

Vocabulary Teaching Tactics for the Classroom

Reading in the Rockies
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What is Vocabulary Acquisition?

- Learning a new meaning for a known word (e.g., hound: to pursue unrelentingly)
- Learning the meaning for a new word representing a known concept (e.g., adjacent: next to)
- Learning the meaning of a new word representing an unknown concept (e.g., lahar: mudflow resulting from a volcanic eruption)
- Clarifying and enriching the meaning of a known word (e.g., justice)

Why is Vocabulary Learning Important to Literacy Achievement?

- **Printed English contains approximately 88,000 different words**
- **Amount of reading students do predicts the size of their vocabulary**
- **Vocabulary knowledge is the single most important factor contributing to reading comprehension**
- **The proportion of difficult words in a text is the most powerful predictor of text difficulty**
- **Informational text vocabulary differs greatly from narrative text vocabulary**
- **Average students learn between 3,000 and 4,000 new words per year through ordinary reading of moderately challenging texts**
- **To directly teach those 3,000-4,000 words, students would have to learn 20+ words every school day**

- **Most words are learned indirectly through listening or reading**
- **Only about 10-15 words per week can be taught directly**
- **Expressive vocabulary consists of only 5,000-7,000 words; we can comprehend many more words than we typically use**
- **English has the largest vocabulary of any language currently in use, at about 450,000 words**
- **Vocabulary learning is not tied to a particular grade or age, it is related to experience**
- **One of the most powerful ways to increase vocabulary is to read to students and to have them read widely**
- **High school seniors read about 50 pages of text per week, college students read about 100 pages per week**
- **All content areas need to focus on vocabulary instruction to address the unique vocabulary demands in disciplinary texts**

How to Teach Vocabulary

- **Enact General Research-Based Principles**
 - Explicitly teach words and concepts (students with LD experience difficulty spontaneously deriving meaning from mere exposure to words or incidental learning)
 - Teach both common and rare words (exposure to rare words is associated with increased vocabulary size even in young children; see Tabors, Beals, & Weizman, 2001)
 - Teach general, specialized, and technical vocabulary from curriculum (but avoid haphazard selection of vocabulary targets)
 - Foster definitional (formal categorical understanding) and contextual (linkages to prior knowledge and other vocabulary) knowledge
 - Foster depth of vocabulary knowledge (greater depth is associated with better retrieval accuracy; see McGregor, Friedman, Reilly & Newman, 2002)
 - Teach efficient strategies for understanding and using vocabulary and use a variety of teaching tactics

- Provide multiple exposures in varied and authentic contexts to facilitate fast- and slow-mapping
- Motivate students to learn vocabulary by having them listen and watch for and record occurrences and select target vocabulary for instruction
- Identify level of knowledge required for success (see Baumann & Kame'enui, 1991), which depends on (a) importance in general and specific contexts, (b) student's current vocabulary knowledge, and (c) suitable instructional approaches:
 - **Associative**—ability to link a new word with a specific definition in a single context
 - **Partial**—ability to use a new word in a limited number of ways
 - **Full**—ability to use a new word flexibly in broad set of contexts
- Teach words in meaningful groups (see Stahl, 2001) and mark distinctions (e.g., How are *villain* and *cad* alike and different?):

Red

ruby
blush
scarlet
crimson
carmine

Bad people

villain
cad
rogue
scoundrel
malefactor
miscreant

- **Use multiple strategies that fit desired learning outcomes:**
 - Dialogic support through shared book reading with Q&A or student-generated scenarios (e.g., In what situation would you find *debris*?)
 - Cognate pairs for ELLs (e.g., tourist/turista, important/importante, problem/problema) **WEB RESOURCE**
 - Object description
 - Zip around/Loopwriter
 - Establish breadth (horizontal) and depth (vertical) knowledge of vocabulary with continua
 - Semantic mapping or webbing
 - Semantic features analysis
 - Four-square concept development
 - Concept ladders
 - Keyword mnemonics
 - Morphologic structural analysis
 - Semantic cues in text

Object Description

- Aim is for students to create semantically accurate and memorable definitions using a question and answer strategy:
 1. What is it called?
 2. What is the category?
 3. What does it do/what do you do with it?
 4. What does it look like?
 5. What parts does it have?
 6. What does it feel like?
 7. Where can it be found?
- A 1 is a (an) 2 that 3 . It 4/5/6/7 and 4/5/6/7 .

