



Vocabulary Mastery for GCSE English Resit

Overview

East Lancashire Learning Group (ELLG) is partnering with the Education Endowment Foundation and The Policy Institute, King's College London to evaluate Vocabulary Mastery for GCSE English Resit. The programme aims to support learners working towards a grade 4 by developing their understanding and application of Tier 2 vocabulary. The trial will assess the impact of the programme on learners' GCSE resit grade. The programme is designed to complement existing GCSE English teaching and aims to support improved attainment in the summer resit examination. This is an exciting opportunity for colleges to receive professional development and resources to run the programme, and to help generate evidence of what works to improve the outcomes of learners who are resitting their GCSE English exam.

What does the programme involve?

Vocabulary Mastery is a 12-week programme where learners are invited to attend an additional 60-minute, small group workshop as well as their usual GCSE English classes each week. Workshops are delivered by each college's specialist English teachers who will be trained and supported throughout the programme.

The programme is designed to enhance the teaching of tier 2 vocabulary (defined as words with high frequency in written texts, such as 'parallel', 'dispersed', 'adjacent'). The aim is to help learners to develop and use new vocabulary and also supports the decoding of unfamiliar vocabulary by exploring the building blocks of words. The workshops also aim to develop learners' oracy skills which in turn improves spoken language and fluency.

To ensure a high level of support for teachers delivering the intervention, the programme will be led by four "hub leads" who will each support 15-20 settings. Each college must put forward two specialist English teachers to be trained in the approach. These teachers will:

- Attend an in-person training session in late-August/early-September 2026;
- Attend three twilight webinars delivered between October 2026 and January 2027;
- Receive a full suite of resources for delivering the intervention;
- Complete a weekly learning log so that the hub lead can ensure that they are on track with delivery; and
- Have access to online drop-in sessions to seek additional support if required.

Participating teachers will also have access to a preplanned 6-week scheme, a list of over 400 tier 2 words and supporting resources.

The programme will run in two, 12-week cycles: one in the autumn term and one in the spring term. In each cycle, settings must run two workshop groups with four to eight learners per group. This means that each setting will run four workshop groups over the academic year.

Learners will complete one initial and one summative assessment at the beginning and the end of the cycle. Settings will also receive one observation throughout the programme delivery from the hub leads and participate in a professional learning conversation.

Each setting must provide a senior leader as a key contact to work with ELLG and King's to support the intervention and evaluation and commit to engaging staff in the training as well as the evaluation activities.

Students will be randomly allocated from a chosen list (submitted by the college) to receive the 12-week intervention workshops for 1 hour per week.

What are the benefits of participating?

By taking part, your setting is helping to understand the impact of the programme on learners' attainment. This means that participating colleges will also be contributing to the education evidence base that informs efforts to improve outcomes for all FE GCSE English resit learners.

The evaluation report will be publicly accessible on the EEF website upon project completion. All participating colleges will receive professional development training for at least two teachers, delivered by experienced learning practitioners, as well as a £1000.00 recognition payment. Settings will also receive a teacher release payment of up to £480 for two staff to attend the training.

Eligibility

To participate, settings must meet the following criteria:

- Campus of a state-funded FEC or SFC in England
- Offer GCSE English resits as part of full-time courses to 16-19-year-old learners
- Have a minimum of 64, 16-19-year-old GCSE English resit learners enrolled on a full-time study programme for the 2026/27 academic year
- In the 50% most deprived areas of England as defined by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)
- Have not previously participated in the VM ESPD and incorporated the VM approach into the standard GCSE English resit curriculum
- Not taking part in the STEER Tracking to Support 16+ Transition EEF pilot evaluation
- Not currently using the Lexonik literacy intervention as part of your GCSE English resit course in academic year 25 / 26 and not intending to use it during academic year 26 27 (settings that have used Lexonik in the past but are no longer using it may participate in this study).

Who is running the project?

ELLG is an Ofsted outstanding Further Education provider based in East Lancashire. It is one of six EEF Evidence Partnership colleges. ELLG aims to support some of the most deprived students in the country to achieve their potential by utilising proven educational research and developing this further through innovative projects. They will be working alongside three hubs who will co-deliver the programme in regionally specific areas across the country. ELLG have designed the Vocabulary Mastery for GCSE English Resit programme. The Policy Institute at King's College London works to solve society's challenges with evidence and expertise. They will be independently evaluating the impact of this programme.

How does the trial work?

The purpose of this trial is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Vocabulary Mastery for GCSE English Resit programme on learners' GCSE attainment and outcomes. This is a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT), therefore, learners within settings (college campuses) will be randomly allocated to the intervention group or control group. The intervention group of learners will receive the Vocabulary Mastery for GCSE English Resit programme for 12 weeks. The control group of learners will not receive the programme and will continue with their standard GCSE Resit programme. All settings will be given an incentive payment of £1000, alongside the professional development training, for participating in the evaluation.

The evaluation activities include:

- Observations of workshop delivery (only at a small number of colleges)
- Short staff questionnaires
- Short interviews (only at a small number of colleges)
- Data monitoring

Settings will also need to:

- Put forward lists of eligible learners for randomisation to the intervention and control groups
- Provide learners with information about the trial (information leaflets and a short video)
- Hand out parent information leaflets (where appropriate)
- Provide raw scores for GCSE English resits for all eligible learners in September 2027
- Communicate with the evaluation team (King's) and the delivery team (ELLG).

Are there any costs involved?

It is free of charge to take part in this programme. Teacher release payments (£480 per setting) will be provided retrospectively after training is complete.

How will data be used?

ELLG, King's and the project partners (Hub Leads) will treat all data securely, confidentially and in accordance with data protection law.

Your college staff and the learners will not be identified in any report arising from the research.

Information on how King's processes research data can be found in their [Statement on Use of Personal Data in Research](#). More information about how King's will collect, store and share data for this project will be provided to colleges that express interest in participating in the evaluation. Information on how ELLG processes data can be found on the [privacy notice](#). A specified notice for this programme will be given to those who express an interest.

What is the timeline for this project?

What happens after a college expresses an interest?	A Vocabulary Mastery for GCSE English Resit hub lead will be in touch to book a call and discuss next steps.
When will colleges hear that they have been accepted to participate?	July 31 st 2026
When will the programme be delivered?	October 2026 - May 2027
When will settings receive incentive payments?	December 2027
When will the evaluation results be published?	February 2029

Interested in participating?

[Ask a question](#)

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