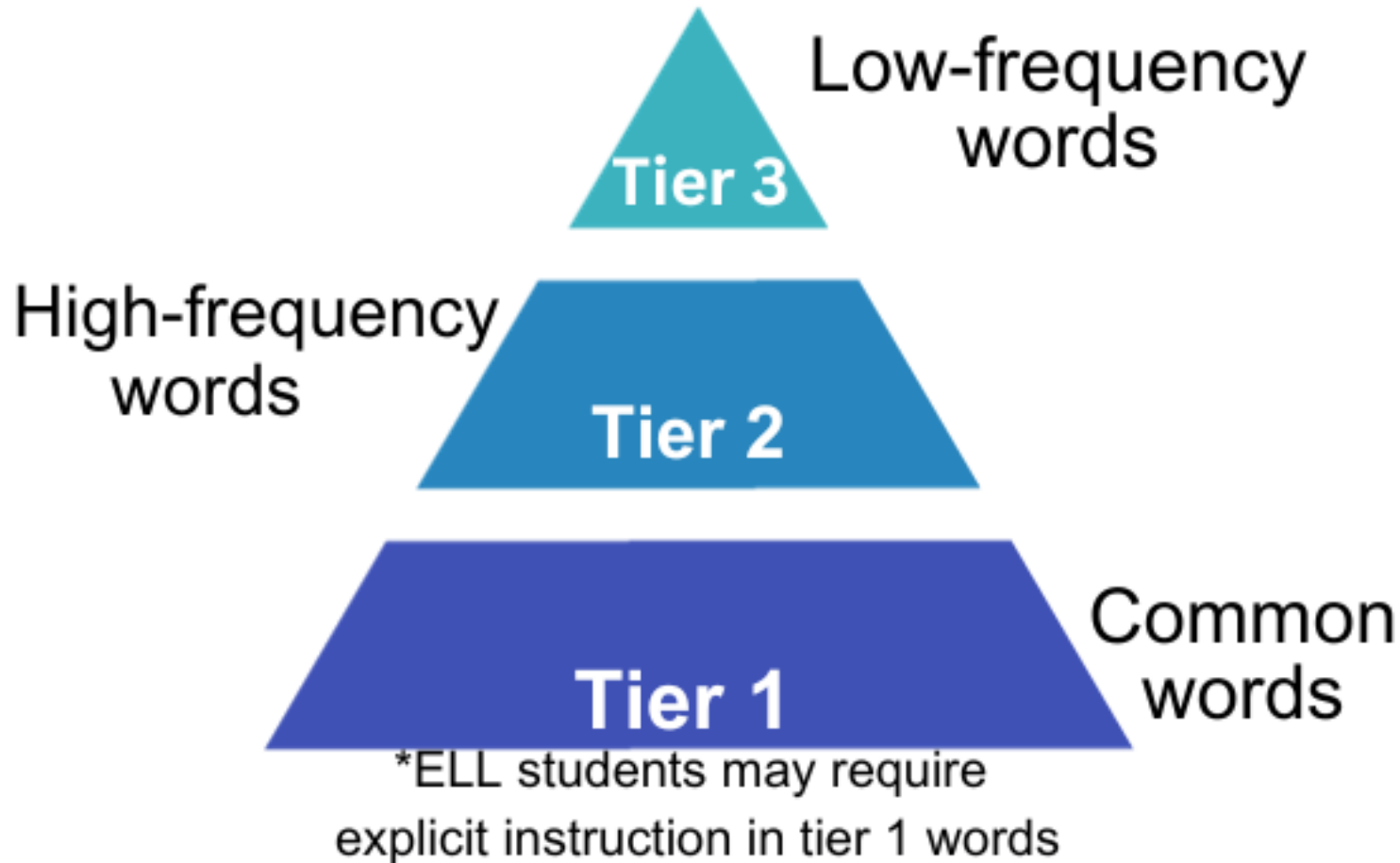
Activity 1.1: Establishing Your “Why”

- Take a moment to reflect on the previous slides. Answer at least one of the following questions:
 1. In general, why is it important to teach vocabulary?
 2. Personally, why is vocabulary instruction important to teach/support in your classroom?
- Please share your thoughts in the chat

2.0 What Words Should I Teach?

Word Selection

Consider the Tiers of Vocabulary



(Hennessy, 2021; Beck et al., 2013)

Word Selection Criteria

Select...

- A limited number of words
- Words that are unknown
- Words that are critical to understanding the passage or a unit of instruction
- Words that can be used in the future
- Difficult words that need interpretation
- Words that have word relatives
- Words that contain meaningful parts that would generalize to other vocabulary terms

Archer & Hughes, 2011

Word Selection Criteria Details

- Choose 4-5 words per lesson
 - Additional words addressed as needed
 - Tier 3 often need only a “light touch”
- Choose unknown words
 - Not defined in the text
 - Abstract words
 - Unknown concepts
- Choose critical words
 - Must know to understand the content
- Choose generalizable words
 - What will students use in the future?