1. What is it called? chasm
 2. What is the category? geological feature
 3. What does it do/what do you do with it? occurs in rocky places
 4. What does it look like? deep
 5. What parts does it have?
 6. What does it feel like? dangerous
 7. Where can it be found? in deserts
- A chasm is a geological feature of the earth that occurs in rocky areas. It may be deep and dangerous and you can find it in deserts.

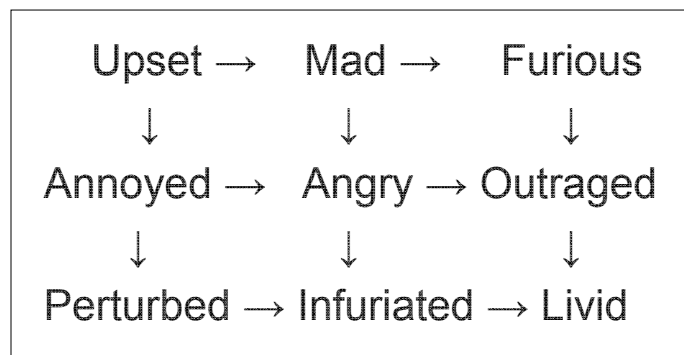
Zip Around/Loopwriter

<http://www.curriculumproject.com/loopwriter.htm>

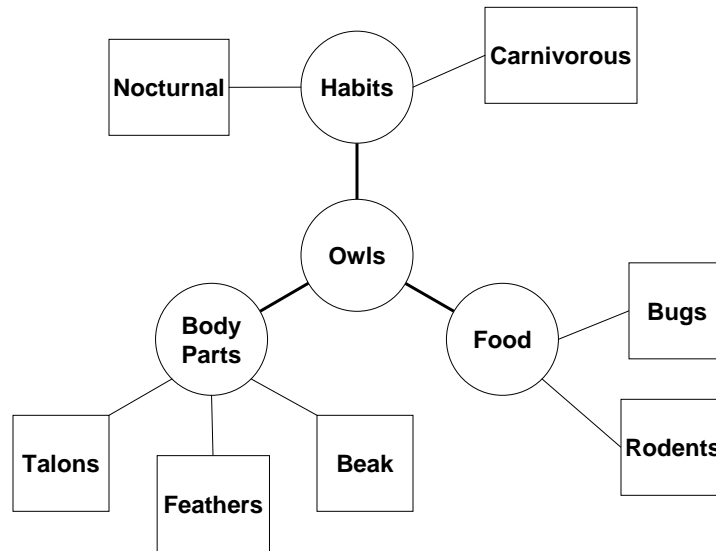
- Students must listen for word, definition, or phrase while playing a fast-paced game
- The words may be sight vocabulary (targets word recognition as well as vocabulary), word families (again, targets both reading and vocabulary), content area vocabulary, similar sounding words
- Person asks, "Who has...(read card)?"
- Another responds, "I have...(read first part of card)."
- They ask, "Who has...(read second part of card)?"

