

Vocabulary Literacy Practices Contents

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Strategy 1: Wordsplash

Purpose

Prepare students for reading by accessing prior knowledge; introduce key vocabulary words.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.6: Acquire and use a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

This activity focuses on key terms and concepts related to the material students will be asked to read. It was developed by Dorsey Hammond of Oakland University (Hammond & Raphael, 1999). Similar to the Story Impressions activity, this process begins with several words/concepts related to the lesson.

Procedure

1. The teacher chooses several words from the text related to the content. Option: Write the words out on strips of paper or note cards that can be taped to the chalkboard and then moved around.
2. Students are instructed to write a complete sentence using any three of the words.
3. Students are asked to read and share the sentences they wrote, which will give the teacher an idea of how much prior knowledge of the subject students have.
4. Ask questions that encourage students to explore the relationships between the words. For example, “Can you arrange the terms so that they follow a particular pattern?”
5. Next, ask students to complete the reading assignment and to watch for the words in the text, noting how they are used. I like to have them use sticky notes to mark the location of each of the words in the text.
6. Next, have students revise their sentences and write three new sentences using more of the words selected.
7. Have students choose their best sentences to share with others or write on the overhead, chart paper, or chalkboard.

This activity helps focus on key concepts related to the lesson, builds upon students’ prior knowledge of the material, motivates students to read, and helps them process what they know and have learned from the reading.

Strategy 2: Daily Oral Language (DOL)

Purpose

Develop written and spoken language skills; learn and use content-specific vocabulary words and academic vocabulary.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

Having a DOL exercise is one way for students to build and develop their written and spoken vocabulary. Many English teachers who include DOL activities use them to teach grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure, and conduct general mini-lessons on language features. However, DOL can also be focused on content-specific vocabulary and academic words and terms as well. Most teachers choose to use the DOL as a warm-up activity at the beginning of each period. They could also be done during the last five minutes of each period (time that is often unfortunately wasted).

Procedure

1. Present a vocabulary word, write it on the board, and pronounce the word. Have students pronounce the word in chorus.
2. Define the term for students and give them the part of speech. For example: “*Ambiguous* means unclear or having more than one possible meaning. Because it ends with ‘-ous’ we can tell it is an adjective and would be used to describe something someone says or an event.”
3. Give students several examples of the word used in sentences so they can see a variety of ways in which the word could be used.
4. Have students work with partners to come up with synonyms, antonyms, examples, drawings, and uses of the word in context.

Here is another example:

- The teacher presents the word “meticulous,” writing it on the board. The class pronounces the word.
- The word is an adjective.
- Meaning: “extremely careful about details.”
- Sentences: “The meticulous student checked every math answer to make sure her calculations were accurate.” “A good cashier needs to be meticulous when giving customers change.” “Don’t be too meticulous about sweeping the sand from the floor because everyone tracks it in from the beach.”
- Ask students the following: “How many synonyms for the word ‘meticulous’ can you think of?” “What is the opposite of ‘meticulous’?” “Use the word in a sentence of your own. Share it with the class.” “Draw a visual or picture that illustrates the meaning of the word ‘meticulous.’”

Strategy 3: Context Clues

Purpose

Identify unknown or unfamiliar words used in text; use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words.

CCSS Connection

Standard RI/RL.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

One of the main barriers to good reading comprehension is lack of sufficient knowledge of word meanings. Good readers identify key vocabulary words in informational and technical reading material. For students who struggle with reading, there are many ways teachers can help students master critical vocabulary and learn to identify the meaning of unknown words. This three-step process helps students develop their skills in using context clues.

Procedure

1. Gather the following materials: copies of assigned textbook pages, an article, or other reading material. Identify several words in the passage or article that may be unknown to students. You will also need several highlighters in two different colors. Model the three-step process shown next. Explain to students your thinking process so students can do it for themselves.
2. First, read through the material and highlight the unknown words, concepts, or terms, especially those that you think are critical to the study of the topic.
3. Use a different color to highlight the context clue that might help you understand each word. It may be a definition, restatement, or example.
4. Now try to use the context clues to write your own definition of each word you highlighted. Don't look the word or term up in the dictionary; write your own definition using only the context clues.
5. Have students practice this process several times on their own after you have modeled it for them initially.

Strategy 4: Vocabulary Carousel

Purpose

Use a dictionary to identify an appropriate definition for given words and terms; learn the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary words.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

Tompkins and Blanchfield (2008) attribute this strategy to teacher Kathleen Markovich, who invented the vocabulary carousel, “a merry-go-round of words,” to expeditiously teach vocabulary for Steinbeck’s novel *The Pearl*. The carousel strategy, however, can work well in many different disciplines and provides a way for students to quickly learn several new words. It has the added advantage of incorporating movement into the class period as well. If you find that you don’t have a whole lot of time to teach students vocabulary, you may want to try the vocabulary carousel.

Procedure

1. Give each student a large sheet of white paper and a colored marker (sticky note chart paper would be ideal). Students will also need their reading assignment and a print or electronic dictionary.
2. Assign one vocabulary word, numbered in the order that it appears in the text, to each student, along with the page number from the text. If there are leftover words that are not assigned, give them to students who finish early.
3. With their markers, have students write the number of the word and the word, spelled correctly, on their chart paper. They should write large enough for everyone to see.
4. Have students locate their word in the text or reading assignment and then copy the sentence that contains the word, underlining the word on their paper. Sentences can be shortened if they are too long.
5. Next, students will look up the word in the dictionary and, if there is more than one definition, determine which is the correct one to match the meaning in the text. Then have

them write the definition on their paper. Check to be sure that students are identifying the correct definition of their words as they work.

6. Have students paste their papers to the classroom wall, extending all the way around the room in the order they appear in the chapter or reading assignment.
7. Next, position students randomly in front of a particular word with a sheet of lined paper, numbered for the specific number of vocabulary words. Have students write the word in front of them on their paper, writing down the word and its definition. So, one student will start at number eight, for example, and then move on to the next number, rotating around the classroom. Students should keep moving in the merry-go-round pattern until they have written down all the words and definitions.
8. When students are finished, they can begin reading the chapter, article, or reading assignment with their list of vocabulary words in front of them.

Strategy 5: Class Context

Purpose

Identify the meaning of unfamiliar words in reading or conversation; use context clues; use and practice newly learned vocabulary words.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

This strategy is not so much a specific vocabulary strategy as it is a general teaching method. In his book *The English Teacher's Companion: A Complete Guide to Classroom, Curriculum, and the Profession*, Jim Burke (2008) recommends teachers use words that challenge students during discussion, on handouts, and when giving directions. This is something that can be done in every content area.

Procedure

Rather than “dumbing down” your language for students, instead use complex vocabulary and sophisticated words, and expect students to learn the meaning of them. Take the opportunity to question students about the term’s meaning. For example, while giving directions, I might say, “You have a *plethora* of options to choose from for this activity. Can someone explain what ‘plethora’ means?” Or “I will now *segue* into the next method for developing vocabulary.” Talk about the word “segue” and give students the opportunity to incorporate the word into their own vocabularies. About this strategy, Burke (2008) adds, Similarly, while reading or discussing a text in class, stop when it seems necessary to inquire about the use or meaning of a word. For example, while reading portions of Nathan McCall’s *Makes Me Wanna Holler*, we encountered the word surrogate three times in one paragraph. I stopped and asked the class if they could understand what the author was talking about if they did not know what the word meant. “No,” they said. We talked about the word in the context

of a surrogate mother, an issue that was being discussed in the news at that time, then returned to reading the book. This was effective and natural because it grew out of class context. This method of teaching vocabulary is probably most effective for second-language learners who are challenged every day by a vast new language. Don't be afraid to challenge students by presenting them with difficult words and stressing the importance of constantly working to learn new words.

Strategy 6: Clarifying Cue Card

Purpose

Identify and clarify the meaning of unknown words and terms; use context clues, identify word parts, and consult resources to determine the meaning of given words.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

Clarifying cue card is a simple and easy-to-use vocabulary strategy that comes from Lubliner (2005). The figure below shows a variation of the original version by Lubliner.

Procedure

Prepare a “cue card” or handout similar to the one in figure 4.1 and have students complete the card for new terms and concepts. Ask students to use these cards whenever they are reading new material in class (or for homework).

Clarifying Cue Card

CLARIFYING CUE CARD

When you come across a word in your reading you don't understand, use the following strategies:

- Mine your memory: have you ever seen the word before or can you remember what it means?
- Study the word structure: Do you know the root or base word? Does the word have a prefix or suffix that you might know? Try to use any possible clues in the word to figure out the meaning.
- Consider the word's context: Look at the information the sentence provides and think about the whole paragraph. Can you figure out the meaning of the word?
- Substitute a synonym: When you think that you know what the word means, try replacing it with a similar word. Does it make sense?

If the strategies above don't work:

- Ask an Expert: Does someone in your class or group know the meaning, or can they help you figure it out?
- Place a Post-It Note: If you can't figure out the word's meaning, put a post-it by the word and check with the teacher or look in the dictionary.

If you speak Spanish, try this:

- Catch a cognate: Does the word sound or look similar to some word in Spanish? See if the Spanish word's meaning makes sense.

Strategy 7: Student VOC Strategy

Purpose

Identify and clarify the meaning of unknown words and terms; use context clues, identify word parts, and consult resources to determine the meaning of given words.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

Similar to the clarifying cue card, use this simple vocabulary form (which could easily be reproduced on half sheets) to help students examine a word's context, predict the meaning, and demonstrate their understanding of the new word learned. The VOC strategy helps students analyze the word meaning within the context and helps them make sensory connections that relate to their learning style (Doty, Cameron, & Barton, 2003).

Procedure

Prepare half sheets of paper with the student vocabulary strategy (see figure below). During reading assignments, either ask students to complete a specified number of strategy sheets or use them as needed during reading. Another option is to have each student prepare one or two strategy sheets during his or her reading to be placed on the document camera and shared with the class.

Student Vocabulary Strategy

STUDENT VOCABULARY STRATEGY
Vocabulary Word: _____
Write the sentence in which the word appears in the text:

Based upon how it is used in the text, predict what the word means:

Consult an expert for the actual definition (a friend, teacher, dictionary, or website). Expert's definition: _____

Show your understanding of the word by using it in a sentence of your own:

Choose one of the following ways to help you remember the meaning: draw a picture of what the word means to you, select an action that will remind you of what the word means, or connect the word to something you have heard or read (story, news report, song, incident, etc.) Write down what personal associations you have made with the word: _____

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Strategy 8: Knowledge Rating Scale

Purpose

Identify unknown words and terms in text; connect background knowledge to new information learned.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

The knowledge rating scale was created by Blachowicz (1986) as a strategy for introducing unknown words to students. It helps students connect new information to their previous learning. This strategy can be used in any subject area and has the added benefit of establishing a purpose or reading.

