



National Center and State Collaborative

# **NCSC Curriculum Resource to Prepare Students for AA-AAS**

## **Language Arts Content: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

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The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) is applying the lessons learned from the past decade of research on alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) to develop a multi-state comprehensive assessment system for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The project draws on a strong research base to develop an AA-AAS that is built from the ground up on powerful validity arguments linked to clear learning outcomes and defensible assessment results, to complement the work of the Race to the Top Common State Assessment Program (RTTA) consortia.

Our long-term goal is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options. A well-designed summative assessment alone is insufficient to achieve that goal. Thus, NCSC is developing a full system intended to support educators, which includes formative assessment tools and strategies, professional development on appropriate interim uses of data for progress monitoring, and management systems to ease the burdens of administration and documentation. All partners share a commitment to the research-to-practice focus of the project and the development of a comprehensive model of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and supportive professional development. These supports will improve the alignment of the entire system and strengthen the validity of inferences of the system of assessments.



The contents of this Resource Guide were developed as part of the National Center and State Collaborative by Special Educators Angel Lee, M.Ed., Diane Browder, Ph.D., and validated by Jean Vintinner, Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for under a grant from the Department of Education (PR/Award #: H373X100002, Project Officer, [Susan.Weigert@Ed.gov](mailto:Susan.Weigert@Ed.gov)). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and no assumption of endorsement by the Federal government should be made.

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This document is available in alternative formats upon request.



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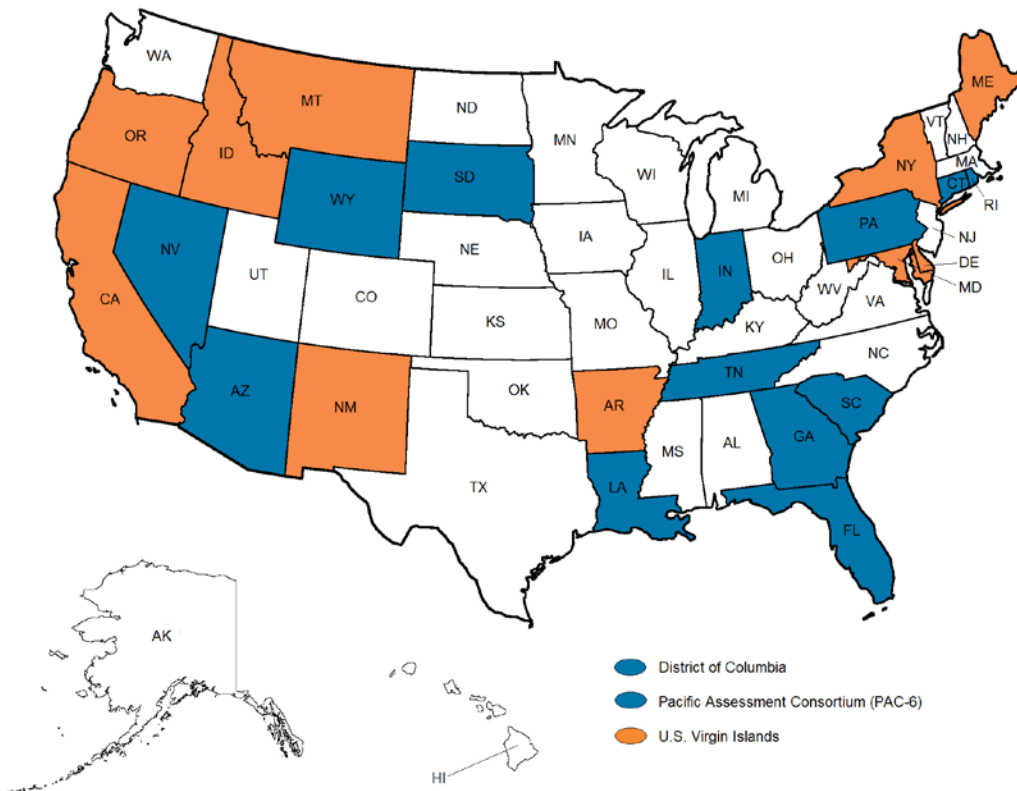
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The states include (shown in blue on map): Arizona, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Nevada, Pacific Assessment Consortium (PAC-6)<sup>1</sup>, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wyoming.

