

Creating Vocabulary Lessons that Stick: A Practicum on Lesson Design

NABE 2018 ALBUQUERQUE

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A Crucial Component

National Reading Panel Findings on Vocabulary

Learning in rich contexts is valuable for vocabulary learning	Repetition and multiple exposures are important	Vocabulary can be acquired through incidental learning
Vocabulary tasks should be restructured as necessary	Vocabulary learning should entail active engagement in learning tasks	Computer technology can be used effectively to help teach vocabulary
Intentional instruction of vocabulary terms is required for specific texts	Methods of assessment and evaluation can have differential effects on instruction	Dependence on a single instructional method will not result in optimal learning

Crucial for English Learners

“Vocabulary knowledge is the single best predictor of second language learners’ academic achievement across subject matter domains.”

— Saville–Troike, M. (1984). What really matters in second language learning for academic achievement?
TESOL Quarterly 18, 199–219.

Specific Word Instruction

Research indicates that teachers should:

1. Be highly selective about which words to teach
2. Provide rich, in-depth knowledge of word meanings—not just definitions
3. Provide clear, accessible explanations and examples of word meanings and opportunities for active involvement of students
4. Provide multiple encounters with targeted words
5. Engage students in active, deep processing by having them use the words in new contexts and create associations among the words

Effective Instruction for English Learners

To guide instruction for ELs, teachers should consider these factors:

Concrete vs. Abstract	Cognate Status	Depth of Meaning	Utility
Can students be shown a picture or image of the word? Can it be demonstrated? Or is it abstract?	Does the English word have a cognate?	Does the word have multiple meanings?	Is the meaning of the word critical to understanding a text?
veiled vs. reliable	reputation/ reputación	party sheer composed determined	

ELs Require Additional Instructional Supports

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- Building on student experiences and familiar content
- Providing students with necessary background knowledge
- Using graphic organizers to organize information and clarify concepts
- Making instruction and learning tasks extremely clear
- Using pictures, demonstrations, and real-life objects
- Providing hands-on, interactive learning activities
- Providing redundant information (gestures, visual cues)
- Giving additional practice and time for discussion of key concepts
- Using sentence frames and models to help students talk about academic content
- Providing support utilizing the students' first language including cognates

Goldenberg, 2013

4 Strategies for Every Teacher's Repertoire

Show images	Demonstrate	Define quickly at point of use	Teach fully and explicitly
This works best for concrete words; most often nouns but sometimes adjectives or verbs. Can be easily displayed on white board and quickly reviewed over the course of the week.	This works best for action verbs. Should be very quick.	Recommended for low-incidence words that are nonetheless central to understanding the text. Also useful for words that are far more advanced than the students' grade level.	This option is time-consuming and should be reserved for words that are high utility and cross content areas. Usually abstract words and concepts, but should be at the appropriate developmental level (i.e. not the most difficult words in the text.)

Displaying Images

- ▶ This works best for concrete words; most often nouns but sometimes adjectives or verbs.
- ▶ Can be easily displayed on white board and quickly reviewed over the course of the week.
- ▶ Use Google Images or similar search engine for quick results.
- ▶ Never do this on the spot in front of students.
- ▶ Let's look at images for nine words from a 3rd grade text, *Ramona Quimby*.

cash register	warehouse	forklift
Bigfoot	Mount Hood	scarce
triumphant	frustrated	rivals

