Vocabulary Portfolio

*EDUC 647*

A collection of vocabulary activities for the tired teacher.

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Introduction

We have chosen to create a compendium of resources for teaching vocabulary because it is such an important part of language learning, but is often seen as unnecessary and boring for students and teachers alike. The collection of original and adapted activities has been carefully selected to invigorate student interest and to integrate vocabulary instruction into daily learning. Vocabulary learning is inseparable from reading and is nearly inseparable from writing. These skills require that students understand the words in order to create original thoughts. William Chomsky, father of Noam Chomsky, said that “We do not first have thoughts, ideas, feelings, and then put them into a verbal framework. We think in words, by means of words.” In order to urge our students to become creative with language, we must equip them with the words to use. Words themselves become a strategy for building all skills.

According to Associate Supreme Court Justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes, “A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanging; it is the skin of a living thought and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and time in which it is used.” Our first section of vocabulary activities is dedicated to teaching vocabulary in context. We talk about binding and schema and prior knowledge in reading, but the same ideas apply to vocabulary instruction. If binding is to happen in vocabulary instruction, students need to be able to make as many connections as possible with things they already know. Students need to make word-concept connections in multidimensional ways. We see vocabulary instruction as similar to sewing a button on a coat. The button can be placed on the coat and will stick until moved. The button will also stay with one piece of thread until moved. However, the more times the thread is sewn through the button holes, the longer the button will stay. Contextualized learning of vocabulary not only increases the number of times the threads are sewn, but also enhances the quality of thread used to sew on the button.
We also saw a need to teach word parts to students. The Oxford English Dictionary indicates that there are nearly a quarter of a million words in use in the English language. This means that in the course of a student’s lifetime, he/she will encounter a great number of unfamiliar words. We want to equip students for this real world of words by giving them tools to use when they are outside the support of our classrooms. Word parts are a perfect strategy for students to use. Our word parts strategies are divided into two sections: Greek and Latin derivatives, and affixation. Students will learn the most common Greek and Latin root words present in high frequency vocabulary. Knowing these root words will equip students to better guess the meaning of unfamiliar words. A student who knows that “corpus” means “body” would have a clue for guessing the meaning of the word “corporation.” In the same vein, a student who knows the word “excited” can understand the meaning and use of the word “excitedly.”

We have also decided to include a section of vocabulary instruction using a word wall. One of the core values for teaching vocabulary is the need for a vocabulary rich environment. Research has shown that a great amount of vocabulary learning takes place incidentally. If students are learning from their environments, then it is in our best interest as teachers to make that environment FULL of words. A word wall is an excellent and versatile way to fill the classroom with words. It also creates an opportunity for recycling as students are repetitively faced with acquired vocabulary words.
Vocabulary is an often avoided modality in instruction because it is often boring and seems needless. Many teachers believe that students should be able to learn enough vocabulary from reading and writing practice. Our strong belief is that students need explicit vocabulary instruction in order to make them better readers and writers. Students will encounter thousands of words over the course of a lifetime, and our job is to best prepare them to face these words by teaching them as many as possible and by equipping them with strategies for learning unknown words.

In order for students to get the most out of their vocabulary instruction, it is most important to frame their instruction in the most authentic contexts. We believe that vocabulary instruction should first and foremost be highly communicative, providing students with multiple opportunities to practice their newly acquired language in multiple contexts while interacting with their peers. In order to achieve this goal of communicative teaching, students must be provided with the most authentic materials with which to work. Using authentic texts and providing ample opportunities to practice in authentic scenarios best prepares students for the real world of improvised speech and unexpected language outcomes (Lee & Van Patten, 2003). We can prepare our students for the future by applying Krashen’s rule of $i+1$, making each day count and more challenging than the next.

While we know from research that students can learn a great deal of vocabulary through incidental contact with new words, we must take responsibility for teaching the words we want them to know. We cannot rely on fate or chance for students to learn the words necessary to prepare them for their academic futures. We believe that explicit vocabulary instruction and explicit instruction of vocabulary learning strategies is paramount in building higher level lexica. We were deeply inspired by Ken Cranker’s presentation on vocabulary instruction and his reflection
on the importance of teaching word parts (Cranker, 2009). We believe this to be an important
strand of vocabulary instruction to explicitly teach for the reason that the knowledge of word
parts also serves as a reading strategy for determining the meaning of unknown words. We can
do the best job we can as teachers to support our students while they are in our classrooms,
but what counts is what we teach them that can be used on their own in the “real-world.”
Strategies, such as word part analysis, become tools for fixing real life problems. A student
could very well fix a jammed door in real life with bare hands, but imagine the ease and lack of
stress provided by the presence of the right tools. We believe that we can save our students
stress and provide them with more rewarding opportunities in learning by offering tools to get
language jobs done with ease.