Procedure

1. Choose important vocabulary words from the reading material you are about to assign.
Focus on choosing those terms that are essential to understanding the content.
2. Provide a handout for students with four columns or ask them to draw four columns on a piece of paper. Label the columns in order: “Vocabulary Word,” “Know It Well,” “Have Heard or Seen It,” and “No Clue.”
3. Place students in groups of two to four and have them share what they know about the words. During their discussion they should individually place a check next to each word in the appropriate column based on how much understanding they have of the word.
4. Next, have students write sentences for each word they have listed in the Know It Well column.
5. Individually, students then complete the reading assignment.
6. After the reading, have students add definitions for their unknown words and confirm or revise their previous placement of checks. Students should also be assigned to write additional sentences for those words they now have a better understanding of.

Strategy 9: Vocabulary Log

Purpose

Identify unknown words and terms in text; identify parts of speech of unknown words; use context clues and consult dictionaries to determine meaning of unfamiliar words; incorporate newly learned words into one's own language.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

The vocabulary log is another strategy recommended by Jim Burke (2008). Have students keep a special section in their notebook, journal, or on paper for a vocabulary log.

Procedure

As they are reading and learning new content information, instruct students to record all the words and terms they do not understand. Give students the following directions:

1. When you come across a word you don't understand, write down the word. Be sure to include it in its original sentence with the word underlined.
2. Write down the part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc.).
3. Identify the source (e.g., physics textbook) and the page number where the word is used.
4. Define the word using the following procedure:
 - a. Make your own guess, using contextual clues.
 - b. Write down the dictionary definition that best describes the way the word was originally used.
 - c. Use your own words to define it, so if you were asked to explain the meaning of the word, you could do it.
5. List any other variations of the word (other forms) or synonyms. So, for example, if the word is "profane," you would write down "profanity" as well as "swearing" and "cursing." Also list any antonyms, such as "revere" and "respect."
6. Write your own original sentence using the word in the same way it was used in the original.

Strategy 10: Word Cards

Purpose

Identify and clarify the meaning of unknown words and terms; use context clues, identify word parts, and consult resources to determine the meaning of given words; incorporate newly learned words into one's own language.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

This strategy is another easy and useful way to help students learn and study new vocabulary words. It can also be varied in numerous ways to fit your particular content area. It is best at first to identify the ten or so key words or terms from the reading material that you will ask students to identify and define. After students have done the strategy a few times, you could then have them identify words themselves while reading.

Procedure

1. First, determine the central concepts and key words in a unit or reading assignment. Try to limit the list to ten words.
2. Give students half sheets of paper or index cards, one for each word. Have students write each word in the center of one of the cards (see figure below)
3. Have students locate the word in the text and try to figure out the meaning by examining context and root words. Then have them check the meaning in a dictionary.
4. Students write the definition in the upper-right-hand corner of the card. (This can be done together as a class, which may be a good idea when first introducing the strategy.)
5. Have students create a sentence using the word in context and write it in the lower-right-hand corner of the card.
6. Have students identify possible synonyms for the word and write them in the upper-left-hand corner of the card.

7. Have students come up with a symbol, picture, drawing, or stick figure to demonstrate the meaning of the word. Draw the visual in the lower left-hand corner.
8. Model this process with the first few cards and then gradually release students to work on their own. It is a good idea for the class to agree on the definition that is written in the upper-right-hand corner.

Word Card

Synonyms	Definition
WORD	
Symbols/Pictures	Sentence

Strategy 11: Sequencing Instruction for Multiple Exposure

Purpose

Identify and clarify the meaning of unknown words and terms; use context clues, identify word parts, and consult resources to determine the meaning of given words; use visual representations to learn and remember newly learned words and concepts.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

One of the most powerful ways to teach students new terms is to design a series of instructional activities that allows students to be exposed to the terms in several different ways. Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) present a process for teaching new terms and phrases using this method.

Procedure

1. Present students with a brief explanation or description of the new term or phrase.
2. Present students with a nonlinguistic representation of the new term or phrase (a visual).
3. Ask students to generate their own explanation or description of the term or phrase.

These can include students' own examples and may be based upon their prior knowledge of the term.

4. Ask students to create their own nonlinguistic representation of the term.
5. Periodically ask students to review the accuracy of their explanations and representations.

To illustrate this process, let's suppose that Mrs. Miller, an English teacher, wants her students to understand the terms "dynamic character" and "static character." She begins step one by asking students to compare two characters in a short story the students have recently

read. She asks them to think about which character has changed and developed and which one has stayed the same. She then explains the terms to students: a *dynamic character* is one who changes, grows, and develops during a story; a *static character* is one who stays the same or does not go through any process of development. She explains that dynamic characters are those who are more like real human beings.

Next, she presents a nonlinguistic representation by drawing a stick figure on the board to illustrate a static character, one who is not fully developed or characterized and may only represent one trait or characteristic. She then draws (or shows a photograph) of a more artistic, rounded character with features such as hair, eyes, facial and physical features, jewelry, and distinctive articles of clothing, one who looks more like a real person, growing and changing through life's experiences.

For the third step, Mrs. Miller asks her students to come up with their own explanations of the terms and what they mean and give some examples of characters they have seen in stories that are either dynamic or static.

For part four, Mrs. Miller asks students to make a poster that includes pictures of various people from magazines and magazine ads to illustrate dynamic characters. Students will include on their posters descriptive words and phrases they make up to describe what the character in the picture is like. For the final part of this strategy, during the next two weeks, while reading a novel as a class, students will be asked to think about which characters in the novel are dynamic and which are static to reinforce their learning of the two terms.

Strategy 12: Analogies

Purpose

Understand the parts and characteristics of an analogy; understand and identify relationships among words; create analogies to help clarify understanding of words, terms, and concepts.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Standard SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations.

Overview

Analogies are comparisons of two unlike things. Because analogies can help us understand something unfamiliar by comparing it to something familiar, they can serve as a bridge between familiar and new concepts. Harmon, Wood, and Hedrick (2006) recommend using analogies to help students understand new concepts.

Procedure

1. Begin by teaching students how analogies work. To interpret analogies, students will need to understand how the parts of the analogy relate to each other, and they will need to see lots of examples:
 - refers to the words “is to”
 - refers to the “as”
2. Use several simple analogies such as the following to help students understand how analogies work:
 - word : sentence :: page : book (“word is to sentence as page is to book”)
 - mitten : hand :: sock : foot
 - gas : car :: wood : fire

- day : month :: minute : hour
 - wheel : bike :: tire : car
3. Students need to understand that because words can have various relationships with other words, there are several different types of analogies.
 - Part to whole (finger : hand :: toe : foot)
 - Person to situation (Roosevelt : Great Depression :: Lincoln : Civil War)
 - Cause and Effect (aging : facial wrinkles :: sunbathing : tan)
 - Synonyms (master : expert :: novice : apprentice)
 - Antonyms (naive : sophisticated :: alien : native)
 - Geography (Rocky Mountains : west :: Appalachian Mountains : east)
 - Measurement (inches : ruler :: minutes : clock)
 - Examples (Folgers : Maxwell House :: Cheerios : Corn Flakes)
 - Functions (switch : lamp :: key : door)
 4. Using these examples or others like them, model the thinking processes used to understand them. If you talk through a few of the analogies to demonstrate for students how you think through them, it will be very helpful to students who may have difficulty with this at first. Explain that analogies can help us to understand new concepts in a particular subject matter such as science.
 5. Come up with some examples of analogies from the lesson or from the reading material students are working with. For example: gas : engine :: food : digestive system.

Here are some variations for working with analogies:

1. Have students create a certain number of analogies while reading a textbook chapter.
2. Use a given list of vocabulary words and terms and ask students to write a certain number of analogies using the words.
3. Have students work in groups to create analogies and also provide rationale for their choice of terms.

Strategy 13: Association in Word Recognition

Purpose

Use prior knowledge and associations to identify word meaning; analyze and identify word parts.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Overview

Association in word recognition is a strategy that encourages students to make associations between their prior knowledge and new information and terms (Punch & Robinson, 1992). This approach helps students identify the word parts in terms. This technique does not work across the board with all vocabulary, but for many words and terms, it is effective.

Procedure

First, identify important terms that students will need to know, the critical vocabulary from a passage of text. Next, try to identify smaller words that are spelled within the word, which might be used to make an association with the meaning of the word. Develop an explanation to show the connection between the vocabulary word and smaller words within it. After students become familiar with this strategy, have them identify the smaller words within vocabulary concepts and create their own explanations and associations (Harmon, Wood, & Hedrick, 2006). They present some additional examples from math:

- **Perimeter:** Contains the small word “rim.” Have students think about how the rim is the outside edge of something. Have them make the connection to the perimeter, which is the sum of the sides of the polygon.
- **Horizontal:** A horizontal line looks like the horizon in the sky. It also goes in the same direction as the crossed line in “H” and the top line in “T.”
- **Measurement:** Has the word “sure” in it. Measurements are sure things. You are sure of your numbers if you have measured correctly.

Strategy 14: Concept Definition Map

Purpose

Identify features of key terms and concepts, including categories, properties and illustrations; build conceptual understanding of key terms and concepts.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

The concept definition map comes with many variations. It was designed by Schwartz and Raphael (1985) as a way to help students understand a central concept. It has been adapted into many different forms and variations, but in general it is a graphic organizer for helping students consider the various features of a single term. Use it when there is a key term or concept that all students need a solid understanding of. The features of the framework include categories, properties, and illustrations. It can also be extended to include Purpose: or “How do you do this?” depending on the concept. It helps students internalize the features and generally works best with nouns rather than verbs. Some examples of concepts from various disciplines might include imperialism, capitalism, scientific notation, realism, regionalism, endocrine system, internal combustion, or mutation.

