

Summary

(M2B)

An Online Technical Vocabulary Reference Tool for Deaf Students

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Deaf students in technological programs face a major challenge in developing sufficient knowledge of the specialized technical vocabulary required for success in their fields of study and in their future careers. To help students address this challenge, we developed an online technical vocabulary reference tool for deaf students enrolled in college-level engineering programs. This user-friendly reference tool was designed based on best practices in instructional technology and in vocabulary teaching. Students can access definitions of 200 technical terms from four engineering sub-fields. Each definition is illustrated within its real-world technological context and links to an actual photographic image depicting the tool, process, or description conveyed by the targeted technical term. It also links to technical data associated with terms (diagrams, formulas, and calculations) and to contextualized English language practice. Following best practices articulated, for example, in Schmitt (2000, *Vocabulary in Language Study*), the online reference provides a number of encounters with each term, promotes a deep level of processing, facilitates imaging, connects words to the student's world, uses a variety of techniques, and encourages independent learning strategies. Preliminary successful use of the tool by deaf engineering students suggests that our technical vocabulary reference design can be broadly extended to multidisciplinary vocabulary teaching and learning contexts.