


Improving Adolescent Literacy: The Pivotal Role of Academic Vocabulary

Wyoming State Conference
July 29, 2010

Dr. Kevin Feldman
kfeldman@scoe.org www.scoe.org

Literacy

Main Entry: **lit-er-ate** 
Pronunciation: \li-tə-rēt also 'li-trāt\
Function: *adjective*
Etymology: Middle English *līterat*, from Latin *litteratus* marked with letters, *literate*, from *litterae* letters, *literature*, from plural of *littera*
Date: 15th century
1 **a** : EDUCATED, CULTURED **b** : able to read and write
2 **a** : versed in literature or creative writing : LITERARY **b** : LUCID, POLISHED
<a *literate* essay> **c** : having knowledge or competence
<computer-*literate*> <politically *literate*>
— *lit-er-ate-ly* *adverb*
— *lit-er-ate-ness* *noun*

✓ reading, writing AND speaking, listening
✓ across the grades, content area disciplines
✓ "having competence or knowledge"

Feldman's Biased Literacy Listserve

Reading/Language Arts

This section of the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) website provides a collection of reading/language arts resources and information designed to support teachers, administrators, parents, and anyone else concerned with improving literacy in Sonoma County and beyond. Formerly known as the Reading Corner, these web pages are compiled by Dr. Kevin Feldman, SCOE's Director of Reading & Early Intervention.

Quick Links

→ Reading/Language Arts Professional Development Classes
→ Early Intervention Resources
→ Response to Intervention Resources

Dr. Anita Archer's Strategic Literacy Instruction Videos

Dr. Anita Archer is one of our nation's most talented and beloved teachers of teachers. Her new series of online videos, produced with support from the Sonoma County Office of Education, is a gift to the education community. We are posting her videos, along with viewing guides, as production on each video in the series is completed. Take a look at this emerging resource! These files are free to download, podcast, or view online.

Literacy Listserve

Dr. Feldman runs a free "literacy listserv" to provide up-to-date information on research and activities related to literacy, from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. To sign up for the listserv, send an email to literacy@lists.scoe.org, then follow the instructions in the automated email response you receive.

Subscribe at:
www.scoe.org/reading

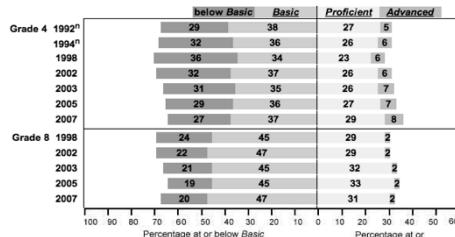
How are our older readers doing...?

The Need?

Clearly WY* Has Work to Do

Achievement Levels for Reading, Wyoming

To compare the percentages of scores at or above any achievement level, simply click on the label for that level and the segments of the bars will realign accordingly.



2 of 3 WY 8th Graders Read Below the Proficient Level

* as do 49 other states!

8th Grade NAEP Passage: *Ellis Island - Gateway to America*

Why does the author say " 'the land of the free' was not so free to everyone, after all"?

Why does this passage contain the actual words of some of the immigrants?

If you could ask one of the immigrants a question, what else would you want to know about their experience on Ellis Is.?

If you had lived in Armenia in 1892, would you have immigrated to America? Use information from the passage to explain why or why not.

12th Grade NAEP Passage:

M.L. King - A Letter from a Birmingham Jail

If King were alive today, what question would you most want to ask him about his views of civil disobedience that he has not already answered in the letter? Explain why you chose this question.

How does King use his distinction between just and unjust laws to support the need for civil disobedience?

Look through the letter and find one phrase that is particularly meaningful for you. Explain your understanding of the phrase as it is used in the letter and why the phrase is meaningful to you.

Q: What do you notice about the nature of these questions? Implications?

Academic Literacy

✓ Ability to critique, analyze, defend, explain, think deeply - not just "on the surface"

✓ "Argumentative literacy" (Graff, 2003)

- ability to persuade, to debate, to clarify
- explain why, evaluate, make judgments

✓ Make a point and support it w/evidence and clear thinking, beyond opinion/idiosyncratic experience

✓ Use appropriate Academic Language - the vocabulary and conventions of grammar and syntax demanded by the discipline/situation

✓ Skillful in speaking & writing - expressive lang. arts

And it must be **TAUGHT** - not simply assigned or expected!

