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CASE STUDY UNIT

Comprehension & Vocabulary:
Grades 3–5

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IDEAs that Work U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

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Licensure and Content Standards

This IRIS Case Study aligns with the following licensure and program standards and topic areas.

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)

CAEP standards for the accreditation of educators are designed to improve the quality and effectiveness not only of new instructional practitioners but also the evidence-base used to assess those qualities in the classroom.

- Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

CEC standards encompass a wide range of ethics, standards, and practices created to help guide those who have taken on the crucial role of educating students with disabilities.

- Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies

Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards are designed to help teachers of all grade levels and content areas to prepare their students either for college or for employment following graduation.

- Standard 8: Instructional Strategies

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

NCATE standards are intended to serve as professional guidelines for educators. They also overview the "organizational structures, policies, and procedures" necessary to support them.

- Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

Comprehension in reading is the ability to understand a written text. When students comprehend a written passage, they construct meaning from the words to understand the passage as a whole. Students can develop comprehension at several levels.

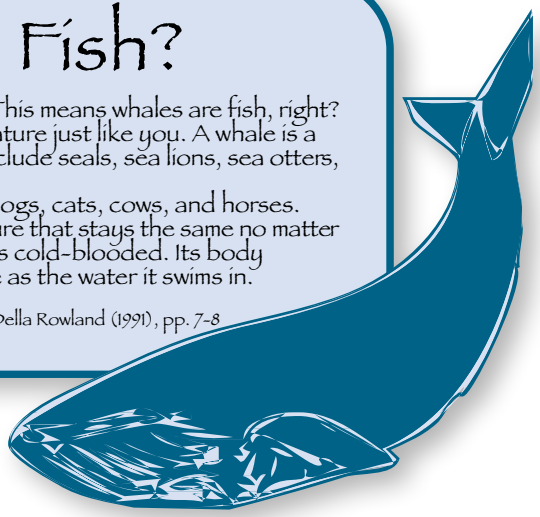
Literal comprehension indicates a student can identify simple facts from a passage. Evaluative comprehension demonstrates that a student can make judgments regarding the passage's content. Inferential comprehension shows that a student understands how the passage's content relates to other passages or to other situations. The brief passage below is followed by example questions from each of these three levels of comprehension.

Is a Whale a Fish?

A whale spends all of its time in the water. This means whales are fish, right? Wrong! A whale is a mammal, an air-breathing creature just like you. A whale is a marine, or sea, mammal. Other marine mammals include seals, sea lions, sea otters, walruses, and manatees.

Mammals are warm-blooded animals, like dogs, cats, cows, and horses. Whales and other mammals have a body temperature that stays the same no matter how cold or hot the air or water becomes. A fish is cold-blooded. Its body temperature changes so that it is always the same as the water it swims in.

From Explorer Books: Whales & Dolphins by Della Rowland (1991), pp. 7–8



Literal questions (and responses):

Is a whale a fish? (No.)

Name three marine mammals. (ex., seal, sea lion, walrus)

Define warm-blooded. (Animals whose body temperature stays the same.)

Evaluative question (and potential response):

Can a fish's body temperature be warm? Why or why not?

(Yes, if it swims in warm water.)

Inferential question (and potential response):

Complete the analogy, whale: fish:: bird: _____. (ex. butterfly)

Students develop vocabulary in reading as they learn the meaning of new words. The greater a students' vocabulary in a given subject, the more likely the student will comprehend what he or she reads in that subject. For example, in the passage above, a student who is already familiar with the words mammal, warm-blooded, marine, and temperature will have an easier time understanding the content of the passage than a student who must learn these words as he or she is reading the passage. The author of the passage has anticipated that some students will not have all of these words in their vocabularies and has included hints in the context of the passage to help the reader.

What a STAR Sheet is...

A STAR (STrategies And Resources) Sheet provides you with a description of a well-researched strategy that can help you solve the case studies in this unit.

Comprehension & Vocabulary: Grades 3–5
Direct Instruction

About the Strategy

Direct instruction requires the teacher to directly teach the pronunciation and definitions of new vocabulary words in a highly organized manner and to directly teach comprehension strategies in a highly organized manner.

What the Research and Resources Say

- When learning is difficult and novel, teachers must provide support for their students (Mercer, Lane, Jordan, Allsopp, & Eisele, 1996).
- Teachers must model what they want students to learn, provide guided instruction, independent instruction, and frequent feedback (NRC, 2000).
- Students must be given ample opportunities to practice the task in order to generalize the strategy to other settings (Gersten, Baker, Pugach, Scanlon, & Chard, 2001).
- Students' reading comprehension is maximized when they glean meaning from context. Students can learn a small set of words to build their vocabulary if they are taught these words "well and deep"—they receive direct instruction on the words, their meanings, and they are exposed to these words in meaningful contexts for both reading and writing (Leu & Kinzer, 1999).
- Direct instruction is highly structured and does not allow students to infer from or personalize the content; however, this technique has been especially effective for teaching reading and other subjects to students with disabilities (Gersten et al., 2001).

