

# What are powerful instructional routines for learning academic words?

Extracted from Townsend, D.R. (2020, Jun). *Academic Vocabulary for Adolescent learners*. Presented in OhioALN webinar.

Question 1. Supporting teacher knowledge around Types/features of academic words

1. In content area groups explore standards, objectives, and materials, and discuss:

What are the most important words in our discipline?

What general academic words and connectives appear with consistency in our disciplines and others?

2. Do the same, and explore morphology:

What meaningful word parts relate to our discipline?

What meaningful word parts relate to our discipline, and also to others?

3. Do the same, and explore polysemy:

What words have specific meanings in our discipline but are used elsewhere with other meanings?

What words mean something general in our discipline but are used elsewhere with technical meanings?

Question 2. Supporting teacher knowledge around how we learn words

1. In content area groups, explore lessons together:

Do students have many opportunities to see and read important words? Are word walls, vocabulary journals, multimedia resources, etc. used regularly in lessons?

2. In content area groups, explore routines for reading together:

Do students spend part of every class period reading texts that are at an optimal level of challenge? Do teachers spend time modeling how to use context clues to figure out word meanings?

3. In content area groups, explore opportunities for students to USE words in writing and discussion:

Do students have many opportunities to hear important words in context? Do they have many opportunities to speak and write key words?

Question 3. Supporting teacher knowledge around powerful instructional routines

1. Bring together content area departments and:

Identify the essential concepts students need deep knowledge of, and identify the related words that students will also have opportunities to practice. Choose meaningful morphemes that students are likely to see in the discipline.

2. Bring mixed content area groups together, and:

Choose high-utility general academic words and meaningful morphemes that students are likely to see in multiple content areas.

3. In both content area, and mixed content area, groups:

Craft instructional routines for language rich classrooms AND for active practice of essential academic words and morphemes. **Plan regular formative assessments to monitor vocabulary growth.**