



Primary Reading Instruction Manuals for Educators


Vocabulary Development Instruction

(includes Spanish student materials)

SAMPLE

Examples of Slides from Professional Development Training Session on Vocabulary Instruction

13 What is it?



Research-based components of effective vocabulary instruction include:

- ✱ High-quality oral language experiences that develop word consciousness, the knowledge of and interest in words
- ✱ Explicit instruction of specific words
- ✱ Modeling and instruction in independent word-learning strategies
- ✱ Time and support for wide reading

(Texas Reading Initiative, 2000)

17 How do I teach it?

- ✱ Read aloud daily
- ✱ Engage children in extended, cognitively challenging conversations
- ✱ Ask open-ended questions
- ✱ Encourage children to retell stories
- ✱ Encourage children to describe events in their lives
- ✱ Discuss a wide range of topics; model use of new and unusual words
- ✱ Discuss word meanings (TCRLA, 2000)


15 Why is it important?

Much of a student's vocabulary will have to be acquired outside of explicit vocabulary instruction.





(NICHD, 2000, p. 4-26)

- ✱ Students can be explicitly taught some 400 words per year through effective vocabulary instruction.
- ✱ Students must read widely in order to encounter a sufficient number of unfamiliar words to increase their vocabulary.


Lessons and Activities



Developing Vocabulary Through Read Alouds

-  Lesson 1: Narrative Text
-  Lesson 2: Expository Text
-  Lesson 3: Teaching Word Meanings as Concepts
-  Lesson 4: Assessing and Activating Prior Word Knowledge
-  Lesson 5: Explicit Instruction of Specific Words

15 Why is it important?




We know from research that good readers constantly read more, become even better readers, and learn more words.

Struggling readers, on the other hand, read less, and thus become poorer readers and learn fewer words. (Stanovich, 1986)

Many students who need vocabulary development do not read widely, especially in books that contain unfamiliar vocabulary.

(Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002)

26 Lesson 1: Narrative Text



Which of these people is *curious*: a child who is asleep or a child playing with his shadow?

I think the child playing with his shadow is *curious*.

If any of the things I say might be examples of *curious*, say "*curious*." If not, don't say anything.

A child reading a new Harry Potter book.

Curious.

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What types of assessments will be used?

There are two broad categories of assessment: 1) formative assessment and 2) summative assessment. **Formative assessment** is ongoing and serves as a source of feedback to improve teaching and learning. **Summative assessment** measures what students have learned at the end of a set of learning activities. Summative-assessment information should be used to plan instruction for the next major segment of instruction.

There are two types of measures that can be used for either category. **Formal** measures of early reading include state-approved reading assessments and other standardized tests.

Informal measures include ongoing assessment and progress-monitoring tools such as teacher observation, anecdotal records, checklists, and daily performance samples.

How is vocabulary assessed?

To assess vocabulary, first we must define which vocabulary set is to be measured. We all have different receptive and productive vocabularies; that is, we listen to and read one set of words and speak and write another. Even the receptive and productive vocabularies can be further subdivided, examined, and assessed. For example, reading vocabulary includes the subset of sight vocabulary—words which can be identified without explicit decoding during reading. This distinction has implications for practice. Research shows that conclusions about some of these vocabularies do not necessarily apply to all, and that what is true for one may not be true for another. As the *Report of the National Reading Panel* points out, “Because there are so many definitions of vocabulary, the format for assessing or evaluating vocabulary is an important variable in both practice and research” (NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CHILD HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT [NICHD], 2000, p. 4-16).

Accurately assessing a student’s knowledge of vocabulary is a complex and challenging task. In fact, the NRP report states that “...we can never know *exactly* how large a vocabulary an individual has. Instead, we often measure only specific vocabulary items we want the individual to know, for example, in the context of a reading or a science lesson” (NICHD, 2000, p. 4-16).

How we measure vocabulary is determined by our purposes for measuring. Each way of measuring vocabulary produces different results; therefore, sound evaluation includes more than a single measure of vocabulary. For teaching purposes, vocabulary evaluation should match the instructional context. “The more closely the assessment matches the instructional context, the more appropriate the conclusions about the instruction will be” (NICHD, 2000, p. 4-26). Researchers continue to examine the best ways to evaluate vocabulary size, use, acquisition, and retention.

Why is vocabulary instruction important?

WORD KNOWLEDGE AND EARLY EXPERIENCES

Word knowledge begins early in life. The range of words that children are exposed to in their preschool years has a significant effect on vocabulary development, and research has shown that the number of these words varies significantly according to the economic status of the family. By age 3, children from upper-income families have heard 30 million more words than children from lower-income families. By age 4, children in professional families have been exposed to 45 million words, children in working-class families have been exposed to 26 million words, and children in welfare families have been exposed to 13 million words (HART & RISLEY, 2003). The variance in word knowledge that exists within a given classroom creates a substantial challenge for primary-grade teachers.

