

THE USAGE OF INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

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Abstract: Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in a sentence. Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning strategies. This article presents several instructional vocabulary strategies and explains how to design and adapt those strategies in order to reach desired learning outcomes. Emphasis is placed on research-based principles that guide effective vocabulary instruction and on the importance of incorporating vocabulary instruction language learning lesson.

Key words: *instruction, vocabulary, teaching, learning, language, knowledge*

Vocabulary knowledge closely reflects language learners' breadth of real-life and vicarious experiences. Students cannot comprehend well without some knowledge of the concepts that are represented by the print. Vocabulary is a shared component of reading and writing—it helps the author and the reader to comprehend through their shared meanings of words. Students who are successful at decoding can, and often do struggle with comprehension when they encounter too many words for which they have limited or no meaning. Furthermore, vocabulary knowledge that is rich and well developed contributes significantly to fluent reading. Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world. Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and

using the words in a sentence. Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning strategies. According to Michael Graves, there are four components of an effective vocabulary program:

- > wide or extensive independent reading to expand word knowledge
- > instruction in specific words to enhance comprehension of texts containing those words
- > instruction in independent word-learning strategies, and
- > word consciousness and word-play activities to motivate and enhance learning

There is no single research-based method for teaching vocabulary. Intentional vocabulary teaching

Specific Word Instruction

- Selecting Words to Teach
- Rich and Robust Instruction

Word-Learning Strategies

- Dictionary Use
- Morphemic Analysis
- Cognate Awareness (ELL)
- Contextual Analysis

Explicit instruction of vocabulary is highly effective. To develop vocabulary intentionally, language learners should be explicitly taught both specific words and word-learning strategies. To deepen language learners' knowledge of word meanings, specific word instruction should be robust. Seeing vocabulary in rich contexts provided by authentic texts, rather than in isolated vocabulary drills, produces robust vocabulary learning. Such instruction often does not begin with a definition, for the ability to give a definition is often the result of knowing what the word means. Rich and robust vocabulary instruction goes beyond definitional knowledge; it gets students actively engaged in using and thinking about word meanings and in creating relationships among words.

Word-learning strategies include dictionary use, morphemic analysis, and

contextual analysis. For ELLs whose language shares cognates with English, cognate awareness is also an important strategy. Dictionary use teaches students about multiple word meanings, as well as the importance of choosing the appropriate definition to fit the particular context. Morphemic analysis is the process of deriving a word's meaning by analyzing its meaningful parts, or morphemes. Such word parts include root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Contextual analysis involves inferring the meaning of an unfamiliar word by scrutinizing the text surrounding it. Instruction in contextual analysis generally involves teaching students to employ both generic and specific types of context clues.

Fostering word consciousness

A more general way to help students develop vocabulary is by fostering word consciousness, an awareness of and interest in words. Word consciousness is not an isolated component of vocabulary instruction; it needs to be taken into account each and every day. It can be developed at all times and in several ways: through encouraging adept diction, through word play, and through research on word origins or histories.

It is often assumed that when students do not learn new vocabulary words, they simply need to practice the words some more. Research has shown, however, that it is often the case that students simply do not understand the instructional task involved. Rather than focus only on the words themselves, teachers should be certain that students fully understand the instructional tasks.

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