101 Strategies to Make Academic Vocabulary Stick- Part 1

By Marilee Sprenger

As a Biology teacher it is very challenging for students to acquire and retain all of the vocabulary introduced within the course, so I got very excited when I saw this book advertised because this was just what I needed in my classroom. The goal of this document is to share with you my thoughts and synopsis of the book so that you don't have to read as much and provide reproducible documents of the strategies that I liked… But understand that I am reading with a high school lens, so if you are a teacher who works with lower-grades you might like some other strategies that I don't mention. I do recommend the book to add to your collection.

Introduction: Addressing Word Poverty

The text starts out stating, "The size of a child's vocabulary is an accurate predictor of academic achievement an even upward mobility over the course of their lifetime" (Hirsch, 2013). The vocabulary acquired by children is affected by 1. The number of words exchanged in the home 2. The quality of those words 3. The language spoken in the home 4. The number of books that have been read to a child 5. The amount of time spent in quality conversations

During elementary and secondary school students learn about 50,000 words, averaging 3,000 to 4,000 via implicit learning due to reading, being read to and engaging in quality conversations. Teachers should be explicitly teaching approximately 300 vocabulary words through direct instructions; 60 words per content area.

Tier 1 words are words used in every day speck, Tier 2 are "everybody's words" that have multiple meanings in different contexts, appear frequently in written sources but are not discipline specific, Tier 3 words are content specific words that are low frequency specialized vocabulary.

The book discusses four reasons why teachers aren't teaching vocabulary 1. We assume that if we know the word then so does everyone else 2. We assume in the cases of cross-content words that the other teacher taught it 3. We think that students will discover words themselves 4. We don't have time to teach vocabulary.

HOWEVER!!! The book purports that vocabulary may be the most important content that we teach and is a critical element in reading comprehension and academic achievement.

Chapter 1: Remembering Words: Reviewing the Research

- Teaching vocabulary is more effective when words are associated with some type of visuals
- Students should speak new words, it is important to create opportunities for students to use and repeat a word as it increases the likelihood that they will use it again.
- Use repetition and reinforcement to strengthen word-brain connections by:
    - Creating a rich language environment (read with and to students, student formed book clubs where they read and discuss their choice of books, read and write across genres and content areas, provide informational and fictional texts
    - Focus on individual words
    - Utilize word learning strategies to instruct students on how to explore words independently
    - Teachers should foster Word Consciousness by modeling an awareness and enjoyment of words
- There are Five long term memory systems that store information in the brain and that is what we want STORAGE!!!
    - Semantic memory- takes several repetitions to cement and must be stimulated by associations, comparisons, and similarities
    - Episodic memory- relates to locations, people and events (research has found that students who learn information in one room and are tested in another underperform)

        - Students can improve both episodic and semantic memory by recoding the information; putting it into their own words. Students should be encouraged and motivated to pay close attention to the instructional components of the lesson and taught how to recode and internalize the information after the lesson is over.
    - Motor procedural memory-muscle memory; allows us to multi-task, ie drive to a familiar place and talk on the phone
    - Nonmotor Procedural Memory- automatic memory, if you practiced learning information on flashcards that material would be stored in your automatic memory **** this is where the Tier 2 vocabulary should be, so there should be lots of opportunities for students to recall and utilize these words
    - Emotional memory- experiences that evoke feelings of happiness, sadness, joy, etc…be mindful that emotional memory can supersede the other memory systems so as teachers connecting learning to positive emotions, such as joy, pride, and humor is the way to go.
- Help students get to know and Love their brains; they need to believe that they can learn
    - Explain the five memory systems
    - Explain and discuss multiple intelligences
    - Test their memory with ensured success
    - Empower students with a growth mindset

