

To the Dictionary and Beyond!

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Time Frame 45-60 minutes

Essential Question(s)

What are the benefits of authentic academic vocabulary instruction?

Summary

The authentic teaching of academic vocabulary encompasses many components, such as incorporating students' prior knowledge, using engaging strategies, and promoting student ownership and understanding. In this session, participants will explore and evaluate strategies that increase the authentic teaching of vocabulary, explain the benefits of authentic vocabulary instruction, and identify a strategy that they can use in their own classrooms.

Learning Goals

- Participants will explore and evaluate new strategies to increase the authentic teaching of academic vocabulary.
- Participants will explain the benefits of authentic academic vocabulary instruction.
- Participants will identify one strategy to implement in their own classrooms.

Attachments

- Authentic Learning and Teaching.pdf
- Definitions.docx
- Definitions.pdf
- Generic Vocabulary Pyramid .docx
- Generic Vocabulary Pyramid.pdf
- Generic Vocabulary Template .docx
- Generic Vocabulary Template.pdf
- Rock and Roll Vocabulary.docx
- Rock and Roll Vocabulary.pdf
- SCORE Reflection.docx
- SCORE Reflection.pdf
- Strategy Harvest Note Sheet.docx
- Strategy Harvest Note Sheet.pdf
- To the Dictionary and Beyond! Agenda.docx
- To the Dictionary and Beyond! Agenda.pdf
- VOCABULARY STRATEGIES LIST.docx
- VOCABULARY STRATEGIES LIST.pdf
- Vocabulary Activity Index Cards.pdf
- Vocabulary Beyond the Dictionary!.pptx

Materials

- Vocabulary Beyond the Dictionary! Presentation Slides (attached)
- Agenda (attached)
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet (attached)
- Strategy Harvest Note Sheet (attached)
- Vocabulary Strategies List (attached)
- SCORE Reflection handout (attached)
- Authenticity Learning and Teaching Rubric (attached)
- Video clip "Rock, Paper, Scissors, Lizard, Spock" from "The Big Bang Theory"
- Vocabulary Activity Index Cards, 4x6 cut and printed on color card stock (green is mentioned in text below)
- Blank 4x6 note cards (blue is mentioned in text below)

Engage

Presenter's Note: Preparation

Before beginning, have all handouts and the blank (blue) note cards available on a table for participants. Tables should be organized to facilitate small groups. Before the presentation, research and know all the vocabulary strategies attached. Also, check the audio for the presentation video. The attached **Vocabulary Activity Index Cards** (green) should be handed out during the session. Do not let participants have access to these until it is time to use them for the session.

Welcome participants to the session using **slide 2** of the attached **Presentation Slides**. Briefly highlight the **Agenda**, specifically noting how it is in the 5E format.

Transition to **slide 3** by asking, "Is anyone familiar with 'Rock, Paper, Scissors, Lizard, Spock'? If you are, please understand this is independent work, and you are not to help your neighbors."

Click through the slide, noting that the definitions are also on the back of the agenda for participants to reference as notes. Explain that these are important definitions and should be known when playing the game "Rock, Paper, Scissors, Lizard, Spock."

After going over the definitions, move to **slide 4**. Tell participants: "Listen as Sheldon from "The Big Bang Theory" explains to Barry how to play Rock, Paper, Scissors, Lizard, Spock."

Play the video: https://youtu.be/fqlDc2VICZ0. (*Note: The video is hyperlinked to the image on slide 4 and will open in your browser when you click the image.*)

After the video, go to **slide 5**. Ask, "Are you ready to play the game, or can you teach someone else now?"

Expected Response

"NO!"

Tell participants: "Sheldon explained it twice for you. What else might have benefited your learning experience?" Let participants share out a few ideas.

Possible Responses

More time or practice; more opportunities to use it before being “tested”; interaction or competition; clear context to the game and terminology; a chance to talk about it; visuals or handouts.

Change to **slide 6** and quickly click through the images and text that appear.

"I heard some of you say... a chart to keep you organized; more context or meaning behind the game (who was Spock?); a chance to play the game (friendly competition); more time to talk about it and ask questions; or a visual to see the hand representations."

Explore

Transition to **slide 7** and mention how it is important to remember that "sometimes our students need these extra things, too, and we need to allow more time for them to build and apply their vocabulary skills. This session will provide protected time for us to explore new vocabulary strategies and connect how authentic components benefit student learning."