Types of Activities to Implement

Pre-teaching Vocabulary

One easy way to increase a student's vocabulary is to pre-teach vocabulary before a passage is read. When pre-teaching vocabulary, it is important to teach the words within the context of the passage. Carnine, Silbert, & Kame'enui (1997) suggest the following method for teaching new vocabulary words:

- State the definition and have students repeat the definition.
- Provide students with examples and nonexamples of the word in sentences.

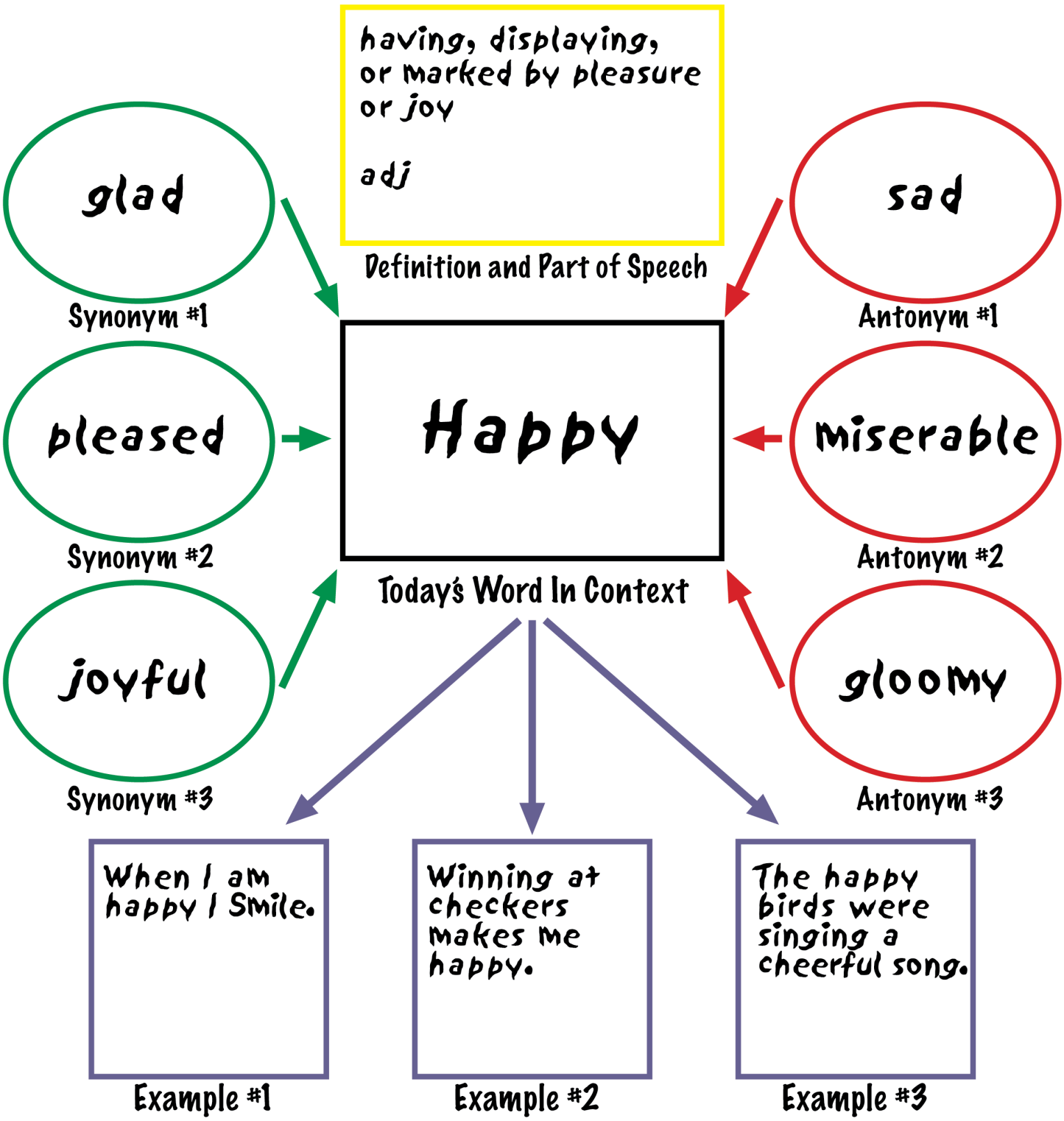
  Example: When I'm happy I smile.

  Non-example: When I'm angry I smile.

- Review the new words along with those previously learned to ensure students have the words in their long-term memories.

One tool teachers use in preteaching vocabulary is the word web. See "Word in Context" below and Graphic Organizers STAR Sheet.