cash register



warehouse



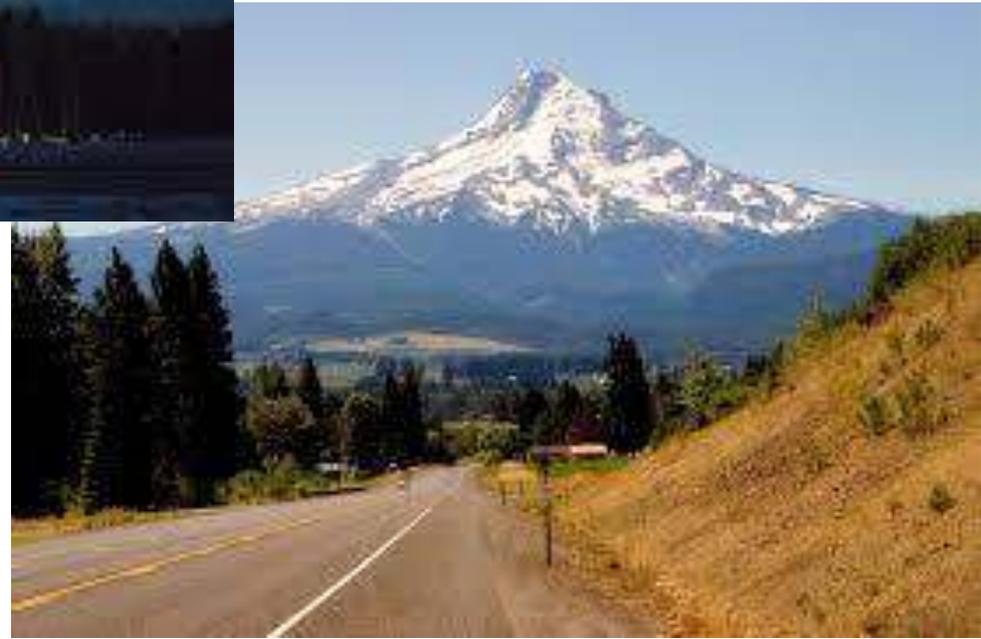
fork lift



Bigfoot



Mount Hood



scarce



In this picture of Naples, Italy, you can see that open space is **scarce**. Naples is Europe's most crowded city. There are very few parks or open spaces.

Scarce Toys

- Do you have a Cabbage Patch Kid? A Tickle Me Elmo? There were years when these toys were in hot demand, and there were fewer toys than children who wanted them. Watch what happened.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LaT_6UNxk

Famous Olympic Triumphs: Triumphant Michael Phelps & Jason Lezak



http://greatist.com/sites/default/files/styles/article_main/public/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Michael-Phelps.jpg?itok=kEGETExp

frustrated



Family rivals



Photo by Ken Wilcox
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/kenwilcox/3904984457>



Photo by Edwin Martinez

Demonstrations

- ▶ Quick demonstrations are very effective for many verbs as well as emotions.
- ▶ With a partner, discuss and show each other how you might demonstrate the following words and phrases which occur in the book *Frindle*:
 - ▶ a catch in her voice
 - ▶ stumbled
 - ▶ clattered
 - ▶ squinted
 - > pursed her lips
 - > squirmed
 - > shook hands stiffly
 - > puckered

Quick Definitions at Point of Use

- ▶ Recommended for low-incidence words that are nonetheless central to understanding the text.
- ▶ Also useful for words that are far more advanced than the students' grade level.
- ▶ Make sure that you cannot demonstrate or show an image to quickly teach the word!
- ▶ The key to doing this quickly is to use a learner's dictionary to obtain student-friendly definitions that do not use other rare words. It can be hard to do this on the spot. Think about how you would define:
 - ▶ inspire
 - ▶ relieve
 - ▶ pace

Recommended Dictionaries

- *Collins COBUILD New Student's Dictionary*
www.collinsdictionary.com
- *Heinle's Basic Newbury House Dictionary of American English*
- Online: nhd.heinle.com/
- *Longman Dictionary of American English* or *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*
- Online: *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*
www.ldoceonline.com
- *Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary*: learnersdictionary.com

Vocabulary.com

- ▶ Excellent website for word learning
- ▶ Has student-friendly explanations of words rather than dry dictionary definitions
- ▶ Teachers and students can create custom lists for practice
- ▶ Shows multiple usage examples
- ▶ Shows the full word family of each word

Explicit Instruction

- ▶ This option is time-consuming and should be reserved for words that are high utility and cross content areas.
- ▶ Usually abstract words and concepts, but should be at the appropriate developmental level (i.e. not always the most difficult words in the text.)
- ▶ Examples from ***Frindle***:

deserved	promptly	reputation	ideal
unfortunately	volume	fascinating	threatened
standards (of behavior)	controversial	confess	supplier

Which method to use?

