

**Title**

Teaching Vocabulary: Word Meanings and Word Knowledge (Grades PreK-2)

**Target Audience**

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service teachers of grades PreK-2.

**Prerequisites**

To successfully participate and complete the assignments in this course, the learner must:

- Have access to a reading classroom or a few students (PreK-2) to try out the strategies and the lesson plans.
- Be familiar with taking an online course or have completed the PBS “Practice Learning Online with TeacherLine” course.
- Have some experience in PreK, kindergarten, first-, or second-grade classrooms.
- Have an interest in language, literacy, and vocabulary instruction.

**Course Description**

This course is designed to give educators both theoretical and practical information about vocabulary development for students in grades PreK-2. Learners will study the role vocabulary knowledge plays in early literacy, as well as the relationship among the written vocabularies of reading and writing and the oral vocabularies of listening and speaking. After analyzing vocabulary-related standards for speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the primary grades, learners will evaluate their own instructional practices with respect to the NCTE/IRA standards and their state standards. As a final task, learners will assess and evaluate students’ word knowledge, incorporate effective vocabulary instructional strategies into their teachings, and reflect on the effectiveness of their lesson plan implementation.

**Instructor/Facilitator**

See instructor/facilitator sheet

**Credits**

To be determined by college or university

**Goals**

The overall goal of this course is for you to develop an understanding of important research about vocabulary instruction in PreK-2 and to learn an array of practical strategies for supporting students' vocabulary development.

By the end of the course, you will:

- Know the role vocabulary knowledge plays in early literacy.
- Analyze vocabulary-related standards for speaking and listening in PreK-2 and reading and writing in the primary grades.
- Know the relationship among the written vocabularies of reading and writing and the oral vocabularies of listening and speaking.

- Analyze and apply guidelines for selecting words to bring to the attention of PreK-2 students.
- Apply a variety of vocabulary strategies that are appropriate for different purposes and age levels.
- Incorporate effective instructional strategies in your professional teaching practice to improve student learning.

**Learner Outcomes (performance based)**

Students completing Teaching Vocabulary, Word Recognition, and Meaning (grades PreK – 2) will be able to:

- Evaluate their own instructional practices with respect to NCTE/IRA standards and their state’s standards.
- Assess and evaluate students’ word knowledge.
- Design two lesson plans that incorporate effective vocabulary teaching strategies, as well as strategies for teaching in a diverse classroom.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of their lesson plan implementation.

**Outline of Content and Assignments**

After previewing the documents in the Course Information area, learners will proceed to the Course Content area to complete the following six sessions, working through each session in order. Throughout the sessions, learners are asked to articulate their ideas in various forms: they are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and experiences in their online journal; the weekly discussions in the discussion forum are designed to allow learners to glean information from other learners’ experiences.

Learners in this course will choose to complete two of the rubric assignments (Analysis of State and NCTE/IRA Standards Rubric Assignment, the Level of Word Knowledge: A Study of One Student Rubric, Book Reading Planning Guide Rubric) with the final project with a reflection paper. As a final project, learners will develop one of two lesson plans incorporating the different strategies for vocabulary teaching learned throughout the course. They will also write a reflection paper about the experience.

This course is designed to address the standards set forth by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA) which makes recommendations on content, classroom practice, and guidelines for effective early reading programs. In Session 1 of this course, learners will read NCTE/IRA and their own state standards related to the importance of vocabulary instruction.

This course also addresses several of the ISTE NETS\*T for teachers, including:

- Use technology to enhance the curriculum.
- Use technology to assess student learning.
- Use technology resources to engage in ongoing professional development and lifelong learning.
- Continually evaluate and reflect on professional practice to make informed decisions regarding the use of technology in support of student learning.
- Use technology to communicate and collaborate with peers, parents, and the larger community in order to nurture student learning.

**Session 1: Introduction to Vocabulary Development and Teaching PreK-2**

Learners will:

- Analyze their own expectations for this course by setting professional goals.
- Analyze their prior knowledge of this topic by generating specific questions about this topic.
- Reflect on their teaching practices related to oral language and vocabulary development after completing the self-assessment instrument adapted from “Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children.”

