

Tool:	Vocabulary Strategies
Category:	Classroom
Urban Specialist:	Vicke Pyles
School Level:	All levels (elementary, middle, high)
Target Audience:	Novice and In-service Teachers pre-service teachers, novice teachers, in-service teachers, mentoring teachers
References:	<p>**Mora, J.K., (2000). Teaching Concepts and Vocabulary - Principles and Strategies. Retrieved January 17, 2002 from http://coe.sdsu.edu</p> <p>**Mora, J.K., (2000). Reading in the Content Area: Study Guide and Vocabulary Activities. Retrieved January 17, 2002 from http://coe.sudsu.edu</p> <p>**Jelinek, A., (2000). Thirteen Strategies to Improve Reading Performance. Retrieved January 17, 2002 from http://www.education-world.com</p> <p>**David, M.A. (1999, November). Reading at the Middle Level: Change May Be Good, But Not Always Easy. NASSP Bulletin</p> <p>**Olson, S., (1999). Word Wall Activity List. Retrieved February 22, 2002 from http://www.teachers.net</p>
<p>Rationale: The main organization of this study is to provide evidence that knowledge of word meanings is a critical component to reading comprehension. With vocabulary words, tied conceptually to the content areas, this groundwork supports comprehension and increased knowledge. Increasing the knowledge of vocabulary is essential to further academic development in the content areas. Students need a “body of word knowledge to succeed in basic skill areas.” They also need a specialized vocabulary to learn content area material. For this reason, vocabulary instruction properly belongs in all subjects of the curriculum in which students meet both new ideas and the words by which they are represented in the language. (Hodges, 1994)</p>	

Description:

Content vocabulary was taught in a variety of ways. Reading teachers used the five-step process listed below:

1. Identify vocabulary words in the story or unit of study
2. Vocabulary groups: assign one vocabulary word to each group
3. Identify definition from dictionary then definition using context. Write a synonym, a sentence or draw a picture that applies to the word. Perform a skit or play "pictionary". Seeing the definition in action helps remember the word.
4. Hang vocabulary word with information on a "word wall". Words stay up for visual effect until test day.
5. Refer back to the words as the story is read or as the word is used in the unit.

Vocabulary in the Math content area was taught in a variety of ways. To understand math word problems, a series of basic words were given to the students and discussed how they are related to math. For example, the word "total" gives the student a clue to "add" the numbers. Graphic organizers were used to explain and show math vocabulary as well as math problems.

Although no test was given it was obvious to the teacher that the students understood math vocabulary more effectively. However, the students showed more interest in the artistic aspect of visual learning. Through interdisciplinary teaching, art projects were incorporated into the vocabulary development: using origami to make octahedrons stressing several geometric terms, string art calling attention to the definition of angles and using symmetry with their names to underline mirror images. The Internet offers an abundance of great ideas for teaching vocabulary in content areas. Many websites were listed with a variety of strategies to help implement vocabulary in other content areas. Based on the research, several teaching strategies are listed below to help "energize" lesson plans in all content areas.

Word Wall: Using a word processor, type each word using the Helvetica Black font at the size of 125. Print each word on separate sheets of paper. You can use different colors for the most often-confused words. Choose a location in the room where every student can see all the words on the wall. Do a variety of review activities to provide enough practice so that words are read and spelled instantly and automatically.

Word Jar: Write the vocabulary word with definition on a slip of paper or index card and place in a jar. Have a student pick a word from the jar. Read the word to the class and have them spell the word and/or give the definition. Continue with the other words. This activity can be used for the entire year, which encourages constant review of all vocabulary terms.

Mind Reader: The teacher thinks of a word on the wall and then gives five clues to the word. Have students guess the words by writing them on a sheet of paper. This activity can be used in place of the traditional spelling test.

Bingo: (several varieties are suggested) Using blank bingo sheets have students write the words drawn out of the word jar in various spaces. Once this has been done, the teacher replaces the words into the word jar. Shake up the jar and begin to draw out words. The teacher can say the word or give the definition and then the students will place markers over the given word. The student with the completed row wins Bingo.

Flashlight Fun: Turn out the lights. Say the poem together with the class:

Flashlight, flashlight, oh so bright,
Shine on a word with your light.

Shine the flashlight on individual words for the class to write a definition to the word or to use the word in a sentence.

T-Bar chart: This is a visual representation of a vocabulary word. The teacher will list the vocabulary word on top of the letter “T”. Next, the teacher would list associated terms on the left side of the vertical line and synonyms on the right side of the vertical line.

