

# Effective Vocabulary Instruction

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# Adult Vocabulary Development

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## Evidence on Vocabulary Growth

- Very little research exists on adults' vocabulary growth, even within the context of low-skilled adults
- Research about children's vocabulary development transfers to older learners
  - Hart & Risley as foundational to our understanding
  - Richness and complexity of language individuals hear around them influence their own vocabulary development

## Evidence on Vocabulary Growth, cont.

- Vocabulary growth is developmental, happening throughout the lifespan
- Vocabulary grows as individuals learn to read
  - ~.90 correlation between comprehension of written and oral language
  - Little time spent on vocabulary instruction, even in early grades
- Vocabulary growth can be considered “unconstrained”

## Unconstrained? Huh?

Learning to decode involves:

- Mastering 44 sounds
- Recognizing 26 letters (in English)
- Learning a hundred or so spelling patterns

Acquiring a Grade 12 vocabulary involves:

- Learning the meanings and use of approximately 75,000 words

## Top 100 Words that Adults Should Know

Single Word Examples

- Acronym, Antonym, Homonym
- Dialect, Diction, Didactic
- Onomatopoeia, Oxymoron
- Phonemes, Phonological, Preposition
- Satire, Simile, Soliloquy, Syntax

Nonsense Phrases

- Emergent empathy
- Egregious eloquence
- Innate intellectual hyperbole
- Superfluous sardonic simile
- Clandestine criterion

## Getting Back to the Evidence

- Three distinct contexts for adults' vocabulary comprehension and use
  - Societal
    - Home
    - Civic
    - Political
  - Educational
    - "Language of instruction"
    - Content-specific terms and concepts
  - Vocational
    - Specialized terminology

## Evidence-based Strategies for Vocabulary Growth

- Increasing the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge
  - Direct instruction
  - Meaningful discussions, debates, etc.
  - Reading with comprehension and engagement
  - Writing in ways that require or invite experimentation with words
- Increasing knowledge of specific words
  - Word learning strategies
  - Teacher-directed vocabulary instruction
  - Thoughtful dependence on context to determine meaning

## Learning to Think about Words

- Students perceive learning vocabulary as essential to learning in general, but they prefer to figure out word meanings themselves
  - However, they often lack the flexible strategies to use content clues or resources to identify meanings
- Therefore, teachers need to scaffold content area work and provide direct instruction on using textual aids and use of dictionaries, web resources, and other aids

## Another Factor in Vocabulary Growth

- Adolescent struggling readers often carry a “fixed mindset” or maladaptive attribution mechanism into adulthood
- Adults learners respond to:
  - Direct instruction
  - Teacher paraphrasing and defining unfamiliar words
  - Modeling/thinking aloud about appropriate strategies for figuring out unfamiliar words, with the caveat that no one strategy works all the time

## And Finally.....

Adult learners need to feel comfortable with the reality that a highly appropriate strategy for figuring out the meaning of unfamiliar words is just asking what the word means!

## Selected References

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- National Research Council. (2016). *Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Options for Practice and Research*. The National Academies Press.
- Wolf, M. (2016). *Tales of Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Oxford University Press.

# Effective Instruction Vocabulary

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## Importance of Vocabulary

Helps to determine comprehension

**Effective, evidence-based vocabulary  
instruction helps address all of the above**

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## Ultimate Goals of Vocabulary Instruction

- Successfully improve / attain comprehension
- Increase / Master the number word meanings they know
  - Explain
  - Teach
  - Use correctly verbal/written contexts

**Effective, evidence-based vocabulary instruction helps address all of the above**

## Chat

How do you select / determine the vocabulary words for your instruction?

**Please type in your answers in the chat box**



## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction High-Frequency Academic Words

Abstract words, cross-content areas

–Ex. effective, furthermore, anticipate, criteria, crucial

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction Direct, Explicit Instruction

(also known as the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model)

- **Introduction** – explain what students are doing and why
- **Modeling** – teacher explains word meanings using different context
- **Guided Practice** – multiple exposures in a variety of contexts
- **Independent Practice** – use in discussion and writing
- **Monitor** – throughout all lessons

## Chat

1. What parts of Direct, Explicit Instruction are you currently using when teaching vocabulary words?
2. What kinds of activities do you use in your instruction to reinforce the vocabulary words you teach?