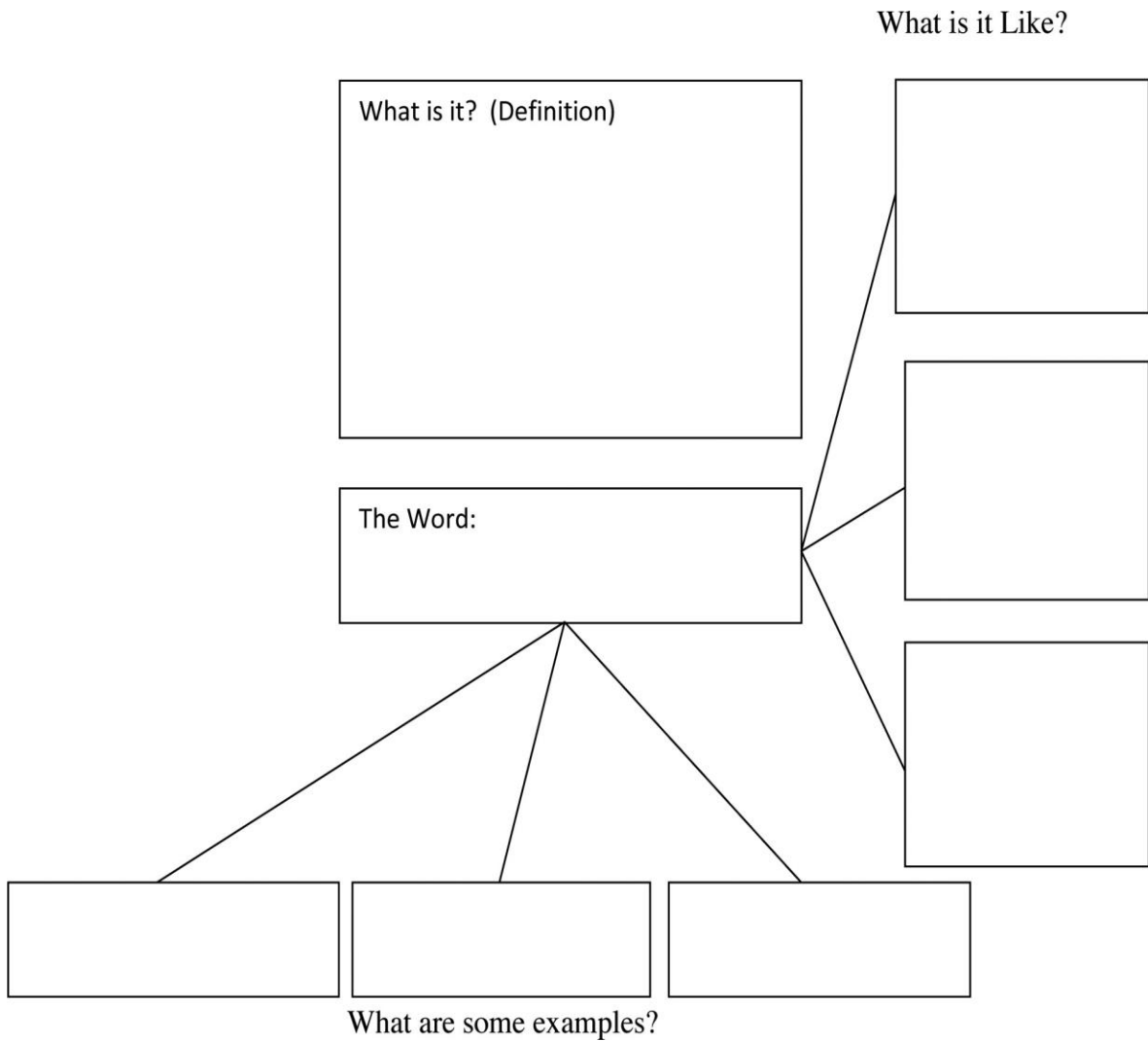
Procedure

1. Explain to students that concepts can be defined by their features, such as categories, properties, or examples.
2. Introduce the concept definition map. Explain each part.
3. As a class or with partners, have students complete the concept definition map for the term.
4. Place a blank concept definition map on the overhead or document camera and ask students to share information to contribute to a whole-class map for the term.

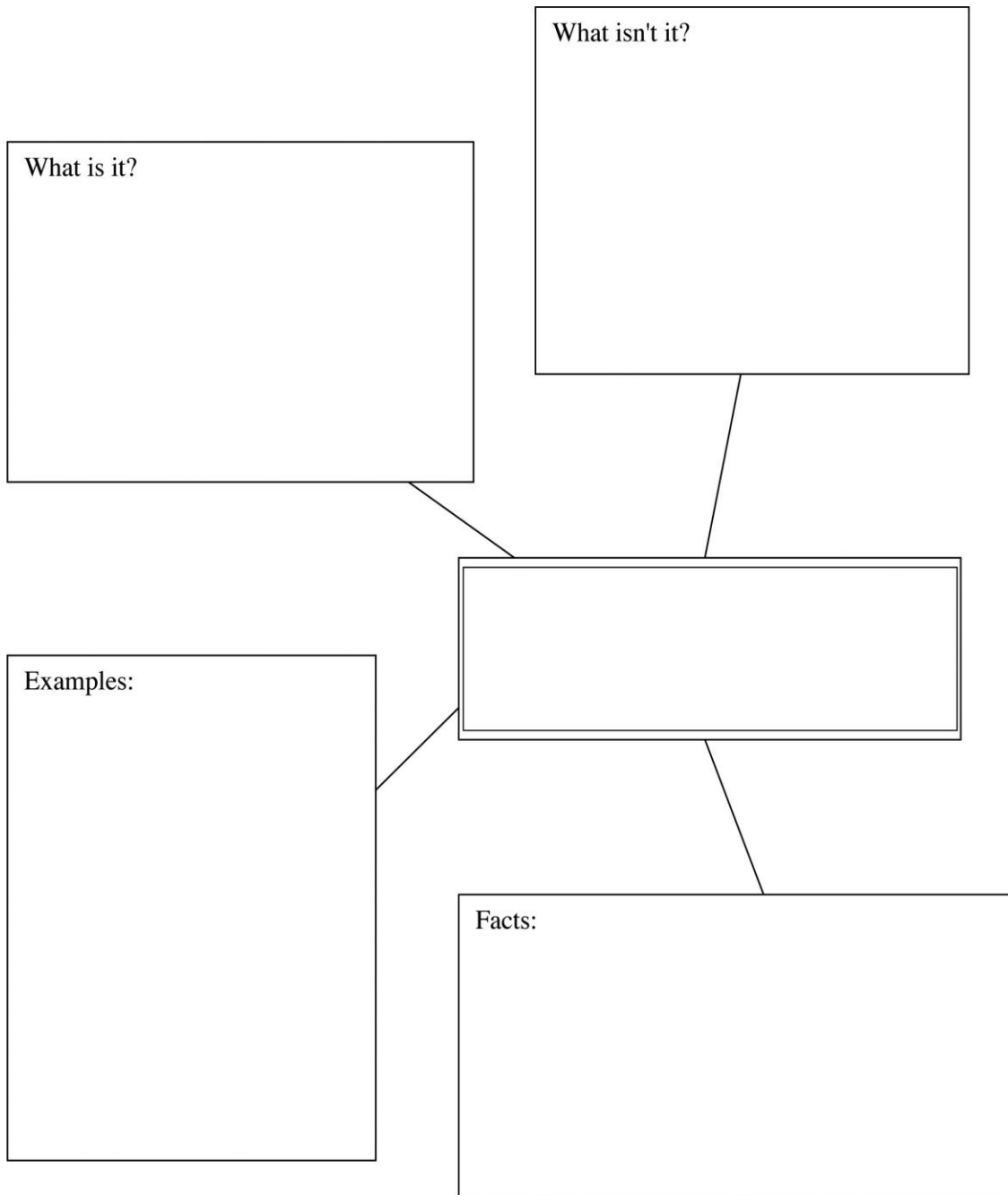
Several years ago, I created my own version of a concept map, which I called the “graphic for word study.” It asks students to use the word in a sentence, provide antonyms, synonyms, roots, other forms of the word, an illustration or visual representation, and also provide

examples of people or things related to the word. I use this map often with students when I want them to master key concepts. I have also used it with a vocabulary list, assigning each student (or a pair) one word, having them complete the graphic for their particular word, and then asking them to present their graphic organizer to the class, which helps the whole class review and think more deeply about all the vocabulary words. The figures below present various versions of the concept map.

