

Instructional Literacy Strategies for Content Area Classrooms

Vocabulary strategies used before and during a learning activity help students build and improve their vocabulary knowledge.

Strategy	Purpose	Description
Shades of Meaning	Increases vocabulary of similar terms and helps students' understand the difference between terms and select the "right" word in writing and speaking.	Give a word to a small group to look up similar terms in a Thesaurus. They arrange 4-5 words on a paint strip that demonstrate the different "shades of meaning."
Vocabulary Cards (Frayer Model)	Connections are made between words, examples, non-examples, and other attributes associated with a word.	Students create vocabulary cards that include definitions, illustrations, examples and non-examples.
Word Art	Helps students clarify their understanding of words through visuals and modifications of words.	Students use visuals and other modifications to a word to create a pictorial view of a term that needs to be learned.
Word Grids or Semantic Feature Analysis	Provides students with an organized framework for learning related terms through analysis of their similarities and differences.	A blank grid or chart is given to students to investigate a topic with related words (down left side) and how these terms differ based on their characteristics (across top).
Word Hunts	Helps students develop definitional and contextual word knowledge in a more exciting format.	Teams of students are given a list of terms that they must search for and display their understanding with pictures, objects, or models.
Word Sorts	Provides students a way to arrange and rearrange words into categories or related concepts to help them better understand the relationship between and among words.	Give students a list of 15-20 words, with each word on a slip of paper. Ask students to sort words into categories and explain their reasons for grouping words together.
Word Walls	Create and use a word wall throughout a unit to better understand vocabulary words.	Words are displayed alphabetically on a wall in the classroom for students to use. The word wall is created by the students.