

# Giving the Gift of Words

Regional Meetings  
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Massachusetts Department of  
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY  
EDUCATION



# A Vision of Classrooms Where Students Receive the Gift of Words

Scott, J.A., Skobel, B.J., & Wells, J. (2008). *The word-conscious classroom*.  
NY: Scholastic

1. Opportunities for *scaffolded* silent reading
2. Rich language by teachers through read-alouds
3. Direct instruction of thematic groups of words from informational text
4. Direct instruction of semantic clusters of words from literary/narrative texts



# 1. Scaffolded Silent Reading SSR

(Hiebert, 2008; Reutzel, Jones, Fawson, & Smith, 2008; Gambrell, 2008)

- *What it is...*
  - time for students to *practice reading skills and strategies*
  - opportunity for students to develop an extensive reading habit as they *gain vocabulary and conceptual knowledge*
  - *structured* opportunity for students *to engage with peers* on literacy-related discussion and activities
  - time for teachers to *conference with students and provide guidance*



# Elements

(Gambrell, 2008)

- Access to books
- Teacher read-aloud/book sharing
- Choice/bounded choice
- Transfer of strategies
- Social interaction
- Teacher-student conferences
- Teacher record keeping



# Planning Considerations

(Hiebert, 2008; Gambrell, 2008; Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007)

- Task Structure
  - Text
  - Purpose
  - Accountability
- Student Motivation
  - Relevance
  - Choice
  - Collaboration
  - Challenge/Success



## 2. Rich Language Through Read-Alouds

- In preparation for the Read-Aloud, the teacher should read the book from beginning to end
- Pre-teach the vocabulary
  - Take advantage of the relationships among words!



# Rich Language Through Read-Alouds

- Decide how to build necessary background knowledge
  - *Down Comes the Rain*  
by Franklyn M. Branley  
*LET'S-READ-AND-FIND-OUT-SCIENCE*
  - Nell Duke's Experience-Text-Relationship



# Rich Language Through Read-Alouds

- Decide whether to highlight one or more text structures
  - Sequential
  - Cause/Effect
  - Compare and Contrast
  - Descriptive
  - Problem/Solution
  - Question and Answer
- Decide whether to highlight one or more comprehension strategies



# Turn and Talk

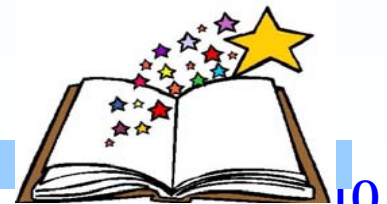
What kinds of discussion and writing activities would support this experience- text-relationship?



