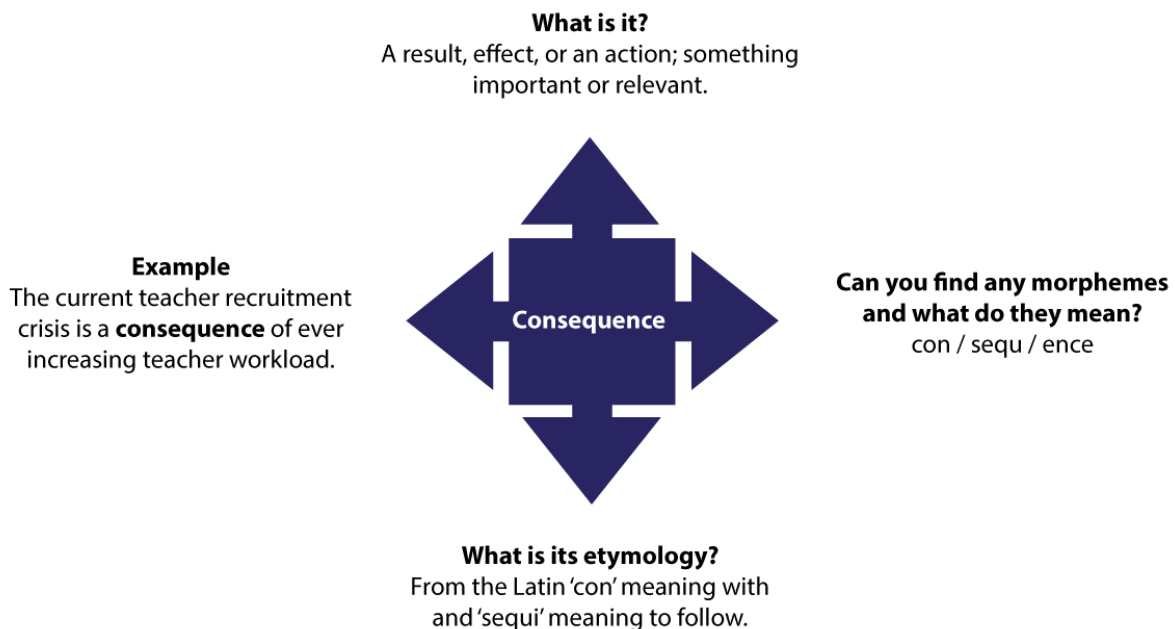


VOCABULARY RESEARCH



- Teaching definitions by themselves are unlikely to enhance comprehension. (Baumann, Kame'enuu, & Ash, 2003)
- It takes up to 12 encounters with a word to reliably learn it, children need multiple exposures to academic language and vocabulary (across the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing). (McKeown, M.G., and M.E. Curtis, eds. 1987. *The Nature of Vocabulary Acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.)
- All teachers must support all-purpose, high-leverage language - the "mortar" words crucial for understanding texts, regardless of content area (words such as "infer," "deny," "justify," "analyze," and "interpret")
- Most vocabulary researchers agree that vocabulary learning is a combination of:
 - learning words from context through extensive reading.
 - providing direct instruction (Pre-teaching vocabulary, demonstrating morphology and word-building knowledge, checking understanding through use in the context of vocabulary words).
 - developing **word-learning strategies**.
 - building **word-recognition fluency**.
 - developing **word appreciation** (and motivation) on students' parts. (Graves 2000, Nation 2001, Stahl & Nagy 2006)

Use Concept Maps to Teach New Words



Select Words Purposefully

Selecting Vocabulary

- Before instruction, preview the text, even when using text that has pre-selected vocabulary words.
- Read the passage and identify vocabulary words you think students will find unfamiliar. Ask yourself: "How difficult is this passage to understand?"
- Select words that are important to understanding the text.
- List words you predict will be challenging for your students. You may not be able to teach all of these words. Research supports teaching only a few words before reading.
- Determine which words are adequately defined in the text. Some may be defined by direct definition and others through context. Expand on these words after reading, rather than directly teaching them before reading.
- Identify words students may know based on their prefixes, suffixes and base or root words. If structural elements help students determine words' meanings, don't teach them directly.
- Consider students' prior knowledge. Words can be discussed as you activate and build prior knowledge. Words can also be extended.
- Determine the importance of the word. Ask yourself: "Does the word appear again and again? Is the word important to comprehending the passage? Will knowledge of the word help in other content areas?"
- Remember, words taught before students read include:
 - Words that will be frequently encountered in other texts and content areas.
 - Words that are important to understanding the main ideas.
 - Words that are not a part of your student' prior knowledge.
 - Words unlikely to be learned independently through the use of context and/or structural analysis.

Adapted from Cooper, J.D. (1997). Literacy: Helping children construct meaning (3' ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Consider Teaching Greek and Latin Word Roots as a School

- Approximately 80% of vocabulary in math, science, and technical English is derived from Latin or Greek.

Our goal? Student understanding!