This disparity in word knowledge underscores the importance of well-designed school experiences that promote vocabulary growth in the early grades. All students in the primary grades need a language-rich, print-rich environment in which they have frequent opportunities to listen to and talk about books read aloud, but this is particularly true for students who enter school with limited vocabularies. These students require multiple exposures to new words and concepts if they are to be successful in reading and in school.

WORD KNOWLEDGE AND VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

Consider these facts about vocabulary development in monolingual students and their relevance to the discussion of effective vocabulary instruction.

- The average 4-year-old has a speaking vocabulary of roughly 1,500 words (TEXAS CENTER FOR READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS [TCRLA], 2000).
- The average 5-year-old has a speaking vocabulary of 2,500 to 5,000 words (BECK & MCKEOWN, 1991) and a listening vocabulary of more than 20,000 words (OWENS, 2000).
- By first grade, the student's speaking vocabulary has increased to 6,000 words. A high-performing first grader knows about twice as many words as a low-performing one (HIRSCH, 2003).
- In second grade, the student continues to develop listening and speaking vocabularies and now has a reading vocabulary of 2,000 to 5,000 words (GRAVES, JUEL, & GRAVES, 1998).
- Subsequently, the student learns an average of 3,000 to 4,000 words a year (WHITE, GRAVES, & SLATER, 1990).
- The average high school student has a reading vocabulary of 45,000 words (NAGY & ANDERSON, 1984). The high-performing 12th-grader knows between 60,000 and 100,000 words, four times as many as the low-performing one (HIRSCH, 2003).

Why is vocabulary instruction important? (continued)

If students are to develop their vocabularies at a rate that will allow them to achieve success in school, then teachers need to know which strategies and techniques are most effective for vocabulary development.

WORD KNOWLEDGE AND READING COMPREHENSION

The importance of vocabulary knowledge to reading comprehension has long been recognized. Vocabulary knowledge is the single best predictor of how well the reader will understand text (NAGY, 1988). It plays a critical role in beginning reading instruction.

Beginning readers rely on their speaking vocabulary to make sense of decoded words; their comprehension of text is dependent on their experience with the words they read. If the word is unknown to the beginning reader, decoding does not make it any more understandable. The reader's speaking vocabulary supports the transition from speech to print. For this reason, the importance of quality oral language experiences in the primary classroom cannot be overstated.

As students increase their reading skills, text becomes the vehicle for learning many new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary.

IMPLICATIONS FOR READING INSTRUCTION

Much of a student's vocabulary will have to be acquired outside of explicit vocabulary instruction (NICHHD, 2000, p. 4-26). While it is true that students can be explicitly taught some 400 words per year through effective vocabulary instruction (BECK, McKEOWN, & KUCAN, 2002), they also must read widely in order to encounter a sufficient number of unfamiliar words to increase their vocabulary. Herein lies the challenge for the struggling reader. We know from research that good readers constantly read more, become even better readers, and learn more words. Struggling readers, on the other hand, read less, and thus become poorer readers and learn fewer words (STANOVICH, 1986).

Further complicating the issue is that many students who need vocabulary development do not read widely, especially in books that contain unfamiliar vocabulary (BECK, McKEOWN, & KUCAN, 2002). This ever-increasing gap between proficient readers and struggling readers underscores the importance of providing an environment in the classroom that "accelerates the incidental acquisition of vocabulary, which is how most vocabulary growth takes place" (HIRSCH, 2003, p. 16), while increasing the volume of students' reading—the single most important thing teachers can do to promote large-scale vocabulary growth (NAGY, 1988).