# 3. Direct Instruction of Thematic Groups of Words From Informational Text

## What to teach...

1. Content Specific Words
2. General academic words such as system, process, and form

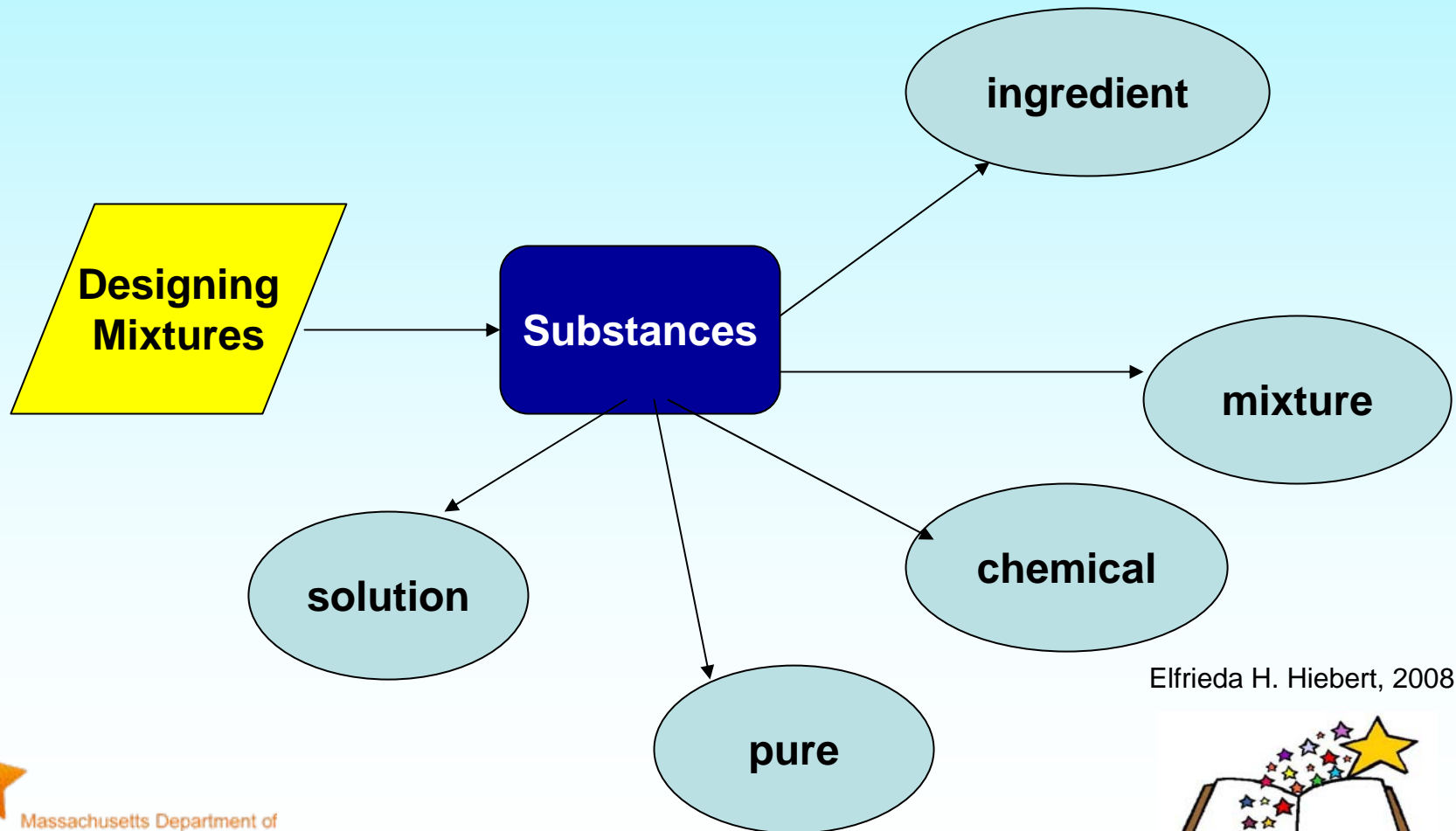


# Informational Vocabulary

1. Text should be content-specific
  - Consider possible morphological forms such as *combine/combination*, *solution/dissolve*, *vapor/evaporate*
  - Many compound words and phrases are present in informational texts.