Tier II states are partners in curriculum, instruction, and professional development implementation but are not part of the assessment development work. They are (shown in orange on map): Arkansas, California, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, and U.S. Virgin Islands.

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<sup>1</sup> The Pacific Assessment Consortium (including the entities of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Republic of Palau, and Republic of the Marshall Islands) partner with NCSC as one state, led by the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (CEDDERS).



\*Core partner states are blue in color and Tier II states are orange in color.



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The five partner organizations include: The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota, The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Center for Assessment), The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, The University of Kentucky, and edCount, LLC.



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## **Language Arts Content: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

September 2013

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# Curriculum Resource to Prepare Students for AA-AAS

## Language Arts Content: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

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### The purposes of the Curriculum Resource Guides Are:

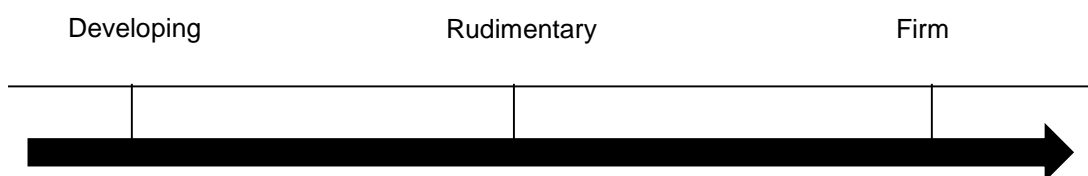
- To provide guidance for teaching the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SWSCD) that both aligns with these standards and provides differentiation for individual student needs
- To serve as a companion document to the Progress Indicators for the CCSS found in the NCSC Learning Progressions
- To help educators build knowledge of the essential content reflected in these Progress Indicators of the CCSS
- To delineate the necessary skills and knowledge students need to acquire to master these indicators
- To provide examples for differentiating instruction for a wide range of SWSCD. These examples can be used in planning specific lessons, alternate assessment items, and professional development.

### 1a. What is “concept of word” and how is it taught in general education settings?

#### Essential knowledge

Emergent literacy refers to children’s development of literacy skills; a stage that begins at birth and continues until students become proficient readers and writers. During this stage of literacy development, students concurrently develop skills in concepts about print, phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency. The concept of word refers to children matching spoken words with written words. Students should recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters. By teaching concept of word, it connects the words with their context and students’ prior knowledge of phonics/phonemic awareness.

Concept of word is not an “all or nothing skill.” It can best be represented on a continuum.





## **Developing Concept of Word**

*Represents the lowest form of concept of word.*

- Students at the “developing” level can usually remember and recite a sentence that was taught. Left to right directionality without word awareness.
- Students have little, if any letter-sound knowledge.
- Few words are known.
- Students are unable to determine where one word ends and the next begins.

## **Rudimentary Concept of Word**

*Represents increased knowledge.*

Points to words, self-corrects when he/she gets off track.

- The student knows many of the words.
- Two-syllable words can still cause the student confusion.

## **Firm Concept of Word**

*Final stage of the continuum.*

- Tracking is consistent and accurate.
- Word recognition is accurate. The student knows most of the words.
- The student applies letter-sound knowledge that includes awareness of beginning, middle, and ending sounds.

Adapted from Blackwell-Bullock, R. C., Invernizzi, M. A., Drake, E. A., & Howell, J. L. (2008-2009). Concept of word in text: An integral literacy skill. *Journal of the Virginia State Reading Association*, 31, 30-39.

## **Common misunderstandings**

Student may have trouble understanding that sentences and phrases have spacing between words.

### **Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

- Letter-sound knowledge
- Phonemic awareness
- Understand letters
- Understand concept of print

## **1.b What is “vocabulary study” and how is it taught in general education settings?**

### **Essential knowledge**

The concept of vocabulary study relates to the words students must know to communicate effectively and comprehend while reading. Vocabulary development includes mastering high frequency words with automaticity, decoding unfamiliar words (beyond simple phonological study), developing awareness and application of morphology, and learning content area vocabulary within the context of a unit of study. Vocabulary study and acquisition can also increase reading fluency for students.

