

Marko & Associates specializes in education consulting, including school in-service at all levels, corporate management training and education consulting in other fields.

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EDUCATION CONSULTANTS

NEWSLETTER

Please call us to discuss your staff concerns. We'll put together a program that will invigorate your staff and inspire passion.

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## "Inspiring Passion In Teachers"

### FROM JANE

**Welcome** to another issue of "Inspiring Passion In Teachers", our newsletter for administrators and teachers. Each issue provides teaching tips that can be immediately implemented and create results.

This fall has been invigorating at Marko & Associates. Many schools chose us to kick off the school year. The teachers are inspired and ready.

One particular project offers the teachers short and sweet bimonthly in-services based on teacher needs. The teachers decide skills they would like to master, and we develop the presentation.

It gets better. Following the in-service, the teachers get coaching on the skills during the school day. We might model a lesson or support the teacher trying a new lesson, and then give productive feedback.

The teachers enjoy the attention and the support. It follows that the better our teachers, the better our schools, and the higher student achievement.

It has been a busy and productive year and we look forward to working with new schools in the future. Give us a call.

Jane Elizabeth Marko



### TEACHING TIP

#### Vocabulary Instruction, A Must

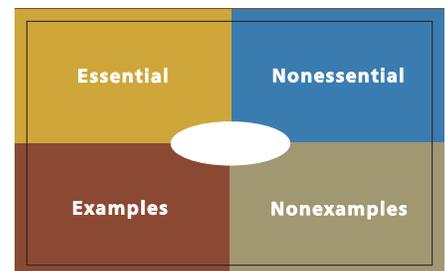
Comprehension, communication, and confidence improve when students have larger vocabularies. Intensively teaching select vocabulary improves reading comprehension.

Fruer Vocabulary Model is a powerful strategy (Fruer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969), that teaches a key concept as a vocabulary word. It helps students understand the difference between attributes defining a word or simply associated with the word, as well as teaching a deep understanding of the word. Here is how it works.

1. Using an easy word, complete the model with the class. I always use chocolate cookie to introduce the model. This allows the students to become familiar with the process without worrying about a new word. This takes about ten minutes.
2. Introduce a new "Fruer" with a concept from the unit.
3. Provide students with the list of essential characteristics.
4. Begin discussing the characteristics and elicit examples and non-examples from the students filling in the organizer.
5. As students begin to discuss, provide examples, non-examples and non-essential characteristics, always asking for the reasons

why, as necessary to guide the discussion. The square is not filled in order, but is added to as the students come up with responses.

6. Ask the student to generate his/her own examples and non-examples and non-essential characteristics, and provide justification.



This strategy can be difficult when you first start using it; however, it generates much discussion. It is well worth the time to master such a strong teaching tool. See Website Watch for videos of teachers using the Fruer Strategy. To learn more about Fruer, visit these sites:

#### Think Literacy

<http://oame.on.ca/main/files/thinklit/FruerModel.pdf>

#### Understanding Vocabulary

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading/bestpractices/vocabulary/understanding.htm>

**"Effective teachers explain stuff in lots of different ways... until they do it the way they get it"**

Brodsky, 2002

**Raise your hand if....**

A master teacher sets high expectations for class participation. The students need to understand that while they are in your classroom; they will interact with the material and the activities.

Setting higher expectations for classroom participation requires simple changes in how you run your room and how you address the students. Your lecture may start with “We will be taking notes.” Consistently asking all students to hold up their notebooks before beginning, sets the expectation that they need to be prepared. It is that simple.

As important as it is to set expectations on the first day of school, it is equally important to consistently follow up. Students wait to see if you are serious, and will respond when they clearly understand that you consistently hold them to the expectations set earlier. More and more students will come prepared for class if you have a consistent visible expectation that they come prepared.

The phrase “raise your hand if..... ” requires students to participate. A teacher might say, “Class, raise your hand if you agree with what Brandy just shared. Good, hands down. Now, raise your hand if you disagree with Brandy. Shaun, why do you disagree with Brandy.” Using this phrase throughout a discussion prevents students from shutting down during class discussions.

If you have not used this strategy much in your classroom, the first few times you use it, some students will not raise their hand at all and then of course, you will say, raise your hand if you are not sure, and then perhaps ask the student why they are not sure. Students will eventually realize that it is better to listen and participate in discussions as you, the teacher, have set high expectations for participation.

These are just two ideas for getting all students more involved in your classroom. Please email your ideas on how you do it. The most unique, clever, and effective strategies will be shared in the next newsletter. Have a conversation in the teacher’s lounge and collect all the great ideas you use to get the students involved.

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**“In my four years as a graduate student (including Columbia and NYU) I have never felt more enlightened, knowledgeable, and capable since your class. What an amazing experience it was for me. Again, I must thank you for introducing me and teaching me about these strategies and techniques - they have made all the difference”**

*New York High School teacher*

**WEBSITE WATCH**

A to Z Teacher Stuff has lots of great ideas to get classroom activities going. One example is a pattern for a cube.

<http://atozteacherstuff.com/>

More Reading Strategies in action. Videos of teachers talking about many strategies using short video clips.

<http://www.marion.k12.ky.us/Strategies/Math/readingspecialist/understand.htm>

Here is a great explanation of the Frayer Vocabulary Model

<http://www.longview.k12.wa.us/Curr/CURRICINSTR/Reading/Frayer%20Model.pdf>

This site explains the importance of pre, during and after learning strategies and how to implement to have high achieving students.

<http://www.onlinereadingresources.com/>

“There is an urgent need to produce a nation of critical thinkers and problem solvers prepared to succeed in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. To accomplish this, we must foster higher-order thinking skills within our education system and embrace more diagnostic, performance-based assessments that measure students’ ability to engage in the kinds of complex thinking and problem-solving tasks required of a 21st century learner.”

*(Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2005)*

**2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress Data**

The results of the NAEP tests suggest a great need for improving the thinking skills of our students. According to the 2003 results, only 31% of fourth graders and 32% of eighth graders are at or above the proficient level in reading. (See Table 1) When looking at a break down of specific groups, the statistics reveal some interesting differences. For example, 33% of fourth grade girls and 35% of eight grade girls scored at or above proficient in reading. However, only 26% of fourth grade boys and 25% of eighth grade boys scored at or above proficient in reading. (See Table 2)

Teachers can make simple changes in their lessons, such as using the Frayer strategy, to begin to improve the thinking of the students.

	Below basic	At or above basic	At or above proficient	At advanced
4th Grade	37	63	31	8
8th Grade	26	74	32	3

Table 1 Percent of all students by reading level, grades 4 & 8.

	Below basic	At or above basic	At or above proficient	At advanced
Boys	42	58	26	6
Girls	35	65	33	8

Table 2 Percent of students at or above basic in reading by gender, grade 4.

