

Vocabulary Strategies for ESL Learners

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Teachers may find the following strategies helpful for instructing students for whom English is a second language.

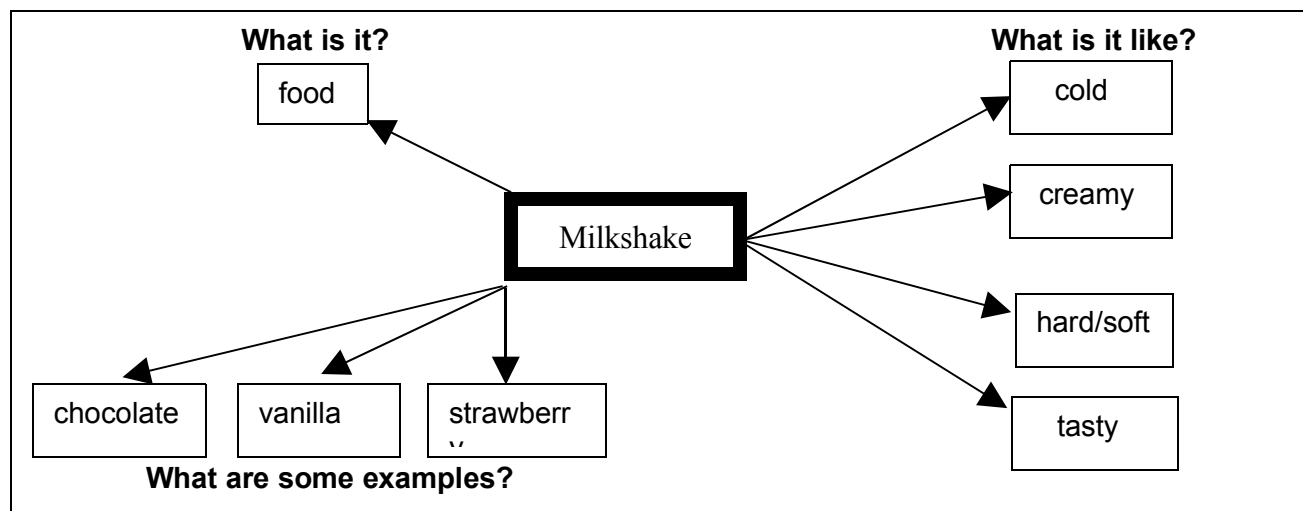
Keyword Method

A keyword is a word that is familiar to the student but sounds acoustically similar to the target word that is being introduced. In the keyword method, the student is taught to select a keyword and construct a visual image that connects the target word with the familiar, concrete keyword. For example, if the target word is the English word “*dormant*,” the Spanish-speaking student links it to “*dormir*,” which means *to sleep* in her native language, and draws a picture of a sleeping plant (Baumann & Kameenui, 1991).

Word Map

The word map technique is useful for helping students develop a general concept of “definition.” It focuses on three questions, “*What is it?*” “*What is it like?*” and “*What are some examples?*,” to make students aware of the types of information that make up a definition and how that information is organized (Schwartz & Raphael, 1985). A word map for *ice cream* is provided below (example from Holder, 1997).

Word Map Diagram



References

- Baumann, J. F., & Kameenui, E. J. (1991). Research on vocabulary instruction: Ode to Voltaire. In J. Flood, J. D. Lapp, & J. R. Squire (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (pp. 604-632). New York: Macmillan.
- Schwartz, R. M., & Raphael, T. E. (1985). Concept of definition: A key to improving students' vocabulary. *The Reading Teacher*, 39, 198-205