In order to prepare for this real world and the use of these tools in an authentic context,
students need a vocabulary rich environment. Word walls provide this vocabulary rich
environment by physically surrounding students with words. This tangible reminder of the
students’ language acquisition also serves to promote “word consciousness.” “Word
consciousness” is the combination of phoneme recognition alongside word appreciation that
gives students satisfaction and power in knowing the right words to use (Scott & Nagy, 2004).
World walls provide an interactive tool for teachers to achieve these objectives for vocabulary
instruction. According to Dr. Barbara Prillaman, word walls also support the creation of form-
meaning connections and connections in content knowledge (Prillaman, 2009). The use of word
walls can be highly communicative as they require a great deal of student involvement. They
also promote student autonomy and motivation when students are involved in the creation of a
classroom word wall.
Because vocabulary acquisition is complex, vocabulary instruction must be varied in order to reach all students, in all learning styles, for all purposes, and for all words. Word walls become particularly attractive for their versatility in terms of purposes for instruction. They can be used for analysis of words, for word parts, and for spelling. As students build impressive lists of acquired words over the course of their learning, word walls become a tool for recycling. Repetition and rehearsal and exposure over time help commit new information to long term memory. Students must “use-it-or-lose-it” when learning new vocabulary words.

In addition, we do not merely want students to learn words for our class and lose them as soon as they walk out of our doors. We have designed our vocabulary instruction with the understanding that students have different levels of understanding words. “Making Words Stick,” by Kellie Buis (2004), outlines three levels of word knowledge. A student at the first level, the word-association level, would recognize a word and would know the definition in a single context. A student at the partial-concept level would understand multiple meanings and nuances of words and would use the word in a variety of contexts. A student at the highest level, full concept level, would be able to extend definitions and integrate words into meaningful use. We have incorporated these levels into our vocabulary instruction so that achievement to the highest level is properly scaffolded. We attempt to anchor newly acquired knowledge to pre-existing schema while developing new schema with sophistication.

Our goal is for students to internalize the words, making them more than memories or things to study, but an integral part of themselves. William Chomsky says that “Our ideas and experiences are not independent of language; they are all integral parts of the same pattern, the warp and woof of the same texture.” Students can lose parts of their identities when learning a
second language as they struggle to find the right words with which to express themselves. Giving our students words and a chance to use them becomes an opportunity for the student to flourish and show who they are.
“Taken out of context, I must seem so strange.”
- Ani DiFranco
Pitchmen

Level High-Intermediate-Advanced

Age Middle school-Adult

Purpose This activity is for extending and refining the students’ knowledge of learned vocabulary words. They are to apply their learned definitions of the words in a new context, manipulating word forms and context to accommodate the vocabulary.

Skill Area Strategy for extending meaning to multiple contexts, full concept level

Type Small group (3-4)

Pre-Requisites Review list of vocabulary words being used in the activity.

Materials Vocabulary list (topically/thematically related words that fit your unit), movie scores

Procedures

1. Students will have already learned a list of words in a word family. Divide your students into groups of 3-4 students.
2. Assign each group a brand name product (i.e. 1. McDonald’s latte, 2. Hallmark Greeting Card, 3. iPhone, 4. Tylenol)
3. Divide your vocabulary list evenly amongst your groups (i.e. 40 words, 4 groups-10 words per group). Give each group their vocabulary lists.
4. Perform a model of the activity for students to understand structure. Showing an example of a commercial would be very useful for students.
5. Ask each group to create a short “pitch” for their product. They must use all of the words assigned to their groups, making as many sentences as they need to use all of their words. Students may use different forms of the word than given (“intuitive” instead of “intuition” for example). Students will need 2-3 minutes per word to plan their presentations.
6. Each group will present to the class by electing someone from their group to read aloud. When the students prepare to read their presentations to the class, play music from famous movie scores. The mood of the music should reflect the mood and tone of the commercials. This adds an authentic feel to the activity.

Created by Rachel Lapp, 2009
Example:

“Hey you, yes you! You look awfully pallid. Perhaps you could use an energy boost. If that’s the case, you should try the new audaciously caffeinated Dunkin’ Donuts $0.99 latte. One sip of the latte and it will be ostensible how strong the coffee drink is. Other companies try to emulate our formula, but you can only enjoy this clandestine recipe at Dunkin’ Donuts. Stop by today!”
Silly Homonym Sentences

Level: High Beginner-Low Intermediate

Age: Elementary-Middle School

Purpose: The activity helps students identify homonyms. Students will be introduced to new vocabulary words and must derive the meaning from context. They will practice creating novel sentences using the homonym cards. The students will create one sentence containing a homonym pair and must understand the context for using each word in order to create a sentence. The sentences should be silly, but the students will need to know the part of speech and meaning so that the sentence is still intelligible.

Skill Area: Strategy for identifying meaning to through contexts inductively through visual clues, partial-concept level

Type: Pairs

Pre-Requisites: Students will need a brief introduction to the meaning of the word “homonym” with examples.