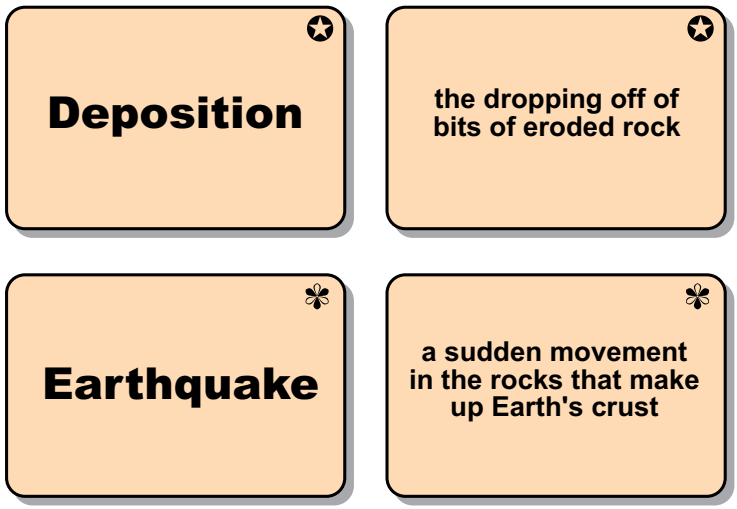
WORD IN CONTEXT



Review and Practice

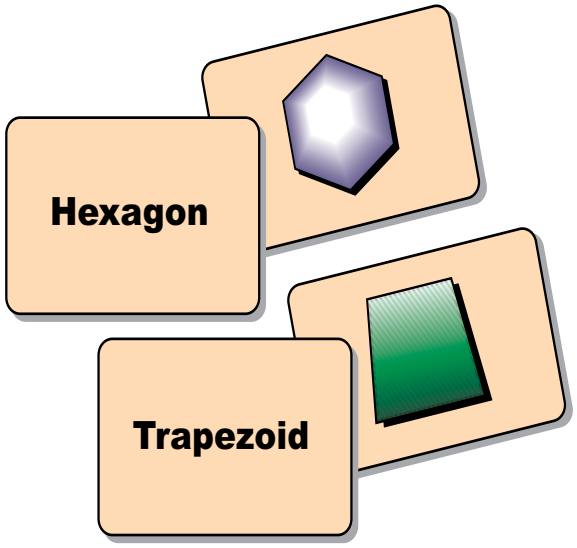
Once students have explicitly been taught the new vocabulary terms, they must continue to practice them. Daily reviews can decrease in frequency, becoming weekly reviews when students become familiar with the vocabulary words. Review quizzes, repeated practice, and games, such as the self-correcting activities below, are tools teachers use to review and practice vocabulary with students. Review and practice activities can be completed with a peer, in small groups, or independently.

Examples of Teacher-Created Self-Correcting Materials



Matching Students are given a set of cards with vocabulary words written on one half of the cards and the corresponding definitions written on the other. Students match the vocabulary word with the correct definition. As seen in the example below, students can check their work by making sure the word and the definition have the same symbol in the upper right-hand corner.

Picture Cards Students are given a set of cards with vocabulary words written on the front of the cards and corresponding pictures drawn on the back. Students are shown the picture representation and provide the corresponding vocabulary word.



Modeling and Thinking Aloud

Students can learn both new vocabulary and how to comprehend written passages by watching and listening to their teacher demonstrate these activities. Modeling and thinking aloud are effective strategies for all students but are even more effective when accompanied by the teacher giving supportive feedback as students attempt the same activities (Gersten et al., 2001) Modeling and thinking aloud often are used in conjunction with other teaching strategies.

Example: Modeling – a teacher demonstrates how to play the matching activity outlined above, drawing attention to the pairing of vocabulary words with their definitions.

Example: Thinking aloud – a teacher explains how he or she learned the meaning of "warm-blooded" from the passage on whales provided in the Introduction, focusing his or her statements on the use of context to find meaning.

Keep in Mind

- Direct instruction involves teaching students step-by-baby-step to the point of redundancy. Though enormously effective for students who need the repetition, redundancy can be reached by some students very early leading to boredom or frustration. Consider how to provide engaging instruction to all students at the level they need.
- Direct instruction can be a challenge because it requires the teacher to break down an activity or skill she does automatically into its component parts in order to teach the skill to students. It may help to put yourself in the student's shoes and try to imagine what it's like to not understand or know how to do the task. Direct instruction also requires patience as you help students to build the composite skills so that they can eventually perform the skill as automatically as their peers.

Resources

Carnine, D., Silbert, J., & Kame'enui , E. (1997). *Direct instruction reading* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/ Prentice Hall.