- ▶ Examine the list of 24 words taken from a 5th grade text, Mom's Best Friend, about a blind mother who gets a guide dog. For each words, decide whether you think the best choice would be to:
 - A. Show an image
 - B. Demonstrate
 - C. Define quickly at point of use
 - D. Teach explicitly

A variety of options to teach words

- ▶ We identified 24 words that many students would not know.
- ▶ 9 can be taught using visual images
- ▶ 4 can be quickly demonstrated
- ▶ We chose 6 words for deep, explicit instruction
- ▶ That leaves 5 words that should be quickly defined at point of use.

hedges and hedge clippers



movie marquees



harness



curb ramps (with and without raised bumps)



jackhammer



obstacles



overflowed



This trash can is **overflowing** with garbage.

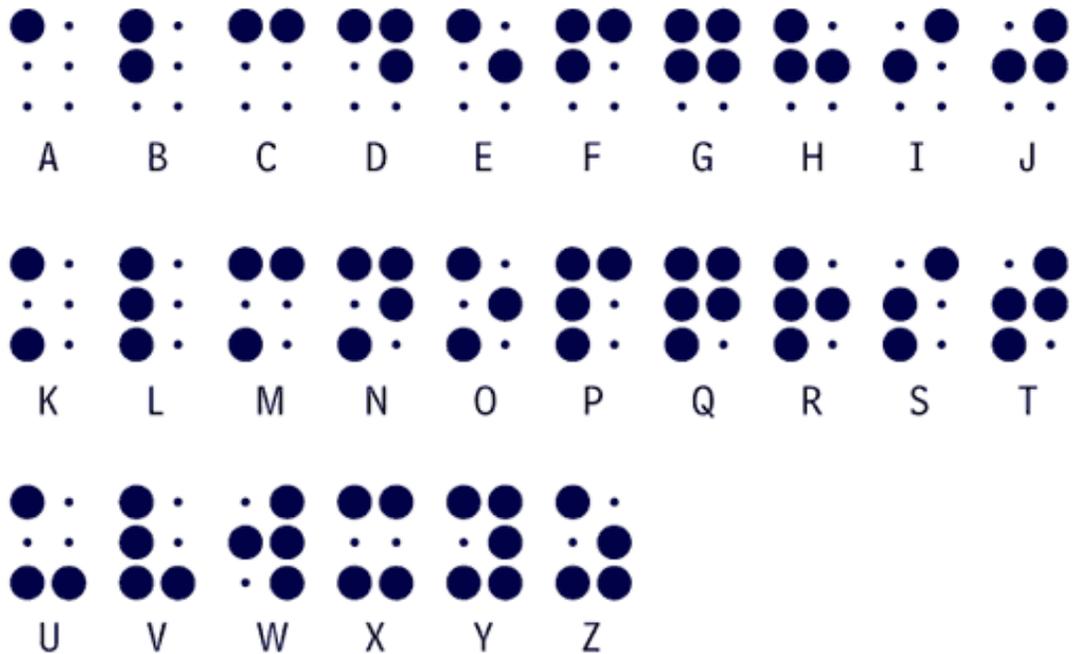


This creek has **overflowed** due to heavy rainfall.



This toilet has **overflowed!**

Braille



- a system of writing and printing for the blind
- Large dots are raised; small dots are left flat



Elements of Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

- ▶ Pronounce and break down into syllables
- ▶ Student-friendly definition or explanation; may include explanation of word parts
- ▶ Translation or Spanish cognate, if applicable
- ▶ Optional related word forms or antonyms (depends on the word!)
- ▶ Multiple examples using the word in varying contexts
- ▶ Accompanying image
- ▶ Engaging activity in which students process word meaning
- ▶ Prompts with written and oral response using sentence frame
- ▶ Follow-up questions

Breed and breeding station

- ▶ Breed can be a verb or a noun.
- ▶ In Spanish, the verb breed is *criar* or *criarse*
- ▶ People breed all kinds of animals and plants.



Dog Breeds

German Shepherd



Golden Retriever



Labrador Retriever



Boxer



Great Dane



Cocker Spaniel



Written response

- ▶ What is your favorite breed of dog?
- ▶ My favorite breed of dog is the _____ because _____ .
- ▶ My favorite breed of dog is the husky because they are so intelligent and so strong that they can pull sleds across Alaska.