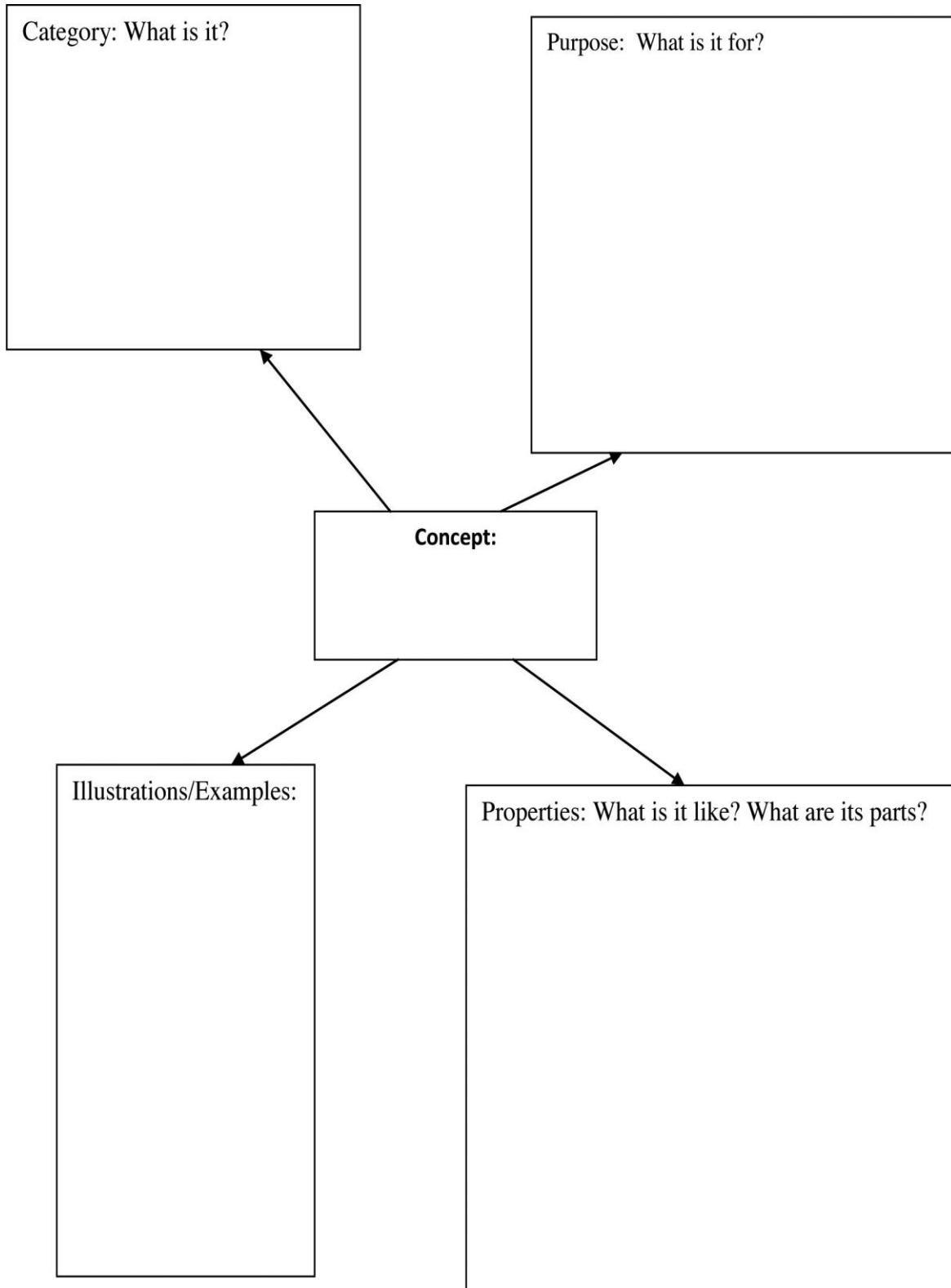
Concept Definition Map 1



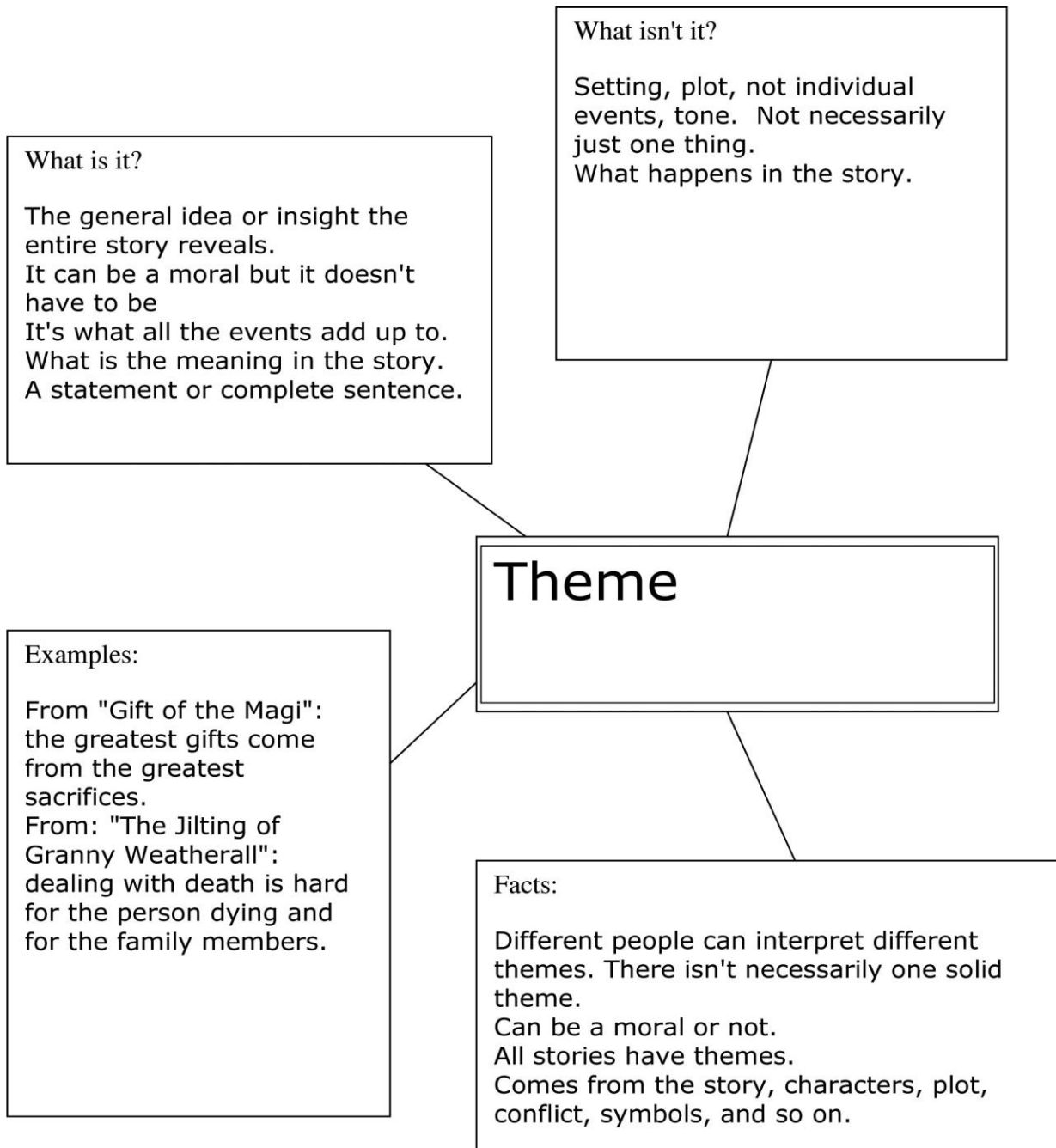
Concept Definition Map 2



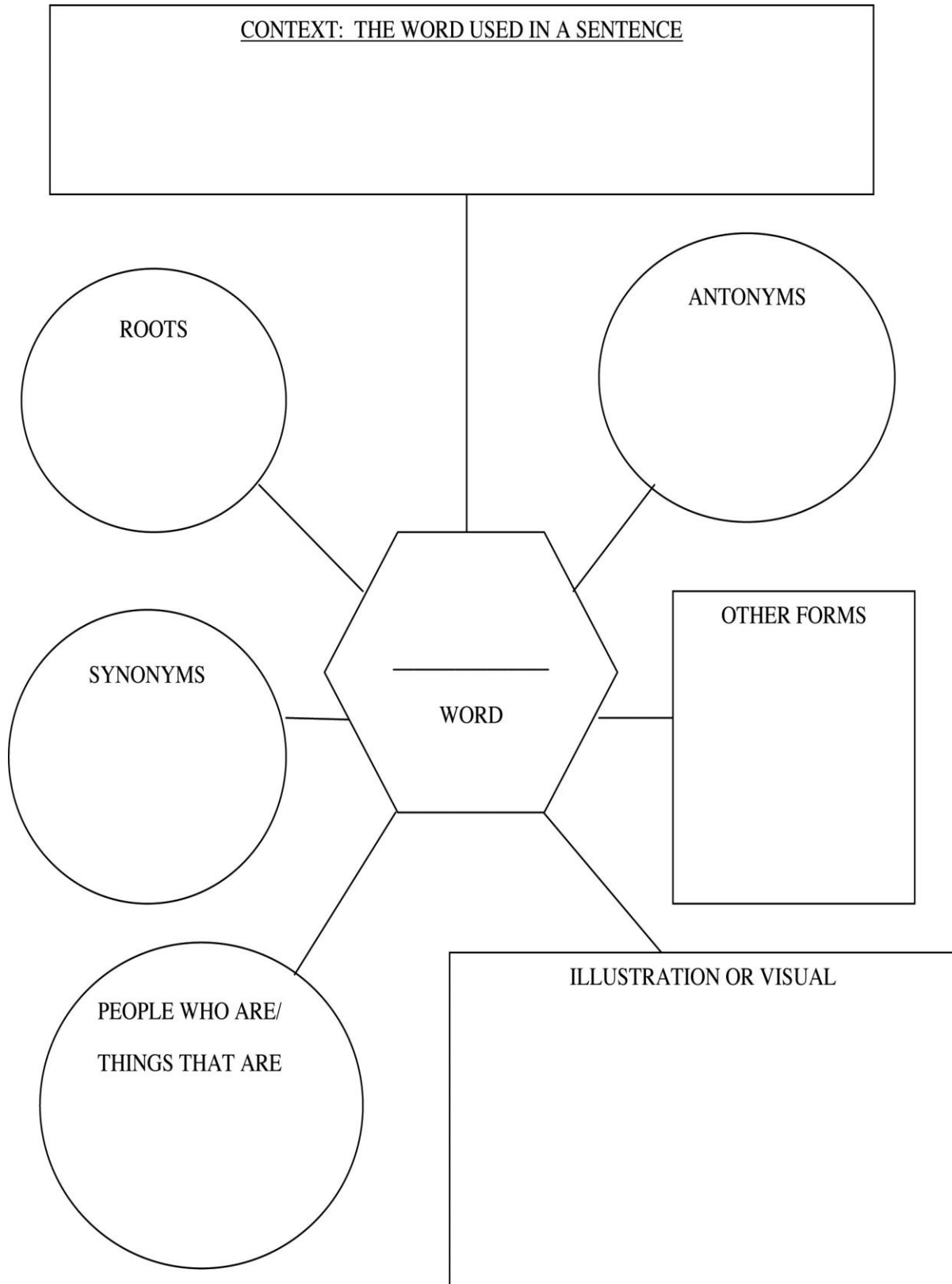
Concept Definition Map 3.



Completed Concept Definition Map



Graphic for Word Study



Strategy 15: Text, Organize, Anchor, Say, and Test (TOAST)

Purpose

Use an organizational system for learning new vocabulary; learn new words and terms; assess one's own learning of new words and terms.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general and domain specific words and phrases.

Overview

The TOAST strategy (Dana & Rodriguez, 1992) provides students with a system for learning new vocabulary words, which they can use in any subject area. Students learn the meaning of new words and phrases at varying levels and rates, and this strategy allows them to work at their own pace. It is an especially effective strategy for struggling readers.

Procedure

1. Text: Choose vocabulary words and terms from reading material or class context that students need to know. Give students index cards and have them write the words on one side and the definition and a sentence using the word on the other (one word for each card).
2. Organize: Have students organize the cards into categories that make the most sense to them.
3. Anchor: Have students work individually or with a partner, using the cards to quiz each other.
4. Say: Emphasize that it is important for students to pronounce the words and definitions out loud to themselves or their partner.
5. Test: Have students complete a practice test on the words to identify which of the words they still need to learn. They can then remove cards for those words and continue the process.

