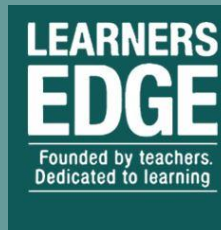


# WORD WISDOM

Tips for Every Teacher to  

---

Improve Vocabulary  
Instruction



# Barb Istas, Presenter

- ❖ Favorite way to spend free time: read, write, travel, bike, hike
- ❖ Former 6<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts Teacher
- ❖ Taught for 25 years in a large suburban district
- ❖ Current Role: Curriculum & Instruction Specialist at Learners Edge



# Words Make a Big Difference.....



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzgzim5m7oU>

# Word Wisdom!

## Webinar Inspiration & Intention

1. Why all educators should teach vocabulary.
2. What to do – how to help your students build bigger vocabularies.
  - ✓ Well-tested examples of systematic vocabulary instruction
  - ✓ Easy ideas for how to teach vocabulary in your classroom
  - ✓ Call to action

[www.LearnersEdgeInc.com](http://www.LearnersEdgeInc.com)



# Why Teach Vocabulary?





*“Vocabulary is the best single indicator of intellectual ability and an accurate predictor of success at school.”*

- W.B. Elley



“We can’t alter how prepared a child is for school, but we can impact any child’s future with our teaching.”



# Research

- Vocabulary has a strong relationship with comprehension
- Effective vocabulary instruction is a key foundation to helping students acquire a wide and diverse vocabulary.
- When teachers engage with vocabulary instruction, they begin selecting words with more intention; develop a toolbox of vocab strategies; create word walls to support learning; observe growth in student learning and achievement.
- Teachers need a variety of instructional strategies for teaching vocabulary.

*-Colorado Reading First Initiative*





# Least Effective Vocabulary Strategies



- Copying definitions
- Writing sentences
- Memorizing definitions from a vocab study sheet
- Asking students to use context for unknown words when there is little contextual support

– Colorado Reading First



## The evidence suggests students need:

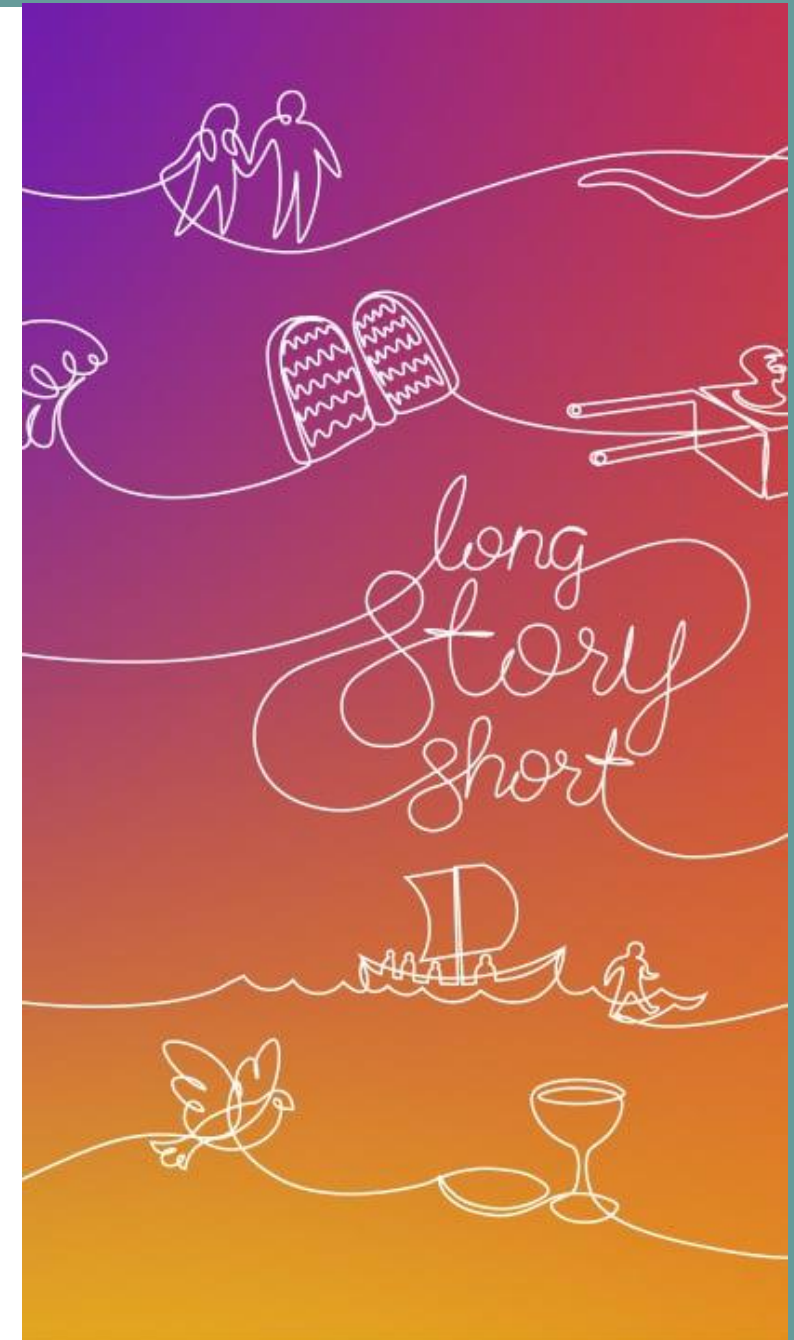
1. explicit instruction in word meanings,
2. repeated exposure to words,
3. opportunities for wide reading and experiences using the words in the presence of their peers.

