Lesson Plan # 7:
Vocabulary Development – Word Tiers

NOTE: This lesson is designed for advanced (9.0-12.9) adult learners.

Introduction:
Vocabulary development can be approached in terms of three word tiers. Using Isabel Beck's work as a model, they are as follows:

Word Tiers (modified)
        examples:

Tier One	- Basic - Concrete - In oral vocabulary	*school* *house* *walk*
Tier Two	- Abstract - Academic - occurring frequently in written language in school, in the workplace, and in everyday life	*consistent* *expectation* *mobility*
Tier Three	- Content specific - occurring mainly in academic texts or specific events; not occurring frequently in everyday life	*trapezoid* *tonsillectomy* *geosystems*

Objectives:
In this lesson, students will:

- recognize that some words represent <u>simple, concrete</u> concepts used in everyday life.

- recognize that some words represent <u>abstract</u> concepts used frequently in oral and written language in school, in the workplace, and in everyday life.

● recognize that some words represent <u>concrete or abstract</u> concepts used most often with respect to certain topics or content. While they can occur in the workplace and in everyday life, they are most often encountered in academic texts or in specific events.

Procedures:

Hand out the Word Tiers Chart to students. Go over it with them. **EXPLAIN** it and **MODEL** the examples given and the rationale for their being shown as Tier One, Two, or Three according to the Chart.

GUIDED PRACTICE: Ask students if they can provide other examples in each tier. Discuss their responses as a group, focusing on those words they suggest which may fall into more than one category and why.

APPLICATION:
Group students in twos. Using the Word Tiers Chart as a guide, ask each group to sort the following words by tiers:
▪ Which are Tier 1 words? Explain.
▪ Which are Tier 2?   Explain.
   Which are Tier 3?   Explain.
When finished, each group will share their responses with the larger group.

(If students do not know the meaning of a word, tell them the meaning. Ask them to write it down beside the word so they can refer to it. Different groups may have different opinions regarding in which Tier some of these words should fall. That's why they have to explain their choices.)

CONTINUOUS MONITORING OF PROGRESS:
Walking around the room, check to ensure that students are on task. Encourage them to ask questions if they are unsure or unclear as to what to do.

Session time: 2 hours

Word list for grouping in Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3:

chair	**cyberspace**	**concurrent**	**reform**
virtual	**precious**	**pizza**	**ultimate**
circumference	**longitude**	**couch**	**google**
tolerate	**cloud**	**photosynthesis**	**tranquil**

menu   **eclipse**   **nucleus**   **trajectory**

Suggested answer key (as a springboard for discussion):

chair   (1)
cyberspace (2 or 3)
concurrent   (2)
reform   (2)
virtual (2 or 3)
precious (1 or 2)
pizza (1)
ultimate (2)
circumference (2 or 3)
longitude (3)
couch (1)
google (1, 2 or 3)*
tolerate (2)
cloud (1)
photosynthesis (3)
tranquil (2)
menu (1, 2, or 3)**
eclipse (3)
nucleus (3)
trajectory (3)

*"Google" has entered our language as a commonly used verb. Since many students are computer-savvy and have "googled" a topic, name, or word, "google" may be in their basic oral vocabulary in Tier One. "Google" could also be in Tier 2 as an frequently occurring abstract concept or even in Tier 3 as a content-specific application.

**"menu" could be in any of the tiers, since students may be familiar with a fast-food restaurant menu and thus have it in their oral vocabulary as a concrete example (Tier One), an on-screen menu on the computer monitor (Tier Two), or with the concept of a computer menu that could be tailored specifically to address a particular application (Tier Three).

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