Materials: Homonym cards handout, cut into individual cards (keep pairs together, numbering the backs of the cards 1-1, 2-2, 3-3...) (see attached)

Procedures:

1. Pair students in mixed ability levels. Make sure pairs are comfortable communicating with each other.
2. Each player should get the same number of pair cards.
3. The player takes the pair of target words, pair and pear for example, and makes up a silly sentence using both of the words.
4. For example: “I purchased a **pair** of **pears** at the grocery store.” Be sure to model this for students without using the vocabulary from the cards. Use a novel sentence of your own.
5. Players take turns.
6. Have students “share out” their best answers. Have the class vote on the silliest sentence for an added twist.

Adapted from Webber, 2009
Silly Homonym Sentence Card Game

**You and me**
You and I are best friends!

**A ewe**
A ewe is a female sheep.

**Pears**
Pears are my favorite fruit.

**Will you hand me the pair of dice?**

**Will you marry me?**

**The children at the party were very merry.**
The father hugs his **son** before school everyday.

The **sun** is very hot in the summer.

I go to a salon to get my **hair** cut.

The **hare** was happy to eat carrots.

This man does not know which **way** to go.

How much do you **weigh**?
Would you like a **piece** of cake?

To have **peace**, we must be kind to everyone.
Word Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>All levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>All ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is to help students build fluency in reading by collecting definitions of unknown words encountered during reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Area</td>
<td>Learning vocabulary meaning through context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Requisites</td>
<td>Students will need to know the meaning of “synonym,” and “antonym” and will need to know how to use a dictionary, in addition to understanding that words have different forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Students, reading material, binder, RWT worksheets (see attached)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

1. Students will be given a 3 ring binder. They will need several blank RWT worksheets to put in their binders.
2. As students read through required or pleasure reading throughout the school year, they are to fill out a Word Map worksheet for every word they do not know.
3. When a student finds a word that he/she does not know, the student will put the word into the chart.
4. The student then needs to find as many synonyms for the word as he/she knows. The student may also use a thesaurus or ask a friend.
5. The student will need to find an antonym of the word, first by thinking of “opposites” and they can also use a thesaurus or dictionary.
6. The student will need to list any forms of the word. If the word is “energy,” the student would list “energetically,” “energize,” and “energetic.”
7. The student will need to write the sentence from the text in which the word was used.
8. The student will write a sentence of their own creation.
9. The student will create a visual representation of the meaning of the word. This visual is pivotal because it should be the signifier signified by the sound and shape of the word.

Adapted from International Reading Association, 2009
Word Map

Sentence from the text

My own sentence

Dictionary

Other Forms of word

Antonym

Synonym

Word

My sketch or association
Word Wizard

Procedures

1. This requires some prep work. You will need to make a chart for your class with a row for each student. You will need columns for every day or week, depending on the length of your course. You should make this as colorful as possible. You will also need stickers.

2. You will need to write on small pieces of paper vocabulary words that you want your students to know from your unit, your chapter, from their content areas, words they will need in the future, etc. Fold the small papers in half and put them in a “Sorting Hat.” This can be anything you like.

3. Every day, you will select a new student for the Wizarding Challenge. The student will come up to the Sorting Hat to pick a word. The student will read the word out loud to the class.

4. The student’s job is to go home and listen for the word on TV, the radio, in conversations, etc. The student can also use the word on their own, creating their own context.

5. The student must report back to the class with their sentence.

6. Students will achieve one of three wizarding levels: Word Watcher, Word Warrior, and Word Wizard. A Word Watcher will be able to find the word, but cannot explain it. A Word Warrior could find the word and give a created example. A Word Wizard can provide a created or novel example and explain to the class how to use the word and what the word means.

7. Keep track of the students’ accomplishments and let the top five participate in a Wizard’s Cup during the final week of classes. The student who can find the most uses for the last word in the hat will win the Wizard’s Cup (a prize of your choice.) Make sure it’s something they would covet greatly.

Adapted from Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Word</th>
<th>My sentence</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>
CSI: Vocabulary

Level Intermediate

Age Middle School-High School

Purpose This activity is designed for students to use word parts and clues from the text in order to find the meaning of given words.

Skill Area Strategy for understanding word meaning in context by identifying form and surrounding details

Type Individual, pair work

Pre-Requisites None

Materials Reading material, selected vocabulary words from text, worksheet (see attached)

Procedures

1. Write a list of words you want students to know from your reading passage on the blackboard or on an overhead.
2. Distribute the “Evidence Worksheet.” Students will need to put these worksheets in their “Word Map” binders.
3. Ask students to scan the reading for the given vocabulary words. They will need to underline or highlight those words.
4. As students read, alone or in pairs, they must complete the work sheet. The students are to work like Crime Scene Investigators. They will need to search for clues to find the missing definition of the word.
5. Students will collect “evidence” from the passage. This evidence will be prefixes or suffixes, root words, or surrounding words that help the student develop an idea of the word’s meaning.
6. The student, like a CSI or scientist, will develop a theory based on the evidence of the word’s meaning.
7. The students will then need to consult an expert in the same way that a CSI would perform tests or would consult an expert to solve a crime. The students “Experts” will be other students, dictionaries, thesauri, Internet, translations, etc. *At this point students could work in pairs or small groups and could collaborate on developing their expert definitions by pulling from students’ prior knowledge to create an expert, “self-definition.”

