

Webinar Transcript : Dynamic Vocabulary Instruction In The Classroom

- Thanks, Susanna. Leah and I are excited for this opportunity to provide an overview of what dynamic vocabulary instruction can look like in a classroom from kindergarten through the intermediate grades. And we love this term dynamic, as it captures the vocabulary instruction in the classroom is multifaceted, that we gain words from language and rich environments and vocabulary is also learned through explicit instruction, which can measurably improve reading comprehension. So our key learning goals for this session include reviewing the five components of reading instruction from the National Reading Panel to really position where vocabulary fits into helping students understand the words they're lifting from the page. Then we'll examine theoretical models of what it means to really know a word, thinking about that depth of vocabulary knowledge, not just the number of words that we know. We've also shared some strategies to help educators choose the words to explicitly teach. And finally, we'll explore some practical tips for translating research to classroom practise to teach vocabulary using a dynamic vocabulary approach. We recognise that all of us are in different places in terms of our understanding of these topics. We are all in a learning stance. Wherever you are at in your journey, please take what applies to you. You will find links to planning tools and classroom resources in the session slides. So let's dig in. We know from the National Reading Panel's recommendations that these are the skills that need to be taught, practised, and applied. And the Right to Read report from the Ontario Human Rights Commission noted that the panel's analysis of research made it clear that the best approach to reading instruction incorporates explicit instruction and phonemic awareness, which is the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds or phonemes and spoken words. Explicit and systematic phonics instruction, which encompasses teaching the relationship between sounds and graphemes, or the letters that represent those sounds. Teaching methods to improve fluency, which is reading text accurately at a good rate, as well as word reading efficiency. Teaching vocabulary, which is why we are here today. And teaching strategies that support reading comprehension. These are often referred to as the five big ideas in beginning reading or the five pillars of reading instruction. And for those of you who are familiar with the simple view of reading, we can map the five pillars of reading instruction onto this model to see how vocabulary works in harmony with the other building blocks to result in skilled reading with comprehension. And to start, we wanna consider why is vocabulary so critical to this big picture, specifically in supporting comprehension. And we can see teaching new words and their meanings can support students in learning new concepts and ways of thinking that help students make sense of sophisticated content. And we also want to keep in mind because there is such a focus on word reading skills, that some students may have difficulty comprehending texts not because they have wobbly skills in decoding, but because they have limited knowledge of the topic of the text or do not know the meaning for some or many of the words in a text. So vocabulary really is this conduit to a world of understanding. And we love this quote from Steven Stahl. That vocabulary knowledge is knowledge. And he goes on to state the vocabulary knowledge is not something that can never be fully acquired. It is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. In the beginning, we learn words through listening, and over time, we learn more and more words

