

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Effect Size = .97 SD

(Hattie, 2009)

Definition:

What it is: Direct, clear, concise, repetitive instruction presenting meaning and contextual examples through multiple exposures.

What it is not: The traditional procedure of having students copy a list of words, look the words up in the glossary, copy the definitions, and study the definitions.

Rationale (Why):

Explicit vocabulary instruction is beneficial in developing reading skills and comprehension.

- Students receiving explicit, engaging vocabulary instruction experience growth in vocabulary (Tomesen & Aarnoutse, 1998; White, Graves, & Slater, 1990).
- When students receive intentional teaching of target words, their comprehension of text containing the target words improve (McKeown, Beck, Omanson, & Pople, 1985; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986).
- Explicit vocabulary instruction is particularly critical for struggling readers, who do not read extensively and have more difficulty using contextual cues to determine word meanings (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).

Strategies:

Effective vocabulary/academic language instruction comes down to:

Connection—new to the known, building that “semantic network” in the mind/brain

Use—academic speaking and writing as we construct and apply knowledge (not simply memorize or match, multiple choice, etc.)

Before Teaching: Carefully select vocabulary words based on essential concepts.
Select terms that are:

- unknown,
- critical to the content,
- useful in the future,
- and difficult to obtain independently.
 - Archer & Hughes, 2011

The Three Tiers of Vocabulary

Tier 1: Commonly used everyday words.

Tier 2: high utility, general academic words. These are words that students may encounter frequently in their reading and should be able to use in their writing.
-conglomeration, contentious, immigration, retaliate

Tier 3: Specialized Academic/Content Specific: These are words that refer to a new and difficult concept that is important for students to learn.
-independent variable, isotope, isthmus, diphthong, polysyndeton

Basic Instructional Protocol

1. Introduce the word
2. Introduce the meaning of the word (provide a student-friendly explanation)
3. Illustrate with examples
4. Check students' understanding
5. Deepen students' understanding
6. Check students' understanding
7. Review & Coach Use (possible extensions)

Observation Protocol:
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

	Checklist	Present?		Comments
		Yes	No	
During	Introduce the word.			
	Introduce the meaning of the word.			
	Illustrate with examples.			
	Check students' understanding.			
Optional Extension Activities	Deepen students' understanding.			
	Check students' understanding.			
	Review & Coach Use.			

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FIGURE 3.1. Basic instructional routine:

<p>Setting: Eighth-grade language arts</p> <p>Situation: Preparation for reading a portion of a biography about Harriet Tubman.</p>
<p>Step 1: Introduce the word.</p> <p>[Teacher displays the word.] This word is <i>elude</i>. What word? <i>Elude</i>. We pronounce it as “e lüd.” Say the word again. <i>Elude</i>.</p>
<p>Step 2: Introduce the meaning of the word.</p> <p>Option 1. Provide a student-friendly explanation.</p> <p>If you avoid someone or escape from them, you <i>elude</i> them. If you avoid someone or escape from them, you _____. <i>Elude them</i>.</p>
<p>Step 3: Illustrate with examples.</p> <p>If runaway slaves were able to hide from patrollers who were hunting for them, the slaves were able to <i>elude</i> them. If a convict was able to escape and hide from police officers for 10 years, the convict was able to _____. <i>Elude them</i>. If other players were not able to catch Jason during a game of hide and seek, he was able to _____. <i>Elude them</i>.</p>
<p>Step 4: Check students’ understanding.</p> <p>Option 1. Have students distinguish between examples and non-examples.</p> <p>Please get out your Yes and No cards. I will ask a question. When I say, “Show me,” hold up a Yes or a No card.</p> <p>If a slave wanted to <i>elude</i> patrollers, would that slave protest slave practices in the marketplace? [Pause.] Show me. [Students hold up a No card.] Ones, tell your partner why runaway slaves would not protest slave practices in the marketplace. <i>If they protested slave practices in the marketplace, they would be noticed and caught.</i></p> <p>If a slave wanted to <i>elude</i> patrollers, would that slave move only at night and then sleep undercover during the day? [Pause.] Show me. [Students hold up a Yes card.] Twos, tell your partner why a slave would move only at night and sleep undercover during the day. Use the word <i>elude</i> in your explanation. <i>If they moved only at night and slept during the day, they would be able to elude patrollers.</i></p> <p>Option 3. Ask questions that require deep processing of the word’s meaning.</p> <p>If you were a slave and you wanted to <i>elude</i> patrollers, would you want to leave in the morning or evening? <i>In the evening</i>. Twos, tell your partner why evening would be better. Start with: If you wanted to <i>elude</i> patrollers, it would be better to leave in the evening, because . . . <i>If you wanted to elude patrollers, it would be better to leave in the evening, because it would be dark and the patrollers would be at home sleeping.</i></p> <p>If you were a slave and you wanted to <i>elude</i> patrollers, should you walk down a road or through the forest? <i>Through the forest</i>. Ones, tell your partner why walking through the forest would be better. Start with: If you wanted to <i>elude</i> patrollers, it would be better to walk through the forest because . . . <i>If you wanted to elude patrollers, it would be better to walk through the forest because you could hide behind tree trunks or under leaves. On the road, you could not hide.</i></p> <p>Think about how the word <i>elude</i> might be used in a passage about Harriet Tubman. [Teacher provides thinking time.] Now talk it over with your partner. <i>When Harriet escaped, she might have eluded people and dogs that were hunting her down. When Harriet helped other slaves escape on the underground railroad, she might have helped them elude patrollers.</i></p>
<p>Extensions—Synonyms: Introduce or have students generate synonyms for new word. Allow use of reference materials.</p> <p>Working with your partner, list words or phrases that are synonyms for <i>elude</i>. You are welcome to use a dictionary or thesaurus. [Teacher monitors and records words on an overhead transparency. The following synonyms are then shared with the class: <i>evade, avoid, escape from, run away from, dodge, shake off, break loose, get away.</i>]</p>