Strategy 16: Frayer Model

Purpose

Identify features of key terms and concepts, including categories, properties, and illustrations; generate examples and nonexamples of key terms and concepts; build conceptual understanding of key terms and concepts.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

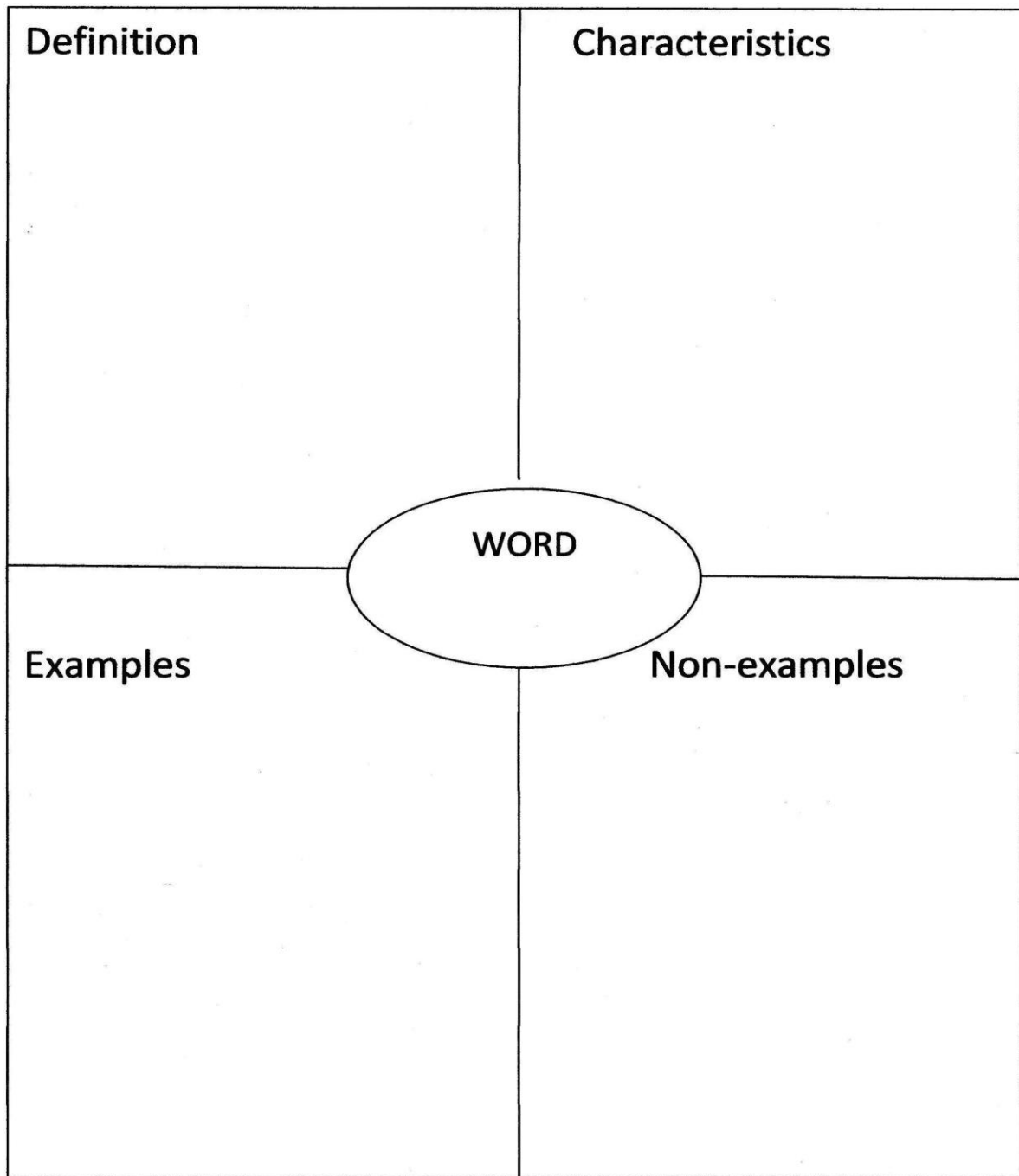
Overview

The Frayer model is also a graphic organizer and a categorizing activity that helps students develop conceptual understanding (Frayer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969). Students may be asked to provide a definition, characteristics, examples, and nonexamples.

Procedure

1. Assign students to complete the model for a particular idea, term, or concept they are studying.
2. Explain the parts of the Frayer model graphic organizer (see below).
3. Use a simple term to illustrate how to complete the Frayer model. Instruct students to write the definition in their own words and include examples and nonexamples from real life or from their own lives and experiences.
4. Have students complete the model using the concept assigned. They may work with partners or complete the model individually and then share their work with a partner.
5. You can also have students display their Frayer models or create poster-size versions to be displayed.

The Frayer Model



(From D. A. Frayer, W C. Frederick, and H. J. Klausmeier [1969], *A schema for testing the level of concept mastery* [Working Paper No. 16]. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning.)

Strategy 17: List-Group-Label-Write

Purpose

Use prior knowledge to identify meanings of unfamiliar words; build conceptual understanding; categorize and classify concepts; use prior knowledge to comprehend text; use key words and concepts in writing.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

List-group-label-write is a strategy in which students use their prior knowledge to improve their vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills (Harmon, Wood, & Hedrick, 2006).

Begin by asking students to brainstorm and make a list of all the words and terms they know related to a particular topic. For example, for the term “data,” a student might brainstorm a list similar to this one: mean, histogram, mode, median, data set, compute, bar graph, circle graph, add, scatter plot, divide, distribution. Next, students will group or categorize the terms according to their similarities. Using the following procedure, start with a reading assignment or passage from a text that students will be reading.

Procedure

1. Select a passage on a particular topic that students will reading during the class period.
2. Ask students to brainstorm a list of everything that comes to mind on the topic. Display these terms on the overhead.
3. Have students independently or in pairs or small groups categorize the terms. Ask them to be able to explain why they decided to categorize the words as they did.
4. Have students read the selected passage and add to their list of terms or make changes in their original categories as needed.

5. Have each student choose a category of terms and write a paragraph about that category, using the terms included. It may be necessary to model this writing activity at first before having students write their own.

Strategy 18: Vocabulary Pictures

Purpose

Define word meaning using dictionaries or other resources; create visual representations to clarify the meaning of new words; incorporate newly learned words into one's own speaking and writing.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

This simple and effective vocabulary strategy asks students to define vocabulary words and then create nonlinguistic representations to understand and remember the words.

Procedure

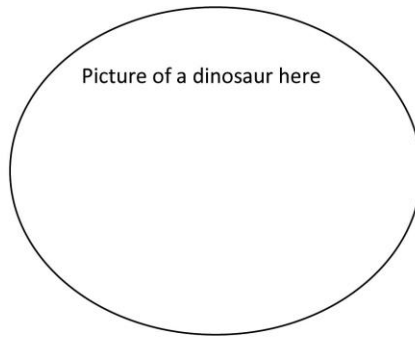
Students begin by folding a blank piece of paper into, or drawing, squares (two, four, or six per page). You can also have students use note cards instead. In each square have students do the following:

1. Write the vocabulary word.
2. Write the definition of the word.
3. Draw a picture to show the word's meaning or cut a picture out of a magazine.
4. Write a sentence using the word.

The figure below shows two examples of vocabulary squares.

Vocabulary Square 1.

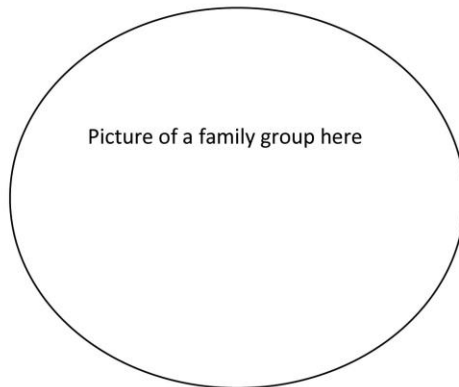
Extinct: no longer existing in living form, having died out.



The dinosaurs have been extinct for thousands of years, but
birds are their descendants.

Vocabulary Square 2.

Kindred: a group of related persons, a family, clan, tribe, or the like.



Every year, all of my kindred get together for the Christmas holiday.

Strategy 19: Contextual Redefinition

Purpose

Use context clues and root words as well as prior knowledge to determine word meaning; use dictionary skills to clarify word meaning; use newly acquired vocabulary in one's writing.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

The contextual redefinition strategy (Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1998) is a useful strategy for helping students use prior knowledge to figure out the meaning of words. As opposed to random guessing at the meaning, this activity helps students use important clues about the word's meaning.

Procedure

1. First, locate several words or terms related to the assigned reading material, especially those you can predict students will find challenging.
2. Determine to what extent the context provides clues to the word's meaning.
3. Review the list of words with students and have them write the words in the first column of the chart. Ask them to try to use their prior knowledge to figure out what the word might mean as well as using word roots and guessing at the word's meaning as they complete the second column of the chart.
4. Next, students use the word in a sentence, either one from the text or a sentence of their own. Have students complete the third column.
5. Finally, students write their own prediction of the word's meaning in the fourth column and then check the textbook, glossary, or dictionary to confirm. The actual word meaning is to be

Strategy 20: Finding Common Roots

Purpose

Identify multiple-meaning words during the reading process; contrast words' common meanings versus subject-specific meanings; use dictionary skills to identify word meaning; identify word parts to clarify word meaning.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases used in a text.

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

In many content areas, terminology may consist of words that have multiple meanings. Some words even have the same spelling but may have different meanings depending on how they are used (e.g., “bass” is a type of fish in science [or cooking] and a deep singing voice in the area of music; “advocate” can be pronounced with a long “a” sound and mean “to speak or write in support of” but can also be pronounced with a short “a” sound and refer to a person who supports or pleads the cause of another).

Think of how the word “compound,” for example, can be used in many ways in different content areas. In English class, “compound” is a grammatical term referring to a particular type of sentence structure; in math it may describe a mathematical function or process; in science it may refer to a mixture of different chemicals or substances; in social studies it may refer to an event that creates additional problems or difficulties, or a fenced-in area. Finding common roots is a strategy that helps students identify multiple word meanings within or across given subject areas (Harmon, Wood, & Hedrick, 2006).

Procedure

1. After activating students' prior knowledge and engaging in prereading activities, assign students to read a given passage or textbook section. While they are reading, have students look for and highlight all the words that may have more than one meaning in the passage.
2. Begin a whole-class discussion following the reading in which you ask students to share words they have identified. Discuss the common meanings of the word versus the content-specific meaning. Define for students the word "homograph" as "words that have the same spellings but different meanings and origins." Also point out that these words will have dictionary entries for each definition.
3. Have students work in pairs to create a finding common roots map by folding a piece of paper into four squares and labeling it as shown below. Tell them they are assigned to determine whether the word is a homograph. Students can complete additional maps on separate paper for additional terms.
4. Have students discuss their findings with the whole class.

