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Explicit content-area vocabulary instruction for English learners: Impacts with reading comprehension

Catherine Ruthe Terrell

EXPLICIT CONTENT-AREA VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS: IMPACTS WITH

READING COMPREHENSION

———————————

A Dissertation

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

———————————

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

———————————

by

Catherine Ruthe Terrell

December 2011

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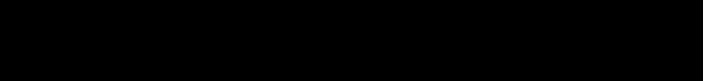
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine impacts of

explicit content-area vocabulary instruction on reading

comprehension. Previous research indicated positive effects

of explicit vocabulary instruction with reading

comprehension (August et al, 2005; Bear et al, 2007; Beck

et al, 2008; Carlo et al, 2004). In contrast to preceding

studies, this study used the California English Language

Development Test (CELDT) as a measure for reading

comprehension. The CELDT is a measure unique to California

and was chosen for that reason and because it measures all

four domains of literacy, listening, speaking, reading and

writing. This study focused on four years of CELDT scores

for third grade students at a targeted elementary school.

In addition to analysis of archival CELDT data,

teacher interviews were conducted. Using a phenomenological

approach, interview data provided a clear view of how

participants experienced implementation of explicit content

area vocabulary instruction. The qualitative segment of

this study presented what the experiences meant for the

participants and permitted an investigation of evidence of

the experiences as reported by the participants (Moustakas,

1994). The experiences and actions of the participants are inseparable from this study.

Analysis of CELDT data did not support hypotheses of this study, but interview results were discussed in comparison with CELDT results to reconcile discrepancies between teacher's perceptions of increased student achievement and scarcity of quantitative evidence of increased student achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Whatever that superlative of thank you is, I send it to my husband. For extraordinary valor in dealing with a doctoral student you deserve a medal.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Definitions

Definitions of key terms used in this study were derived from pertinent literature. An *English learner* is a student whose first language is other than English and who has not yet acquired sufficient English to benefit from classroom instruction equally with students whose first language is English. These students access school instruction using wide ranges of English acquisition. The ranges of English acquisition are assessed in California by using the *California English Language Development Test (CELDT)*. The CELDT is an assessment which measures overall English language acquisition and also contains assessments of the four domains of literacy: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Problem Statement

As decision makers, and as advisors to decision makers, educational leaders are concerned with the academic achievement of English learners. English learners comprise a growing percentage of all learners, especially in

California. Educational leaders in California are troubled by the gap in reading and writing achievement between native English speakers and English learners. According to the California Department of Education (CDE) website, approximately 83% of English learners, grades 2-11, are less than proficient in English/Language Arts (ELA) as measured by the Standardized Testing And Reporting (STAR) ELA assessment. This study examined impacts of the addition of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction in the four domains of literacy, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, on literacy achievement for English learners.

The review of literature presented provides a convincing line of reasoning supporting additional explicit instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Researchers, such as Gibbons, and Perogoy and Boyle, advocate the benefits of enhancing standard literacy instruction with explicit instruction to provide students repeated opportunities to acquire and apply literacy skills needed for academic achievement. Repetition of targeted skills grants English learners sufficient experiences to conquer disparities caused by scarce acquaintance with English. Other researchers, such as August, Bear, Beck, Carlo, and Slavin, demonstrate benefits of explicit

instruction in literacy. Benefits of explicit instruction in the domains of literacy contain direction for classroom instruction and further research. Benefits of explicit literacy instruction reported by previous research showed increased achievement in reading comprehension and more effective writing by students.

One method, suggested by previous research, of increasing literacy achievement for English learners is explicit vocabulary instruction. In a study of English learners in three states, research revealed that explicit vocabulary instruction increased reading comprehension (August et al, 2005). During reading, fluent readers read up to five words per second (Adams, 1995). To read fluently, students must be able to scan over the words without interrupting themselves to determine word meanings. Explicit vocabulary instruction teaches word meanings, thus allowing students to read more fluently.

Although implicit vocabulary instruction has been shown to be effective for many students, the addition of explicit vocabulary instruction increased third grade students' literacy acquisition (Trelease, 2006). In this study of six third grade classes, two classes did not experience texts read aloud, two experienced read-alouds

without word explanations, and two experienced read-alouds with word explanations. The classes which experienced read-alouds demonstrated greater vocabulary acquisition, but the classes which experienced read-alouds with word explanations gained the most in vocabulary (Trelease, 2006). Combined with research exhibiting links to increased vocabulary and reading comprehension (August et al, 2005; Carlo et al, 2004), this indicates a need for further research in this area.