Please type in your answers in the chat box

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction

## Generative Activities

- Required Analytical/Critical thinking skills
- Show understanding of words

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction: Sequence of Activities

- Knowledge Rating Chart
- Introduction of 5 High-Frequency words w/ Oral Prompts
- Fill-in-the-Blank
- Sentence Completion
- What Do You Think?
- Read and Answer
- Final Sentences
- Additional Activities from other resources

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## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction Teacher Prep

Word	Context	Prompt
ra*tion*ale (noun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- my rationale for exercising on a regular basis</li> <li>- the rationale for coming to the reading class, for getting a GED or high school diploma</li> <li>- rationale for choosing an apartment instead of a house</li> <li>- rationale for moving or buying a car</li> <li>- rationale for hiring / firing more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is your <b>rationale</b> for exercising? What is your <b>rationale</b> for taking this reading class? What is your <b>rationale</b> for getting your GED or high school diploma?</li> <li>- What do you think would be a city's <b>rationale</b> for hiring more police? For starting a recycling program? For creating bike lanes?</li> <li>- What would be your <b>rationale</b> for choosing an apartment instead of a house?</li> </ul>

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## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction

### Activities: Knowledge Rating Chart (KRC)

How well do you know the words? Use the numbers to rate your knowledge of the vocabulary words.

Follow the teacher’s directions.

- 4 = I know the word. I know it well enough to teach it to someone else.
- 3 = The word is familiar. I think I know what it means. It has something to do with .....
- 2 = I have heard or seen the word before, but I’m not sure what it means.
- 1 = I don’t know this word at all.

	My rating before instruction	My rating after instruction
<b>Affect</b>		
<b>Exclude</b>		
<b>Rationale</b>		
<b>Restrict</b>		
<b>Typical</b>		

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction

### Academic Vocabulary Notebook

Academic Vocabulary Notebook	
<u>rationale</u> Word <u>noun</u> Part of Speech	<u>ra*tion*ale</u> Syllabication
<b>Word Family</b>	<b>Word Meaning</b>
Noun: rationale	Meaning: the basis, or set of reasons, for deciding or doing something
Verb:	
Adjective:	Synonym / Close Word:
Adverb:	Antonym / Opposite Word:
<b>Class Practice</b>	
<b>My Original Sentence</b>	

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction

## Activities: Introduction

I have been exercising on a regular basis for several years. My reasons – my **rationale** – for exercising regularly are mainly for my health. It's good for my heart and lungs. It's good for my circulation. That's part of my **rationale**. Another part of my **rationale** is that exercise makes me feel good. I feel happier after I exercise. For some people, a strong **rationale** includes a wish to stop smoking or lose weight. Whatever a person's **rationale** may be, exercise is a good thing to do. What is your **rationale** for exercising?

Part of my **rationale** for exercising is that \_\_\_\_\_.

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction

## Activities: Introduction

Last year I had to decide whether to move into an apartment or a house. They both have their advantages and disadvantages. After thinking about it for a while, I decided to move into an apartment. I made my decision based on several reasons. I based my decision based on certain **rationale**. One reason for choosing an apartment over a house was because it was less expensive. The cost was part of my **rationale**. The cost was one reason. Part of my **rationale** for choosing an apartment over a house was because I didn't really need my space. The amount of space I needed was part of my **rationale**. It was another reason why I chose an apartment over a house. If you were moving tomorrow, would you move into an apartment or a house? What would your **rationale** be for moving into an apartment? A house?

Part of the/my **rationale** for moving into a house is that \_\_\_\_\_.

Part of the/my **rationale** for moving into an apartment is that \_\_\_\_\_.

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction

### Activities: 1. Fill-in-the-Blank

**affect      exclude      rationale      restrict      typical**

Part of his \_\_\_\_\_ for carpooling to work every day is that it is convenient.

The doctor may \_\_\_\_\_ me from going to work for three days.

Many people don't understand that the things you do when you're young \_\_\_\_\_ your entire future.

Cindy was \_\_\_\_\_ from becoming a member of the California Club because she is a woman.

Karl's \_\_\_\_\_ morning includes drinking a huge cup of coffee and listening to the morning news.

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction

### Activities: 2. Sentence Completion

Part of my **rationale** for getting a (GED / diploma) is that \_\_\_\_\_.

On a **typical** morning I \_\_\_\_\_.

