

# Michigan's MTSS Technical Assistance Center (MiMTSS TAC)

formerly Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MIBLSI)

## Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Series

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# The Series

- Module 1: The Goal is Comprehension
  - Recorded (25 minutes)
- Module 2: The Evidence
  - Recorded (35 minutes)
- Module 3: Selecting the Right Words
  - Recorded (30 minutes)
- Module 4: Design and Delivery
  - Live session August 18, 2020 @ 1:00 – 3:00 pm EDT
- Module 5: Practice
  - Recorded (30 minutes)

# Acknowledgements

- Dr . Anita Archer
  - Slides denoted with an asterisk indicates content modified or taken directly from Dr. Archer's content with permission
- Dr. Melissa Nantais, Nicole Coleman, John Vail for creation and vetting of the content of this series

# Online Expectations

- Set up in a quiet environment as free from distractions as possible
- Download / Print a copy of the power point and any other documents needed prior to initiating session
- Place your phone and other devices on mute and out of sight

# Some more numbers

Can you guess what these numbers represent?

- 171,000
- 40,000 – 80,000
- 4000
- 50 - 60

# Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Module 2

## The Evidence

# Vocabulary is Important

- Big Idea!

If students can accurately pronounce and understand the meaning of critical vocabulary terms in the passage, their comprehension will be enhanced.

- Although there are several factors that determine one's ability to comprehend text, "...vocabulary is the most important single factor, once children have learned the alphabetic code." (Moats & Tolman, 2019)

# Long Term Vocabulary Goal\*

- A Kindergarten student typically recognizes about 4000 words when they enter school
- By the end of high school, college-ready students will need to acquire between 40,000 - 80,000 words.
- Problem - An at-risk 8<sup>th</sup> grade student has a vocabulary of an average 4<sup>th</sup> grader and the gap widens each year.

Graves, 2006; Hirsh, 2003



# Frequency of Rare Words in Text

(per 1000 words presented)

## • Printed Text

- Scientific Journal abstracts – 128.0
- Newspapers - 68.3
- Popular Magazines – 65.7
- Adult fun reading – 52.7
- Children's books – 30.9

## • TV and Adult Speech

- Prime time adult shows – 22.7
- Prime time children shows – 20.2
- Conversation between college educated adults - 17.3

Hayes & Ahrens, 1988

# Importance of Vocabulary\*

- To close the vocabulary gap, vocabulary acquisition must be accelerated through intentional instruction and significant reading.
- Vocabulary instruction must be a focus in all classes in all grades

# Vocabulary Instruction – Evidence #1\*

- Vocabulary is related to reading comprehension.
  - “Indeed, one of the **most enduring findings** in reading research is the extent to which students’ vocabulary knowledge relates to their reading comprehension.”
  - Knowledge of individual word meanings accounts for as much as 50-60% of the variance in reading comprehension.

Lehr, Osborn & Hiebert, 2004; Adlof & Perfetti, 2014; Stahl & Nagy 2006; Moats & Tolman, 2019

# Vocabulary Instruction – Evidence #2\*

- “direct vocabulary instruction has an impressive track record of improving students’ background knowledge and comprehension of academic content.” (Marzano, 2001, p.69)
- .97 effect size for direct teaching of vocabulary related to content (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986)
- Effect size on student achievement for vocabulary programs 0.62 (Hattie, 2015)

## Table 2. Recommendations and corresponding levels of evidence to support each

Recommendations	Level of evidence
1. Provide explicit vocabulary instruction	<b>Strong</b>
2. Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.	<b>Strong</b>
3. Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.	<b>Moderate</b>
4. Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.	<b>Moderate</b>
5. Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists.	<b>Strong</b>

(IES Practice Guide: Improving Adolescent Literacy, 2008)

# Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices

- **Recommendation 1. Provide explicit vocabulary instruction**
- Dedicate a portion of regular classroom lessons to **explicit vocabulary instruction.**
- Provide **repeated exposure to new words** in multiple contexts, and allow sufficient practice sessions in vocabulary instruction.

IES Practice Guide: Improving Adolescent Literacy, 2008

# Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices (continued)

- Give **sufficient opportunities to use new vocabulary** in a variety of contexts through activities such as discussion, writing, and extended reading.
- Provide students with **word learning strategies** to make them independent vocabulary learners.

IES Practice Guide: Improving Adolescent Literacy, 2008

Principle 1: Establish school wide practices for enhancing reading for understanding in all content area instruction.

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Principle 2: Teach word-meaning strategies within content area classes.

**Practice 1: Provide explicit instruction for important words.**

**Practice 2: Provide instruction in word-learning strategies.**

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Principle 3: Activate and build appropriate background knowledge for understanding text content.