Continua of Related Vocabulary

Emotions



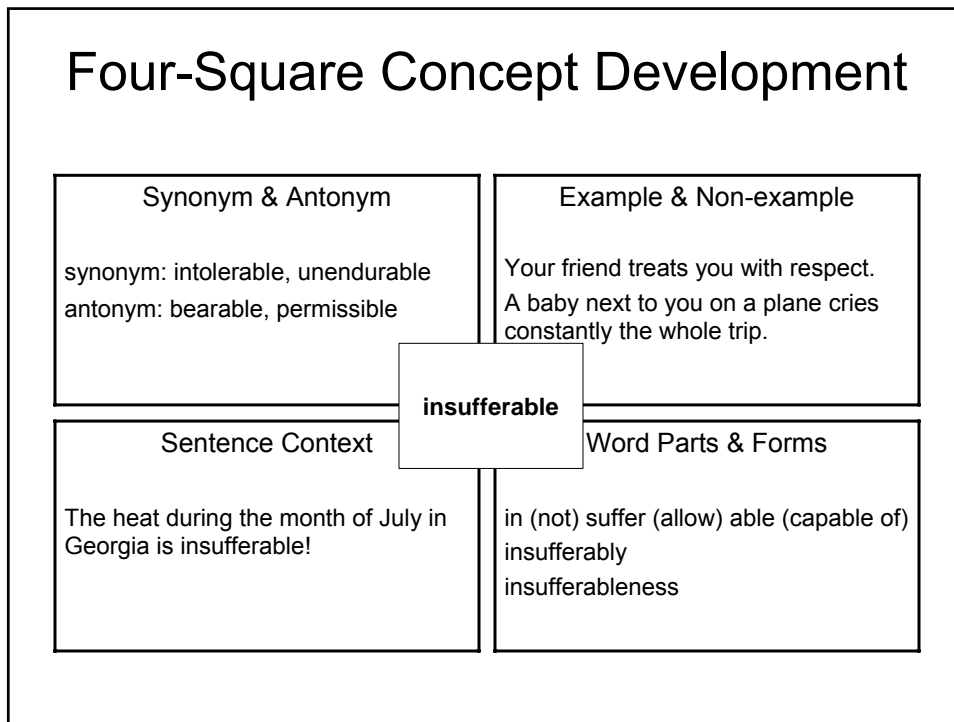
Semantic Mapping



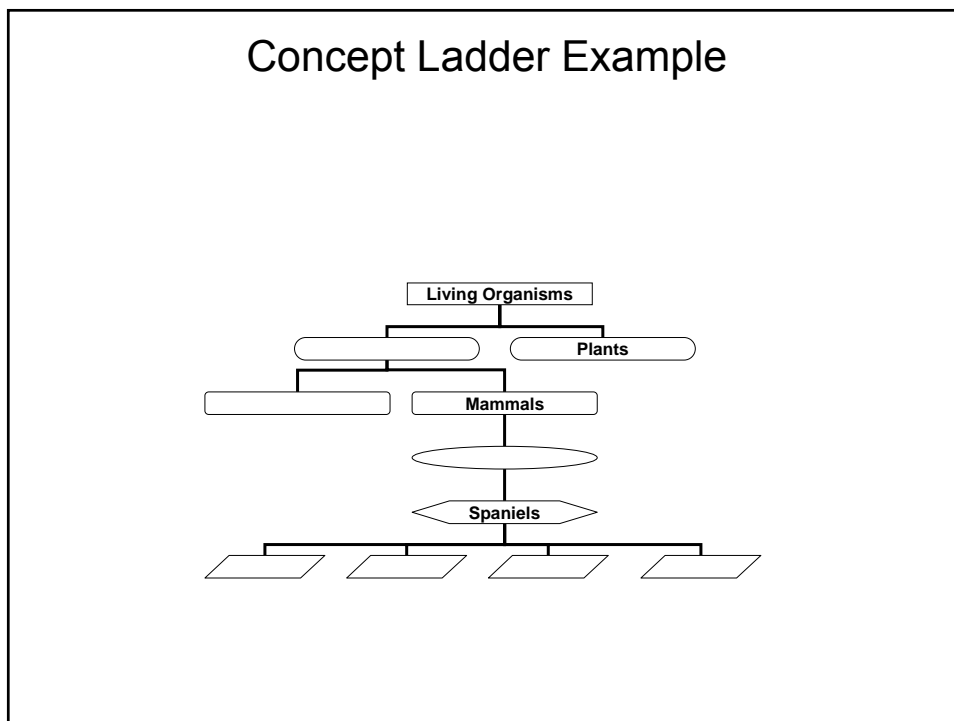
Semantic Features Analysis Shelters for Humans