(Archer & Hughes, 2011)

Word Selection Criteria Details, continued

- Choose word relatives (capital, capitalism, capitalize)
 - Big bang for the buck
 - Build vocabulary connections
 - One of the family words may be more common and known
 - Use existing knowledge to expand
 - Take advantage of background knowledge when possible
- Meaningful Parts & Etymology
 - Choose words that contain parts found in other words:
 - Prefix
 - Suffix
 - Root (Greek, Latin)
 - Help determine meaning as new words are encountered

(Archer & Hughes, 2011; Such, 2021)

Activity 2.1: Word Selection Practice



- Which words would you select for pre-reading instruction?
 - Environment
 - Drought
 - Vegetation
 - Region
 - Climate
 - Agriculture
 - Desert
 - Symptoms

3.0 How should I teach vocabulary?

Design lessons following a consistent routine for teaching vocabulary

Characteristics of Effective Vocabulary Instruction

- Instruction is clear and unambiguous
- Instruction involves the presentation of word meanings and contextual examples
- Multiple exposures to the word are provided
- Sufficient instructional time is devoted to vocabulary instruction

Archer & Hughes, 2011

Vocabulary Routine: IPIC

1. Introduce the word
2. **P**rovide a Student-Friendly Explanation
3. Illustrate with Examples
4. **C**heck for understanding

(Archer, 2011)

Step One: Introduce the Word (Key Concepts)

- Write word on board or display on screen
 - Use lowercase letters
- Read word and have students repeat word
 - Give students the opportunity to say the words multiple times
- Include the part of speech
- Show the word broken down into word parts or tap out the oral syllables

Archer & Hughes, 2011



Activity 3.1: Vocabulary Word Introduction

Review the display of the
vocabulary word below and the
example script:

desertification (noun)

De ser ti fi ca tion

Example Script: Desertification

T: This word is desertification. What word?

S: Desertification

T: Tap and say the syllables in desertification.

T/S: De ser ti fi ca tion

Step Two: Student-Friendly Explanation (Key Concepts)

- The explanation should include words and concepts already understood by the students
- Explanation should align with the meaning appropriate for the text being used
- Be cautious about asking students to offer what they think a word means before presenting the accurate explanation

Provide a Student-Friendly Explanation—Option One

- Provide the explanation
 - Tell students the explanation or
 - Have them read the explanation with you
 - T: Desertification is the process by which a piece of land becomes dry, empty, and unsuitable for growing trees or crops.
 - T: So, if land displays characteristics of being dry, empty, and without trees or crops, the land has experienced...
 - S: (Choral Response) Desertification

Provide a Student Friendly Explanation—Option Two

- Discuss critical attributes of the definition
- T: So, Desertification is...(students read along with teacher)
 - A process
 - Occurs when fertile land gradually dries out and becomes desert
 - Can be caused by climate, human activities, or both

Provide a Student Friendly Explanation—Option Three

- Introduce the word along with word relatives
- Desertification (noun)
 - Desert (noun)
 - Desertify (verb)



Activity 3.2: Student-Friendly Explanations

- Review the option for student-friendly explanations. Which would be ideal for the students you support?
 - Option 1: Provide the explanation
 - Option 2: Break definition into critical attributes
 - Option 3: Introduce the word using word relatives
 - Any others?

Step Three: Illustrate with Examples (Key Concepts)

- Multiple exposures are important
- When appropriate, use non-examples
- Consider word analysis when it applies
- Concrete, visual and verbal examples support comprehension
- Use word families when appropriate
- Tie to previously learned terms, if possible

Illustrate with Examples

- Desertification
- Natural cause: During a drought, marginal land can turn into a desert as less plants grow. Without plants to hold the dry soil in place, desert winds will pick up and carry away the soil, leading to desertification.



Illustrate with Examples, continued

- Desertification
- Human cause: Human activities that contribute to desertification include the expansion and intensive use of agricultural lands, poor irrigation practices, deforestation, and overgrazing.



Step Four: Check for Understanding (Key Concepts)

- The task should promote deep thinking rather than just recognition
 - If all you want is for them to recognize the definition, then why spend the time teaching it so thoroughly?
- Keep the focus on the critical attributes of the student-friendly explanation. Students should defend their response using the critical attributes
- Students should always use the term in their responses

Check for Understanding – Identification

- Have students discern between examples and non-examples

T: Tell me, desertification or not desertification?

T: The Amazon Rainforest... Desertification or not desertification?

T: Farmland that no longer produces crops due to excessive heat and lack of irrigation... Desertification or not desertification?

Check for Understanding—Explanation



- Complete the following sentence:

“This is / is not an example of desertification because _____.”

