

Strategic Literacy Instruction

A video series featuring Dr. Anita Archer



About Dr. Archer

Anita Archer, Ph.D., recipient of eight outstanding educator awards, has taught elementary and middle school students and has been a faculty member at San Diego State University, the University of Washington, and the University of Oregon. She currently serves as an educational consultant to school districts on effective instruction, classroom management, language arts instruction, and study skills instruction. She is a nationally known presenter and has authored training and curriculum materials, chapters, and books. Among her works are the acclaimed REWARDS reading program and the Tough Kid Video Series.

Vocabulary Instruction, kindergarten

Even as students enter kindergarten, they have vast differences in their vocabularies. If we are to narrow the achievement gap that students from different economic levels exhibit in the upper grades, we must provide explicit vocabulary instruction in the primary grades. One of the best sources of vocabulary words is the books we read aloud to students.

In this video, the students have listened to the book *Honk!: The Story of a Prima Swanerina* by Pamela Duncan Edwards and are being introduced to the meaning of three words from the story. This video is a great reminder of the difficulties in delivering instruction and maintaining the attention of students. There is no doubt about it; teaching is hard work!

Focus ... As you watch this video, consider the following questions.

1. Did the teacher ...
 - Introduce each word?
 - Present a student-friendly explanation?
 - Illustrate the word with examples?



About the video

Filmed at McKinley Elementary School in Tacoma, Washington
 Videographer, Dima Yaremenko
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 Elapsed time, 6:15 minutes

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- Check students' understanding?
 - Review the word?
2. What other good practices did you observe?
 3. What suggestions would you give the teacher?

Feedback ... Notice that the teacher used all of the following techniques in presenting and reviewing vocabulary words:

- Introduced the word
- Presented a student-friendly explanation
- Illustrated the word with examples
- Checked students' understanding
- Reviewed the word

During the lesson, the teacher actively involved the students by having them:

- Say answers as a whole group
- Share ideas with their partners
- Share ideas with their partners, then with the class
- Respond with movement and facial gestures

The instructor also augmented the vocabulary instruction by:

- Adding gestures and movement
- Checking understanding using examples and non-examples
- Conveying the usefulness of learning the three words
- Adding humor

Two ideas for improving this lesson:

1. Create a better, more attentive environment by:
 - Putting the last two rows of children in chairs so they are more visible.
 - Reorganizing the seating arrangement so that inattentive students are closer to the teacher.
 - Selecting partners more carefully.
 - Reorganizing the schedule of activities so that the students have an activity at their desk before this lesson.
2. Teach the word "practice" rather than "practiced." It was confusing to switch between the two words.