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Strategram

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Word Mapping

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WHAT'S UP WITH WORD MAPPING?

How do we learn words? That is the question I first asked myself when I began to research vocabulary teaching and learning. Today, vocabulary is an integral part of any content classroom; however...

WHY TEACH THE WORD MAPPING STRATEGY?

Think for a moment and remember what you do when you come across a word for which you do not know the meaning. Do you look around and try to use context clues? Unfortunately, not all contexts are created equal. Strong contexts describe the word or use a synonym, but weak contexts give very little or no hint to the word's meaning. What if there is no context? Do you look at the word and break it apart into smaller, more manageable words or parts with meaning? Good readers do a variety of these things. They use context (when available), word structure (breaking words into smaller parts), and *etymology* (word origins) to figure out overall meaning.

Vocabulary knowledge is a predictor of academic success, yet students who are not proficient readers struggle with knowing the meanings of academically important vocabulary. Students who struggle in this area lack the strategies necessary to help them learn or predict the meanings of unknown words.

OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGY

The *Word Mapping Strategy* provides a set of steps students can use to predict the meanings of unknown words while reading and learning new information. The strategy helps students quickly learn how to predict the meanings of unknown words. It will teach students to (a) identify parts of words that have meaning, (b) learn the meaning of high-frequency word parts, and (c) use the meaning of those word parts to predict the meaning of whole words. These skills are critical when students take standardized reading comprehension tests on which they are required to identify the meaning of words among several choices and where they are required to read passages and answer questions about them. Providing a rationale for learning the strategy and talking about situations in which students can use the strategy will increase students' commitment to learn how to predict the meaning of words.

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STEPS OF THE WORD MAPPING STRATEGY

The steps of the *Word Mapping Strategy* specify how a student thinks and acts while using the strategy. Following is an explanation of what the student does in each step.

The steps of the *Word Mapping Strategy* should be performed in quick succession. With some practice, students will learn to predict the meaning of unknown words by breaking them into smaller, more meaningful parts and then making sense of those

word parts by putting the meaning of those parts together. By using etymology, or word origins, to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words, students can begin to make meaningful guesses and then apply that information to what they are reading. The benefits of using such a strategy for word learning are powerful. Students begin to internalize and make the strategy their own. Before long, they will not need word maps to figure out an unknown word's meaning; instead, they will be able to visualize and go through the process instantaneously in their minds. That is the goal.

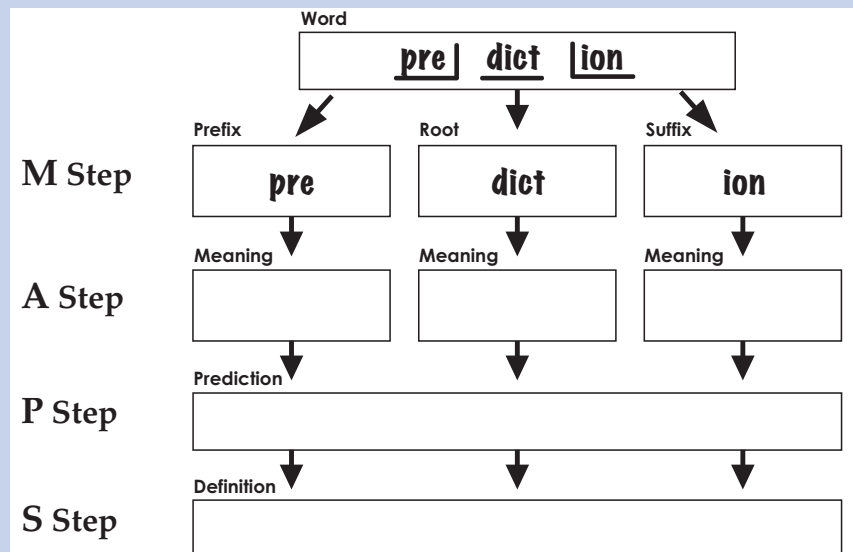
WORD MAPPING STRATEGY STEPS

1. **Map** the word parts
2. **Attack** the meaning of each part
3. **Predict** the word's meaning
4. **See** if you're right!

