

Teaching the Critical Verbs: Closing the Vocabulary Gap

The importance of direct vocabulary instruction cannot be exaggerated. Vocabulary provides essential background knowledge and is linked to reading comprehension and academic achievement. Researchers estimate that 85 percent of achievement test results are based on the vocabulary of the standards. Educators must teach these critical words through research-based direct instruction.

The verbs used in all standards are based on critical thinking processes that students must learn. In this course, you will be exposed to the research, the strategies, and the most critical verbs. Educators who take on the responsibility of explicitly teaching the necessary vocabulary need to know that they are providing students the opportunity to grow, learn, and succeed.

Course Objectives

After completing this course you should be able to

Module 1

- Examine what research says about teaching critical vocabulary.
- Analyze academic vocabulary by labeling Tier 2 and 3 words.

Module 2

- Identify the memory systems.
- Understand ways to get critical words into non motor procedural memory.
- Evaluate current vocabulary instruction for memory processing.

Module 3

- Identify critical verbs that reflect high levels of cognitive processing.
- Evaluate student knowledge of critical verbs at the present time.

Module 4

- Analyze strategies for engagement and variety.
- Implement strategies for words students don't know.

Module 5

- Understand the importance of review.
- Identify appropriate review strategies for your students.
- Implement review games and evaluate success.

Module 6

- Evaluate school and community engagement.
- Create a plan to engage the school community.

Course Syllabus

Module 1	What Research Says <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 1: What Does Research Say about Vocabulary? • Video: Tier 1 and Tier 2 Vocabulary • Reading 2: Choosing Words to Teach • Knowledge Check • Application: Categorizing Tiers of Words • Post-Module Reflection
Module 2	Processing and Storing Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 1: Processing and Storing Vocabulary • Reading 2: Searching for Memory • Video: Vocabulary in Action • Reading 3: <i>EL</i>—Moving with the Brain in Mind • Knowledge Check • Application: Evaluating Current Vocabulary Instruction • Post-Module Reflection
Module 3	Introducing the Critical Verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 1: The Critical Words: The Verbs • Reading 2: Top 10 Terms Students Need to Know to Be Successful on Standardized Tests • Video: Emotions are Contagious • Knowledge Check • Application: Pre-Assess Student Knowledge of Verbs • Post-Module Reflection
Module 4	Introductory and Intermediate Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 1: Engagement Strategies • Reading 2: More Strategies • Video 1: Differentiating Strategies • Video 2: Vocabulary Paint Chips • Knowledge Check • Application: Assessment of Vocabulary Learning Strategies • Post-Module Reflection

Module 5	Review Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 1: Why Review? • Reading 2: Review Games • Video 1: Review Strategies for Elementary Grades • Video 2: Review Strategies for the Upper Grades • Knowledge Check • Application: Conduct a Review Game • Post-Module Reflection
Module 6	Engaging the School Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 1: Making Them Stick • Reading 2: <i>EL</i>—The Words Students Need • Video: Where Do We Go From Here? • Knowledge Check • Application: Create a Plan • Post-Module Reflection

Resources

ASCD. (2014). *Vocabulary in action* [DVD]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Baum, L. F. (1900). *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. New York and Chicago: George M. Hill.
 Lawrence, J. F., White, C., & Snow, C. E. (2010). The words students need. *Educational Leadership*, 68(2), 23–26.

Jensen, E. (2000). Moving with the brain in mind. *Educational Leadership*, 58(3), 34–37.
 Sprenger, M. (2005). *How to teach so students remember*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Sprenger, M. (2013). *Teaching the critical vocabulary of the common core: 55 words that make or break student understanding*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Sprenger, M. (2014). *Vocab rehab*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD