

Ingham Impact Episode 27 – CORE Vocabulary at Heartwood

Alexis Adams: I started this position, I think, seven days ago, as the Heartwood Principal. I'm really excited to be here; before that I was an administrator in Macomb ISD so I had a couple years of experience with that. I also was a special education teacher for a long time at Jackson ISD, at the Lyle Torrant Center. You know, I'm really excited to be here, Heartwood's a great place, so, yeah, it's been great so far. Amber Slocum: So we found that our students were leaving our program at 26 not able to communicate a lot of things, a lot of meanings. CORE Vocabulary is a set of highly used words in the English Language. We followed the research out of the University of North Carolina, selected the 36 most frequently used words, or most impactful words for our students. They're words paired with symbols set up in a six by six grid, for students to be able to access a communication system. They use the pictures and the words in the communication system to tell us a variety of things. Julianna Putman: We have been doing CORE Vocabulary here for two and a half years; after a conference we attended, we came back and did some trial rooms. It was Amber and one other room, and they practiced and trialed CORE Vocabulary for one semester. We had a lot of success, and we decided to do this school-wide, so this will be our second full school year with everyone being trained in CORE Vocabulary, and providing that aided language input throughout the day. Alexis Adams: Everyone in the building is using CORE; they use it throughout the day. Everyone has wearable CORE, so in the hallways, even, you'll see them pull their CORE board out and kind of just be able to talk to the student and get them to understand what they're asking and, also, what they want, too. So yes, they use it throughout the day; lunch, snack, all activities outside if they're going on a walk, or, eventually they'll be going out into the community and they'll use them there, too. Amber Slocum: Our whole school is working on CORE Vocabulary, and I think that that shows how collaborative we are. We have really great Speech Pathologists that bring all these innovative ideas and ways to teach it, ways to use it. Julianna Putman: It's innovative because this is the current research; this is the newest and best thing to be doing with our population, and we're always following evidence based practices. Alexis Adams: Being able to bring home CORE Vocabulary, back to the home, back to the families, in order to kind of work as a team, I think is really important in collaboration, both with home and school combined. Also, we're making sure that all of the new teachers are trained on CORE, so I would say that's also part of Ingham's mission: to make sure everyone has as much information and is as educated as possible about the things that are going on in the building. Our new teachers were just trained on CORE last week, I was also trained on CORE last week, so we just want everyone to make sure that we're all using CORE and understanding CORE, because it's such an important part of Heartwood.

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