

Title

Teaching Vocabulary: Word Meanings and Word Knowledge (Grades 3-5)

Audience

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service teachers in grades 3-5.

Prerequisites

To successfully participate and complete the assignments in this course, the learner must:

- Have access to a reading classroom or a few grade 3-5 students to try out the strategies and the lesson plans.
- Be familiar with taking an online course or have completed the PBS “Practice Learning Online with TeacherLine” course.
- Have some experience in grades 3-5 classrooms.
- Have an interest in language, literacy, and vocabulary instruction.

Course Description

This course is designed to give educators both theoretical and practical information about vocabulary development for students in grades 3-5. Learners will study these four interrelated concepts:

- Students’ word knowledge is integrally related to both reading comprehension and content area learning.
- Both breadth and depth of word knowledge are essential when planning instruction.
- Incidental exposure, context-based instruction, and direct instruction are all components of a balanced approach to vocabulary learning.
- Teachers can provide vocabulary-intensive, word-rich classroom environments to support students’ awareness of words and vocabulary learning.

After analyzing vocabulary-related standards for speaking, listening, reading, and writing in grades 3-5, learners will evaluate their own instructional practices with respect to the NCTE/IRA standards and their state standards. As a final task, learners will assess and evaluate students’ word knowledge, incorporate effective vocabulary instructional strategies into their teachings, and reflect on the effectiveness of their lesson plan implementation.

Instructor/Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet

Credits

To be determined by college or university

Goals

The overall goal of this course is for teachers to develop an understanding of important research about vocabulary instruction in grades 3-5 and to learn an array of practical strategies for supporting students’ vocabulary development.

By the end of the course, learners will:

- Know how vocabulary knowledge provides a foundation for reading comprehension and enables students to expand their content-area knowledge.

- Analyze vocabulary–related standards for reading and writing in grades 3-5 and evaluate instructional approaches in light of these standards.
- Apply guidelines for selecting words to bring to the attention of students in grades 3-5.
- Plan and implement a range of practical, effective teaching strategies that can be used to develop students’ vocabulary knowledge.
- Apply techniques for assessing students’ vocabulary knowledge.
- Incorporate effective instructional strategies in their professional teaching practice to improve teaching and learning of students.

Learner Outcomes (performance based)

Learners completing “Teaching Vocabulary, Word Recognition, and Meaning (Grades 3-5)” will be able to:

- Evaluate their own instructional practices with respect to NCTE/IRA standards and their state’s standards.
- Assess and evaluate students’ word knowledge.
- Design four lesson plans that incorporate effective vocabulary teaching strategies, as well as strategies for teaching in a diverse classroom.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of their lesson plan implementation.

Outline of Content and Assignments

After previewing the documents in the Course Information area, learners will proceed to the Course Content area to complete the following six sessions, working through each session in order. Throughout the sessions, learners are asked to articulate their ideas in various forms: they are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and experiences in their online journal; the weekly discussions in the discussion forum are designed to allow learners to glean information from other learners’ experiences. As a final project, learners will develop four lesson plans that incorporate the different strategies for vocabulary teaching highlighted in this course. At the end of the course, learners will write a reflection paper about the experience.

This course is designed to address the standards set forth by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA) which makes recommendations on content, classroom practice, and guidelines for effective early reading program. In Session 1 of this course, learners will read NCTE/IRA and their own state standards related to the importance of vocabulary instruction.

This course also addresses several of the ISTE NETS*T for teachers, including:

- Use technology to enhance the curriculum.
- Use technology to assess student learning.
- Use technology resources to engage in ongoing professional development and lifelong learning.
- Continually evaluate and reflect on professional practice to make informed decisions regarding the use of technology in support of student learning.
- Use technology to communicate and collaborate with peers, parents, and the larger community in order to nurture student learning.

Session 1: Introduction to Vocabulary Development and Teaching Grades 3-5

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Define their professional goals and expectations for this course in the online journal.
- Explain their prior knowledge about the challenges of teaching vocabulary in the online journal.
- Analyze the instructional implications of a wide range of students’ vocabularies for students of diverse backgrounds in the online journal.



- Explain the “Mathew Effect” and reflect on its implications for teachers and for own practice in the online journal.
- Discuss ways teachers may address the disparate vocabulary knowledge bases of students.
- Analyze how the NCTE/IRA and their state standards incorporate current research on vocabulary development in the online journal.
- Describe and analyze how vocabulary instruction is provided in their classroom or the classroom of a teacher the learner interviews in the online journal.

Read

- “What is the Relationship between Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension?” from the book *Vocabulary Development*
- NCTE/IRA Standards 3, 4, 6, 11, 12

Write in online journal

- Reflect on expectations for the course.
- Reflect on past vocabulary teaching experiences they have already done.
- Reflect and set goals to strengthen their teaching practice.
- Reflect on the instructional implications of the wide range of students’ vocabularies for students from varied social, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
- Reflect on how the sets of standards incorporate what is known about vocabulary development.

Participate in an online discussion

- Introduce themselves to other learners.
- Discuss ways to address the disparate vocabulary knowledge bases of his or her students.

Complete activity and assignment (2 options)

- Complete an analysis of their own or of another teacher’s current practice and classroom environment.

