EXPLICIT VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

GOAL: ENGAGE STUDENTS IN DEEP, ROBUST VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION EVERY DAY.

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction – Dedicating a portion of lesson time in <u>each content area</u> to: **(1) word learning, (2) repeated exposure to new words in multiple oral and written contexts, and (3) providing students with strategies to make them independent vocabulary learners.**

March's Dazzling Ideas

Dazzling Idea #1: Allowing students to self-select words to study is a powerful vocabulary teaching tool that builds reading independence. (Haggard, 1982, 1985; Fisher, Blachowicz, & Smith, 1991; Fisher, Blachowicz, Pozzi, & Costa, 1992).

Dazzling Idea #2: Since the goal of vocabulary instruction is to have students gain control of vocabulary to use for their own expression, students need **many** experiences that allow them to encounter and use words in meaningful ways. (Blackowicz, Fisher, & Watts-Taffe, 2005).

In March, let's focus on implementing the last 3 of the 7 guiding principles of exemplary vocabulary instruction:

5. **Vocabulary learning takes place when children gain control over their own learning.** In addition to teaching words suggested by basal developers and text authors, consider allowing children to self-select some words.

6. **Vocabulary learning takes place when students are aided in developing independent strategies.** Besides vocabulary self-selection, children benefit from explicit instruction in using context to determine meaning, using structural analysis, and using a dictionary.

7. **Vocabulary learning is long lasting when students use words in meaningful ways over time.** Students must play with words and use words in writing and discussions. Teachers must be good models of word learning.

Remember…
- **Children need many, many exposures to words before those words become part of their "working vocabularies"!**
- **Vocabulary instruction doesn't just happen in language arts—it happens all day long in every content area!**

Helping Children Become Independent Word Learners

(Principles 5 and 6)

Instead of:	Try this:
• Letting the text authors choose all the words your students will learn for the week…	• Teach students to "skim and scan" text for words they don't know before they actually read it. Add some or all of these words to your pre-reading vocabulary instruction. • Teach students to give you a signal (when listening to oral or taped reading) when they hear a word they don't know. As the teacher, you can choose to stop as soon as you see the signal to discuss the word, or make note of the word and discuss it when there's a good time to break in the reading.
• Having students independently read without working on vocabulary learning strategies…	• Encourage students to keep a list of unknown words they encounter in their independent reading (see attached bookmark). These words can be written in a journal (Try Marzano's journal from last month!), discussed with others, and used in writing. • Explicitly each them the "SCUBA" strategy (see attached).
• (Upper Grades) Relying on only "Journeys" for instruction on roots and affixes (the instructional opportunities are a bit sparse) …	• When words with common roots or affixes (see attached) present themselves, use Graves' Context & Definition procedure (see attached) to reinforce the root or affix.

Word Exposure Over Time

Instead of:	Try this:
• Teaching words only during the week they're introduced, and never systematically revisiting them…	• Play games periodically with a cumulative list of words you've introduced during the year and in a variety of subjects. Try "Vo-Back-ulary" or the "Drawing Word Sticks" game (attached). Your SMARTBoard also has some cool tools for vocabulary games. Check out: http://bemidji.k12.mn.us/~kkusler and click on SMART Vocabulary Game Examples. • Encourage students to list vocabulary words in their writing journal and use them in their compositions.

Learning Roots and Affixes

Learning structural analysis through a focus on roots and affixes is often most effective when it's done as words present themselves in text…as a "teachable moment". As a teacher, knowing the most common roots and affixes, and then recognizing the "teachable moments" as students are reading, is very important. Here is a listing of the most common roots and affixes:

The Most Common Roots

Root	Meaning	Origin	Examples
aud	hear	Latin	auditorium, audition
astro	star	Greek	astrology, astronaut, asteroid
bio	life	Greek	biography, biology
dict	speak, tell	Latin	dictate, predict, dictator
geo	earth	Greek	geology, geography
meter	measure	Greek	thermometer, barometer
min	small, little	Latin	minimum, minimal
mit, mis	send	Latin	mission, transmit, remit, missile
ped	foot	Latin	pedestrian, pedal, pedestal
phon	sound	Greek	phonograph, microphone, phoneme
port	carry	Latin	transport, portable, import
scrib, script	write	Latin	scribble, manuscript, inscription
spect	see	Latin	inspect, spectator, speculate
struct	build, form	Latin	construction, destruction, instruction