through text. So broadly speaking, vocabulary is all the words in a language used to understand and communicate thought. I like to think of it as a person's lexicon or their mental dictionary, which includes both receptive and expressive vocabulary. Our receptive vocabulary supports our understanding of information received through listening or reading. And our expressive vocabulary allows us to convey our thinking through speaking or writing. But a comprehensive definition of vocabulary also addresses a person's level of understanding, which is often referred to as breadth and depth. Breadth refers to the size of a person's mental lexicon, how many words they recognise and know, and then depth refers to the richness of word knowledge or how well an individual knows a word. Both breadth and depth contribute to a student's comprehension. And this depth, or understanding of the meaning of words, changes over time. In her book, Nancy Hennessy explains that we learn the meaning of words in bits and pieces. So we first fast map a word, like the label dog, and then over time, a child adds to that understanding with slow mapping, like different breeds of dogs, characteristics such as size, and even the role of different dogs. So we get this depth of word knowledge through extended mapping of words. Word meanings are also interrelated. That is, knowing the meaning of a word is usually related to knowing other words. So in our case of dogs, you might know words like pets, shelters, and veterinarians. Then eventually, the network or schema of dog may potentially include knowing synonyms or figurative use, like it's raining cats and dogs. Certainly, no single encounter with a word is likely to produce all of these types of knowledge and no single encounter with a word needs to produce all of these types of knowledge. Words are learned over time. So together, let's pause and apply depth of knowledge to the word thigmotropism, which is the label, or that fast map of the word. But I can deepen my knowledge of the word by considering other facets. This word, thigmotropism, was unfamiliar to me, so I had to look up the definition. It means the turning or bending of a plant in response to a touch stimulus. Like when a plant tendril coils around pet trellis. The category is that it's from biology and it's a noun. Some of the interrelated words were growing, plants, stimuli, or directional. And then the morphology really adds to my understanding of the word. Fig means touch. Tropos means turning. So again, the turning or bending of a plant in response to a touch stimulus. And then there were a few synonyms and antonyms within the field of biology. So now it's your turn with the word geography. We're going to encourage you to grab a post-it or a piece of paper to record your ideas. Consider how well you know this word geography or how many different facets of the word you can list. For example, can you provide a category, the part of speech, definition, or do you know the morphology? So I will give you a minute or two. When I first did this, I came to realise I had more to learn about the word geography. I was definitely adding to my depth of knowledge. So I recorded the category for geography as a field of science. It's a noun. A student friendly definition for geography could be the study of the earth, its atmosphere, and human activity related to the earth. There were many interrelated words and some of them could be words such as physical, human, climate, atmosphere, landforms, oceans, cultures. And then we looked at the morphology. And again, this helps us understand the word. So geo means earth. Graph means to write. And then the Y means the activity of. And some synonyms for it would be

earth science or geology. So by considering all of these facets, we deepen our knowledge of this word geography. Additionally, our depth of knowledge or word meanings is part of understanding the three forms of a word, like the word crane, has its phonology, kuh-er-a-ne, the orthography, and its meanings. Like the bird, part of construction, or a verb like craning my neck. And we know connecting these three forms promotes orthographic mapping, or the cognitive process that stores words in long term memory for instant word recognition when reading. At all times, we need to consider how our instruction accommodates for the contribution of other language systems like phonology, orthography, and syntax or parts of speech to develop deep understanding of word meaning that goes beyond those definitional word knowledge. Getting students actively engaged and using and thinking about word meanings and in creating relationships amongst words.

- Thanks, Jen. We wanna consider being that vocabulary infant educators, that Nancy Hennessy refers to in her book, highlighting how we need to teach word meanings intentionally and intensively for students to develop depth of understanding and ease of access. And she outlined some critical considerations for direct teaching of word meanings. We wanna reflect on these considerations as vocabulary researchers are basically in agreement that students can and should be directly taught about two words per day or 10 words per week. And we'll start with the consideration of word choice. Though no formula or explicit list yet exists for selecting age appropriate vocabulary for instruction, several researchers have worked out strategies to identify the words to teach. The most familiar approach is the three tier system, developed by Isabelle Beck and her colleagues. In this system, a word is chosen based on its importance and utility. Tier one words are words that are most commonly used in everyday situations. Words that most children know. These are not often the target of our instruction. Tier two words are those more sophisticated words that are used by mature language users. These words can be found across a variety of domains, and this is where we often focus our explicit instruction. And then we have tier three words that are very precise, playing certain roles in our language. These words are less familiar to many language users, as they are specific to a given domain. And personally, I love this simplified version of this system, thinking of it as just right words. Not too difficult, those found in tier three. Not too easy, those common words found in tier one, but just right words, those tier two words that are ideal for our instruction and focus. And there are other helpful resources for choosing the words to teach, such as the academic vocabulary lists developed by Averil Coxhead. Tier two words, sometimes referred to as academic vocabulary, are those that tend not to occur in everyday conversations but are highly important to being able to read academic materials across the curriculum. They're considered to be too low frequency to be readily acquired by children who have vocabulary weaknesses. And as such, we must offer explicit instruction to ensure accurate comprehension for our students. And in Ontario, we already have a roadmap of the words we need to teach. It's in our curriculums or our programmes. We don't have to look for words. They're clearly spelled out to guide instruction in the classroom. And this past summer, Jen and I had the opportunity to create

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academic vocabulary lists for Ontario's new science curriculum for grades one to four as part of our summer project. With each strand, a list of vocabulary terms have been compiled by grade level, and educators can then utilise dynamic vocabulary instructional routines with their students to target these words explicitly. And here, you're just seeing a snippet of the target vocabulary in grade three Life Systems strand.

