

CHAPTER 3

Explicit and Extended Vocabulary Instruction

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What should be included in explicit vocabulary instruction?
- How should teachers implement instruction before, during, and after reading?
- How can teachers extend instruction throughout the day?

During read-aloud time, Ms. Adrisi read the book *Chugga, Chugga, Choo, Choo*, by Kevin Lewis (2001), to her kindergarten class. In the book, a toy train climbs up mountains, high and steep, and chugs through valleys, low and deep. Before, during, and after reading, Mrs. Adrisi focused on the words *steep*, *mountain*, *deep*, and *valley*. She defined the words and used pictures and gestures to illustrate them. She even had her students act out climbing up a steep mountain and chugging through a deep valley. Later, on the playground, Mrs. Adrisi couldn't help but smile when she heard one of her students say, "I'm gonna climb up the rock wall. It's so steep!"

When you think of explicit instruction, you may think of "skill drills." In fact, a lot of teachers we have talked with cringe when we use the term "explicit instruction" because it can be associated with boring and tedious scripted lesson delivery. However, explicit instruction, when done well, can be fun and engaging. It can also serve to support children as they develop independence. In this chapter, we focus on characteristics of explicit vocabulary instruction and describe ways you can incorporate explicit vocabulary instruction into your regular read-aloud routines. We also discuss the importance of extending instruction beyond read-alouds and reinforcing vocabulary throughout the day in prekindergarten through second-grade classrooms.

Characteristics of Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

The model of explicit instruction that provides ongoing support as students gain independence is called the gradual release of responsibility (Duke & Pearson, 2008). At first, teachers explain and model. Then, teachers provide students with highly supported guided practice. Once students begin to show proficiency with the instructional target, teachers begin to take away some of the support and allow students to become increasingly independent. The gradual release of responsibility model has been applied most widely in the area of comprehension, but it can be used in the area of vocabulary as well. (See Figure 3.1.)

At first, when teachers introduce new words, they provide definitions, explain the meaning of the words in context, and offer examples of how the words could be used in other contexts. They also focus on how words are pronounced or spelled.¹ This part of the explicit instruction process can be highly supportive and lots of fun if teachers use visuals and pantomimes to explain words and interesting examples to which children can relate. Next, they provide supported opportunities for children to use the words. For example, they might provide cloze sentences (i.e., fill-in-the-blank sentences) or ask closed questions (i.e., forced choice) about

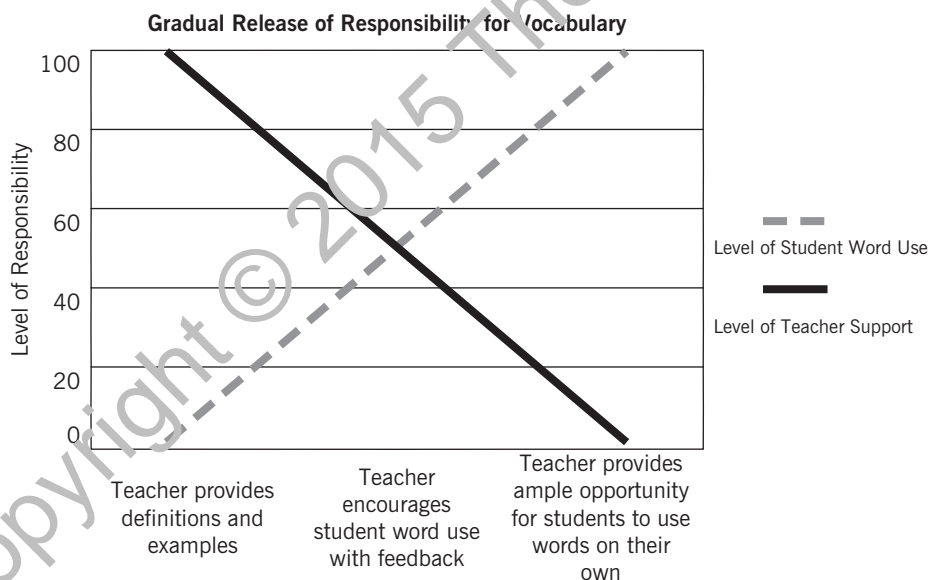


FIGURE 3.1. Gradual release of responsibility for vocabulary.

¹Note, however, that vocabulary instruction should not be confused with spelling instruction. Knowing how to pronounce or spell words helps students remember them, but spelling instruction should be focused on letter-sound patterns and vocabulary instruction should be focused on meaning. The only time that spelling and vocabulary instruction should completely overlap is when the spelling of a word (i.e., including prefixes and suffixes) is related to its meaning.

word use in context so students can practice their word knowledge with support. Finally, teachers can provide opportunities for students to use the words themselves across contexts so they can gain independence in using the words on their own. At first, students may gain receptive knowledge of words and be able to understand them when they hear them, but over time they will gain expressive knowledge of the words and be able to use them productively. With lots of repeated practice, students' word knowledge gradually moves from shallow to deep, and the words become part of their personal vocabulary.

Research has converged on a set of practices that can be used throughout explicit instruction before, during, and after read-alouds and during instruction beyond read-alouds. These practices have been included for interventions shown to be effective at supporting children's vocabulary learning (e.g., Beck & McKeown, 2007; Coyne et al., 2009; Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005; Silverman, 2007b). Bringing together instructional practices used in explicit vocabulary instruction across studies, Silverman (2007a) developed and evaluated a multidimensional vocabulary program (MVP) that included instructional practices meant to call attention to various aspects of words and support children in engaging with words in different ways. The instructional practices we present in Figure 3.2 and discuss herein are based on the practices outlined in the MVP model. (Note that all children who participated in the MVP gained in word learning, and ELL children who participated in the program began to catch up to their peers in general vocabulary knowledge.) Next we describe each practice in more detail.

