

VOCABULARY IDEAS THAT WORK!

Teaching vocabulary in the content area is sometimes a tedious and frustrating job. Here is an idea that may work for you. Select the vocabulary words you want the students to focus on from the current lesson. Discuss the topic and brainstorm with the students about the meanings of these words. Then divide the students into groups of two and instruct them to hold a conversation using as many of the words as possible. The partner keeps track of how many vocabulary words his partner uses. This can be followed with a writing activity. Have the students write a summary of the topic using the new vocabulary words. Then have them read each other's papers to determine whether or not the words have been used properly. (This idea was adapted from *Capsule Vocabulary* by Jayne Perlick, a teacher in the Beaver Dam School District in Wisconsin.)

Pam Upton, math teacher, has her students keep vocabulary packets. In the packets you can find examples of the Raphael/Schwartz map, picture maps, RAFT assignments, group-list-label, and lots of other CRISS strategies. Recently she had her students create a matching vocabulary quiz. Each student made up his own quiz. Some students used words and definitions; some used words and problems; some created a crossword puzzle, and others, a game. Students were told that the "best" vocabulary quiz would be used as the final text for the class and the student who wrote it would be exempt from the test.

Gordy Smith, a science teacher in Kalispell, uses "science bingo" to help his students learn concepts and vocabulary. He gives the students a list of 25 vocabulary words or concepts. The students set up their own bingo cards using the information in place of the usual numbers. Then Gordy reads definitions, questions, or problems dealing with the current topic. The students must match the answers on their cards with the information the teacher reads. If they have a "bingo," they win bonus points. They need to have read the chapter and must be familiar with the vocabulary in order to play the game. This is a good way to review at the end of a unit or chapter.

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