Contraction of research to effects of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction for English learners is also suggested by previous research (Beck et al, 2002). Since student learning is maximized by thoughtful word choice for instruction and by teaching no more than 10-12 words per week (August et al, 2005), vocabulary instruction should emphasize words that will be of the most benefit to students. Informal words, commonly used words, are easily learned (Cummins, 1994) and need not be explicitly taught. Words students will encounter in academic environments are more difficult to learn (Cummins, 1994) and these words, specific to curriculum content-areas, require explicit instruction with repeated exposures and applications. In ordinary classroom instruction English learners have

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insufficient interactions with content-area vocabulary. This study was planned to provide additional data, specific to California, to support change in classroom instruction. It is hoped that this research will present educational leaders, and classroom teachers, with convincing evidence of the benefits of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction. Possible benefits of this research may include increased academic achievement demonstrated in classroom activities and assessments and through STAR ELA results. Educators are weary of change, so ongoing implementation of alternative instructional techniques must be supported by persuasive evidence.

Purpose of the Study

As an educational leader, literacy instructor, and teacher trainer, Gentile (2003, 2006) studied English learners at risk for literacy failure in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States and his research suggests that one area of deficiency for English learners is breadth and depth of vocabulary in English. Also key for this research are: Cambourne, Clay, Calkins, and Fountas and Pinnell. These authors focus on teaching reading and methods to increase students' reading achievement.

Building on this beginning, this study explored additional authors publishing studies focused on links between literacy achievement and vocabulary development for English learners.

"Reading is comprehension" (Cambourne, 1995, p. 4). Beginning with this statement, this study investigated impacts of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension and the reading process. In addition to Gentile (2003, 2006), numerous other researchers studied emerging, intermediate, and advancing literacy behaviors. Many findings were consistent across each study. Consistent findings contain effective instructional strategies and student's reading behaviors at each achievement level. Effective instructional strategies include multiple texts at students' instructional levels, highly qualified teachers, daily explicit vocabulary instruction combined with student's application of instruction and evolution of instruction as students' reading achievement increases.

Gentile's research provides evidence that reading achievement increases in response to effective vocabulary instruction. Also, in addition to Gentile, August (2004), Bear (2007), Beck (2002, 2008), Carlo (2004), and McKeown (2007) each studied vocabulary instruction and development.

As with reading achievement, many findings were consistent among the studies. Evidence supports the premise that implicit vocabulary instruction has limited effectiveness with English learners. Due to their already limited vocabulary using the context of a reading or of a conversation to infer meanings for unknown words is generally unsuccessful. Evidence supports explicit vocabulary instruction as necessary for English learners and that instruction should convey depth of word meanings in addition to breadth of vocabulary. These researchers agree word choices for instruction are crucial to increasing vocabulary acquisition. They also agree that when focusing on English learners word explanations must be easily understood and frequent. In addition, a key for building vocabulary is repeated uses of words in a variety of contexts.

The key article, the article that provided the impetus for this study is *Closing the gap: Vocabulary instruction for English language learners* (Carlo et al, 2004). This article describes a study focused on connections between vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension which was conducted across three states. Participants included students who were underachieving in comparison to grade-

level peers. Measures used were created by the researchers. It demonstrated positive correlations between explicit vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension. As a reading teacher, this researcher is vitally interested in increasing reading comprehension. As a teacher in a school which has a population that includes approximately 36% English learners, this researcher is searching for solutions targeting those students.

Reflecting on the significant discoveries of previous research, it is reasonable to predict this study will strengthen the evidence that explicit content-area vocabulary instruction increases reading comprehension. Each study discussed above contributes to the body of knowledge informing classroom literacy instruction and blending the research adding a target instructional focus of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction, this study builds on prior research as it incorporates previous findings and methods. Effective instructional methods are described, yet many classrooms fail to incorporate them. Using the weight of prior research in a study in a local setting will contribute to the formulation of more precise understandings and encourage ongoing classroom implementation.

One way this study will contribute to the body of literature addressing vocabulary development and reading comprehension is by using a measure unique to California. The California English Language Development Test (CELDT) was developed and is used only in California. In contrast to other assessments, this assessment measures all four domains of literacy: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Measuring all four domains provides a broader evaluation of literacy development than assessments addressing only reading and writing. In addition, CELDT is standardized test in contrast to the measures used by Carlo et al (2004) in their study. The results of this study will contribute information regarding the effects of short-term explicit vocabulary instruction with third grade English learners.

This study examined how explicit vocabulary instruction of content-area vocabulary targeting third grade English learners correlates with reading comprehension as measured by a standardized assessment, the CELDT.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were developed to examine the effectiveness of the intervention. Hypotheses were:

H_1: CELDT overall scores for the school year 2010-2011 for third grade students at the selected school will demonstrate an increase compared to CELDT overall scores for the school year 2009-2010.

H_2: CELDT overall scores for the school year 2009-2010 for third grade students at the selected school will demonstrate an increase compared to CELDT overall scores for the school years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

H_3: CELDT reading scores for the school year 2010-2011 for third grade students at the selected school will demonstrate an increase compared to CELDT reading scores for the school year 2009-2010.