Say the Word for Students and Have Them Say It Back

Children need to make a connection between how a word sounds and what it means. They need to hear the correct pronunciation of the word, and then they need to practice saying it themselves. Hearing and saying the word will help

Say the word for students and have them say it back.	Provide a comprehensible definition of the word.	Provide examples of the word across contexts.
Show the printed word on a word card and have students attend to the letters and sounds in words.	Multidimensional Vocabulary Instruction	Guide children to analyze how the word is used in context and how it is related to other words.
Show actions, gestures, pictures, and props to illustrate the word.	Provide repeated exposure and review to reinforce word learning across contexts.	Encourage children to use the word in new contexts on their own.

FIGURE 3.2. Practices of multidimensional vocabulary instruction. Based on Silverman (2007b).

children remember the word over time, and it will give them a phonological representation of the word with which to associate the meaning of the word. First, teachers need to call attention to the words they are saying so children know which word is the target word they should be learning. To do this, teachers can call children's attention to their mouth with a hand signal that communicates, "look and listen." Having joint attention where the teacher and the children are focused on the same thing can help cue students in learning a new word. Next, teachers can say the word slowly (but not so slowly that the word becomes distorted) with clear articulation. For children who need extra time to process the sounds they hear, slowing down speech slightly when introducing a new word can help them hear all of the sounds in the word. Finally, teachers can have children say the word themselves. Choral response, when all of the children respond together, allows everyone to have a chance to participate. Teachers can look around the room to make sure everyone said the word and to make sure it looks like they said it correctly. If needed, teachers can repeat the word a couple more times and have children do the same. Through this process, teachers are supporting children as they establish a phonological representation of the word at hand, which will help them remember the word as they learn. Here's an example of how a teacher might introduce the word *vehicle*, which she is teaching in a unit on transportation:

TEACHER: The word we are going to learn today is (*pause*) *vehicle*. Look and listen as I say that word again: *vehicle*. Listen to me say it one more time: *vehicle*. Now your turn. Say *vehicle*.

STUDENTS: *Vehicle*.

TEACHER: Say it again.

STUDENTS: *Vehicle*.

TEACHER: One last time.

STUDENTS: *Vehicle*.

Show the Printed Word on a Word Card and Have Students Attend to the Letters and Sounds in Words

Even though many of the words teachers introduce to young children for vocabulary learning are beyond their decoding ability, displaying the written word helps children attend to the word and gives them an initial sense of how the word is printed in text. Children in kindergarten may be able to read some words and attend to the initial letters and sounds in the words on word cards. First and second graders may actually be able to read some of the words introduced. Regardless, even for prekindergarten children, showing the word on a word card can help them attend to the word and make the connection between words they hear and

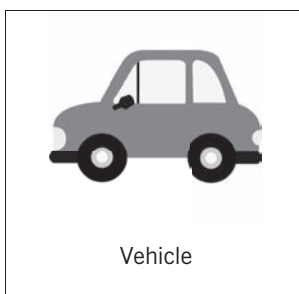


FIGURE 3.3. Vehicle word card. Image Copyright 2013 by YenzHautArt. Used with permission.

words that are in the books their teachers are reading and they will, eventually, read themselves. Additionally, showing words on word cards helps children begin to establish an orthographic representation of the words they are learning, which will prime them to be able to read the words once their decoding skills have caught up with their vocabulary skills. The following is an example of how a teacher might explicitly introduce the word card, shown in Figure 3.3, for the target word, *vehicle*.

TEACHER: Take a look at my word card. This word says, “*Vehicle*.” What letter does the word *vehicle* start with? [Or, depending on the children’s level, teachers could say, “*Vehicle* starts with the letter V. What letter?”]

STUDENTS: V.

TEACHER: Yes, *vehicle* starts with /v/, /v/, V.

Display Pictures, Actions, Gestures, and Props to Illustrate the Word

Combined with the phonological and orthographic representation of the words, a visual representation of the word gives children an anchor on which to build their understanding of the word. For example, on the word card above, there is a prototypical example of a *vehicle*. While there are many other kinds of vehicles children can learn about and other uses of the word that children may encounter (i.e., air is a *vehicle* for sound, art is a *vehicle* for expression, and words are a *vehicle* for communication), the prototypical image is ideal for establishing a baseline for the word. Later, this image can jog students’ memory and help them connect new examples and uses of the word when they hear or see them. Teachers can also use actions or gestures to help children comprehend and remember the word. For example, they can teach children sign language for the word *car* to help them remember the word *vehicle*. Finally, teachers can use props to provide concrete examples of words that will help children remember the word and what it means.

Provide a Comprehensible Definition of the Word

When children first learn words, they need comprehensible input about what a word means. Dictionary definitions are likely incomprehensible for young learners, offering definitions that often include words that are too complex to understand or so vague that it is impossible to figure out what the word actually means. For example, the *American Heritage Dictionary* (www.ahdictionary.com) defines *vehicle* as “(a) a device or structure for transporting persons or things; a conveyance: a space vehicle or (b) a self-propelled conveyance that runs on tires; a motor vehicle.” For a child who doesn’t know what *device*, *structure*, *transport*, *conveyance*, or *self-propelled* means, this definition does nothing to elucidate its meaning. However, by rephrasing definitions in terms young children can understand, comprising only words that they already know in the context of a full explanation, teachers can help children begin to develop a decontextualized understanding of a word on which they will build over time. Creating these definitions is not always easy. We have found a few resources that can be used to support coming up with comprehensible definitions, although the definitions in these resources sometimes need to be modified even further to use only known words or concepts. In Figure 3.4 we provide definitions of *vehicle* from some of these resources.