Partner 2 read your response to partner 1.

Partner 1 respond saying “I agree / disagree this is an example of desertification because _____.”

Check for Understanding—Analysis



- Ask deep processing questions
 - Partner 1 tell partner 2 what evidence you see in the picture that supports the claim that this area is in the process of desertification
 - “I believe this area is becoming desert because...”
 - Partner 2 tell partner 1 what may be one factor causing the desertification
 - “I believe one factor causing this desertification is ...”

Additional Check for Understanding Options

1. Students generate examples of the vocabulary term
 - Consider using this after students have developed/activated background knowledge of the term
2. Compare and Contrast Opportunities
 - How are these words similar?
 - How are they different?

Archer & Hughes, 2011



Activity 3.3: Check for Understanding

Check for understanding of the word **desertification**

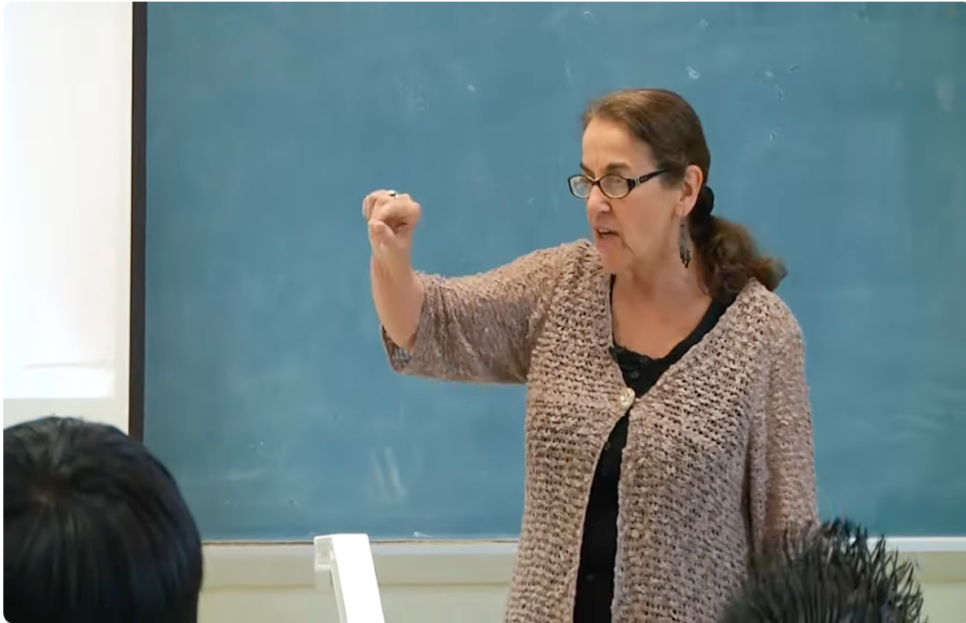
- Option 1: Examples and Non-Examples
 - Option 2: Student-generated examples
 - Option 3: Deep processing questions
 - Option 4: Compare and contrast
- Jot down on your planning template what option(s) you would select to use with your students

IPIC Routine Review

1. Introduce the word
2. **P**rovide a Student Friendly Explanation
3. Illustrate with Examples
4. **C**heck for understanding

(Archer, 2011)

Assignment 3.1: Vocabulary Lesson Review



Dr. Anita Archer - Vocabulary Instruction

- Consider viewing the Anita Archer Vocabulary Instruction video to see the explicit vocabulary routine in action
- As you watch this video, ask yourself:
 - What instructional steps were used to introduce each of the vocabulary words?
 - What other good instructional practices did you observe?

• [Example Vocabulary Lesson by Dr. Anita Archer](#)

4.0 Wrap Up

Implementation Considerations and Session Review

Implementation Considerations

- Educators will need time to create vocabulary slide decks to support explicit vocabulary instruction. Consider the following recommendations:
 - If you have a colleague who is teaching the same content, collaborate on the creation of the slide decks for the content
 - If you have an intern, teach them the strategy and provide them with opportunities to create slide decks (it's a win/win!)
 - Students who enjoy extra work can be taught how to create some of the easier components of the deck to help you get started
 - If this is a school-wide initiative, use PD time to work on slide decks (with deliverables to show at the end of the time period)

Session Review

- Explicitly teaching vocabulary is important because:
 - “50-60% of reading comprehension variability can be attributed to knowledge of individual words.” (Nagy & Stahl, 2006)
 - “Adequate reading comprehension depends on a person already knowing between 90% to 95% of the words in a text.” (Nagy & Scott, 2000)
- When I select words for instruction they should be:
 - A select number of unknown words, critical for understanding, which can be used now and in the future
 - Difficult words that need interpretation, have word relatives, or can be generalized
- Use the IPIC strategy to maintain consistent routines

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