Session 2: Exploring Issues in Vocabulary

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Analyze transcripts of students discussing challenging vocabulary words in the online journal.
- Synthesize their knowledge about levels of word knowledge through online discussion with other learners.
- Analyze techniques to develop students’ vocabulary knowledge and reflect which ones would be most effective with students.
- Identify and modify for English-language learners 2-3 central principles of vocabulary instruction presented in Stahl’s *Vocabulary Development*.
- Compare the effectiveness of direct and indirect approaches to vocabulary instruction by viewing and discussing a video.
- Implement an assessment technique to determine a student’s level of word knowledge and formulate recommendations for instruction.

Read

- “How Do People Learn Words from Context? and What Does It Mean to “Know” a Word?” from the book *Vocabulary Development*
- “Vocabulary Talk Transcripts”
- “Vocabulary Instruction: Concerns and Visions,” from *The Reading Teacher*
- “General Principles for Teaching Words,” from the book, *Vocabulary Development*

Write in online journal

- Reflect on how information about students' level of word knowledge can be used to assist them.
- Reflect on the principles used to guide the choice of vocabulary words for students.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss ways to help students learn and use vocabulary words on a regular basis.

Complete activity and assignment

- Watch a video of third-graders in a small group reading lesson.
- Assess a student's word knowledge in person.

Session 3: Direct Instruction of Vocabulary

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Discuss effective approaches to selecting central concepts and words for study.
- Synthesize their learning about direct instruction techniques by designing two lesson plans.

Read

- "Developing Vocabulary in the Later Grades," from the book, *Bringing Words to Life*
- "Vocabulary Instruction in a Balanced Reading Program," from the book, *Evidence-Based Reading Instruction: Putting the National Reading Panel Report into Practice*.
- "Understanding Word Parts," from the book, *Word Power: What Every Educator Needs to Know About Teaching Vocabulary*
- "Teaching Elementary Students to Use Word-Part Clues," from *The Reading Teacher*
- "Autograph Art" a lesson plan from PBS.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss how to determine which central concepts and words to focus on in teaching different subjects.

Complete activities and assignments

- Explore Semantic Web A interactive
- Implement Semantic Web B interactive with a student
- Watch a video of fifth-graders engaged in a lesson using word parts.
- Complete one lesson plan and a reflection on the implementation of one the plan.

Session 4: Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Discuss challenges in assessing and building the vocabulary of culturally and linguistically diverse students.
- Interpret a story retelling inventory and reflect on specific techniques that might increase students' vocabulary development.
- Synthesize their learning about diverse students by revising lesson plans to incorporate specific strategies, including technology integration, for meeting the vocabulary learning needs of diverse students.

Read

- "Transforming Deficits Myths about Learning, Language, and Culture," from the book, *Literacy Instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*
- "Multicultural Factors and the Effective Instruction of Students of Diverse Backgrounds," from the book, *What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction*

- “Technology and the Building Blocks for Teaching Students to Read: Vocabulary Instruction,” from the NEIRTEC report, *Technology and Teaching Children to Read*

Write in online journal

- Respond to questions about the students’ level of word knowledge in the video.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss the challenges you face in assessing and building the vocabulary of diverse students.
- Post their lesson plans and provide feedback to at least two other learners’ lesson plans.

Complete activities and assignments

- Watch five short videos of a diverse group of third-grade students retelling a narrative text.
- Complete a story retelling inventory (not required)
- Explore one of the four “Word a Day” Web sites.
- Explore two interactive games for teaching vocabulary
- Review and edit lesson plans.

Session 5: Evaluating Vocabulary Teaching: Environments and Approaches

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Synthesize their knowledge of effective vocabulary instruction by refining and discussing a rubric for evaluating classroom-based supports for vocabulary learning.
- Critically evaluate classroom vocabulary instruction using the rubric they have created.
- Analyze specific ways that the use of the rubric can inform their approaches to teaching vocabulary.

Read

- “Enriching the Verbal Environment,” from *Bringing Words to Life*
- “Guidelines for Evaluating Vocabulary Instruction,” from *Journal of Reading*

Write in online journal

- Respond to questions about the rubric the learner created.

Participate in an online discussion

- Exchange information and feedback with other learners regarding the rubric created.

Complete activities and assignments

- Review the Building a Classroom Community and Bully Free Zone and A Bison Web lesson plans.
- Create a rubric for evaluating classroom supports for vocabulary development.
- Complete a written summary of a classroom observation and an analysis of the rubric the learner created.

Session 6: Synthesis of Learning about Vocabulary

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Synthesize their learning about vocabulary instruction by designing two lesson plans applying research-based techniques to build students’ vocabulary, environmental supports, and different approaches to assessment.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the lesson plan.
- Evaluate learning in this course by comparing prior and acquired knowledge in a journal activity.
- Assess their professional goals related to vocabulary instruction in a journal activity.

Read

- “Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read,” from the book, *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*

Write in online journal

- Reflect on the knowledge acquired in the course.
- Reflect on how the learning experiences from this course compare with their goals and expectations.

Final Project

Learners will submit a final project for Session 6. The final project includes two elements.

- 1) Two lesson plans (one already submitted in Session 3) and one from Session 6 that includes a wide range of teaching strategies, environment supports, and approaches to assessment.

Schedule

This course is scheduled to take approximately 30 hours to complete readings, activities, video, assignments, reflections and a final project.

Requirements

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments
- Maintain an online journal
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge
- Be self-directed and self-motivated
- Ask for assistance when they need it

Materials (hardware, software, plug-ins)

Technical Requirements

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail

Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by university institution only

Evaluation

This course is evaluated on a letter grade basis, and may be available for graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.