- Thanks Leah. So in addition to word selection, the vocabulary tuned educator also uses a series of evidence informed vocabulary routines to intentionally teach words. These routines are captured in this five part framework that aligns with the work of many in the field. The National Reading Panel did conclude that there is no single research based method for teaching vocabulary. In fact, the panel recommended using a variety of direct and indirect methods of vocabulary instruction. These methods include incidental on purpose learning through frequent, varied and extensive language experiences, explicit instruction of specific words and word learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness. So creating a word rich environment or an awareness and interest in words. I think of this as playing with words. So for me right now, this is Wordle, and for kids, that can be things like tongue twisters or Hank Pinks. And what Leah and I love about this framework is that it illustrates that words can be caught with that incidental on purpose learning and can be taught with our explicit vocabulary instruction. Remembering vocabulary can be caught and needs to be taught. And we want to take a moment here to elevate the fact that these dynamic routines also apply to multilingual learners. In fact, the practise guide from the Institute of Education Sciences showed strong and consistent evidence that for multilingual learners, we should teach a set of academic words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities, including using multiple modalities and teaching word learning strategies. So let's take a quick look at how words can be caught in a language rich classroom. So Nancy Hennessy coined this term, which we love, incidental on purpose learning. And this simply refers to being intentional with our word use during everyday classroom experiences or intentionally selecting texts that grow students word knowledge. This intentionality on our part results in students hearing or reading more of those tier two and three words from the cake. And when it comes to those rich oral language experiences, we always wanna remember that oral language is the underlying foundation for the written language system. So as educators, we can use and model the kind of oral language we would expect to see in written work, such as speaking in complete sentences or using sophisticated, scaffolded vocabulary. One example of this could be our intentional use of cohesive ties during everyday classroom activities to create rich oral language experiences. Cohesive ties, of course, being those words or phrases we use in oral language or writing to connect ideas. When reading, cohesive devices signalled to the reader what the relationships are between the different clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. The use of cohesive ties increases overall sentence complexity and improves the level of sophistication. In the classroom, we can intentionally model more sophisticated vocabulary and that more sophisticated complexity by using cohesive ties during everyday routines and transitions. So for example, we could say we are going to finish

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our math before going to the gym, or the oil spill is causing damage to the immediate ecosystem, and consequently, harming the marine life. So now it's your turn. We're going to ask you to pick one cohesive tie from the list you see here, and think about how you can intentionally use this during your existing classroom routines.

