

# Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Middle School.

Presenters:

Maria Elena Faz-Enriquez

Sonia Pena



# Today's Talk

As most classes are being taught online, teachers are looking for practical ways to teach vocabulary in an e-environment.

- Synchronous classes
- Asynchronous classes
- Hybrid

How can we best teach content and literacy to our English Learners?



# Three Objectives:


1. Why vocabulary?
2. Which words?
3. What to do with words?



# Why vocabulary?

**Students' academic vocabulary knowledge is crucial to their success in school.**

Robert Marzano



# Academic Vocabulary

A way of

- reading
- writing
- speaking
- listening

Thinking!!

that reflects valued Knowledge and effective communication skills.



# Which Words?

## Domain Specific Words

- Low frequency
- Content specific

**BRICK WORDS**

Science: Meteorology, Dewpoint

Math: scalene triangle, polygon

Social Studies: tectonic plate, butte

## Gen Academic Vocabulary

- Frequent across academic domains
- Different definitions relevant to different domains

**MORTAR WORDS**

Analyze, assume, context, period, Role, conduct, range, document, link, minor, register, error, code, project, sum

## Signal words, Symbols, Abbreviations and Phrases

- All domains

Nonetheless, on the other hand, Furthermore, because, since, govt. UN, PSI

**When choosing words to teach, ask yourself:**

*Does the word represent a specific concept students definitely need to know?*

*Will the word be used again during the school year?*

## Brick Words:

- domain specific (content specific)

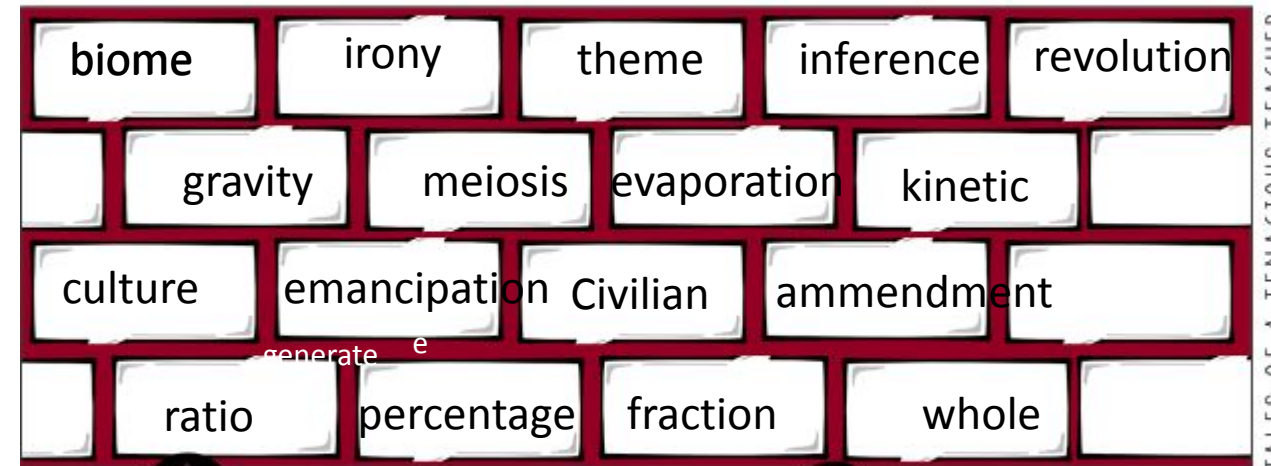
## Mortar Words:

- general academic (cross curricular)

- estimate
- analyze
- justify
- explain
- describe
- evaluate
- create

# BRICKS & MORTAR

BRICKS AND MORTAR COINED BY DUTRO & MORAN (2003)



