

Characteristics of Effective Academic Vocabulary Instruction in Mixed-Ability 4-12 Classrooms

The teacher effectively integrates vocabulary development to support learning by:

- ✓ Conscientiously analyzing the vocabulary demands of the lesson (focal lesson concepts, lesson specific terms, high-utility academic vocabulary)
- ✓ Preparing for vocabulary instruction (instead of relying upon the "teachable moment")
- ✓ Signaling that critical vocabulary instruction will take place
- ✓ Asking students to assess their current knowledge level of the target lesson vocabulary prior to instruction
- ✓ Prompting students to assume an active role (listening, responding, taking notes)
- ✓ Pre-teaching focal lesson concepts and lesson-specific terms (*capitalism, stereotype*)
- ✓ Pre-teaching high-utility ("tool kit") academic vocabulary (*subsequent, analyze*)
- ✓ Following a consistent "multi-modality" instructional sequence for teaching a word:
 - Presenting the word in writing (on the board, overhead, computer)
 - Pronouncing the word and having students pronounce the word
 - Writing vital information so students can copy: synonyms, definitions, examples (rather than entrusting comprehension solely to their auditory processing)
 - Providing a range of synonyms (or "it's like" words) before definitions/explanations
 - Providing an accessible definition (without using even more sophisticated words)
 - Providing concrete examples and images for students to create mental anchors
 - Checking for understanding by providing a task/question requiring critical thinking
- ✓ Providing a note-taking scaffold for struggling readers and English language learners
- ✓ Asking students to reassess their knowledge level of the target lesson words, then indicate to the teacher any need for clarification or review
- ✓ Holding students accountable for studying, reviewing, and learning both lesson-specific terms and high-utility ("tool kit") academic vocabulary
- ✓ Assessing students' vocabulary mastery frequently with brief and meaningful quizzes (on 3-5 words) that require analysis and application rather than rote memorization