Adapted from Riedl, 2004
CSI: Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Clues</th>
<th>My theory/best guess</th>
<th>Expert</th>
</tr>
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Adapted from Riedl, 2004
Create a Root Tree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>High-Beginner-Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Grade 2-Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is for students to make connections between word meanings and their word parts. The main focus is on root words and how the meaning of these helps to determine the meaning of a variety of words containing the same root.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Area</td>
<td>Determining meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Individual, pair, or small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Requisites</td>
<td>Students must have prior knowledge of the vocabulary being used in the activity and knowledge of word parts, specifically root words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Tree worksheet (see attached), prepared list of vocabulary words (needs to have multiple subsets of words that contain the same root), dictionaries for reference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

1. Prepare a list of vocabulary words for the activity. You need to include several subsets of words within the list that have the same root word (at least 6 words for each subset), and students need to be familiar with these words.

2. Show students an example of a root tree in which the root word serves as the base of the tree and the branches serve as vocabulary words containing the root and their definitions (use attached template).

3. Give each student a tree template, and instruct them to choose a subset of words from the vocabulary list that contains the same root. Encourage them to write the definitions for each word in their own words since they have encountered these words before, but have dictionaries on hand for reference if needed.

4. When students have completed their trees, have them write a brief summary of the connections that they see among the “branch words” and their definitions. This will help to strengthen their understanding of the word meanings and how they relate to the root word.

5. Have students trade trees with another classmate, pair, or group for further connections.

Adapted from Green, 2009
Create a Root Tree

Root Word:
Make Silly Words with Word Parts

Level High-Beginner-Advanced

Age Grade 4-Adult

Purpose The purpose of this activity is for students to create nonsense words by combining a random root word, a prefix, and a suffix. This activity reviews and strengthens students' knowledge of word part meanings by forcing them to create definitions for their nonsense words based on the meanings of the word parts used.

Skill Area Word part meanings

Type Individual, pair, or small group

Pre-Requisites Students must possess prior knowledge of word parts (prefixes, suffixes, and roots) being used and their meanings.

Materials Prefix cards (10 per participant), suffix cards (10 per participant), root word cards (10 per participant), student worksheet (see attached)

Procedures

1. Prepare a set of 10 prefix cards, 10 suffix cards, and 10 root word cards for each student, pair or group. Shuffle each set of cards.

2. Give each student a worksheet (see attached) and explain that they will be creating silly words using their sets of cards.

3. Model the process for the students by first selecting 1 card from each of the 3 piles and recording each word part in the correct worksheet space. Then, combine the word parts to create your new silly word, and record it in the worksheet space. Next, pronounce your new word for the students, and model the process of creating a definition of the word based on the meaning of each of the 3 word parts. Record your new definition in the corresponding worksheet space.

4. Have students engage in the above process. Each student, pair, or group should be responsible for creating and defining 10 silly words.

5. Give students the opportunity to share one or two of their silly words and corresponding definitions with the class. Have students try to make connections between the words being presented and their own words.

Adapted from Green, 2009
Make Silly Words with Word Parts

Name:______________                      Date:______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Root Word</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Silly Word</th>
<th>Silly Word Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Three of a Kind

Level: All Levels

Age: Grade 4-Adult

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to strengthen students’ knowledge of word parts by finding prefixes and suffixes that can be applied to a set of given root words. This will help students to make connections among words with the same prefixes and suffixes.

Skill Area: Reviewing and strengthening meaning

Type: Pairs, small group

Pre-Requisites: Students must have prior knowledge of the vocabulary being used in the activity and knowledge of word parts

Materials: Cards that contain 3 root words (5 for each participant), prefix cards (5 for each participant), suffix cards (5 for each participant), and graphic organizer (see attached example)

Procedures

1. Strategically create root word cards, prefix cards, and suffix cards. Each root word card needs to have a corresponding prefix and suffix card (see attached example).

2. Give each pair or group of students a set of root word cards, prefix cards, and suffix cards. Explain that each root word card has a corresponding prefix card and suffix card, meaning that the prefix and suffix can be applied to each of the 3 root words (i.e. anti- to septic, body, and slavery). ** It is important to point out that the prefixes and suffixes are not combined to form one word. They are both applied to the root words separately.