Provide Examples and Encourage Children to Use the Word across Contexts

When introducing a word through picture books, referencing how the word was used in the book supports children in thinking about word meaning in a familiar context. It also helps children connect the word to the bigger picture of the story or subject at hand. Beyond the context of the book, providing children with examples of how the word can be used in other contexts and connecting the word to examples in children’s personal lives can help them develop a rich understanding of the word and how it is used across contexts. In the following example, the teacher connects the word to the context of the book, gives examples in additional contexts that might be relevant to children, and encourages children to connect the word to something in their personal lives. The teacher in this example is referencing *My Truck Is Stuck*, by Kevin Lewis and Daniel Kirk (2006). Although the

Definition of <i>Vehicle</i>	Source
Something used to carry and move people or things.	kids.wordsmyth.net/wild
Something used to transport persons or goods.	www.wordcentral.com
A machine with an engine that carries people or things from place to place.	<i>Collins COBUILD Student’s Dictionary</i> (Sinclair, 2005)

FIGURE 3.4. Varying definitions for the word *vehicle*.

book doesn't specifically use the word *vehicle*, the teacher uses the book to teach the word *vehicle*. As we noted in Chapter 2, books can include target words or serve as jumping-off points for teaching target words in context.

TEACHER: In the book, the truck driver had a problem. His *vehicle* broke down. Drivers in other *vehicles* tried to help. Some of the *vehicles* we saw were cars, buses, and, finally, a tow truck. This book reminds me of a time when my car broke down. Lots of *vehicles* passed by while I was waiting for the tow truck. I saw a motorcycle, a concrete mixer, and a garbage truck. What I needed was a tow truck. There are lots of *vehicles* in our neighborhood. What are some of the *vehicles* you saw on your way to school today?

Within this short explanation, the teacher connected the word to its immediate context (i.e., the truck in the story *My Truck Is Stuck*), encouraged use of the word in other contexts with which students are likely familiar (e.g., seeing cars/trucks on the road), and prompted students to provide their own example of the target word (i.e., vehicles seen on the way to school).

While providing examples is an important way to help children generalize their word learning beyond the immediate context of the book, teachers should limit the amount of time spent simply listing examples, unless it is necessary to give lots of examples in order to highlight the nuances of a word's meaning. We have noticed that sometimes teachers stray or allow their students to stray too far off topic without coming back to the target word at hand. For instance, one teacher we observed teaching the word *delivery* used the example of a time when she had pizza delivered to her home. Then she asked children about things they had had *delivered* to their homes. Children got so focused on what kinds of foods or packages they had gotten in the past that they forgot all about the word *delivery*. Therefore, it is important to support children's use of the word so they use it appropriately in new contexts and do not stray. Some children may need more structure and assistance to use words effectively. Below are some ways teachers can scaffold children's use of words.

Providing Sentence Frames

Like an oral "fill in the blank" teachers can provide students with a sentence frame and students can fill in the rest with either a word or an example. For children who are readers, teachers can write the sentence stem on a sentence strip or on the board for children to use as they provide their examples. Asking children to restate the sentence frame and use the target word can help structure their word use. The following example of a sentence stem could support children in using the word *vehicle*.

TEACHER: Say, “A vehicle I saw this morning was a _____.”

Offering Closed Choices

When children aren’t sure how to use a word correctly, offering them choices can constrain the cognitive load required in figuring out when, where, and how to use words accurately. Here is an example of how a teacher might provide a closed choice for children to use the word *vehicle*.

TEACHER: What kind of vehicle did you see this morning, Marcus? Did you see a car or a truck?

STUDENT: Truck.

TEACHER: Can you say, “A vehicle I saw was a truck”?

STUDENT: A vehicle I saw was a truck.

Supporting Elaboration

To encourage children to think about how words can be used appropriately in context, teachers can support students in thinking beyond brief and general examples of using words by asking them to say more or explain their thinking. Here is an example of how a teacher might support elaboration in word use.

TEACHER: You said the vehicle you saw was a truck, Marcus. What kind of truck? Was it a dump truck or a fire truck?

STUDENT: A dump truck.

TEACHER: So the vehicle you saw was a dump truck? Vehicles move things from one place to another. What did the dump truck move from one place to another?

STUDENT: Dirt.

TEACHER: Yes, dump trucks are vehicles that move dirt from one place to another.

Another issue that we have noticed is that sometimes, when children are still trying to figure out what a word means and how to appropriately use the word in different contexts, they give answers that are partially or totally incorrect. Teachers often don’t know what to do in these cases. They don’t want to discourage children from trying out the word, but they also don’t want children to learn to use the word incorrectly. Thus, it is important for teachers to give timely, corrective feedback in a constructive and supportive way. Here are some feedback strategies for supporting word learning:

- *Clarifying.* If children use words incorrectly, it may be because they don't quite understand how to apply words. Providing additional explanation about when, where, and how to use words can help children figure out how to use words appropriately. Also, offering additional examples to demonstrate the correct way to use the word can be helpful.
- *Revoicing.* If children use words in a grammatically awkward way or if they need support to say more about a word, teachers can support them by simply revoicing what they said in a more accurate or elaborated way.
- *Affirming.* When children use words correctly, they benefit from an indication that they used the word correctly. Such affirmation will encourage them to use words in the same way in the future.

The following exchange between a teacher and a student about what vehicle the student saw on the way to school demonstrates how feedback can be helpful for supporting word use.

STUDENT: I saw a mailbox on the way to school today.

TEACHER: A mailbox? Is that a kind of vehicle? Let's think about that. A vehicle is something that is used to move people or things from one place to another. Can a mailbox move? [clarifying]

STUDENT: Uh, no.

TEACHER: Can you think of something that has to do with mail that does move? A mail _____. [scaffolding using a sentence frame]

STUDENT: Oh, a mail truck moves.

