



Literacy Connects

A Content Literacy Newsletter from Regional Professional Development Program-Issue VI



Welcome back! I hope your summer was perfect. The first *Literacy Connects* of the 2002-2003 school year is featuring Vocabulary Cards -- a well-known strategy, used successfully by teachers for years. If you are familiar with Vocabulary Cards, take this as yet another testament to their effectiveness; if you've never used this strategy, take it as your impetus to start.

Vocabulary is important across the curriculum. Vocabulary Cards are an effective learning tool as they allow students to use vocabulary in a variety of ways, thus providing multiple exposures to the words while utilizing various learning modalities.

Procedure:

1. Give each student index cards or have them create cards from paper.
2. Identify, or have the student identify, no more than 10 words for the unit of study. Place this word in the center of the index card.
3. Provide, or have the student generate or locate, a concise definition for the word and write it in the top, right-hand corner of the card.
4. Provide, or have the student generate, a one-word synonym for the word and write it in the top, left-hand corner of the card.
5. Have the student create a sentence using the word in context. The best sentences suggest the word's definition. Write the sentence in the bottom, left-hand corner of the card.
6. Have students brainstorm images or symbols for the word. It is important that each student create his/her own symbol as a visual, memory clue for both the word and its definition. Images should be drawn in the bottom, right-hand corner of the card.
7. Each corner of the card should be written in a different color. Students should choose their own colors, but once chosen, the colors need to remain the same. Color coding the corners creates another visual memory aid, but consistency is key.
8. Finally, have students punch a hole in one corner of the card and attach with a binder ring. Cards can be kept together in notebooks for easy access.
9. Students can use Vocabulary Cards as portable dictionaries for reference or as flash cards for vocabulary study. They can alphabetize cards or sort by part of speech, word meaning, category, function, etc. Students can also play a review game with cards by writing sentences or paragraphs substituting their symbol for the word and having other students try and guess the word.

(synonym)

guess

(definition)

a proposed solution
to a scientific problem

(Vocabulary Word)

Hypothesis

(contextually correct sentence)

My hypothesis should draw
a logical conclusion based on
the data I gather.

(symbol)

