**CONCEPT OF DEFINITION**

**Purpose:**

To help students to use several strategies to develop and refine their knowledge of word meanings. This technique is particularly useful for KLA classrooms. It helps students

deepen and expand their understanding, rather than over-simplifying by the use of a

less specific synonym.

**Description:**

A Word Map (see example next page) is used to visually display the three categories

of relationships in a definition:

* the class to which the concept belongs (What is it?)
* the properties that distinguish it from other members of its class (What is it like?)
* examples of the concept (What are some examples?)
* in addition: similar examples to the concept (Boundary comparisons)

**Preparation:**

Explain to the students that other students have found this strategy helpful, and that understanding new words in this subject will help them better read their textbook or other information.

Present the students with a blank Word Map and trial the strategy in pairs or a small group.

**Materials:**

Copies of the Word Map for each student – or they can draw them in their books.

Two or three key terms from the current topic, with a familiar term – perhaps *ice cream* or *computer* or *surfing.*

**Implementation:**

1. Review word map
2. Joint construction step. Use the first concept to guide the students through the strategy, providing clear and explicit step-by-step instruction.
3. Jointly construct a written definition of the concept based on the Word Map.
4. Guided practice step. Ask the students in pairs to fill out a Word Map for the second concept. During this time supervise so that students are successful and do not practise errors.
5. Ask the students to write a definition based on the Word Map.
6. Independent construction step. On the third concept, if the students have demonstrated a good grasp of the strategy, have the students fill out the Word Map independently.
7. Review both the concepts and the strategy in following lessons to check understanding.

Example:

In Science the teacher used Word Maps for the terms volcano, lava and cone volcano to develop the students” understanding of these terms.

Helpful Hints:

Keep additional copies of Word Maps on hand for use in subsequent lessons or for homework.

