Word Maps

This strategy can be used to activate student's prior knowledge of the subject content that terms relate to.

1. **Purpose**

   The purpose of this strategy is to introduce students to new vocabulary through brainstorming words that relate to a single "focus word" chosen by the teacher.

   This allows the teacher to find out what relevant words the students already know and to introduce new words. The word map can also clarify relevant subject-specific meaning of a word that has more than one meaning.

2. **How is it used?**
   1. Choose a focus word for the word map and write that word in a central circle on the board.
   2. Decide what the branches of the word map will be and write the branches on the word map. Discuss each branch with the students before beginning the brainstorm.
   3. Brainstorm - could be a think-pair-share exercise before the word is contributed to the class discussion.
   4. Discuss the words on each of the branches.
   5. Are the students making connections with other words that they know? Are they aware that familiar words may have different meanings in other contexts? Are they using new words independently?
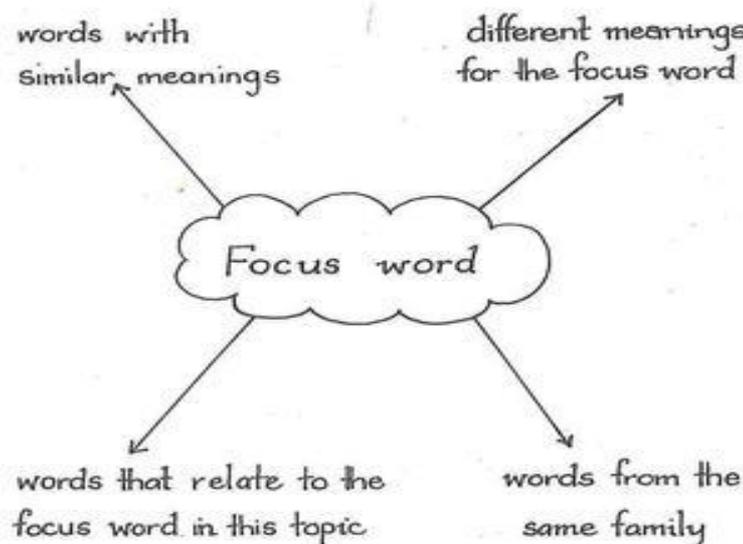
Example
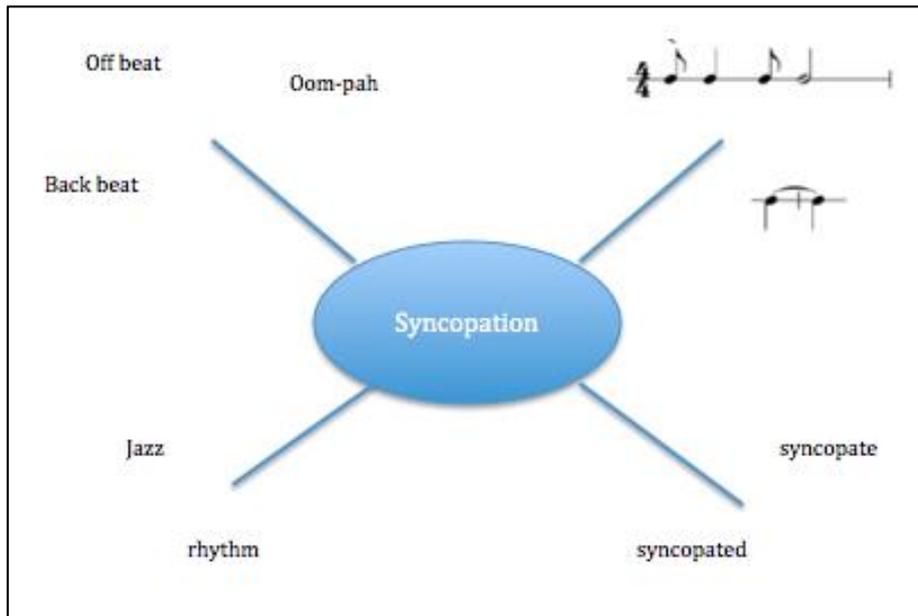
4. **Context/setting for use**
   Suitable for any grouping of students including across year levels and / or curriculum areas

5. **Link to the Ako Critical Contexts for Learning (3 circles)**
   Word maps engage student's prior knowledge and provide an opportunity for interactive and dialogic sense-making.

   This strategy provides a scaffold for introducing students to new vocabulary and it also enables them to make connections to vocabulary that they may already be familiar with.

   Students could take their word maps home to whānau to complete as a shared activity.