The

Architecture

Of Improving Literacy School Wide

Yes - No - Why?

"Block Scheduling and Project Based Learning are two examples of proven methods to improve secondary student achievement."

Yes, I agree with this **assertion** because_____.

No, I do not agree with this **assertion** because_____.

The BIG Picture of School Improvement

A School-Wide Focus on:

☐ **Positive behavior:** preventative, proactive, data based
- <http://www.pbis.org> - <http://www.safeandcivilschools.com/>

☐ **Instruction:** all content areas & intervention classes.
research based strategies-data based decision making
- <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/>

☐ **Collaborative problem solving** around data - formative assessment tied to important outcomes (e.g. PLC work)

☐ **Leadership** that "gets it", supports it, expects/inspects and keeps the Focus on what matters most...

Just Ask "Bill & Melinda" !



Many of the results were disappointing, Gates said Tuesday. He acknowledged that the effort to break up big schools into smaller units did not lead to the hoped-for gains in achievement, or an increase in the numbers of students who went on to college.

11/12/08 Seattle Times

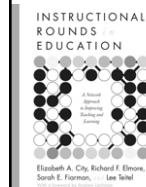
How Could Effective Teachers Use Yes - No - Why? in Daily Instruction?

A few examples:

- ✓ "Do Now" or Bell-Ringer warm up activity
- ✓ "Exit Ticket" or summary activity to close a lesson
- ✓ To check for understanding at any point in a lesson.

* Think - Write - Partner - Group
 " model thinking, language, ensure S have correct copy ... an also be done verbally if short on time

This is Also Becoming a National Focus



Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning Elizabeth A. City, Richard F. Elmore, Sarah E. Fiarman, and Lee Teitel

"Teaching causes learning." While this might seem obvious, teaching is often the last focus of education--shifted to the side by standardized testing, changing curricula, faculty room politics, overbearing or aloof administrators, and shrinking school budgets. And yet, argue the book's authors, the "instructional core"--the essential interaction between teacher, student, and content that creates the basis of learning--is the first place that schools should look to improve student learning. If you want to improve learning, you have to improve teaching

Sadly, but Not Surprisingly, We Find These "Matthew Effects" in Virtually EVERY School Activity Fostering Literacy/Achievement

- ☐ Independent reading
- ☐ Homework/projects completed
- ☐ Questions asked
- ☐ Questions answered
- ☐ Notes taken
- ☐ Words written in class & out
- ☐ Participation in group activities
- ☐ Academic language used; oral/written
- ☐ Studying for tests, etc. etc.

Schools are working fine for student who do well in school!



Single Best Resource for "Best Practices" & Research Syntheses (all FREE!)

www.centeroninstruction.org

Improving Adolescent Literacy:
 Effective Classroom and
 Intervention Practices

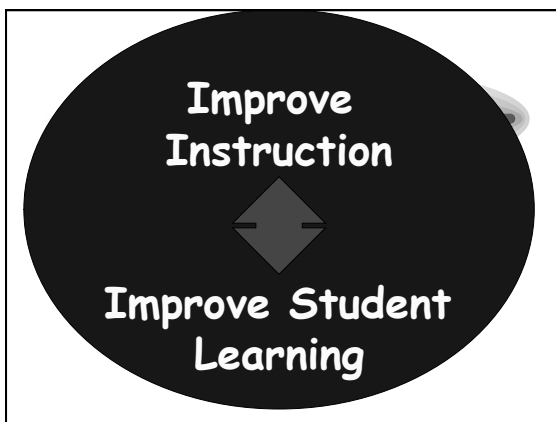
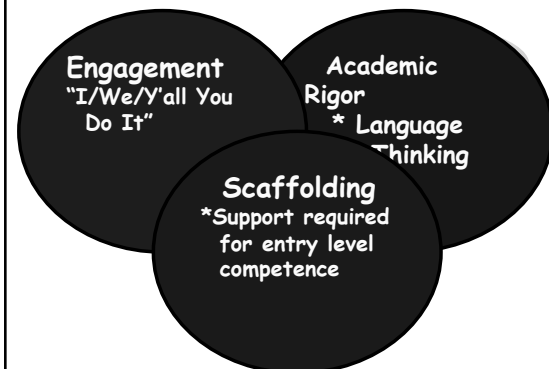
IES Research Summary: Improving Adolescent Literacy