KEY VOCABULARY  
WORDS



SIGNAL WORDS  
& PHRASES



# Example of Academic Vocabulary necessary for a Social Studies Class

<b>Brick Words</b> Essential to understand the lesson.	<b>Mortar Words</b> For assessment task, and/or to understand action of lesson.	<b>Signal Words, Symbols Abbreviations and Phrases</b> Ok to define <u>each time they come up.</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Immigrant</li><li>○ Citizen</li><li>○ Discrimination</li><li>○ Civil Rights</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Analyze</li><li>○ Evidence</li><li>○ Contrast</li><li>○ Argue</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Nevertheless</li><li>○ On the other hand</li><li>○ Govt.</li><li>○ CBP</li></ul>





**Verbal**

**and**

**Visual Associations**

**Brick Words**



# Verbal and Visual Associations

Activities that connect learning to vocal  
unwritten or spoken tasks

The teacher gives students a quick verbal definition and several examples of a **Brick Word**. Then he/she moves to visual associations so that the students can begin to associate the brick with an image.

A group of persons sworn to give a verdict.



Jury

Ju-ry

Jury

**Entraînement physique** destiné à **développer musculature**.

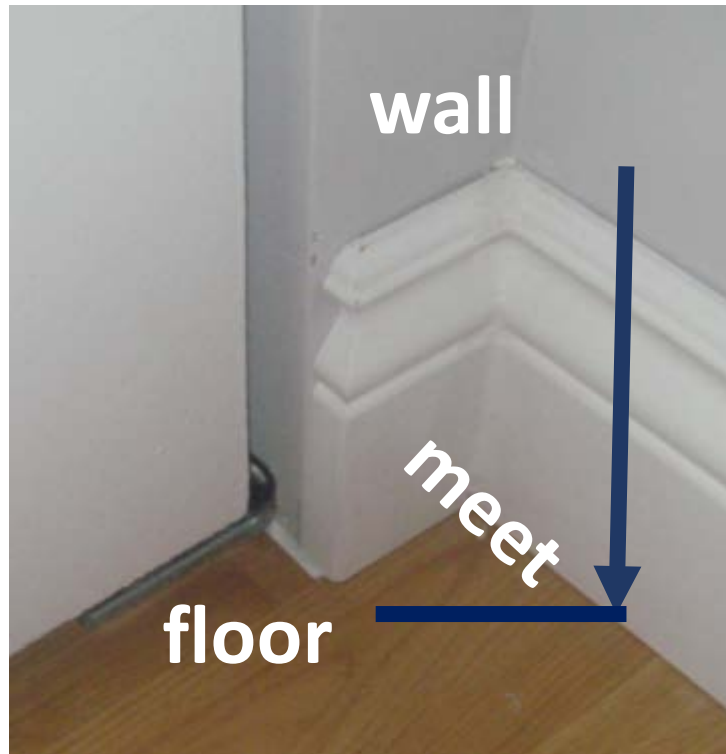


**muscultation**

**mus-cu-la-tion**

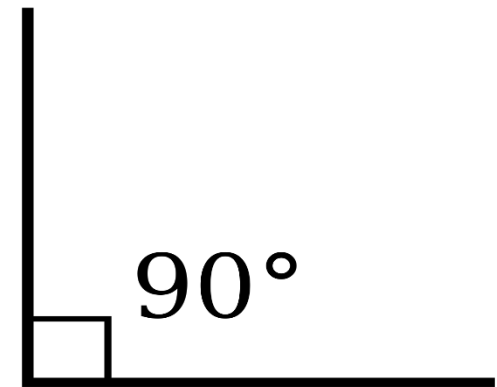
**muscultation**

I am 90 degrees and you can find me in corners where the floor meets the wall.



Right Angle

Right Angle



# Start with what they know

<http://www.mathisfun.com>

**Ms. Williams:** What can you tell me about this **shape**, Eduardo?

**Eduardo:** It looks like a diamond.

**Ms. Williams:** It does look like a diamond. We call these shapes that look like diamonds a **rhombus**. What else do you notice about the **rhombus**?

**Eduardo:** It's blue and has 4 sides and 4 corners.

**Ms. Williams:** Nice job noticing the rhombus' 4 **sides**. It does have 4 **corners** and we call the **corners** of a shape a **vertex**. Let's count each vertex together.





