

EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION AND LITERACY LEVELS:
AN ONLINE COURSE PROVIDED FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

by

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in English as a Second Language.

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Project Summary

Knowing how to teach vocabulary effectively is so vital in today's classrooms with our increasing populations of English Language Learners. Many of the classroom teachers in my school are not certified to teach ELs, and as a result our ELs are falling through the cracks and there remains a huge gap between ELs and non-ELs. You have heard of the expression "we have to close the gap," it has never been more true than it is now. Our populations of English Language Learners are seriously behind academically, and it is up to us as teachers to help remedy this. Literacy is one area that ELs have struggled to reach grade-level standards and a major reason is the ineffective vocabulary instruction they are receiving. Scott, Jamieson-Noel, and Assein (2003) found, in their observations of 23 ethnically diverse classrooms, that only 6% of school time was centered on vocabulary development, and in the core academic subject areas only 1.4 % of instructional time was spent developing vocabulary knowledge (as cited in Flynt & Brozo, 2008). In an attempt to fix this problem I designed an online course that instructs teachers how to provide effective vocabulary instruction. It is guided by the question: *how does vocabulary instruction improve F&P literacy levels?*

Fountas and Pinnell or (F&P) is a widely used program which assesses students' literacy levels and provides teachers with insight on other literacy components such as comprehension, vocabulary, and phonics. Considering this program is used in my district, and is likely familiar to many other teachers I found it appropriate to use for the purpose of this investigation.

This online course created on Schoology was designed with three words in mind: informative, concise, and simple. Schoology is a platform that many teachers are likely familiar with and universal across districts. The course begins by asking educators to complete a pre-assessment Google Form on their current implementation of vocabulary instruction. It also states the purpose of participating in the course and what the learning objectives are. The

content is split into sections: Types of Vocabulary and Vocabulary Instruction. The Types of Vocabulary section covers Tier 2/Tier 3 words and briefly discusses the importance of teaching academic vocabulary. Following this, there is a discussion post with questions connected to the topic of Types of Vocabulary. The next section covers Vocabulary Instruction which touches on researched instructional methods that have proven effective. These methods are building background by using multimedia enhancements, realia, semantic maps, sentence frames and read-alouds. There is a discussion post that follows asking teachers to reflect on their current and future practices in the classroom. Lastly, there is an Excel document where teachers can input their EL students' current literacy levels and track their progress over the course of the 6-week time frame.



















In designing this online course, I found a unique way to help other teachers provide effective vocabulary instruction to ELs in order to improve their literacy levels and answer the question: *How does vocabulary instruction improve ELs' F&P literacy levels?* I initially thought I would do this by providing a workshop to my colleagues, but in the spring of 2020, a pandemic occurred and everyone; including teachers, were forced to learn from home. In light of this, and the uncertainty of times, I created an online course that covers the content of this capstone. The following pages contain screenshots of the online course that I created on Schoology, including the overview, as well as individual shots of the discussion posts, links to the presentations and evaluation forms.

Upon completion of the course, teachers will be assessed using a post-assessment Google Form to gain insight into what they learned throughout the course. In addition to this, they will track their ELs' literacy levels before and after implementing methods of vocabulary instruction into their classrooms . These modes of assessment will provide the data needed to test the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction and its impact on improving ELs' literacy levels.

Schoology Course: Vocabulary Instruction for ELs

Do you find yourself asking what vocabulary words do I need to teach or which methods of vocabulary instruction are most effective? The images below display screenshots of a course I designed on Schoology which attempt to furnish answers to the questions above. It was created for teachers to provide them with the supports and tools that may be needed in order to help English Language Learners improve their literacy skills and levels.

This screenshot on Schoology is an overview of what the user sees when first logging into the course. The materials are in the order that they should be done.

	Vocabulary Instruction of ELs (Pre-Assessment Google Form)	
	Introduction	
	Types of Vocabulary.pptx 539 KB	
	Types of Vocabulary Discussion After reviewing the Types of Vocabulary slides, answer the following questions in the discussion below. Following your response, reply to at least one other person. 1. In your own words, define... · Due Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 11:59 pm	
	Vocabulary Instruction.pptx 2 MB	
	Vocabulary Instruction Discussion After reviewing the Vocabulary Instruction slides, answer the following questions in the discussion below. Following your response, reply to at least one other person. 1. Do you currently... · Due Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 11:59 pm	
	Vocabulary Instruction for ELs (Post-Assessment Google Form)	
	Take Aways What were the major take aways that you had from participating in this online course? If a colleague asked you "what did you learn" what would you tell them? · Due Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 11:59 pm	
	Tracking EL Students' Literacy Levels	

This is the pre-assessment Google Form that I ask teachers to complete first when participating in the course. This survey asks five questions about their current knowledge of academic vocabulary and the current practice of vocabulary instruction in their classrooms.