IES Research Summary: Keys to Improving Adolescent Literacy Across Content Areas

- 1) Provide explicit vocabulary instruction
- 2) Provide direct & explicit comprehension strategy instruction
- 3) Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text/content meaning and interpretations
- 4) Increase motivation and engagement in literacy learning (e.g. connections, choice, applications, etc)
- 5) Make available intensive individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by qualified specialists. (i.e. "tiered interventions")

In a context of structured active engagement in which ALL Students are participants - NO bystanders !

Instructional Heuristic: Applying Research



Pre-Teaching Key Vocabulary: 10th Grade History



Note how the instruction is; Engaging (all responding), Scaffolded (supports for learning), and Academic (using AL/Vocabulary/HOTs)

Everyone Does Everything!

No Opting Out = EVERYONE DOES EVERYTHING !

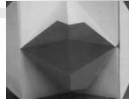
But what do I do when a student says "I don't know...?"

Options include:

- ✓ Teachers provides - student repeats in context
- ✓ Ask another student - first student repeats
- ✓ Teacher prompts (scaffolds 1st part or cues)
- ✓ Teacher prompts a peer to cue the student
- ✓ Think about it/check page _ "I'LL BE BACK"
- ✓ IF YOU DID KNOW, What would it be....!

Engagement Comes Down To the Quantity & Quality of Student:

❑ **Saying** - Oral Language



❑ **Writing**- Written Language



❑ **Doing** - pointing, touching, demonstrating, etc.



**** NEVER more than 2-10 Rule ****

SLANT Strategy (Ed Ellis, U of Alabama)

S = Sit Up

L = Listen (teacher/peers)

A = Ask/Answer

N = Nod and Note

T = Track the teacher/speaker

Structured Engagement "tool kit": Ensure ALL Are Responding

- 1) Choral Responses -pronounce it together
 - teacher cues students to respond (e.g. hand signal, voice, etc.)
 - physical responses too; fingers under the word, chart, picture
 - "thumbs up when you know" (think time)
- 2) Partner Responses
 - teacher assigns - provide a label/role "I's tell 2's"
 - alternate ranking (high with middle, middle with lower)
 - thoughtful questions/prompts/up & down Bloom's taxonomy
- 3) Written Responses
 - focused prompts increase thinking, accountability, focus
 - structure academic language (e.g. sentence starters)
- 4) Individual Responses (AFTER rehearsal/practice)
 - randomly call on individuals, use "public voices"
 - complete sentences, using new vocabulary

Generic to *Precision* Partners

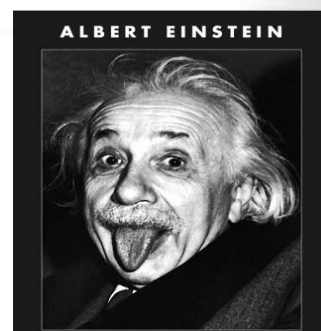
1. Teacher Assigns Based on: ("like real life" rationale)
 - level of literacy
 - proficiency in English
 - overall "niceness"
 - alternate ranking (#1 w/ #16, #15 w/ #30)
2. Roles - "A" and "B", "1" and "2"... who speaks first?
w/accountable listening (My partner ____ said ____)
3. Topic/Language Required - e.g. provide models & scaffolding - e.g. "sentence frames"...
Such as: "The most important thing about ____ so far is ____ because ____."
4. Change - every 2-4 weeks

ACADEMIC RIGOR

Quality of Language & Thinking

A Ubiquitous Goal: Increase the Academic
"miles on the tongue" for EVERY student EVERY day!

talk
talk
talk
talk
talk
talk



Of course it is NOT simply talk we are after it is: "Academic Talk"

Academic talk is "comprehensible verbal output" addressing focal lesson content, framed in complete sentences with appropriate vocabulary, syntax and grammar.
- Kate Kinsella, 2006

Components of Academic Language?

