De-emphasizing science vocabulary with English language learners

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In particular, how can instructors support ELLs in acquisition of scientific vocabulary?

Ongoing debate: Should vocabulary be taught explicitly or implicitly? Front-loaded to support ELLs?

Contrasting approaches to introducing vocabulary

- Explicitly, before content (Conline & Carriras, 2004; Colorado, 2003)
- Explicitly, during, and after instruction (S advert, Echevarria, 1998, p. 22)
- Implicitly, during and after instruction (Short, 2002; Lee, et al., 2006; Santiago, Maldonado, & Rueda, 2006)

Must Sheltered Instruction front-load vocabulary?

"...We advocate specific vocabulary instruction, and it can come where it makes the most sense."
(Schleppegrell, 2006, p. 67; emphasis added)

Conclusion

Removing the instructional “support” of front-loading vocabulary can help students (re)frame their classroom activity as sense-making, leading to inquiry in which the students help decide when and how to emphasize vocabulary.

Implications

- Researchers must examine classroom interactions to make claims about the effects of different instructional moves in different circumstances, for fostering inquiry and vocabulary growth.
- Teacher educators can engage teacher candidates in analyzing cases to realize that no “best” teaching method exists.

References


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