

Vocabulary Instruction - K

**Grade Level:** Kindergarten

**School:** McKinley Elementary School

**Location:** Tacoma, Washington

**Materials:** *Honk!: The Story of a Prima Swanerina* by Pamela Duncan Edwards

**Videographer:** Dima Yaremenko

**Elapsed Time:** 6:15

**Introduction:** Even as students enter kindergarten, there are huge differences in their individual vocabularies. If we are to narrow the achievement gap that students from different economic levels exhibit in the upper grades, we must provide systematic, robust explicit vocabulary instruction in the primary grades.

One of the best sources of vocabulary words is the books that we read aloud to students. In this video, the students have listened to the book *Honk!: The Story of a Prima Swanerina*. They are being introduced to the meanings of three words from the story.

This vocabulary instruction is presented at the end of a 90-minute reading period including the reading of *Honk!* The troops are restless. This video is a great reminder of the difficulties in delivering instruction and maintaining the attention of the students. There is no doubt about it... **teaching is hard work.**

**Focus:** As you watch this video, ask yourself:

- 1) Did the Teacher use an instructional routine for teaching each vocabulary term including these steps:
  - a) Introduce the word?
  - b) Present a student-friendly explanation?
  - c) Illustrate the word with examples?
  - d) Check students' understanding?
  - e) Review the words?

What other good practices did you observe?

What suggestions would you give the teacher?

## **Feedback:**

**1) Did the Teacher use an instructional routine for teaching each vocabulary term including these steps:**

- a) Introduce the word?**
- b) Present a student-friendly explanation?**
- c) Illustrate the word with examples?**
- d) Check students' understanding?**
- e) Review the words?**

The teacher followed all of these steps when introducing each word. At the end of the lesson, the teacher reviewed the words. This video shows that the practice of using instructional routines supports teachers even when the group is a little more challenging (though very sweet).

**2) What other good practices did you observe?**

During the lesson, the teacher actively involved the students by having them:

- Say answers as a whole group.
- Share ideas with their partners.
- Share ideas with their partners and then with the class.
- Respond with movement and facial gestures.

The instructor augmented the vocabulary instruction by:

- Adding the use of gestures and movement.
- Checking understanding using examples and non-examples.
- Conveying the usefulness in learning the three words.
- Adding humor.

**What suggestions would you give the teacher?**

If I taught this lesson again, I would do these things:

Perhaps, teach the vocabulary at a later time in the day after reviewing the read-aloud. OR

Create a better environment that would promote student attention by:

- Putting the last two rows of children in chairs so they would be more visible.

- Reorganizing the seating arrangement so that the inattentive students were closer to the teacher.
- More carefully selecting the partners.
- Reorganizing the schedule of activities so that the students would have an activity at their desk before this lesson.

Be careful in the choice of words. I would teach the word ‘practice’ rather than ‘practiced’. It was confusing to switch between the two words.

But most importantly, I would be careful that I acted as if I **expected** participation. At the end of video, when the students did not all respond, I simply did a “do over”. “I need everyone.” As soon as I started to **expect** participation and instigated gentle “do overs”, the students began to respond more consistently. It reminded me, “It is not what we tell students we want, but how we act in concert with our requests that students attend to.”