3. Have students work in pairs or small groups to manipulate the prefix and suffix cards to correspond to the correct root word cards. Students must place the cards on their graphic organizers.

4. Review student findings as a class, and as an extension, ask students to supply further prefixes and suffixes that could correspond to each set of root words.

Adapted from Greenwood, 2004
Three of a Kind

Example Cards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root Word Card</th>
<th>Corresponding Prefix Card</th>
<th>Corresponding Suffix Card</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agree, appear, assemble</td>
<td>dis-</td>
<td>-ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fair, just, even</td>
<td>un-</td>
<td>-ly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pay, view, arrange</td>
<td>pre-</td>
<td>-able</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active, found, create</td>
<td>pro-</td>
<td>-ation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wind, dry, word</td>
<td>re-</td>
<td>-iest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example Graphic Organizer:
“Characterizing” Greek and Latin Roots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Intermediate-Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Middle School-Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is for students to extend their knowledge of Greek and Latin roots. Through this extension, students will gain a deeper understanding of these roots and their meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Area</td>
<td>Review and extension of Greek and Latin roots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Individual or pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Requisites</td>
<td>Students must have prior knowledge of the Greek and Latin roots being used in the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>List of Greek and Latin Roots, student worksheet (see attached), crayons/markers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

1. Prepare a list of Greek and Latin roots. Students must possess prior knowledge of these roots and their meanings.

2. Explain to students that they will be creating cartoon characters based on Greek and Latin roots. The name of their characters must contain a root, and they must also explain the characteristics that the character possesses based on the root.

3. Provide students with an example using the student worksheet (see attached). One example could be “Agridog,” a red and black spotted poodle that runs a corn field with his other agri-animal friends.

4. Have students create their own characters by following the above process. Each student or pair should choose a different root for later sharing purposes. Provide adequate time for completion to help foster creativity and thoughtful analysis.

5. Allow students to share their characters with the class. This will allow them to make further connections with the Greek and Latin roots presented in their classmates’ characters.

**Created by Mandy Reis, 2009**
“Characterizing” Greek and Latin Roots

Name:______________ Date:______________

Character Name:______________

Character Drawing

Explanation of Character’s Characteristics

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
**Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>High Intermediate-Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Middle School-Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is to relay the importance of understanding word parts and their meanings to students. From this activity, students will be able to better appreciate word parts and their role in deciphering the meanings of unknown words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skill Area</strong></td>
<td>Strengthening word part understanding and motivation for future use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
<td>Small Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Requisites</strong></td>
<td>Students must possess some knowledge of word parts before completing this activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
<td>Index cards each prepared with one of the eight word parts of the word Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis, dictionaries, computers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

1. Explain to students that they are going to figure out the meaning of the word Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis using word parts.

2. Place students into 8 small groups. Have each group pick an index card that has one of the 8 word parts of pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis listed on it.

3. Explain to each group that they are responsible for researching the meaning of their word part using classroom dictionaries and computers. Each group must come up with a cohesive meaning within 10-15 minutes. Students need to write their meanings on the back of their index cards.

4. After each group has produced a meaning for their word part, have one group member come to the front of the room where students will arrange themselves in the correct order of their word parts.

5. From the 8 word part meanings presented at the front of the class, each group will then create their own definition of the word pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis.

6. Have students present their definitions to the class, and write them on the board. Compare these definitions as a class, and present the correct definition so that students can compare it to their own definitions.

*Adapted from Hembree, 2008*
7. Create a class discussion centered around the idea of how using word parts helped them to define pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis and how they can use word parts to help to determine the meanings of future unknown words.

**Word Parts and Corresponding Meanings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Part</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pneumono</td>
<td>related to the lungs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ultra</td>
<td>super</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>micro</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scopic</td>
<td>relating to viewing with an instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silico</td>
<td>mineral silicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volcano</td>
<td>eruption in the earth from which molten rock issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coni</td>
<td>dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>osis</td>
<td>diseased condition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition of pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis:** a disease of the lungs caused by habitual inhalation of very fine silicon dust particles.
Word Walls

Opportunities? They are all around us...
There is power living latent everywhere waiting for the observant eye to discover it.

-Orison Swett Marden
Mind Reader

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>All levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade 2 - Adult ESL/EFL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>The purpose of this activity is to recall the meaning of previously learned Word Wall words. It is most helpful as a review activity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Strategies for facilitating the understanding of the vocabulary in study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Whole class, small group (3-4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Requisites</th>
<th>The selected words need to be part of an established classroom Word Wall.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Materials        | A clearly presented classroom Word Wall, blank paper |

**Procedures**

1. Have your Word Wall list in an area where it is visible by all students. Select a word from the Word Wall list, and keep it secret.

2. Tell students that you are going to see who can read your mind and guess some words that you are thinking of.

3. Give each student a blank sheet of paper, and ask them to number their paper from 1 to 5.

4. Explain to students that you will be providing them with 5 clues for each word to help them guess what it is. You should also explain that after each clue they should write a guess of what they think the word could be on their paper.

