
Building Academic Vocabulary: Teacher's Manual

Marzano, Robert J. and Pickering, Debra J.

2005 ♦ ASCD

ISBN: 978-1416602347

Pedagogical Knowledge: Books

DESCRIPTION

Building Academic Vocabulary: Teacher's Manual, by Robert J. Marzano and Debra J. Pickering, describes a research based process for designing and implementing a comprehensive approach to teaching academic vocabulary for a classroom, school, or district. Understanding content includes having background knowledge, including academic vocabulary. Without a basic knowledge of the terms specific to mathematics, students have difficulty understanding the content they hear and read about in mathematics classrooms. Vocabulary is an essential component of the background knowledge all students need. Providing systematic instruction in important academic terms is one of the most crucial services teachers can provide.

The manual's five chapters provide the rationale and suggestions for an individual teacher, a school, or a district to use in developing a comprehensive program to teach and reinforce academic vocabulary as a means to enhance student learning. In addition, two appendices provide templates for use in classrooms as well as word lists for a variety of subject areas, including mathematics. The chapters include:

- Chapter 1: The Need for a Program to Build Academic Vocabulary
- Chapter 2: Creating a List of Academic Vocabulary Terms
- Chapter 3: Teaching the Selected Terms
- Chapter 4: Review Activities and Games
- Chapter 5: Managing the Program.

STAGE 1 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Building Academic Vocabulary: Teacher's Manual, by Robert J. Marzano and Debra J. Pickering, supports stage 1 development of leaders working to improve their practice. Specialists working in the role of coaching will find the process described in the manual useful for designing a comprehensive program for teaching academic mathematics vocabulary.

First, specialists identify terms that are critically important to the mathematics content taught at a particular grade level or a grade span. They might use the vocabulary list from Appendix B as a starting place for choosing words to include at each grade level or might refer to state standards or the Common Core State Standards as the list is compiled. For each word, consider this question: *Is this term critically important to the mathematics content that will be taught at this grade level?*

Having a completed list is not necessary in order to begin teaching academic vocabulary. In fact, specialists might find creating a list of words for each unit or each week more manageable as a starting place. They might work to implement a pilot program for teaching academic vocabulary as part of mathematics instruction using the instructional processes recommended in the manual. This six-step process includes:

1. Teachers provide a description, explanation, or example of new terms.
2. Students restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.
3. Students construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representing the terms.
4. Students engage in classroom activities to add to their knowledge.
5. Students discuss the terms with one another.
6. Students play games to reinforce the new terms.

STAGE 2 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Building Academic Vocabulary: Teacher's Manual, by Robert J. Marzano and Debra J. Pickering, supports stage 2 development of leaders working to collaborate and implement strategies for building academic vocabulary in mathematics. Leaders might work to develop a plan for teaching academic vocabulary systematically using the six-step process described in chapters 1 through 4 and for managing the program using the three elements described in chapter 5, "Managing the Program." The elements include managing:

1. Student Notebooks
2. Terms That are Not Taught Directly
3. Time

Leaders might collaborate with stakeholders to develop a plan for organizing the student notebooks that are a central feature of the program. A format for the notebook pages is provided in chapter 3 and shown below. Terms might be organized alphabetically or by unit, theme, or topic. Organizing the terms by unit, theme, or topic facilitates many of the activities and games described in chapter 4. While the planned program will include teaching specific terms in specific ways to all students, teachers and specialists might want to provide the opportunity to include terms in student notebooks that students select to learn on their own or that teachers choose to meet individual student needs.

Managing the time for implementing the program described in the manual is crucial to its success. While teaching one to three terms per week should fit into regular classroom routines, three aspects of the six-step process do require extra time.