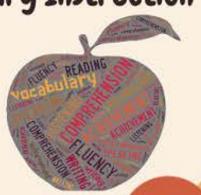
10 Do's and Don'ts for Effective Vocabulary Instruction

- There is a strong relationship between vocabulary and comprehension, and student achievement.
- Effective vocabulary instruction across grade levels and content areas is key increasing student learning and achievement
- The following 'do's' and 'don'ts' provide a great place to start when implementing effective vocabulary instruction in your setting.

Do's



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You should

provide multiple exposures to words. New words are learned and meaning is shaped through many exposures over time.



You should

have students create nonlinguistic representations for key words - images, pictographs, and acting out new words supports word learning.



You should

focus on academic vocabulary for instruction - Tier 2 and Tier 3 terms. See "No Tears for Tiers: Common Core Vocabulary Made Simple" for guidance.



You should

support independent reading in a variety of genres and text types. Wide reading builds a rich, useful, and diverse vocabulary.



You should

integrate word walls into vocabulary instruction and practice. See Top Tips for Word Walls' for great ideas.



You should

harness the power of digital tools for practice, review, and to connect words to images. See "21 Digital Tools to Build Vocabulary" for ideas.



You should

directly teach individual words. Pronounce each word, spell it, provide a kid-friendly definition and encourage elaborations & nonlinguistics.



You should

read aloud to students - picture books, trade books, and informational text. Reading aloud exposes students to higherlevel vocabulary.



You should

create semantic maps and webs of words to make word learning visible. It is critical to discuss the relationships of words to support word learning.



You should

teach students independent wordlearning strategies. These include context clues, word parts, reference tools, and strategies for personalized word learning.



You should not

have students only look up words in the dictionary and copy definitions. Don't over-rely on dictionary definitions.



You should not

teach too many words at one time. Students will only learn words at a cursory level and quickly forget them.



You should not

introduce words and promptly forget about them. New words are learned over time through a variety of exposures.



You should not

think you need to assess every single word. Use a variety of assessment methods to determine word learning.



You should not

require students to use new vocabulary in sentences too quickly. Students need more familiarity with words in order to use them in speaking and writing.



You should not

arbitrarily assign lists of words for students to learn. Connect vocabulary to a context - text, language, writing - in order for word learning to be rooted in meaning.



You should not

rely solely on leveled books for word learning. Children's literature, including picture books, will introduce students to advanced vocabulary within context.



You should not

forget the power of a print-rich environment to support word learning. Classroom libraries, books, read alouds & discussion flood students with language and new vocabulary.



You should not

forget that context clues are more reliable for informational and expository text than for fiction and narrative.



You should not

get overwhelmed with the amount of words students need to know. Focusing on crosscurricular terms (Tier 2 words) can make an important difference in academic growth.