

Vocabulary Instruction – Sixth Grade Language Arts

Grade Level: Sixth Grade – Middle School

School: Fees Middle School

Location: Tempe, Arizona

Videographer: Dima Yaremenko

Elapsed Time: 10:30

Introduction: Dr. Archer is preparing students to read a biography of Harriet Tubman including the following activities: a) teaching background knowledge, b) introducing the pronunciation of multi-syllabic words, and c) teaching critical vocabulary words. In this video segment, Dr. Archer is introducing two vocabulary terms: elude and intention.

To see the entire passage reading preparation, see the following videos:

Pronunciation of Multi-syllabic Words – Sixth Grade Language Arts

Background Knowledge Instruction – Sixth Grade Language Arts

Focus: As you watch this video, think about the following questions:

- 1) What steps were used in the vocabulary instructional routine to introduce each of the vocabulary terms?
- 2) What other procedures were used to extend vocabulary instruction?
- 3) What delivery skills were used?

Feedback:

What steps were used in the vocabulary instructional routine to introduce each of the vocabulary terms?

The instructional routine included the following steps:

1) Introduce the pronunciation of the word.

In order to attach meaning to the vocabulary term and to retrieve that meaning, students must pronounce the word correctly. If the word is one that students have neither heard or said OR is difficult to pronounce, have the students pronounce the word a number of times.

2) Provide a student-friendly explanation of the word's meaning.

The next step is to present the meaning of the word using a definition/explanation that is easy to understand and only includes known words. In this case, the definition was presented in a written form within the power-point. Presentation of the definition within a sentence makes it easier to process the definition.

3) Illustrate with examples.

Dr. Archer presented a number of examples to illustrate the

vocabulary term/concept. Some of the examples related to the students' own experiences while other examples related directly to the use of the word in the passage, thus bridging vocabulary instruction and passage comprehension.

4) Check understanding by asking questions.

Dr. Archer asked students questions to determine their understanding. In this lesson, students were asked to discern between examples and non-examples of 'elude' and later examples and non-examples of 'intention.'

Missed Opportunity: It would have been helpful to ask students how they knew that the exemplar was an example or non-example. This would have deepened students' thinking in regards to the word's meaning.

What other procedures were used to extend the vocabulary instruction?

Word Use – Students were asked to anticipate how the word 'elude' might be used in the passage. Not only did this require deeper knowledge of the word's meaning, but served to bridge vocabulary instruction and passage comprehension.

Teacher Use of Word – After 'elude' had been introduced, Dr. Archer immediately used the word within her own language ("Did he want to elude us?") Given that it takes multiple exposures to a word before a word's meaning is mastered, it is important that the teacher use the word as often as possible. This is one of the reasons for having a "Word Wall". You will have a visual reminder of the words that were recently taught.

Part of Speech – With older students, especially ELL's, it is helpful to introduce the part of speech. Of course, it would first be necessary that students understand the terms noun, verb, adjective, and adverb.

Logs – Students in every class should maintain a vocabulary log that includes at a minimum the vocabulary term and a definition. Students could also add an original sentence, an illustration, synonyms, etc. Vocabulary logs can be used for self-study, class review, and partner-study.

Word Relatives – The most expedient procedure for expanding students vocabulary is to introduce students to "word relatives" (intend, intention, intentional, intentional). The word relatives for intention were listed on the screen and a connected story was used to introduce the words. This practice illustrates the transparent morphemic nature of English and is especially important if the pronunciation of the relatives is altered (e.g., reform and

reformation; wild and wilderness; protest and protestant) so that students can transfer the meaning from one word to the relatives.

Embedded Study Skills: One of the goals of Middle School is to teach the study skills that will support students academically in secondary schools and in higher education. Note-taking skills were reinforced as students wrote in their logs.

What delivery skills were used?

Active Participation: Dr. Archer requested continuous responses from the students to ascertain their learning and to increase on-task behavior. Those responses included:

- a) **Choral Responses.** When the answers were short and the same, choral responses were requested.
- b) **Partner Responses.** When the answers were long and different, Dr. Archer had students share their answers with their partners.
- c) **Written Responses.** Students recorded entries in their logs.

Monitoring: When the students were sharing answers with their partners or writing in their logs, Dr. Archer circulated in the room and gave feedback including praise, encouragement, and corrections.