

Overview of the 2020/21 Study of *Vocabulary Workshop*

INTRODUCTION

William H. Sadlier, Inc. (Sadlier) believes in providing the highest quality materials for use in the classroom. Sadlier has contracted with Magnolia Consulting, LLC (Magnolia), an external, independent consulting firm specializing in research and evaluation, to conduct an efficacy study of its *Vocabulary Workshop* program during the 2020/21 school year. Sadlier and Magnolia are currently recruiting schools to participate in this study, which will examine the efficacy of *Vocabulary Workshop Enriched Edition* ©2021 in grades 2–5 and *Vocabulary Workshop Achieve Edition* ©2018 in grades 7 & 8.

Vocabulary Workshop is a supplemental program that allows teachers to present vocabulary in the context of informational and literary texts while providing thorough practice with a variety of print and online activities. The program is based on an approach that combines three pedagogical elements. First, it offers step-by-step direct instruction of grade-appropriate words with a definitional and contextual approach. Second, students face multiple exposures to new vocabulary, allowing them the opportunity to use the words in different contexts and to build ownership of each word. Finally, Word Study activities and word-learning strategies help students develop ways to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and understand the nuances of language.

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

The study will use a randomized control design to compare the reading performance of two groups of students in each grade in the study: those whose teachers use *Vocabulary Workshop* (i.e., the treatment group) as a supplement to a core reading/language arts program and those whose teachers use only a core reading/language arts program (i.e., the comparison group). At the beginning of the study, Magnolia will randomly assign participating teachers within schools and grades to either the treatment or comparison group. Therefore, within each participating school, approximately half of the participating teachers will use the *Vocabulary Workshop* program with their core program, and the other half will use only their school's existing core program.

The study will also examine program implementation and teacher perceptions of *Vocabulary Workshop* and comparison programs. Data collection will involve:

- collection of demographic data from teachers and students;
- online treatment and comparison-teacher surveys (administered in the fall and spring);
- teacher administration of the Iowa Reading Online, a standardized reading assessment, (administered at the beginning and end of the study). If district does not already use this assessment, it will be provided at no cost through the study.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The study's eligibility requirements are as follows:

- schools must be using a core reading/language arts program;
- schools must have at least two teachers per grade who are willing to participate in the study (i.e., elementary schools must have at least two teachers per grade for grades 2–5 and middle schools must have at least two teachers per grade for grades 7–8);
- schools and teachers must be comfortable with random assignment to study conditions;

- schools must work with Sadlier to determine a time for treatment teachers to participate in two required half-day sessions of *Vocabulary Workshop* professional development (one before the start of the school year and one several weeks into the school year); and
- treatment teachers must be willing to implement *Vocabulary Workshop* for an average of 15 minutes per day during their reading instructional time throughout the school year. Time may vary during some days of the lesson cycle.

Magnolia Consulting protects participant confidentiality and anonymity and will adhere to district and school processes and requirements for human subjects review.

STUDY BENEFITS

Participation in the study is an exciting opportunity for educators to contribute to the effectiveness of the materials in improving student learning in reading. Students nationwide will benefit from the improvements to *Vocabulary Workshop* based on results from this study. As an incentive for participation, each participating teacher will receive a \$150 stipend, and each school coordinator will receive a \$200 stipend. All study materials, including the Iowa Reading Online assessment, will be provided at no cost. In addition, during the 2020/21 school year, treatment teachers at participating study schools will receive the *Vocabulary Workshop* program—as well as two professional development trainings—at no cost. At the end of the study, all schools will have access to the study report, and each school will have access to their school's Iowa Reading Online scores at no cost. During the 2021/22 school year, all teachers who participated in the study will receive the *Vocabulary Workshop* program at no cost.

PARTICIPATION NEXT STEPS

To be considered for this study, please complete a study application as soon as possible, as space is limited.

The application will take about 10 minutes to complete and is available via the following links (complete one for each participating school):

- For Elementary schools: <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5425186/2782219104f6>
- For Middle Schools/Junior High Schools:
<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5425363/147b222e2ca9>

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Beth Peery (434.906.6806 or beth@magnoliaconsulting.org) or Dr. Lisa Shannon (919.622.8407 or lisa@magnoliaconsulting.org).

Magnolia Consulting understands the practical realities of conducting studies with schools and educators while adhering to the highest possible research standards. We are aware of the demand placed on participants' time and appreciate the consideration of this effort. For more information about Magnolia Consulting, visit www.magnoliaconsulting.org.