	Permanent	Insulated	Large	Fancy	Dwelling
Apartment	+	+	?	?	+
Tent	-	-	-	-	+
Cave	+	-	?	-	?
Igloo	-	-	-	-	+
Hut	+	-	-	-	+
Wigwam	+	-	-	-	+
Shed	+	?	-	-	-
Mansion	+	+	+	+	+

Four-Square Concept Development



Concept Ladder Example



Keyword Mnemonic Example

Recode/Relate/Retrieve

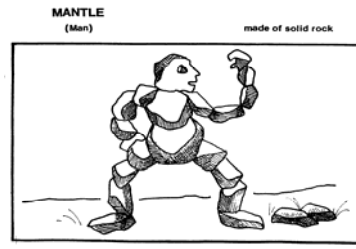
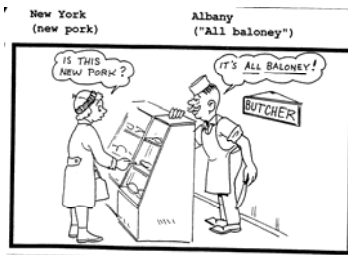
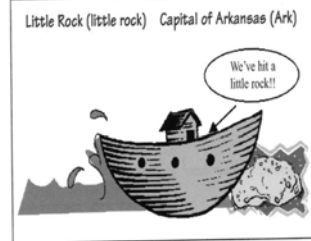
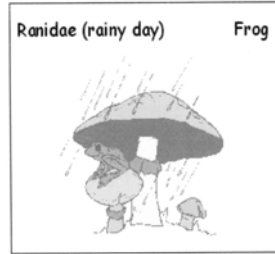
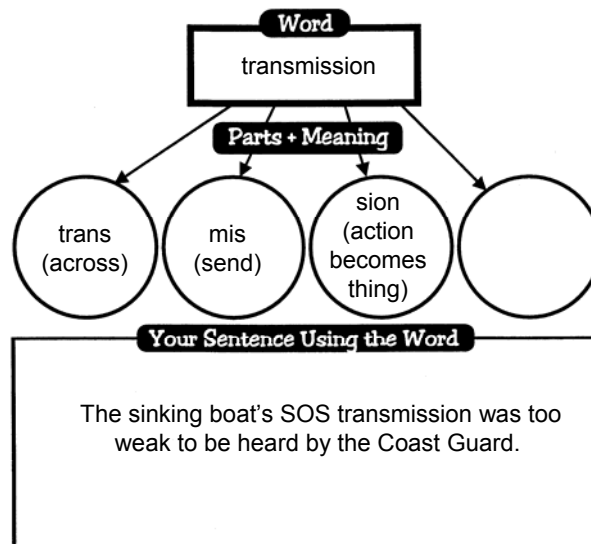


FIGURE 4. Mnemonic illustration for teaching the capital of New York.

FIGURE 5. Mnemonic illustration of the earth's mantle made of solid rock.

Morphemic Analysis



Some Examples of Common Morphemes

Greek/Latin Roots	Prefixes	Suffixes
graph (write)	re (again, back)	able/ible (capable of)
meter (measure)	sub (under, less)	ful/ous (full of)
port (carry)	un (not)	al (pertaining to)
ped (foot)	trans (across)	ish (characteristic of)
phon (sound)	dis (opposite)	er/or (occupation)
spec/spect (see)	il (not)	ist/ant (one who)
dic/dict (tell, speak)	ir (not, into)	ness/some (state of)
cred (believe)	ante (before, front)	ance/ence (change action to state)
struct (build, form)	mal (bad)	tion/ation (change action to state)

Semantic Cues in Text

- Restatements
 - All instruments used during an operation must be *sterile*. They have to be free of germs.
- Examples
 - Most office workers are encouraged to take short *respite*s during the day. For example, they go to the water fountain or friend's office to chat.
- Similes
 - *Capillaries* are like tiny pipelines that connect veins and arteries.
- Metaphors
 - The bean-shaped *mitochondria* are the cell's power plants.
- Summary
 - The wealthy man enjoyed raising money for many charities. He gave large sums of his own money to homes for orphaned children, soup kitchens, and shelters for the homeless. He also turned one of his homes into a school for needy children. He was one of the best known *philanthropists*.