SECTION II: RESEARCH ON VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

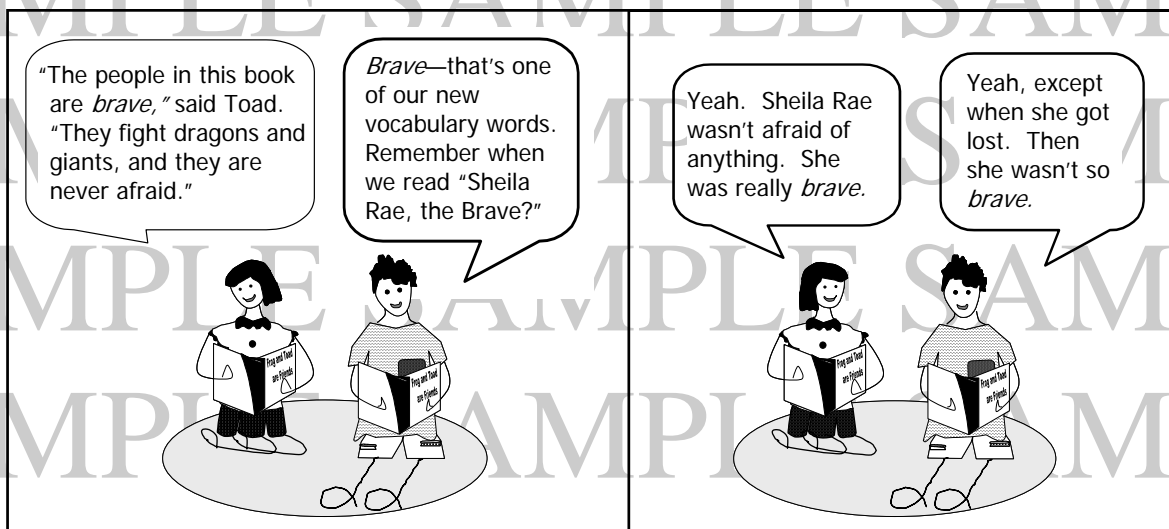
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE



"Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important"
(NICHD, 2000, p. 4-27).

IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

Word knowledge builds incrementally over time through multiple exposures to the new vocabulary word in different contexts (HIRSCH, 2003; STAHL, 2003). These exposures can take place through repeated readings of the same text; through encountering the vocabulary repeatedly throughout the text; and/or through meaningful, concrete experiences with new vocabulary words in a variety of contexts. Students must have many encounters with a new word if vocabulary instruction is to have a measurable effect on reading comprehension (NAGY, 1988). Effective vocabulary instruction helps students acquire new knowledge and at the same time develop strategies that increase the depth of that knowledge over time (TRI, 2002).



"Vocabulary learning should entail active engagement in learning tasks"
(NICHD, 2000, p. 4-27).

IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

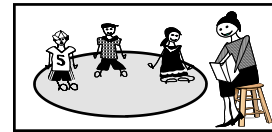
In the few studies that examine active engagement in learning new words, the conventional wisdom prevails: active learning is best. For example, students learn more during read alouds from answering questions than they do from simply listening. One study looked at student-initiated analytic talk and found that this kind of talk is important for vocabulary gains (NICHD, 2000).



SECTION III: LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

LESSON 1: NARRATIVE TEXT

Lesson 1: Narrative Text



Description—The teacher will help the student develop vocabulary and background knowledge through read alouds of narrative text. Plan for instruction before, during, and after reading.

Goal—The student develops an extensive vocabulary by listening to and discussing text read aloud.

Objectives—The student will

- discuss the meanings of words.
- develop vocabulary through meaningful, concrete experiences.

Materials

- Children's narrative book
- Selected vocabulary words

Background Information for the Teacher

Read alouds expose students to high-quality oral language. High-quality oral language experiences develop word consciousness, which is the knowledge of and interest in words (TRI, 2000). Plan for and implement activities for before, during, and after reading.

Direct vocabulary instruction occurs after a text has been read and discussed (see discussion on read alouds, p. 16, for more information).

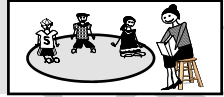
Vocabulary instruction always begins with the word's context in the story because this provides a situation that is already familiar to students and provides a rich example of the word's use.

Select words to teach through read alouds by answering the questions in FIGURE 3.1.

SELECTING WORDS TO TEACH THROUGH READ ALOUDS

- How useful is the word?
 - Is it a word that students are likely to encounter in other texts?
 - Will it be helpful to students in describing their own experiences?
 - How does the word relate to other words and/or ideas that students know?
 - Does it directly relate to some topic of study in the classroom?
 - Might it add a dimension to ideas that have been developed?
 - What does the word bring to a text or situation?
 - What role does the word play in communicating the meaning of the context in which it is used?
- (BECK ET AL., 2002)

FIGURE 3.1



Explicit Instruction

Go back to the text and identify the selected vocabulary words as they appear in the story. Talk about what the words mean in the story's context. Have the students say the word with you to help them create a phonological representation of the words.

In the story, Goldilocks was *curious* about who might live in this cottage in the woods so she knocked on the door to see if anyone was home.

Let's say the new word together. *Curious.*

When no one answered the door, Goldilocks became even more *curious* about who might live there so she opened the door and went inside.

Curious.

Curious.

Curious.

Curious.

Teacher Modeling

Provide a student-friendly explanation of the word by explaining the meaning in everyday language (dictionary definitions are less helpful to young students than explanations in everyday language).

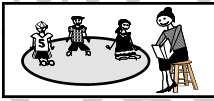
Present examples of the word used in different contexts. This is a particularly important step because later the students will be asked to use the word in a context different from the story context.