### **Common misunderstandings**

Vocabulary instruction is an important, but often ignored component of reading. Traditional teaching of vocabulary, including writing the word and copying definitions can lead students to disengage with vocabulary study. Explicit vocabulary activities can be incorporated into teaching vocabulary and can engage and excite students.

### **Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

*In general education, the student typically will need to:*

- Decode words
- Read sight words
- Identify synonyms/antonyms
- Use context to determine possible word meanings

## **1c. What are “multiple meaning words” and how are they taught in general education settings?**

### **Essential knowledge**

Multiple meaning words are words that have more than one meaning. They may or may not be pronounced the same way. Multiple meaning words are also known as homographs, or words that are written the same way but have different meanings. These words can be particularly challenging to emergent and developing readers as they may base their understanding of what they read on existing knowledge of a word and not comprehend material.

### **Common misunderstandings**

Homographs are often mistaken for homophones or homonyms. Homophones are words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings. Homonyms are words that are pronounced the same way, but differ in meaning. They may or may not be spelled the same way.

**Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

***In general education, the student typically will need to:***

- Understand homophones and homonyms
- Understand that all words have meanings
- Understand the meaning of word parts: prefix, suffix, root word (morphology)

## **1d. What are “context clues” and how are they taught in general education settings?**

### **Essential knowledge**

Context clues are information an author provides that may help define an unknown word in a reading. These context clues can be in the form of a direct definition, or an example, or may be implications in the surrounding text. While context clues are an excellent resource for confirming or negating students’ predicted definitions for unknown words, texts rarely provide enough information for students to generate a definition.

### **Common misunderstandings**

When reading in a passage, students may sometimes only rely on memory to deduce the meaning of a word. In doing this, students may miss context clues that lead them to understand the word, in that sentence, phrase, or paragraph, has a different meaning.

**Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)**

***In general education, the student typically will need to:***

- Identify words can have different meanings
- Identify each word has a meaning
- Identify synonyms and antonyms

## **1e. What is “connected text” and how is it taught in general education settings?**

### **Essential knowledge**

Connected text refers to words that are linked in sentences, phrases, or paragraphs, sometimes referred to as “chunking” text. When reading connected text, students must process the information in one section, and retain this in their memory as they move on. Simple reading decoding becomes an important part of connected text. The cognitive processing required for decoding can impede students’ ability to comprehend text. Students should be able to fluently decode words with automaticity and move from one section to another without much hesitation.

## Common misunderstandings

Students may have trouble connecting definitions of words from different sections of text.

### Prior knowledge/skills needed (can be taught concurrently)

- Understand multiple meanings of words
- Use context clues to understand difficult vocabulary
- Reading decoding skills
- Sight word fluency

## 2. What are some of the types of activities general educators will use to teach this skill?

### 2.1 Activities from General Education Resources

- Concept of word
  - Making Words: Students have letter cards and are asked to make as many words as possible with the letters.
  - Word Families: students learn new words through rhyming activities: <http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/activities-projects/fantastically-word-families-30941.html>
  - Have students summarize a picture they have drawn and help them create a sentence to describe it.
  - Give each student a word in a sentence, and have students work together to put the sentence in the correct order.
  - Word cards for students to deconstruct and construct sentences
  - Word walls: as students learn new words, they add them to a class word wall.
  - Concept mapping or webbing
  - Word expert cards: <http://www.lth5.k12.il.us/itsreal/units/5th/WestwardExpansion/wordexpert.pdf>
  - Have students summarize a picture they have drawn and help them create a sentence to describe it. Working individually with the student, have him/her draw a picture. Ask the student to describe the picture. Then summarize the description in a few words. For example, a simple description could be, "I made a snowman." Draw a line for each word on the student's paper. Next, help the student write the sounds for each of the words in the description.
  - Give each student a word in a sentence, and have them work together to put the sentence in the correct order. This helps promote concept of word by having students physically represent a particular word in a sentence. The teacher needs to create cards for each student with one word on each card (for example, "We" "ate" "the" "cookie"). Students work together to

arrange themselves into the correct order to form the teacher-created sentence.