Change to **slide 8**. "You already use great strategies for authentically teaching vocabulary, so use these next two minutes to briefly discuss those strategies with an elbow partner." *(Note: A timer can be used to help the presenter keep time, but if participants are done discussing after a minute, move on. Don't use the whole two minutes if they don't need it.)*

Change to **slide 9** and address the blue index cards at the center of the table. Click through the slide, highlighting the four key items that should be written on the card. Allow three minutes for participants to record a strategy they shared with their partner. Inform participants that these will be collected in a few minutes. Stack them on the edge of the table, making them easier to collect.

Change to **slide 10**. Introduce the attached **Vocabulary Strategies List** resource that will be used for the upcoming activity. Participants can scan a QR Code to access digital material once they begin working on the activity. Mention that there will not be enough time to explore all 12 strategies, but participants should keep this document as a resource for later exploration of possible strategies.

Presenter's Note

This resource can be downloaded and emailed to participants ahead of time. If a QR Code app is not available to them, this resource also contains hyperlinks for easy digital assess to the strategies listed.

Transition into the activity grouping with **slide 11**. Click through the following instructions. Then, transition to **slide 12**.

Presenter's Note

Know your audience. You might need to highlight these instructions and address slide 12 before you have participants move into groups. If you have time and know they will listen, have participants follow the instructions as they appear on the screen. For example, allow time for them to partner or group before clicking the slideshow again to display the next task (writing down two vocabulary words).

Then, address the attached **Strategy Harvest Note Sheet**. (*NOTE: If you haven't already, collect the blue index cards while participants are grouping and writing down the vocabulary words. Quickly scan these cards, keep any that describe strategies you have not already printed and that appear to promote authentic vocabulary learning. Set aside any that do not promote authenticity or are repeats of your prepared set.*)

Use slide 12 to highlight the Strategy Harvest Note Sheet. Identify where groups/pairs will record the strategy they decide to explore and what will be recorded next to each bullet point. The Heads Up strategy, printed on the paper, will provide a clear, concrete example for participants to follow. Mention that the attached **Authenticity Learning and Teaching Rubric** can be used as a resource for the third bullet point.

Change to **slide 13**. Explain that the **Vocabulary Strategy Index Cards** (green) being handed out will be modeled by groups to conclude this activity, but, before that happens, groups need to learn more about one of these strategies provided.

Presenter's Note

Distribute a variety of at least three green "Vocabulary Strategy Index Cards" to each working group. *(NOTE: You can mix participants' blue index cards in with the green index cards provided as mentioned above. Thus, handing out to each working group two green index cards plus one blue card.)* Participants can notify you if they receive the blue card that they wrote.

Tell participants: “As a group, briefly read the cards received and select one strategy to explore further. The strategy selected should be recorded on the Strategy Harvest Note Sheet as described previously from slide 12.” (Briefly review this information if needed.)

After a strategy has been selected, ask participants to turn the other strategy cards that were not selected face down and move them to the edge of the table to be collected.

Display **slide 14** (for six to 10 minutes), so that participants can easily see the requirements to record on their note sheet. As groups explore their strategy, they will also plan how to model or demonstrate their strategy for the whole group. The two academic vocabulary words they already chose and recorded on the Strategy Harvest Note Sheet will be the words used when modeling. *(NOTE: If they need more words to use when demonstrating, they can create more as they plan.)*

Remind participants to consult the Authenticity Learning and Teaching Rubric as they address the third bullet point.

Presenter's Note

Walk around and help groups as needed. Also, monitor your time. Groups might finish early and some groups might need a reminder of how much time is left to explore and plan. Groups may create necessary cards or props to be used in their presentations.

Explain

Ask the whole group to finish up and get ready to demonstrate their strategy using the two vocabulary words they had selected. Transition to **slide 15** and detail what each group will be expected to share as they model (act out) their vocabulary strategy.

Explicit Example For Acting It Out

Using the strategy "Heads Up" and two math vocabulary words (inequality and variable), a small group would demonstrate how a class might engage in the activity/strategy. Partner A selects a card without reading the word and places the word on their forehead. Partner B (or the rest of the small group) describes the word without saying the word until time runs out or until Partner A guesses the correct word.