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Principle 4: Teach students to use reading comprehension strategies while reading complex text.

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Principle 5: Provide intensive reading interventions to students with reading problems. For Principles 6-9 plus more information see ...

Middle School Matters Field Guide, The Meadows Center Univ. of Texas, 2016



# From the State

## 7. Intentional efforts to build vocabulary and conceptual knowledge

### The teacher:

- presents vocabulary as language in use (as opposed to words from decontextualized lists);
- teaches multiple meanings or nuanced meanings of a word across different contexts and encourages students to use new words in meaningful contexts (e.g., discussion of texts, discussions of content area learning, semantic maps);
- provides repeated opportunities for students to review and use new vocabulary over time, including discussing ways that new vocabulary relates to one another and to students' existing conceptual knowledge;
- explicitly teaches words that build necessary knowledge for reading and writing texts of instruction;
- engages students in morphemic analysis (i.e., analysis of the meaning of word parts) of unfamiliar vocabulary;
- selects **Tier 2** and **Tier 3** vocabulary words to teach using disciplinary texts of instruction;
- encourages talk about vocabulary among students, particularly during disciplinary learning and students' discussions of print or digital texts; and
- encourages students to identify and explore new vocabulary independently and provides instruction to support this process.

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Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2013). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. Guilford Press.

Nagy, W., & Hiebert, E. (2011). Toward a theory of word selection. In M. L. Kamil, P. D. Pearson, P. Afflerbach, & E. B. Moje (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 4). New York: Routledge.

Essential Practices for Disciplinary Literacy Instruction in the Secondary Classroom, General Education Leadership Network (geln) and MDE, 2020

# Background Knowledge

Vocabulary instruction as a tool for building background knowledge and making connections

# The Impact of Background Knowledge

- The Baseball Experiment (and other replications)
  - The Variables
    - Verbal Skills
    - Prior Knowledge
  - The Outcomes
    - Students with low verbal skills who had prior knowledge scored significantly better than students with high verbal skills and low background knowledge.

Conclusion: “Verbal skill didn’t matter much compared to knowledge.”

(Willingham, 2017)

# Importance of Vocabulary and Background Knowledge

- Key elements of vocabulary instruction used to build background knowledge
  - Deliberate selection of words for instruction
  - Intentional use of examples to highlight critical knowledge
  - Thoughtful connections made to students' prior knowledge

# Activity

- 8th Grade SS
- **Watch the video of Dr. Archer building background knowledge in an 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies class. Make a list of the ways in which she helps students make connections such that they might better understand the upcoming unit.**

# Methods of Vocabulary Instruction

- Methods
  - Teacher talk
  - Reading
  - Word learning strategies
  - Direct explicit instruction
  - Making connections of new vocabulary to existing word knowledge
  - Distributed practice

# Impact of Teacher Talk

- “...teachers’ use of sophisticated vocabulary and complex syntax had a significant and positive effect on students’ vocabulary growth.”
- “The quality of a teacher’s oral language, especially the number of unusual words used by the teacher, was more important than the sheer number of words spoken by the teacher.”
  - Based on Gamez and Lesaux (2012) study in urban middle school classrooms

Moats & Tolman, 2019

# Vocabulary Essentials\*

- Vocabulary instruction that improves reading comprehension has:
  - multiple exposures to the word
  - both definitional and contextual information
  - active participation and deep processing.

Mezynski, 1983; McKeioman et al., 1985; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986



# Misuses of Vocabulary Instruction

- Assigning students to look up vocabulary in a dictionary and write the definitions
- Teaching all the vocabulary for a unit at the very beginning of the unit
- Having students “guess” about the meaning of a term, especially when some students may lack appropriate background knowledge to discern correct from incorrect guesses

# Schoolwide Vocabulary Practices\*

- Use high quality classroom language
- Consistently use academic language
- Promote wide independent reading (especially concentrating on a topic to build deeper knowledge)
- Teach word learning strategies
- Explicitly teach vocabulary terms

# Exit Ticket

- **Brain Drain**

- Take 3 minutes (set a timer) to do a Brain Drain, writing down everything you can recall from this overview of the evidence supporting explicitly teaching vocabulary.
- Tell someone within 24 hours at least one interesting fact about the importance of vocabulary

# Preview Module 3

- Explicit Vocabulary Instruction, “Module 3 – Selecting the right words to teach” will provide guidance and practice is choosing terms worthy of explicit instruction.

# References

Reference for the information provided in this and the following Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Modules are provided on a handout that can be accessed on our web page