- Thanks, Jen. Now we're gonna provide a quick overview of the three explicit vocabulary teaching routines starting with instruction of words in text. We wanna highlight three instructional routines that can be used before, during, and after reading a text. Each of these practises stem from the work of Becca McEwen in bringing words to life. Before reading a text, what happens is we include vocabulary prediction alongside our content predictions. So after looking at the front cover of the book, maybe the title, you can prompt students. Using the book and your brain, what are some words we might hear in this story? As you see here, using the story "Snowmen at Night", in the beginning, you can scaffold this routine with pre-selected words for students to consider and sort. And then we feed the support. It's a simple routine. Will we hear the word sledding in this story? Let's pause briefly here. Take a second and consider which of these words you think we might hear in this story. We can push a deeper sense of meaning with connections by asking what makes you think that? We then have a wonderful extension of this, connecting it to active listening. We think the words sledding, cold, shovel, and carrot will be in the story. Put your hand on your head or your finger on your nose when you hear one of our words. And if you're going to use your own books and words, we would encourage you to use the lesson framework from Patton to guide you through the steps to create your own script. And if you wanna see it in action, no one does it better than Anita Archer. And you'll find two video demonstrations on her website that are linked for you here. When considering how you might get started with this in your classroom, we wanna highlight the Text Talk lessons that are available on the web. Text Talk lessons were created by Utah Reading First Educators and outline an approach to read alouds designed to build the vocabulary and oral language skills of young students. They've matched instructional review for 101 books, identifying the potential tier two vocabulary targets within the book, providing a script using kid friendly definitions to explicitly teach the words, and follow up activities to allow students to further engage and strengthen their word knowledge. Of course, you can also go through your favourite stories and start to collect your tier two words as well. We like "Snowmen at Night", we've gone through and done this process. We can use our specific word instruction during reading, using that Text Talk approach for read alouds that Becca McEwen described. First, selecting three to four tier two, or just right words before reading the text with students. We then look up kid-friendly definitions for the target words for quick and easy reference during our instructional time. We love to pop our words and definitions on a post-it note and keep those notes right inside the book for reference in the lesson and for future use. During reading, when you come across the word, briefly explain the word in context using that kid-friendly definition or consider acting out the word. After reading, you're going to explicitly teach your pre-selected tier two words using Becca McEwen's instructional routine, explicitly identifying the five

elements that you can see here. Establishing that story context, we might say in the story, the setting at night is frigid. We see icy hills, snowy housetops, and lots of snowmen that all look frigid. Everyone say frigid together. Frigid. We then provide the meaning of our target word. Frigid is when something is very cold in temperature. The air was frigid and the people outside were shivering. We can enhance students' understanding by providing some examples. We might think that a frozen lake is frigid because the water is so cold. We then associate an action with that word. Let's pretend that we feel frigid. When we are frigid, we would shiver and feel cold in our entire body. If an object is frigid, it would feel very cold to the touch and would maybe freeze other things nearby. Finally, we offer sharing time. I'd like someone to tell me about a time when they felt frigid. This time could also include a thumbs up, thumbs down activity where students decide if a stated item or scenario could be described as frigid. For example, a day in January, thumbs up. An ice cream cone, thumbs up. A suitcase, thumbs down. We've shown you that using a book that may be suited for younger learners. But we wanna highlight that these strategies also apply to students in the junior, intermediate, and secondary levels. AdLit.org is a fantastic resource that focuses on all on adolescent literacy and provides evidence based strategies that can be used across content areas. Using the search function, you can select a strategy focus with options only comprehending vocabulary or writing. And you can then specify if you're seeking strategies to support learners before, during, or after reading. Each strategy listed will then identify the area in which it will support student learning.

- Great Leah, thanks. It is a wonderful website. So another way that students can be taught words is with specific word instruction routines. There are many, many strategies available to support explicit instruction of academic and other tier two and three words. It is recommended that educators use one strategy at a time. The best is the word or a set of words. But for the sake of time today, we will only briefly review the six routines you see listed here. So the first instructional routine we wanted to highlight is a concept picture or object sort. This strategy is great for kindergarten and grade one students and for students with weak oral language skills. Eventually, picture sorts can become word sorts with older students. Notice here we have a math example and a science example directly from the new provincial curriculum. In the matter and energy example, students are not only learning about the concept of energy, but they're also deepening their word knowledge of the 12 pictured words. So for example, that a table does not use energy. And then we have semantic maps. The purpose of creating a map is to visually display the meaning based connections between a word and a set of related words or concepts. Semantic maps help students to identify, understand, and recall the meaning of words they read in a text. The complexity of semantic maps can be bearable, like you see here with the early weather map to the more advanced energy map, which makes them applicable across all grades and subject areas. As well, we can provide specific word instruction by explicitly targeting the dimensions of a word to deepen word knowledge. So in this example, we use some tier two words while working on word recognition skills in a decodable text. So work that is already happening in classrooms. And this type of instruction creates that neural circuit that promotes