Gersten, R., Baker, S., Pugach, M., Scanlon, D., & Chard, D. (2001). *Contemporary research on special education teaching*. In V. Richardson (Ed.) Handbook of research on teaching (4th ed.), pp. 695–722.

Leu, D.J., & Kinzer, C. K. (1999). *Effective literacy instruction* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Mercer, C., Lane, H., Jordan, L., Allsopp, D., & Eisele, M. (1996). Empowering teachers and students with instructional choices in inclusive settings. *Remedial and Special Education, 17*, 226–236.

National Research Council (NRC). (2000). *How people learn: Mind, experience, and school* (Expanded ed.). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

About the Strategy

A **Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA)** is a strategy that links a student's prior knowledge with new information and new words by showing the relationships between words from a specific topic.

What the Research and Resources Say

- Content teachers cannot leave development of vocabulary to chance (Greenwood, 2002). Difficulties in content area classes (e.g., science, social studies) are common among students with a low vocabulary base (Pittelman, Heimlich, Berglund, & French, 1991).
- Readers comprehend and learn when they are able to connect the new information in their reading material to what they already know (Greenwood, 2002).
- Student discussion is essential when using a SFA (Bos & Anders, 1992).
- Discussion increases student participation, thus increasing their expressive language skills (Pittelman, Heimlich, Berglund, & French, 1991).

Types of Activities to Implement

SFA Grid

Pittelman et al. (1991) provide a seven-step process to develop a SFA:

- Select a category that you will be teaching.
- List three or four words or objects related to the category down the left side of the grid.
- List three or four features in a row across the top of the grid. Discuss features with students and encourage them to add other features.
- Guide students through the matrix, having them determine if the words on the left side possess the features listed. Students place a "+" if the word possesses the feature, a "-" sign if the word does not possess the feature, and a "?" if they are unsure of the relationship.
- Students suggest additional words and features.
- Complete the grid by adding plus signs, minus signs, or question marks for the new words and features.
- Examine the grid and discuss relationships among the words.

Types of Rocks	Igneous	Metamorphic	Sedimentary		
Granite	?	?	-		
Sandstone	-	-	+		
Pumice	+	-	-		
Shale	?	-	?		

Keep in Mind

- Teachers must model how to complete a SFA prior to having students complete them independently.
- Completing SFAs as a group is a great activity to spark a great deal of discussion among students.
- Use SFAs to tap prior knowledge as well as to build vocabulary.
- Allow students to recognize the relationships between features and words in the grid. Prompt with questions as needed.

Resources

Bos, C., & Anders, P. L. (1992). Using interactive teaching and learning strategies to promote text comprehension and content learning for students with learning disabilties. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 39*(3), 225–238.

Greenwood, S. C. (2002). Making words matter: Vocabulary study in the content areas. *The Clearing House, 75*(5), 258–264.

Pittelman, S. D., Heimlich, J. E., Berglund, R. L., & French, M. P. (1991). *Semantic Feature Analysis: Classroom Application.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

About the Strategy

Graphic organizers are visual displays that help students to organize their understanding of words or written passages. There are several types of graphic organizers including word webs and story maps.

What the Research and Resources Say

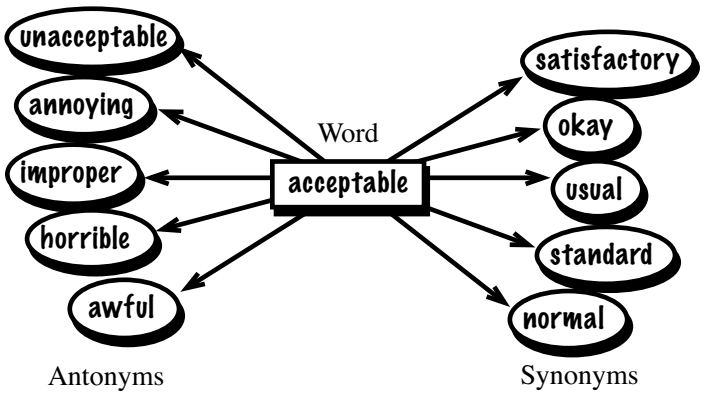
- The purpose of teaching students to use graphic organizers is to provide students with metacognitive tools that they can use on their own (Swanson & De La Paz, 1998).
- It is estimated that adults use some 10,000 words in their everyday conversations. Students understand and comprehend between 20,000 and 24,000 at age 6 and more than 50,000 by age 12 (Owens, 2001).
- The use of word mapping has been proven to increase a student's vocabulary (Bos & Anders, 1990).
- Teaching students to attend to story elements has been shown to enhance reading comprehension skills (Idol, 1987; Mathes, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1997).
- The visual framework of a graphic organizer provides an organizational format for reading text that has been shown to help children with learning disabilities increase comprehension skills (Babyak, Koorland, & Mathes, 2000; Idol, 1987).
- Strategic readers connect what they know to what they are reading. Children at-risk for or with learning disabilities need direct instruction on attending to story details (Babyak, Koorland, & Mathes, 2000; Idol, 1987; Mathes, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1997).