Chapter 2: Encoding: Introducing New Words

- This chapter is where the strategies begin, I liked the following from the First 25 strategies
    - Cloze Activities to introduce vocabulary
    - Vocabnotation- annotation specific to vocabulary; circle the unknown word, draw a line from the word to your definition in the margin, not if it is a Tier 2 or Tier 3 word, draw arrows to words that connect
    - Dump and Clump- Introduce a topic, and group students into pairs or teams of no more than 3, dump by having each group brainstorm a list or words, items, or information related to the topic, clump by categorizing the words in the word list, then each group has to write a descriptive summary sentence for each category using words in the category, finally these sentences are posted around the room or shared in small groups.
    - Affix Organizer that helps familiarize students with common affixes, see diagram
    - Related words- can be used as a preassesment before reading a text or post=reading assessment. Give students 10 to 12 vocabulary words and have them write sentences using those words in the format, I would relate _____ and _____ because.
    - Vocabulary song lyrics- write a rhyme, verse, in the form of a song using the definition and the key term
    - Visual strategies using technology, Visuwords, Visual Thesaurus, Lexipedia, Rewordify
    - Linear Arrangement- subtends have to put words of a given category into a continuum according to shades of meanings, think about temperature terms, hot, warm, cool, freezing, lukewarm, tepid.
    - Enriching the Vocabulary Experience by priming the brain to increase familiarity and comprehension- on their own paper tell students that you are going to real aloud some words from the upcoming unit, between 5 and 20 depending on grade level. However, instead of writing down the word spoken you want them to jot down two other words or ideas that the word brings to mind, pause 10-20 seconds between words. After you finish, have the students turn their paper over and try to remember and jot down the original word
    - It's in the Bag- create a class vocabulary bag so that when new vocabulary is added it gets written on card stock and put in the bag