You may need some additional examples to help students understand the concept of homophones. You can find additional examples of homographs online.

accent—stress or emphasis

a manner of speaking or pronunciation influenced by the region in which one lives or grew up.

agape—wide open

a Greek word meaning "love" attribute—a characteristic or quality/to think of as belonging to or originating in some person, place, or thing.

axes—the plural of ax or axe/the plural of axis bass—a deep voice or tone/a kind of fish bat—a piece of sporting equipment used in baseball.

a winged animal associated with vampires.

bow—to bend at the waist/the front of a boat.

a pair of tied loops/an instrument used to play a string instrument such as a violin.

buffet—to hit, punch, or slap.

a self-serve food bar compact—small/to make small/a small case for holding makeup compound—to mix or combine/an enclosed area with a building or group of buildings inside.

Definition of Homograph:

Word:

Homograph?

Content-Specific Meaning	Common Meaning
Word Origin	Word Origin

Strategy 21: Using Prefixes, Roots, and Suffixes

Purpose

Use prefixes, roots, and suffixes to clarify and define words; learn common prefixes, roots, and suffixes; identify unfamiliar words from reading of text and identify word parts to clarify meanings; create a list of self-selected vocabulary words.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Overview

Critical to good reading comprehension in any subject area is the ability to recognize common prefixes, root words, and suffixes in English, which is helpful in clarifying word meaning. Having students use a list of prefixes, roots, and suffixes allows students to record unfamiliar terms and determine their meanings by analyzing the word parts. Students should continue using the word part list for as long as necessary, until they realize they have learned most common word parts that are used in English.

Procedure

1. Provide students with their own copy of a word part list such as the one that follows (table 4.2). Ask them to keep the list in their notebook and to use it when they are completing reading assignments. You might also consider making a poster-size copy of the list to display in your classroom. Most dictionaries include good lists of prefixes, roots, and suffixes students can use. Lists of common prefixes, suffix, and roots can also be found easily with a simple online search.
2. Spend some time discussing with students how to use the word. Share simple examples such as this one with students:

“un-” is a prefix. “Unprepared” means to not be prepared; “unusual” means something out of the ordinary; “unavailable” means to not be present or available. Therefore, the prefix “un-” means “undone” or “not.” It is a prefix that makes the meaning of the term negative. Ask students how many other words they can name that begin with the prefix “un-.” Practice with the word

- list by using some of the word parts and asking them to brainstorm a list of as many words as they can think of that use that prefix, root, or suffix.
3. Have students use the word list to determine the meanings of words they encounter in the context of class work and reading assignments. Have them create a space or section in their journal or notebook where they can write down the words they find from lectures, discussions, films, or readings that use particular word parts.
 4. At the end of a unit, or periodically during the unit, have students discuss and share the words they have found.

A Use the Table of Contents on the LFL Home Page to access a table of common prefixes, roots, and suffixes is included in the online Instructor's Resources.

Strategy 22: Animal Creations

Purpose

Use prefixes, roots, and suffixes to clarify and define words; learn common prefixes, roots, and suffixes; apply knowledge of word parts to create something new.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Overview

This creative strategy was adapted by Harmon, Wood, and Hedrick (2006) from the original idea by Johnson and Pearson (1984) and Cecil and Gipe (2003). It helps students learn to use knowledge of prefixes and roots. It is great for scientific and technical subject areas because scientific terminology is heavily dependent upon prefixes and roots. Students must create an imaginary creature that can be identified by its invented scientific name. For this activity, have students use the prefixes, suffixes, and roots from the list of common prefixes, roots, and suffixes in the previous strategy. They will also need some poster paper, strips of paper, and markers.

Procedure

1. Refer students to their list of prefixes, roots, and suffixes to use during this activity.
2. Using some scientific terms that contain prefixes and roots, have students create an original creature or monster by choosing from the prefixes and roots and then writing the scientific name of this creature on a strip of paper.
3. Students then draw a picture of their creation on the top part of their poster paper.
4. At the bottom of the paper students will write a sentence that shows the connection between the name of their creature to a real scientific term they have learned in class.
5. Students should hang their posters around the room and share their creations with the class.

This process can also be completed in pairs or small groups. Here is an example from Harmon, Wood, and Hedrick (2006):

My creature, *Lineatusbicornis monocephalustquadropod*, has no problem using a monocular microscope. (p. 114)

Strategy 23: Incidental Morpheme Method

Purpose

Use prefixes, roots, and suffixes to clarify and define words; learn common prefixes, roots, and suffixes; apply knowledge of word parts to clarify meaning; use newly acquired vocabulary in one's writing; use dictionary skills to clarify word meaning.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language.

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

The incidental morpheme method is another strategy that requires students to make use of their knowledge of word prefixes and roots to figure out the meaning of words. It is a strategy that the teacher can use at any time during teaching whenever a word requires attention to its word parts to identify the meaning (Manzo & Manzo, 1990).

Procedure

1. Write the word on the chalkboard or overhead and divide it into its parts. For example: peri + scope.
2. Ask students to try to explain each word part: peri- means “around.” Scope means “to see.” Write the definition of each part under the word.
3. If students have trouble coming up with the meaning, give them some other words with the same prefixes and roots to offer clues: For “peri,” perhaps “perimeter” or “periphery.” For “scope,” perhaps “microscope,” “telescope,” “optical,” or “optometrist.”
4. Discuss the clue words with the class and ask them to make a guess as to the meaning of the target word.
5. Ask students to help you write a sentence that defines the meaning of the term: “A periscope is a device that allows one to see around an area.”
6. Next, ask students to look up the meaning of the term for a more detailed definition: “A periscope is a tubular instrument containing a series of mirrors and lenses used to

view objects that are above the line of direct vision as when submerged in a submarine or a trench.”

7. This is a great, easy strategy that you can use at any time during your teaching. You can also ask students to write down the definitions in their word list or in their notebooks.

Strategy 24: Word Pie

Purpose

Use prior knowledge to identify word meaning; identify synonyms and antonyms to clarify word meaning; use nonlinguistic representation as a means of learning new words; use newly learned words in one's own writing.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

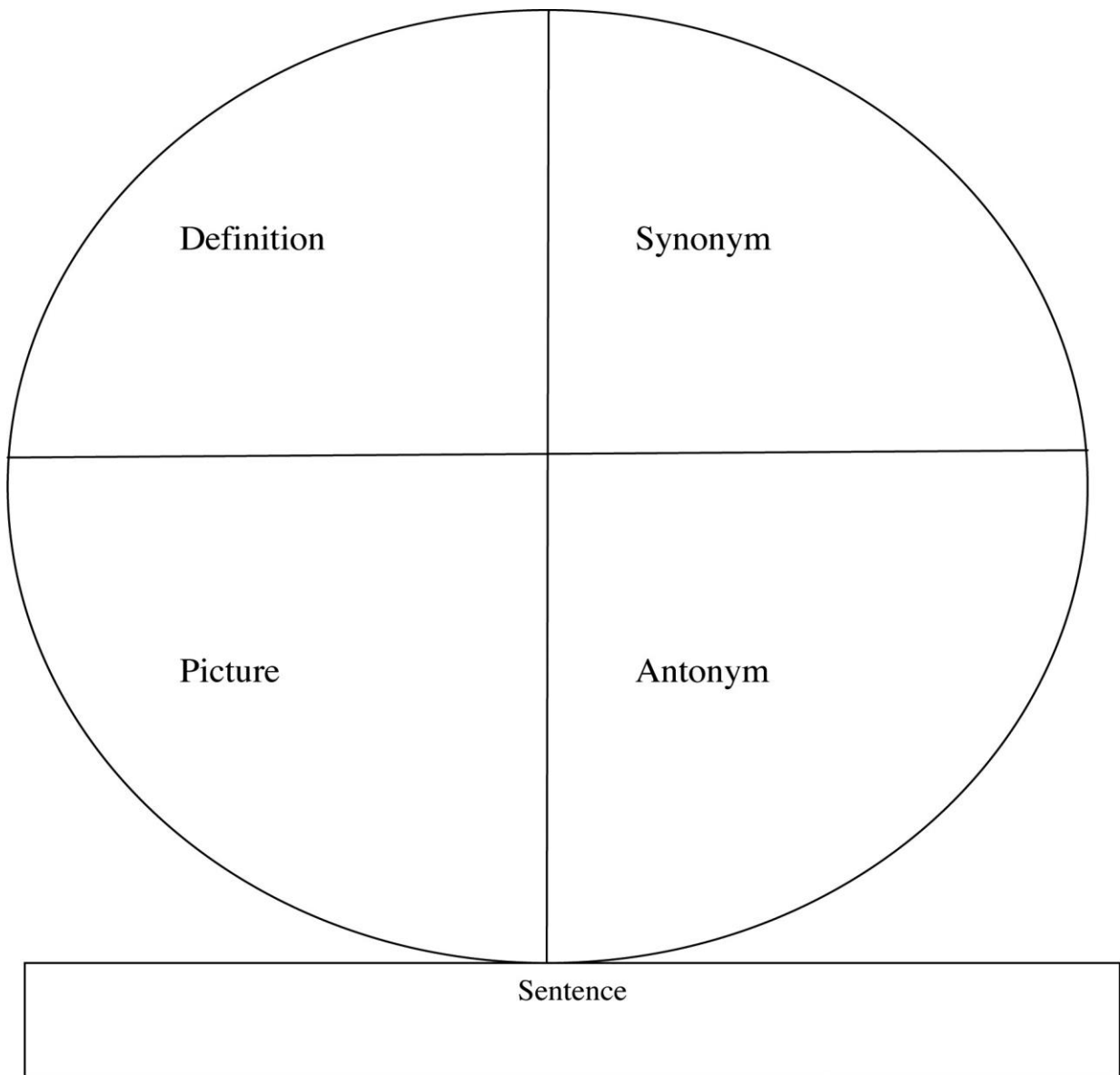
Overview

Word pie is a variation of the Frayer model strategy. It asks students to learn a new word by defining it in their own words, providing a synonym and antonym for the word, drawing a graphic representation of the word, and using the word in a sentence. This is also an easy-to-use strategy that can be done at any time and helps students remember key vocabulary (see figure below).

Procedure

You can give students word pie figures on a single sheet or multiple sheets so that they can complete many different word pies.

Word Pie.



Strategy 25: Word Sorts

Purpose

Identify relationships among words; use critical thinking to classify and categorize words and terms into groups using a set of justifiable criteria; clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words and terms.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Overview

A slightly different version of the word sort was presented earlier in the book as a postreading strategy. Word sorts, however, are also a great vocabulary development strategy. Word sorts come from Gillet and Kita (1979) and Gillet and Temple (1983). They help students to identify the relationships among key concepts. You may remember from part 2 that they may be “open” word sorts or “closed” word sorts. With the “closed sort,” the teacher provides students with the categories into which they will sort the words. With the “open sort,” which is slightly more challenging and a better critical-thinking activity for students, students group the words and come up with their own titles or labels for each category.