5. Give them the first clue which should be “it’s one of the words on the Word Wall.”

6. Give them the second clue. This should be the number of letters in the word (i.e. 5 letters for “candy”).

7. Give them the third clue. This clue should be the word’s part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc.).

8. Give them the fourth clue which should be an attribute of the word (color, size, etc.).

9. Give students the fifth and final clue. This should be a context-rich sentence that leaves a blank for the Word Wall word being guessed. For example, if the word was medicine, you could give the sentence: “The doctor gave the sick boy some ____________ to lower his fever.”

10. The winner is the first student that guesses the word correctly.

11. Lastly, the teacher should review the meaning of each word referring back to the 5 clues used to guess the word.

*Adapted from Cunningham, Hall, & Sigmon, 2009*
Mind Reader

Example

Word: Medicine

Clue #1: “The word is on the Word Wall.”

Clue #2: “The word has 8 letters.”

Clue #3: “The word is a noun.”

Clue #4: “It can be solid or liquid.”

Clue #5: “A context sentence for the word is: The doctor gave the sick boy some __________ to lower his fever.”
Wheel of Fortune

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>All levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Grade 2-Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is to activate prior knowledge of vocabulary and strengthen word structure and meaning. It is most useful as a review of word spelling and meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Area</td>
<td>Strategies for recalling spelling and meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Whole class, small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Requisites</td>
<td>The selected words need to be part of an existing Word Wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>A clearly presented classroom Word Wall, a chalkboard, projector, or a Smart Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

1. Have your Word Wall list in an area where it is visible by all students. Choose a word from the word wall to use for the activity.

2. On the chalkboard, projector, or Smart Board, draw a line for each letter in the word (i.e. _ _ _ _ _ for “virus”).

3. Explain to students that they will be taking turns guessing the letters of the word. Calling out is not permitted.

4. Explain that correct letters are written on the lines and incorrect letters are written under the lines to keep track of all used letters.

5. Have your Word Wall list in an area where it is visible by all students. Choose a word from the word wall to use for the activity.

6. Each student is given 10 seconds to guess a letter. If the student goes over his/her time, he/she loses that turn and another student takes over. *You can have a buzzer to call the end of the allotted time to make it more fun and enjoyable.

7. In order to guess the word, students must raise their hands. It is the job of the teacher to choose a student to make a guess. If the student correctly guesses the word, he/she then needs to provide a definition or an explanation of the word using their own words to be considered “the winner.” This process continues until the correct word/definition is given by a student.

8. The winner then runs the next round of the activity by choosing a new word from the Word Wall and facilitating the process described above. Once the game is finished, the teacher should review all of the vocabulary word spellings and meanings used throughout the game with students.

Adapted from Taylor, 1999
Concept Wheel

**Level**  Intermediate-Advanced

**Age**  Grade 3-Adult

**Purpose**  The purpose of this activity is to help students build a deeper understanding of meaning for themselves. It is most helpful as a review of previously presented words.

**Skill Area**  Development of critical thinking skills and deeper comprehension of word meaning

**Type**  Whole class, small group (3-4)

**Pre-Requisites**  The students must have prior knowledge of the Word Wall words.

**Materials**  A clearly presented classroom Word Wall, Concept Wheel chart (see attached), dictionaries/encyclopedias

**Procedures**

1. The Word Wall should be visible by all students. Select a word from the Word Wall.

2. Give each student a Concept Wheel chart (see attached). Explain that in the first part of the circle, they will need to write the selected word from the word wall. *You can assign a word or you can ask them to choose a word from the Word Wall that they would like to know more about.*

3. Then, ask students to brainstorm a list of words that they associate with the selected word in the second part of the circle.

4. In the third part of the circle, ask students to write down a formal definition of the word from a dictionary or encyclopedia. *If you have access to the internet, they can check an online dictionary.*

5. Then, ask students to write a definition in their own words in the fourth part of the circle. Have them draw a picture that represents the word as well.

6. Have students share their definitions and pictures with other classmates for further understanding.

*Adapted from Stankevicius, 2003*
In this section: write a word from the Word Wall that you would like to understand better.

4) In this section: write a definition in your own words and draw a corresponding picture.

2) In this section: brainstorm a list of words that you think of when you hear the word in the first box.

3) In this section: write the formal definition of the word (use a dictionary or encyclopedia).