TIP: When you introduce the Word Mapping Strategy to students, use an overhead transparency or poster to help emphasize the steps.

M – Map the word parts

When mapping the word parts, students will write the word in the top box on the Word Maps, a graphic device integral to use of the strategy. Then, they will look for the prefix, suffix, and root in the word and place each word part in the first row of boxes under the word. Students must keep in mind that not all words have prefixes or suffixes, and some words have more than one. That means some boxes might be blank and others might contain two word parts.



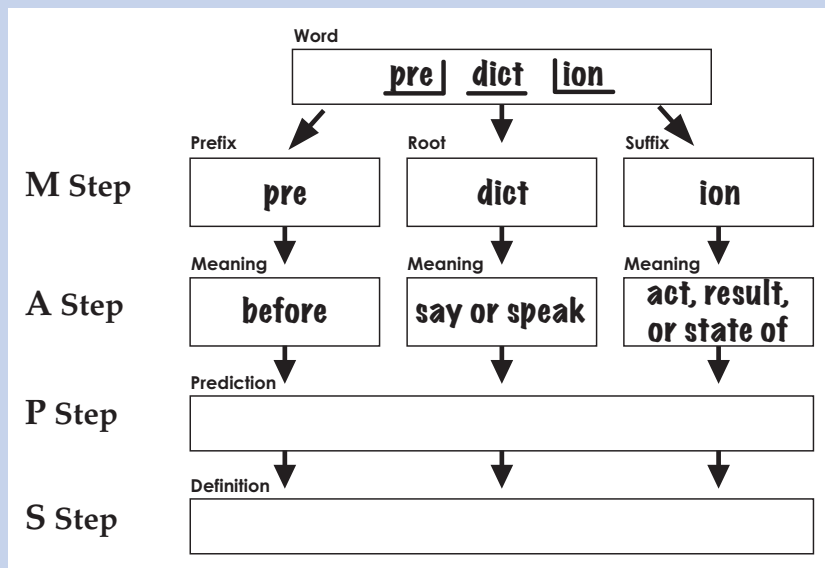
TIP: When you write the word in the first box, model how to break the word into smaller parts using the symbols for isolating the prefix (backwards "L"), separating the suffix ("L"), and finding the root (" ").

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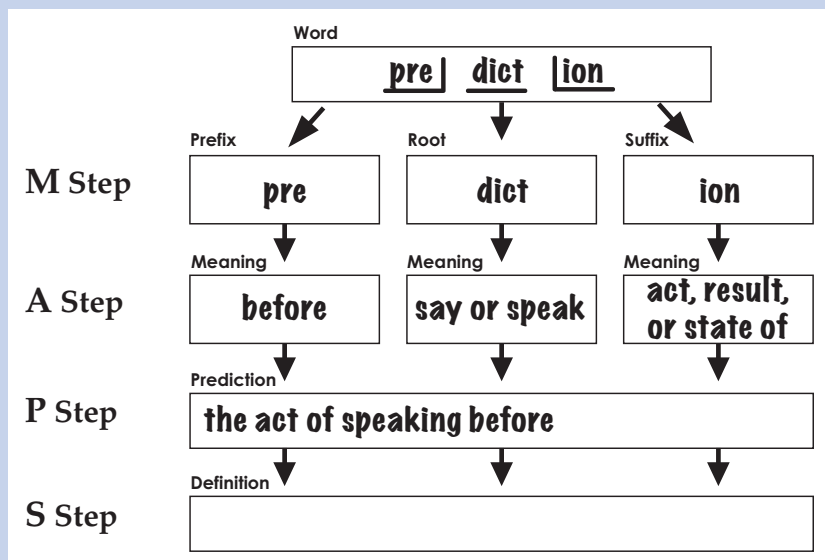
A – Attack the meaning of each part

After students break the word into its meaningful parts, they write the meaning of each part in the appropriate box in the next row. Students use their word part lists (prefixes, suffixes, and roots) to find the meaning of each word part. Because some word parts have more than one meaning, encourage students to write all possible meanings in the corresponding box, to be explored later when making the prediction of the word’s meaning.