So, Partner B might describe inequality as, "This is similar to an equation, but the unknown number might be a variety of answers within a given range." Then, partners switch roles and Partner B places the next card on their forehead while Partner A describes variable as "the unknown value in an equation or something that can change depending on the output." The objective for this strategy is that these are the students' words and they are applying ideas, communicating, performing, and connecting situations that may or may not exist within the classroom setting.

Identify the two remaining spaces on the Strategy Harvest Note Sheet, and explain that this space will be used to record the information shared by each presenting group. *(NOTE: There is only enough space to record two other strategies, but in a 45-minute session, that might be all you have time for. If your session allows, have more groups model and participants can record the strategies that they prefer.)*

As groups model, display **slide 16** (for 15 minutes). Pay close attention that groups highlight each bullet from the note sheet. To ensure that each group explains an authentic component and how that component benefits student learning, keep a Strategy Harvest Note Sheet and an Authenticity Learning and Teaching Rubric visible during presentations.

Extend

After the last group models, transition to **slide 17** and instruct participants to select one strategy that was explored today that they will implement with their students before the next meeting. Have them write that vocabulary strategy down on the bottom of the Strategy Harvest Note Sheet.

Click the slide and instruct participants to share the one strategy that they will implement in their class before the reflection.

Evaluate

Depending on the evaluation tool available, change to **slide 18** or **slide 19**.

Presenter's Note

TREK evaluations will be used in place of the evaluation activity when available. If you don't have access to a TREK evaluation, continue with the activity on slide 19 that is detailed below.

Ask participants to think about the most significant point of the session. You can do this by starting with a review of the topic and then posing a question like, “What point made during today’s session helped you understand the importance of promoting authentic instruction for academic vocabulary?”

Have participants either share this point aloud or write it down. If written, collect participants' responses. Analyze responses and use them as necessary during the follow-up reflection session.

Follow-up Activities

Presenter's Note

Between two weeks and a month after this session, host a scheduled informal reflection with small groups of participants who attended the formal professional development session. (This can be one session with all participants or multiple sessions with different participants each time.) These follow-up sessions can be held during a PLC or teacher planning period because they are to be short and informal. Use slide 21 and the attached SCORE Reflection handout for the follow-up session(s).

Begin the follow-up session with **slide 20** displayed.

Once the session begins, display **slide 21** and ask participants to use the attached **SCORE Reflection** handout to jot down notes from their experiences with using one of the strategies in a lesson. The questions on the slide will help guide discussion. Ask each question and allow each attendee a moment to share about their strategy and experience.

Encourage attendees to use another strategy and continue to follow up with each participant if you are able because this will create a safe environment of accountability.

Research Rationale

Vocabulary instruction is a continual process. Just when you think all students know the required academic vocabulary, they surprise you by asking the meaning of a word you've recently taught. Teachers need to understand how to build relationships between new vocabulary and a student's existing background knowledge, thus providing a student with a meaningful context and connection to support the new vocabulary (Marzano, 2003). Marzano (2003) explains that theory and research show strong evidence supporting how vocabulary instruction is closely associated with building on one's background knowledge.

Working memory is limited, and learning new vocabulary requires the working space in our brain, so it is important to provide students more times to engage and experience vocabulary through background knowledge or connect it to something already in permanent memory. When students are allowed various opportunities to interact and make personal connections to vocabulary, new knowledge will deepen, strengthen, and move towards permanent memory through the re-occurrence and firing of synapses (Marzano, 2003; Jensen, 2005; Boaler, 2016). Brain research shows that synapses fire when students engage in game play, build or draw, participate in meaningful conversations, explain or describe learning, and do something new with the information presented (Boaler, 2016; Jensen, 2005; Knight, 2013). Using information in a repetitive manner does not ensure that it will be transitioned into a student's permanent memory, but opportunities for students to elaborate and make varied connections highly increase the possibility of this happening (Boaler, 2016; Marzano, 2003). Vocabulary should be personal and meaningful, not just memorized to be used in non-contextualized ways at a later date.

Resources

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- K20 Center. (n.d.). Vocabulary charades. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/b30762a7557ba0b391f207f4c600f1f0
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- Snow, Vance, and Associates. (2013). Talk a mile a minute. http://www.snow.associates/educator-spotlight.html
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