Vocabulary Instruction of ELs (Pre-Assessment Google Form)

***Take this survey first prior to participating in the online course**

Vocabulary Instruction for ELs Questionnaire

Please answer the following responses honestly and to the best of your ability before participating in the online course (Vocabulary Instruction for English Language Learners: ELs)

*** Required**

I feel comfortable implementing methods of vocabulary instruction with my EL students *

Yes

No

I know the difference between Tier 2 and Tier 3 words (answer yes or no; if yes: briefly explain the difference below) *

Your answer _____

I am using one or more of the following methods below in my vocabulary instruction for ELs *

- Word Walls
- Sentence Frames
- Visuals: in the form of pictures, realia or multi-media enhancements (technology)
- Teaching words in context Ex: the word "plate" in baseball isn't a dinner plate, but it is the last base the player must touch to make a run for the team.
- None

I believe I benefited from taking an online course focusing on Vocabulary Instruction for ELs *

- Yes
- No

One question that I still have about implementing vocabulary instruction for ELs is... *

Your answer _____

Submit

More

This screenshot provides teachers with the overall goals and objectives for taking the course.

Introduction



Goals and Objectives:

This course was created for classroom teachers in effort to provide them with supports and tools they may need in the area of vocabulary instruction in order to help English language learners improve their literacy skills and levels. This course will be taken during opening week starting on August 24th and needs to be completed by September 1st, 2020.

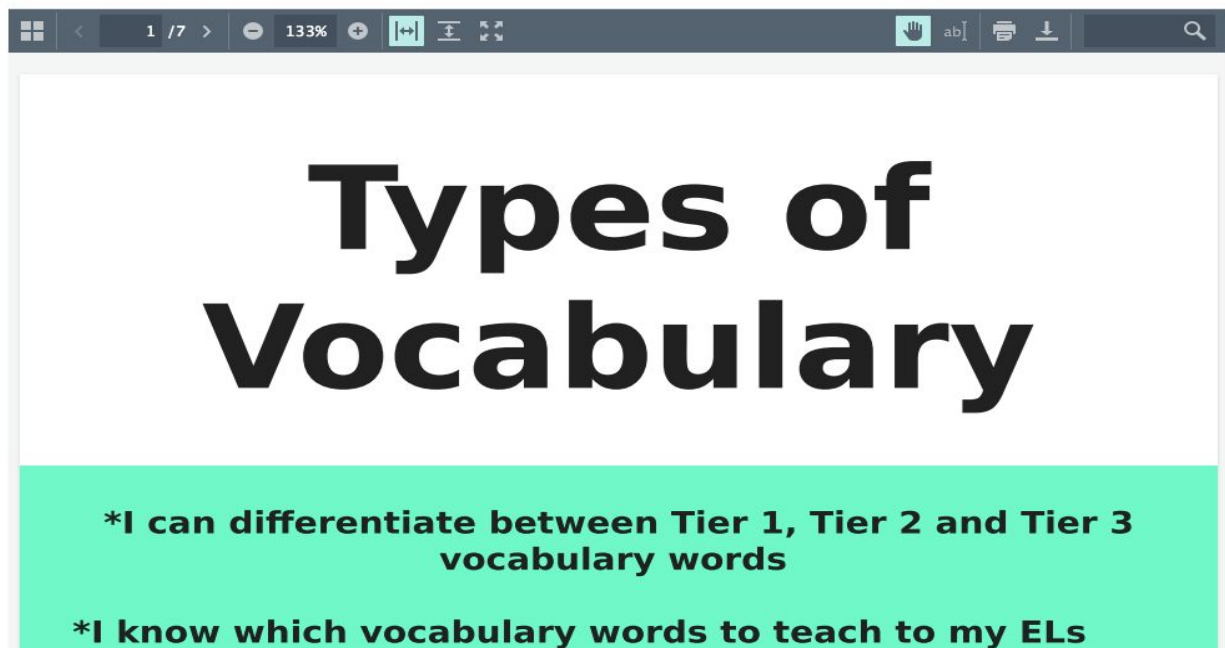
Area of focus: **Vocabulary Instruction for ELs**

By the end of this course educators will know...