Curious means you have an interest in something, and you want to learn about it.

We read a story about another character who is curious; in fact, it's even part of his name: *Curious* George! George is a monkey who has lots of adventures and sometimes gets himself into trouble because he is so *curious*.

Being *curious* doesn't always get you in trouble, though. Someone who is *curious* about learning how to make a cake might read a recipe.

If you are *curious* about a bug you see in the grass, you can look at it closely to study it.



SECTION III: LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

LESSON 1: NARRATIVE TEXT

Guided Practice

Discuss uses of the word beyond the story's context. Ask questions that use the word in new contexts.

If you are *curious* about a present that you think you might be getting for your birthday, what could you do to find out more about it?

What are some other things to be *curious* about?

I am *curious* about why school starts so early in the morning.

My kitten is *curious* about my toes when I'm in bed.

Which of these people is *curious*: a child who is asleep or a child playing with his shadow?

I think the child playing with his shadow is *curious*.

If any of the things I say might be examples of *curious*, say "*curious*." If not, don't say anything.

A dog digging for a bone. *Curious.*

A piece of pizza on a plate. ***

A child reading a new Harry Potter book. *Curious.*

Independent Practice

Provide situations for students to interact with the target words by responding to and explaining examples, as well as by creating their own examples. Ask students questions that require them to make a choice and to explain the reason for that choice. The explanation is the most important part, "because it requires the child to explicitly think through how the word fits the choices in the questions in order to express the relationship between the example and the word" (BECK ET AL., 2002, p. 59).



Independent Practice, continued

Finally, ask the students to create their own examples. Typically, a vocabulary activity requiring the student to generate an original sentence using the new word often results in a very limited response such as "I like to be *curious*."

Instead, ask students to describe a situation that will lead them to associate the newly-learned word with personal contexts and activities. The students must first consider the word's meaning in order to create an example situation.

Key sentence starters include the following.

- When might you ___?
- How might you ___?
- Why might you ___?

The comic strip consists of four panels. The first panel shows a woman in a black dress and white belt standing and talking to a boy in a black t-shirt and white shorts. The second panel shows the boy standing and talking to the woman. The third panel shows a woman in a grey dress and white belt sitting on a wooden stool, talking to herself. The fourth panel shows a woman in a grey dress and white belt standing and talking to a man in a black shirt and white pants.

Panel 1: Describe a time when you were *curious*.

Panel 2: I was *curious* about my new classroom before school started this year.

Panel 3: Is *curious* more like interested or bored? Why?

Panel 4: If you had a friend who watched TV all the time, how might you help him or her become *curious* about going outside?

Panel 5: If you are *curious* about a new video game, would you go to the gas station or the toy store? Why?

Monitoring Progress

Provide many opportunities to draw students' attention to examples of the new word in different contexts.

Observe students' use of the new vocabulary in story retells and explanations.

Encourage students to integrate the new words into their spoken vocabularies by creating opportunities to use the words through role play or in class discussions.

Select other texts in which the new vocabulary words appear. Compare how the word is used in the new text with how it was used in the first one.

Ask students to notice when the new words are used outside of school and to report these examples to the class.

SECTION IV: APPENDIX B
VOCABULARY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Name: _____ Date: _____

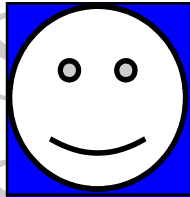
How Well Do I Know These Words?

Title of Book: _____

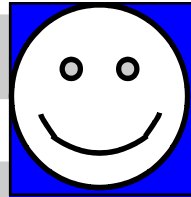
Directions: Read the words at the bottom of the page. Write each word in one of the boxes below.



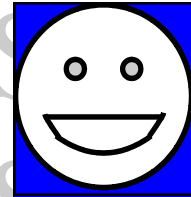
I don't
know it at
all.



I've heard it,
but I don't
know what it
means.



I think I
know the
meaning.



I know
the
meaning.

Adapted from Allen, J. (1999). *Words, words, words: Teaching vocabulary in grades 4-12*. York, MN: Stenhouse.

VOCABULARY NOTEBOOK—DIRECTIONS

Make photocopies of Appendices D and E for student Vocabulary Notebooks.

Make one notebook per student by either stapling the pages together or by punching holes in the pages and inserting them into binders.

Have students decorate a cover page for their Vocabulary Notebook.

Students add words to their Vocabulary Notebooks throughout the year as they learn new vocabulary. For each new word, they write the source of the word, a definition in their own words, an illustration, and an original sentence.

Example:

New word: blowhole

Where I read the word: Dolphin's First Day

My definition: A dolphin has a blowhole at the top of its head. The blowhole is like my nose because it helps the dolphin breathe.

My illustration:

