



Say-Tell-Do-Play Technique for Teaching Vocabulary

Teachers should not assume that children will pick up new words just by listening to stories or from listening to the language spoken around them. Thus, they must select the target words and intentionally teach these words to the children and widen their vocabulary.

The following are key principles to bear in mind when teaching target vocabulary:

- Be intentional in selecting target words
- Provide both explicit and implicit instruction, e.g., explain the meaning of the word and present the word in context through a story
- Give children repeated exposure to the word in order to consolidate their understanding of the new vocabulary

The “Say-Tell-Do-Play” technique (Roskos et al., 2009) is an example of vocabulary instruction that can be used during shared book reading:

- Say the target words and get the children to say the words
- Tell the meaning of each word using a child-friendly definition
- Do actions or use gestures to add to the meaning of the words
- Play a game or role-play with the children to get them to use the new words

Say the word	Tell the meaning	Do the action	Play
buckled	Fall or break apart	Bending the knees and falling over	Children tell and act out the story using the target words
sneered	Smile in an unfriendly way	Make the facial expression	
swaying	Moving gently side to side	Move the arms and step side to side	
entranced	Amazed with looks of surprise	Make the facial expression	

An example of the “Say-Tell-Do-Play” technique based on “Giraffes Can’t Dance” by Giles Andreae.