



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

WORD WALLS

By Jim Bentley

Activity Description

Many language arts curricula advocate the use of “word walls” where important vocabulary are displayed. The SVPDP curriculum is filled with important words and big ideas. By creating word/concept walls within a classroom, students can be reminded daily of the vocabulary and ideas they are studying. It also further blurs the lines between language arts education and the SVPDP curriculum. Finally, publicly displaying the vocabulary/concepts from a selected unit of study further supports the use of “academic language” within the classroom.

Variations

The word-wall concept can be expanded. The Houghton-Mifflin Open Court language arts textbook series employs a Concept-Question wall where vocabulary or concepts from a specific story can be posted and where students can post questions or connections they have related to a specific selection.

The SVPDP word-wall concept can be used similarly. Students can post connections to specific vocabulary words/concepts on the wall or be encouraged to search for news stories that directly relate to a specific word or concept. If students have a question related to a concept or word, they could post those, too. You could create a T-chart with one side labeled Vocabulary and the other side labeled Questions/Connections.

Suggested Grade Level

Elementary through middle school

Estimated Time to Complete

Varies; as vocabulary is explicitly taught, the addition of a word(s) to the wall would take very little time.

Objective

- Students will explicitly read, decode, and internalize the meaning of important vocabulary words.

Materials Needed

- Large vocabulary word cards