Court rooms **restrict** the use of cell phones because \_\_\_\_\_.

A coach would **exclude** someone from the team for/because \_\_\_\_\_.

Being tired **affects** my ability to \_\_\_\_\_.

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction Activities: 3. What do you think?

What **rationale** might a person have for **excluding** someone from a party or special event?

If you **analyzed** your performance in Mr. Verdin's class, would you put yourself in the **category** of students who are "above average? Why or why not?

How will **restricting** the use of plastic bottles **affect** our society?

## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction Activities: 4. Read and Answer

### READ-AND-ANSWER GUIDED PRACTICE

Please use complete sentences to answer the questions below based on the reading "I Will Fight No More Forever".

- Do you think the Nez Perce tribe was treated in a **humane** manner when the U.S. government ordered this tribe to leave their home in the Wallowa Valley and go to a reservation? Why or why not?
- With which two groups did these tribes spend a **considerable** amount of time and effort fighting against?
- What **aggravated** the already dangerous situation for the women and children who were hiding the shelter pits?
- Why did Chief Joseph decide to **cease** fighting against the U.S. Army?

*(Questions based on Six-Way Paragraphs in the Context Area, Introductory Level, Unit 32 "I Will Fight No More Forever, p.64)*

**In-Class Vocabulary Instruction**

**Activities: 5. Final Sentences**

**Rationale** – the basis, or set of reasons, for deciding or doing something

1. Part of my **rationale** for exercising on a regular basis is that exercise makes me feel good.
2. The city’s **rationale** for closing down the park is mainly to build two more playgrounds.
3. Part of Janet’s **rationale** for getting a GED is that it gets her closer to earning her high school diploma.
4. My **rationale** for choosing an apartment instead of a house is that an apartment is much cheaper.
5. My **rationale** for moving is that there are more opportunities for employment.
- 6.

7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

**In-Class Vocabulary Instruction**

**Activities: Knowledge Rating Chart (KRC)**

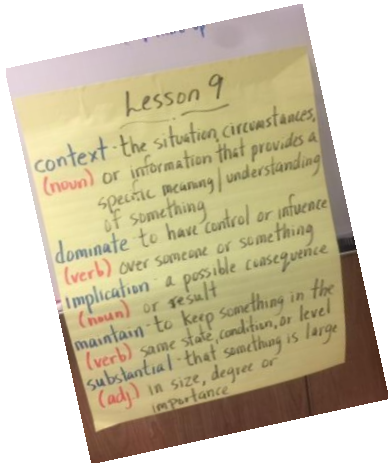
How well do you know the words? Use the numbers to rate your knowledge of the vocabulary words.  
Follow the teacher’s directions.

- 4 = I know the word. I know it well enough to teach it to someone else.
- 3 = The word is familiar. I think I know what it means. It has something to do with .....
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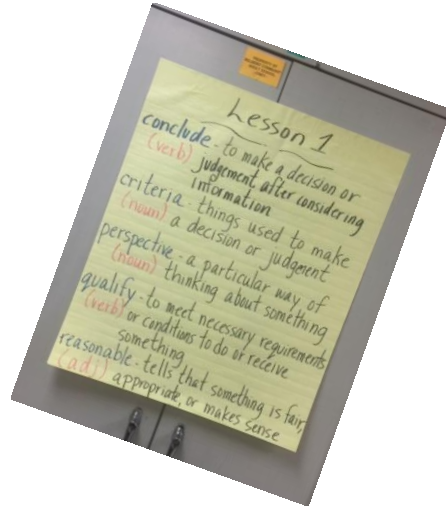
	My rating before instruction	My rating after instruction
Affect		
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Restrict		
Typical		




## In-Class Vocabulary Instruction



## Vocabulary Posters





# Q & A

## Question 1

What key elements should instructors focus on regarding vocabulary instruction that students, statistically, struggle with?

## Question 2

What do instructors need to know when implementing new vocabulary instructional practices? How can they prepare students and themselves for the potential increase in rigor?

## Question 3

How do you convey the importance of vocabulary instruction to students? How do you connect it to their everyday lives, learning, and career goals?

## Question 4

What resources and research are available that educators can tap into in order to encourage continuous learning for students. How do we help them become life-long learners of new vocabulary words and phrases?

# Additional Questions



Please type in your questions in the chat box.

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Please complete the evaluation once the webinar window closes.

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