



**MA Public Adult Education
Professional Development System**

A PUBLIC ADULT EDUCATION OF MA PROGRAM

Transcript Part 2: From Class to Class: Effective Research-Based Vocabulary Instruction for Adult ESOL Learners.

Hello and welcome to part two of our brief video series on From Class to Class: Effective Research-Based Vocabulary Instruction for Adult ESOL Learners. We're going to spend a few moments together here to dive a bit deeper with elements three and four of our reading earlier in this course, Elements of Effective Vocabulary Instruction.

As a reminder, the Center for Applied Linguistics has identified four elements of recommended practice for vocabulary instruction based on their research and the research of others in the field. The combination of these strategies, when regularly integrated into language instruction, will support students' ongoing vocabulary development.

We will be focusing on the final two elements you see here: promoting independent word learning and using assessment to inform instruction.

Looking first at the third element for effective vocabulary instruction, Strategies for Independent Word Learning, you'll see the key concepts of this element indicated here in this word cloud: strategy, awareness, cognates, context, and meaning. The words provide you with a very general summary of this element. Today we are going to focus on the core strategies for independent word learning, which include structural analysis, cognate awareness, contextual analysis, and dictionary skills.

We will touch briefly on these different strategies and will explore techniques and activities you may use in your vocabulary instruction process when we meet in our virtual session. This graphic, Grab a New Word, can be used to help students when they encounter a new word. It's helpful to think of the steps in this strategy within the context of a hand, with each of the fingers being one of the steps to work through: meaning, pause, look inside, look around, infer, and check the guess.

There's a lot going on within this process, so let's break it down a bit. We'll start by examining the first two steps or fingers shown here. First, you want to pause—stop reading and allow time to see and think. Then, look inside the word—look at the word itself, notice spelling, prefixes, suffixes, and any similarity to their first language to help learners make that connection. Here you are using structural analysis and cognate awareness to support independent word learning.

Explicit instruction about word structure helps students gain understanding of the meanings of the word parts and how they together comprise the meaning of a word. When helping students analyze the parts that make up a word, the morphology teaches this process as a logical strategy within the context of the broader text that they can learn to do independently. Provide them with

a word analysis strategy and teach these words explicitly within the context of the reading. Then teach them to deconstruct and reconstruct words to analyze meaning, which we're going to talk more about.

The process of structural analysis focuses on teasing apart the prefix, the root, and the suffix, thinking about their respective meanings, and then reconstructing the word to make sense of the longer, complete word in the context of the sentence. For example, in a unit on the environment and current events, students might read this sentence with the word “renewable”: "The Green New Deal focuses on renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power." Model how to deconstruct the word, noticing that "re," the prefix, means again; "nu" is the root word meaning new or fresh; and "able," the suffix, means capable of. Renewable, putting these together, students can guess that the meaning is something like “capable of new again,” which, when used to describe energy sources, makes logical sense reinforced by the other context clues.

Looking at morphology a bit more closely, notice on this chart where the most common prefixes and suffixes are shown. Sixty-two percent of prefixed words are from five prefix sets, and 73 percent of all suffixes fall within four suffix categories. These high-frequency prefixes and suffixes are the ones you and your students should focus on during instruction.

Just for clarification, what is a prefix? A syllable or group of syllables added to the beginning of a word that will then change the word's meaning. A helpful approach to prefix instruction is to first present the prefix in isolation and then as it appears in four or five words. Here you can see examples of “dis” and “in” used as prefixes. You can also contextualize the prefixed definitions and sentences: dislike—to not like, "I dislike spinach," or "I dislike snow"; incorrect—not right, "That answer is incorrect," or "The directions are incorrect."

Another way to approach prefix instruction is to have students engage with the prefix by matching the prefix to different familiar words and then determining the meanings of the prefixed words: dislike—not like; dishonest—not truthful; disagree—not agree; disappear—not there.

When you begin your instruction on suffixes, they're a little harder to define. That is, they generally don't have a standalone meaning like most prefixes do, such as re, pre, or bi. However, they serve an important transformational purpose when added to the end of the words in which they appear. There are two primary types of suffixes in the English language: inflectional and derivational.

We will first take a look at inflectional suffixes. Almost 80 percent of all suffixes are inflectional. Inflectional suffixes change the word structure to indicate a different tense, plural, comparative, or superlative form. I want to walk through some examples: here we have “dog,” we have “dogs,” adding the inflectional suffix “s” creates the plural; or “walk,” adding the inflectional suffix “ed” provides the past tense; and “big,” “bigger,” “biggest,” showing the root word, the comparative, and the superlative.

