

Professional Learning Communities Facilitator's Guide

for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School

VIDEO

6:13 minutes

Full Details and Transcript

Introduction to Recommendation 2

July 2015

Video Details

Facilitator's Guide Session:	Recommendation 2, Session 2A Handout 2A.1: Video Viewing Guide – Introduction to Recommendation 2
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Description:	In this video, Joan Morris, a retired teacher specialist and a panel member for the English learner practice guide, presents a brief overview of Recommendation 2, including a description of the four <i>How-to</i> steps for carrying out the recommendation.
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Full Transcript

Joan Morris: Recommendation 2. Recommendation 2 addresses integrating vocabulary instruction, as well as other literacy tools, into your content-area teaching. In this way, your students can build both their speaking and writing abilities as they are learning subject matter. Again, as we saw in Recommendation 1, the level of evidence based on research for Recommendation 2 is strong.

The practice guide provides four *How-to* steps to help you carry out this recommendation. *How-to* Step 1 covers using visual aids, such as pictures, graphic organizers, or short video clips, to help students make sense of the topic you are teaching. These instructional tools can be used to prepare students for a lesson by providing them with necessary background knowledge, raising issues, and/or conveying themes that will be pursued in the lesson.

Video Transcript: Introduction to Recommendation 2

Exhibit 2.1 describes how a video clip is used to strengthen comprehension in a lesson on Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Graphic organizers are tools that both teachers and students can use to help organize their thinking. These organizers help students study the structure of the text, which in turn increases their comprehension. Some of the most common text structures are sequencing, compare and contrast, and cause and effect. A number of different types of graphic organizers can be used to teach these structures. Exhibit 2.2 is an example of a lesson on the environment's effects on animal behavior. It shows how content is supported through the use of a video clip followed by a Venn diagram and then a cause-and-effect graphic organizer.

The importance of vocabulary instruction cannot be overemphasized. As you know, Recommendation 1 was devoted to this topic. Now, in Recommendation 2, *How-to* Step 2 stresses the importance of teaching vocabulary to English learners during content instruction. General academic vocabulary words, such as *environment*, *factor*, *exhibit*, and *investigate*, are used in writing across many academic disciplines. Domain-specific academic vocabulary words are unique to a particular academic discipline. Words like *pi* and *commutative* are linked to mathematics. Words like *diode* and *atom* are linked to physics. Both general academic words and content-specific vocabulary should be taught explicitly. An example of a domain-specific word in science is *photosynthesis*. The general academic words that you may need to teach in order to clarify the meaning of photosynthesis might include *process* or *convert*. As educators, your judgment is crucial in determining which vocabulary words are conceptually central to the text. It may be that you determine words other than those the publisher has recommended are important for comprehending the text. So, by all means, please include those words in your explicit vocabulary instruction.

Exhibit 2.4 is an example of Ms. Prinz's thought processes in deciding which words should be explicitly taught within a history text. She considers words that were taught previously, words that can be understood from context clues, and words that she can briefly teach through body language or gestures. By eliminating these words, she can focus on words that need explicit instruction to enhance comprehension.

How-to Step 3 addresses the importance of having daily opportunities for your students to talk about content in pairs or small groups using cooperative structures, such as Think-Pair-Share. The panel believes that these short peer conversations should take place multiple times daily in order to reinforce learning. Keep in mind that success in ensuring that peer conversations are productive hinges on having routines and guidelines firmly in place. Examples of routines include which partner should speak first, how long each partner should speak (a timer can be helpful for this), which vocabulary word should be included in the conversation, use of sentence starters, and so on.

– End of Transcript –

Disclaimer: This video, produced by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest is part of a series developed for the *Professional Learning Communities Facilitator's Guide for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School*.

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