LESSON PLAN:
Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Preparation

Lesson Overview
Students began using vocabulary journals in the Getting Started unit. The instruction in this lesson will give them more tools to use when learning new vocabulary. You model three tools that students can use to learn new vocabulary: concept mapping, compare/contrast, and various memorization techniques. Students then practice using the 5-Step Literacy Routine with “What Adults Can Learn from Babies.”

Do Before Teaching
Be prepared to display the excerpt from “A Fun Way to Learn.”

Teaching Routine

Before Reading

Introduce Lesson: (5 minutes)

1. Introduce the lesson with this warm-up activity: Divide students into pairs. Give each pair a bilingual dictionary (such as an English-Spanish dictionary), a stack of self-stick notes, and a marker. Ask the pairs of students to go around the classroom and label three objects in both English and their home language.

2. In a whole-class discussion, have each pair of students share with the class the objects they labeled, the English word for the object, and the word in their first language. If you have a classroom word wall or dictionary, have the pairs add their new English words to the wall or dictionary.

Learning Objective
Students will learn tools for acquiring new vocabulary, including concept mapping, compare/contrast, and memorization techniques.

Pacing
45–90 minutes

Suggested Readings
“A Fun Way to Learn” by Achieve3000
“What Adults Can Learn from Babies” by Achieve3000
Provide Direct Instruction and Modeling (10–15 minutes)

- Remind students that they have been using the vocabulary journals to learn and review academic vocabulary so that they can understand the language of the different disciplines. Tell them that you are going to model three more strategies to use when learning new vocabulary: concept mapping, comparison/contrast, and memorization techniques.

Concept Mapping

- With concept mapping, you write the target concept in the center of your drawing area. Elicit related key words and concepts from students and add them to the diagram, radiating out from the central concept. In the process, you can group concepts into different categories and introduce new words and related concepts in addition to the ones known by students.

Display an excerpt from “A Fun Way to Learn.” Do a read-aloud of the first paragraph of the passage. (See master.)

**TOKYO, Japan** (Achieve3000, July 31, 2008). The Nintendo DS isn’t just fun and games anymore for students at Tokyo’s Joshi Gakuen all-girls junior high school. The portable video game console is now being used as a teaching tool in English classes. Using the DS is a break with traditional Japanese academic methods, and the response has been varied among teachers. Among students, however, the DS is getting high marks.
Circle the word *console* when you come to it. Say, “I wonder what a console is. Do any of you know? Does the context of the passage give us any clues?” I look up the word *console* in a dictionary and find that it means ‘a machine that is used to run different kinds of software.’ On the board, write *console* and draw a circle around it. Elicit ideas from students about the word *console*. “We know from the article that the Nintendo DS is a console. What kind of console is it? What other kinds of video game consoles are there? What are some features of video game consoles?” Continue this line of questioning until you have a concept map that looks something like the following:

![Concept Map](image)

This process helps students not only gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the word *console* but also helps them learn other new vocabulary, such as *media*, *devices*, and so on.
**Compare/Contrast**

- Students can also facilitate English vocabulary learning by comparing and contrasting terms. Return to the article excerpt and point out the word *portable* to students. Ask them, “What does *portable* mean? The article says that the Nintendo DS is *portable*, which means ‘movable.’ These are handheld games you can take around with you. Are the other consoles you mentioned in our diagram portable? If not, what is the opposite of portable?” Take student suggestions, which might include *immovable*. Tell them that the word *stationary* describes something that stays in one place. Create a Venn diagram with *portable* on one side and *stationary* on the other. Write *video game consoles* in the middle.

Then compare and contrast the two kinds of consoles, writing the details on the diagram. For example, portable consoles are likely to be small and lightweight, while stationary consoles are heavier and larger. Yet both play video games.

**Memorizing**

- Briefly share the following methods for memorizing new vocabulary with students:
  - Rehearsal techniques: such as using flash cards and active rehearsal using underlining and highlighting
  - Mnemonic devices: such as making up a song or rhyme
  - Physical response: acting out the meaning of a new word or phrase
  - Word sort: organizing words based on common attributes
  - Visualization: creating a mental image that is representative of the new word
  - Audio response: speaking the new word aloud and hearing it spoken by others
  - Contextualization: placing the new word in context. Students can find the word as used in context by a simple Internet search and then write a new sentence of their own using the word.
  - Sensory learning: trying to connect the word to as many senses as possible. Think not only of what the object described by the new word looks like, but what it smells like, sounds like, feels like, and tastes like.
  - Elaboration: relating new word to other concepts in memory
During Reading

**Student Practice (15–25 minutes)**

- Have students complete the 5-Step Literacy Routine with “What Adults Can Learn from Babies,” an article about how babies learn more than one language and the implications for language learning in general. Tell students to monitor their understanding as they read and use the vocabulary strategies they have learned for getting back on track when needed.