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orthographic mapping, connecting the sounds, graphemes, and meaning. So here with our decodable text, we are working on long vowels. And then I see that sentence, I'm just drawn to that first sentence. Three goats were in a deep sleep at the base of a tree. So first, we could focus on parts of speech. You know, what is the noun, the verb, the adverb. We want to do this as parts of speech are so important for reading comprehension, but this instruction also provides students with the building blocks for teaching students how to write sentences, which are the foundation for writing a story, paragraph, and even an essay. But I could also use this sentence to slow map that word base because I just can't resist that specific word. Seeing this as a perfect opportunity to deepen word knowledge by focusing on multiple meanings. So please take a moment to consider. How many different meanings do you think the word base has? Well, when I did this, I quickly came up with base of a tree, which is the same as a base of a shape, a baseball base, and an army base. But there are actually over 15 meanings for the word base. So what we want to emphasise here is that we can add to a student's word knowledge during instructional activities that are already happening in the classroom, like how we used this decodable text as an opportunity to provide additional encounters with words from the text. We can also use semantic feature analysis. This instructional strategy uses a grid to help students explore how sets of things are related to one another. By completing and analysing the grid, students are able to see connections, make predictions, and acquire important concepts. This strategy enhances comprehension and vocabulary skills for all areas of the curriculum and to build descriptive vocabulary. And here, we have the four square or Frayer Model. This model is often used after students have worked with words for a little while and can be a great assessment tool for educators. Note here how the four square model goes beyond definitional knowledge. Looking at additional facets of a word such as synonyms, antonyms, morphology, and function. The Frayer Model can be used across all grades to deepen vocabulary knowledge in a number of subject areas, including expanding descriptive vocabulary like you see in the weary example in the bottom left hand corner. And our last strategy for specific word instruction is explicitly teaching shades of meaning or word scales. Word scales help students understand and identify subtle differences in meaning among related words, and it's often used to guide students in adding interest to their written expression. So let's look at a word scale for the word tired. Here, we see a set of words that show shades of meaning for feeling tired. So weary, drowsy, exhausted, worn out. And we're going to put these words in order from least tired to most tired. When teaching this concept to students, I often guide the first few scales with prompts such as, so which word means just a little bit tired? And that one is drowsy, so we would then drag drowsy under the word tired. And then I would prompt for the last word on the list. So which word means very tired? And that is exhausted, so we would drag exhausted to the bottom of that list. And then we have the words worn out and weary remaining. And I would ask, any ideas of where they should go? So these words in the middle are sometimes tricky for students, and the whole class, groups, or pairs of students can discuss the gradient or intensity of the words as needed. That is actually building word consciousness within this lesson. Often, classrooms arrive at the scale of drowsy, weary, worn out, and exhausted, which again, all show

shades of meaning related to feeling tired, from least tired to most tired. So now it's your turn. Look at the list of words for walk or eat. And then take a moment to arrange one of the word lists to show that increase in degree or intensity for the verb. Like with tired, you likely found it easiest to select the words with the least and most intensity, such as the words dawdle and marching for walk. And depending on the age of the learners, you can extend this learning by having the students act it out by dawdling, strolling, strutting, or marching, and or brainstorm more words for eating such as chew or consume. Learning about shades and meaning throughout the school year helps students learn new words, be more descriptive when talking and writing, helps when editing or revising work, and helps students paint a picture for the reader when they are writing.