Fisher, Blanchowicz, & Watts-Taffe;  
Graves, 2006

# Most Effective Strategies

- Direct, explicit instruction of words in context
- Using simple contextual maps
- Teaching specific context clues
- Selecting meaningful words to teach
- Increasing independent reading
- Directly teaching word learning strategies
- Connecting new concepts/meanings to existing knowledge base

– Colorado Reading First



1. What best matches up with your student needs?
2. What could click with your teaching style?





# The Vocabulary Book

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition - Michael Graves (2016)

1. Provide rich and varied language experiences
2. Teach individual words
3. Teach word-learning strategies
4. Promote word consciousness

# Marzano's 6 Step Process

Teacher provides a description, explanation, or examples of the new term.

Students restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.

Students construct a picture, pictograph, or symbolic representation of the term.

Teacher engages students in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their vocabulary notebooks.

Teacher periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another.

Teacher involves students periodically in games that enable them to play with terms and reinforce word knowledge.

# Robust Vocabulary Instruction

## Beck, McKeown, and Kucan

### 5 Components of Effective Vocabulary Instruction

1. Wide Reading
2. High-Quality Oral Language
3. Word Consciousness
4. Direct Teaching of Specific Words
5. Teaching and Modeling Independent Word Learning Strategies





# Word Nerds

## Overturf, Montgomery, Holmes-Smith (2013)

Choose words to teach

Introduce words

Students begin vocabulary journals

Whole-group community building practice

Create anchor chart

Add synonyms (examples) and antonyms (non-examples)

Small-group and independent active practice

Vocabulary celebration

Assess understanding





KEEP  
CALM  
AND

USE YOUR  
WORDS

VOCABULARY  
INSTRUCTION  
IDEAS

# Easy Steps for Every Educator Add Vocabulary-Building Strategies into Daily Instruction

- Determine what words to teach.
- Design a plan for daily vocabulary-building activities.
- Start with a simple routine.
- Build from there.