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Why explicitly teach vocabulary?

- Engages students
- Increases comprehension
- Decreases misconceptions

When should you teach vocabulary?

- Prior to beginning a new unit of study
- Before an assigned reading
- When students are not comprehending the assigned reading

Which words should be taught?

- Essential to understanding
- Tier Two words – descriptive words that are essential to understanding (ex. bogus, tier, hysterical, parallel)

How to explicitly teach vocabulary:

1. Say the word repeatedly

“Ladies and gents, the word is **bogus**. **Bogus**. We are learning the word **bogus**.”

2. Students ALL repeat the word

“What’s the word? That’s right, the word is **bogus**.”

3. Break it up

“How many syllables in the word **bogus**? Clap it out, **bog** – **us**. Yup. Two syllables in **bogus**.”

4. Students ALL repeat the word

“What’s the word?”

5. Use a kid-friendly, content specific definition. **You are not teaching ALL the definitions, just the one that is essential to the learning and within the context of the learning.**

Here's the definition for **bogus** – ready? **Bogus** means that something is fake. **Bogus** means that something is fake. So that means something in our reading today is going to be fake, therefore, it's (all respond) **bogus**.

6. Students ALL repeat the word

"What's the word? That's right, the word is **bogus**."

7. Give an example and a non-example

"Here's an example of something that is **bogus**. The diamond in her ring was **bogus**. It wasn't real, it was fake, so it was (all respond) **bogus**."

"Here's a non-example of **bogus**. The book in front of me is not **bogus**. It's real, therefore, it's not **bogus**."

8. Student use the word in a sentence. The sentence must be at least 7 words long.

"Turn to your partner and use the word **bogus** in a sentence. Number 1's goes first, then 2's, then 3's. Count words for your partners. Go!"

9. Monitor student's work, then ask for examples

Optional : to add in a physical component, have students use signs to describe the word. The sign for bogus might be pointing to a ring on a finger.

Observation Protocol:
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	Checklist	Present?		Comments
		Yes	No	
Pre	Carefully select vocabulary words based on essential concepts.			
	Dedicate a portion of the regular classroom lesson to explicit vocabulary instruction.			
During	Introduce the word.			
	Introduce the meaning of the word.			
	Illustrate with examples.			
	Check students' understanding.			
Optional Extension Activities	Deepen students' understanding.			
	Check students' understanding.			
	Review & Coach Use.			

Archer, A. L., & Hughes, C. A. (2011). *Explicit instruction, effective and efficient teaching*. The Guilford Press.

