

Vocabulary and Word Study Project

Grade 4

RED 6545

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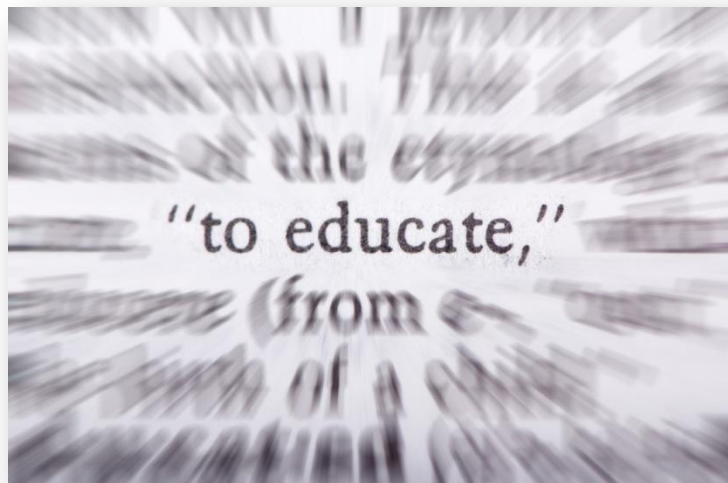


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Strategy: Vocabulary Bookmarks

Description: Vocabulary bookmarks can be used with any grade level and changed to meet the needs of student developmentally. The bookmark I have created is for a primarily grades 3-5. Students will keep this bookmark with them when reading for pleasure as well as assigned readings. When students come to a word that is unfamiliar, they will fill out the first and second columns on the bookmark. After reading, they will complete the remaining columns. After filling their entire bookmark, they will copy the words into their classroom 'Word Journal' and turn the bookmark into the teacher, who will store it in the students' portfolio.

Materials:

- ☺ Cardstock
- ☺ Vocabulary bookmark template
- ☺ Colored pencils/crayons for illustrating
- ☺ Age appropriate reading materials

Rationale: The purpose for this vocabulary strategy is for students to recognize unknown vocabulary throughout various texts as they read. Student should come to realize, through the process, that new words do not just come from the teacher in a vocabulary list; students can self-select the words that they want to learn. "Repeated meaningful encounters with words in direct experience, in read-alouds, in conversation, in personal reading, in discussion...can lead students to produce an immediate label for an object or concept or to build clues to these word meanings over time" (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2010, p. 21). These vocabulary bookmarks aid students in creating said labels, as they will serve as a reference to the meaning of the word.

Resource: I created this template on my own. However, I got ideas from www.educationworld.com

Implementation Reflection: I have always enjoyed using vocabulary bookmarks with my students. They enjoy the freedom of choosing words that are interesting to them. They also enjoy learning the meaning of these words and using them in later writing or conversations. At the end of the school year when students were given their portfolios, they always enjoyed looking at the bookmarks that they created in the beginning of the year and seeing how much they had grown in their word knowledge.

(samples in other attached files)

Strategy: Semantic Mapping

Description: Semantic maps are especially useful in content area subjects. This is a strategy that I use quite often with my high school science students. It involves choosing a topic or vocabulary word and 'mapping' its meaning. Once a word is chosen, students will come up with three or four categories to branch off from that word that explain its meaning. Then students can even create more branches to further exemplify the meaning of the word. Teachers can either provide a template for this or allow students to draw their own.

Materials:

- ☺ Plain paper
- ☺ Template if chosen by teacher
- ☺ Colored pencils/crayons for illustrating (optional)

Rationale: Semantic mapping is a strategy that not only deepens a student's understanding of a word or concept, but it also extends his or her ability to classify. According to Baumann & Kame'enui (2004), "classification is a basic mental process, one that underlies vocabulary knowledge as well as other cognitive processes" (p. 72). Therefore, it is important for students to have practice with categorizing and classifying and this strategy provides them with a tool for doing so.

Resource: N/A

Implementation Reflection: Semantic maps have been a tool in my bag of tricks since I begin teaching during my internship. They are such a great strategy and they can be adapted for students of any age. I used these frequently with my fourth grade students. They enjoyed creating maps and illustrating the word or concept. Now that I teach high school science online, I use this strategy with my high schoolers as well. They enjoy the opportunity to be creative and it helps them to develop a much deeper understanding of the topic of study.

(samples in other attached files)

Strategy: Before and After Knowledge Rating

Description: This strategy allows students to assess their understanding of vocabulary from a story before actually reading the selection. Students will determine whether they know the meaning, have heard the word, or don't know the meaning at all. After completing this individually, students will have the opportunity to discuss the words with their group. As each group member discusses what they believe a word means, the students will take notes. During reading students will be more likely to pay attention to the vocabulary words and use context clues to determine their meanings. After reading, students will fill out the knowledge rating guide again. They will then write down what they believe the definition to be. If they are still unsure, they can refer to the dictionary.