- Finally then, we have word learning strategies. You know, the reality is if students have the task of learning tens of thousands of words and we can only teach them a snippet of these, then they have to do a lot of word learning on their own. So these word learning strategies can help students take a systematic approach to learning new words as they encounter them. Beginning with morphemic analysis, it's important to acknowledge that students' knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and root words will help students in reading multi-syllabic words. If your board does not have a sequence for teaching prefixes and suffixes, start by teaching commonly used prefixes. We linked the practise guide on providing reading interventions for students in grade four to nine from the Institute of Education Sciences. This document provides a ranked list of the most frequently occurring prefixes, suffixes, and root words with their meanings. If students know the common prefixes and suffixes, move on to less frequently used prefixes and suffixes, ones that are more difficult, or morphemic units that are commonly used in your academic words. Teach students to isolate the base word prefix and or suffix and determine the meaning of each separately. Show students how putting the meanings of each of the parts together can help them determine the meaning of a word. Revisiting the idea that every word has three forms, we can see that engaging in the process of morphemic analysis helps students use the information from inside the word, its orthography or spelling, for their understanding. Consider engaging in this analysis with a word that students are already familiar with to teach the process and then apply it to academic content vocabulary that they're encountering within your lessons. Here, we see an example using the word deforestation. We provide a kid-friendly definition of the word and then facilitate examining syllables and graphemes that are part of the word. From there, students can connect the meaning of the prefix, root, and suffix to consolidate their understanding and knowledge of a target word. Let's pause and think about how this could look in your classroom. Using the word metamorphic, grab a post-it or piece of paper and take a minute to identify the part of speech, a kid-friendly definition, the graphemes and morphemes that are part of this word. Going through this process can be really helpful to highlight all the pieces of knowledge that students require to learn this word. Considering the word metamorphic, we can identify if part of speech is an adjective. Our kid friendly definition might sound something like rock that has been transformed by heat, pressure, or other natural means.

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When we consider the graphemes and syllables that are part of this word, we can see that there are four syllables and nine graphemes to represent the sounds that we hear. And then we can examine the individual morpheme units to assist us making meaning from these individual units of the word. Meta is a root meaning changed or altered. Morph is a second root form in this word, which refers to an objects form or shape. And the suffix ic, which indicates of or related to. Including pictures or visual supports can also benefit students consolidating their depth of understanding of newly introduced words As well, in older grades, we can explicitly teach the meaning of Latin and Greek roots. Latin and Greek roots appear frequently in words in math, science, and social studies. For example, micro is part of many terms, including microbiology, microscope, and microbe. Spend some time explicitly teaching the meaning of the roots. How do roots contribute to the meaning of a word and how words with the same root are related. The link on this slide will take you to decoding and encoding resources from the University of Florida's Literacy Institute site, where you'll find a wealth of information and materials to support your instruction of big words with all of these elements completed for you. Once the student has decoded a word, if they're not able to comprehend what the word means, we can teach students how to derive meanings of unknown words using context. In some circumstances, the sentences surrounding an unknown word can help students determine its meaning. Teach and explicitly model how to find clues in the surrounding sentences to help students determine the meanings of words they do not understand. Demonstrate for students how and where to find direct definitions or appositives within a statement, highlighting that the meaning is explicitly provided for them. Additionally, highlighting the presence of synonyms, antonyms, or examples can also assist students in making meaning of the unknown or less familiar words. We've touched on most of these resources throughout our presentation today so we wanted to share links to a number of these wonderful tools available to us on the web. Each of these is linked for you to easily access many incredible sources of information and materials to support your instruction and to guide your observations of students' vocabulary development. Because we wanna be mindful of what we're seeing and how that informs us about students' vocabulary knowledge and growth. Students who demonstrate difficulty using newly learned words often use non-specific terms like thing or stuff and are likely to have weak vocabulary skills. They may also have difficulty understanding figurative language, using language flexibly, or only use the most commonly named items within a given category. These students will benefit from additional support to build their vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary instruction during intervention needs to be more explicit than is typical in tier one instruction. Whenever feasible, the words and comprehension practises taught and used during intervention instruction should align with those used in tier one instruction.

- Wonderful. So in summary, today, vocabulary is one of the five essential components of effective reading instruction and is critical in helping students make sense of the words they're lifting from the page. To support students, we are advocating for a dynamic approach to vocabulary instruction in classrooms, keeping in mind that words can be caught and need to be

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taught to support oral language, reading comprehension, and written expression. That this instructional framework illustrates that it's not about that one lesson, that one programme, or that one content area. It is about using our dynamic vocabulary approach to create word users and knowers, word solvers, and most importantly, word lovers. Thank you so much for joining us today and please visit our family facing website and connect with TVDSB Speech and Language Services on social media. Thanks.

