Creating and Using an Anchor Chart to Support Vocabulary Development

Rationale
• Proficient readers use various clues to comprehend new vocabulary.
• All students need to be able to use “clues” for vocabulary development but for English learners it is of utmost importance. They cannot “catch-up” solely through direct instruction of new vocabulary.

Important Points
• It is important that students remain engaged. Therefore, after they have learned the procedure, it should be done quickly, perhaps practicing with 2-3 words taking 10-15 minutes.
• Even though it needs to be done quickly, it should be done daily and across the curriculum.
• The resulting “anchor chart” needs to remain on the wall for students to see.

Some Ways We Decide on the Meaning of Unfamiliar Words
• Morphology (word parts)
• Prior Knowledge of the word
• The word is defined in the sentence (appositive)
• The sentences before or after the word give clues
• The part of speech or syntax gives a clue
• There are no clues, we need to look it up, ask someone, or skip it
• Other ___________________???

Teaching the Procedure
1) Identify a short passage which has 2-3 new vocabulary words. Make sure that there are context or morphology clues supporting the new vocabulary.
2) Read the passage with the students
3) Ask the students to identify words that they do not fully comprehend.
4) Choose 2-3 of the words that the students have identified.
5) Ask the students to “guess” the meaning of the first word. Have them tell their neighbor what they think the word means and how they made their “prediction."
6) Randomly choose a student (no raised hands) to tell you what they think the word means.
7) Insist that they tell you how they decided on the meaning. As they proceed in telling you, guide them to a phrase that can be included on the anchor chart. For example: “Ok, I think you are saying that it told us that it was really cold outside so when they said he put on his parka, you guessed he was putting on a coat.” You used the sentences before the word, and your experience, to guess the meaning.
8) As they mention the different “clues” that help determine meaning, write these “clues” on an “anchor chart.” This chart will be in the classroom for students to refer to when you have them practice this strategy. You might also have them copy the chart into their notebooks.
9) Continue with the next word and if there is a different clue used, add that to the chart. The chart will grow as you work with the students on the procedure.

Practicing
• Once you have a viable anchor chart you can switch to “practice” mode. You will practice by calling attention to a word in something that the class is reading and asking them to write down what they think it means and which clue from the anchor chart they are using.
• You can even give quizzes around this strategy.
• Always give lots and lots of positive feedback for any answer that shows “thinking.” Even if their guess is wrong, the students need to be acknowledged for their thinking.
• This is not about “mastery” it is about “immersion.” It needs to be practiced, over time, until it becomes an automatic response in the brain.
• Could be a “warm up”, or an “exit activity” as well as during direct instruction.

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**Vocabulary-Retell**

- Teacher reads *to and with* students, a short passage which includes 2 to 5 new vocabulary words. Teacher discusses vocabulary with the students as they read together. During the first “read,” the teacher writes identified vocabulary (2 or 3 words for Kinder/1st; 3 to 5 words for 2nd – 12th) on the board or chart paper with a very short definition or synonym. *The synonym or definition can be provided through student predictions based on clues, or can be given by the teacher.*

- Students then read the same passage silently, preparing to retell (if fiction), or tell what they have learned (if non-fiction). **Students take a moment to think silently** about what they might “tell”.

**Notes:**

- After thinking silently, **students may read the passage again** before attempting to retell to a partner.
- Students turn to a partner, taking turns as they attempt to retell or to tell what they learned. **They may not look back at the text.**
- If a student feels that they have little to tell, they may do another reading and then attempt the retell.

**Notes:**

- After sharing with a partner the students will be asked to share with the group. The teacher will *call on students at random. Do not ask “comprehension” questions.* Just let each student tell as much as they can. If you call on a student, and they have trouble, you may ask them a leading question…but only after they have had time to think. Ask students to use the new vocabulary and to paraphrase.