**The 5-Step Literacy Routine**

1. **Before-reading Poll** — Brings students’ prior knowledge into the classroom as they make connections and express opinions about the topic of the day.

2. **Article** — Students derive information from nonfiction articles differentiated to their levels. Repeated exposure to vocabulary and embedded strategy support enables all students to participate in classroom discussions. Access to grade-level text and activities ensure that students have frequent interactions with grade-appropriate complex text.

3. **Activity** — Students demonstrate successful close reading of text by responding to text-dependent questions that require higher-order thinking skills.

4. **After-reading Poll** — All students express their opinions again, based on the reading they did that day, with teachers requiring students to provide evidence for their opinions. Teachers then facilitate discussion and debates in the classroom.

5. **Thought Question** — A critical-thinking activity guides students to write in more formal scenarios with the intent to either argue or inform about a situation or narrate an event.

After mastering the concepts at reading-level, students have the opportunity to complete the same Article and Activity at grade level. They can also review their Poll results from both before and after reading and reflect on how their readings and experiences affect the evolution of their opinions.

After Reading

**Whole-Class Wrap Up (5-10 minutes)**

- When all students have completed the 5-Step Literacy Routine (or at least the first two steps), have students enter new vocabulary in their vocabulary journals and indicate their level of understanding for each of the new terms learned in this lesson, including these academic terms: *concept map* and *compare/contrast*. 
Lesson Extensions

Have students create a flip dictionary using a set of spiral bound index cards that they can carry with them throughout the day. As they encounter an unfamiliar word in school, they can write the word on one side of the card, look up the meaning in a bilingual dictionary, and enter the meaning on the other side. Remind them that drawing an image of the word and using the word in a sentence will help them remember its meaning. Students can then review the words when they are waiting in line, riding the bus, and so on, and will have them at the ready to discuss in class.
Lesson Masters

A Fun Way to Learn

TOKYO, Japan (Achieve3000, July 31, 2008). The Nintendo DS isn't just fun and games anymore for students at Tokyo's Joshi Gakuen all-girls junior high school. The portable video game console is now being used as a teaching tool in English classes. Using the DS is a break with traditional Japanese academic methods, and the response has been varied among teachers. Among students, however, the DS is getting high marks.

"It's fun," said Chigusa Matsumoto, a seventh-grader at Joshi Gakuen. "You can study while you have fun."

Like many other Japanese youngsters, Matsumoto has the DS at home and plays DS games like "Mario Kart." Yet, she insists that she likes her English language software the best.

The classroom game is a sort of high-tech spelling bee. Matsumoto's class uses plastic pens to spell words like "hamburger" and "cola" on the DS's touch screen, following an electronic voice from the machine. When a student gets the spelling right, the word "good" pops up on the screen. Then, the software goes on to the next word. The first five students to complete the drills are awarded colorful stickers.

Spelling drills are nothing new for Japanese students who are studying English. However, doing the drills on the DS certainly is. In Japanese schools, English instruction usually focuses on memorization and grammar. Video game consoles have never been used in the Japanese classroom before.

"This is quite revolutionary for a Japanese schoolroom," said Yasuhiro Yamamoto, whose software company made the DS English program.

The DS is part of a course that helps Japanese students learn English. The course includes videos of an American ordering at a fast-food restaurant, as well as audio that students listen to on headphones and then repeat. The DS helps students build English vocabulary. It's a natural fit for the DS; the console already boasts brainteaser and puzzle software designed to improve math and other academic skills.

Even so, many teachers are uncertain about using the DS in the classroom. Tsuneo Saneyoshi, principal of Joshi Gakuen, said that views about the initiative have been mixed among teachers. Teachers are more accustomed to keeping distractions out of classrooms, not welcoming them.

"Some teachers aren't quite convinced this is good," Saneyoshi said.
However, other school officials have a number of reasons to be pleased. For Joshi Gakuen, the program was more or less free. Kyoto-based Nintendo Company sent the school 40 DS machines and free software for agreeing to test the DS in the classroom.

The school's vice-principal, Junko Tatsumi, was won over.

"There was no opposition from the parents," Tatsumi said. "It wasn't that difficult a decision for us. We thought it was a great idea."

*The Associated Press contributed to this story.*

**academic** *(adjective)* having to do with education

**console** *(noun)* a machine that is used to run different kinds of software

**initiative** *(noun)* a plan designed to deal with a problem

**vocabulary** *(noun)* words and their meanings