

## TEACHING BASIC VOCABULARY AND PHRASES

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**Abstract:** Vocabulary is understanding **how to use words in relation to their meaning**. Developing new vocabulary involves more than just looking up words in a dictionary and using those words in sentences. Students' vocabulary grows throughout their lifetime through direct and indirect learning.

**Keywords:** vocabulary, flashcards, dictionary, comprehension, aspects, indirect, increasing, productive.

We define vocabulary as knowledge of words and word meanings in both oral and written language and in productive and receptive forms. More specifically, we use vocabulary to refer to the kind of words that students must know to read increasingly demanding text with comprehension. Teaching vocabulary requires nurturing a clear understanding of words to know what is actually being said. Students need to be able to carry this knowledge over into the real world in phrases and sentences. Merely repeating words like a parrot will not assist them in what they are trying to say.

If we merely throw a series of words at students and expect them to stick, then we have taught them virtually nothing. We have to find meaning behind each word so that they can fit them together and build sentence structure (grammar) and therefore create complete thoughts and expressions.

Robert Lado talked about patterns of difficulty in vocabulary teaching. He highlighted key issues related to words, the native language factor and about patterns. He stated that while dealing with vocabulary one should take into account three important aspects of words - their form, their meaning and their distribution and one should consider various kinds of classes of words in the function of the language. He said that the forms, meaning distribution and classification of words are different in different languages. He revealed that these differences might lead to vocabulary problems [1, p.23].

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

It was concluded that there is no single research-based method for teaching vocabulary. It is recommended using a variety of direct and indirect methods of vocabulary instruction.

- Intentional vocabulary teaching
- Specific Word Instruction
- Selecting Words to Teach
- Rich and Robust Instruction
- Word-Learning Strategies
- Dictionary Use
- Morphemic Analysis
- Cognate Awareness
- Contextual Analysis

The explicit instruction of vocabulary is highly effective. To develop vocabulary intentionally, students should be explicitly taught both specific words and word-learning strategies. To deepen students' 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 [2,67].

Research shows that there are more words to be learned than can be directly taught in even the most ambitious program of vocabulary instruction. Explicit instruction in word-learning strategies gives students tools for independently determining the meanings of unfamiliar words that have not been explicitly introduced in class. Since students encounter so many unfamiliar words in their reading, any help provided by such strategies can be useful.

Word-learning strategies include dictionary use, morphemic analysis, and contextual analysis. For students 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 [3, p.351].

In conclusion, when teaching vocabulary, you should inspire creativity as much as possible to keep the level of interest and excitement high. Get students to create colourful, bold street signs, posters, billboards, magazine covers, flashcards, calendars, weather forecasts, newspaper headlines and news presentations using colours, numbers, shapes and letters. A written, creative project can then be given as an oral presentation and a class discussion can follow. Reviewing tasks and questions to analyze and confirm understanding are very important in determining the vocabulary comprehension.

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