Interactive Word Walls

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

INTERACTIVE WORD WALLS create print rich learning environments. They provide students with a visual cue of the vocabulary words they are learning. There are a variety of formats for interactive word walls: unit-specific words, new vocabulary words, word parts, for example. Educators should choose the format of the interactive word wall that is most appropriate for the needs of their classroom and should regularly engage the word wall in learning by updating the words and using it as a cue to remind students to use their vocabulary words in their learning.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

– Create the word wall where every student can see it.
– Use large black letters and a variety of background colors to distinguish easily confused words.
– Engage students to determine which words should go on the word wall. Try to include words that students use most commonly in their writing.
– Add words gradually — a general guideline is five words per week.
– Use the word wall daily to practice words, incorporating a variety of activities such as chanting, snapping, clapping , word guessing games as well as writing them.
– Provide enough practice so that words are read and spelled automatically and transfer in students' daily writing.
– Add new words on a regular basis.
– Use content-area material from the curriculum rather than randomly selected words.
– Refer to the word walls regularly, so students understand its relevance.

RESEARCH

Bear, D. R., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. (2000). *Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Morris, D. (1981). Concept of word: A developmental phenomenon in the beginning reading and writing process. *Language Arts*, 58, 659-668.

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