This activity can be used as a review activity at the end of the unit or reading, or it can be done during a unit to help students gain a deeper understanding of the central concepts and ideas being taught. The process of sorting requires students to review or learn the meaning of each term or concept. For example, in math, students might sort a series of problems into groups according to types of functions needed to solve the problem. In English, students might sort the names of the characters from a novel into groups and determine a label for each category. In social studies, terms could be grouped according to places, historical periods, regions, or ideas. In shop class, students might sort different tools into categories based on their functions.

Procedure

1. List each of the terms in the group on one 3" × 5" note card or strip of paper. You will need one set for each student group.
2. Have students work in groups to sort the terms into categories, either open or closed. You may want to model this process for students with a simple set of words—such as common vegetables—prior to having students start.
3. Once the categorizing is finished, have each group make sure that each category is labeled (if it is an open sort) and that they have not labeled any of the categories “Miscellaneous” or “Other.” Then have each group present their word sort to the rest of the class, explaining their reasons for sorting the terms as they did.

The table shows an example of a historical character sort (Doty, Cameron, & Barton, 2003).

Table 4.3. Character Sort

<i>American Revolution</i>	<i>Civil War</i>	<i>World War II</i>
George Washington	Abraham Lincoln	Franklin Roosevelt
Benedict Arnold	Ulysses Grant	Gen. D. Eisenhower
Lord Cornwallis	Robert E. Lee	Winston Churchill
King George III	Jefferson Davis	Adolph Hitler
Marquis de Lafayette	Stonewall Jackson	Joseph Stalin
Alexander Hamilton	General Sherman	Benito Mussolini Gen. D. MacArthur Hideki Tojo

Source: Reprinted by permission of McREL, International

Strategy 26: Semantic Feature Analysis

Purpose

Identify relationships among words; use critical thinking to classify and compare words and phrases; clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words and terms.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Overview

Semantic feature analysis (Baldwin, Ford, & Readence, 1981) is a strategy in which students identify characteristics of a concept by comparing it to others in the same category. Students organize the words into a relationship grid. Any task in which students could categorize features of various similar concepts is ideal for use of this strategy. Students can gather information about concepts and identify the similarities and differences.

Procedure

1. Identify a category for study. For example: States of the United States.
2. Develop a matrix or grid such as the one in the figure below. On the left side, list terms, places, concepts, people, events, ideas. Along the top of the grid, list features that the concepts might share. For example, if students are analyzing US states, the left side would list Alaska, California, Colorado, New York, Arizona, and Minnesota. The top of the grid would list various features: mountainous, desert, Western, landlocked, population greater than five million, industrial, and so on.
3. Have students place an X in the grid if the feature applies. They may need to do research and gather information to do this part, or it can be completed while they are doing a reading assignment on the topic or a unit.
4. Have students discuss in small groups and come to consensus. Students should also look for patterns and identify the rationale behind their choices.

Semantic Feature Analysis.

Semantic Feature Analysis Grid

Features							
Terms							

Strategy 27: Semantic Map

Purpose

Use background knowledge to identify word meaning; identify relationships among key ideas and concepts; make predictions about word meaning; clarify understanding of word meaning during reading of text.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language.

Standard L.4: Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances.

Overview

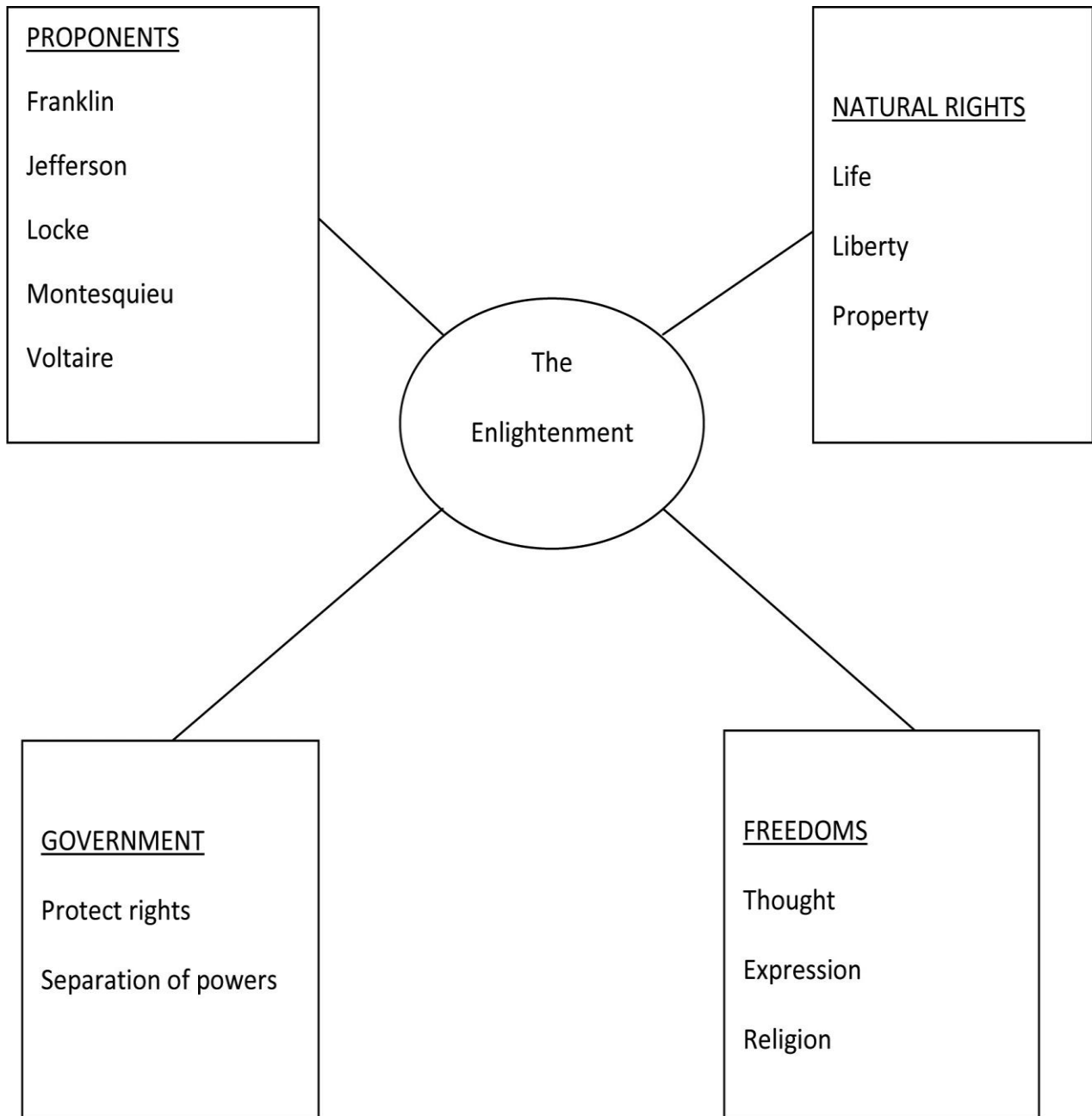
Semantic maps are visual tools that help students activate their background knowledge on a central idea or concept. The maps are a visual display of the relationships among key ideas and terms related to the central concept (Doty, Cameron, & Barton, 2003). The best way to use semantic maps is at the beginning of a lesson or unit to help students activate their prior knowledge of the topic. Then later, they can refine their understanding as they progress through the reading material or unit.

Procedure

1. Choose a major concept of the lesson or unit. Write it in the center of a piece of poster paper and circle it. For example: totalitarianism, climate change, romanticism, realism, Stalinism, the Enlightenment, or real numbers.
2. Have students brainstorm a list of terms that relate to the concept and record their responses on the chart paper.
3. Have students work in groups to place the terms they have brainstormed into categories. Each group can create its own version of the semantic map. The semantic map helps to build a network of ideas that reveals how the key terms and ideas are related.
4. Have students return to the maps frequently during the reading and after the reading, or at the end of the unit, to add additional information and details to them as they learn new content.

The figure below shows an example of a semantic map from Doty, Cameron, and Barton (2003).

Semantic Map



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Strategy 29: The Prereading Plan (PreP)

Purpose

Use prior knowledge to comprehend text and identify meaning of unfamiliar words; clarify understanding based on active reading of text.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Standard L.3: Acquire knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.

Overview

The PreP is a strategy that helps students discover what they know about a topic and extend their thinking. It also helps teachers identify students' levels of prior knowledge about a topic. The strategy comes from Langer (1981).

Procedure

1. Identify the textbook section or reading passage you are assigning to students and the key concepts that students will need to understand.
2. Use a film, quotation, online video, or display artifact to introduce the topic to students.
3. Ask students questions about the term, such as the following: "What do you think of when you . . . ?" "What might you see, hear, or feel . . . ?" "What comes to mind?" "What does this remind you of?" Make a list of students' ideas on the board, chart paper, or projector. During this process, ask students to reflect on their thinking about the word.
4. Reformulate the knowledge generated by asking if students wish to make any changes to the ideas that have been listed. They can delete or add to the list. As the teacher, analyze students' responses. Do they have:
 - a. little understanding (can only identify basic word parts or roots, only think of similar sounding words),
 - b. some prior information (they can identify examples, attributes, or defining characteristics), or
 - c. a lot of prior knowledge (high-level thinking, analogies, definitions, super-ordinate concepts)
5. Come back to the PreP after the reading assignment or unit is completed. Have students continue to add to, change, or delete the ideas.

Strategy 30: KIM Chart***Purpose***

Identify word meaning; elaborate upon the meaning of key terms and concepts; create visual representations to learn and memorize new words.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Overview

The KIM chart is a great, simple strategy for teaching vocabulary words and new concepts. The original source of the KIM chart is unknown. The KIM chart has three columns:

K—Key idea

I—Information that goes along with the key idea

M—Memory clue, a picture or visual representation of the concept

Procedure

The key idea may be a new vocabulary word or concept that students need to learn. Students can use a KIM chart with several different terms or vocabulary words. The information column can be an actual definition or a detailed explanation of the concept. It may also be something more technical for certain content areas. The memory clue is what students will picture in their minds in order to remember the word. Making a simple drawing helps students synthesize and apply the new word, making it their own. The figure below presents a KIM chart.

KIM Chart.