- Create a sheet of simple sentences using a large-size font. Students cut apart the words from a sentence, and then move the individual word cards around, manipulating the words to re-create the sentence in the correct order. Students recognize that each word is separate and that spaces exist between words.
- Write individual words from a line from a particular rhyme/poem on index cards/sentence strips. Have students match the word on the card with the word in the poem. This helps students to look at the whole word and consider all of the letters in a word.
- Have students use unifix cubes to physically create words. They will begin to understand that each set of connected cubes represents a word.



- Excellent sample lessons for concept of word can be found at <https://pals.virginia.edu/activities-LS-cow-all.html>
- Vocabulary Study
  - Integrate independent reading into vocabulary study. Have students use words they find in their text to engage them in the process.
  - Semantic maps-graphic organizers that help students associate an unfamiliar word with familiar words.
  - Preteach unfamiliar vocabulary.
  - Providing rich and varied language experiences encourages students to participate in engaging vocabulary lessons
  - Morphology: learning to decode unknown words through knowledge of roots and affixes

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/printouts/common-content-area-roots-30842.html>
- Multiple Meaning Words
  - Teachers should model word solving strategies for students.
  - Teach context clues parallel to teaching multiple meaning words. Encourage students to use the context clues to determine the meaning of words with multiple meanings

- Context Clues
  - Picture clues
  - Teachers can embed target vocabulary in sentences and draw their student to the context.
- Connected Text
  - Compare and contrast student's background knowledge to text.
  - Decide which words students already know, and focus on word studies for harder words.

## **2.2 Links across Content Areas**

- Vocabulary study and acquisition is important in Language Arts, but also across curriculum areas. Teachers within all disciplines can use vocabulary study to teach important concepts to students. In order for students to be able to transfer vocabulary learning strategies from Language Arts to other content areas, teachers will need to support the application of these strategies across the curricula.

### 3. What Connectors to the Common Core State Standards Are Addressed in Teaching “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use”?

#### Link Core Content Connectors for the Common Core State Standards




This guide is not intended to comprehensively cover all of the CCCs related to this topic. For further information on CCCs listed see Core Content Modules and General Education Resources listed in section 3 of this guide.

<b>Grade Differentiation</b>	<b>Core Content Connectors</b>	<b>Common Core State Standards</b>
Kindergarten	K.RWL.e2 With guidance and support, sort objects into categories (e.g., shapes, food) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.	K.L.5a
	K.RWL.e3 With guidance and support, match the opposites for frequently used verbs and adjectives.	K.L.5b
	K.RWL.f With guidance and support, use newly acquired words in real-life context.	K.L.5c
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	1.RWL.e1 With guidance and support, identify the category for a given word (e.g., a duck is a bird).	1.L.5b
	1.RWL.e2 With guidance and support, sort labeled objects into categories (e.g., shapes, food) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.	1.L.5a
	1.RWL.e3 With guidance and support from adults, sort words or picture cards with words into categories (e.g., shapes, food) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.	1.L.5a
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	2.RWL.a1 Identify connections with previously understood words to acquire the meaning of a new word (e.g., weeping is like crying).	2.L.6
	2.RWL.d1 Recognize and/or read grade appropriate irregularly spelled words.	2.RF.3
	2.RWL.d2 Identify grade-level words with accuracy and on successive attempts.	2.RF.4
	2.RWL.d3 Read grade-level text with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression (when applicable) on successive readings.	2.RF.4
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	3.RWL.h2 Identify grade level words with accuracy.	3.RF.4
	3.RWL.i2 Use sentence context as a clue to the meaning of a new word, phrase, or multiple meaning word.	3.L.4
4 <sup>th</sup> grade	4.RWL.i2 Use context as a clue to determine the meaning of unknown words, multiple meaning words, or words showing shades of meaning.	4.L.4
	4.RWL.j1 Use general academic and domain specific words and phrases accurately.	4.L.6
	4.RWL.h2 Identify grade level words with accuracy and on successive attempts.	4.RF.3