H_4: CELDT reading scores for the school year 2009-2010 for third grade students at the selected school will demonstrate an increase compared to CELDT reading scores for the school years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

As STAR ELA scores demonstrate that English learners, a subgroup of California students, comprise an increasing percentage of students who score below proficient in literacy-based assessment tasks it is worthwhile to examine

instructional methods that provide possible benefits to students. By performing analyses of overall CELDT scores and CELDT Reading scores increases in student achievement can be examined.

Conclusion

Significant differences in CELDT overall and reading subgroup scores would provide evidence supporting explicit content-area vocabulary instruction as a method to increase student's literacy achievement. Significant differences in CELDT overall and reading subgroup scores would also provide evidence supporting professional development targeting explicit content-area vocabulary instruction as a method to implement effective teaching practices into daily classroom instruction. Using such evidence, educational leaders may provide professional development directed toward increasing students' content-area vocabularies and support classroom implementation of teaching strategies acquired during professional development, thus increasing overall academic achievement.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students who enter school as English learners are
immediately at a disadvantage in California schools. They
face additional obstacles to becoming successful readers in
comparison to their peers who enter school fluent in
English, which is considered one of the most difficult
languages to learn due to its oddities and inconsistencies.
It is estimated the average native English speaking five
year old has a vocabulary of 4000-5000 words and the gap
between native speakers and non-native speakers is a
critical factor in academic success (Nation & Waring,
n.d.). To diminish this disparity, to accelerate students'
learning, vocabulary instruction must occur concurrently
with effective literacy instruction and it must be embedded
within the instructional setting (Adams, 1995; Clay, 1991;
Gentile, 2006). Educational leaders are concerned with
increasing English learners' literacy acquisition for
numerous reasons.

Lags in literacy acquisition are demonstrated by a
significant portion of the school-age population and
English learners make up a disproportionate of the

underachieving population (California Department of

Education, 2009). These differences cause educational

leaders to continue seeking solutions for students who have

obstacles to successful literacy achievement since

disparities in literacy acquisition may have substantial

impacts. Among those impacts are increased high school

dropout rates, decreased rates of college entry and

completion, narrowed employment options, lower wages,

increased circumstances of poverty, higher rates of

imprisonment, lower levels of good health, and shorter life

spans (CDE. 2008). Educational leaders recognize that

students presently in classes are the citizens and wage

earners of the future. For a flourishing future our

students must acquire the greatest levels of learning

possible.

Data demonstrate that approximately 15.9% of the

4,710,018 school-age students who participated in

California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR)

English-language arts (ELA) California Standards Tests

(CSTs) consistently achieves at levels lower than

proficient and advanced students (CDE Statewide Assessment

Division, 2009). English learners make up an unequal

segment of the underachieving population. Approximately

23.39% of the 4.75 million students in California are English learners and are achieving at the following rates according to the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) English-language arts (ELA) California Standards Tests (CSTs): 3.4% advanced, 13.4% proficient, 33.6% basic, 27.9% below basic, and 21.8% far below basic (CDE Statewide Assessment Division, 2009). Compared to overall student achievement on the same measure: 22% advanced, 28% proficient, 27.5% basic, 13.4% below basic, and 9% far below basic (CDE Statewide Assessment Division, 2009). This data highlights reasons educational leaders are concerned with students' literacy achievement, especially literacy achievement among English learners.

This chapter presents a review of literature addressing: literacy acquisition, literacy teaching practices that target English learners, the California English language development test, and an explanation of explicit and implicit vocabulary instruction takes focus in this review.

Literacy Acquisition

What are the goals of literacy instruction? Why do we teach literacy skills? In the English speaking community,

communication occurs using an alphabetic system, through texts (Adams, 1995). The ability to create and access texts is a crucial life skill. Many researchers have examined literacy acquisition, yet numerous schools continue to struggle to achieve basic literacy levels for the majority of their students. The demands for constantly increasing competency levels are crucial to the integration of students into the world of reading for a variety of purposes in modern literacy.

Oral Language Supports Literacy Acquisition

Reading and writing develop from familiarity with listening and speaking (Adams, 1995; Cambourne, 1995; Clay, 1991; Gentile, 2006). Beginning before birth, children experience listening and speaking (Gentile, 2006). As young children, individuals are immersed in oral language. By listening, children incorporate language into interpersonal interactions. As they begin to speak coherently children explore and develop uses of language to communicate. As children's literacy behaviors emerge they use similar processes to acquire reading and writing skills (Calkins, 2001, 1994; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001; Miller, 2002; Mooney, 1990; Morris & Slavin, 2003).