K Key Idea	I Information	M Memory Clue
pioneer	Someone who forges a way for others to follow	(Picture)
abolitionist	One who is morally opposed to slavery	(Picture)
secession	To withdraw formally from a group, organization, or union	(Picture)

Strategy 31: Preview in Context

Purpose

Use prior knowledge to determine word meaning; use context clues to define and clarify the meaning of words and terms; use word parts, synonyms, and antonyms to help clarify word meaning; use dictionary skills to define vocabulary words.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.

Standard L.4: Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

The preview in context is a strategy for introducing students to new vocabulary words by using the original context. It comes from Tierney and Readence (1999). The strategy involves students exploring meanings and using discussion and context to determine the correct meaning.

Procedure

1. Select key vocabulary terms from the text passage or reading assignment.
2. Present the words to students on the board or overhead. Pronounce each word and ask students if they have any idea what each word may mean.
3. Have students study how the author uses the terms in the reading passage. It is best to do this in the context of a whole class reading of the passage.
4. Use questions such as the following:
 - a. What does the sentence tell you about the word?
 - b. What questions do you have about the word?
 - c. Do you recognize any of the roots or word parts?
 - d. Can you think of any synonyms or antonyms for the word?
 - e. What do you think is probably the meaning of the word?

5. For those words that do not provide enough context information, ask students to look up the dictionary definition of the word. I often have a student use his or her Smartphone to quickly look up the definition. Have students compare the dictionary definition with the way that the word is used in the context.

Strategy 32: Word Walls

Purpose

Identify unfamiliar words and terms in reading and discussion; identify and clarify the meaning of words; use newly learned words and terms in one's own writing.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

As mentioned earlier in this section, word walls are a powerful method of teaching and reinforcing vocabulary. Consider designating a section of bulletin board in your classroom for a “word wall,” a place to display vocabulary words in the classroom. You and your students can add words and concepts to the word wall as the unit proceeds.

Procedure

When a new unit begins, start a new word wall. The word wall becomes a permanent location for high-frequency words and those you want to continually reinforce. Here are some guidelines for word walls:

1. Choose the location carefully. You want the word wall to be visible to students. Keep some strips of paper and markers nearby to write down new words in large black letters.
2. Ask students to try to use the words from the word wall in their written assignments, graphic organizers, and discussions.
3. While you can do word walls for general vocabulary terms and general unfamiliar words encountered, they can also be topical and thematic, with the words related to a particular course topic, unit, or reading selection.
4. Ask students to help you in determining what words should go up on the word wall. Don't add any more than a few per week.
5. A good way to begin a word wall is to go through the textbook section for a particular unit and choose key concepts and ideas that you know students will need to understand and also some general or academic vocabulary words that you predict students will have trouble with when they encounter them in their reading.

Strategy 33: Interactive Word Walls

Purpose

Identify unfamiliar words and terms in reading and discussion; identify and clarify the meaning of words; use newly learned words and terms in one's own writing.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

While word walls may be a traditional component for vocabulary development in elementary school, questions arise about their practicality for middle and high school classrooms. Vintinner, Harmon, Wood, and Stover (2015) suggest that interactive word walls allow students to have control over their learning as they express their understanding of words and concepts in dynamic displays.

Procedure

1. During the prereading stage, individual students or small groups of students select terms that are associated with the topic of the reading selection.
2. They, then create the word wall based on their terms and prior knowledge of their use.
3. As they move through the reading selection, the students may add new terms. They may also add new meanings of any word based on its context in the reading selection.
4. To further increase student engagement, the words may be rearranged to take advantage of the novelty effect: renewed interest based on a change. Grouping or pairing words as synonyms, examples, syllables, or any commonality reinforces the students' understanding of the term.

Vintinner, J. P., Harmon, J., Wood, K., & Stover, K. (2015). Inquiry into the Efficacy of Interactive Word Walls with Older Adolescent Learners. *High School Journal*, 98(3), 250-261. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com> or <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/hsj/summary/v098/98.3.vintinner.html>

Strategy 34: Vocabulary Self-Selection

Purpose

Monitor one's own reading and use active reading strategies to identify unknown words and terms; use context clues to identify word meaning; use dictionary skills or other resources to identify and clarify word meaning; recognize which words and terms are essential to understanding.

CCSS Connection

Standard RL/RI.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Standard L.4: Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Overview

The vocabulary self-collection strategy (Haggard, 1982) actively engages students in identifying important words from their reading to share with the class. Students are introduced to the process before they begin reading.

Procedure

1. When presenting students with the reading assignment, tell them they will be expected to find new and unfamiliar words as they read.
2. Model how to do this for students by choosing a word from a particular passage, explaining why understanding the word may be a key to understanding the sentence or the passage around it. Then show them how you would use context, a glossary, or a dictionary to help figure out the meaning of the word. Write the word down on the board along with the sentence from the reading passage and the definition.
3. Have students read the first section of the reading assignment and choose a word they wish to select. This part can be done in small groups. Each student or group should develop a reason for selecting the word, writing it down on their own piece of paper.
4. Have them continue the reading process in small groups or individually. For each word, selected students should identify the word, why they would select it as an important word

to learn, identify how the word was used by writing the sentence in which the word was used, and identify the meaning of the word.

5. Each student or small group will be asked to present two words to the class by writing them down on a large piece of chart paper in the front of the room.
6. Another option is to have students write each word down on a two-column chart, with one column indicating the word and its definition and the other column explaining why the words are important. You might have each group complete its own two-column chart and then share the words they identified with the rest of the class.

Strategy 35: Forced Associations

Purpose

Identify connections and relationships among words; identify domain-specific words as well as those that are cross-curricular; clarify understanding of words and terms through collaborative discussion.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.

Standard L.4: Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Standard SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations.

Overview

Forced associations is a creative vocabulary strategy designed by Middleton (1991). This strategy asks students to make connections between two terms or concepts. These may be random words that teachers choose to help students connect the specific content terms they have been studying, or they may be words that students choose to make cross-curricular concepts based on content they have recently been learning.

Procedure

1. Choose some content vocabulary words students have been studying recently.
2. Find some unrelated words either from another content area or from a dictionary.
3. Write each word on a note card and keep them in two separate piles, one for content words from your class and one for words from the dictionary or other content areas. You might want to use different-colored note cards for each pile.
4. Place students into groups of four and have each group member select one card from each pile. Allow them to trade cards with other students if they wish.
5. Have students think about their understanding and knowledge of each term and how the two terms might be connected.
6. Have group members work together to write sentences that correctly use both words.

These sentences should then be shared with the whole class.

Forced associations makes use of another strategy called concept combining, in which students are asked to combine two or more vocabulary words or concepts into one sentence. Anytime I have students use vocabulary words in sentences, I ask them to write a certain number of sentences that use more than one of the vocabulary words. For example:

Dark, ominous looking clouds are harbingers of spring storms.

The rock concert was attended by a raucous audience that filled the auditorium with a cacophony of stomping, cheering, and screaming.

Lily had such an aversion to peas that she became astute at picking them out of her food despite her mother's painstaking efforts to hide them.

When things are too abstruse for me to understand, I become very soporific and doze off.

Next time you are teaching students multiple vocabulary words, have them extend their thinking and use their creativity to make associations between words. Then have them write some sentences that make use of concept combining.

Strategy 36: Play Ball

Purpose

Review and reinforce learning of new vocabulary.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Overview

Play Ball comes from Brunner (2011). It is a simple, fun activity for students that promotes movement and physical activity while reinforcing learning by reviewing the meanings of newly learned words. It is also a great strategy for students who are kinesthetic learners, and a good one to use at the end of a unit for review. This strategy does require some type of soft, plastic, or cloth ball.

Procedure

1. Following a reading assignment or at the end of a unit, prepare a list of vocabulary words and concepts that students have been learning along with their definitions.
2. Clear desks and chairs to the side and have students stand in a circle.
3. Explain to students that they will be tossing a ball to other students. Each student will receive one point for catching the ball and two points for correctly answering the question. (You may want to assign one student as a scorekeeper, so that you are free to monitor the process.)
4. Begin the game by tossing the ball to a student and asking him or her to define a vocabulary term from the unit. The other option, of course, is to provide the definition of the word and ask students to identify the term.
5. The student will gain points if he can correctly identify the word or definition. Then the student will toss the ball to another student in the group. You might need to set up some rules of the game for this strategy: the ball must be tossed gently, no student may be tossed to a second time until every student has received one toss, students must participate politely, and students are not allowed to question the final decision about how many points they will receive.

6. Continue the game for as long as desired, but do not stop until everyone has had a chance to participate. You might arrange some sort of simple prize for the two or three top scorers in the game.

Strategy 37: Vocabulary Skits

Purpose

Identify and clarify word meaning; apply knowledge of word meaning; use movement and dialogue to demonstrate understanding of word meaning; use newly learned words and terms in one's own writing and speech; work effectively with others in a collaborative group.

CCSS Connection

Standard L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Standard L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances.

Standard L.6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

Standard SL.1: Prepare for and participate in a range of conversations and collaborations.

Overview

The last vocabulary strategy is a simple strategy that my students always enjoy doing. I call it “vocabulary skits.” It’s a variation on the game of charades in which students create a brief, dramatic scene or skit to illustrate the meaning of a vocabulary word. Unlike charades, they can use words and dialogue, but cannot use the vocabulary word itself.

Procedure

1. Identify vocabulary terms from a reading assignment or a particular unit of study that students need to know.
2. Depending on the number of vocabulary words, have students work in pairs or in small groups. Assign one word to each group or pair. Their assignment is to prepare a scene or skit of one to two minutes to illustrate the meaning of the vocabulary word. Their skit must illustrate or enact the meaning of the word without using the word itself. They can use synonyms for the word or build into the scene explanatory material or action but *cannot* use the word itself or any form of it. You could choose to assign students to write out a script for their scene; however, because the scenes are so short, I do not require a written script.

3. Give students some time to discuss the word, plan out a scene that would effectively portray the meaning of the word, and then practice their skits a couple of times.
4. Once student skits are prepared, have each group or pair present their skit for the class. After each skit is over, have the other students guess which vocabulary word has been presented in the scene. Require that the rest of the class wait until the skit is finished before guessing at the word presented.

This strategy is effective for many reasons. It requires students to understand the meaning of the word well enough to adequately illustrate the meaning with a skit, it allows students to use their energy and creativity, and it builds conceptual understanding in a visual and kinesthetic way, requiring students to not only construct dialogue but also include movement and action to convey the meaning of the word. Students are more likely to remember the vocabulary words because they will remember the student-created scene.