



## How To: Build Vocabulary Knowledge through Classwide Tutoring

In academic content areas such as mathematics or the sciences, students must rapidly become familiar with specialized vocabulary terms that either are not encountered often in everyday situations or are used in unfamiliar ways (Adams, 2003). Further complicating this situation is the fact that there are different levels of 'knowing' a word. A student who masters a science term, for example, may pass successively through these following stages: (1) the term is completely unknown; (2) the student vaguely recognizes the term; (3) the student can provide a formal definition of the term; (4) the student can independently use the term flexibly and correctly in various applied oral and written contexts (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). According to one estimate, a student typically needs at least 12--and perhaps as many as 17--exposures to a vocabulary term before he or she is able to fully assimilate and use it (Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008).

Classwide vocabulary tutoring with constant time delay (Hughes & Fredrick, 2006) is an economical approach that teachers can employ to give a small or large student group repeated exposure to low-incidence, specialized academic vocabulary. In this intervention, students use flash-cards to tutor each other in vocabulary of the teacher's choosing. This explicit drill of terms and matching definitions accelerates students' movement through the stages of vocabulary acquisition and primes them to understand targeted vocabulary in large- and small-group discussions as well as on assignments. The directions outlined here for implementing a classwide vocabulary tutoring program are adapted from Hughes & Fredrick, 2006.

### Preparation.

Prior to each tutoring session, the teacher ensures that the following materials are prepared or available for each tutor-pair:

- Folder with pockets to hold tutoring materials
- 5 vocabulary flash-cards, with terms written on one side and definitions written on the other. New vocabulary cards are prepared for each tutoring session. TIP: To save time, the teacher may display terms and definitions on an overhead and have students copy them on flash-cards.
- *Vocabulary Tutoring Student Checklist*: 1 copy to be used for the duration of the tutoring program: This checklist is a review tool for the tutor. It briefly outlines the non-negotiable steps for tutoring a peer.
- *Vocabulary Tutoring: Session Form*: 2 copies that are replaced after each session. The tutee and tutor use this form to record their responses during tutoring.
- *Vocabulary Tutoring: Tracking Form*: 1 copy to be used for the duration of the tutoring program: This form is used to record each tutee's percentage of correctly defined vocabulary terms across tutoring sessions.

Prior to starting the tutoring program the teacher matches students in tutoring pairs:

- The teacher first reviews the class or group list and rank-orders students in descending order by their perceived vocabulary knowledge or reading skills.
- The teacher then puts the names of students from the top half of the class/group into one container and the names of the students from the bottom half into another container.
- Finally, the teacher creates each tutoring pair by drawing one name each from the top-half and bottom-half containers, continuing the process until all names are drawn. These student pairings are recorded on the *Vocabulary Tutoring: Student-Pair Assignments* form. NOTE: If there is an odd number of students in the class/group, one tutoring 'trio' can be made up of 3 students. A student from this trio can be temporarily assigned to work with another student in the class as needed to cover absences.

**Training.** During several short sessions, the teacher trains students to work together as vocabulary tutors. The teacher has students sit with their assigned tutoring partners. Each tutoring pair has a work folder with all tutoring materials.



To introduce the sequence of tutoring procedures, the teacher sits with another adult or cooperative student and conducts a mock tutoring session. (The steps that tutors follow are outlined in the *Vocabulary Tutoring Student Checklist* that appears elsewhere in this document). The person role-playing the tutee deliberately makes several mistakes to allow the person role-playing the tutor to demonstrate how to handle and record student errors. The teacher then has the student pairs conduct several short tutoring sessions, circulating and providing feedback to each pair. During these practice sessions, students in each pair alternate between tutor and tutee roles. When in the teacher's judgment, the student pairs understand all tutoring procedures (usually after 2 practice sessions), the tutoring program can begin.

**Procedures.** Whenever the teacher uses the classwide vocabulary tutoring program, these steps are followed:

1. *Introduce the Day's Vocabulary Terms.* In large-group, the teacher displays on an overhead the terms and corresponding definitions for each of the 5 vocabulary items to be the focus of the day's tutoring session. The teacher reads aloud each term and definition twice. The teacher then has the class chorally respond by reading each term and definition aloud twice.
2. *Review Essential Tutoring Steps.* The teacher reminds students of the essential steps of the tutoring program--using the format outlined on the *Vocabulary Tutoring Student Checklist* form. NOTE: This review step can be shortened when--in the teacher's judgment--the students clearly know and can reliably follow the correct procedures in their tutoring pairs.
3. *Begin the Tutoring Session.* The teacher directs students to get their tutoring folders and join their tutoring partners. The teacher sets an audio or visual timer for 4 minutes and directs the students to decide which roles (tutor, tutee) each will take at the outset and to begin tutoring. NOTE: The steps that the students follow during the tutoring session are outlined on the attached *Vocabulary Tutoring Student Checklist*.
4. *Conduct Integrity Checks.* While students are engaged in tutoring, the teacher circulates throughout the room using the *Vocabulary Tutoring Student Checklist* to conduct integrity checks of the tutoring and to intervene if needed with tutoring pairs.
5. *Prompt Tutors to Record Data.* When the session-timer has expired, the teacher prompts tutors to tally their tutee's performance on the daily *Vocabulary Tutoring: Session Form* and copy the 'Percent Vocabulary Words Correct' on the *Vocabulary Tutoring: Tracking Form*.
6. *Have Students Switch Roles and Repeat.* The teacher tells students to switch tutor and tutee roles. The teacher then starts the timer and repeats steps 3-5.