What is usually forgotten in this debate is the developmental fact that the little child learning to speak does not learn all his sounds before he uses words, nor does he know many words before he knows sentences. He is immature in his control of language, in his cognition, in his visual perception, and in his motor activities. Despite these immaturities the child gradually improves in his control over each one of these aspects of oral language. The best approaches to instruction in reading and writing acknowledge such a way of learning. (Clay, 1991, p. 237)

Just as listening and speaking skills are learned through approximate attempts supported by other's encouragement, reading and writing are learned by using what is known and continually developing toward greater sophistication in literacy.

Building on oral language, children construct reading and writing schemas, and the foundation of oral language provides children with familiarity of the structures and strategies of language (Adams, 1995; Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Cardenas-Hagan & Linan-Thompson, 2006; Gentile 2006; Pollard-Durodola, Mathes, Vaughn, 2006). Using this information, children apply the strategies of

listening and speaking to reading and writing. As they read and write, they analyze texts to determine if the text makes sense according to how language should sound (Adams, 1995; Clay 1991; Gentile 2006). As students become more sophisticated in literacy skills and strategies they integrate phonetic principles comparing the meaning and structure of texts to alphabetic representations to determine accuracy (Adams, 1995; Calkins, 2001; Clay 1991; Pollard-Durodola et al, 2006). Integration of letters, sounds and words with the messages of text emphasizes that language, whether oral or written, is communication accessible using structures learned through listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Children who enter school with fewer literacy experiences and whose English language acquisition is less than their peers are at risk for difficulties in literacy acquisition (Gentile, 2003, 2006). Based on years of teaching at-risk children, Gentile provided insight into the difficulties children encounter during literacy instruction and ways to scaffold students to accelerated literacy acquisition. Literacy experiences provide children with expectations of both fictional and non-fictional texts by leading them to presume texts will communicate

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coherently. Texts will make sense and have meaning. Texts will also conform to the rules of language by adhering to conventional syntax.

> Successful students frequently and consistently used the following five common sentence structures and four sentence transformations that may comprise a 'common syntax' throughout their talking and writing: Sentence Structures: 1. Simple sentences… 2. Prepositional phrases… 3. Conjunctions… 4. Relative pronouns… 5. Adverbial connectors… Sentence transformations: 1. Negatives… 2. Questions… 3. Commands… 4. Exclamations… (Gentile, 2006, p. 33-34)

Literacy experiences, written and oral, increase students' scope of syntax and provide increasing literacy acquisition.

Learning the organization of English through oral language provides structure for underachieving students in order to accelerate their command of language constructs deemed crucial to language acquisition (Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Gentile, 2003, 2006). "For children having to learn English as a second language or those with the least experience in language and literacy, just spending time in school without *targeted* intervention, does

little to develop the language needed for academic competence" (Gentile, 2006, p. 34). Daily literacy experiences incorporating oral opportunities to apply and expand syntax guide students to increasing control of the elements necessary for accelerated literacy acquisition, an "instructional design to link the development of spoken language with literacy instruction…" (Gentile, 2006, p. 37-38). Opportunities to utilize oral language support the goals of literacy acquisition.

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Reading Comprehension Supports Literacy Acquisition

Reading comprehension has been the subject of intensive study (Adams, 1995; Cambourne, 1995; Clay, 1991; Holdaway, 1979; Slavin, Madden, Chambers & Haxby, 2009). How texts are understood and processed has been researched by scholars, such as those mentioned above, for decades and results demonstrate reading is a complex process used individually. Reading comprehension is influenced by an extensive range of literacy skills and strategies applied within a variety of learning conditions.

Presented here is an approach to reading instruction for English learners developed by Cambourne, Holdaway, Clay, and other researchers, which starts from a basic

understanding of how a student learns to read, often referred to as the "reading process". The reading process and literacy acquisition include emphasis on reading comprehension, the reader's understanding of the communication intended by the author.

Literacy skills used for reading comprehension include using aspects of texts which encompass meaning, syntax, and visual information (Adams, 1995; Clay, 1991, 1993). Readers analyze text during reading, accessing these sources of information to build comprehension. Information regarding the meaning of a text is used by the reader to determine if what was read made sense. For example, a reader might read a text as if it says, "The little green frog just open the fall lock." Instead of, "The little green frog jumped over the fallen log." Since the substitutions do not make sense the reader should be alerted errors were made and must be corrected (Clay, 1991, 1993). Since the goal of reading is to understand what has been read, the text must make sense. If it does not, it is the reader's job to correct the reading so it does make sense (Cambourne, 1995). Meaning, understanding the author's message, is the defining characteristic of reading comprehension.