TEACHER: Yes, a mail truck is a vehicle because it is used to move mail from one place to another. [affirming and revoicing]

Supporting children in using words and providing feedback on their word use can be an invaluable way to help them adopt words into their own personal vocabularies for future use in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Guide Children to Analyze How the Word Is Used in Context and How It Is Related to Other Words

In order to go beyond understanding words at a surface level, children need to analyze words more deeply. By thinking about how words may or may not apply in given contexts and about how words are related to other words, children can begin to understand the finer nuances of what words mean. This analytic thinking about words helps children grow in depth of knowledge of the particular words under study and in depth of knowledge about how words work in general. There are at least three ways, which we discuss next, that teachers can support children

in analyzing words. In all of these approaches, asking children to explain their thinking is a critical step in helping them be analytic about words. And, in all of these approaches, teacher feedback is critical to ensuring that children understand the underlying nuances about words.

Examples and Non-Examples

Teachers can give children examples and non-examples and have children decide which is which. In doing this, children have to think about what does and does not belong conceptually with the target word.

TEACHER: We have been talking a lot about road vehicles. Now I want to ask you about some other things, and I want you to decide whether they are vehicles or not. Thumbs up if you think they are vehicles and thumbs down if you think they are not vehicles. An airplane?

STUDENTS: *(Some have thumbs up and some have thumbs down.)*

TEACHER: Maria, you had your thumb down. Why do you think an airplane is not a vehicle?

STUDENT: 'Cause it's not like a car.

TEACHER: Well, a vehicle is something that moves people or things from one place to another. Does an airplane do that?

STUDENT: Yes, in the sky.

TEACHER: That's right, an airplane is a vehicle because it moves people and things from one place to another in the sky. Cars and airplanes are both vehicles.

Context

Teachers can offer contexts and ask, "Does that make sense?" To respond, children have to consider the interaction between the meaning of the word and the given context.

TEACHER: I am going to give you a sentence with the word *vehicles* in it. Then, I want you to decide whether it makes sense. Say "yes" if you think it makes sense and "no" if you think it does not make sense. I used my vehicle to cook pancakes this morning. Does that make sense: yes or no?

STUDENTS: *(Some say yes and some say no.)*

TEACHER: Daniel, you said yes. Why do you think that makes sense?

STUDENTS: Maybe you cooked pancakes in an RV while you were driving to school?

TEACHER: Oh, I wasn't thinking of that. An RV is a kind of vehicle because it moves people from place to place. RVs are mobile homes and they have kitchens inside so you can cook while you are on the road. I don't have an RV, but I guess I could make pancakes in an RV while someone else was driving.

As shown in this example, sometimes children's answers make sense from their point of view. Asking them to explain and giving them feedback can help both the student and the teacher clarify their understanding.

Related Words

Thinking of other words that are related to target words can help children develop their semantic network. By building connections between words, children are able to strengthen their memory for words so that when they hear or read a word in the environment they will remember what it means in relation to other words in the context. In some cases, teachers can focus on antonyms and synonyms. In other cases, teachers can focus more generally on words related to the target word. For example, when children think of vehicles, they might think of *wheels*, *driving*, and *traffic*.

TEACHER: So, we are learning about vehicles. What other words do you think of when you think about vehicles?

STUDENT: Cars.

STUDENT: Wreck.

STUDENT: Tires

STUDENT: Airplanes . . .

TEACHER: What a great brainstorm of vehicle words. Let's organize these vehicle words into a web. We can choose types of vehicles from our list and organize them by how they travel. For example, a car travels on a road. So, our first category is vehicles that travel by road.

Note that the chart in Figure 3.5 includes a finished word web in which words have been organized by the mode of travel the vehicle uses. This activity is productive because it elicits prior knowledge students may have about vehicles and provides a clear structure for organizing those discrete thoughts. In many instances, learning the organizational structure itself will be a key step in understanding the multiple facets of a single word. This chart can be posted after the initial brainstorming and used during other contexts to spark new ideas. (For instance, during an independent writing activity, students could fill in a sentence stem with a vehicle

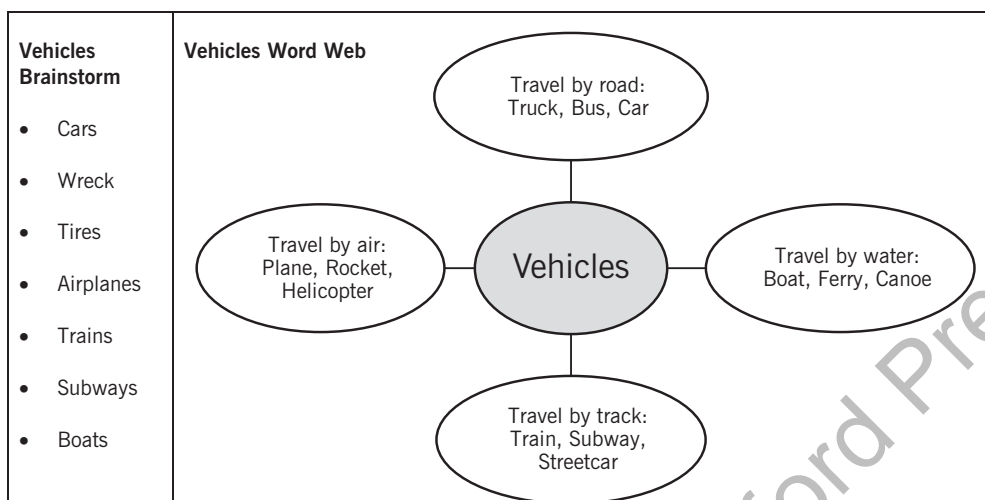


FIGURE 3.5. Example of brainstorming and word webbing for the word *vehicles*.

and the type of mode it uses to travel. “A vehicle that moves on _____ is a _____.” “A vehicle that moves on water is a boat.”)

