Cracking Vocabulary's CODE

Principle 1: Direct vocabulary instruction works.

Principle 2: Teachers need research-based tools and strategies that maximize student learning and retention of new words.

Principle 3: Vocabulary instruction is best thought of at the unit level rather than the lesson level.

Principle 4: Vocabulary instruction should be designed around how the brain learns, processes, and retains new information.

C	**Connect**
O	**Organize**
D	**Deep Process**
E	**Exercise**

Connect with the new word by searching memory and examining the context in which the word appears. The brain wants to establish a connection – either based on what it already knows or what it observes – to the new word in order to get a handle on it.
For example:
- Attack words by breaking them down into parts, using context clues, drawing on associations, etc.
- Maximize exposure to new words (word walls, etc.)

Organize new words into meaningful categories and frameworks.

Deep Process new words by interacting with a new word in more than a superficial, fill-in-the-blank kind of way.
For example:
- Visualize the word
- Restate its definition in one's own words
- Create a metaphor for the word
- Act it out
- Explain one's emotional response to the word

This is where true understanding happens and what greatly increases retention and recall.

Exercise by revisiting and practicing what has been learned over time.

Dan Moirao, Cracking Vocabulary's CODE, 2008