- Discuss the most important practices in promoting vocabulary and language development included in the self-assessment instrument adapted from “Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children.”
- Evaluate their own instructional practices with respect to NCTE/IRA standards and his or her state’s standards by completing a graphic organizer.

Read

- “Language Development from Age 4 to 5” from PBS Parents <http://www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopment/language-4to5.html>
- “Language Development from Age 5 to 6” from PBS Parents <http://www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopment/language-5to6.html>
- “Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children,” by the National Association for the Education of Young Children
- “Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read,” from the book, *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*
- NCTE/IRA Standards 1, 3 & 4
- “Standard 3: Language Use and Conventions,” from New Standards Speaking and Listening Committee’s *Speaking and Listening for Preschool through Third Grade*
- “Standard 3: Reading Habits – Vocabulary,” from New Standards Speaking and Listening Committee’s *Speaking and Listening for Preschool through Third Grade*

Write in online journal

- Reflect on expectations for the course.
- Reflect on past teaching experiences and/or readings they have already done related to vocabulary development.
- Reflect and set goals to strengthen their teaching practice.

Participate in an online discussion

- Introduce themselves to other learners
- Respond to: “Looking at the practices included in the self-assessment, which do you believe are the most important in promoting vocabulary and language development?”

Complete activities and assignments

- Complete an online graphic organizer to analyze the alignment between their state standards and the NCTE/IRA standards

Session 2: Exploring Issues in Vocabulary Development and Instruction

Learners will:

- Reflect on students’ levels of word knowledge after analyzing student performances from an interactive activity.
- Discuss their analyses of student word knowledge through online discussions at multiple times throughout the session.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of different techniques teachers may use to promote vocabulary development by responding to specific prompts in the online journal.
- Assess a student’s level of word knowledge by conducting a mini case study of that student.

Read

- “How do people learn words from context? And what does it mean to “know” a word?” from the book, *Vocabulary Development*
- Series of transcripts
- “Vocabulary Instruction: Concerns and Visions,” from *The Reading Teacher*
- “General principles for teaching words, “from *Vocabulary development*

Write in online journal

- Reflect on ways to categorize the breadth and depth of students' vocabulary knowledge after using an interactive to analyze a series of transcripts.
- Reflect on various kinds of techniques for fostering students' in-depth knowledge.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss a student's vocabulary knowledge in-depth after using an interactive to analyze the student's transcript.

Complete activities and assignments

- Word Knowledge interactive
- Levels of Word Knowledge: A Study of One Student Assignment (or the assignment in Session 4)

Session 3: Recommend Practices for Direct Vocabulary Instruction for Students PreK-2

Learners will:

- Discuss the criteria used to select and teach words directly.
- Analyze a video clip of a direct instructional technique by describing how the teacher's instruction furthered students' understanding of words and their meanings.
- Design one lesson that directly teach selected vocabulary using direct instruction techniques.
- Evaluate the value of using technology to support vocabulary learning by reflecting on their reviews of interactive stories.

Read

- "Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read," from the book, *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*
- "Vocabulary Instruction in a Balanced Reading Program," from *The Reading Teacher*
- "Technology and the Building Blocks for Teaching Students to Read: Vocabulary Instruction," from the NEIRTEC report, *Technology and Teaching Children to Read*

Write in online journal

- Respond to questions about the vocabulary instruction technique demonstrated in the video.
- Reflect on the value of using technology to support vocabulary learning in their classrooms.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss the different criteria for selecting words to teach.

Complete activities and assignments

- Watch a video of a second grade teacher's vocabulary lesson.
- Explore the following Web sites:
  - Between the Lions: Stories
  - Clifford the Big Red Dog: Stories
  - It's a Big Big World: Interactive Stories
- Complete one lesson plan focusing on direct instruction of vocabulary.

