LEARNING TOGETHER ABOUT DEVELOPING ACADEMIC ENGLISH

Convene a group to review the *Learn What Works* resources on Developing Academic English. Potential members of the team include a building administrator, the reading coach or reading specialist, English as a Second Language staff, content teachers, and a district representative.

Watch the multi-media overview and the short interview of expert Robin Scarcella. Check out the additional resources such as the PowerPoint from a Scarcella presentation or the paper that provides her framework for thinking about academic English.

Here are some discussion questions to help you study the recommendation and reflect on your current practices:

1. How does Scarcella define the components of academic English? Does your state, district, or school have a framework for academic English? Does your framework address all the components Scarcella listed? If not, what are the most important topics to add? (If you need to do more work on framework development, see the tool "Preparing to Develop Academic English.")

2. Academic English includes all four literacy modalities—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The schools profiled on DWW find value in teaching, and interconnecting, all four modalities. They often pay special attention to writing, starting in kindergarten. Does your district or school explicitly develop academic English in all four modalities?

3. Developing academic English is closely related to teaching content. Instruction can and should take place during literacy instruction, during content area instruction, and in English language development classes. In which settings are you developing academic English? How are you coordinating instruction across these different settings? Do teacher have adequate opportunities for collaborative planning across classes and grades? (See some of the sample materials for examples of approaches to teacher collaboration for planning.)

4. Once teachers become alerted to the importance of academic English, they will be able to identify vocabulary and language structures that cause students difficulty. What specific needs do you identify immediately? (For help in analysis of student responses and identification of areas to target for instruction, see the tools on "Observing Gaps in Academic English" or "Reviewing Test Items.")