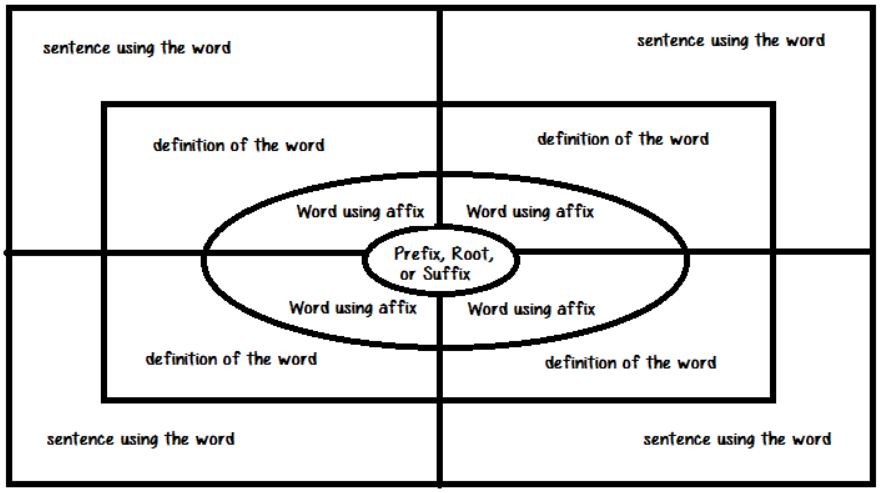
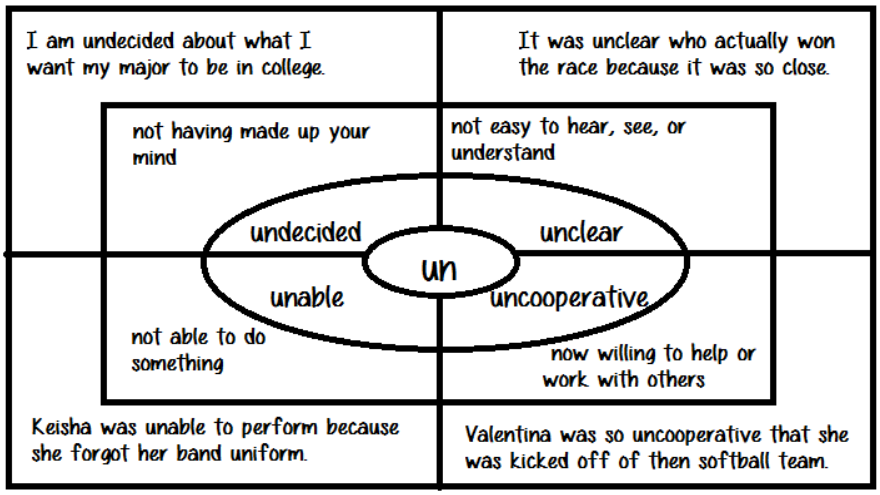
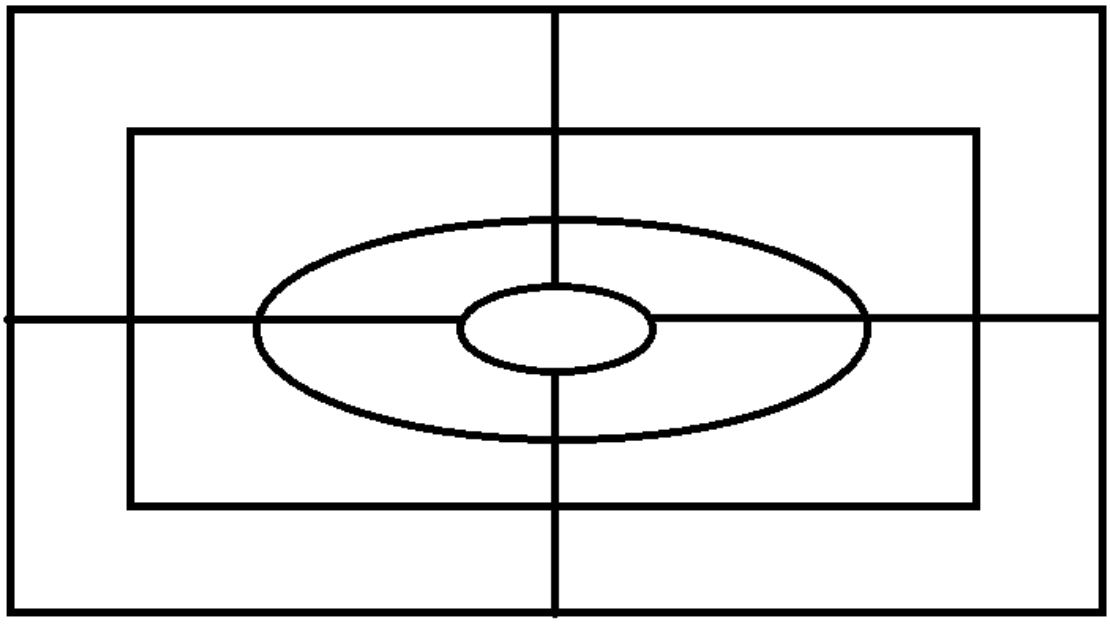
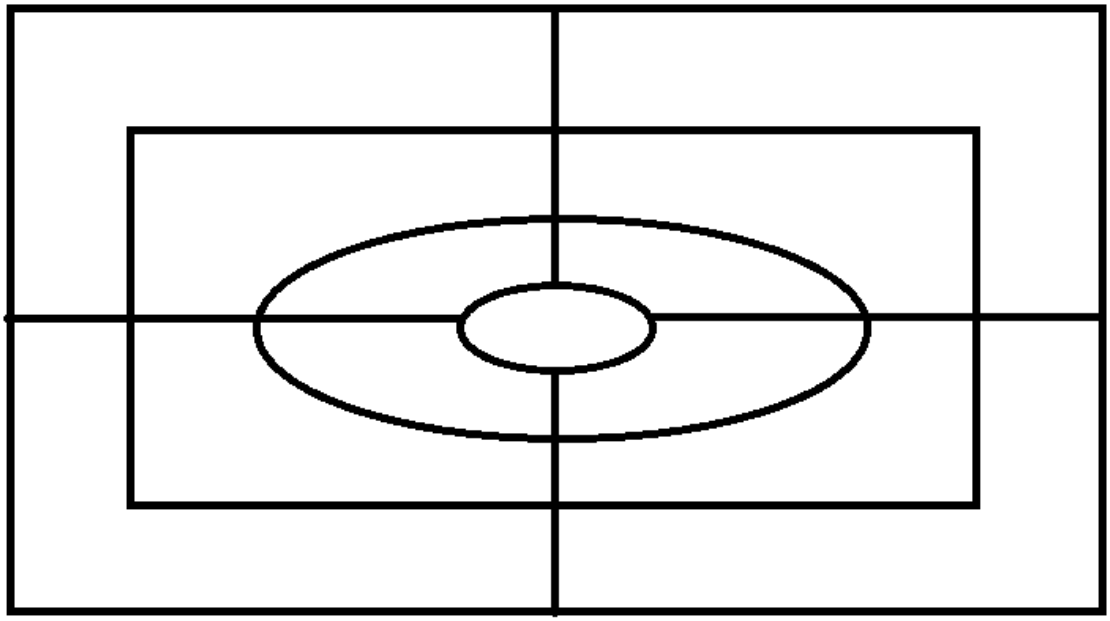
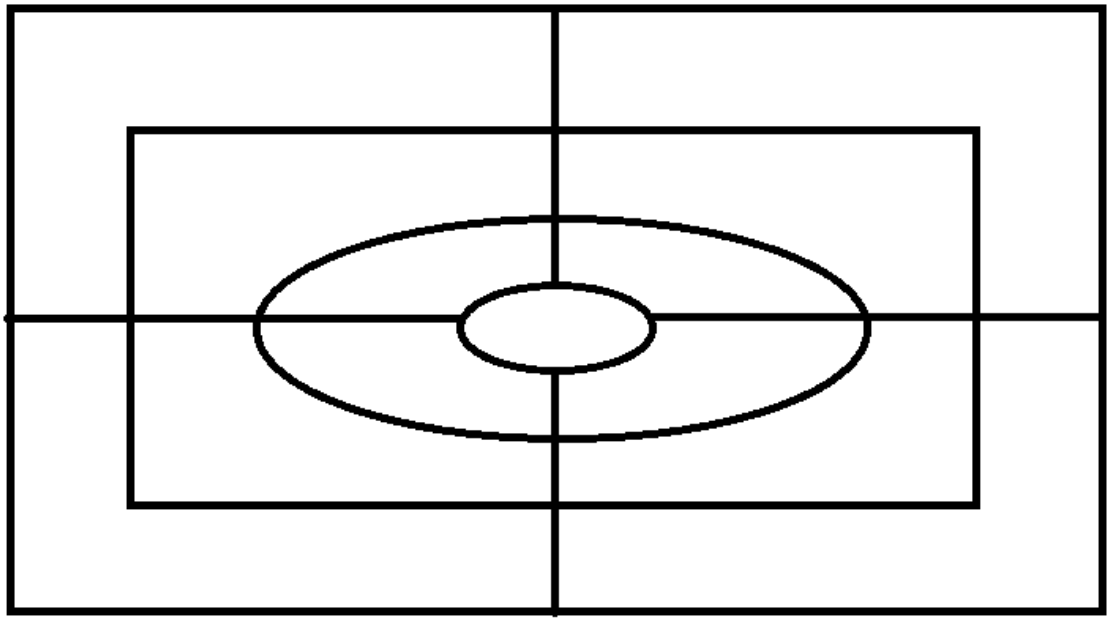
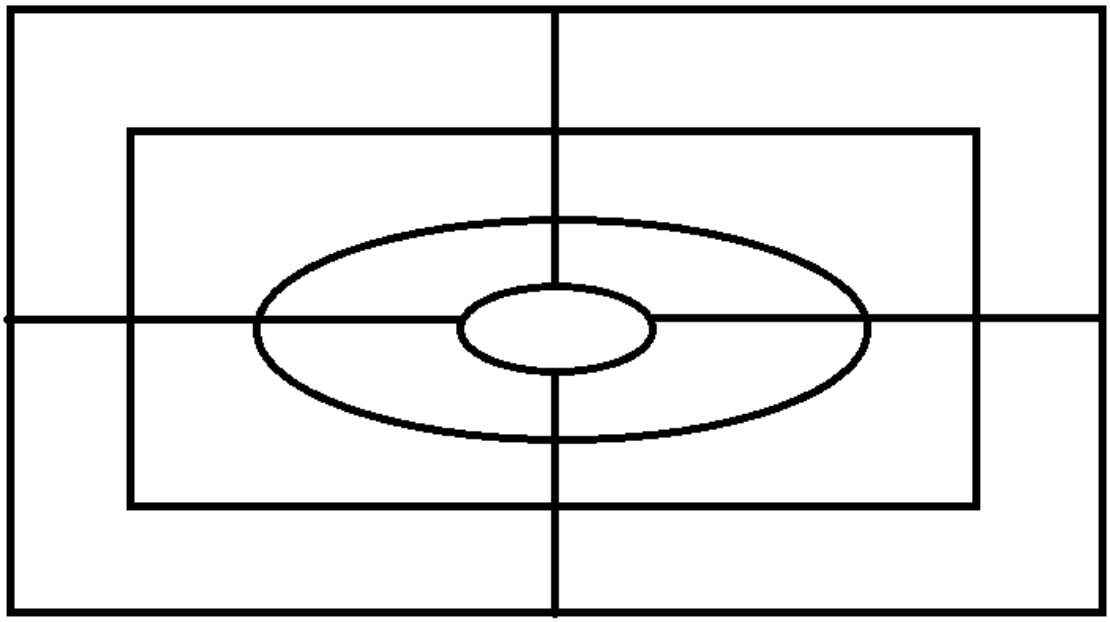
Part 2 Will Include

Chapter 3: Storage: Practice Makes Permanent
Chapter 4: Retrieval: Review for Automaticity
Chapter 5: What Now? Assessment and Planning

If this has piqued your interest please read the book, this is just a brief synopsis; the book is a wealth of information!

Name _____ Date _____ Class Period__

Affix Organizer



Example: