

Teaching for Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary knowledge affects comprehension. Words may be known on different levels so we should not search for one way to teach vocabulary for all words. Rather, we should create a language-rich environment with lots of reading, talking, and writing. Teach words at different levels depending on their importance, frequency and applicability in other contexts.

Follow these steps for selecting words...

1. Read the text and vocabulary words before the students encounter the text.
2. * Analyze words to think about how much conceptual understanding the students would have about the word, the importance of the word in text and the instructional potential (see below).
3. Also, try to select words that are central to meaning of the text.
4. There is no systematic study on how many words should be chosen.

When you introduce a new word because the students do not know what it means, follow these four steps.

Step 1: Say the new word and a simple definition. Do not ask the students if they know the word. Often a student may think he or she knows it and gives a confusing or a wrong definition. This will mislead students and waste time. Just tell; don't ask.

Step 2: Connect the new word to the students' background knowledge and experiences.

Step 3: Connect the new word to the text. Tell the students how the word is used and direct them to an illustration if one is provided.

Step 4: Ask the students to define the word to a partner.

Teachers should provide varied and rich opportunities to interact with words. The practice of writing words multiple times or writing the definition of the word does not constitute best practice and should be eliminated.