Using the Core Standards to Teach Academic Vocabulary

Summary

Students will use the core standards and an academic vocabulary template (adapted from Janet Allen and Robert Marzano) to explicitly learn the academic language they will need to understand, not only in English Language Arts, but in all content areas.

Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 9-10
Reading: Informational Text Standard 4

Time Frame

1 class periods of 30 minutes each

Group Size

Individual

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication

Materials

Academic Vocabulary Template
Utah Core Standards
Academic Word List
3 x 5 cards/chart paper & markers (optional)

Background for Teachers

The Academic Vocabulary Template is a structured way for students to learn and apply the academic vocabulary inherent in the new core and in the content of every subject area. To increase the chances for students' success in learning content, the most critical words need to be introduced, experienced, and applied to new situations.
One way to introduce academic vocabulary to students is to utilize the language of the new core standards. Not only will the students become more familiar with the course's expectations, but they will also become more familiar with high-utility vocabulary words essential to all content areas.

Student Prior Knowledge

The student must know how to use graphic organizers, how to connect vocabulary with particular content, and how to apply and extend their knowledge of the word.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will use vocabulary development (determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text) to comprehend literary and informational grade level text.

Instructional Procedures

Starting with one of the strands of the new core standards (Reading Literature/Informational Text, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Language), highlight the academic vocabulary necessary for students to demonstrate an understanding of a particular standard. As reference, use the

Academic Word List as a resource.

Find a meaningful context to introduce the word to students (objective of the course, word critical to all content areas, for example). All students should hear/see the same context. All students should be able to pronounce the word correctly.

Distribute copies of the Academic Vocabulary Template.

Instruct students to complete the Vocabulary Self-Evaluation first, then to fill in the other sections: Describe, Draw, Additional Connections.

Repeat this process for each of the standards introduced.

Modification: Give students 3 x 5 cards in place of multiple copies of the template. The students can model the template features on each 3 x 5 card.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

This lesson is fairly simple to differentiate. Instead of working individually, students can work in pairs and/or small groups. Chart-size versions of the template can be created and displayed in the classroom for constant reference.

Extensions

Analyzing academic vocabulary in the new core standards is but one use of the template. Ask students to look for these high-utility words in both literary and informational texts.

Assessment Plan

The vocabulary self-evaluation serves as an effective formative assessment tool. Checking for understanding in both oral and written communication is the best assessment of the student's grasp of meaning. Participation points can be assigned for student's correct use of the term in both oral and written communication.

Bibliography

Allen, Janet. More Tools for Teaching Content Literacy. Stenhouse Publishers, 2008.
Marzano, Robert. "Building Academic Vocabulary: Teacher's Manual." ASCD, 2005.

Authors

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