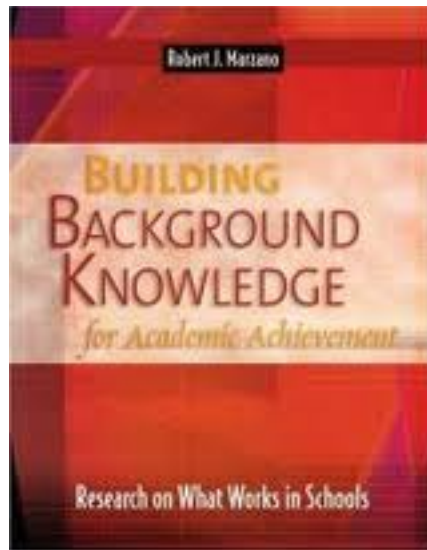# MARZANO RESEARCH LABORATORY

TINA H. BOOGREN

Academic Vocabulary

2.7: Developing Vocabulary: Identifies academic vocabulary aligned to the learning target and uses various strategies for student acquisition

OUTCOMES

- Learn how to boost the academic performance of all students through focused instruction in vocabulary.
- Understand the difference between general and academic vocabulary and how vocabulary learning relates to building background knowledge.
- Learn a process for creating a list of essential academic terms and phrases within a content area and a six-step process for teaching academic vocabulary.
- Discover how to utilize a list of basic and advanced vocabulary terms with English learners, as well as specific vocabulary games to enhance student engagement with vocabulary instruction.

Definitions

- **Background knowledge:** What a person already knows about a particular topic.
- **Academic vocabulary:** Vocabulary that is considered to be critical to understanding the concepts taught within an academic subject areas. ↵
- **Basic vocabulary:** Vocabulary that is critical to understanding and using the English language.
- **Advanced vocabulary:** Vocabulary that is critical to general literacy development.

Additional Notes:

Suggested Activities to Implement Effective Vocabulary Instruction:

1. All teachers participate in training on vocabulary instruction.

2. All teachers create lists of essential words for units of study.

3. Students will be pre- and post-tested on these lists.

4. All students create and use vocabulary journals in their classes.

5. All teachers participate in PLC activities focused on vocabulary.

The more general background knowledge a student has about the academic content that will be addressed in a given class or course, the easier it is for the student to understand and learn the new content addressed in that class or course.

If a district (or school) were to systematically ensure that all students were exposed to specific academic terms and phrases across the grade levels, this would form a strong common foundation for all students.

All students arrive at school with some amount of background knowledge – it is just different

- Children of middle class have heard **48,000** words before coming to school
- Children of poverty have heard **13,000** words before coming to school

WORDS HEARD IN AN HOUR

- Poverty: 615
- Middle class: 1,251
- Upper class: 2,153

The gap in word knowledge between advantaged and disadvantaged children is word poverty.

Louisa Moats, 2001

There is an **established correlation** between academic background knowledge and

- Success on test scores
- Level of reading comprehension, irrespective of reading ability
- Speed and accuracy of study behavior
- Student interest in material

Factors Affecting	Student Achievement
Factor	**Example**
School	• Guaranteed and viable curriculum
	• Challenging goals and effective feedback
	• Parent and Community involvement
	• Safe and orderly environment
	• Collegiality and professionalism
Teacher	• Instructional strategies
	• Classroom Management
	• Classroom curriculum design
Student	• Home atmosphere
	• Learned intelligence and **background knowledge**
	• Motivation

o Research shows a student in the **50th percentile** in terms of ability to comprehend the subject matter taught in school, with no direct vocabulary instruction, scores in the **50th percentile** ranking.

o The same student, after specific content-area terms have been taught in a specific way, raises his/her comprehension ability to the **83rd percentile**.

TAKE AWAY: FOR ALL STUDENTS, DIRECT INSTRUCTION OF VOCABULARY WORKS!

Additional Notes:

Identify critical terms and phrases then use a research-based process for teaching new terms and phrases.

The Process:
Start with Academic Vocabulary

Choose a content area.

- Individual teachers create list (approximately 30 words per content area).

- Grade level–common course teachers collaborate to make one grade level list.

- Consider both horizontal and vertical alignment of the word lists.

- Align vocabulary terms and phrases with pacing guides.

- Teach the words, revise the list based on feedback from teachers.

- Next, create a school list.

- Finally, bring all schools together to create a district list.

Examine state and national standards documents as well as directions on state and other standardized tests.

Select terms that are critical to understanding the content in order to impact student achievement.

It is very important to re-visit and re-test words.
For retention purposes, you should:

- Use the words in classroom conversations one to two weeks prior to direct instruction.
- Mention each word ten times during that week.
- Require students to use the words (e.g., Write a sentence using two of the vocabulary words.).
- Spiral your assessments to include words from previous weeks.

Tracking Student Progress

"On average, the practice of having students track their own progress was associated with a 32 percentile point gain in their achievement."