5 <sup>th</sup> grade	5.RWL.a2 Use context to determine the meaning of unknown or multiple meaning words or phrases.	5.L.4
6 <sup>th</sup> grade	6.RWL.a1 Use context to determine the meaning of unknown or multiple meaning words or phrases. 6.RWL.c1 Use general academic and domain specific words and phrases accurately.	6.L.4 6.L.6
7 <sup>th</sup> grade	7.RWL.g1 Use context as a clue to determine the meaning of a grade appropriate word or phrase.	7.L.4
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	8.RWL.g1 Use context as a clue to the meaning of a grade-appropriate word or phrase.	8.L.4
9 <sup>th</sup> /10 <sup>th</sup> grade	910.RWL.a3 Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses) to find the precise meaning of a word.	9-10.L.4
11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup> grade	1112.RWL.b1 Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word of phrase. 1112.RWL.c3 Develop and explain ideas for why authors made specific word choices within text.	11-12.L.4 11-12.RI.6



**Performance Examples for Priority CCCs**

Grade 4		
CCC	Performance Example	Essential Understandings:
4.RWL.i2 Use context as a clue to determine the meaning of unknown words, multiple meaning words, or words showing shades of meaning. <b>4.L.4</b>	<p>A) Determine the meaning of an unknown word using context clues. Listen to this sentence: My rabbit loves to eat vegetables. I went to the produce section of the grocery store to buy my rabbit some food.</p> <p>What does the word <b>produce</b> mean in this sentence?</p> <p>B) Answers:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Being on a stage</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Vegetables</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>A piggy bank</p> </div> </div>	<p>Understand that words can have more than one meaning.</p> <p>THEN</p> <p>Identify a meaning of a multiple meaning word.</p> <p>THEN</p> <p>Determine which familiar word completes a sentence.</p> <p>THEN</p> <p>Given the meaning of new word, determine which word completes the sentence.</p>

**Grade 6**

6.RWL.c1 Use general academic and domain specific words and phrases accurately.  
**6.L.6**

A) Determine the correct use of a general academic word.  
Listen to this paragraph about a baseball game. Listen for the word forfeit.  
Noah played on a winning baseball team called the Sonics. All the boys were looking forward to the baseball tournament that would be played on Saturday. Saturday arrived but Noah was sick! Noah's parents called the baseball coach and found out that two other boys on the team were also sick. Noah felt terrible. He knew that the team needed nine players in order to play in the tournament. If they did not have nine players they would have to forfeit the game! It would count as a loss!  
Noah decided to try and play. He went to the baseball field. His coach was there and some of his teammates but they still only had eight players. No one wanted to forfeit the game. They waited nervously and finally, one more boy came running up at the last minute! Now they had nine players and would not have to forfeit the game. They could play baseball!

B) Answers  
Which of these sentences uses the word forfeit correctly?

 <p>I picked pink forfeits for my mother.</p>	 <p>There was lots of forfeit on the ground this morning.</p>	 <p>The boys did not want to forfeit the baseball game, they wanted to play!</p>
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Identify general academic words.  
**THEN**  
Identify domain specific words or phrases.

**Grade 11-12**

1112.RWL.b1  
Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. 11-12.L.4

- A) Listen to these sentences.  
**Listen for the word indigent.**
- Some of the newcomers appraised the woman's old blue skirt and her son's tattered blanket and they knew they were **indigent**.
  - He became angry because he did not want to be bothered. The doctor was rich and did not help **indigent** babies. He asked the man if he had money to pay.

B)Answers  
What do you think the word indigent means?

They wore old clothes and had an old blanket. They did not have any money.	The doctor was rich. Indigent means rich.	Juana wore an old blue skirt. Indigent means blue.
Indigent means poor.		

Use context as a clue to determine the meaning of a word in text.

THEN

Use references to identify the meaning of unknown words and phrases.

## 4. What Are Some Additional Activities That Can Promote Use of this Academic Concept in Real World Contexts?

- Associate vocabulary learned in class to current events happening in the world. This allows the student to see the word used without the context of the book or text. This supports students understanding of the relevance of content and will increase engagement.
- Vocabulary can be grouped according to real world context: countries, activities, cleaning, cooking, and conversations.

## 5. How Can I Further Promote College and Career Readiness when Teaching “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use”?

### Ideas for Promoting Career/ College Ready Outcomes

#### Communicative competence

Students will increase their vocabulary to include concepts related to “vocabulary acquisition and use.” They will also be increasing their ability to effectively communicate with others due to increased vocabulary. Students will begin to understand the importance of written and spoken correspondence with others.