Types of Graphic Organizers

Word Webs

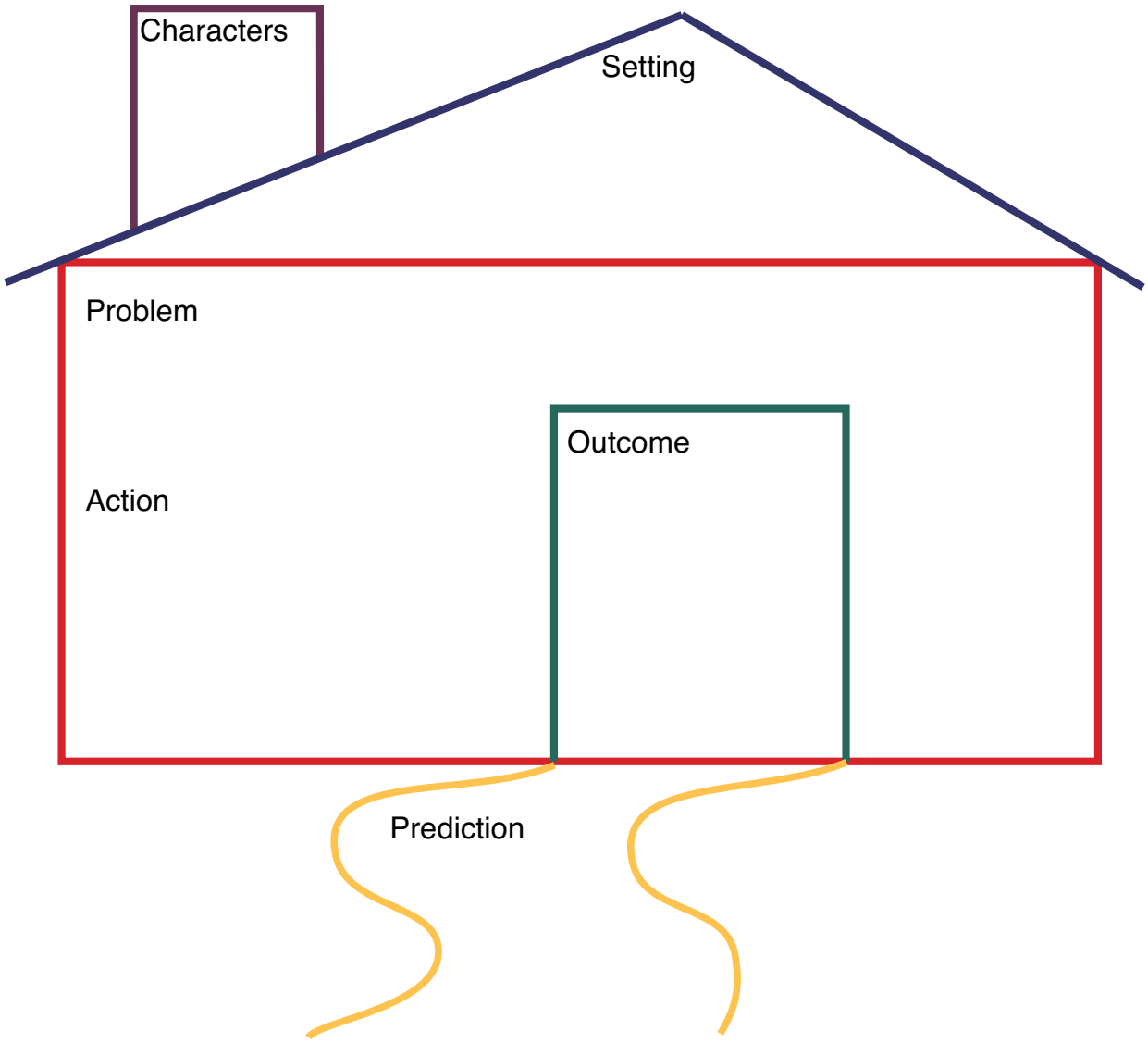
Word webs are visual diagrams used to assist students in defining and recalling important vocabulary words. There are several types of word webs. One example uses synonyms and antonyms. The teacher presents the new vocabulary word in the center of the map and provides links for students to write in synonyms and antonyms. See example to the right.

Another type of word map or word web uses descriptions. To create this type of word web, a teacher would provide students with a new vocabulary word and ask them to describe the word. For example, you might place the word "castle" in the center and ask students questions such as "What is it?"; "What does it look like?"; "Where do we find them?"; "Who lives in them?" and link the new word with students' responses.



