

## Characteristics of Effective Explicit Vocabulary Instruction in Mixed-Ability 6-12 Classrooms

**The teacher effectively integrates vocabulary development to support learning by:**

- Conscientiously analyzing the vocabulary demands of the lesson and prioritizing words for more robust instruction
- Preparing for vocabulary instruction (instead of relying upon the “teachable moment”)
- Signaling that critical vocabulary instruction will take place
- Prompting students to assume an active role (listening, responding, taking notes)
- Pre-teaching focal lesson concepts and lesson-specific terms (*capitalism, stereotype*)
- Pre-teaching high-utility (“tool kit”) academic vocabulary (*subsequent, analyze*)
- Following a consistent “multi-modality” instructional sequence for teaching a word:
  - Presenting the word in writing (on the board, overhead, computer)
  - Pronouncing the word and having students pronounce the word several times
  - Writing vital information so students can copy: synonyms, definitions, examples (rather than entrusting comprehension solely to their auditory processing)
  - Clarifying the part of speech - what kind of word it is
  - Providing a range of synonyms (or “it’s like” words) before definitions/explanations
  - Providing an accessible explanation (without using even more sophisticated words)
  - Providing concrete examples and images for students to create mental anchors
  - Checking for understanding by providing a task/question requiring critical thinking
  - Structuring students’ use of the word in speaking and writing with response frames
- Providing a note-taking scaffold for struggling readers and English language learners
- Structuring students’ effective use of high utility words in speaking and writing with sentence frames in order to develop expressive word knowledge
- Holding students accountable for studying, reviewing, and learning both lesson-specific terms and high-utility (“tool kit”) academic vocabulary
- Assessing students’ vocabulary mastery frequently with brief and meaningful quizzes (on 3-5 words) that require analysis and application rather than rote memorization