#### Fluency in reading, writing, and math

Students will have opportunities to increase their fluency and comprehension as their vocabulary skills increase. By having stronger background knowledge in vocabulary studies, students will be able to process text at a faster pace. They will also understand the text in greater depth.

#### Age appropriate social skills

Students will engage in peer groups to discover new vocabulary and communication.

#### Independent work behaviors

Students will engage in independent reading. They will have an increased understanding of words in the real-life context.

#### Skills in accessing support systems

At times, students will need to ask for assistance to complete activities related to “vocabulary acquisition and use” which will give them practice in accessing supports. Students will gain practice asking for tools such as dictionaries and a thesaurus. They can ask a peer to complete the physical movements of the tasks they are not able to do themselves. Be sure to teach students to ask versus having items or supports automatically given to them.

## **6. How Do I Make Instruction on “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” Accessible to ALL the Students I Teach?**

### **6.1 Teach Prerequisites and Basic Vocabulary Acquisition and Use Skills Concurrently: Remember that students can continue to learn basic literacy skills in the context of this grade level content.**

Basic literacy skills that can be worked on as a part of a lesson relating to vocabulary acquisition and use:

- Letter recognition
- Letter-sound knowledge
- Phonemic awareness
- Understand letters
- Understand concept of print
- Reading decoding skills
- Sight word fluency

## 6.2 Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in planning, and provide for additional Differentiated Instruction when Teaching Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Some examples of options for teaching vocabulary and acquisition skills to students who may present instructional challenges due to:

	<b>Sensory Differences such as Blindness, Visual Impairment, Deafness, or Deaf/Blindness</b>	<b>Physical Disability or Motor Differences (such as weakness or motor planning difficulty)</b>	<b>Extremely limited evidence of experience/skill or motivation/attention</b>	<b>Lacks basic concepts</b>
<b>Representation</b>	Use a talking device such as an avatar; use large print text, raised text or Braille, use objects and images to represent vocabulary words and their meanings; use online dictionaries that will pronounce the words and read the definitions aloud. Use matching picture cards with words and their meanings.	Student scans an array of possible options and uses a switch to select the correct vocabulary word or meaning; use computer representation of word meanings that can be manipulated with switch; place vocabulary words on a slant board or eye gaze board; create a vocabulary matching exercise in the classroom that the student can walk or ride in wheelchair to find the matching words and meanings (this can include picture clues).	Use motivating objects (e.g., pizza, coloring markers in a box, piece of a Lego set) to incorporate key vocabulary. Incorporate technology including computer representations, videos, animations, and talking avatar. Allow students to self-select words for study.	Have student use online dictionary to pronounce and define words. Use online visual dictionary. Students can use one to one correspondence to match words with definitions. Preteach vocabulary. Highlight vocabulary words within the context of the print.

	<b>Sensory Differences such as Blindness, Visual Impairment, Deafness, or Deaf/Blindness</b>	<b>Physical Disability or Motor Differences (such as weakness or motor planning difficulty)</b>	<b>Extremely limited evidence of experience/skill or motivation/attention</b>	<b>Lacks basic concepts</b>
<b>Expression</b>	Student states answer; use voice output devices for student to select the correct answer; teach tangible symbols that mean vocabulary word and meaning.	Uses a switch to indicate correct answers; uses an eye gaze board to select answer; uses a blink response to count parts or select answer; phrase questions so that they require a “yes/no” response and can easily be answered using an eye gaze, head turn, two switches, etc.	Have students express word meanings with images, drawing, interactive computer programs, etc.	Student selects vocabulary words or meanings versus writing them; selection of correct answer is done after a model; student answers “yes/no” questions.
<b>Engagement</b>	Teach students to use their hands to scan the raised of each whole item; use talking calculator for computing the area; start with simple, clearly defined fractions; use items that are familiar and reinforcing to students.	Use bright colors to call attention to vocabulary words; use a computer with AT where the student can click to answer; use word cards that are large enough to accommodate the movements that the student is able to make; pair student with another student without a physical impairment and have them work together to create word and meaning matches.	Create games in which students interact with partners to determine word meanings (i.e., word matching game like Memory).	Student uses online dictionaries that pronounce the words and read the definitions.