P – Predict the word’s meaning

When students are making a prediction, it is important to remember to “play” with the word part meanings. Not all words will break down neatly into meaningful parts; some parts have more than one meaning and require some creativity when making a prediction. Students will begin to translate the meaning of the word parts into a more cohesive definition by starting with the root. Say the root and add the meaning of the prefix to it; this will change or add to the meaning of the root. Lastly, consider the meaning of the suffix; it serves as a backdrop for forming a prediction. Encourage students to create their best, most educated guess and write it in the first long box. In developing the meaning of the word, students should try to use the meaning of the suffix at the beginning of their prediction, as shown in the example.



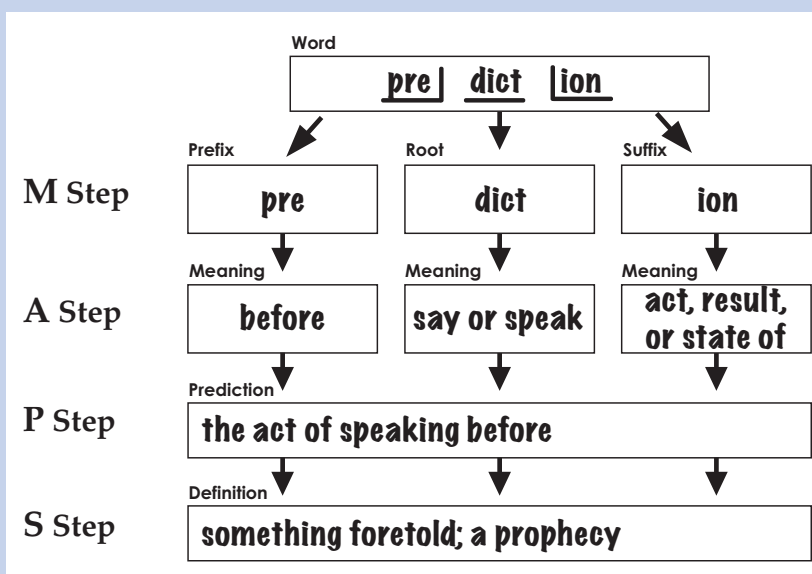
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S – See if you’re right!

After students have made a prediction, they must see whether the definition they invented fits into the context in which the word was encountered. Students can read the sentence again to see whether the definition works in the sentence. If it does not seem to fit, they might look up a definition using a dictionary or a computer search, or they might ask someone else what it means. Sometimes the definition will match the prediction perfectly, sometimes students can make a connection between the two, and at other times, it takes a stretch of the imagination to see a relationship. Finally, students write the correct, or dictionary-derived, definition in the bottom box and make comparisons to their prediction.



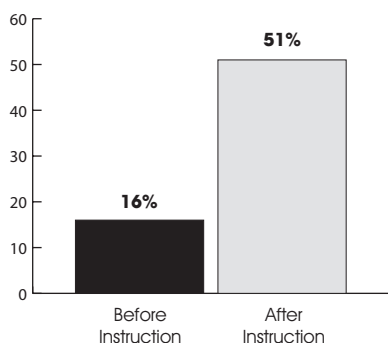
WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Research conducted using the *Word Mapping Strategy* with students enrolled in an inclusive English 9 course in an urban public high school reported significant and encouraging results with respect to student performance. Students who used the *Word Mapping Strategy*