Materials:

☺ before and after knowledge rating template

☺ pencils

☺ Age appropriate reading materials

Rationale: The purpose for this vocabulary strategy is for students to view and study vocabulary words before actually reading them in context. The purpose is also to have students evaluate their understanding of the words and discuss them with a group. Often times this leads to interesting conversations. Before and after knowledge ratings also prove to be a useful tool for teachers. Through using them, teachers are able to better assess the breadth of students' understanding of the vocabulary words (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2010, p. 140).

Resource: I created this template by taking ideas from various other knowledge rating guides that I have seen.

Implementation Reflection: Before taking this class, I had never used this strategy. I used anticipation guides which are similar but deal more with comprehension. I tried this strategy out with a student that I know by having her read a chapter from *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo. Before reading I chose the most difficult vocabulary from the text and had the student complete the knowledge rating guide. We continued through the process as described above. Upon completion, the student provided me with great feedback, saying that she really enjoyed the activity, it helped her to notice the important words more, and she understands them better than she would if she had just simply read the chapter. I feel that this strategy is a great success and I plan to use it if I find myself in the classroom again.

(samples in other attached files)

Strategy: Magic Squares

Description: The magic squares activity gives teachers a creative way to help their students learn vocabulary, especially when the vocabulary is difficult. Often times the vocabulary words that we teach are foreign to students that they might not understand simply from reading. That's why the Magic Squares strategy is so effective. Students have all of the definitions and terms on the sheet, so they can deduct what each word means. Then, they can check to make sure their answers are correct by adding up the squares. The Magic Squares strategy can help students learn vocabulary in a new way, so they aren't simply memorizing lists.

Materials:

☺ Magic Squares Worksheet

☺ pencil

☺ Grade appropriate text

Rationale: The purpose of this strategy is for students to learn new words in an interesting way. This strategy can be used when introducing a new set of vocabulary words or as an extension once the words have already been studied. Allowing students an opportunity to have 'fun' with words and participate in word games is an excellent motivator. As Blachowicz & Fisher (2010) state, "Part of creating a 'positive environment for word learning' involves having activities, materials, and resources that allow students to play with words" (p. 215).

Resource: N/A

Implementation Reflection: I used to use magic square activities with my fourth grade students often. They enjoyed the mystery aspect of this activity. They would often times make it into a race to see who could come up with the magic number the fastest. One thing I found difficult was coming up with the different combinations of numbers and letters. This can prove to be a little time consuming. All in all, it is an activity that the students love and it helps to improve their word knowledge, so I feel it's worth the extra time to prepare.

(samples in other attached files)

Strategy: Four Square

Description: This is a useful strategy for students of all ages. It can be modified to meet the needs of any age level. The Four Square vocabulary strategy is much like a concept or word map. It involves having the students write a word in the center and then in the outer boxes write the definition, an example, a sentence, and a picture. These Four Square pages can be kept in word study journals for later reference by students.

Materials:

☺ Four Square template

☺ pencils

☺ crayons, colored pencils, or markers for illustrations (optional)

Rationale: Concept maps like this four square activity usually focus on one word at a time. They allow students to gain a deeper understanding of the word as well as work it into their current schemata by attaching labels; the illustration and examples. These types of graphic organizers also offer a visual representation for students as well. As stated by Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston (2008), “one key to the effectiveness of graphic organizers is their visual presentation of the relationships among target vocabulary and related concepts” (p. 215). In other words, if a student created a four square about the word ‘forest’ and they drew trees as an illustration and wrote an example about a wooded area near their home, they would be able to visualize the connection between the vocabulary word and themselves.

Resource: N/A

Implementation Reflection: I have always enjoyed using this strategy in my fourth grade class. Many times I would not bother with the template. Instead I would just use a piece of construction paper folded into fourths, which works just as well. My students enjoyed this as well because it allowed them to be creative and they gained a deeper understanding of the word. I would often times hang up the four square creation around the classroom for display. If they were not used for display, I would have my students store them in their word study journals for later reference.

(samples in other attached files)

Strategy: Vocabulary Board Game

Description: Having students create vocabulary board games is a great way to enhance their understanding of vocabulary words. Students use the template provided to create a board game with the vocabulary words provided. Once their board game is created and decorated, they can take turns playing with the other members of their group. Students will roll the spinner to see what question they land on. When they reach a space, they will have to answer the vocabulary question on that space. If they get it right, they get a point and the game continues to the next player.

Materials:

- ☺ Cardstock
- ☺ Vocabulary board game template
- ☺ Colored pencils/crayons for illustrating
- ☺ vocabulary list

Rationale: The purpose for this vocabulary strategy is for students to gain a deeper understanding of vocabulary through play. Students will enjoy learning vocabulary through interaction with other students. The benefits of this strategy are three-fold. First of all, students are being exposed to vocabulary while creating their own board games. Secondly, they are practicing the vocabulary while playing the game with classmates. And finally, students are actively involved in trying to 'catch' their classmates making a mistake. This keeps them engaged in the activity.

Resource: The template for this activity comes from Lakeshore learning.

www.lakeshorelearning.com

Implementation Reflection: This is a very fun activity to use in class. However, teachers need to bear in mind that it does take up a lot of class time. Sometimes I would do this over the course of two days, having the students create their board games on the first day and then play with partners on the second. Another suggestion is to have students work with groups to create the board game. Once they have finished, the board games can be rotated around the classroom so that each group gets to try the other groups' games. My students always thoroughly enjoyed this activity.

