

## Example of a Six-Step Routine for Vocabulary Instruction

by Dr. Jennifer Schnakenberg

**Step 1** tells us to have students say the word. In order to do this, I like to say the word aloud and then ask students to echo, or repeat the word. I do this several times so that students are comfortable with producing the word and *all* of its sounds. Then, I show them the word. I like to use a word card, but I know some teachers use a PowerPoint presentation or write the word on the board. Regardless, the students will need to see the word spelled out so that they can “read” the word. I reread the word to students and have them echo at least three more times so that by the time we are ready to move to Step 2, students have produced the new vocabulary word at least six times. As you know, if students are not ever asked to produce new words, the likelihood that they will ever say or learn the words diminishes significantly.

**Step 2** is to provide a definition of the word, using student-friendly explanations and visuals. In order to find definitions that my students can comprehend, I use websites that offer definitions for kids (e.g., [www.ideoonline](http://www.ideoonline.com) & [www.wordcentral.com](http://www.wordcentral.com)) and student dictionaries that I have in my classroom. The more accessible I can make the word meaning, the more likely it is that my students will use the word and retain the word meaning. I use visuals as often as I can with words that have concrete meanings. If my students can act out words, I have them do that as well. With more abstract words, I am careful that the pictures are not too confusing or convoluted for my students to make the necessary connections.

**Step 3** is where I have students discuss what is known about the word. It is important that in Step 2, I have been very explicit about the word meaning and have brought in any information that will help my students connect the new vocabulary to something that they know and can make sense of as they connect it to something else. If I have done a great job on Step 2, Step 3 is a place where my students can talk about their connections with the word and meaning (and visuals, if applicable). I usually have my students work in partners so that they can Think-Turn-Talk during Step 3. This means that I have them **Think** about what I have introduced about the new vocabulary word in Step 2, **Turn** to their partner, and **Talk** about what they know about the word. Think-Turn-Talk is a wonderful routine that I use often in my class. Using it during this explicit vocabulary routine is a great way to facilitate understanding, model sharing between students, and listen to connections that students are making with the new word.

**Step 4** tells us to provide examples and nonexamples of the word. This is where I spend time providing students the ways that the word can be correctly used and also including synonyms for the word, as appropriate. The best use of my time in Step 4 is to make sure that I am showing ways that the word connects to other ideas, concepts, and skills that the students know and understand. The best way to help students retain new vocabulary learning is to connect it to their background and prior knowledge about ideas, concepts, and skills related to the new vocabulary. It is important that we do not overload students with too many nonexamples in this step of the process. In some cases, nonexamples lend themselves to making important distinctions for students as they work to comprehend a word. The caution here is that if there are too many nonexamples provided, students will tend to remember the nonexamples as examples rather than have a meaningful and true understanding of the target word.

*During this step, I am careful to use the word in the same form in which I introduced it and defined it. It is not helpful to our students if we start using morphological variations of words at this point in the direct instruction process. For example, if the target word that we have taught up to this point is *discover*, then it is important that we do not start using similar words like *discovery*, *discovers*, or *discovered*.*

**Step 5** is to engage in deep-processing activities by asking questions, using graphic organizers, or having students act out the word. This step CANNOT be skipped if students are going to have the necessary *meaningful instructional encounters* with the target word. This step in the routine requires connections to be made explicit within, between, and among words so that students not only see how these words connect, but also how they can use these words in a meaningful way. If we think back to the example with the target word *tardy*, we might ask our students when they would be considered *tardy*, how often they have been *tardy* throughout the year, what the consequences are for being *tardy*, and how many times they plan on being *tardy* for the remainder of the school year. To take this Step 5 one level up, we would ask students to tell us if it is easier to be *tardy* than it is to be on time for school and why or if it is easier to be *tardy* than absent from school and why. When students are asked to engage in conversations using the target word and then are asked to clarify, quantify, compare, and contrast the target word with other words or concepts, then they are being asked to truly process the vocabulary word at a deeper level, thereby engaging in *meaningful instructional encounters*.

