


COMMON CORE

What to Know Now About Academic Vocabulary

Instructional Shifts

1. Balancing Informational and Literary Texts (P-5)
2. Knowledge in the Disciplines (6-12)
3. Staircase of Complexity
4. Text Based Answers
5. Writing from Sources
6. Academic Vocabulary



What is the current reality of
your vocabulary instruction?

Shifting Our Thinking

From...

Literary or Scientific Terms

To...

Helping students use and access words that are slightly out of reach, but take readers to the next level of complexity

High-knowledge third graders had vocabularies about equal to lowest-performing twelfth graders.

(Smith, 1941)

Linguistically “poor” first graders knew 5,000 words; linguistically “rich” knew 20,000 words.

(Moats, 2001)

Vocabulary size in kindergarten serves as a strong predictor of reading comprehension level in later grades.

(Scarborough, 2001)

Developing Vocabulary

- *Make it intentional* through word selection and intentional instruction.
- *Make it transparent* through teacher modeling of word-solving and word learning.
- *Make it useable* with collaborative learning.
- *Make it personal* by fostering student ownership.
- *Make it a priority* with school-wide practices.

Tier 1: Basic Words

- Most cannot be demonstrated and do not have multiple meanings (e.g. sight words)
- Estimates indicate that about 8,000 basic words need no instruction

Tier 2: Powerful and Frequent

- Words occur in high frequency
- Found in a variety of domains
- Estimates indicate that there are about 7,000 words for tier 2. These words can have a powerful impact on verbal functions.
- Allow students to provide precision and specificity in describing the concept

Tier 3

- Low frequency of use, often limited to special, specific domains
- Best learned when a specific need arises. (Content area words)
- Words like: igneous, metamorphic, Revolutionary War, economics

Which Words?

One of the biggest decisions is which words to teach.

- Repeatability
- Contextual Analysis
- Transportability
- Word Choice/Author's Purpose

Independent Reading in Content Areas

- Independent reading during content instruction has provided students with access to a wide range of books on the topics they are studying

The Language of the Lesson

- Content Area Word Walls
- Language Frames

How do we get kids writing with these words?

Wide Reading

- Given the research in this area that suggests that time spent reading is one of the ways that students increase their vocabulary knowledge (e.g., Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Herman, Anderson, Pearson, & Nagy, 1987; Krashen, 1993), the literacy leadership team focused on both silent sustained reading (SSR) and independent reading across content areas.

Content Area Read Aloud

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Professional journals
- Trade books



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