- ✦ **Vocabulary:** the specialized words used in academic settings: content specific (e.g. magma) & high use academic terms (e.g. analyze, comparatively, variable)
- ✦ **Syntax:** the way words are arranged in order to form sentences or phrases
- ✦ **Grammar:** the rules according to which the words of a language change their form and are combined into sentences

Where is Academic English Found? - In Print!

Frequency of Word Use in Major Sources of Oral and Written Language
(Hayes & Ahrens, 1988)

Rare Words per 1,000

I. Printed texts		
Abstracts of scientific articles		128.0
Newspapers		68.3
Popular magazines		65.7
Adult books		52.7
Children's books		30.9
Preschool books		16.3
II. Television texts		
Prime-time adult shows		22.7
Prime-time children's shows		20.2
III. Adult speech		
Expert witness testimony		28.4
College graduates talk to friends/spouses		17.3

Most Gr. 2 & up
Info Texts

Academic Register vs. Social Register

✦ **Task:** Discuss common challenges faced by new immigrants to the U.S.

✦ **Students' Default Informal Conversational Register (Vernacular)**

Jobs. Mean people. You don't know English. The food's different.

✦ **Formal Academic Discussion Register**

One challenge faced by most new immigrants to our country is learning a different language.

✦ **Formal Written Academic Discourse**

Recent immigrants to the United States face many predictable challenges. One challenge encountered by most newcomers is learning an entirely different language. It is critical for adult immigrants to be able to communicate effectively in English if they want to have a well paid job or attend an American college.

- Kinsella, 2009

7th Grade GenEd - 60% EIs - Social Studies -Vaughn & Martinez, 2008

Study 2 Preliminary Results

Comprehension

Intervention		Control	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Non-ELL .78 (1.21)	3.32 (2.52)	.72 (1.02)	2.52 (.24)
ELL .82 (1.00)	3.26 (2.61)	.78 (.96)	1.36 (.32)

CREATE

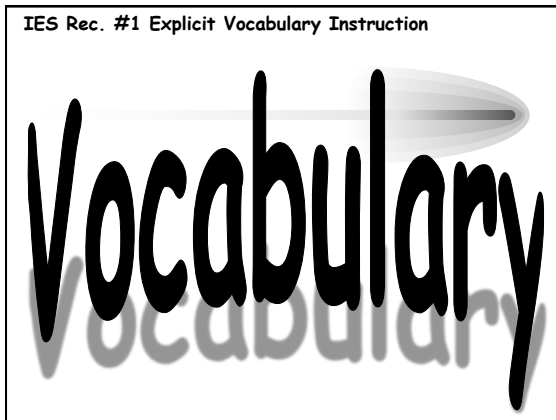
34

<http://www.cal.org/create/events/CREATE2008/peerpairing.html>

Take the Academic Language Oath !!



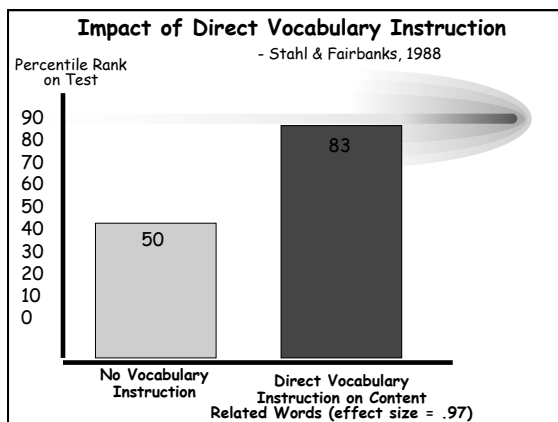
"I will ensure that EVERY single student in my class speaks, and often also writes, at least one meaningful academic sentence EVERY day !"



The Bottom Line Rationale for DIRECTLY Teaching Vocabulary?