Adapted from Stankevicius, 2003
Word Wall Fairy Tale

Level | High-Intermediate-Low-Advanced
--- | ---
Age | Middle School-Adult
Purpose | Students will use their word wall vocabulary words creatively and in as many ways as they can by creating a story.
Skill Area | Forming deeper understanding of vocabulary by writing in context, full concept level
Type | Individual or pair writing
Pre-Requisites | Understanding of creative writing register, fairytale register, familiarity with word wall meanings
Materials | Word wall, select specific words from the word wall

**Procedures**

1. Show the students the Word wall Words that you would like them to use. Pick 15 words from your Word Wall.
2. Students must write their own fairytale using the selected words.
3. Remind students of the elements of fairytales (good vs. bad character, magical element, problem, solution, happily ever after). Give students time to brainstorm their ideas. Clarify the meanings of any words and provide alternate forms of words if necessary.
4. Give students 30-45 minutes for students to write and give students the opportunity to share their stories if they feel comfortable.

**Example** *(Noble, sauntered, inconsequential, omnipresent, exiled, detested, permanence)*

“Once upon a time, there was a noble prince. He was in the forest on his way to his castle. He heard a scream coming from nearby. The prince ran to the rescue. His horse, unimpressed by the prince’s omnipresent chivalry, sauntered off to find some food. A wicked witch, who had just scared a young girl walking in the woods, continued to hide in the dark woods, waiting for the prince to walk by. She detested his kindness, and she was thirsty for his power. The wicked witch stunned the prince with her mighty wand. The young woman knew of the witch’s evil plan and charged out of the woods on the prince’s horse. She came to rescue him, but she saw that she was too late. The permanence of the witch’s spell was inconsequential to the young woman. It was love at first sight and she knew her love was strong enough to save the fallen prince.”

*Created by Rachel Lapp, 2009*
Erasing Relay

Level | All levels
---|---
Age | K-12
Purpose | The purpose of the activity is for students to have an opportunity to recall previously learned words. This also serves to further increase “word consciousness” so that students are more familiar with Word Wall words.
Skill Area | To recall the meaning of previously learned words
Type | Whole class
Pre-Requisites | Students must be familiar with vocabulary used in the activity.
Materials | Vocabulary, black or whiteboard, chalk or dry erase markers, a bell/buzzer/music

Procedures

1. Divide students into two teams. Write two columns of words that are equal in difficulty on the board.
2. There should be enough words for each member in each team. The words should all come from the Word Wall.
3. At the signal, the first pair of students will go up to the board. For younger students at a lower level, they can pronounce the word to get a point. To get a point, the student must erase the word *first* after correctly pronouncing the word. The student will go back to the end of the line.
4. Older students will need more of a challenge. Ask your older students to provide the definition and a novel sentence for an even greater challenge.
5. Continue cycling through students until a team erases all the words on their list.

Adapted from Dunkerly, 2004
Left-overs

adj. Remaining over; not used up or disposed of.
Word Splash

Level Intermediate, Advanced

Age High School-Adult

Purpose This activity has been developed to tie together words and concepts. This is similar to a semantic map, minus the visuals. Students will use the skill of predicting and activating prior knowledge to guess the meaning of the word based on familiar related words.

Skill Area Concept attainment through prediction and binding to schema

Type Group work, whole-class

Pre-Requisites Students must be familiar with vocabulary used in the activity.

Materials Vocabulary words, new topic

Procedures

1. Choose a topic that students are studying in content courses or a concept from your unit. Make sure the topic is new, but the related vocabulary is familiar.
2. Show the students the new topic on the black board or overhead.
3. Write down the concept in the middle of the board. Write the supporting related words around the concept word in random order.
4. Tell students that brainstorming is a strategy for anticipating meaning.
5. Ask students to describe their predictions of the meaning of the concept word based on the relation of the supporting words to the topic. Students will provide complete sentence answers that the teacher will report on the board.
6. Students can discuss their answers in pairs or small groups.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invention</th>
<th>Industrial Revolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eli Whitney</td>
<td>Cotton Gin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton seeds</td>
<td>Cylinders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern states</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Connect All

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Intermediate-Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Grade 2-Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is to help students make connections between a given topic and related vocabulary words. It is best used as a review of previously learned topics and words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Area</td>
<td>Making connections and establishing deeper understandings of word meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Individual, small group (3-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Requisites</td>
<td>Students must have prior knowledge of the topic and related vocabulary words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Previously selected topic, blank paper, teacher example (see attached)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Procedures

1. Ask students to write down 20 words on a specific topic (previously selected) in 1 minute. *To maximize word usage, you may want to choose a topic related to the reading or writing of the week.*

2. After students have finished writing their words, ask them to form groups of 3-4 students. Explain that in these groups they need to introduce their words and explain any unknown words to group members.

3. When all group members have had a chance to introduce and explain their words, ask each group to organize their ideas in a web chart to establish connections among different words and ideas shared by their group members. Provide students with an example (see attached). *To add some healthy competition to the activity, explain to the students that they will receive one point for each word and connection used on their webs. The group with the most points will be “the winner.”*

4. While students are creating their webs, travel around the room and ask them questions related to the connections that they are making.