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Syntax is the application of grammar (Adams, 1995;

Clay, 1991, 1993). Grammar is defined as classes of words,

their functions and the system of rules of structure for a

language (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) Syntax, as the application

of the rules of grammar, can be the most difficult

information used to assist comprehension since the question

used to focus students' attention on syntax is: Does it

sound right? (Clay, 1991, 1993). The ability to determine

if what was read sounds right is dependent on previous

language experiences (Anthony, 2008; Gentile, 2006; Manyak,

2007). Children who have experienced grammatically correct

language are able to compare readings to their mental

recordings of conventional language; conversely, children

who have not experienced grammatically correct language do

not have conventional language stored as mental recordings

of oral language as a tool for comparison (Adams, 1995;

Anthony, 2008; Clay, 1991, 1993; Gentile, 2006; Manyak,

2007). So "He gots no apples." may sound right to those

children. The question for those children, asked by a

teacher or by the student's self-questioning, becomes: Does

it sound the way it would in books? (Clay,1991, 1993;

Macleod, Macmillan & Norwich, 2007). In order for a student

to correctly answer this question, extensive experiences

with literature are needed to rebuild the schema for syntax

so students will have a new basis of comparison of correct

syntax with incorrect (Anthony, 2008; Gentile, 2006;

Macleod et al, 2007; Manyak, 2007; Pollard-Durodola et al,

2006). As with incorrect readings based on

misunderstandings of meaning, correcting inaccurate reading

due to syntactic inaccuracies is the reader's

responsibility, but the responses of the teacher support

the reader differently (Clay, 1991, 1993). Teacher

responses to guide corrections for syntactic inaccuracies

will support the reader by instigating the reader's

examination of application of conventional grammar.

Visual information is how things look on the page.

"The child must learn to attend to the details in print"

(Clay, 1993, p. 23). Details in print include how the print

is formatted onto the page, word shapes, letter chunks,

punctuation, and additional information (Clay, 1991). An

example of using additional visual information is the use

of pictures to support reading. Recalling the example

provided earlier to demonstrate a reader's use of meaning,

imagine a picture of a little green frog jumping over a

fallen log. Coordinating two sources of information,

meaning and visual information, the reader would have

additional support to read accurately or to monitor reading
and correct miscues (Adams, 1995; Clay, 1991, Mooney,
1990). Another illustration of using visual information is
noticing the difference between words, such as hippopotamus
and hippo. Either would make sense, but only one would
match the word length expected by the reader, only one
would be accurate reading. A text might have these two
sentences: "Can you find the hippo?" and "The hippopotamus
is in the pool." Application of visual information, the
shapes and lengths of the words, cues the reader as to
which word, hippo or hippopotamus, is accurate (Adams,
1995; Clay, 1991; Mooney, 1990; Routman, 1991). Students
apply skills utilizing numerous information sources for
accurate reading and comprehension. As students develop as
readers, greater responsibility for reading is assumed by
the reader.

<div align="center">Reading Comprehension, Independence,
and Problem Solving</div>

The reader's application of a variety of information
to accurately read texts is increased through literacy
acquisition, which is maximized as learners' reading skills
develop (Adams, 1995; Clay, 1991; Slavin et al, 2009;
Vygotsky, 1962). Lending support to this understanding of

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the reading process, Vygotsky, a cognitivist and

constructivist, profiled how thought and language develop

and discussed ways learning depends on a child's

development and how literacy acquisition experiences extend

development, thus extending learning (Vygotsky, 1962).

Identified by Vygotsky, the Zone of Proximal Development

(ZPD) defined what the learner can achieve with scaffolding

by a teacher facilitating the learner's climb to the next

level of achievement. A ZPD is produced when a student and

teacher join in a carefully crafted instructional activity.

The teacher may then provide multiple learning

opportunities to maximize student achievement (Vygotsky,

1962). Using the ZPD, teachers adjust the level of support

provided in response to the child's level of performance

affording success for the child and instilling the skills

necessary for independent problem solving in the future. As

every student develops into an independent reader

autonomous application of skills is one of the goals of

literacy acquisition.

Inner control and independence are crucial for

successful reading comprehension. Inner control is the

reader controlling the text, making and retaining meaning

to grasp the communication intended by the author (Adams,

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1995; Calkins, 2001; Clay, 1991; Miller, 2002; Mooney, 1990; Slavin et al, 2009). Inner control is manifested as persons navigate text and demonstrate comprehension. Observable behaviors signal the development of inner control (Clay, 1991). Behaviors used by the reader as the reader moves from less to more expert include fluent use of language during reading, application of concepts about print, attending to visual information, print-sound relationships, and cross-checking types of information (Adams, 1995; Calkins, 2001; Clay, 1991; Miller, 2002; Slavin et al, 2009). Inner control is based on exercising analysis strategies and visual perception. As discussed earlier, the reader integrates types of information through use of inner control.

Independence is a requirement for fluent reading (Adams, 1995; Cambourne, 1995; Clay, 1991). Only when one can access text independently can one read for meaning, read to learn. As a reader develops independence, problem solving strategies increase, and as problem solving strategies increase a reader increases in independence producing a cyclical increase in literacy acquisition (Adams, 1995; Calkins, 2001; Clay, 1991; Slavin et al, 2009). Vygotsky's (1962) perspective on learning includes

the thought that as learning is occurring the teacher guides the child, but as the learning moves toward acquisition responsibility is transferred to the child. The child becomes an independent problem solver.

