Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating

Comprehension and Learning Strategy

NBSS
The National Behaviour Support Service

Before Reading Comprehension Strategy

Vocabulary or Knowledge Rating

Purpose of Vocabulary Rating:

Vocabulary or knowledge rating (Blachowicz, 1986; Young et al. 2002) is a before reading strategy designed to evaluate students' prior or background knowledge of a topic or concept. Students are given a list of words related to the topic or concept and rate how well they know each term. Rating scales can help students to actively look at and be aware of new vocabulary and also help activate prior knowledge. By identifying terms students do not know well the teacher will be better able to prepare students for reading, viewing, listening and discussing the new topic or text.

Explicitly Vocabulary Rating:

Step 1

Demonstrate the strategy to students, explaining that it will get them thinking and prepare them for the new learning in the lesson. Explain the rating scale (there are several variations).

Step 2

Provide students with a list of words and say each one out loud. In pairs have students then rate each word according to how well they know it. Additionally, students can be asked to write a definition for any words they ticked in the 'Know it well" column or draw a sketch of the word.

Step 3

Discuss with students the terms they are familiar with and those they are not too sure about. Have students predict what they think unknown words might mean. Provide explanations and examples of any unknown terms before reading and draw attention to them when used throughout the lesson.

Step 4

Students rating scales can be collected and used to explicitly teach key vocabulary in the next lesson also.

(See other NBSS resources on vocabulary development e.g. *Academic Vocabulary Building Activities, Frayer Model, Vocabulary Journal, etc)*

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating Examples

Word	Know it well	Have seen or heard it	No Clue
rhombus			x
triangle	x		
pentagon		x	
quadrilateral		x	
trapezoid			x
square	x		

Rate Your Words

Rating scale:

1=Words you know and can use correctly.

2=Words you almost know, but the meanings are a bit foggy.

3=Words you think you have seen or heard before maybe from TV, conversations, magazines or in another subject.

4=Words you do not know at all.

Words	1	2	3	4
Atmosphere	Atmosphere			
Troposphere				Troposphere
Acid Rain		Acid Rain		
Water Cycle			Water Cycle	
Precipitation				Precipitation

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating Examples

Rate Your Knowledge – Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

Directions:

1. Consider each of the words in the chart below and then place a ✗ in the column that best describes how well you know and understand the word.

2. When you have completed the chart write a definition in the box provided, for **each** of the words that you marked in the '*Know it well'* column.

Words/Terms	Know it well	Have seen/heard it	No clue!
Feud			
Romance			
Tragedy			
Apothecary			
Reconcile			
Folly			
Verona			
Friar			
Thee/thou			

"Know it well' Word Definitions:

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating Examples
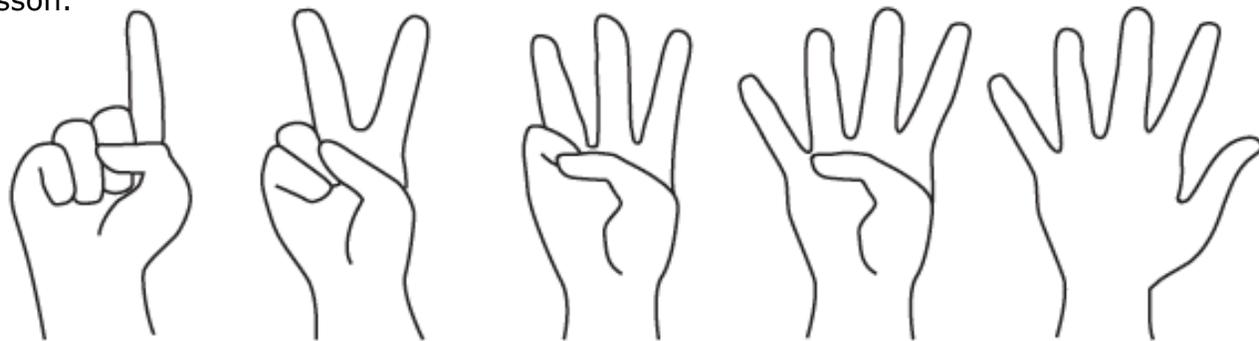
Rate Your Knowledge – Ocean Systems

Directions:
1. Consider each of the words in the chart below.
2. In the first two columns place an ✗ beside any word you have never heard before or have heard but don't know what it means.
3. In the 'Have some idea' column write down what you think you know about the word.
4. In the 'Know it Well' column write down your definition of the word.

Vocabulary	Never Heard of It	Heard it	Have Some Idea	Know It Well
Ocean current				Is a continuous movement of ocean water
Surface currents			On the top of the water caused by wind?	
Deep currents			These currents flow under the surface but I don't really know how they are different to surface ones	
Gulf Stream		✗		
Continental Shelf	✗			

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating Examples

Vocabulary High Five Rating Scale

This version of the rating scale, Fist-to Five (Patterson et al., 2002), can be used to quickly and informally assess students' topic vocabulary knowledge. Students vote with their fingers to indicate how much they know about the key vocabulary or the concepts about to be studied in the lesson.

1	2	3	4	5
I do not know the word.	I know a little.	I know a fair amount.	I know a lot.	I am an expert on this word.
I have never heard the word before and I have no idea what you're talking about.	I have heard the word before, but I am not certain of its meaning.	When I read, I know what the word means.	I could explain the word to others and use it in writing and discussion.	I know a great deal. I could teach a lesson on it.

(Rating Scale from *Word Study Assessment and Instruction for Vocabulary*)

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating

Directions:

Consider each of the words in the chart below and then place a ✗ in the column that best describes how well you know and understand each of the words.