Story Maps

Story maps are simple visual diagrams used to assist students in organizing and recalling important story elements. Story maps help students to think about what they are reading in order to increase their reading comprehension. To complete a story map, students fill in the corresponding information requested as or after they read. See example below. Story map shapes and structures can be adapted to fit the story context or can be designed to resemble the word web (on page 8). Story maps are often used with picture books or single chapters of chapter books.



Story Matrix

When reading chapter books, students can increase their comprehension by using a story matrix to connect the story maps of each chapter. Students complete a grid to outline the main elements of the book as they read or after reading each chapter. See example below.

Stone Fox *by* **John Reynolds Gardiner**	**Chapter 1**	**Chapter 2**	**Chapter 3…**
Chapter Title	Grandfather		
Characters			
(Who?)	• Grandfather		
	• Willy		
	• Searchlight		
	• Doc Smith		
	• Rex		
Setting			
(Where? When?)	• Potato farm in Wyoming		
	• Morning		
Main events			
(What? Why?)	• Grandfather doesn't get out of bed		
	• Willy goes to get Doc Smith to check on him		
	• Grandfather has lost his will to live		
Prediction			
(What's next?)	Willy finds out why Grandfather has given up		

Types of Activities to Implement

Model-Lead-Test

This process can be used with any of the graphic organizers described in this section.

- **Model Phase:** teacher reads a passage aloud and stops reading when they come to one of the key elements (e.g., character, setting, outcome). She or he asks the students to identify the key element. The teacher then models writing the information on the (group) story map. Once the students understand the process, the teacher asks the students to continue reading and to complete their own maps.
- **Lead Phase:** students read the passage and complete their maps independently. Teacher reviews the completed maps with students and adds any missed information.

- **Test Phase:** students read the passage and complete their story maps independently. Teacher then asks the following questions: "Who were the main characters?" "Where did the story take place?" "What was the main idea of the story?" "What was the problem in the story?" "How was the problem solved?" Other appropriate questions should be asked.

Keep in Mind:

- Graphic organizers can be used as independent activities or as group activities in peer tutoring or cooperative learning groups.
- Teachers must model how to complete graphic organizers several times before students are expected to complete them independently.
- With story maps, make sure the story elements are easy to identify. Fade the use of story maps as students are able to independently identify elements.
- Some students will require completed story maps during the test portion of the Model-Lead-Test activity.

Resources

Babyak, A. E., Koorland, M., & Mathes, P. G. (2000). The effects of story mapping instruction on reading comprehension of students with behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders, 25*(3), 239–258.

Bos, C., & Anders, P. L. (1990). Using interactive teaching and learning strategies to promote text comprehension and content learning for students with learning disabilties. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 39*(3), 225–238.

Idol, L. (1987). Group story mapping: A comprehension strategy for both skilled and unskilled readers. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 20*(4), 196–205.

Mathes, P. G., Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (1997). Cooperative story mapping. *Remedial and Special Education, 18(*1), 20–27.

Owens, Jr., R. E. (2001). *Language disorders: A functional approach to assessment and intervention* (5th ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Swanson, P. N., & De La Paz, S. (1998). Teaching effective comprehension strategies to students with learning and reading disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 33*, 209–218.

About the Strategy

A **metacognitive strategy** is one that assists students in monitoring their own learning by asking themselves questions as they read a passage.

What the Research and Resources Say

- The purpose of strategy instruction is to provide students with metacognitive tools that they can use on their own (Swanson & DeLaPaz, 1998).
- Rather than teaching specific strategies to increase comprehension, several teachers monitor comprehension by asking questions after students have read a passage (Levy, Coleman, & Alsman, 2002; Swanson & DeLaPaz, 1998).
- One comprehension strategy should be taught at a time. Students should not be taught a second strategy until the first one has been mastered (Swanson & DeLaPaz, 1998).
- Students must be taught when and where to use a strategy (Swanson & DeLaPaz, 1998).
- Students should be taught to question themselves before, during, and after reading a passage (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1997).
- Students with learning disabilities have difficulty connecting present strategies with new situations and mentally organizing new material. In addition, when students with learning disabilities read, they ask themselves fewer questions about the reading (Gersten, Baker, Pugach, Scanlon, & Chard, 2001).

Strategies to Implement

Prior to teaching the strategies listed under the Types of Activities to Implement (next section), upper elementary students should be able to complete the following activities:

- Prior to reading new material, teachers should activate and assess student's prior knowledge. This can be done by making predictions based on the title, a scanning of story pictures, or from past experiences with the topic, themes, or characters in the story.
- Students should be able to identify the main idea of a passage. If students have difficulty with identifying the main idea they should be taught how to locate the main idea (e.g., often found in the first sentence or a repeating concept in the passage).
- Students should be able to answer the who, what, when, where, and how questions of a story.
- Students should be able to retell stories they have read or listened to at their instructional levels.
- Students should have the skills to look back or reread a section if they don't understand what they have read.