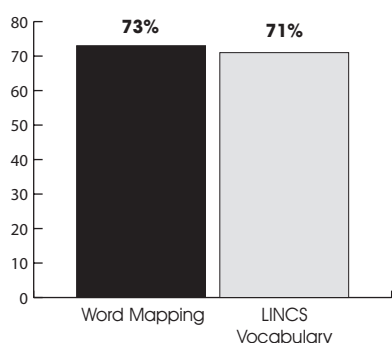
were able to correctly predict the meanings of unknown words 51 percent of the time compared to their rate before instruction (16 percent). In addition, students were able to learn the meanings of targeted vocabulary, resulting in an average score of 73 percent on posttests. This is on par with the students who were taught the *LINCS Vocabulary*

Strategy (Ellis, 1992) in place of *Word Mapping*, who received an average score of 71 percent. Furthermore, students who used the *Word Mapping Strategy* expressed satisfaction with learning the strategy steps and the processes used to increase their academic knowledge base and performance.

Student Performance on Prediction Test



Student Performance on Word Knowledge Test



HOW DOES WORD MAPPING FIT INTO TIERED INSTRUCTION?

Many schools are adopting tiered models of instruction (e.g., the Center for Research on Learning’s Content Literacy Continuum® or response to intervention) and are seeking research-based interventions to use at each tier. According

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to a report on struggling adolescent readers and effective instruction at the secondary level (Boardman et al., 2008), word study (morphology)—along with fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation—is an integral part of increasing academic literacy. The *Word Mapping Strategy* can provide an explicit, systematic approach that teachers and students can use successfully in settings ranging from general education to the most explicit small-group or one-on-one instruction. For example, using the CLC® levels, here are some of the ways teachers might incorporate the *Word Mapping Strategy* into content instruction:

Level 1: Content Mastery. At this level, general education teachers can use the *Word Mapping Strategy* by demonstrating its use when difficult or unknown words come up when reading or learning new vocabulary. Teachers can use the strategy steps to provide meaning and overall comprehension to a reading passage or sentence. Remember to emphasize the importance of word learning and how etymology can provide clues to unlock these meanings.

TIP: *Distribute bookmarks or hang posters in the classroom to increase student awareness of the strategy and its steps.*

Level 2: Embedded Strategy Instruction. Here, teachers (general or special) can embed and

directly teach the *Word Mapping Strategy* by describing and modeling the strategy steps, then providing practice and application opportunities for targeted academic vocabulary. The teacher may choose to use pertinent lessons from the manual to reinforce and practice strategy uses. The teacher then continues to cue the students to its use throughout the year.

Level 3: Explicit Strategy Instruction. Teachers (general, special, or specialist) engage students in explicit and targeted instruction using the *Word Mapping Strategy* process. Here, the focus is to provide ample corrective feedback and guided practice with grade-level materials using the strategy. Emphasis should be to help students to use the strategy independently in various settings to increase their academic performance in the content areas. Teachers may decide to collaborate with colleagues to discuss student progress and new ways to use or teach the strategy.

Level 4: Intensive Skill Development. Teachers (special, specialist, or speech and language) provide more intensive and explicit literacy instruction. Teachers may need to provide more remedial methods in basic skill instruction. The *Word Mapping Strategy* can be used with students who are at or above the fourth-grade reading level. However, many will be able to benefit from the systematic approach and lessons provided in the manual.

Level 5: Intensive Clinical/Therapeutic Intervention. Teachers (specialist or speech and language) can provide interven-

tions to support learners with language deficits. At this level, students must learn foundations of language so that they may learn core content and how to be strategic thinkers. Morphology, or structural analysis, is a component of language, and the *Word Mapping Strategy* is an approach that infuses morphemic principles.

Finally, when having conversations about tiered-instruction or interventions, another component worth considering is after-school programming. *Word Mapping* can easily fit into an after-school or tutoring program.

(For more information about the CLC and its levels, visit <http://kucrl.org>; video on CLC levels and instruction: <http://clc.kucrl.org/video>)

The bottom line is word study is an essential part of content knowledge and learning. Explicit and systematic instruction that involves the manipulation and dissection of words is beneficial to student academic performance. Exploring ways to effectively use the *Word Mapping Strategy* across the various instruction levels is important and, in the long run, such use will promote improved student achievement.