—Marzano (2009)

Knowledge Level	Description
Level 4	I understand even more about the term than I was taught
Level 3	I understand the term and I'm not confused about any part of what it means
Level 2	I'm a little uncertain about what the term means, but I have a general idea
Level 1	I'm very uncertain about the term. I really don't understand what it means.

Tah-daaah… The Six-Steps to Teaching Vocabulary:

Provide a description, explanation, or example of the new term. *Notes:*	*Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.* *Notes:*	*Ask students to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representing the term or phrase.* *Notes:*

Engage students periodically in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their notebooks. *Notes:*	*Periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another.* *Notes:*	*Involve students periodically in games that allow them to play with terms.* *Notes:*

ELL students:

Step 1: Provide a description, explanation, or example of the new term (along with a nonlinguistic representation).

Step 2: Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words in their own language.

Step 3: Ask students to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representing the word or phrase. Students should create their own representation and not copy yours from Step 1.

Step 4: Engage students periodically in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their notebook. Allow students to use their native language as much as possible.
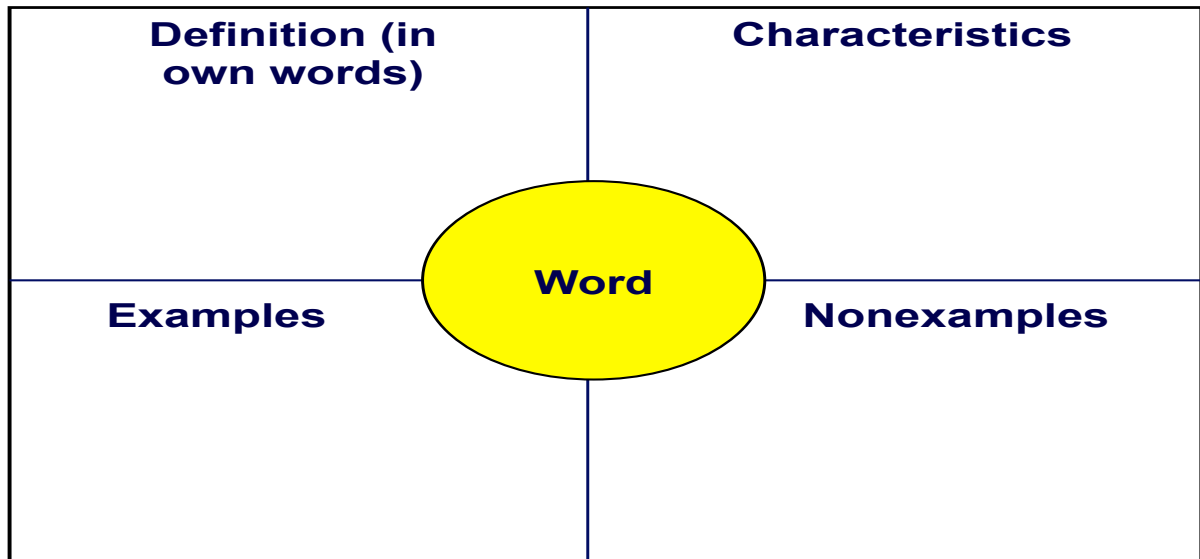
Step 5: Periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another. Pair students of the same language together.

Step 6: Involve students periodically in games that allow them to play with terms. Pair students of the same language together.

Additional Notes:

Samples

Frayer Model

Definition (in own words)	Characteristics
Examples	**Nonexamples**

(Word)

VOCABULARY

Using Sentence Stems to Describe a Word

It is kind of like _____.

It looks like_____.

It is when you _____.

It's where you go to _____.

It feels like_____.

It smells like_____.

You use it when you_____.

Vocabulary Worksheet

Term: _____ My Understanding: 1   2   3   4

Describe: _____

_____

_____

_____

Draw:

Activity:

Subject:

Vocabulary Progress Chart

✔+	I understand even more about the term than I have been taught.
✔	I understand the term and am not confused about its meaning or usage.
✔—	I am not sure I understand the term, but I have some idea as to its meaning.
✘	I really do not understand the term at all.

Progress Chart	Color the box to show your level of knowledge about each term			
Write each term below.	✔+	✔	✔—	✘

Websites to check out:

www.marzanoresearch.com

www.wordia.com

www.visuwords.com

www.toondoo.com

www.makebeliefscomix.com

www.snappywords.com

www.freerice.com

www.confusingwords.com

www.visualthesaurus.com/vocabgrabber.com

www.wordle.net

www.cybraryan.com/vocabulary.html

www.freetech4teachers.com

http://esu4vocabularystrategies.wikispaces.com/

http://sde.state.ok.us/curriculum/BAV/default.html

Others:

"The limits of your language are the limits of your world. All I know is what I have words for."

-Ludwig Wittgenstein

References:

Marzano, R. J. (2009). *Teaching basic and advanced vocabulary: A framework for direct instruction*. Florence, KY: Heinle (Cengage Learning) and Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R. J., & Pickering, D. J. (2004). *Building background knowledge for academic achievement: Research on what works in schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Thank you!

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