Types of Activities to Implement

Self-Questioning

Wong & Jones (1982) developed a self-questioning strategy to assist students in comprehending reading passages. It is important that students are able to identify the main idea of the passage before using this strategy. The questions students are taught to ask themselves include:

- What am I studying this passage for?
- What is the main idea(s)?
- What is a question I have about the main idea?
- What is the answer to my question?
- What previous knowledge can I use to gain more information?

Paraphrasing

The Paraphrasing Strategy (Schumaker, Denton, & Deshler, 1993) is a comprehension strategy that helps students recall the main idea and details of passages read. The mnemonic for the Paraphrasing Strategy is RAP and the steps include:

- Read a paragraph: students silently read a paragraph.
- Ask yourself, "What are the main idea(s) and details?" After reading the paragraph, students ask themselves "What were the main idea(s) and details? If needed, students should look back or reread the paragraph.
- Put the main idea and details in your own words: Students are required to put the main idea and details in their own words.

POSSE

POSSE (Predict, Organize, Search, Summarize, and Evaluate) is a strategy that can be used with students in fourth grade and higher. The predict and organize steps are directed by the teacher prior to reading.

- Predict – students are cued by saying "I predict that…" or "I'm remembering…"
- Organize – students categorize their thoughts and organize them by saying "I think one category may be…" and develop a semantic map.
- A group leader is selected to facilitate the discussion during the Search and Summarize phases.
    - A section of the passage is read and discussed and then added to the new semantic map under the search section.
    - The leader then asks questions to generate supporting details. Statements made by students might include "I think the main idea is…" or "My question about the main idea is…"
- Evaluation includes comparing, clarifying, and predicting.
    - Students compare the map under "Organizing your thoughts" to the map under the "Summarize phase" by saying "I think we did (did not) predict this main idea."
    - Students clarify any new vocabulary or unclear information by asking "does anything need to be clarified?"
    - Students predict what will happen in the next section.

Keep in Mind

- Most strategies will take 3 or more lessons before students are able to use the strategy independently.
- Students must be taught when and where to use the strategy.
- Students must have mastery of the strategy and opportunities to apply the strategy in a variety of settings and conditions for generalization to occur.
- When teaching the strategies, text needs to be at an independent reading level. Emphasis is on comprehension, not decoding.

Resources

Gersten, R., Baker, S., Pugach, M., Scanlon, D., & Chard, D. (2001). Contemporary research on special education teaching. In V. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of research on teaching* (4th ed.), 695–722.

Levy, S., Coleman, M., & Alsman, B. (2002). Reading instruction for elementary students with emotional/behavioral disorders: What's a teacher to do? *Beyond Behavior, 11*(3), 3–10.

Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (1997). Best practices in promoting reading comprehension in students with learning disabilities: 1976 to 1996. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*(4), 197–213.

Schumaker, J. B., Denton, P. H., & Deshler, D. D. (1993). *The paraphrasing strategy* (rev. ed.) (Learning Strategies Curriculum). Lawrence: University of Kansas.

Swanson, P. N., & De La Paz, S. (1998). Teaching effective comprehension strategies to students with learning and reading disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 33*, 209–218.

Wong, B. Y. L., & Jones, W. (1982). Increasing metacomprehension in learning disabled and normally achieving students through self-questioning training. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 5*, 228–240.

Background

Student: Antonio
Age: 9.5
Grade: 4th
Focus: Vocabulary Development

Scenario

Antonio likes school and especially enjoys reading. However, he has a difficult time comprehending stories because of a limited vocabulary. Antonio's teacher, Ms. Falk, has observed that he is able to read sight words and decode many unfamiliar words. Despite Ms. Falk's "previewing" new vocabulary before each story, Antonio appears to need more instruction in the meaning of words. As she ponders possible strategies to assist Antonio, she realizes all of her students could benefit from the strategies. Consequently, she decides to implement a class-wide plan that will assist all students and specifically help Antonio reach the following instructional goal:

- Given vocabulary words, Antonio will provide definitions.

Possible Strategies

- Direct Instruction
- Semantic Feature Analysis
- Graphic Organizers

Assignment

1. Read the STAR sheets for each of the three possible strategies.
2. Describe each of the three strategies.
3. Describe one activity for each of the three strategies and explain how it could be used to assist Antonio in achieving his goal.