REFERENCES

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- Ellis, E.S. (1992). *LINCS: A Starter Strategy for Vocabulary Learning*. Lawrence, KS: Edge Enterprises, Inc.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES 2010

Descriptions and Registration Forms at <http://kucrl.org/institutes>

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning invites you to explore effective instructional methods through our series of institutes geared toward classroom teachers, higher education faculty, and instructional coaches. These institutes are practical, hands-on experiences that will enable you to implement Strategic Instruction Model® (SIM) interventions or instructional coaching methods effectively. For experienced SIM teachers who successfully complete an application process, we offer an institute to begin the process for SIM Professional Developer certification.

Fees cover the cost of materials and instruction. Participants will be responsible for their own transportation, housing, and meals.

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June 1-5, 2010—10 a.m. Tuesday to noon Saturday, Lawrence, Kan.

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\$975 (after April 26: \$1,000)
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\$450
Choice of three dates in 2010:
January 28-30, 2010
August 9-11, 2010
October 4-6, 2010

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August 12-14, 2010
October 7-9, 2010



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Instructional Coaching Institute, Level 1, Lawrence, Kan.
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Instructional Coaching Institute, Level 2, Lawrence, Kan.
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Oct. 9-10, 2009

CAL-SIM
California State University, Northridge
Educator & Administrator tracks only
Note: For educators and administrators. *This conference is not a SIM Professional Developer update.*
Keynote: Don Deshler
For details, contact Dr. Beth Lasky,
818-677-2725, beth.lasky@csun.edu

Oct. 12-14, 2009

Instructional Coaching Conference
Lawrence, Kan.
<http://instructionalcoach.org/>

Oct. 23-24, 2009

Northeast SIM Update
Radisson Hotel Providence Airport,
Providence, RI

Jan. 28-30, 2010

Instructional Coaching Institute, Level 1, Lawrence, Kan.
<http://instructionalcoach.org/>

Feb. 25-27, 2010

Southeast SIM Update
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Charleston, SC

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SIM Learning Strategies Class for
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Lawrence, Kan.
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June 1-5, 2010

Teaching Content to All: Effective
College Teaching, Lawrence, Kan.
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June 15-18, 2010

SIM Reading and Writing Strategies
Lawrence, Kan.
<http://www.kucrl.org/institutes/>

June 15-18, 2010

More SIM Strategies, Lawrence, Kan.
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June 21-25, 2010

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Professional Developers in Content
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June 22-25, 2010

Introduction to Teaching with
Content Enhancement
Lawrence, Kan.
<http://www.kucrl.org/institutes/>

June 23-25, 2010

SIM for Administrators
Lawrence, Kan.
<http://www.kucrl.org/institutes/>

July 13-16, 2010

International SIM Conference and
Preconference, Lawrence, Kan.
<http://sim2009.kucrl.org>

Aug. 9-11, 2010

Instructional Coaching Institute, Level
1, Lawrence, Kan.
<http://instructionalcoach.org/>

Aug. 12-14, 2010

Instructional Coaching Institute, Level
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Oct. 4-6, 2010

Instructional Coaching Institute, Level
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Oct. 7-9, 2010

Instructional Coaching Institute, Level
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Oct. 11-13, 2010

Instructional Coaching Conference
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ALTEC: Advanced Learning Technologies in Education Consortia

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Division of Adult Studies

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<http://iral.kucrl.org>

Kansas Coaching Project

<http://instructionalcoach.org>

Professional Development

Research Institute

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NEW ONLINE

CRL Learns

CRL Learns, the Center's professional learning initiative, kicked off a new year with a "workout" session led by Jim Knight. Visit the website to see video of Jim's Big Four presentation.

<http://crllearns.kucrl.org>

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