Word	I know it well. I use it.	I know it a bit.	I've seen it or heard of it.	I've never heard of it.
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating

Rate Your Knowledge

Directions:
1. Consider each of the words in the chart below.
2. In the first two columns place an ✗ beside any word you have never heard before or have heard but don't know what it means.
3. In the '*Have some idea'* column write down what you think you know about the word.
4. In the '*Know it Well'* column write down your definition of the word.

Vocabulary	Never Heard of It	Heard it	Have Some Idea	Know It Well

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating

Rate Your Knowledge

Directions:

1. Consider each of the words in the chart below and then place a ✗ in the column that best describes how well you know and understand the word.

2. When you have completed the chart write a definition in the box provided, for **each** of the words that you marked in the '*Know it well'* column.

Words/Terms	Know it well	Have seen/heard it	No clue!

"Know it well' Word Definitions:

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating

Rate Your Words

Rating scale:

1=Words you know and can use correctly.

2=Words you almost know, but the meanings are a bit foggy.

3=Words you think you have seen or heard before maybe from TV, conversations, magazines or in another subject.

4=Words you do not know at all.

Topic:

Words	1	2	3	4

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating

Rate Your Knowledge

Directions:

1. Consider each of the words in the chart below and then place a ✗ in the column that best describes how well you know and understand the word.

Word	Know It Well	Have Seen or Heard It	Have No Clue

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating

Directions:

a) Rate how well you know each word by using this scale: *4 = Know it could teach it to someone else 3 = Think I know it, but need to review it 2 = Have seen/heard it 1 = Have no idea*

b) After reading and learning about this topic write your own definition of each word in the 3rd column and the textbooks definition in the 4th column.

c) At the end of the lesson rate the words again.

WORD	RATING	OUR DEFINITION	DICTIONARY/TEXTBOOK DEFINITION	NEW RATING

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating

Directions:
1. Read each word and put a **?** beside any words that you are not too sure of and a ✔ beside any words you know well.
2. As you read the text put the number of the page that the word first appears on.
3. After reading write a definition of each word in your owns words. Then find an example in the textbook that explains the word.

Before Reading			During Reading	After Reading
Word	?	✔	Page in book	Write a definition in your words and an example of how it was used in the text.
				My definition: Example in textbook:
				My definition: Example in textbook:
				My definition: Example in textbook:
				My definition: Example in textbook:

Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating

Directions:
1. Read each word and put a **?** beside any words that you are not too sure of and a ✓ beside any words you know well.
2. For any words you marked with a ✓ write a definition or put the word in a sentence or draw a sketch of it.
3. After learning about the topic write a definition, put the word in a sentence or draw a sketch for those words you marked with a **?** before reading.

Word	Rating ? ✓		Definition, Sentence or Sketch

Marzano's Six Steps to Effective Vocabulary Instruction

Academic vocabulary is the vocabulary critical to understanding the concepts being taught in class. Marzano (2005) stresses that in all subject areas explicit vocabulary instruction is necessary and outlines a six step process that can help students learn critical subject specific vocabulary.

Step One:
The teacher gives a friendly, informal description, explanation or example of the new vocabulary term.

- Provide students with information about the vocabulary term.
- Create pictures or use video and computer images as a source of information.
- Describe your own mental picture of the word.
- Use current events and other media to connect the term to something familiar.
- Determine prior knowledge and find out what students already know about the term (see NBSS vocabulary rating scale, text features and other before reading strategy resources).
- Have students share what they already know and use this knowledge as a foundation for more learning.

Step Two:
Students give a description, explanation or example of the new term in his/her own words.

- Students record their explanation (see NBSS vocabulary notebooks and activities resources).
- Remind students to not copy and only use their own words.
- Monitor to determine if any confusion still exists and correct misunderstandings with further explanation and example.

Step Three:
Students create a non linguistic representation of the word.

- Provide students with non linguistic methods to record the vocabulary term (see NBSS vocabulary notebooks and activities resources).
- Students can work in pairs or groups to create a non linguistic representation e.g. picture, symbol, cartoon, dramatisation or play pictionary, charades, etc.
- Have students record their visuals and share their ideas.
- Continue to identify and clear up any misunderstandings about the new terms if necessary.

Marzano's Six Steps to Effective Vocabulary Instruction

Step Four:

Students engage in activities to deepen their knowledge of the new word.

- Have students list related words.
- Highlight any prefixes and suffixes that will help them remember the word.
- Identify antonyms and synonyms.
- Discuss similarities and differences of two terms.
- Compare how the vocabulary term is used across subject areas and discuss and note any common confusions.
- Have students record this information.

Step Five:

Students discuss the new word with one another.

- Students think, pair and share their ideas by comparing explanations, describing and explaining drawings and discussing any new information they have learned, etc.
- Students can make revisions to their own work and add to their vocabulary explanation and visual if necessary.
- Continue to identify and clear up any misunderstandings about the new terms if necessary.

Step Six:

Students play games to reinforce and review new vocabulary.

- Develop deep understanding of academic vocabulary terms by engaging students in weekly review activities. For example students can play taboo, dominoes, wordo, pictionary, charades, word sorts, bingo, crosswords, hangman, card games, etc. (Contact the NBSS for powerpoint templates of games).
- Have students create and play their own vocabulary games and activities.
- After activities students can continue to make corrections, additions and changes to their explanation and visual.

(Marzano, R.J. & Pickering, D.J. Building Academic Vocabulary, 2005)

(See other NBSS resources on vocabulary development e.g. *Academic Vocabulary Building Activities, Frayer Model, Vocabulary Journal, etc)*

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