Background

Student: Pablo
Age: 10.3
Grade: 5th
Focus: Comprehension

Scenario

Pablo is a fifth grader at a suburban elementary school. His reading strengths include a wide vocabulary, average decoding skill, and average fluency. He has built these strengths across the past three years through his work with the special education teacher, Mr. Trout. Pablo enjoys reading but still has difficulty comprehending what he reads. The comprehension difficulties include both literal and evaluative questions (see Introduction, page 2, for definitions). In addition, Pablo has difficulty identifying the main components of a story. As the end of the school year approaches, his teacher has become concerned about his lack of progress in comprehension. During a consultation with the reading specialist, several strategies were discussed and the following goals were developed for Pablo:

- Given a reading passage on his instructional level*, Pablo will answer literal comprehension questions.
- Given a reading passage on his instructional level, Pablo will answer evaluative comprehension questions.
- Given a reading passage on his instructional level, Pablo will identify the main components of the passage.

Possible Strategies

- Graphic Organizers
- Metacognitive Strategies

Assignment

1. Read the STAR Sheets on the possible strategies listed above.
2. Describe each of the two strategies.
3. Define literal, evaluative, and inferential comprehension.
4. Describe how each strategy could be used to assist Pablo in achieving his goals.

*Instructional level – the level of materials students can read successfully on a daily basis for instruction

Background

Student: José
Age: 10.6
Grade: 5th
Focus: Comprehension

Scenario

José is a new student in the fifth grade. It is April and this is the third school José has been in this year. José adapts well to change, has a positive attitude toward school, and appears to have made friends at his new school. José does well in math and enjoys science and social studies. In the area of reading, José is able to easily decode unfamiliar words and reads with good expression. However, in the area of comprehension, José has difficulty answering questions that require reasoning and total understanding of the story. José also has difficulty identifying the main components of a story. José's teacher, Ms. Lundy, states that although he enjoys reading and does not seem to be frustrated, he will not ask for help when needed, thus his reading grade is beginning to suffer. Ms. Lundy has the following instructional goals for José:

- Given a reading passage on his instructional level*, José will answer inferential and evaluative comprehension questions (see Introduction, page 2, for definitions).
- Given a reading passage on his instructional level, José will recall the main story elements.

Possible Strategies

- Direct Instruction
- Graphic Organizers
- Metacognitive Strategies

Assignment

1. Read the STAR sheets for the three strategies listed above and the Introduction.
2. Decide which of José's goals you would address first and explain why.
3. For each goal, identify a strategy and explain why or how it will assist José in reaching his goals.

*Instructional level – the level of materials students can read successfully on a daily basis for instruction

Background

Student: Jacob
Age: 9.9
Grade: 4th
Focus: Vocabulary Development

Scenario

Jacob is an active boy who enjoys coming to school and participates in sports after school. Jacob does well in most classes but has difficulty with new vocabulary words. This difficulty with new vocabulary is not only seen during reading class but also during content area classes such as science and social studies. Jacob's mother indicated that he has always had difficulty understanding new vocabulary but that it hasn't affected his comprehension until this year. Jacob is willing to adopt new strategies that will assist him in learning and remembering new vocabulary words and also to help him better understand the story as a whole. Jacob and his teacher developed the following goal for him:

- Given vocabulary words, Jacob will define and use each in a sentence.

Possible Strategies

- Direct Instruction
- Semantic Feature Analysis
- Graphic Organizers

Assignment

1. Read the STAR sheets for the two strategies listed above.
2. Explain how each strategy could assist Jacob in reaching his goal.
3. Explain how you would involve Jacob's parents, and develop an activity from one of these three strategies that Jacob's parents can use at home.

Overview of 3rd–5th Grade Comprehension And Vocabulary Skills

- ✓ Predicts what will happen in a story.
- ✓ Draws conclusions based on what has been read.
- ✓ Answers literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension questions.
- ✓ Identifies the main story elements.
- ✓ Pronounces and defines new vocabulary words.

Background

Student: Beth
Age: 8.8
Grade: 3rd

Scenario

Beth is an energetic third grader who enjoys school and has many friends. Her teacher, Mrs. Edwards, reports that Beth works hard, has a positive attitude about school, and is a "teacher pleaser." Beth has excellent math skills and does well in her content area classes where all of the reading is still done as a group. However, Beth has difficulty in the area of reading, specifically with new vocabulary and comprehension. It is the end of the second six-week grading period, and Beth's teacher has called a meeting with the parents and the reading specialist. Mrs. Edward's concern is that if Beth's reading skills do not improve this year she will have great difficulty in the fourth grade, where she will be expected to do most of her reading independently. She wants to capitalize on Beth's positive attitude and increase her vocabulary and comprehension skills.

Areas of Strength

- Listens and participates in all oral reading activities
- Answers literal comprehension questions
- Accepts feedback and help; positive attitude

Assignment

1. Develop three or four goals for Beth.
2. Using the Comprehension & Vocabulary Grades 3–5 STAR sheets, select one strategy for each goal and explain the benefits of using this strategy to address the corresponding goal.
3. Select one goal and describe one hands-on activity that will assist Beth in achieving that goal.
4. Select one goal and describe an activity you could develop for Beth's parents to use at home.