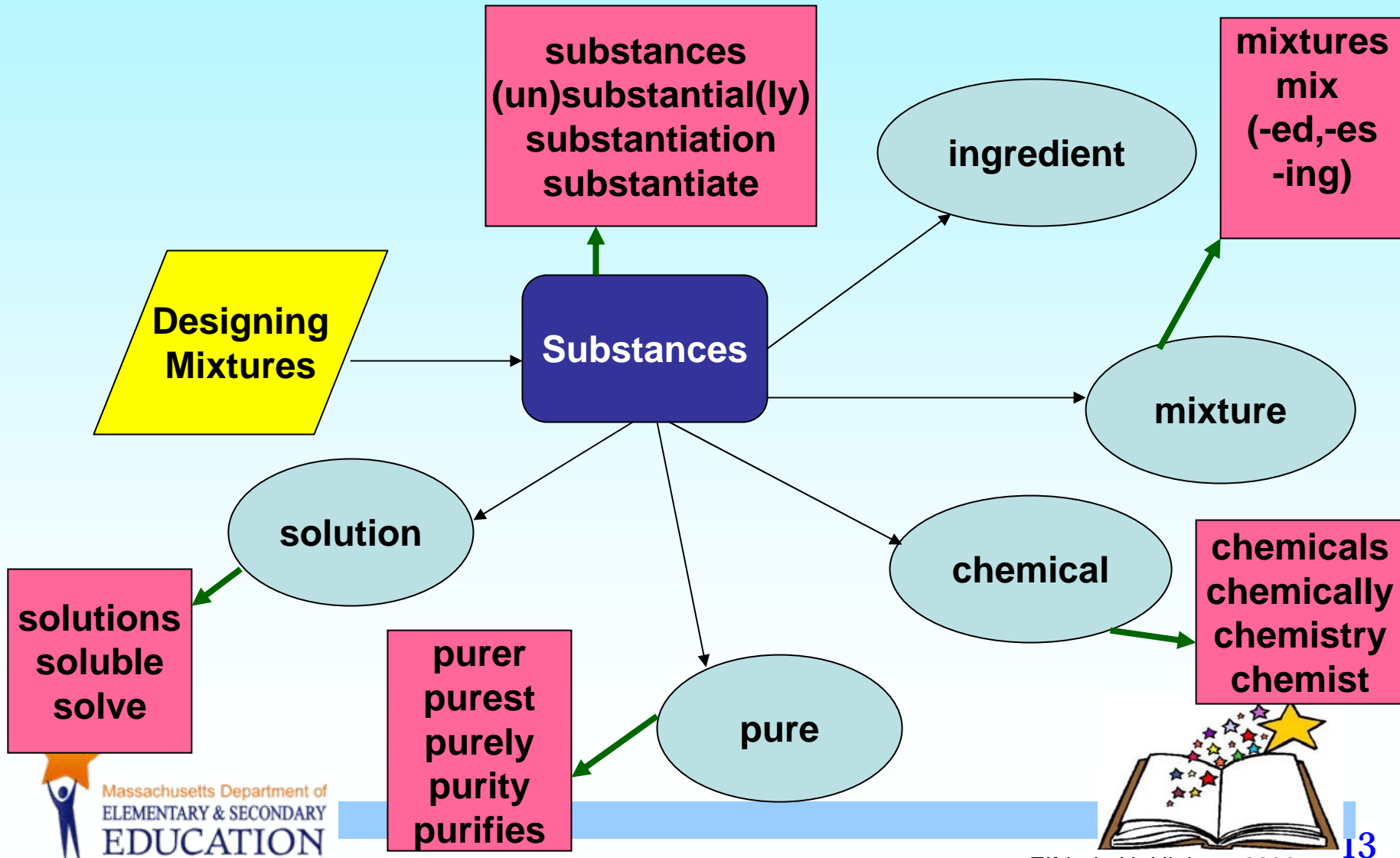
# Rich in Morphological Word Families



Elfrieda H. Hiebert, 2008



# Rich in Morphological Word Families



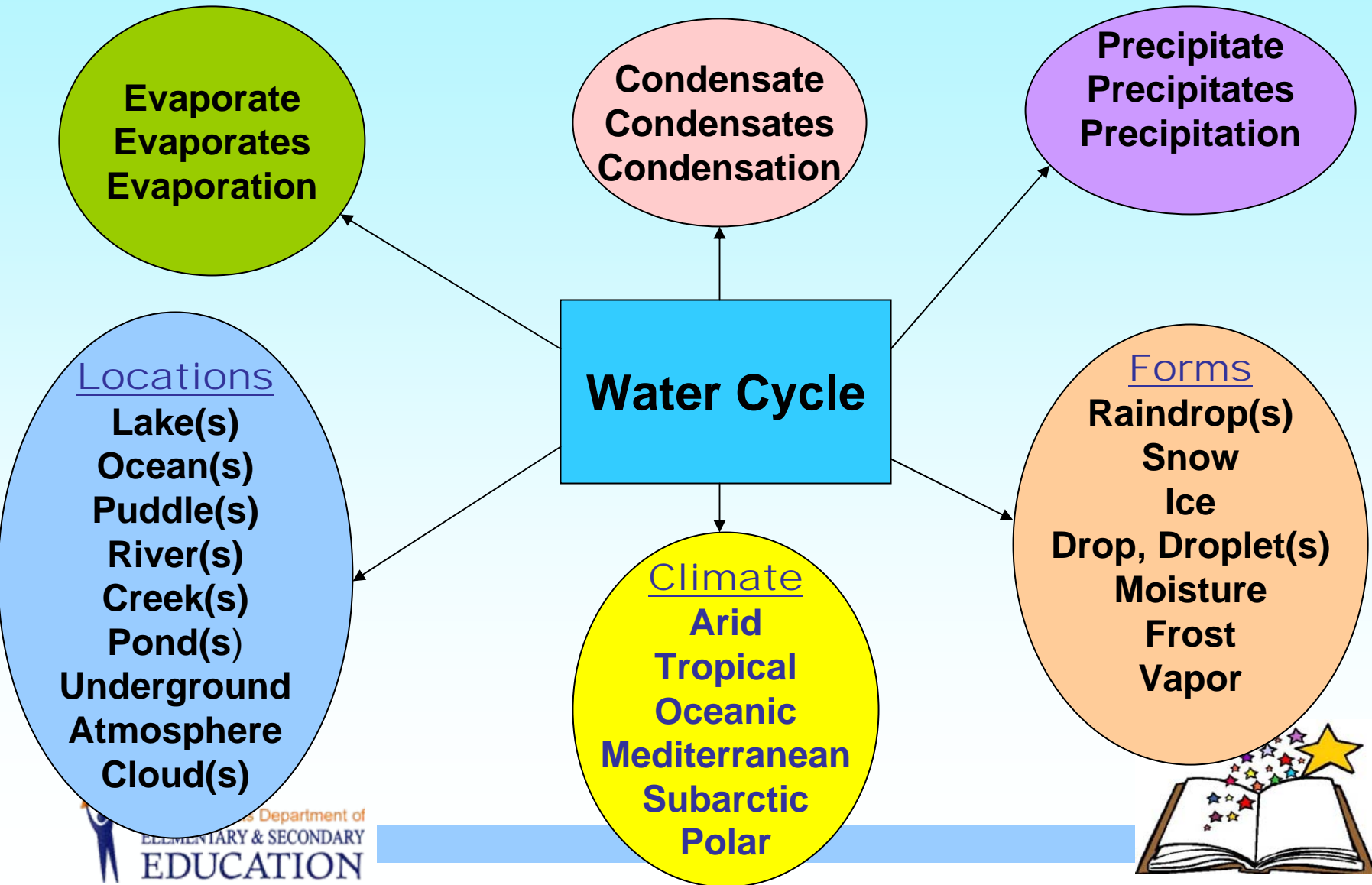
# Turn and Talk

As a table, brainstorm words associated with water and the water cycle.



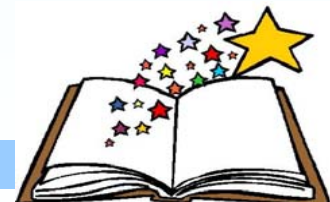
# The Water Cycle

## Learning Standards 10 and 11



# Informational Vocabulary

- General academic words---such as system, process, and form should be taught
- Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000): Drawn from university level textbooks.



# 4. Direct Instruction of Semantic Clusters of Words From Literary/Narrative Texts

## *Goal:*

Strengthen language skills, develop concept knowledge, expand vocabulary, and build background knowledge using the core program



# An Example

- Identify Unit Theme
- Identify Story Theme
- Select important words
  - Look at core program vocabulary selection
  - Identify additional words/ideas to teach
    - Theme
    - Morphemes
    - Extensions of the word (synonyms, antonyms)
    - Idioms and figurative language connected to the unit and story theme



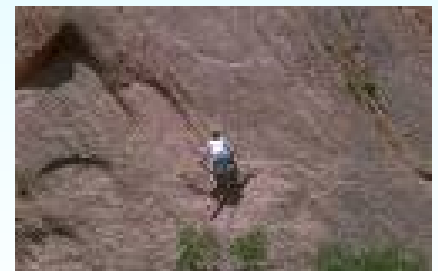
# *Expected outcomes include:*

- Teachers will revisit theme vocabulary throughout the unit
- Students will recognize the connections among stories
- Students will develop vocabulary pertaining to familiar and unfamiliar concepts
- Students will use the vocabulary during oral language activities and writing
- Students will maintain the use of the language



# You try it!

- Unit Theme: Perseverance
  - Synonyms
  - Antonyms
  - Character traits of those (persevering and quitting)
  - Character actions
  - Idioms and figurative language
  - Other interesting words



# References

- Gambrell, L. B. (2008, August). *Reading motivation: Proficiency, persistence, and passion*. Presented at the Massachusetts Reading First Conference, Sturbridge, MA.
- Guthrie, J. T., McRae, A., & Klauda, S. L. (2007). Contributions of concept-oriented reading instruction to knowledge about interventions for motivations in reading. *Educational Psychologist*, 42(4), 237-250.
- Hiebert, E. (2008, October). *Strategic vocabulary selection: Choosing words from narrative and informational texts*. Presented at the Massachusetts Reading First Advanced Seminar, Marlborough, MA.
- Reutzel, D. R., Jones, C. D., Fawson, P. C., Smith, J. A. (2008). Scaffolded silent reading: A complement to guided repeated oral reading that works! *Reading Teacher*, 62(3), 194-207.