Problem solving, knowing one can do something to help oneself and having an array of skills to apply, allows the reader to pull through more difficult texts (Adams, 1995; Calkins, 2001; Clay, 1991; Miller, 2002; Slavin et al, 2009). Skilled readers use information more efficiently and quickly to problem solve, to read and understand texts (Adams, 1995; Clay, 1991).

So highly developed are the word recognition processes of skillful readers that the rate at which they read typically exceeds five words per second. They can perceive whole words as quickly and accurately as single letters, and they can recognize whole phrases as quickly and easily as strings of three or four unrelated letters. (Adams, 1995, p. 95)

When reading a difficult text, or a difficult word, skilled readers apply problem solving strategies. The confidence to employ problem solving strategies while reading continuous text is essential to fluent reading and reading comprehension (Adams, 1995; Clay, 1991; Slavin et

al, 2009). Problem solving incorporates taking risks and risk-taking demonstrates confidence allowing the reader to expand the number and types of texts to be read (Calkins, 2001; Clay, 1991; Miller, 2002). Risk-taking is also applied to unknown texts as the reader first views them. A reader who is uncomfortable with risks might view a long or an intricate text as intimidating and not attempt to read it; however, a reader who has control of problem solving strategies is willing to make the attempt because the text is not intimidating (Adams, 1995; Calkins, 2001; Clay, 1991; Miller, 2002; Slavin et al, 2009).

Literacy Practices That Target English Learners

English learners need carefully crafted learning experiences to maximize their literacy acquisition in English (Gibbons, 1993; Lesaux, Koda, Siegel & Shanahan, 2006; Shanahan & Beck, 2006; Slavin et al, 2009). Learning occurs best in environments that are perceived to encourage scholarship.

Learning Environments

Effective learning environments for English learners provide multiple opportunities for students to explore and

expand English, such environments are not quiet, static

situations. Students are listening, speaking, reading,

writing, building their use of and comfort with a second

language while they are also learning curricular contents

in that language (Gibbons, 1993, 2002; Shanahan & Beck,

2006; Slavin et al, 2009).

A learning environment encouraging literacy

acquisition is filled with multiple texts, texts at varied

reading levels of difficulty and texts addressing a wide

variety of subjects written in a wide variety of styles

(Adams, 1995; Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Calkins, 2001;

Clay, 1991; Miller, 2002; Slavin et al, 2009). Texts of

every genre and presentation are available, books,

magazines, reference materials – there are those who read

the dictionary and the encyclopedia for recreational

reading. Any and all texts possible are readily accessible.

An appealing learning environment maximizes student

engagement (Calkins, 2001; Miller, 2002; Routman, 1994) and

student engagement leads to increased learning as students

intensify their involvement with the tasks and material

available in the learning environment. A learning

environment including both structured lessons and

exploratory opportunities offers the greatest potential for

education (Cambourne, 1995; Vygotsky, 1962). An effective learning environment is infused with expectations for learning; students will learn and will demonstrate learning.

Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing for English Learners

Extensive opportunities to listen to English, both formal and informal usages, is vital (Gentile, 2006; Gibbons, 1993, 2002; Macleod, Macmillan & Norwich, 2007; Mohr & Mohr, 2007). As the students hear English they are acquiring the sounds and rhythms of the language. Since every language uses and emphasizes different sounds, students need repeated exposures to the sounds used in English and the manipulation of those sounds into words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and texts (Carlo et al, 2004; Gentile 2006; Macleod et al, 2007). Often students' first language uses fewer sounds than English. For example, Spanish uses only 22 sounds, and ten ending sounds (Hualde, 2005). Students, entering school in California, who are fluent in languages other than English, must not only acquire a second language and learn academic content in that language they must also acquire phonemes with which they are unfamiliar (Cummins, 1980; Gentile, 2003, 2006;

Gibbons, 1993, 2002; Manyak, 2007). As concluded by Macleod et al (2007), numerous opportunities to hear and produce English provide applications for literacy focusing on practicing English usage.

As students develop comfort with English and confidence to employ it as a communication tool, they begin to speak in English (Cummins, 1980; Gentile, 2003, 2006; Gibbons, 1993, 2002). Speaking allows practicing usage as it was and is heard. Through speaking increasing control of the language develops, and since spoken language is not preserved as is written language, speaking grants a forum which is permitting and easily forgiving of errors, thus encouraging students to produce communications in English Cambourne, 1995; Cummins, 1980; Gentile, 2006; Gibbons, 1993, 2002). As students transition through oral language into reading and writing, the importance of receptive and productive vocabulary is demonstrated (Cummins, 1980; Gentile, 2006; Gibbons, 1993; Pollard-Durodola et al, 2006). Receptive vocabulary consists of words that are understood when they are heard and productive vocabulary consists of those words that are spoken. "Oral vocabulary knowledge, in particular, appears to play a decisive role

in the development of children's literacy acquisition" (Pollard-Durodola et al, 2006, p. 368).