- [Susanna] Awesome. Thank you so much for that presentation, Jen and Leah. That was really, really informative. With that in mind, let's jump into some questions and answers. I know we've got a few lined up for you today. Just to begin with, I wanted to reiterate that I love that words can be taught and caught kind of messaging. I think that's really important for our audience to learn that it's not something that students are just gonna pick up all by themselves. It does have to be explicit and taught to them, but there are so many opportunities in a day for students to pick up this vocabulary and really enrich their vocabularies. So just to jump right into the question period, let's start with instruction of vocabulary. How much time do you think should be dedicated to vocabulary instruction during a day in school and does this change across the grades as students get older and probably build up their vocabulary a little bit?

- I can start with this one if you're okay, Leah. So I'm not aware of the research on how much time should be dedicated to tier one or classroom vocabulary instruction, as that incidental on purpose learning and explicit vocabulary instruction or words can be caught and taught, like you just said, that should be woven into the language of the classroom and lessons across the day. So I think the key takeaway for all grades would be the educators intentionality on selecting the tier two or three words that will be explicitly taught. This could be words from text or academic vocabulary, as well as intentionally creating a rich oral language environment by using sophisticated language during conversation as well as instruction. We do wanna keep in mind what Leah just touched on though, is that some students may require more targeted intensive instruction of the vocabulary you were teaching to the whole class. So ensuring that you're providing those additional opportunities or encounters with the word to deepen their understanding. Anything to add, Leah?

- [Susanna] Wonderful.

- No, I think you covered all those points, yeah.

- [Susanna] That's great. And I know you showed the simple view of reading and how much time do you think we need to balance between the teaching of decoding skills and phonics and all those things that we've been so focused on lately, and how much time needs to go to the actual language instruction and vocabulary?

- Wanna take that one, Leah?

- Sure, yeah, I can give it a go. Absolutely. Again, I'm gonna use that word that Jen used about that balance, right? That you've just preferred to as well. Making sure that we're allowing students to engage with content areas and understanding the ideas and the thinking that as they become more proficient with those word recognition skills and being able to get those words off the page, that they're going to have the knowledge to support that comprehension of those words that they're reading. So I really think that it is about that balance and making sure we're attending to both sides of that simple view really early on. Recognising that the oral language pieces and that oral learning of vocabulary can continue to be more complex than what we're seeing in terms of students' reading abilities and maybe even what they're including in their writing as well. Knowing that we're able to provide explicit instruction and that really strong model of more complex vocabulary, but also syntactic forms as well to support that learning one step ahead of potentially what we're, our students are able to use their phonics knowledge and their word recognition skills to be able to decode. Jen, you wanna add anything there?

- That's perfect.

- [Susanna] Wonderful. So while we're talking about learning words, and I just keep flashing back to that image you showed about the breadth and depth of words. Does a student need to fully have all that knowledge around the depth of a word in order to comprehend a text?

- I think this is a great question and actually we should have brought that into the speaking points. So no, a student doesn't need to have full depth of word knowledge of a word to comprehend a text. They can make sense of a text with sort of a narrower context found knowledge of a word or just some knowledge of that word that we have to keep in mind that a rich, contextualised understanding a word does occur across time, and students encounter with that word within that text as they're reading actually adds and deepens their word knowledge. But you are correct. You don't need to have that full, deep, contextualised knowledge to understand the word within that text. But it will add to their understanding over time.

- [Susanna] Just to piggyback on that question, how do you know then when a student has enough of a depth of knowledge around certain words that they are comprehending the text as you'd want them to?

- I think most often, you would see it in their use of the words. So we first understand our words in terms of receptive vocabulary and then you'll see their use of the word either in expression or in their writing. A great assessment tool for an educator can actually be the use of the Frayer Model and that could really help an educator see and and get a sense of their

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understanding of the depth of the word by the different facets. They just like to put in the four corners. That could be a wonderful insight or window into the student's depth of vocabulary knowledge for the key terms.

