

K-5 Vocabulary Instruction Course Companion

The Course Companion is designed to allow participants to capture notes, reflections and action steps as they work through a course. Additionally, the Course Companion contains a list of all extra resources listed in the course. Each section of the Course Companion is linked to a corresponding section of the course.

Consider this Scenario

Fourth grade teacher, Mr. Zamora, has always provided opportunities for rich conversations in his classroom. This was his main path for vocabulary instruction. However, during class time, Mr. Zamora noticed that several students struggled to explain the meaning of text passages, or to use them to gain information. In particular, they seemed to struggle to understand the meaning of words that were key to understanding passages.

After reviewing assessment data, it became clear that vocabulary is at the top of his list of student needs. Mr. Zamora understands that students may come into his class with limited vocabulary because they are not exposed to robust conversations at home, and he understands that limited or uneven access to instruction in science and social studies can hinder his students' success. Furthermore, he knows that simply having students memorize definitions will not help them gain the understanding of words they need to successfully use them. However, he is not quite sure where to go next to help his students consistently learn the vocabulary they need to be successful.

Can you relate to the above scenario? In what ways are your challenges in literacy instruction similar or different?

What is the Role of Vocabulary in Comprehension?

Notes:

How would you explain the role of vocabulary to colleagues? To caregivers?

The Critical Role of Vocabulary with Nancy Hennessy

Notes:

Resources:

Review the article [“Five Key Principles for Effective Vocabulary Instruction”](#) from Reading Rockets

Consider the five points that Dr. Shanahan made in the article. Identify those steps that you are currently utilizing and the steps that you are not utilizing.

If applicable, which of the steps that you are not currently using could you incorporate into your practice?

Course Reflection:

Consider Dr. Hennessey's Informed Vocabulary Framework along with the points made by Dr. Shanahan in the article. What steps can you take to incorporate the framework and other strategies into your instruction?

The following resources are listed in the course:

- www.etymonline.com is a useful tool for discovering the etymology of words.
- [Selecting and Using Academic Vocabulary Instruction](#) from Achieve the Core provides helpful strategies for teaching vocabulary in your classroom.
- [Text Set Project: Building Knowledge and Vocabulary](#) provides strategies for building and using text sets to increase students' vocabulary.