# Choosing Vocabulary Words: Options

1. Choose words from a set reading program
2. Choose content-area words
3. Choose Tier Two words



# Vocabulary Word Tiers I, II, & III: What you need to know!

## **Tier I                      Basic**

*Examples: big, small, house, table, family*

## **Tier II                      Academic**

*Examples: avoid, explain, enormous, predict,  
maintain, justify*

## **Tier III                      Content Specific**

*Examples: isotope, tectonic plates, mitosis,  
hemisphere, democracy*





# Tier Two Words: 3 Criteria

- Importance and utility
- Instructional potential
- Conceptual understanding



# Repeated Exposures

- I see it.
- I hear it.
- I say it.
- I write it.
- Repeat.....
- I remember it.



# Examples and Non-Examples Synonyms & Antonyms

Students must spend time thinking deeply about both examples and non-examples in order to recognize appropriate word relationships.

Even when a word doesn't have an obvious antonym, it's critical to discuss non-examples of the word so students can grasp distinctions.

**Synonym**

- Wealthy
- Rich

**Antonym**

- Rural
- City

# Thesaurus, anyone?





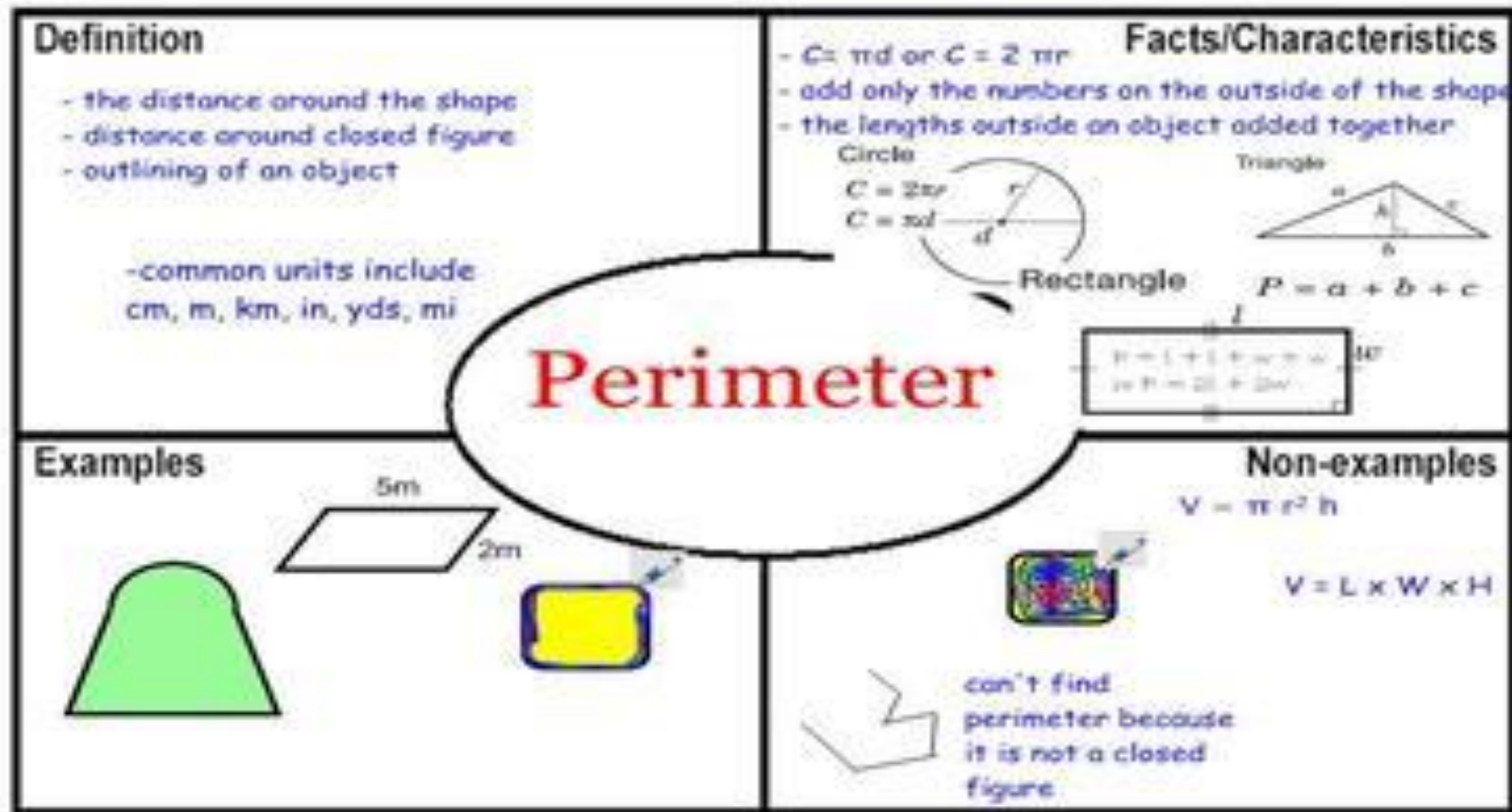
# Simple strategies & tools:

1. Independent reading
2. Intentional read alouds
3. Wide reading
4. Word walls
5. Word & sentence prediction
6. Trying out the words
7. Vocabulary journals
8. Rating the words

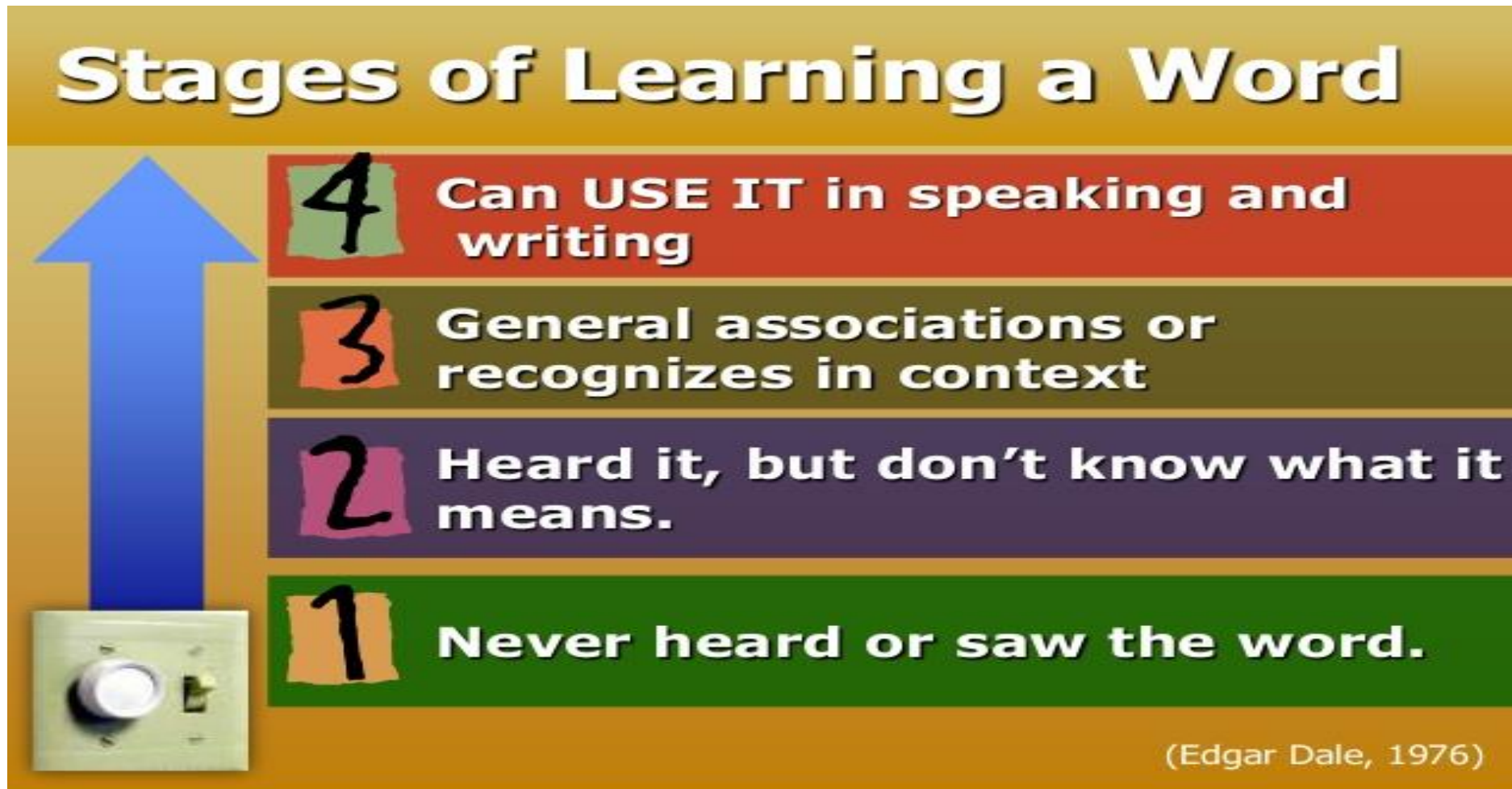


# Frayer vocabulary model - sample

Definition:	Characteristics:	
Vocabulary Term:		
Examples:	Image Representation:	Non-Examples



# 4 Stages of Word Learning





# Simple goals using big ideas:

1. Choose the Right Words
2. Ensure Repeated, Rich Exposure
3. Encourage Use & Experimentation
4. Teach Word Learning Strategies

*The Words Students Need,*  
Lawrence, White & Snow (Education  
Leadership, 2010)



*“The ultimate goal for teachers is to develop the kind of environment that will help students become word confident.....words have power, and students who can use vocabulary appropriately and confidently are much more likely to be successful in school.”*

*Word Nerds, Ch. 2. Overturf,  
Montgomery, Holmes-Smith*

# What can you do to inspire *word confidence* in your classroom?

- Set the tone
- Establish routines
- Honor effort and celebrate mastery
- Spark academic conversations





# THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

---





# References and Resources- Videos

- [Explicit Vocabulary Teaching Strategies](#)
- [List-Group-Label Vocabulary Strategy](#)
- [Semantic Gradients Vocabulary Strategy](#)
- [Concept Sort Vocabulary Strategy](#)