(samples in other attached files)

Strategy: Vocabulary Pantomime

Description: Vocabulary pantomime is a great kinesthetic way for students to explore vocabulary. Students are split into groups of 3 and each group is given a vocabulary word. They are given five to ten minutes to plan how they will pantomime the word for the rest of the class. As students pantomime, the rest of the class tries to figure out what word they are acting out. When each group is finished, the students will jot down the word that they think was being performed. After every group has gone, students will share their predictions and determine whether or not they were correct.

Materials:

- ☺ activity sheet (optional)
- ☺ small slips of paper with vocabulary words.
- ☺ pencils

Rationale: “Students can use dramatization of words to create meaningful situations of contexts that clarify word meanings” (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2010, p. 229). In other words, acting out words as well as watching others act them out will make the meaning of words more clear and will also give students a reference when later encountering the word in a text. This type of activity is also beneficial for those kinesthetic learners who learn more by doing.

Resource: I created the activity sheet for this activity.

Implementation Reflection: My fourth graders love doing vocabulary pantomimes. It used to be one of their favorite activities. It was interesting because some of the shyer students really came out of their shells after participating. I could see that this strategy really solidified word meanings for the kids as well.

Strategy: Find Your Match (wordball fight)

Description: Instead of a snowball fight, have a *wordball* fight. For this activity, students will take out a scratch piece of notebook paper. They will be assigned a word or definition, which they will write on the scratch paper. Each student has a different word and definition. Students then crumble their paper and on the count of three...LET 'ER RIP! Students have a *wordball* fight throwing the papers around the room. When the teacher calls 'time', they freeze and pick up the paper nearest to them. Students then have to search the class for the student holding either the word or the definition that is their match. This can be repeated as many times as the teacher would like (or can stand)!

Materials:

- ☺ scratch paper
- ☺ pencils
- ☺ timer
- ☺ bell or whistle to signal the end of the wordball fight.

Rationale: The purpose of this activity is to get students out of their seats and actively involved in matching words to definitions. This activity would most likely have to come after words have already been introduced and would serve as an extension activity. Kinesthetic learners would benefit from this strategy and all students would find it fun to hurl paper around the room. The great thing is that in order to be successful at the game, students will need to know vocabulary two ways, from the word, and from the definition.

Resource: N/A

Implementation Reflection: Students enjoy this activity immensely. It can get messy and teachers need to model the kind of acceptable behavior that is expected. Examples and non-examples of how to toss the paper are an important part of the instruction process when explaining this activity to students.

Strategy: Word Storm

Description: For this strategy, students have the opportunity to explore words more in-depth and develop a deeper understanding. Students are assigned a word. They then must tell what the word means, what other words they think of when they hear this word, two people who would use this word, what are other ways of saying the same thing, and a sentence using the word. After completion this can be stored in word study journals for later reference.

Materials:

☺ word storm template

☺ pencils

Rationale: The purpose of this strategy is to have students assign real meaning to the vocabulary words that they are studying. Through using this strategy students can connect vocabulary to their schemata, which will help them to attach a label to the word for later recall. The word storm strategy offers a variety of labels because it asks students to relate it to several different schemas.

Resource: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/using-word-storms-explore-886.html>

Implementation Reflection: I just recently tried this activity with a student that I'm working with in another class for a case study. I have never used it in my classroom. However, after receiving her feedback, I do plan to implement it in the future. The student that I did this activity with really felt that she had a better understanding of the word, after completing the word storm. She said that she would like it if her teacher used this strategy in her class because it helped her to make a better connection to the word so that she can remember what it means in the future.

(samples in other attached files)

Strategy: 4-Fold Vocabulary

Description: This strategy involves having students fold their paper into rows with four sections in each row. Students will write the word on the first square, the definition on the second, a picture on the third, and a sentence using the word on the last square. Students will then cut the squares apart and place them in a baggie. They will mix them around and dump them out at which point they will work to put them back together.

Materials:

- ☺ construction or copy paper
- ☺ pencils, crayons (optional)
- ☺ timer
- ☺ sandwich sized baggies

Rationale: According to Baumann & Kame'enui (2004), "Vocabulary knowledge develops when students engage in playful language activities and develop word awareness or metacognitive knowledge" (p. 160). This strategy offers all these things. It allows students to 'play' with words in a very tactile manner. It also offers a way for them to better internalize the meaning of words by illustrating their meanings. On top of this, students are offered multiple exposures as they repeat this activity, trying to beat their best time.

Resource: N/A

Implementation Reflection: Students really enjoy challenging themselves with this activity. In the past, I had done this with just the words and definitions. Students would race to see how quickly they could get their words put together. After trying this new version that also includes an illustration and sentences, I am even more convinced of its effectiveness. My students enjoy racing with their group mates and will do this activity over and over, gaining multiple exposure to these words.

Bibliography

Baumann, J., & Kame'enui, E. (2004). *Vocabulary Instruction: Research to Practice*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Bear, D., Invernizzi, M., Johnston, F., & Templeton, S. (2008). *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

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