



Selecting & Teaching Vocabulary Appropriate to the Subject

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Notes from the Authors

This video features a high school Food Sciences teacher who is using demonstrations, practice with peers, and independent application to build conceptual and vocabulary knowledge. He introduces an ancient cooking technique (stir-fry) that uses a specialized piece of equipment (wok) and connects it to present-day concerns about fuel costs. The teacher demonstrates food preparation methods and establishes the purpose for the day's task. After moving students into collaborative learning groups, the teacher visits each group to refine technique, using the term *leverage* to explain why one method is superior to another. He corrects other errors through the strategic use of questions, prompts, and cues. When he discovers that a student is making a technical error, he models the correct method, further building vocabulary knowledge using contrastive terms (zest and peel).

He works with a group who will be using the woks and explains that the Chinese term *chow* is used to describe stir-fry. He demonstrates that the English term *stir-fry* is misleading and demonstrates the difference between stirring and tossing. The teacher asks the students to practice the tossing technique with the utensils, then cues them to start the cooking process. While the students cook, he repeats the correct method for tossing ("up and over, down and under"). After the cooked meal is served, he once more invites students to discuss what they have learned with their peers.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

1. In what ways does the teacher's instructional design promote understanding of new vocabulary and concepts?
2. Why do you believe the teacher has incorporated informal vocabulary instruction, rather than explicit instruction, into this lesson? How would this apply in the subject that you teach?
3. What evidence of student learning did you notice?
4. Discuss how intentional vocabulary instruction across the curriculum can and should reflect a gradual release of responsibility model.
5. Regarding vocabulary learning, how would you follow up this lesson and apply it in your classroom?