- [Tier II Vocabulary Instruction](#)
- [Let's Teach: Vocabulary Development with a Concept Definition Map](#)
- ["Prefixes, Suffixes, & Roots" Rap www.educationalrap.com](http://www.educationalrap.com)
- [The Power of Words](#)

# References and Resources - Articles

Edutopia - Doing It Differently: Tips for Teaching Vocabulary

AFT - The Early Catastrophe - 30 Million Word Gap

Education Leadership - The Words Students Need

American Educator - The Magic of Words

ASCD - The Art and Science of Teaching - Six Steps to Better Vocabulary Instruction

Scholastic - 10 Research-Tested Ways to Build Children's Vocabulary

TextProject E4: Exceptional Expressions for Everyday Events

[http://www.altonschools.org/media/pdf/Marzano\\_Vocab.pdf](http://www.altonschools.org/media/pdf/Marzano_Vocab.pdf)

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading/bestpractices/vocabulary/pdf/concept.pdf>

# References and Resources - Books

Vocabulary Games for the Classroom by Lindsey Carlton and Robert J. Marzano

Bringing Words to Life by Isabel Beck

Word Nerds by Overturf, Montgomery, Holmes Smith

Words, Words, Words by Janet Allen

Teaching Basic and Advanced Vocabulary: A Framework for Direct Instruction by Robert J. Marzano

# References and Resources - Websites & Tools

[ReadWriteThink](#)

[Reading Rockets](#)

[VisualThesaurus](#)

[Vocabulogic: Bridging the Verbal Divide - Blog](#)

[Frayer model for vocabulary - sample](#)