Provide Repeated Exposure and Review to Reinforce Word Learning across Contexts

Given that word learning takes time, children need a lot of review and reinforcement to learn words. Teachers can accomplish this by doing repeated readings of the same book and reviewing those words in the book several times across a week, a month, or even a year. Teachers can also read other books to children that either contain the target word or offer contexts for using the target word. For example, after reading *My Truck Is Stuck*, teachers could read any of the books listed in Figure 3.6 (to name just a few). Each of these books features many different kinds of vehicles and could be used to reinforce children’s learning of the word *vehicle*.

Teachers can also reinforce word learning by structuring opportunities for students to encounter and use the target words in activities throughout their day, week, and year. For example, prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers could add toy vehicles to the block, art, and dramatic play centers for children to use on their own. Or, first-grade and second-grade teachers could also implement more guided activities like a project in social studies about how vehicles can be used to get food from the farm to the grocery or to get mail from one part of the world to another to show how communities are interconnected. For students of any age, teachers could also extend instruction beyond the classroom by arranging a field

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bear on a Bike</i> (Blackstone, 1998) • <i>Chuck's Truck</i> (Anderson, 2006) • <i>Chugga-Chugga Choo-Choo</i> (Lewis, 1999) • <i>Dig Dig Digging</i> (Mayo, 2002); <i>Choo Choo Clickety-Clack!</i> (Mayo, 2004); or <i>Zoom, Rocket, Zoom</i> (Mayo, 2012) • <i>Little Blue Truck Leads the Way</i> (Schertle, 2009) • <i>The Trucker</i> (Weatherby, 2004) • <i>If I Built a Car</i> (Van Dusen, 2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lightship</i> (Floca, 2007); <i>The Racecar Alphabet</i> (Floca, 2003); and <i>Moonshot</i> (Floca, 2009) • <i>On the Go</i> (Morris, 1990) • <i>Rush Hour</i> (Loomis, 1996) • <i>Trains</i> (Barton, 1986); <i>Planes</i> (Barton, 1998); or <i>Boats</i> (Barton, 1998) • <i>Trains</i> (Gibbons, 1988); <i>The Bicycle Book</i> (Gibbons, 1995); <i>Trucks</i> (Gibbons, 1981); or <i>The Boat Book</i> (Gibbons, 1983)
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FIGURE 3.6. Sample reading list for a *vehicles and modes of transportation* unit.

trip to a museum where children can explore how *vehicles* have changed over time.

From small reminders to big projects, the main objective for teachers is to review words and reinforce word learning over time. To help teachers and students remember to use words, teachers can set up vocabulary word walls in their classrooms. While many teachers use word walls to support sight word learning, they can use picture word walls to support vocabulary learning by serving as a constant reminder to teachers and children to use target words on a regular basis.

Teachers can also make connections to target words in everyday routines. For example, the word *transportation* could be used on a classroom chart identifying the types of transportation children take to get home each afternoon. (See Figure 3.7.) It also serves a real purpose in the classroom (i.e., reminding teachers who goes to the bus line and who goes to the carpool line at the end of the day).

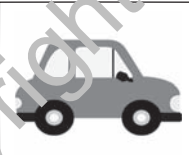
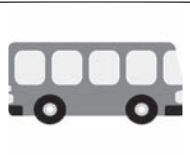


Our Modes of Transportation			
			
Car	Bus	Feet	Bike
Jacob Gabriella Ethan	Sophia Dylan Felipe Elizabeth	Ava Lorenzo Carla	Liam Elias Guadalupe

FIGURE 3.7. Example of a class transportation chart. Images Copyright 2013 by Yenz-HautArt. Used with permission.

Explicit Instruction through Read-Alouds and Beyond

Explicit instruction, including the practices we have noted, is most effective when it is connected to rich content and contexts and meaningful experiences. Read-alouds provide an ideal opportunity to introduce words to students because books have rich contexts and offer a shared experience in which to discuss words. Ideally, vocabulary can be introduced through prereading instruction that includes brief definitions and explanations. Then, when words are encountered in context, teachers can highlight words again and remind children of their meaning. After reading, teachers can help children expand their understanding of words by referring to them in the context of the book. Next teachers can help children deepen their knowledge by thinking about words in new and different contexts. Finally, teachers can provide opportunities for children to extend their knowledge of words through repeated readings and repeated practice of words as well as through activities in which children can apply their word knowledge independently. Extending word knowledge is especially practical in classrooms that use thematic units because students can apply their word knowledge across the day through interconnected lessons and activities beyond read-alouds. In the following sections, we outline how to implement the instructional practices we described before, during, and after read-alouds and through extension activities as well.

Vocabulary Instruction before Reading

While teachers may target as many as 8 to 12 words per week through repeated readings of books during read-aloud time, they should only focus on two or three key words during preteaching. We have noticed that when we have tried to teach any more than three words before reading, children get restless. They want to hear the book, so it is best to preteach essential words quickly and then get into the book. Good candidates for essential words are words that set up the theme for the book or words that are required for comprehension. These words can serve as anchors for other words that will be encountered as the book is read aloud. When teachers introduce words to students, they can provide rich information about the word so that it makes sense when encountered in context. However, such preteaching should be quick and to the point. If it is too drawn out, children will forget the words and the purpose for learning them before they even get to the book that they are reading. Brisk pacing when introducing words is a must. The five steps listed in Figure 3.8 can be done in a brief 2-minute overview.

The following is an example of how the prereading vocabulary routine could be used to introduce the word *travel(s)(ed)(er)* from the book *What Do Wheels Do All Day?*, by April Jones Prince (2006), which shows how wheels are used in a wide variety of daily activities.

1. The teacher pronounces the word and has students say the word.
2. The teacher shows the word on a word card.
3. The teacher provides a picture or gesture representing the word.
4. The teacher provides a comprehensible definition of the word.
5. The teacher previews how the word will be used in context.

