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ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY AND READING SUCCESS

mrnittle.com

JOURNAL WRITE

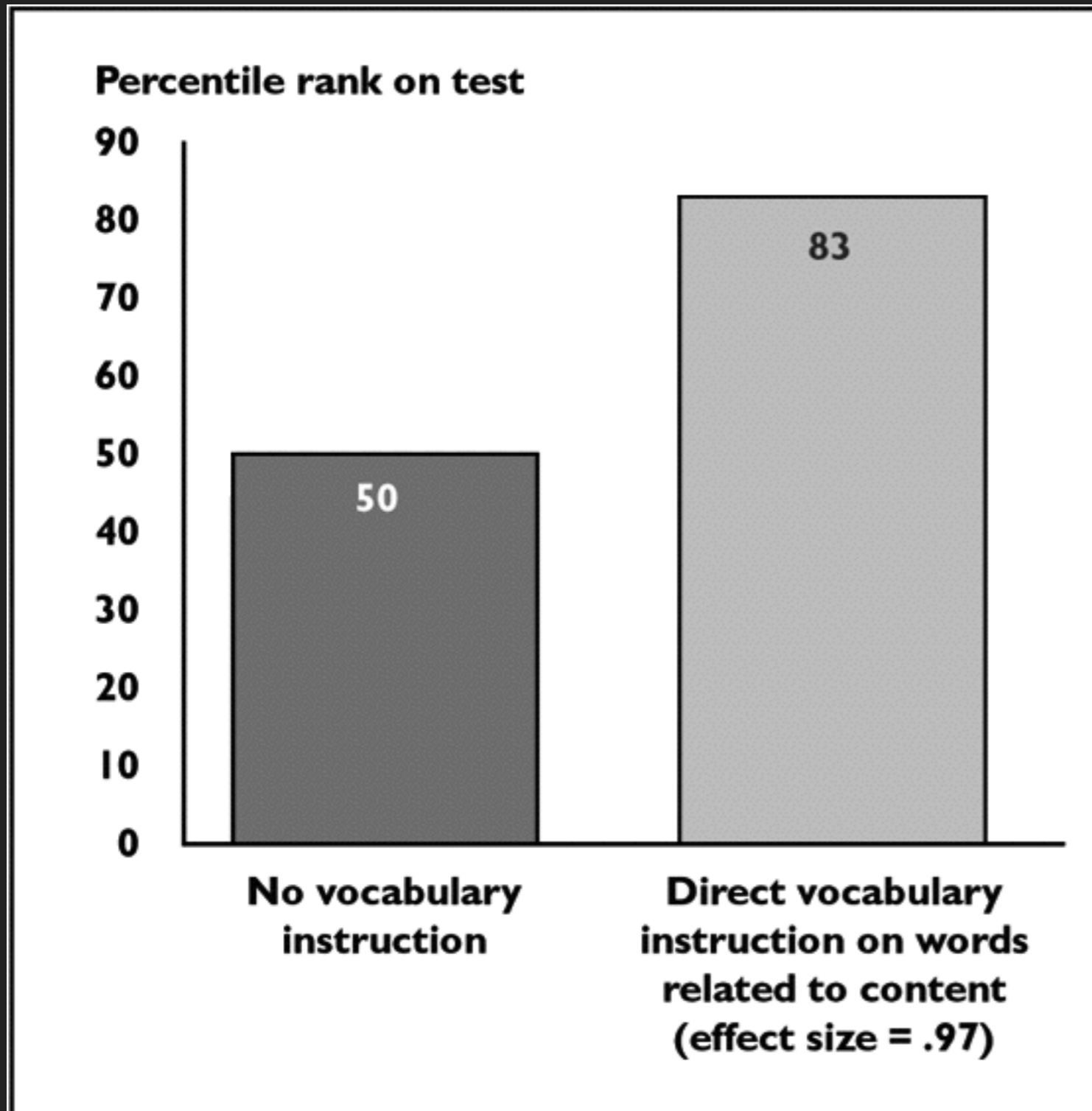


- ▶ How do you currently teach academic vocabulary within your content area?
- ▶ How do you create opportunities for vocabulary “repetition” and accountability for your students?
- ▶ Assess your practices: how has your vocabulary instruction affected student learning?

