Key Words - Explainer

What is the strategy – 'Key Words'?

How can we use 'Key Words' in our classrooms?

Why is it crucial to use 'Key Words' in classrooms across all content areas?

What is 'Key Words'?

*Key Words is about having a keen awareness of the vocabulary demands of our content areas. Vocabulary is key to reading comprehension. Research tells us that readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what <u>**most**</u> of the words mean.* **(95-100%)** *As our young people learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary.* **Key Words** *is ensuring that we carefully choose and explicitly teach the vocabulary of our subject, in every unit and in every lesson.*

What's the point?

→ According to research, explicit instruction and focus on vocabulary influences comprehension of a subject more than any other factor.

→ If a learner only understands 80% of vocabulary (they don't know 1 in every 5 words) the text is incomprehensible in terms of functional comprehension. In other words, the student cannot use the text to learn.

→ There are many Tier 2 and Tier 3 words that are not in our students' everyday vocabularies and which we must teach, explicitly. (More information about tiered vocabulary in links below.)

→ Learners must learn new vocabulary incrementally – they can't learn large amounts of new words all at once. According to research, most students can deeply learn about 8-10 new words per unit and for EAL learners, it's less again. Very careful choice of which key words to explicitly teach is essential.

→ Teaching the etymology and morphology of the vocabulary of our content areas is <u>very</u> powerful as this will assist students to remember new words and to make connections between words.

→ One off definitions or glossaries aren't effective for deep learning and ability to transfer knowledge. Students need multiple exposures to new words, including opportunities to practise using them during guided, collaborative and independent learning phases.

How can we use Key Words in classrooms across all content areas?

1. Clarify and curate the key words that need to be explicitly taught when completing the Getting Ready for Learning section of your Learning Sequence. Remember to choose 8-10 absolutely key words for the unit of learning being undertaken.
2. Use a range of evidence-based strategies for the explicit teaching of the key words throughout each unit, remembering that multiple exposures and opportunities to practise is essential. (Lots of suggested strategies in the links below.)
3. Consider complementing the above by adopting a classroom routine (every possible lesson) of having a column on the board called 'Key Words' dedicated to providing definitions of key vocabulary needed to engage in the learning of that lesson. Explicitly explain to students where you are using those words as you teach. Complementing this list with visual representations or diagrams wherever possible is powerful for learners.

Why?

Reading for Learning:

→ https://www.texasldcenter.org/teachers-corner/five-research-based-ways-to-teach-vocabulary

→ https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/effective-reading-in-the-early-years-of-school/vocabulary#%3Cspan2

→ Vocabulary - The Key to All Content Reading.pdf

→ https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED597046.pdf

→ https://readingwritingcentre.education.qld.gov.au/language/Documents/explicit-vocabulary-instruction-infographic.pdf

→ https://www.theconfidentteacher.com/2021/05/three-pillars-of-vocabulary-teaching/

→ https://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/frayer-model

→ https://languagedisorder.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Six-Steps-for-Effective-Vocabulary-Instruction-Language-Disorder-Australia.pdf

→ https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/553

→ https://www.teachhub.com/teaching-strategies/2020/09/the-frayer-model-what-is-it-and-how-to-use-it/

→ http://blog.hbe.com.au/2018/09/27/the-wonder-of-words-successful-vocabulary-strategies-for-english-learners/

Videos for Learning

→ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9DPKgBrJQE

→ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNR8d4KotNo

Podcast Episodes for Learning

→ https://the-teachers-tool-kit-for-literacy.simplecast.com/episodes/the-power-of-key-words-with-rob-vingerhoets-MRl9k3b6