## References

Adams, T. L. (2003). Reading mathematics: More than words can say. *The Reading Teacher, 56*, 786-795.

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. Guilford Press: New York.

Hughes, T. A., & Fredrick, L. D. (2006). Teaching vocabulary with students with learning disabilities using classwide peer tutoring and constant time delay. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 15*(1), 1-23.

Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., & Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices: A practice guide* (NCEE #2008-4027). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>.



<b>Vocabulary Tutoring Student Checklist</b> (Adapted from Hughes & Fredrick, 2006).	
Students Directions: Use this checklist to remember these important steps as you tutor your student partner.	
<i>Carried Out?</i>	<i>Intervention Step</i>
_Y _N	1. <b>Quickly Start the Session.</b> When the teacher starts the timer, I begin the tutoring session right away.
_Y _N	2. <b>Present Cards: 0-Second Time Delay.</b> The first time that I review the stack of 5 vocabulary cards, I read each definition aloud and then immediately say the vocabulary word on the back of the card that goes with the definition ('0-second time delay').
_Y _N	3. <b>Present Cards: 5-Second Time Delay.</b> For the rest of the session, when I present the stack of vocabulary cards, I read each definition aloud and then count silently to 5 ("1-banana...2 banana...") before giving the matching vocabulary word ('5-second time delay').
_Y _N	4. <b>Tutee Responds.</b> Whenever I read a vocabulary definition from a card (0-second delay or 5-second delay), I make sure that my student partner writes their vocabulary-word answers in the correct space in the LEFT ('Tutee') column on the <i>Vocabulary Tutoring: Session Form</i> .
_Y _N	5. <b>Give Performance Feedback.</b> Whenever the student I am tutoring writes the <i>correct</i> answer, I say, "Yes, the word [word] means [definition]." Then I go to the next flash-card.  Whenever the student I am tutoring either writes an <i>incorrect</i> answer or takes 5 seconds or longer to write an answer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I say "No/sorry/nice try, the word [word] means [definition]."</li> <li>• I draw a line through the space in the LEFT ('Tutee') column on the <i>Vocabulary Tutoring: Session Form</i> where my partner is supposed to write a vocabulary word.</li> <li>• I write the right vocabulary word in the correct space in the RIGHT ('Tutor') column on the <i>Vocabulary Tutoring: Session Form</i>.</li> <li>• Then I go to the next flash-card.</li> </ul>
_Y _N	6. <b>Shuffle Cards.</b> Each time I finish reviewing the stack of vocabulary cards, I shuffle the cards before I show them again to my partner.
_Y _N	7. <b>Work Until End of Session.</b> I go on presenting vocabulary cards to my partner until I have gone through the stack 4 times or we run out of time.
_Y _N	8. <b>Record Tutee Responses.</b> At the end of the session:



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I count up all of my partner's correct answers in the left ('Tutee') column on the <i>Vocabulary Tutoring: Session Form</i> and write the amount in the blank at the bottom of the page.</li><li>• Then I count up all of my partner's incorrect (crossed-out) answers in the left ('Tutee') column on the <i>Vocabulary Tutoring: Session Form</i> and write the amount in the blank at the bottom of the page.</li><li>• Finally, I calculate the percentage of correct responses and write that figure and the current date on the <i>Vocabulary Tutoring: Tracking Form</i>.</li></ul> |
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Hughes, T. A., & Fredrick, L. D. (2006). Teaching vocabulary with students with learning disabilities using classwide peer tutoring and constant time delay. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 15*(1), 1-23.



Vocabulary Tutoring: Student-Pair Assignments					
Class/Grade: _____		Date: _____		Teacher(s): _____	
<b>1</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>11</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		
<b>2</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>12</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		
<b>3</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>13</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		
<b>4</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>14</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		
<b>5</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>15</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		
<b>6</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>16</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		
<b>7</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>17</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		
<b>8</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>18</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		
<b>9</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>19</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		
<b>10</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____	<b>20</b>	Student 1: _____ Student 2: _____		



Vocabulary Tutoring: Session Form		Date: _____
Tutee: _____	Tutor: _____	
1. _____	1. _____	
2. _____	2. _____	
3. _____	3. _____	
4. _____	4. _____	
5. _____	5. _____	
1. _____	1. _____	
2. _____	2. _____	
3. _____	3. _____	
4. _____	4. _____	
5. _____	5. _____	
1. _____	1. _____	
2. _____	2. _____	
3. _____	3. _____	
4. _____	4. _____	
5. _____	5. _____	
1. _____	1. _____	
2. _____	2. _____	
3. _____	3. _____	
4. _____	4. _____	
5. _____	5. _____	
<b>Total Vocabulary Words Correct:</b> _____	<b>Total Vocabulary Words Incorrect (Words Crossed Out in Left Column):</b> _____	
<b>Percent Vocabulary Words Correct:</b> _____% Percent Correct is calculated as follows: (1) Total Correct ÷ (Total Correct + Total Incorrect); (2) Quotient is multiplied by 100.		