**Notes:**

- When the session is finished, students should write the new vocabulary with the synonym or definition in a journal. The teacher can then have a few students to use the vocabulary orally in sentences.
- At the next session, students choose 2 or more words from the last session and write sentences in their notebook using the new words. Students then share their sentences with a partner, followed by “share out” to the class by a few students chosen at random by the teacher.
Unpacking Complex Sentences

A comprehension strategy which also leads to writing more complex sentences...

• You can do this with any complex sentence. You can find sentences in the textbook, in an article or in a novel that students are being asked to read. You would use sentences appropriate to your grade level.

• Note that while it is beneficial to do this strategy every day, after students learn the procedure it should take no more than 10 or 15 minutes.

A) First, to teach the strategy, demonstrate for the students by unpacking the first sentence, writing each “idea” as its own short sentence. Whenever possible, paraphrase, using a simple synonym for complex vocabulary. Number the “ideas.”

Example----Complex Sentence #1: She had such a quick temper and was so strong willed that day after day she refused to obey her mother and father.

The teacher might then write the following in front of the students, one idea at a time:

1) She got angry easily.
2) She wanted her own way.
3) She wouldn’t do what her mother asked.
4) She wouldn’t do what her father asked.
5) She was like this every day.

B) Second, ask them to do the 2nd sentence with you.

• Read the sentence with them, making sure that all of the vocabulary is comprehensible.
• Ask them how many ideas they think the sentence has. Ask them to show you on their fingers or write the number on a paper or in a notebook.
• Then, have the students give suggestions (using think/pair/share first) for what to write. You then write the “idea” sentences that they share out, numbering them.

C) Finally, ask them to try to do the third sentence with a partner or on their own. Have them “predict” the number of “ideas” and write the number on a paper. (Again, make sure that the vocabulary is comprehensible.) Give them time to pair/share before you call on some at random to share out, one idea per student sharing.

NOTE: You may have to repeat the sequence more than once.

1) demonstrate or “I do”

2) work together or “We do”

3) try on your own or “You do”

Always, always be sure that the vocabulary is comprehensible to the students by asking them about words that seem difficult and giving them some synonyms if they need them. The teacher directed portions are very important because you are the guide to the nuances of the language.

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From Retell to Summary:
Focusing on important details and determining the main idea!

- The ultimate goal is for students to be able to comprehend, find the important details, determine the main idea, and then write a summary.
- Doing a retell first, allows students to sort out what is important and to see the difference between a retell and a summary.
- Support the process through direct instruction and guided practice. Eventually the brain is able to read and discriminate without first doing a retell.
- After several class sessions, have collaborative teams take the class “retell” and follow the process of elimination to create a summary. Each team summary will be slightly different. At this point you will see who needs more guidance and who can try it on their own.
- Students should progress to being able to summarize entire articles or stories

1) Begin by reading a paragraph (if expository) and a page (if narrative) with the students. Have them then read the same passage independently as they prepare to do a retell. Students need to be able to retell much of what they have read.

2) As the students share what they recall, write their sentences on the board or a chart paper.

3) Help them to phrase their details and encourage paraphrasing.

4) When students have shared all that they can recall, have them re-read the text to look for any details that were missed. Add these details to the list of sentences.

5) Ask students to collaborate and decide on 3 details that can be eliminated because they are not “important” details. These are details that they would not need to tell a friend if they were sharing what they had learned.

6) Have each collaborative team share one detail that they think can be eliminated.

7) Place a star next to each detail that is shared. The class will discuss each starred detail to decide which ones will actually be eliminated.

8) Support students in seeing where sentences might be combined and make the changes using “arrows”, “carrots,” etc.

9) As you facilitate the discussion, draw a line through the details that you and the class deem “unimportant.” The remaining details will be used to form the summary.

10) Have the collaborative teams determine a main idea. Each team shares their idea and it is written on the board.

11) Have students determine the logical sequence for the remaining important details.

12) Craft a summary using one of the main ideas and the important details and have students write it in their notebook.

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