5. When groups have finished creating their webs, give them 10-15 minutes to organize a 1-2 minute class presentation of their webs. Explain to students that their presentations need to be clear and representative of their connections.

Adapted from Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002
Visual Thesaurus

Level: Intermediate-Advanced

Age: Middle school-Adult

Purpose: This activity has been designed for students to create their own thesauri as resources. The students will use the visual thesaurus chart to identify the shades of meaning in a word. This activity has been designed for students to research all meanings of a word they found to be challenging to use in context. Students will consult dictionaries, thesauri, contextualized sources, and the Collins Cobuild Concordance.

Skill Area: Full concept level word knowledge, understanding full context and use of a word by understanding its many meanings, their shades of meaning, and the relationships between synonyms

Type: Individual research

Pre-Requisites: Students will need to be assigned or choose a word with which they have struggled

Materials: Visual thesaurus worksheet (see attached), dictionary, thesaurus

Procedures

1. Students will be assigned or choose a word that they have struggled to use in a sentence.
2. Students will take this word and will explore the many meanings of the word by using a variety of sources. They will use a dictionary, thesaurus, Collins Cobuild Concordance, and the Oxford English Dictionary. *As a variation, you could ask students to bring in as many newspaper articles, magazine articles, books, notes, commercials, anything that contains the word in a variety of ways in order to inductively learn the meaning and use of the word.
3. Students will be given a satellite chart with their word in the middle. Each satellite stem should be filled in with a synonym of the word. Students will need to make appropriate connections between the head word and synonyms in addition to the connections between the synonyms themselves.
4. Students will report back to the class with a sentence of novel creation and a self-definition of their word. They must also show their visual thesaurus.

Created by Rachel Lapp, 2009
Word Sorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>All levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>All ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is for students to make connections among vocabulary words by sorting them into categories. By making these connections, students will be able to create deeper meanings of the words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Area</td>
<td>Extending word meaning and making connections among words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Individual, pair, or small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Requisites</td>
<td>Students must have prior knowledge of the vocabulary words being used in the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Pre-selected vocabulary list with corresponding categories, strips or cards with selected vocabulary words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

1. Prepare a list of vocabulary words and corresponding categories. Make the words into strips or cards.

2. Explain to students that they will be sorting the word strips or cards into given categories (i.e., pets, feelings, family, etc.). **Choose vocabulary words and categories that are appropriate for students’ level and age.**

3. Have students work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to sort the words into categories. **For more advanced students, you can give them a group of words without categories and have them sort them into their own categories.**

4. While students are working, rotate around the room and ask them their reasoning for placing words into chosen categories.

5. Have groups record their word sort lists to share with the class.

Adapted from Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002
Say the Word

Level  High-Beginner-Adult
Age  Grade 2-Adult
Purpose  The purpose of this activity is for students to form deeper understandings of word meanings through prompting others to use a given word. This activity also helps students to form connections among various vocabulary words. In addition, this activity allows for the exchange of authentic communication among students.
Skill Area  Extending word meaning and making connections among words
Type  Pairs
Pre-Requisites  Students must have prior knowledge of the vocabulary words being used in the activity.
Materials  Classroom “word bowl,” classroom “student bowl,” small sheets of paper or small objects, classroom vocabulary lists or Word Walls, student “word charts” (see attached), stickers

Procedures

1. Create a “word bowl” and a “student bowl” for your classroom. These can be any containers that allow for easy entry and exit of small sheets of paper or objects. Place each of your students’ names into the “student bowl.”

2. Have your students place one vocabulary word (from word lists or Word Walls) into the “word bowl” per week. This should be a word that they particularly enjoy or that they may have trouble understanding.

3. Each day, have one student choose a word from the “word bowl” and a student from the “student bowl.” The student keeps his/her word a secret from the student chosen from the “student bowl.” The student should show his/her word to the teacher.

4. It is the job of the student to get the student chosen from the “student bowl” to say the chosen word from the “word bowl.” The student must do this by prompting the student through conversation.

Created by Mandy Reis, 2009
5. If the student is able to get the chosen student to say the word, he/she receives a sticker on their “word chart.” The process repeats for a new student each day.

6. Be sure to model an example of this process for your students (see attached example).

**Example:**

Word chosen: weekend

Example of prompting through conversation:

Student A (word chooser): Hi Maggie. It’s been such a long week, hasn’t it? I can’t wait for school to be over so I can go to my soccer game.

Student B (chosen student): I can’t wait to go to my dance recital.

Student A (word chooser): When is your dance recital?

Student B (chosen student): It is next **weekend**. My whole family is coming to watch.

**Example of “Word Chart”**

Name of Student:__________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of “Say the Word”</th>
<th>Word Chosen</th>
<th>Student Chosen</th>
<th>Sticker for Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Cranker, K. (2009). *Teaching vocabulary to English-language learners*. Presentation given at a session of EDUC 647, Newark, DE.