Derivational suffixes are used to make or derive new words. They change the part of speech of the word. Here we can see the effect of adding “al,” meaning pertaining to, to these root words:

fiction—is a noun, at the derivational suffix “al” it becomes fictional, which is now an adjective; region—regional; music—musical; accident—accidental.

When teaching students about suffixes, whenever possible present the suffixed words that show no spelling change from the root word. Later in the vocabulary process, you will examine spelling change patterns with suffixes, but for starters, keep it simple. For example, talk plus the suffix “ing” is talking; fast with the suffix “er” is faster. Ask students to determine the suffix and base word. For example, if you have “played,” “called,” and “worked,” where are the root words? Have students interact with the suffix and notice how it may or may not relate to the first language structure. Look for those cognate connections.

Many prefixes and suffixes have cognate equivalents in Spanish and other languages, as you can see here in the chart. Some appear exactly the same, others change slightly. Use this as an added tool if many of your students speak Spanish or other Romance languages. Building students’ awareness of these patterns can help them to recognize words more easily.

Coming back to our Grab a Word strategy, let's take a look at the next few steps. After looking inside the word, the next place a student should look is around the word, noticing the words surrounding unfamiliar words, thinking about the context, analyzing the words around it for parts of speech, familiar prefixes and suffixes, and cognate connections. This is developing contextual and structural analysis and cognate awareness.

After collecting all of the information possible, looking inside and around the word, students should make an educated guess or infer. Then, if the word still doesn't make sense and it impedes comprehension of the entire reading, they should take the time to check their guess—look up the word or ask for help—because the word is likely an essential concept or keyword that must be clear for the reading to make sense. This is where dictionary and thesaurus instruction will be of use and very helpful.

I'd like to take a moment to discuss cognates and cognate awareness. What is a cognate, you might ask? Cognates are words that come from the same linguistic word or root, making them look similar and have related meanings. It's helpful to build cognate awareness when there are connections to a first language. Spanish is the most predominant language in which we see cognate connections, but cognates are also common in other Romance languages such as French, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian, as well as Germanic languages. Depending on your class composition and language representation, you may want to bring explicit attention to cognates, define what they are with your students, practice identifying cognates, and notice which languages commonly have cognates. You will want to help students develop their own awareness of cognate patterns with their first language, and finally it is useful to flag false cognates, which may cause confusion for students, such as “compromiso” in Spanish, which means commitment, not compromise.

Moving along to context clues, there are several different types of context clues, some more explicit than others. It's helpful to teach students using clear examples of different context clues from texts, modeling the think-aloud process as you encounter a new word and look for

information from the surrounding words and sentences. We will look at examples of each of these types in our time together in our virtual session.

It's useful to teach students how to navigate English-English dictionaries and what kind of information is available to them. What are they going to find aside from the definition? A word's part of speech, other related words, syllables, accentuations, synonyms, and examples of use. Dictionaries can also help students explore multiple meanings of words. As a student becomes more advanced in their skills, more elements and dictionaries may be accessible, but even beginning-level students should be introduced to simplified dictionaries to develop skills and understanding of this valuable tool.

Beyond the English-English dictionary, introducing students to the thesaurus is also highly beneficial. It introduces synonyms and word variety as well as providing a tool to help them go beyond overused terminology to find and use more nuanced vocabulary to describe their ideas.

It's important to teach students that they do not have time to look up every unfamiliar word. Students must be able to scan and skim, especially as they progress in their education and have increasing demands and quantities of reading to complete. Returning to our graphic, incorporating these instructional strategies and concepts into your instruction will help students develop confidence to keep reading and trusting in their practice. Ability to guess strategically and get the big picture—if their guess makes sense within the contextual and structural analysis that they have done, they can proceed confidently with their reading and vocabulary development.

The last CAL element, Using Assessment to Inform Instruction, is an integral part of planning for effective integration of vocabulary instruction into our regular teaching practice. Here's the word SIFT for element four. As you can see, the keywords that jump out are vocabulary, knowledge, word, and assessment.

As you think about how to plan and implement your own comprehensive approach to vocabulary instruction, be mindful of backward design principles. What are the target outcomes for a unit or lesson? Which words will be necessary to student success? Let this lens be part of your word selection criteria along with other factors.

A quick review of backward design shows us that knowing what meaningful communicative outcome students need to be able to accomplish with the vocabulary is essential to planning instruction, along with defining what success will look like and how it will be measured. Once you have made these determinations, you can think about how to develop lessons and activities that will help students be successful.

We will discuss in greater depth how to incorporate backward design into your instruction of vocabulary when we next come together. This concludes our overview of the last two elements of our reading. We will explore how to apply these strategies in our upcoming virtual session. Thank you.