"Given the importance of academic background knowledge, and the fact that vocabulary is such an essential aspect of it, one of the most crucial services that teachers can provide, particularly for students who do not come from academically advantaged backgrounds, is **systematic instruction in important academic terms.**"

- Marzano & Pickering, 2005



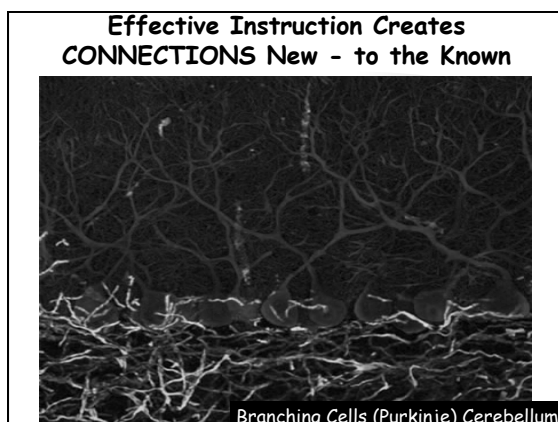
Vocabulary Instruction: Demonstration

apotheosis, n. a·pōth·e·ō·sis

1-2-3-4-5

Synonym	Explanation/Examples	Image
	DEF:	
	EXS: ✓ H-burg coffee - Flying Goat ✓ For serious road bikers, a Trek bike (like Lance's) is the _____ ✓ the most scenic location in CA: _____	

Sentences Starter: Among the various scenic locations in the state of WY, _____ is the apotheosis.



Let's help Brian out here...

Word	Explain	Example	Elaborate/Assess
distorted v.	twist/change	He lied & distorted the truth	Someone tells a story about you that is only part true? +/-

- 1) Say the word w/ me everyone... distorted, it's a verb
- 2) Distorted means to twist or change something, so a word that means change or twisted is _____.
- 3) If I told a story but changed it to make me look better, you could say I _____ the truth
- 4) Think of a time when someone distorted or changed something about you (or you did about someone) - thumbs up when you have one... partners share... call on a couple...

Instructional Guidelines (another Heuristic) for Directly Teaching a New Term

- 1) Pronounce Chorally
- 2) Explain before Define
- 3) Provide Examples
- "Quick Teach"
- 4) Deepen Understanding
- 5) Review & Coach Use

Deepen Understanding

in Wide Variety of Ways Depending
on the Word, Students, Context, etc.

Here's a few of my favorites that also
have empirical evidence supporting them:

- ☐ Examples vs. Non-examples
- ☐ Non-linguistic representations (e.g. images)
- ☐ Acting them out physically
- ☐ Morphology (e.g. bio·diversity)
- ☐ Graphic organizers
- ☐ Computer technology

** It's all about connecting the New to the Known

But which words warrant our direct
teaching?

Important words...
Words that matter today
AND tomorrow...

Words that drive comprehension -key BIG ideas
and words that are important for a student's
academic "tool kit" (e.g. factor, subsequent)

Academic Vocabulary Analysis: History Chapter: Independence from Britain

- | | |
|--|--|
| • High-Use Words (Mortar Words)
(likely to encounter in various texts across
subject areas and grade levels) | • Lesson Terms (Bricks)
(lesson, topic and discipline specific) |
| • independence, n. independent, adj. | • colony, n. colonist, n. |
| • to involve, v., involvement, n. | • Patriot, n. |
| • to argue, n. argument, n. | • Loyalist n. |
| • represent, v. representation n. | • taxation, n. |
| • consequently, adv. consequence, n | • Stamp Act, n. |
| | • traitor, n. |

Focus on words that are:

- 1) keys to grasping big ideas
- 2) abstract and need explanation
- 3) high use academic terms across content areas

ALL Dictionaries Are NOT Equally Useful!

Websters' definition for: virtual

Etymology: Middle English, possessed of certain physical virtues,
from Medieval Latin *virtualis*, from Latin *virtus* strength, virtue

- 1 : being such in essence or effect though not formally
recognized or admitted <a *virtual* dictator>
- 2 : of, relating to, or using virtual memory
- 3 : of, relating to, or being a hypothetical particle
whose existence is inferred from indirect evidence
<*virtual* photons> -- compare

Compared to Heinle's (www.nhd.heinle.com)

virtual /vɜrtul/ adj. nearly, almost but not quite:
*He is nearly deaf; he has suffered the virtual loss
of his hearing.* -adv. virtually.