During the process of acquiring English, students also apply the language to reading and writing. These reciprocal processes require application of learned English into academic situations (Anthony, 2008; Gentile, 2003, 2006). Mimicking the process exercised by young children, during acquisition students integrate the four parts of language: listening; speaking; reading; and, writing, (Clay, 1991). As stated by Clay, students do not learn all the letters, then all the sounds, then words, then sentences, then paragraphs, then complete texts, since language learning is integrated and applied in an ongoing manner. The reciprocal processes of reading and writing are managed in conjunction with listening and speaking (Anthony, 2008; Shanahan & Beck, 2006; Slavin et al, 2009; Swanson, Rosston, Gerber & Solari, 2007). Thus, language learning and literacy acquisition are not linear processes, rather, they are cyclical.

Oracy, using oral language to express thoughts and understanding oral expressions of others, is necessary for proficient reading and writing (Gentile, 2003, 2006; Macleod, Macmillan & Norwich, 2007; Pollard-Durodola et al,

2006). Literacy acquisition develops using oracy to
increase breadth and depth of word knowledge thus
developing a more extensive vocabulary (Bromley, 2007). An
extensive vocabulary, both oral and written, allows
students to communicate using precise, appealing words.
Such communications are more powerful. An extensive
vocabulary also enables students to build inferences,
analyses, and evaluations of communications. Oracy is a
crucial component of literacy acquisition.

English Learners and Reading Comprehension

Next discussed are the connections between reading
comprehension, use of prior knowledge for predicting, links
with the writing process, as well as strategies of
questioning, summarizing, and inferring. Reading
comprehension is taught and learned through thinking,
thinking about the text, before, during and after reading
(Adams, 1995; Calkins, 2001, 1994; Clay, 1991, 1993;
Fountas & Pinnell, 2000, 1996; Miller, 2002; Mooney, 1990;
Morris & Slavin, 2003; Slavin et al, 2009). Strategic
processes applied to text allow the reader to structure
thinking about the text. Predicting, questioning,
summarizing, inferring, synthesizing, and using mental

models of the text each increase the reader's comprehension (Adams, 1995; Calkins, 2001; Clay 1991, 1993; Fountas & Pinnell, 2000, 1996; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007; Miller, 2002; Slavin et al, 2009). Readers employ each strategy and skill to understand texts.

Readers constantly make predictions during reading. Looking at the cover of a book produces predictions of the book's content. The title leads the reader to predict the plot. Events during the text suggest predictions of subsequent events. Even character's names trigger the reader to make predictions. Perceptions regarding a character named the Hun would be quite different than those regarding a character named Twinkle. Assigning readers prediction tasks enhances use of and skill with the strategy (Clay, 1993, 1991; Fountas & Pinnell, 2000, 1996; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007; Slavin et al, 2009). Facilitating predictions also increases risk-taking (Clay, 1991, 1993; Fountas & Pinnell, 2000, 1996; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007). As readers make predictions, they are encouraged to engage with the text (Routman, 1994). Readers become comfortable making predictions and are no longer dismayed if their prediction is not carried out in the text. "Then they confirm, adjust, or disprove their predictions before

reading on" (Routman, 1994, p. 117). Making predictions increases the reader's comfort with reading as texts become accessible, even friendly, and stimulates the reader's interest (Clay, 1991, 1993; Fountas & Pinnell, 2000, 1996; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007; Routman, 1994; Slavin et al, 2009). Using predictions before and during reading increases comprehension of the text and extends literacy acquisition.

Questioning the text and questioning one's reading of the text increases comprehension. As with the reading strategy of using meaning, questioning requires the reader to delve into the messages expressed by the writer. Did the text really mean this? If the character had crossed the bridge how would the events have unfolded differently? Questioning is an augmentation of predicting. To apply questioning successfully, readers need to observe that proficient readers apply the strategy and have guidance as they apply it. Yet as readers apply the strategy they become more proficient with it and their questioning increases in volume and diversity (Calkins, 2001; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007; Miller, 2002). "Questions slow us down and help us focus on what is truly important" (Keene &

Zimmerman, 2007, p. 135). As with predicting, readers apply questioning to garner meaning from the text.

Understanding the meaning of the text is further expanded as the reader summarizes the text. Using transition words for support, making a list of events that occurred in the text and supplementing the events with the characters and setting clearly demonstrates an understanding of the incidents expressed by the author whether the list is mental or captured in writing.

