Instructional Highlight:
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction in the Secondary Classroom
Featuring Theresa Hessling, Harbor Beach Community Schools

A few years ago, administration and staff at Harbor Beach Community Schools identified the need for explicit vocabulary instruction across the curriculum in order to improve student achievement and better prepare their students for taking the ACT test. Over the course of the years, Theresa Hessling, Teacher Leader and High School English Teacher, has gotten the art of explicit vocabulary instruction down to a science. From the planning stages to instruction delivery to data collection, Mrs. Hessling has provided an examplar routine of providing explicit vocabulary instruction.

Curriculum Work/Planning
As a staff, educators at HB compiled a list of vocabulary words critical for students to know, understand and use. Vocabulary words requiring explicit instruction. The ACT prep vocabulary and Averil Coxhead Academic Word List, among other sources, were used as guides. A district decision was made to teach this set of words using key instructional strategies, some of which were from Step Up to Writing.
Prep Time Before Each Lesson
5 minutes to review the terms/meanings and think of examples and nonexamples
Materials Needed
Set of notecards and book ring for each student, writing utensils
Total time for each lesson
5-10 minutes
Instructional Routine
Teaching a Word Part: • Teacher shows word part, says word part (affix) and asks students to say word part • Teacher shows definition of word part and provides verbal definition • Teacher verbally provides example(s) and write example(s) for student view • Teacher elicits examples from students and writes these examples for student view Teaching a Read Word containing the Word Part • Teacher shows the word, says the word and asks students to say the word • Teacher segments the word into individual sound-spelling correspondences using EBLI strategy verbally and using dot and dash cues • Teacher shows the definition and verbally provides definition • Teacher models and guides students through breaking down the definition using SUTW strategy • Teacher provides verbal and written examples and nonexamples • Teacher elicits examples from students and writes them for student view • Teacher provides sentence using the word verbally and in writing
Number of times used each day or week
Monday: teach affixes and words Tuesday: teach more affixes and words Wednesday: review

Thursday: review
Friday: assess
Time required to teach routine
Instructional routine remains consistent, therefore, students are familiar with the routine after first couple weeks of school.
Evidence of success
Use of ExamView and the CPS clicker system to assess automatically provides data. As of last week, the overall scores for all assessments was 28.4/32, which is an 88%.
Video example
See model lesson with Mrs. Hessling on the SAM Literacy website.

Teacher Quote:
"It (the routine) is easy once you have your lists made up. It only takes a few minutes to review the words and affixes each week before modeling the lesson. Students know the routine and use their notecards to study for cumulative assessments. They also talk about when they see one of these words in something they are reading outside of English class, whether it be in a book or in science class. They tend to use the affixes in science class daily."

Student Quotes:
"Learning vocabulary has helped me immensely especially in classes like Biology where prefixes can sometimes tell you what the word means." –Mitch Hirn, 9th Grade

"Studying vocabulary in English has improved the way I speak. It also helps me spell out long words and improve my writing and reading fluency." –Casey Cole, 9th Grade

"Two days ago in our Biology warm-ups, it said, "What do you think fermentation means?" I put the suffix's definition 'to use' and it helped me figure out the meaning of the word, and I remembered it every since." –Robert Ocomen, 9th Grade