“VOCABULARY IS THE BEST SINGLE INDICATOR OF INTELLECTUAL ABILITY AND AN ACCURATE PREDICTOR OF SUCCESS AT SCHOOL.”

W.B. Elley

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY AND READING SUCCESS



Impact of Direct Vocabulary Instruction

(Marzano 2004)

QUESTIONING TRADITIONAL PRACTICES



- ▶ Copying word definitions from a dictionary
- ▶ Word Walls as classroom decorations
- ▶ Spelling tests; words out of context
- ▶ “Drive-by” vocabulary instruction (incidental as opposed to explicit)
- ▶ Teaching only obscure words with rare, specialized usage

SELECTING WORDS



- ▶ As the teacher, you don't always have to choose the words on your own.
- ▶ Students can assist in choosing their own words.
- ▶ Have students rate terms according to "know it," "sort of know it," "don't know it at all."

(Alber)

SELECTING WORDS



According to Isabel Beck, we should focus on “Tier Two” words:

- ▶ Tier One: Basic words that rarely require instructional focus (*door, house, book*)
- ▶ Tier Two: Words that appear with high frequency, across a variety of content areas, and are crucial when using mature, academic language (*coincidence, reluctant, analysis*).
- ▶ Tier Three: Frequency of these words is quite low and often limited to specific content areas (*isotope, Reconstruction, Buddhism*).

(Alber)

SELECTING WORDS



Criteria for Identifying Tier Two Words:

- ▶ Importance and utility
- ▶ Instructional potential
- ▶ Conceptual understanding

(From Beck's *Bringing Words to Life*)

SELECTING WORDS



1. Refer to a text you use in your classroom
2. Isolate “Tier Two” words (high frequency, used across a variety of content areas)
 - ▶ How can you teach these words in your classroom in a way that will enhance student learning?

TEACHING ACADEMIC VOCABULARY



1. Teacher explains the word, going beyond the definition (connecting to prior knowledge)
2. Students restate it in their own words (speaking or writing)
3. Students create a non-linguistic representation of the word
4. Students engage in activities to deepen understanding of the word
5. Students discuss the new word (think-pair-share)
6. Students periodically play games to review new vocabulary

(Marzano 2010)

TIPS AND RESOURCES



- ▶ Use student-friendly definitions/explanations ([Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English](#))
- ▶ Underline vocabulary words in writing prompts, powerpoint slideshows and handouts
- ▶ When possible, identify Spanish-English cognates: e.g. information (English), información (Spanish)
- ▶ Use the "[Academic Word List Highlighter](#)"
- ▶ Academic Vocabulary Handouts, Reader's Anticipation Guides, and Dialectical Journals (samples online at [mrnittle.com](#))

RESOURCES FOR INFORMATIONAL TEXTS



- ▶ [AVID Weekly](#) (requires account, ALC has a subscription)
- ▶ [Time For Kids](#)
- ▶ [Teenshealth](#)
- ▶ [NEWSELA](#)
- ▶ [ReadWorks.org](#) (requires a free account)
- ▶ [New York Times: The Learning Network](#)

PLANNING VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION



1. Using the “Tier Two” words you identified in your text, create some instructional activities.
 2. Refer to mrnittle.com for vocabulary resources and samples handouts.
- ▶ How can you teach these words in your classroom in a way that will enhance student learning?

REFLECTION



- ▶ What new opportunities will you create for academic vocabulary instruction in your classroom?
- ▶ How can you balance exposure to new terms with accountability for learned terms?

REFERENCES



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**“WE THINK WITH
WORDS, THEREFORE TO
IMPROVE THINKING,
TEACH VOCABULARY.”**

A. Draper and G. Moeller