



Vocabulary: Examples and Non-examples

Introduction

The most important aspect of teaching vocabulary is selecting a set of appropriate examples. Using examples (positive examples) and non examples (negative examples) that are only minimally different focuses student attention on the characteristics of the word or concept being taught.

One framework for organising examples and non examples of key words and concepts is a graphic organiser known as the Frayer Model (Frayer, Frederick, & Klausmeier 1969).

The framework of the Frayer Model includes:

- the concept word,
- the definition,
- characteristics of the concept word,
- examples of the concept word, and
- non-examples of the concept word.

The Frayer model takes extensive time so would be used to teach vocabulary that is critical to the unit of work or understanding a text.

The following teaching steps are adapted from Denton, C., Bryan, D., Wexler, J., Reed, D. & Vaughn, S. (2007). *Effective instruction for middle school students with reading difficulties: The reading teacher's sourcebook*. University of Texas:Austin.

Purpose

Students will develop an understanding of key words by generating examples and non examples of words.

Materials

- Topic or text
- Overhead projector, chalkboard, chart paper or Interactive White Board (IWB).
- Two overhead transparencies of a blank Frayer Model graphic organiser (or drawn on chart paper or on the board/IWB).
- Copies of blank Frayer Model graphic organisers for students (Appendix 2).

Teaching steps

1. Teacher previews text

Look for key words (see Vocabulary Strategies – Choosing Words to Teach) that represent central concepts in the topic or text. Identify one or two important words that are closely related to the topic of the text and that are good choices for teaching students to generate examples and non-examples of words.

2. State Objective/Purpose

Today we are going to learn to produce examples and non-examples of important vocabulary words. Listing examples and non-examples of words can help you have a better understanding of important words in a topic/text and can help you remember these words.

3. Model and teach with whole class

- Explain the concept of examples and non-examples.

Let's think about the word birds. What are some examples of birds?

Accept a few student responses. Don't allow more than a minute or so for this.

Yes, parrots, magpies, cockatoos and rosellas are all examples of birds. A non-example would be a word that is not an example of a bird. That could be almost anything, couldn't it? After all, a boat is not a bird. Neither is a house. But, these non-examples won't help us understand and remember what birds are. It is important to come up with non-examples that are related to the word, but that are not examples of the word. A non-example of a bird would be a bee. Bees are like birds because they are living things and they fly, but they are not examples of birds. Another non-example of a bird is a grasshopper. Grasshoppers are living things but they are not birds. What are some other non-examples of birds?

Accept student responses and provide guidance as necessary.

- Show students the blank Frayer Model graphic organiser on board/overhead/IWB. Tell students that they will be using it as a framework as they talk about examples and non-examples of words. Point out that the word will be placed in the centre, and that there are spaces to write a definition, characteristics, examples, and non-examples of the word.

Definition (in own words)	Characteristics
Target word/concept	
Example	Non-example

- Distribute blank Frayer Model graphic organisers to students and ask them to copy the information from the board/transparency as you model the process.
- Use Think Aloud to model completing the Frayer Model graphic organiser for another example related to a text or topic being used as part of the classroom program.

4. Provide guided practice with whole class or small group or partners

- Put a blank Frayer Model transparency on the overhead/IWB and distribute blank Frayer Model sheets to partners.
- Write the key content-specific word in the middle of the graphic organiser and ask students to do the same.
- Tell students that they will complete the graphic organiser together as they read the text. Before reading the text, provide clear “student-friendly” definitions of the key content-specific word and any other key vocabulary and have students quickly preview the selection, examining illustrations, headings, subheadings and diagrams. Previewing should take no longer than 1–2 minutes. Ask students what they think they will learn in the selection. Allow no more than 3–5 minutes for this discussion.
- Have students read the first part of the text with their partners.
- After students have read the first section of the text, work as a class to complete any part of the Frayer Model graphic organiser that can be finished based on that section. Ask students to tell *why* the terms they identify are examples and non-examples of the selected concept/word.
- Read the next section of text and continue to add to the graphic organiser.

5. Provide independent practice

When students are proficient with the process, have them continue to work in partners, reading and adding to their graphic organisers. Monitor student work carefully and provide scaffolding and feedback as needed.

6. Generalisation

Discuss with students how might writing down examples and non-examples of words and using the graphic organiser help you learning the meanings of words in this and other KLAs.

Technology Tip

Mind mapping tools could be used to represent the graphic organiser used in this strategy. Below are examples of some free mind mapping tools:

XMind: <http://www.xmind.net>

Freemind http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

References

Denton, C., Bryan, D., Wexler, J., Reed, D. & Vaughn, S. (2007). Effective instruction for middle school students with reading difficulties: The reading teacher’s sourcebook. University of Texas:Austin.

Frayer, D., Frederick, W. C., and Klausmeier, H. J. (1969). A Schema for Testing the Level of Cognitive Mastery, Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Education Research

Appendix 1 – Examples using the Frayer Model

<p>Definition (in own words)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a clause which expresses a complete thought 	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has a subject and verb can stand alone as a sentence
<p>INDEPENDENT CLAUSE</p>	
<p>Examples (from own life)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> She laughed. I love to read. 	<p>Non-Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> left our house because she was late in the room

<p>Definition (in own words)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A whole number with only two different divisors (factors), 1 and itself. 	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 is the only even prime number 0 and 1 are not prime Every whole number can be written as a product of primes
<p>PRIME NUMBER</p>	
<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,3,5,7,11,13... 	<p>Non-Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14

Appendix 2 – Frayer Model Graphic Organiser

Definition (in own words)	Characteristics
Target word/concept -	
Examples	Non-examples