**Step 6** asks that we provide scaffolds so that students can create powerful sentences with the new word. We say that powerful sentences are seven words and up (7-Up sentences). We can represent this idea by bringing in a 7-Up bottle and placing it in the classroom. When students provide us with powerful sentences, we remind them that they have reached the goal of 7-Up. When they fall short of the seven-word goal, we remind them with the visual of the bottle that they are close, but not quite there with this idea of seven words and up. To scaffold sentences for our students, we provide them with a sentence stem as we work them toward thinking about powerful sentences that illustrate their understanding of the target word. With the word *tardy*, we might provide the sentence stem, *I would be counted tardy if...* This way, students would have six words to start with and would be successful meeting the seven-word goal. We could also provide the stem, *I would not be tardy if...* again helping them reach the goal of creating powerful sentences by setting them up for success.

# Steps for Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Steps	Tips														
1. Have students <b>say</b> the word.															
2. Provide a definition of the word using <b>student-friendly</b> explanations and <b>visuals</b> .	Use a sticky note to help plan your instruction. 														
3. Have students discuss what is <b>known</b> about the word.															
4. Provide <b>examples</b> and <b>nonexamples</b> of the word.															
5. Engage in <b>deep-processing activities</b> by asking <b>questions</b> , using <b>graphic organizers</b> , or having <b>students act</b> out the word.	<p>Choose a deep-processing word from the box. Using a sticky note, plan questions and/or activities that incorporate the word. </p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1000 1192 1349 1472"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Deep Processing Words</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Compare</td> <td>Decide</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Categorize</td> <td>Justify</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Design</td> <td>Create</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contrast</td> <td>Verify</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rate</td> <td>Imagine</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recommend</td> <td>Predict</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Deep Processing Words		Compare	Decide	Categorize	Justify	Design	Create	Contrast	Verify	Rate	Imagine	Recommend	Predict
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6. <b>Scaffold</b> students to <b>create powerful sentences</b> with the new word.	Remember the <div data-bbox="902 1591 1263 1682" style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <b>“Seven-Up” Rule:</b> </div> Powerful sentences are seven words and up!														

# Rutina de Instrucción Explícita Vocabulario

Pasos	Ideas														
<p>1. Pedir a los estudiantes <b>que digan</b> la palabra.</p>															
<p>2. Proveer una definición de la palabra usando <b>explicaciones a nivel de los estudiantes e ilustraciones.</b></p>	<p>Pueden usar una nota adhesible para ayudar a planear su instrucción.</p> 														
<p>3. Pedir a los estudiantes que discutan lo que <b>saben</b> sobre la palabra.</p>															
<p>4. Dar <b>ejemplos y contra-ejemplos</b> de la palabra.</p>															
<p>5. Utilizar <b>actividades de procesamiento intensivo;</b> haciendo <b>preguntas,</b> usando <b>organizadores gráficos,</b> o <b>dramatizando</b> la palabra.</p>	<p>Escoge una palabra. Usando una nota adhesible, planea preguntas y/o actividades que incorporen la palabra.</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="992 1192 1341 1503"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Palabras de procesamiento intensivo</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Comparar</td> <td>Decidir</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Categorizar</td> <td>Justificar</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Diseñar</td> <td>Hacer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contrastar</td> <td>Verificar</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Calificar</td> <td>Imaginar</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recomendar</td> <td>Predecir</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Palabras de procesamiento intensivo		Comparar	Decidir	Categorizar	Justificar	Diseñar	Hacer	Contrastar	Verificar	Calificar	Imaginar	Recomendar	Predecir
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<p>6. Ayudar a los estudiantes a <b>crear oraciones poderosas</b> con la palabra nueva.</p>	<p>Acordarse de la regla</p> <div data-bbox="902 1633 1263 1724" style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>“Siete o Más”</b></p> </div> <p>¡Las oraciones poderosas tienen siete palabras o más!</p>														