## Vocabulary Development

**SS-7. Verbal and Visual Word Association (VVWA)**

**What is it?**

The VVWA strategy puts together a vocabulary word and its definition with both a visual of the term and a personal association or characteristic of the term. VVWA helps students learn vocabulary on their own and helps them retain the new vocabulary through visual characteristic associations. This strategy has been shown to be especially effective for low-achieving students and for second language learners in content area classes (Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 2001).

**How could it be used in instruction?**

Often the vocabulary can be represented visually. This strategy helps students make immediate visual associations to new vocabulary. As students discover the critical characteristics of a concept or make personal associations, they combine these with definitions and visuals to deepen their understanding.
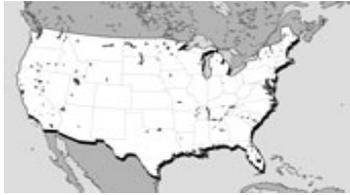
**How to use it:**

1.  Select vocabulary terms that would be appropriate for using VVWA.

2.  Direct students to draw a rectangle divided into four sections.

3.  Instruct students to write the vocabulary word in the upper-left box of the rectangle. Instruct them to write the text definition of the term or give them a definition to write in the lower-left box.

4.  Direct students to draw a visual representation of the vocabulary word (perhaps found in a graphic in the text) in the upper-right box of the rectangle. Then suggest that they make their own personal association, an example or characteristic, to put in the fourth box at the lower right.

See also *Teaching Reading in Mathematics, 2ⁿᵈ Ed.,* pp. 84–85.

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## Verbal and Visual Word Association

| Vocabulary Term | Visual Representation |
|---|---|
| Definition | Personal Association or Characteristic |

| | |
|---|---|
| Manifest Destiny |  |
| The belief in the 19th century that the U.S. would, and had the right to, inevitably expand westward all the way to the Pacific Ocean. |  |