FIGURE 3.8. Vocabulary routine to be implemented before reading.

TEACHER: Today we are going to read a book called *What Do Wheels Do All Day?* In this book, we are going to read that “Wheels carry *travelers*.” Put your thumbs up if you think you know what *travelers* are. Let’s talk about the word *travelers*. Listen to me say the word (*pause*) *travelers*. Now you say the word *travelers*.

STUDENTS: *Travelers*.

TEACHER: Look at the word *traveler* on my word card. (*Holds up a card with a picture of a boat carrying travelers with the word traveler written on it.*) *Tr-, tr-, traveler*. Let me read the definition. *Travelers* are people who go from one place to another. Look at the picture on this word card. Do you see the people on the boat? They are *travelers*. In the book you will see that *travelers* are going from one place to another on a bus.

Note that the teacher asked children to put their thumbs up or down to show whether or not they thought they knew the word. Here the teacher is doing a quick check, based on self-report of children’s knowledge before she teaches the word. However, she does not ask children to share what they know about the word. Sometimes, when teachers start off by asking children what they know about a word, children say things that are off track. Unfortunately, when other children hear the off track information, they can get off track too. In this case, teachers then have to reteach and then reteach the target word. For the purposes of pre-teaching, which should be quick and to the point, teachers should just give children the definitions of words and, by using the context of the book, model how to use the word appropriately.

Vocabulary Instruction during Reading

While teachers may not want to interrupt what they are reading the first time they read a text to children, when teachers read books again, they can stop to briefly define words in context while they are reading. In Figure 3.9 we list steps teachers can use to address words during reading, and in Figure 3.10 we show how teachers can build up over a 3-day period to deep discussions of words in context.

1. Teacher repeats the word, shows the word in the text, and refers to the pictures in the text if applicable.
2. Teacher repeats the child-friendly definition of the word.
3. Teacher explains and/or asks questions about how the word is used in context.

FIGURE 3.9. Vocabulary routine to be implemented during reading.

Discussing words in text affords children an opportunity to talk about words in the rich context of the book and helps children put the definitional and contextual information they are learning about words together. Sometimes teachers are concerned about other words besides target words that children may not know in a given text. If there are too many difficult words, the book might not be a good match for the audience, but in some cases there are a few words that children may not know that are not central to the theme or context of the book and, therefore, do not deserve to be target words. If these words are necessary for comprehension, teachers can very briefly define them without dwelling too much on the words that are not a priority. If the words are not necessary for comprehension and not target words, they can be skipped over altogether.

To address target words, teachers can call attention to words, offer definitions of words, and discuss words in context. Calling children's attention to words will help children notice them and think about what they might mean. Providing children with "just-in-time" information about words will help them understand the words as they are encountered. Briefly explaining how the words apply in the given context will help children see how the words are used and can build on their understanding of how to use the words across contexts for comprehension and communication. Here's an example of vocabulary instruction during reading with the target word *travelers*.

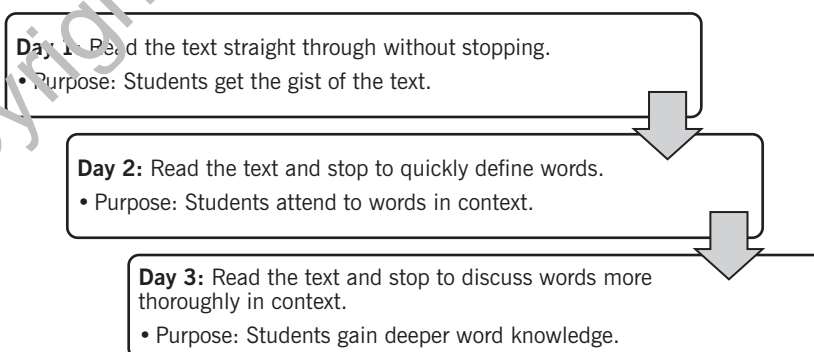


FIGURE 3.10. Sample progression of text reading across 3 days.

TEACHER: On this page it said, “Wheels carry *travelers*.” Here is the word *travelers*. Say it with me. *Travelers*. These are the *travelers*. (*Points to the people on the bus in the picture.*) Remember that *travelers* are people who go from one place to another. How can you tell that these people are *travelers*?

STUDENT: ‘Cause they’re on the bus.

While discussing words during reading is important for supporting children’s understanding in the context of the book at hand, it is important for teachers to keep during-reading vocabulary instruction brief and to the point. Even when children have heard books and been introduced to words previously, many children will lose focus if too much attention is paid to words during reading.

Vocabulary Instruction after Reading

Reminding children about the words that they are learning will help them solidify their word knowledge. Also, once they have heard the full context of the read-aloud book, children can get an even deeper understanding of how the word applies. Finally, discussing how all of the target words are related to the context can help children make connections between words, anchored in the content of the text they have been experiencing. In Figure 3.11 we list steps for vocabulary instruction after reading.

With every repetition, saying the word and showing a word card with a picture or using a gesture to illustrate the word will help children further develop a secure memory for the word. Repeating the definitions of the words over and over will help children remember the definitions later. Expanding children’s understanding of a word by talking about how it was used in the specific context of the text that was just read and in new contexts that are related can help children get a more generalized sense of the word. And encouraging children to use words to think critically about how a word is related to other words and to think about

1. The teacher says the word and shows the word on a word card with a picture or gesture representing the word.
2. The teacher repeats the child-friendly definition of the word.
3. The teacher explains how words are used across a variety of contexts.
4. The teacher provides opportunities for children to critically think about words (compare and contrast).
5. The teacher provides opportunities for children to use words with lots of scaffolding.

