

## LEARNING TOGETHER ABOUT SCHOOLWIDE VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

<b>Purpose</b>	School principals, language arts curriculum coordinators, and reading specialists are encouraged to use this tool to establish a schoolwide approach to teaching vocabulary. Plan and conduct a two-session in-service for content area teachers to learn about explicit vocabulary instruction and how to integrate research-based strategies into ongoing classroom instruction.
<b>Materials</b>	<p><i>Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices</i>, Recommendation 1 (pp. 11-15)</p> <p><i>Content Area Vocabulary: Activities Packet</i></p> <p><i>Middle School Math: Vocabulary Building Lesson and Related Materials</i></p> <p><i>Greek Myths: Vocabulary Lesson, Word List, and Riddle Poems</i></p>
<b>Media</b>	<p><i>Providing Explicit Vocabulary Instruction</i>, multimedia overview (6:50)</p> <p><i>Explicit Vocabulary Teaching Strategies</i>, interview with Mary Beth Curtis, Harvard University (7:43)</p> <p><i>A Schoolwide Vocabulary Approach</i>, video interview with Caroline Bloxom, Principal, Pocomoke Middle School (5:28)</p> <p><i>A Classroom Scenario</i>, interview with Mary Beth Curtis, Harvard University (5:15)</p> <p>This tool and related media and materials are located in the Doing What Works Library (<a href="https://dwwlibrary.wested.org/">https://dwwlibrary.wested.org/</a>). For assistance, contact <a href="mailto:dww@wested.org">dww@wested.org</a>.</p>
<b>Topic</b>	Adolescent Literacy
<b>Practice</b>	Vocabulary Instruction

## Learning Together About Schoolwide Vocabulary Instruction

Facilitator:

- School Principal, *or*
- Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator, *or*
- Reading Specialist

Participants:

- Content area teachers
- Language arts teachers
- Literacy coaches

### First Session: Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

1. Prior to the session, provide each participant with a copy of the Practice Guide, *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices* and have them read the section on vocabulary instruction (pp. 11–15). Ask participants to note questions or perceived challenges related to implementing vocabulary strategies in content area classrooms.
2. Introduce the purpose and goals of the in-service, overview of training, and expected outcomes for classroom instruction.
3. Watch the multimedia presentation and expert interview with Mary Beth Curtis on explicit teaching strategies.
  - Discuss the interrelationship between vocabulary and comprehension, and the importance of providing a portion of regular classroom lessons to explicit vocabulary instruction.
  - Review the explicit vocabulary strategies presented in the media pieces and address specific questions and provide clarification related to specific strategies.

4. Break into small groups led by a reading specialist or language arts teacher (*if possible*) and ask teachers to reflect on the strategies they already use and brainstorm ideas for how they could do more to integrate these strategies into classroom instruction. You might want to record responses on a chart similar to the one shown below or use the included handout.

Vocabulary Strategy	What I already do	What more I can do
<b>Multiple opportunities and varied contexts</b> (to learn word meanings and vocabulary skills)		
<b>Opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts</b> (including oral and written contexts through activities such as discussion, writing, and extended reading)		
<b>Helping students develop strategies for deriving word meanings</b>		

5. Watch the interview with the principal talking about how Pocomoke Middle School has implemented a schoolwide approach to vocabulary instruction. Discuss the challenges Pocomoke faced in establishing a schoolwide program and how they dealt with these challenges.
6. Assignment for next session:
  - Hand out copies of the sample materials, Content Area Vocabulary: Activities Packet; Middle School Math Vocabulary Building Lesson and Related Materials; and Greek Myths: Vocabulary Lesson, Word List, and Riddle Poems.
  - Ask teachers to note specific strategies that could be incorporated into their instruction.
  - Have content area teachers plan and implement one content lesson using explicit vocabulary strategies.
  - If possible, ask language arts teachers to partner with content area teachers to help plan, observe, and assess the content lesson.

## Second Session: Implementing Vocabulary Strategies in Content Lessons

1. Provide a brief review of explicit vocabulary instruction.
  - Discuss any questions participants may still have about specific strategies.
2. Break into small groups, each led by a reading specialist or language arts teacher (*if possible*), and ask each content area/language arts team or individual content teacher to share their assessment of the lesson assigned at the end of the first session.
  - Identify and discuss common success stories, difficulties encountered during the lesson, or concerns raised by the content area teachers.
3. Watch the expert interview with Mary Beth Curtis describing a classroom scenario for teaching vocabulary. Have the group share reactions to the scenario and address questions or concerns raised by content area teachers.
4. As a whole group, make a list of the successes and difficulties identified in the small groups, and come up with a list of ideas for improving vocabulary implementation in content areas.

## Follow-Up Support for Schoolwide Planning

- Provide staff meeting time for periodic assessment of the implementation of schoolwide vocabulary instruction.
- Identify a school list of words that are cross-cutting and that are important for students to be able to use precisely (e.g., alignment, hypothesize, referent).
- Continue to partner language arts and content area teachers to provide opportunities for collaboration on lesson planning and ongoing support for vocabulary instruction and review of student work across content areas.
- Encourage content area teachers to use periodic peer observations to help assess and improve vocabulary instruction.
- Schedule regular times for content area teachers to meet with the reading specialist to review and plan vocabulary instruction in the classroom, examine student work, and identify student needs for additional vocabulary support either in or outside of class time.

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<p><b>Opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts</b> (including oral and written contexts through activities such as discussion, writing, and extended reading)</p>		
<p><b>Helping students develop strategies for deriving word meanings</b></p>		