Dictionaries Serve 2 Primary Functions

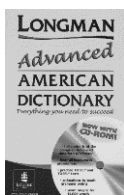
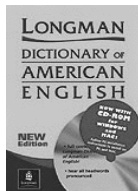
- 1) Confirmation-spelling and/or meaning
- 2) Elaboration-other meanings, word
forms, uses, etc.

However, for initial learning - too often typical
dictionaries don't explain (teachers do!), they use
other forms of the word or more obtuse and unusual
words to define the term in question!

Samples of Useful "learner friendly" Dictionaries for Underprepared Students

<http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

<http://nhd.heinle.com/>



Cool Online Resources-Improve the World While Building Vocabulary!

<http://www.freerice.com/>

Other sites w/Cool Tools for Teachers/Students

<http://www.etymonline.com/>

<http://www.visualthesaurus.com/vocabgrabber/>

<http://www.wordsift.com/>

<http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org>

http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/r21270/texttools/web_vp.html

Extending Vocabulary Learning

Favorite "bell ringers" or Warm Up to Review Key Concepts/Vocab.

✓ Yes -No why?

✓ Word Pair Analysis

✓ Image - explain

✓ Show you know sentence

✓ Completion sentence starter

✓ Translation activity

Key for ALL Warm Ups

- Silent work 1-3 min.
- Higher level thinking beyond memorization
- Structured Partners (1s and 2s)
- Teacher Monitor
- Teacher Validate/ ReTeach if Needed

* Formative Assess is Key to PLCs and improving our instruction

Vocabulary Notebooks



Why Vocabulary Notebooks?

- ☐ Elaboration/Practice
- ☐ Multiple Exposures
- ☐ Accountability - Students AND Teachers
- ☐ Easy to do/low prep/BIG payoff

- ✓ student friendly definitions/explanations (AWL & Content Area)
- ✓ image/morphology/reminder connected to the meaning
- ✓ examples - non examples esp. for BIG concepts
- ✓ note taking guide
- ✓ cumulative over a unit/semester/year - across the school
- ✓ used for games, review, spot quizzes, writing, etc.

Choose a Log/Notebook Format That Works for You

Word	What it is	What it is like	Examples	Non-Examples
promotion	form of communication	to persuade people to buy products	-TV ads -radio ads -signs -Placement in TVshow/movie	News articles
product line	a group of closely related products	manufactured or sold by a company	Nike - - men's sport footwear and apparel - women's sport footwear and apparel	Products NOT sold by the same company... Coke Pepsi

Image - Explain

- ☐ Students sketch/paste a quick image, write a sentence explaining the connection using the term
e.g. influence/influential



Text messaging is a very influential form of modern *communication*.

Bell ringer/Warm Up or "Exit Ticket"

✓ rationale - why might we want to routinely use forms of structured vocabulary review to start/end a lesson a few times per week?

✓ what term might you teach the next week that is important enough to warrant this kind of structured review?

✓ what evidence could you collect of impact on students?

Name _____ Story/Chapter _____

Word My Own Words Image/Representation

SO WHAT? NOW WHAT?

Putting It ALL Together: Supporting Improved Literacy - Site Based Suggestions

- 1) Share relevant information w/everyone (e.g. IES Practice Guides, research summary, etc.).
- 2) Collect baseline data re: key domains (e.g. % of engagement in class) & create Norms or Instruction
- 3) Work directly in classrooms, co-planning/teaching/modeling
- 4) "Instructional Tours" - observations tied to agreed upon norms/key focal areas (e.g. engagement, vocabulary, non-fiction writing) w/feedback & planning for change.
- 5) Collect data based on student performance/work-feedback to faculty via email the same day...
- 6) Provide focused professional development - model/demo effective practices/short video clips etc. **FOCUS FOCUS!**

Thanks for Attending !
Additional **FREE** resources/videos/
etc. are posted at
www.scoe.org/reading

Please send along any
questions; **kfeldman@scoe.org**

Kevin Feldman