FIGURE 3.11. Vocabulary routine to be implemented after reading.

other contexts when they can use the word will help them understand where and when and how to use it. Here is how a teacher might address the word *traveler* after reading *What Do Wheels Do All Day?*

TEACHER: So, in our book today we read that “Wheels carry travelers.” Say that word *travelers* with me. *Travelers*. Now look at the word on our word card again. I will put it up on our word wall. What do you see in the picture that shows travelers?

STUDENTS: People on a boat.

TEACHER: Remember, travelers are people that go from one place to another. In the book, people were traveling by bus. Maybe they were going to visit a new place. If I were a traveler right now, I would want to travel from here to the beach. Where would you like to travel to? Say, “If I were a *traveler*, I would travel to _____.”

STUDENT: If I were a traveler, I’d go to Disney World.

TEACHER: Now I want you to think about some sentences with the word *traveler*. Thumbs up if my sentence makes sense and thumbs down if my sentence does not make sense.

1. Travelers get to see many places.
2. Travelers like to stay home.

Teachers should always ask a couple of children to explain their response. Note that for these analytic questions, there may not be a right answer. While the expected answers for the sentences above are thumbs up for (1) and thumbs down for (2), a child who puts thumbs down for (1) would be correct if he explains that some travelers travel to the same place over and over, and a child who puts thumbs up for (2) would be correct if she explains that some travelers don’t really like to travel but they have to travel for work. The correct answer isn’t as important as the depth of understanding children are developing through thinking analytically about words. Overall, the point of discussing words after reading is to dig deeper into word meaning and review words so that children can increase the breadth and depth of their word knowledge.

Extending Word Learning beyond Read-Alouds

Under natural circumstances, it could take a child a long time to encounter a taught word again. Children learn words incrementally over time, so they need repeated encounters with words to solidify their word knowledge and develop their ability to productively use words on their own when appropriate. Rather

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher provides ample opportunity for repeated exposure to words. 2. The teacher provides rich opportunities for children to use words across a variety of contexts. |
|---|

FIGURE 3.12. Practices for extended vocabulary instruction.

than wait for this process to unfold organically, teachers can structure systematic opportunities for children to encounter words again after their initial exposure to words. Once teachers have taught words during read-alouds, they can choose other books to read that include the word. If words are chosen thematically, this is likely to be an easy task. For example, as discussed earlier, if target words such as *depart*, *arrive*, *vehicle*, *passenger*, *delayed*, and *rapid* are all taught in connection to the theme of *travel* or *transportation*, teachers can readily find or create books, pictures, props, activities, games, and videos that will allow children to review these words simultaneously. In Figure 3.12, we offer tips for extending instruction beyond read-alouds.

Children need sufficient repetition of specific words in different contexts to gain an understanding of how they are used. Beyond the initial introduction of words during read-alouds, children need to see that words can be used in other contexts and applied in different ways. Next we provide a sampling of the kinds of activities teachers can use to extend word learning beyond read-aloud time. We have clustered the activities according to whether they are whole-class, small-group, peer-based, or independent activities, though many of these activities can be used across these organizational structures. Throughout the activities, teachers should remind children of the target word and encourage children to use the target word on their own.

Whole-Class Projects

Whole-class projects can be a great way to extend vocabulary learning beyond read-aloud time. Projects can vary from basic to more elaborate depending on how much time teachers want to devote to given words and concepts. When teachers can reinforce words across the content areas and support word learning through connections in language arts, social studies, science, and/or math, then more elaborate activities may be warranted. Since a primary goal of extension activities is for children to actively use words, projects that involve expression through speech, writing, art, or movement can be particularly helpful. Here are some ideas for class projects that might be relevant for the transportation example we have used throughout this chapter.

A Class Book

Each child in the class can contribute a page to the book about a different kind of *vehicle*, which can be added to the classroom library for all of the children to read and share throughout the year. Class books do double duty in that they afford both an opportunity for children to express their understanding of words and a resource for reviewing words in the future.

A Class Presentation

Each child could research, prepare, and give a presentation about a different mode of transportation. Conducting research, planning what to say, and delivering a presentation to peers or even to another class are authentic ways that children can use the target word and practice language skills.

A Class Mural

Each child could add to a mural about *transportation* and *traveling* that would be displayed in the hallway as a showcase of all they have learned in the unit. Leveraging children's artistic skills and encouraging children to collaborate on a joint project afford many opportunities for children to use the target word to communicate to and with others.

Other Ideas

Some class projects will be particular to the theme and words chosen for the unit. For the transportation theme, having children use different kinds of materials to make vehicles is an example of a kind of activity that might be particular to this theme.

In all these activities, teachers should make sure children attend to the target words (e.g., *vehicle* or *transportation*) and not just other related words that are not the academic words children need to learn for success in school (e.g., *bus*, *boat*). Also, teachers should make sure the activities don't take on a life of their own and become more elaborate and involved than necessary for vocabulary learning. Finally, teachers should plan activities that meet other instructional objectives as well as vocabulary so that children don't miss out on other important learning opportunities while doing vocabulary activities. It is hard for teachers to meet all of the objectives they need to address in early childhood and elementary classrooms, so strategic planning is incredibly important.

Small-Group Activities and Games

Small-group time provides an opportunity for teachers to work with a few children in a more personal way to support their skill development. While many teachers use small groups for phonemic awareness, phonics, and guided reading instruction, they often do not use small-group time to reinforce vocabulary. Given that in small groups children have more opportunities to talk and teachers can provide more focused guidance and feedback, teachers should consider small-group time as an ideal place to extend vocabulary learning. Here are some activities that can encourage word learning in the small-group setting.

Sorting Activities

Building on the word analysis portion of read-aloud lessons, teachers can support children in sorting words conceptually. Word sorting is a common activity for phonemic awareness and phonics, but comparing and contrasting words and placing words into categories can be supportive of vocabulary as well. For the transportation unit, teachers could have children sort pictures of *vehicles* and non-*vehicles* or objects that represent land, water, and air *vehicles*.

