Vocabulary Building Activity: Semantic Map for Grades K-2

Author

Sarah D. Reid, PhD, Illinois State University

Standards and Benchmarks (see page 3)

Activity Description

A semantic map is a visual graphic organizer that assists students in making connections between their prior knowledge and experiences to new vocabulary words and concepts. It typically involves webbing: The vocabulary word or concept is placed in a center circle and then students' associations are linked from the center circle. Students can also create branches of connections from their associations. Semantic maps can be used before, during, or after a lesson to help build connections and activate knowledge or used as a formative assessment. They can be completed individually, in pairs/small groups, or as an entire class. In this activity, teachers and students are encouraged to create their own semantic map.

Grade Level

K-2

Objectives

Students will be able to

- define [targeted vocabulary word or concept],
- illustrate the connections and relationships to [targeted vocabulary word or concept], and
- revise their understanding about [targeted vocabulary word or concept].

Time Required

40 minutes

Materials

- Two blank sheets of chart paper, tape, and an easel
- Markers and an assortment of different colored highlighters
- Small dry erase board, one for each student
- Dry erase marker and eraser, one of each for each student

Preparation

- Select a vocabulary word or concept that relates to the lesson or unit and that offers multiple connection points.
- Hang the blank sheets of chart paper on the easel with the tape, one on top of the other.

Procedure

1. Write the targeted vocabulary word or concept at the top of the first blank sheet of chart paper with a marker.

2. Read the word/concept aloud to students.

3. Invite students to quietly think about what they know, or think they know, about the vocabulary word/concept.

4. While students are thinking, distribute a dry erase board, marker, and eraser to each student.

5. After students have had time to think, instruct them to draw or write one thing that they know, or think they know, about the vocabulary word/concept on their dry erase boards.

6. One at a time, call on a student to stand up and share what they wrote or drew on their board.

7. As students share their background knowledge, write a list of their responses on the chart paper.

8. When all students have shared, instruct them to erase their boards and set their materials to the side.

9. Reread the students' responses on the list.

10. Ask students, "Which of the responses are similar and could go together in a group?" As students identify the responses, use a highlighter to mark the ones that go together.

11. Once students have decided which responses go together, summarize their grouping by giving it a label. Write the label on the chart paper and highlight it.

12. Using a different colored highlighter, repeat Steps 10-11 for another grouping.

13. Repeat until all the students' responses have been placed into a group and each group has a label. Then move the response list to the side, taping it to a nearby wall or board.

14. Create a semantic map using markers: Write the targeted vocabulary word or concept in the center of the second sheet of chart paper and draw a circle around it.

15. Choose one of the highlighted groups. Write the label of the group on the map, draw a circle around it, and then draw a line from the label to the vocabulary word/concept in the center.

16. Invite students to help you create branches of connections from the group label by reading all the highlighted responses. Write each response on the map, draw a circle around it, and draw a line back to the group label.

17. Continue to draw connections off the vocabulary word/concept in the center based on the highlighted groups on the student response chart.

18. Display the semantic map in the classroom where students can see and refer to it during the lesson/unit.

19. Periodically, review the semantic map with students, especially when there is information that needs to be added or if the semantic map needs to be revised or clarified.

Standards and Benchmarks

Elementary

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 1 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.6

- Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe (e.g., When other kids are happy that makes me happy).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.6

- Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., because).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.6

- Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.