

**Title:** Vocabulary and Background Knowledge Frontloading – 5th Grade

**Grade Level:** Fifth Grade

**School:** Jefferson Elementary School

**Location:** Wichita, Kansas

**Materials:** *Treasures Reading* (Macmillan/McGraw-Hill); *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of American English*

**Videographers:** Wichita Public Schools (USD 259) Media Production Services. Staff Members: Mark Mohesky, Jennifer Bellinger-Sipes, Micael D. Smith, Jennifer Hartman

**Web Master:** Dima Yaremenko

**Elapsed Time:** 37:00

**Introduction:** This fifth grade class is preparing to read to a narrative titled *Black Cowboy – Wild Horses, A True Story*. Prior to passage reading, vocabulary was introduced and background knowledge provided to increase reading comprehension.

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

- 1) Determine the four steps in the ***Vocabulary Instruction Routine*** that are used to introduce the words.
- 2) Determine how the words were grouped to facilitate acquisition.
- 3) Identify **additional vocabulary practices** used to extend student knowledge.
- 4) Identify other good instructional practices.

**Feedback :**

1) Determine the four steps in the ***Vocabulary Instruction Routine*** that are used to introduce the words.

For the more difficult words, the following instructional steps were used:

- a) Introduce the pronunciation of the word.
  - The teacher said the new word and students repeated the word. To insure that students could pronounce the words accurately, the teacher and students tapped and said the oral syllables in the words.
- b) Present a student-friendly explanation.
  - The teacher and the students read the explanations together.
- c) Illustrate the word with examples.
  - Pictures and photos coupled with a written sentence containing the vocabulary word were used to illustrate the new word.
  - Gestures were added to the instructional routine for some words (*plain, bluff, ravine, swerved, flickered, suspended*), making the content more memorable.
- d) Check students' understanding.

- Students were asked questions to verify their understanding. In a number of cases, the students had to discern between examples and non-examples.

## 2) Determine how the words were grouped to facilitate acquisition.

In the teacher's manual the words were listed in order of introduction within the passage. Unfortunately that order negates all of the connections that can be made between the words. Thus, the teacher decided to reorder the words, grouping words referring to horses (mustangs, herd, stallion, mare), words referring to landforms (plain, bluff, ravine, horizon), and verbs (swerved, flickered, suspended), leaving only two words, *vast and enthusiasm*. With thoughtful grouping of words, students can make meaningful connections between the words.

After the a group of words was introduced, the teacher "firmed" up understanding by having the students identify which word was being described.

## 3) Identify additional vocabulary practices used to extend student knowledge of the vocabulary words.

A number of additional vocabulary practices were embedded in this lesson. The teacher introduced:

- The part of speech
- Synonyms for the words
- Additional words in the word family (*enthusiasm, enthusiastic, enthusiastically*) emphasizing the consistency of meaning and spelling within the word family.
- The common use of the word (*vast – the plain is vast, a person is not vast*).
- The teacher had the students act out the meaning of words.

## 4) Identify other good instructional practices.

### Inclusive Active Participation

- Structured active participation strategies were used throughout the lesson including:
  - Choral responses - The teacher asked a question, gave thinking time, and then signaled for an oral answer.
  - Partners – The students had been assigned a partner and given the designations A and B. The teacher asked a question, provided thinking time, and then designated one partner to say answer to their partner.

- Individual oral responses – After ALL students thought of an answer and shared their answers with their partners, the teacher randomly called on a few students to report out to the group.
- Acting Out – Students were asked to act out the meaning of words such as *plain, bluff, ravine, horizon, swerved, flickered, suspended*.
- The sentences and paragraphs were read using the following procedures:
  - Choral reading – The teacher and the students read the examples and explanations together.
  - Cloze reading – The teacher read, stopping before some critical words. The students said the next word. Cloze reading is an excellent practice for increasing on-task behavior during passage reading.
  - Echo reading – The teacher said a word and students immediately “echoed” the word.

### Thinking Time

- After asking higher order questions requiring manipulation of information in working memory, the teacher gave 5 to 6 seconds of thinking time and also modeled thinking. When more than 3 seconds are given for thinking, the answers are longer, more logical, and supported with evidence.

### Monitoring and Coaching

- When students were discussing answers with their partners, the teacher moved around the room, listening to answers and coaching as needed.

### Scaffolding

- To increase the quality of student oral answers, the teacher provided sentence starters on the screen. The benefits of sentence starters included: a) increasing the quality of the answers, b) generating complete sentences, c) helping students initiate (start) their responses, and d) promoting the use of academic language.

### Review

At the end of the lesson as a part of the closing, the teacher checked students understanding on all of the words. The teacher provided a verbal hint, the students located the corresponding word in the numbered list and formed the number with their fingers. When given a cue (*Show me.*), the students held up their hands. The teacher monitored the entire class and provided feedback, correcting errors as required.

### Subsequent Lessons

On the following day, the students entered a number of words in their vocabulary logs. The entries included the word, the explanation of the word in their own words, and a quick draw illustration.