Session 4: Teaching Vocabulary Through Conversation and Read-Alouds

Learners will:

- Reflect on specific practices that promote conversation and vocabulary acquisition through your online journal.
- Discuss the most important characteristic of teacher-student interactions in vocabulary development.

- Analyze a video clip of a read-aloud by describing the instructional strategies used in your online journal.
- Apply understanding of anchored-word instruction by completing a book reading planning guide.

Read

- “Fostering Language and Literacy in Classrooms and Homes,” from *Young Children*
- “Much more than the ABC’s: The early stages of reading and writing” from *The National Association for the Education of Young Children*.
- “Bringing Words to Life,” from the book, *Bringing Words to Life*
- Reading and Language Web site (not required)

Write in online journal

- Reflect on how the research findings on high quality school environments and vocabulary development will affect their teaching practices.
- Respond to questions about the video while keeping in mind the effective vocabulary instruction practices from the readings.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss the important characteristics of a teacher-child relationship in connection with vocabulary development as a goal.

Complete activities and assignments

- Watch a video of a second grade read-aloud session.
- Complete a book reading planning guide assignment (or the assignment in Session 2).

Session 5: Supporting Culturally and Linguistically-Diverse Students

Learners will:

- Discuss new assumptions teachers should keep in mind when teaching students from diverse backgrounds.
- Reflect on how reading and talking about quality children’s literature supports the acquisition of oral and written vocabulary of diverse students.
- Evaluate the assessment practices of English language learners used in their practice and school.
- Analyze a video clip of a content area discussion at the kindergarten level by describing the word knowledge of a diverse group of students and making recommendations for further instruction.
- Synthesize learning about vocabulary instruction by designing one additional lesson plan.

Read

- “Transforming Deficits Myths about Learning, Language, and Culture,” from the book, *Literacy Instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*
- “What Early Childhood Educators Need to Know: Developing Effective Programs for Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Children and Families,” from *Young Children*
- “Ensuring Reading Success for African-American Children,” from the book, *Love to Read: Essays in Developing and Enhancing Early Literacy Skills in African American Children*

Write in online journal

- Reflect on how the readings will impact their teaching practice.
- Respond to questions about the video and suggest recommendations for the teacher featured in the video.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss the implications and the assumptions put forth in the article “Transforming Deficit Myths about Learning, Language and Culture” for promoting the word knowledge of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Complete activity and assignment

- Watch a video of a kindergarten teacher in a diverse classroom.
- Implement the lesson plans developed in the previous session.
- Critique and revise the lesson plan developed in the previous session.

Additional resources (not required)

- Corner Stones
- “The Issues: Adapting the Curriculum to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners”
- “The Issues: Behavioral Concerns within Inclusive Classrooms”

Session 6: Synthesis of Learning about Vocabulary

Learners will:

- Assess learning in this course by comparing prior knowledge to acquired knowledge in a journal activity.
- Analyze the learning experience in this course by discussing and reflecting on professional goals and expectations.

Read

- “Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read,” from the book, *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*

Write in online journal

- Reflect on the knowledge acquired in the course.
- Reflect on how the learning experiences from this course compare with their goals and expectations.

**Final Project**

Learners will submit a final project for Session 6. The final project includes two elements:

1. One lesson plan that include a wide range of teaching strategies, environment supports, and approaches to assessment.
2. A 500-750 word paper (1-2 pages) that describes the experience implementing the lesson and includes:
  - Reflection on how the “reality” of the lesson differed from what they expected.
  - Any specific changes they would make to the plan based on their use of it.

**Schedule**

This course is scheduled to take approximately 30 hours to complete readings, activities, video, assignments, reflections and a final project.

**Requirements**

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments
- Maintain an online journal
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge
- Be self-directed and self-motivated

- Ask for assistance when they need it

**Materials** (hardware, software, plug-ins)

Technical Requirements:

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail

**Academic Dishonesty Policy**

To be inserted by university institution only

**Evaluation**

This course can be taken for graduate credit on a pass/fail basis, or for a letter grade and graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.

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