Using Sentence Frames: Situated



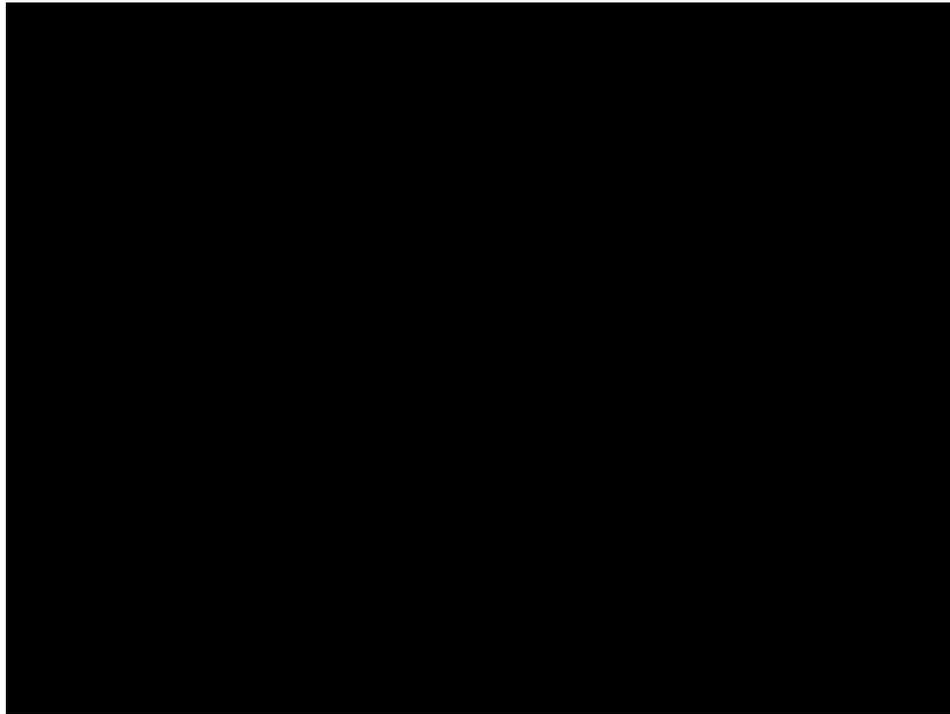
Target word: obedience

- ▶ Look up **obedience** in Longman's **ldoceonline.com** or **vocabulary.com** or **learnersdictionary.com** and choose a student-friendly explanation.
- ▶ Decide whether you want to explain the base word or other forms of the word as well.
- ▶ Use this structure for your meaning: The word **obedience** means _____ .
- ▶ Provide at least 3 varying examples of word usage. Feel free to use the ones you see online.

A wide variety of activities

- ▶ Questions with oral responses- usually the target word is one of the possible responses and often the opposite term is the other choice
- ▶ Questions with yes/no or thumbs up/thumbs down responses
- ▶ Questions with True/False responses using True/False cards
- ▶ Prompts followed by partner brainstorm and/or partner discussion, and then written responses using sentence frames
- ▶ Prompts with other physical responses

Group Response: Reliable



Questions

- ▶ Questions will vary.
- ▶ You might include a sentence frame for the response.
- ▶ As the last question, always restate the meaning of the word and ask “What word means _____ ?” Then signal, and the response is the target word.

12 steps to plan instruction

1. Choose words for instruction
2. Look up words in learner's dictionary or at recommended online site
3. Create a student-friendly definition/explanation
4. Provide several varying examples of word usage
5. Choose an accompanying image
6. Explain related word forms, word parts (roots, affixes), or antonyms if appropriate
7. Find Spanish cognate or translation, or translate into other languages

12 steps to plan instruction, continued

8. Plan an engaging activity that helps students process the word's meaning and usage. Examples of activities include:

- ▶ questions with oral or physical responses
- ▶ questions with yes/no, true/false, or thumbs up/thumbs down responses
- ▶ prompts followed by partner brainstorm, discussion, or collaboration

9. Decide how students will record their learning: on a word map, on index cards, in a vocabulary notebook, etc.

10. Plan a written prompt with a sentence frame as a follow-up to one of the activities.

11. Plan additional follow-up questions.

12. Plan final question in which you restate the meaning and students respond with the target word: What word means _____ ?

Thank You!

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