- * *The difference between Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 words and provide examples of each*
- * *Which vocabulary words to focus on while teaching a lesson*
- * *Research based methods of vocabulary instruction*
- * *How to scaffold vocabulary instruction for language learners*
- * *How to connect vocabulary knowledge to reading comprehension using these strategies*


Below is a screenshot of the first presentation on Types of Vocabulary. It was created using Google Slides and is linked below.

Types of Vocabulary.pptx



https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ZhFVIWiOwVP111yuZNRqnzPoAARLama_vLdG0C7Dt_0/edit?usp=sharing

The screenshot below shows a discussion post in Schoology that reviews learnings from the *Types of Vocabulary* presentation. The following questions were asked allowing teachers to reflect on their current uses of Tiered vocabulary in their classrooms.


Types of Vocabulary Discussion 

Due: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 11:59 pm

After reviewing the *Types of Vocabulary* slides, answer the following questions in the discussion below. Following your response, reply to at least one other person.

1. In your own words, define Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary. Why is it important that we focus our instruction on these particular words?
2. Do you currently teach Tier 2/Tier 3 vocabulary words, if so what is your approach to choosing which words to teach?
3. What are some examples of additional Tier 2/Tier 3 vocabulary words that you know?


Posted today at 7:09 pm

 Write a comment

Below is a screenshot of the second presentation Vocabulary Instruction and is linked below.

Vocabulary Instruction.pptx



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Vocabulary Instruction

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1DqOaBW66Xzgr3S2HSPHCPDrO2IUdCgZsJRpE2T7Q5mU/edit?usp=sharing>

The screenshot below shows a discussion post in Schoology that reviews learnings from the *Vocabulary Instruction* presentation. The following questions were asked allowing teachers to reflect on their current uses of methods of vocabulary instruction in their classrooms.

Vocabulary Instruction Discussion □ ⚙️

Due: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 11:59 pm

After reviewing the *Vocabulary Instruction* slides, answer the following questions in the discussion below. Following your response, reply to at least one other person.

1. Do you currently implement any of these methods of vocabulary instruction for your ELs (activating prior knowledge, multimedia enhancements, realia, semantic maps, sentence frames, or read-alouds), if so, which ones and how do you use them? If you are not currently using any of these methods, which one/s do you plan to use in the coming school year and how will you use them?
2. Are there other methods that you use in your vocabulary instruction that you would like to share?
3. What is one goal that you have when implementing vocabulary instruction for your ELs in the upcoming school year?

Posted today at 7:10 pm

Upon completion of the course, teachers are asked to complete this Google Form again as a post-assessment and is one way their learning will be assessed.

Vocabulary Instruction for ELs (Post-Assessment Google Form)

Take this survey after participating in the course and implementing some of these methods of vocabulary instruction into your classroom for 6 weeks.

Vocabulary Instruction for ELs Questionnaire

Please answer the following responses honestly and to the best of your ability before participating in the online course (Vocabulary Instruction for English Language Learners: ELs)

* Required

I feel comfortable implementing methods of vocabulary instruction with my EL students *

Yes

No

I know the difference between Tier 2 and Tier 3 words (answer yes or no; if yes: briefly explain the difference below) *

Your answer _____

I am using one or more of the following methods below in my vocabulary instruction for ELs *

- Word Walls
- Sentence Frames
- Visuals: in the form of pictures, realia or multi-media enhancements (technology)
- Teaching words in context Ex: the word "plate" in baseball isn't a dinner plate, but it is the last base the player must touch to make a run for the team.
- None

I believe I benefited from taking an online course focusing on Vocabulary Instruction for ELs *

- Yes
- No

One question that I still have about implementing vocabulary instruction for ELs is... *

Your answer _____

Submit

More

This Xcel document is where teachers will input the names and current literacy levels of their EL students. After implementing vocabulary instruction into their classrooms for a 6 week period, they will assess their ELs' literacy levels again and track that information here.

Tracking EL Students' Literacy Levels



This is where you will input the current literacy levels of your EL students. After opening the attached Google Sheets document, you will enter your name within the bottom tabs, and enter the names of your EL students as well as their current literacy level. After implementing methods of vocabulary instruction for a period of 6 weeks, you will assess your EL students' literacy level again, this time in October and record that new level next to the old one. See the psedonyms that have been started for you.



EL Students' Literacy Levels.xlsx 6 KB | [VIEW](#)

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