

## **Six Steps to Effective Vocabulary Instruction**

adapted from *Building Background Knowledge for Academic achievement*

By Robert J. Marzano

### **Step 1: The Teacher Provides a Description, Explanation, or Example of the New Term**

During the first step, the teacher explains the target word. Definitions do not appear to be useful instructional tools, particularly in the initial stages of learning a word. However, conversational descriptions, explanations, and examples are very useful to students when first learning a term.

### **Step 2: Students Restate the Explanation of the New Term in Their Own Words**

It is important that students not simply copy the teacher's explanation of a term. Rather, students should construct their own explanations based on what the teacher has presented.

### **Step 3: Students Create a Nonlinguistic Representation of the Term**

For vocabulary development, this step is best done immediately after students have generated their own linguistic description of the term. These representations can be in the form of graphic organizers, pictures, or pictographs,

### **Step 4: Students Periodically Do Activities That Help Them Add to Their Knowledge of Vocabulary Terms**

To ensure multiple exposures to terms, students should take part in activities that allow them to interact with vocabulary terms in a variety of ways.

### **Step 5: Periodically Students Are Asked to Discuss the Terms with One Another.**

...student interaction plays a key role . . . in the development of academic vocabulary. Consequently, teachers should periodically organize students into groups and ask them to discuss the terms in the vocabulary sections of their notebooks. To stimulate discussion, the teacher might pose questions each group will address.

### **Step 6: Periodically Students Are Involved in Games That Allow Them to Play with the Terms**

... teachers can use games as sponge activities to stimulate interest and enthusiasm about vocabulary as well as provide multiple exposures to terms.