Vocabulary Quilt: Giving each student a blank “quilt” of 26 squares. Label each square with a letter of the alphabet. Using this sheet, have students add vocabulary words in each appropriate square. Add words to the “quilt” as the year continues. Remind students that they can use the “quilt” as a reference for writing activities.

Word Splash helps build student interest and involvement in reading. This particular strategy emphasizes vocabulary skills. One should begin this activity by “splashing” a collection of key terms or concepts from the reading selection at angles on an overhead. Next, ask the students to write complete sentences that predict how the terms are related to the topic. Students are allowed to work individually or in groups, then sharing the final results. This particular strategy is implemented at the beginning of a new story. This activity can also be used with newspaper articles, which allows the students to make their own word splash using vocabulary from the article.

Word Map is a word categorization activity. This helps the students deepen their understanding of concepts and vocabulary words by expanding on definitions. Word mapping helps students learn unfamiliar words and concepts by expanding word meanings and discovering relationships. Students develop elaborated definitions of words and concepts rather than one or two word definitions. The components of a word map might include a definition, characteristics, synonyms and antonyms, examples, and sentences to show understanding, parts of speech and drawings. Word Map has been associated with graphic organizers due to the organization of the information.

KWLWH chart is one of the most successful strategies suggested throughout research. This chart is commonly used consistently throughout the reading lesson beginning with students predicting and connecting new information. KWLWH chart breaks down the comprehension strategies into five columns. Students answer the following questions throughout the lesson:

- 1.What do you think you know?
- 2.What do I want to learn?
- 3.What did I learn?
- 4.What else do we need to learn?
- 5.How will I find out?

During reading strategies are illustrated as follows:

Sticky Note Symbols is one of the most popular strategies. This activity teaches students to focus on what they are reading and to deepen their understanding. Students use post-it notes

during the reading process and write down questions or comments, or placing the note in a particular area with an arrow.

Selective highlighting is a strategy that helps students select what is important in the text. Specific steps are taught to distinguish critical information from information that is not critical. This strategy is in line with the sticky notes. At one time, many of the textbook companies would not accommodate this particular strategy. However, with the research, textbook companies are beginning to accommodate by printing an extra student handbook called the Interactive Reader. Students can highlight sentences, paragraphs or words that they have questions about or they can highlight answers to the pre-reading questions they have asked during the KWLWH session. Once the reading is completed, the after reading strategies are implemented to give a true understanding of what the student just read.

After reading strategies are illustrated as follows:

Picture this is a strategy that emphasizes visual representation. Students work together as a team to think about the text they have read and organize their thoughts to create a visual representation of the text. Students make book jackets to illustrate their understanding of the story. This activates class discussion on creativity, artwork and the important points of what they have just read.

Graphic Organizers give the students graphic representations of the relationship that links together facts, vocabulary, and concepts of texts. Graphic organizers come in many variations. They are designed to organize ideas, represent abstract ideas in more concrete ways, and to help students store and recall information.

Some examples of vocabulary instruction for math content is listed below:

Symmetry Art: A figure is symmetric if a line (real or imaginary) divides it into two congruent (equal) parts, which fit together exactly when folded on the line. Fold a piece of construction paper ($8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$) in half lengthwise. Write your name in large cursive letters along the fold line with a piece of chalk. Remember that letters should reach almost to the top of the paper. If your name should have a "tail" leave the tail off. The bottom of each letter must touch the fold and all letters must be connected. Cut around your name, not on the line but away from it, to make large, fat letters. Cut out the centers of any letters such as o,e,d,etc. Gently wipe off the chalk. Open the design and glue it onto a piece of paper of a contrasting color.

Origami: A Chinese art form of folding paper and making various shapes. Utilizing this skill, students are introduced to various math vocabulary words such as fractions, angles and triangles. Once the twelve pieces are made then the students have the task of putting them together forming a model of the octahedron.

String Art: String designs formed by stitching segments with colored thread through a pattern of holes poked in cardboard. String designs give experience in mathematics being studied or yet to be studied. They develop an awareness of important geometric concepts such as symmetry, point, segment, angle, triangle, circle, hyperbola, parabola, and cardioids.

Graphic Organizers: Graphic organizers are teaching tools that establish organization and structural patterns to enhance learning concepts. The use of organizers produces learning effects that are substantial and long lasting.