The Most Common Prefixes and Suffixes

Prefix	% of all Words	Suffix	% of all Words
un- (not)	26%	-s, -es (plural)	31%
re- (again, back)	14%	-ed (past tense)	20%
in-, im-, il-, ir- (not)	11%	-ing (activity)	14%
dis- (not)	7%	-ly (in the manner of)	7%
en-, em- (put into; make)	4%	-er, -or (person or thing that does something)	4%
non- (not)	4%	-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition (action or condition)	4%
in-, im- (in)	3%	-able, -ible (worth or ability)	2%
over-	3%		
mis-	3%		
sub-	3%		
pre-	3%		
inter-	3%		
fore-	3%		

The Context & Definition Procedure for Learning Roots and Affixes

1. Present the prefix, suffix, or root in isolation and also attach for four words (e.g., *un-, unhappy, unwell, unfair, unbelievable)*

2. Define the prefix. For example, *un-* means "not".

3. Use the words in sentences. (He was unhappy after his team lost the game. She became unwell after eating the rotten banana. The rules of the game were unfair. Your story about catching the 15-foot fish is totally unbelievable.)

4. Define the words. (Unhappy means "not happy". Unwell means "not well" or "sick". Unfair means "not fair". Unbelievable means "not believable".)

5. After completing and discussing the above steps, give students an opportunity to find other words containing the prefix, suffix, or root.

6. Have students add examples to a vocabulary notebook.

Vocabulary Review Word Games

Drawing Word Sticks   This word practice game is perfect for centers or small groups. To make Word Sticks: Write vocabulary words on individual strips of tape, or print the list onto address labels. Stick each tape strip or label onto a craft stick. Add two strips labeled "Sorry!" Place all of the sticks in a shoebox and the game is ready. To play: Two to four children place the sticks word-down in the shoebox. One at a time, each student chooses a stick. If the stick has a vocabulary word, the child reads the word to the group, uses it correctly in a sentence (or defines it), and then keeps the stick.   (It may help to have an answer key handy if the teacher is not present in the group.) If the stick is labeled "Sorry!", the child returns the "Sorry!" stick and any word sticks he or she may have to the box. (This gives the children the chance to practice words more than once.) The game continues until all vocabulary word sticks are gone. Word sticks can be changed in and out periodically so students get varied practice with a wide variety of words over time.

Vo-Back-ulary Tape a vocabulary word card onto the volunteer's back, without revealing the word to the child. Ask the student to turn so that the class can see the card. Have the child call on classmates, one at a time, for helpful informational clues about the word. For example, if the word is gargantuan, a good clue might be "as big as a giant." When the child guesses the word correctly, it's time for the next volunteer. Or, have everyone play at once by taping a word card on each student's back. The children move about the room quietly asking for clues. When a child discovers the word, he or she sits down. Words can be chosen from all content areas and changed in and out for varied review and practice.

Leading a Teacher Discussion on Independent Word Learning Strategies and Word Exposure Over Time:

1. Ask teachers to "Whip Around the Table" and share the "Personalizing Word Learning" or "Word Exposure through Multiple Sources" vocabulary strategy they tried from last month, briefly discussing successes and problems with the strategy. Make sure everyone shares.

2. Make sure teachers each have a copy of the March "Explicit Vocabulary Instruction" handout (5 pages).

3. Tell teachers we are in the last month of examining 7 guiding principles of "Explicit Vocabulary Instruction". Have a teacher orally read the "Goal", the definition for "Explicit Vocabulary Instruction". Then have someone read February's "Dazzling Ideas". Tell teachers that this month, we are discussing principles 5 through 7.

4. Have teachers silently read the ideas in the "Helping Children Become Independent Word Learners" and the "Word Exposure Over Time" tables. Remind teachers that you may not use these strategies every day, but that they could be used across the curriculum to support vocabulary development.

5. After a minute or two, have teachers "Whip Around the Table" where they are sitting to briefly share thoughts, successes, or problems with any of these strategies. Quickly have each table brainstorm solutions to any of the problems.

6. Have each teacher choose a strategy s/he is going to try for the next month. Have teachers "Whip Around the Table" again and share the "Independent Word Learning Strategies" or "Word Exposure Over Time" strategy they will try. Teachers may also have another related strategy that they would like to try and share instead.