Root-Based Vocabulary Building Program
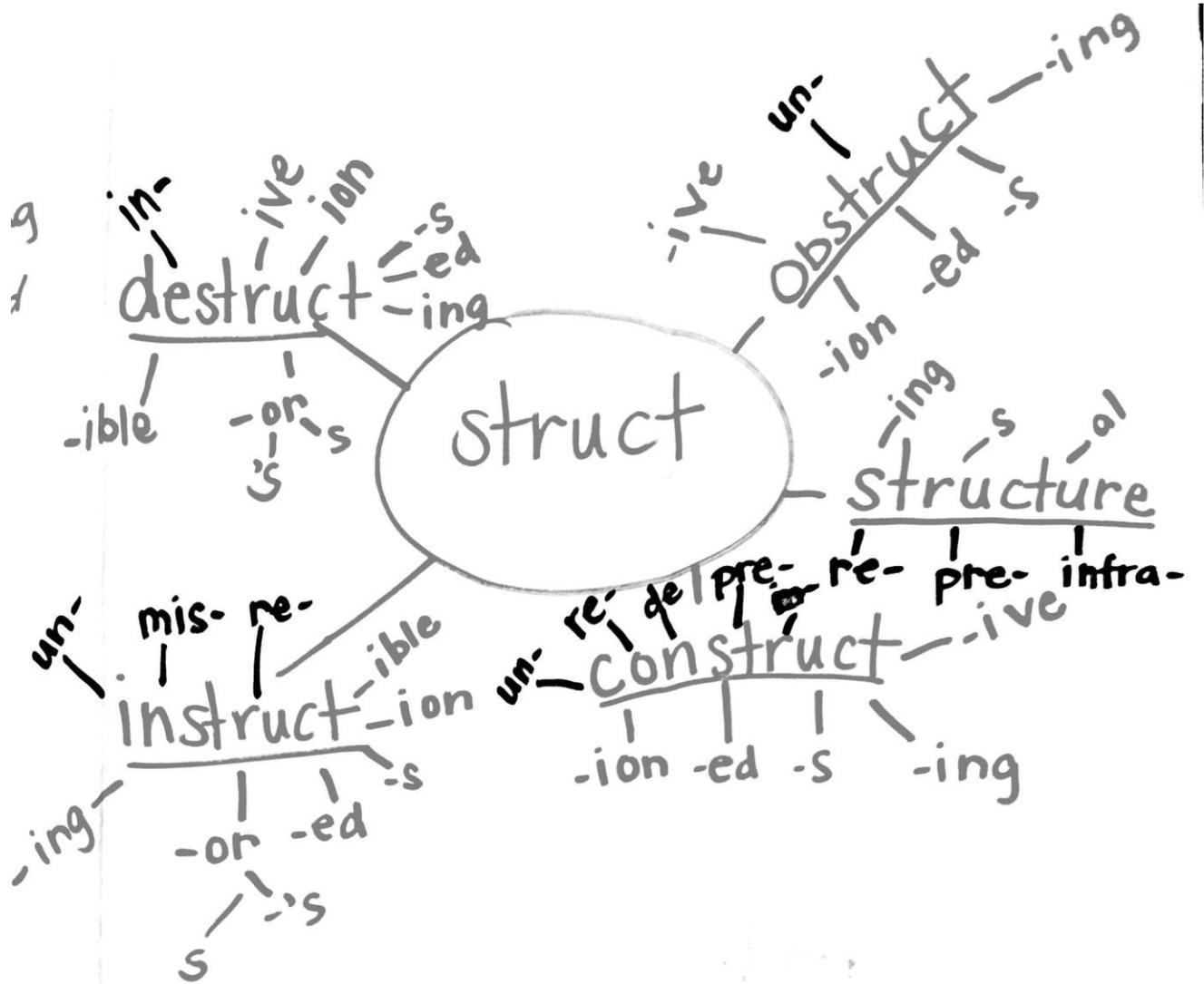
Introduction: There is ample evidence that the study of Latin and Greek roots is essential for strong vocabulary development, and that programs for enhancing student vocabulary should begin in 4th grade with Latin roots, with Greek roots introduced by 6th grade. What is not clear, however, is HOW to teach Latin and Greek, beyond the general vocabulary principles supported by the National Reading Panel (2000).

Let's begin with Latin roots. The usual way that this instruction is delivered is to have students study a set of Latin prefixes and suffixes, along with common roots. I suggest that a more organic way to help students become word detectives is to begin with ROOTS, and have them find words that are built from those roots. In the process of finding words, they would begin to classify prefixes and suffixes and discover how affixes change the meaning and function of the root.

Teaching Sequence:

1. Introduce the root "spec/spect/spic"
2. Have pairs of students brainstorm/find as many words as they can with that root.
3. Put "spec/spect" in a mind-map bubble, and ask students to sort their words into categories around the circle. For example: "spectacle, spectacles, spectacular" in one quadrant; "inspect, inspection, respect, respected, introspect" in another
4. Search for more words in books and (if available) Franklin spellers by typing in *spec*
5. Use www.spiderscribe.net to depict completed webs.
6. Discuss meanings of root, and of common prefixes and suffixes.
7. Assign teams of students to create sentences and act out words.
8. When a sufficient corpus of words are collected, ask students:
   - What do prefixes do to the root? (They change the meaning of the root, but not the function—use in a sentence
   - What do suffixes generally do? (They change the function—Part of speech— in a sentence generally

- 9. Create class mind map:

10. Create vocabulary contests, e.g., Jeapardy (https://jeopardylabs.com)

Latin roots to begin with:
chron
gram
flex/flect
port
dict
miss/mit
duc

scribe/script

cord/cor/cardi

doc

fac/fact/fic

fract/frag

struct

ject

mov, mob, mot

nov

rupt

spir

rupt

vac

tract/tra

vid/vis

voc

Note: Good source for listings and meanings of prefixes, roots and suffixes:
https://www.msu.edu/~defores1/gre/roots/gre_rts_afx1.htm

PORT

Airport
-s
a tract of land or water with facilities for the landing, takeoff, shelter, supply, and repair of aircraft, especially one used for receiving or discharging passengers and cargo at regularly scheduled times

airport.jpg

transport
transport.jpg
-ed, -s, -ing,
-ation
to carry, move, or convey from one place to another.

Export
-s, -ed, -ing
to send or transmit (ideas, institutions, etc.) to another place, especially to another country.
exports.png

Report
-s, -ed, -ing
a statement or announcement.
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Deport
-s, -ed, -ing, -ee
-ation, -able

Rapport
-s, -ed
relation; connection, especially harmonious or sympathetic
rapport.jpg

Import
-ant, -ance
-ed, -s, -ing
to bring in (merchandise, commodities, workers, etc.) from a foreign country for use, sale, processing, reexport, or services.

Support
-er, -ers
-s, -ed, -ing, -er
to bear or hold up (a load, mass, structure, part, etc.); serve as a foundation for.
support.jpg

Portage
the act of carrying; carriage.
-ed, -s, -ing
portage.jpg