Teaching vocabulary: principles for reading success

Devin Kearns | July 1, 2019 Successful Learning Conference | University of Sydney



What is vocabulary?

- Knowledge of words' meanings
 - Breadth: Knowing a lot of words
 - Depth: Understanding the complexity of words

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Vocabulary breadth

What are synonyms for excellent?

synonyms: admirable, awesome, brilliant, capital, eminent, exceptional, fantastic, fine, first-rate, great, magnificent, marvelous, of high quality, outstanding, splendid, super, superb, superior, swell, terrific, top-notch, tremendous, very good, wonderful

near synonyms: a beaut, cool, first-dass, magic, matchless, mindblowing, of the highest quality, of the highest standard, out of this world, peerless, perfect, preeminent, sterling, sublime, superlative, supreme

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Vocabulary breadth

What are synonyms for excellent?

informal synonyms and near synonyms: A1, awesomesauce, brill, fab, on fleek, ripping, smashing, spiffing, supercolifragilisticexpialidocious, tip-top, wicked

Australian words (maybe?): a beauty?, a peach?, a ripper?, bonza?, brilliant, grouse? (Victoria?), slap-up?, snifter?

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Vocabulary depth

· What does principal mean?

- Noun: A school leader (in the U.S.)
 - 2. Noun: Original amount of a debt
 - 3. Adjective: Most important
- 4. Noun: Lead person (of a company or dance group)

Little



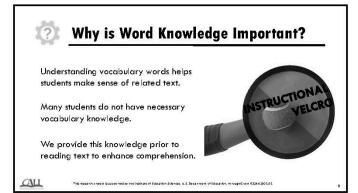
Vocabulary & Reading Comprehension

- Is vocabulary knowledge related to reading comprehension?

 - It is one of the strongest predictors of reading comprehension performance

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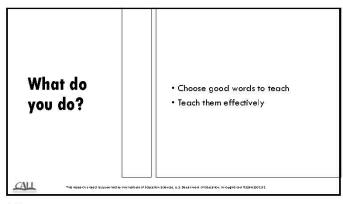


Example of the problem

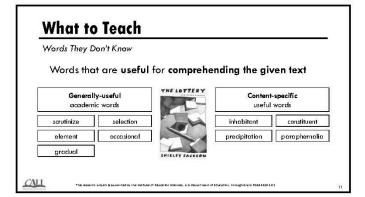
- Understanding hegemony
- "It is claimed that each foreign policy strategy is linked to a hegemonic project and that a crisis in political hegemony in most cases will also imply a change in foreign policy strategies."

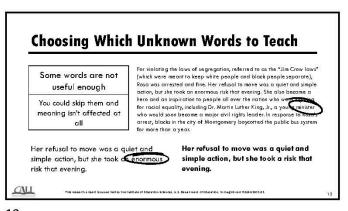
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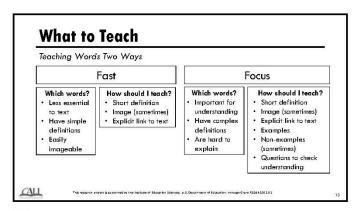


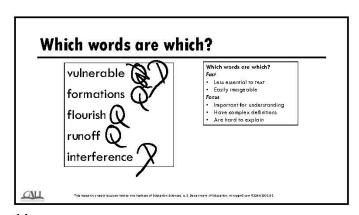
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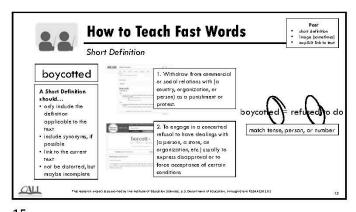


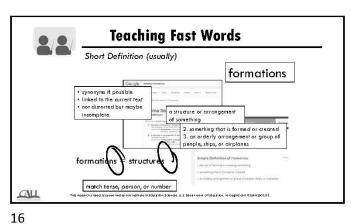


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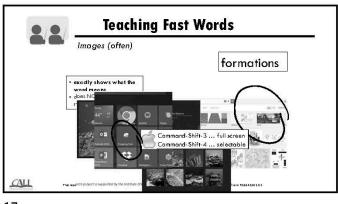


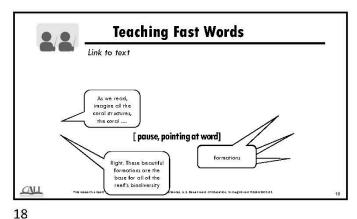


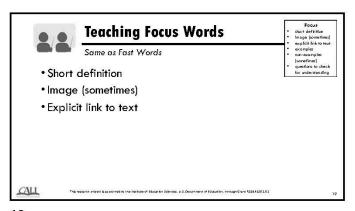


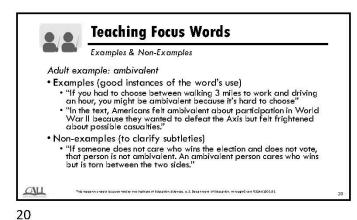


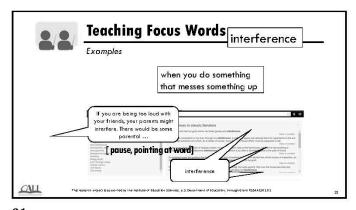
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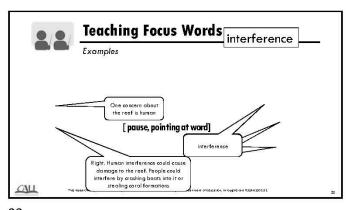