Word Webs

Relating words through semantic webs such as the one shown in Figure 3.5 can help children make connections among words. Having children explain how words are connected is an important part of word webbing. Teachers can have predetermined kinds of information for children to add to the web (e.g., a synonym, an example, and a non-example) or they can make it more open-ended. In a small group, all children should have the opportunity to contribute and add on to each others' ideas.

Small-Group Games

Children love to play games, and they often don't even realize they are learning when they play games in school. While games should never be used to introduce words to children, they are a great way to reinforce word learning. And it is optimal to use games during small-group time, when teachers can encourage children to use target words during the game and provide feedback as needed throughout the game. An example of a game that could be used for the transportation unit is a transportation board game. In this game, children have to choose a card from a pile. Cards include vehicles and non-vehicles. Vehicle cards include pictures of different types of vehicles that are slower or faster. If children pick a non-vehicle they lose their turn. If they pick a slow vehicle, they move one or two spaces (depending on the kind of vehicle). If they pick a fast vehicle, they move three or four spaces

(depending on the kind of vehicle). As children choose words and try to get to the destination first, teachers can encourage children to use transportation words such as *depart*, *arrive*, *delayed*, and *rapid*.

Peer-Based Activities and Games

Many of the small-group activities and games can be done in pairs after teachers have shown children what to do or how to play. But there are other activities that children can do with partners to reinforce word learning. For example, peers can look through and talk about the book read in class or the class book together. They can look at the pictures in other books and read them to each other. And they can do centers activities, discussed next, together as well. Peers can provide a lot of encouragement and support to help each other talk and use words. (We say more about peer-based activities in the next chapter.)

Independent Centers Activities

Teachers can arrange activities and games in centers for children to play with peers or alone. And teachers can structure additional centers activities so that children have the tools to play with the words they are learning in a variety of contexts. If children interact with concepts in a variety of different centers, they will learn about different ways to use words across contexts. In this way, they will have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of words taught in class.

Discovery Center

Placing objects and tools related to taught words for children to explore in a discovery center can be a way to encourage word learning. For example, teachers could put toy vehicles, an incline, and a timer in the discovery center, and children could discover which vehicles go fastest down the incline.

Block Area

Children can build intricate structures to represent their understanding of words and play with words with their hands. For example, teachers could encourage children to build roads and bridges and towns with blocks and demonstrate how vehicles could travel from one place to another.

Dramatic Play

Dramatic play in which children use props to act out words in real-life situations enables them to think about contexts in which target words apply. For example,

placing a kid-size sit-and-ride car in dramatic play so children can act out traveling to new places with their pretend family would be a great way to encourage them to pretend to be travelers.

Art Center

Children can use all kinds of different media to express their understanding of words. They can use clay and paint to depict different types of vehicles or make collages with magazine cutouts to illustrate different places they would like to visit as they travel.

Library Center

Providing a resource for children to explore lots of books on the vocabulary topic so they can think about how words are used across contexts will enable them to generalize their word knowledge beyond the texts they have read in class. Placing some of these books in the library center for children to explore would be a great way to encourage word learning.

Writing Center

Prompting children to write their own narratives and reports having to do with the theme and target words is a great way to encourage children to use words on their own. Posting word cards in the writing center so children can use the words for reference and posting story starters or sentence stems in the center for children to use for support can help children use the words effectively on their own. Very young children or children with limited writing skills can draw their ideas about the given theme and words and dictate to teachers what they would like for teachers to write. Teachers can set aside time each day for a couple of children to share their writing so they have an audience for their work. This gives children an opportunity to see how they can use the words on their own to express their ideas to others.

Planning for Explicit and Extended Instruction

Figure 3.13 is a lesson-planning checklist for before, during, and after reading as well as for extended vocabulary instruction. We have divided the checklist into steps for teachers' instruction and students' participation to clarify what teachers can do to provide explicit and extended instruction and how children should be actively engaged in explicit and extended instruction. Teachers can use this checklist to plan effective lessons with explicit and extended instruction to support children's acquisition of vocabulary breadth and depth.

Component	Steps for teacher instruction
Introduction	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce the theme and activate prior knowledge.
Before reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Pronounce the target word and have students say the word. <input type="checkbox"/> Show the word on a word card. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a picture or gesture representing the word. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a comprehensible definition of the word. <input type="checkbox"/> Preview how the word will be used in context.
During reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Repeat the word, show the word in the text, and refer to the pictures in the text if applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> Repeat the child-friendly definition of the word. <input type="checkbox"/> Explain and/or ask questions about how the word is used in context.
After reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Say the word and show the word on a word card with a picture or gesture representing the word. <input type="checkbox"/> Repeat the child-friendly definition of the word. <input type="checkbox"/> Explain how the word is used across a variety of contexts. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide opportunities for children to think critically about words (compare and contrast). <input type="checkbox"/> Provide opportunities for children to use words with lots of scaffolding.
Extended	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide ample opportunity for repeated exposure to words. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide rich opportunities for children to use words across a variety of contexts.

FIGURE 3.13. Lesson planning checklist for explicit and extended vocabulary instruction.

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Summary

Explicit and extended vocabulary instruction is an essential aspect of a comprehensive vocabulary program. For children to learn words they may not encounter or figure out on their own, explicit and extended instruction is invaluable. Also, by learning words through explicit and extended instruction, children will have a more substantial foundation of knowledge on which to build when they encounter unknown words on their own. In this chapter, we suggested instructional

practices that you can use before, during, and after reading to support children's word learning. And we offered some suggestions for you to extend your vocabulary instruction beyond read-alouds. In the next chapter, we address how you can foster vocabulary development by creating a language-rich environment in which children are simultaneously exposed to words and encouraged to use words across classroom routines and activities.

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