## *You can also....*

- Draw or use a picture
- Show a video
- Use a graphic organizer
- Make a web map
- Demonstrate with a real thing



## Right Away Activities

Activities that give students immediate engagement with a new word

- Idea completion

The teacher uses the brick in a sentence stem but does not finish the statement. **Students complete this fragment based on the lesson.** Responses can be either oral or written.





# Idea Completion

Have you ever.....?

The teacher poses a question that forces students to activate their personal experiences and prior knowledge in order to connect to and describe a brick.

Have you ever critiqued a movie?

Describe what happened.

# Have you ever felt isoliert?



Describe how you felt.

1. Because of the density of the black hole.....

2. How ironic that it is raining and.....

3. Since one value is not equal to the other.....



# Kinesthetic, Auditory or Tactile Connections

Activities that include ways to **experience**,  
**hear** or **touch** the new word.

Teacher and/or students act out the brick in the form of hand motions, role plays, music or chants, or real items.  
Teachers can combine several bricks in one activity.



Beats Per Minute

bpm



Lento

Adagio

Andante

Moderato

46-60 bpm

66-76 bpm

76-108 bpm

108-120 bpm

Allegretto

112-120 bpm

TEMPO

TEM-PO

Allegro

120-168 bpm



# Mortar Words

General academic words that are common terms in everyday Communication

- Words used across a variety of domains
- Utility words that define and hold bricks
- Subtle words or expressions that connect “bricks”
- Show relationships and connect ideas ( nouns) bricks

# Mememes



Using a meme in a classroom is a great way to check if students understand a cultural concept you are working on. They can be a teaching tool or a comprehension check. They are quick, easy to use and efficient. They also pack a big punch.

1. Show a meme and describe the cultural context. Memes are good to use as a hook at the start of a culture topic.
2. Show a meme to introduce a mortar word .



In contrast to.....

versus

vs

ver-sus



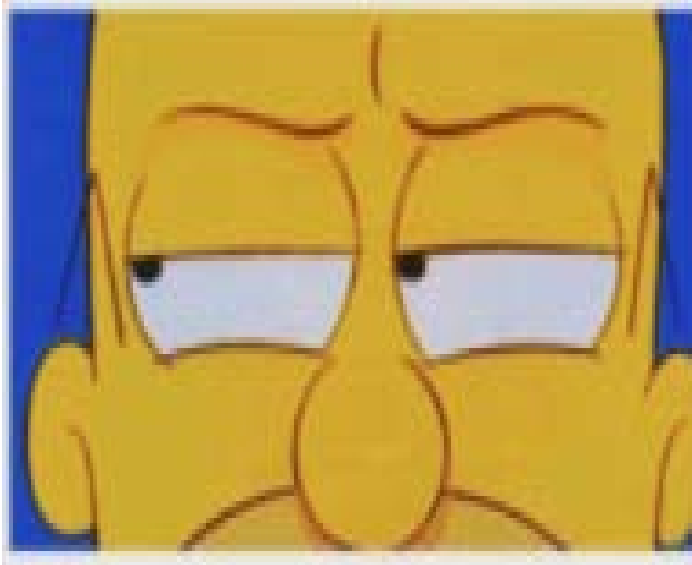
**BACK TO SCHOOL**



**2019 vs 2020**



Meme the image using the word:



ANALYZE

A-NA-LYZE



## Practical tips for teaching mortar words:

**ALWAYS, ALWAYS , ALWAYS** ask if the word sounds like a word in their first language!!!

### NO

- abandon
- abstract
- academy
- access
- accommodate
- accumulate
- accurate

### YES

- abandon
- brief
- commenced
- Forthcoming
- obvious
- predominantly
- technology



WordSift.org



*Teachers positively impact  
academic language  
when they:*

*Intentionally* include the teaching of brick and mortar words.

*Repeatedly* expose students to brick and mortar words

*Regularly utilize* word learning strategies to help students use brick and mortar words