- [Susanna] Awesome. Well I love that you brought up expressive vocabulary then. That just perfectly pulls me into my next question. We know that, you know, the students can come across really dynamic vocabulary in the classroom, but how do we increase their use of this vocabulary, particularly orally? How can you encourage students to use these new words that they're learning in their everyday life?

- I'm gonna share some of my thinking, Jen. Yeah, it's a great opportunity, a great discussion point, right? We do need to practise. It's not just about that exposure piece, building that receptive knowledge, that understanding piece, but also encouraging that use. Personally, I love that shades of meaning, that scales activity that Jen kind of highlighted for us and walked us through, really helping students see how the different words that they know that are within that scale can really change what we're seeing, what we're picturing in our minds, right? About what that action might look like or about that specific detail. And so I think having potentially some built in practise opportunities, what else could we say here? Is there another word that might mean something similar? But that tells us we weren't just out for a walk, we were strolling through the park, always beginning with that model that we as the adult or the educator are providing and allowing our students that opportunity to practise what we're hoping they're going to eventually begin to use quite naturally.

- [Susanna] I love that. So you're saying the educators need to expand their vocabulary as well. Giving us a little bit of homework, I like that a lot. You touched on it a little bit, but my mind is going to English language learners. How do you include them in vocab instruction? How can you maybe transfer what might be a really robust vocabulary in one language to another?

- Fantastic question. So you're right, we did mention briefly that for multilingual learners, that research does recommend that we teach that academic vocabulary words, you know, intentionally across several days using a variety of instructional activities. So we do wanna keep in mind that piece about using multiple modalities as well as teaching word learning strategies that there is evidence to support that work. But I do always keep in mind that, you know, equity starts with good instruction and good instruction includes effective vocabulary practises. So we just always wanna continue to use that dynamic vocabulary approach. A few specific classroom strategies, though, could include pre-teaching vocabulary prior to a lesson or an activity and you can again bring in those multiple modalities there. So it could be bringing in an object, a picture, you could use gestures, using the word in the home language. Again, which is speaks to that dynamic instructional approach. You can also make sure that multilingual learners know the instructional words you use every day. So if you often say things like, I need you to describe that

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or start at the top of the page, or use the steps in the guide, you could make sure and explicitly teach those terms at the start of the school year. And really though to, you know, celebrate diversity and foster an equitable environment, we can consider how to tap into students cultural capital, such as if students do speak more than one language, allow them to use language other than English and when possible and, you know, without putting them on the spot, but you could ask them to share the vocabulary that you are exploring.

- [Susanna] Wonderful, I love that. So I think we've got time for one more question. And I know you two are more focused on earlier readers and sort of grades 4, 5, 6 in that range. But we always get questions about older students and we do know that there are students in our, you know, grades 9, 10, 11, 12 that are still struggling with aspects of reading, including vocabulary. Are these strategies that you've presented today useful for those ages and how would you sort of adapt it to an older group that might feel a little baby-ish talking about, you know, what's a more intense word, weary or exhausted? How would we adapt these things?

- I think many of the strategies can continue to be used and for those older students or more mature learners, I would absolutely encourage educators to explore that AdLit website that we mentioned. It really does have a tonne of information, a variety of different strategies, and focusing on a variety of different skill sets as well to develop, and gives a lot of information about how those different strategies can look and be used across different subject areas and throughout the day to support different learnings. Jen, you wanna add anything there for those older students?

- I think the resource is a fantastic, it puts the dynamic vocabulary approach into practise, like you could, that website gives you the ideas to get going right away with that. And I would just again say that a dynamic vocabulary approach can and should be used with high school students because it does come down to that intentionality of the words you're going to teach. So that pre-selection of the vocabulary that would be in alignment with their curriculum as well as the text that they're interacting with and the written expression that they're producing.

- [Susanna] Yeah. Thank you for hitting on that dynamic word again. I think that is so key. It's about making the lessons fit the student and not the students fit the lessons, so much, which I think is a great way to send us.