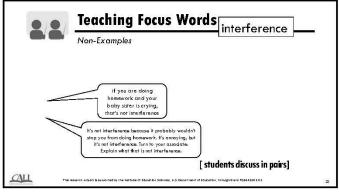


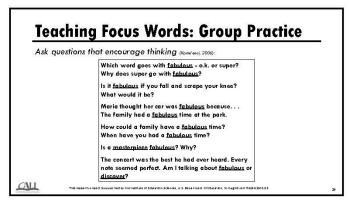


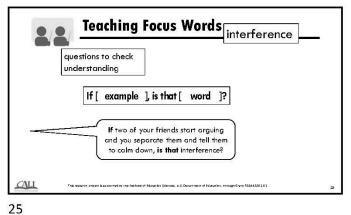


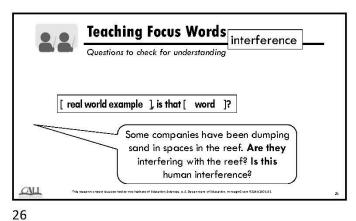


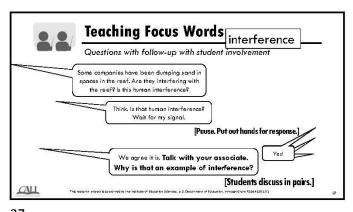
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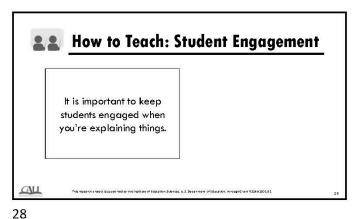


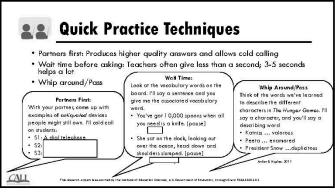


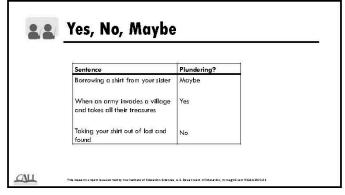


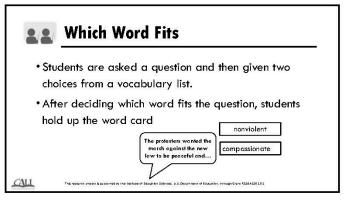


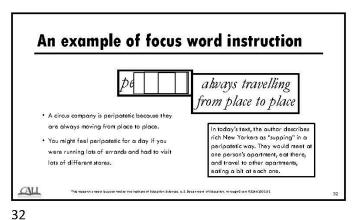


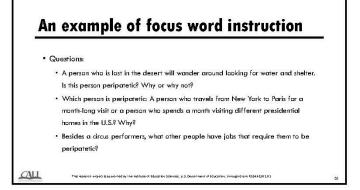


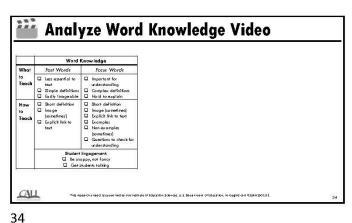




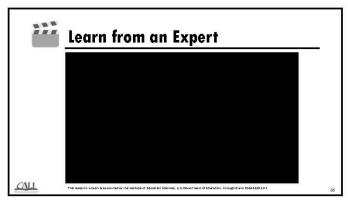


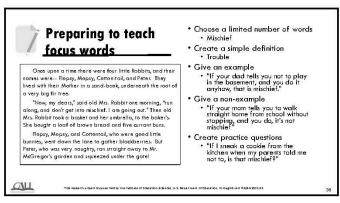






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Check for Understanding: 3B

- When choosing vocabulary words for a given text, it is important to choose:
 a) Generally useful ocademic words
 b) Content specific useful words
 b) Both A and B
- True or False: "Fast" words are words that can be easily explained using short definitions and an image.
- exprained using snort definitions and an image.

 3. For both Fast and Focus words, it is important to:
 a) List a few definitions for each word, even if not applicable to the
 text, so that students get an overall understanding of the word
 b) Find several images to illustrate the word, even if the images
 show approximate definitions
 c) Explicitly link the words to the text
 d) Ask students if they know what the word means before giving
 them the definition

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