The reader develops a deeper understanding of the text by making inferences, by reading between the lines, regarding the author's messages. "Inference is part rational, part mystical, part definable, and part beyond definition. Individuals' life experiences, logic, wisdom, values, creativity, and thoughtfulness, set against the text they are reading, form the crux of new meaning" (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007, p. 143). As readers use the strategy of inference, they become part of the text and the text becomes part of them. These are the texts readers love and revisit without boredom. Inference provides a deeper comprehension of the subtleties of a text, thus providing a larger understanding of the text's meaning (Calkins, 2001;

Fountas & Pinnell, 2000, 1996; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007; Miller, 2002).

Writing is a process controlled by the student in contrast to reading in which the process is controlled by the text (Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Calkins, 1994; Clay, 1991). During writing, students try out a variety of usages of language. Since they are in charge of the process, those are their words on the paper. Writing must be an integral part of every school day since it affords students the opportunities to apply language acquisition as they create texts.

Research exists which promotes specific texts or types of texts as the one best approach to teach English learners to read and write in English. Reading and writing are best taught using multiple texts with numerous and varied opportunities to practice. As with any skill, it improves with practice, practice, and more practice. Often, since students have already developed interests, material that might seem too difficult can be accessed by the students due to their desire to read material focusing on their interests. When students have opportunities to explore their interests, vistas are opened which would not be available with only teacher or curriculum structured

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activities. Teaching reading and writing to English learners is best approached in the same manner as teaching reading and writing to native English speakers with additions of explicit instruction in the four areas of language (Gibbons, 1993, 2002; Peregoy & Boyle, 2001; Shanahan & Beck, 2006) "Recognizing that a child's learning and literacy difficulties are *language-related* is an important first step in providing the necessary intervention and support and an appropriate class program" (Gibbons, 1993, p. 4).

To guide educators in decisions related to instruction for English learners, literacy acquisition by English learners needs to be assessed in all domains, listening, speaking, reading and writing. English learners in California participate in annual assessment, completing the California English Language Development test (CELDT) which provides the information essential to educators regarding students' literacy acquisition.

Implicit and Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary instruction is commonly delivered in two forms: implicit; and, explicit. Implicit vocabulary instruction consists of encountering words and using

context to determine their meanings. Students who find literacy acquisition a fluid process possess an already expanded vocabulary. Using the words they know, they conclude the meanings of unknown words leading to vocabulary growth in oral and written language. As students are reading the number of words in a text which are known and easily understood is greater than unknown words so these students have a vocabulary bank to call on to infer a definition when an unknown word is encountered. Implicit vocabulary acquisition is successful for these students who already possess a large bank of words (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002, 2008; Carlo, August, Mclaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively & White, 2004; Penno, Wilkinson & Moore, 2002). Explicit vocabulary instruction consists of direct teaching of word meanings. Words to be learned are identified and learning activities are crafted (Bear, Helman, Templeton, Invernizzi & Johnston, 2007, 1996; Beck et al, 2008, 2002; Marzano & Pickering, 2005).

Most students learn vocabulary through a balance of explicit and implicit strategies (Bromley, 2007; Carlo et al, 2004). Although both implicit and explicit vocabulary learnings are useful to students, students who have

difficulty acquiring literacy need the balance tipped toward explicit instruction.

Implicit vocabulary acquisition occurs during both oral and written language experiences (Cohen, 1968; Gentile, 2003; Penno et al, 2002; Trelease, 2006). Oral language experiences include listening to and using language during classroom discourse and as texts are read aloud. Trelease (2006) suggested listening to literature read aloud is one of the most significant factors for academic success. As students hear texts read aloud they are immersed in words, often words they would not otherwise hear and might not be able to read independently. During read-alouds, teachers have opportunities to explore word meanings with students to build depth and breadth of vocabulary. Also critical is using expanded vocabulary to reflect on what has been heard and to explore concepts (Bromley, 2007; Gentile, 2003). Opportunities to participate in small group learning activities requiring discussion and to give oral presentations support students' vocabulary acquisition.

Students with small word banks need a larger amount of explicit vocabulary instruction to accelerate vocabulary acquisition (Bear et al, 1996; Marzano & Pickering, 2005).

During a child's early years of vocabulary development words are learned through receptive and productive language experiences. Children who experience a wealth of words acquire a rich vocabulary. In contrast, children whose experiences are less laden with hearing and using a wide variety of words acquire an impoverished vocabulary (Bear et al, 1996, Trelease, 2006). Trelease (2006) reports results of students' experiences with books read aloud in which six classes of third graders participated. Two classes experienced books read aloud and teachers' explanations of preselected words. Two classes experienced books read aloud without explanations of words, and two classes did not experience books read aloud. Students who experienced explanations of words scored 25.1 percent gain in words in their vocabularies above students who did not experience explanations and 37.9 percent gain above students who did not experience read alouds, thus speaking to the need to provide more explicit vocabulary instruction during classroom experiences.

One of the common deficits in explicit vocabulary instruction is application to texts, either during reading or writing. Commonly, teaching vocabulary occurs as separate exercises in which students copy definitions for

lists of words. Assessment consists of some demonstration that the words can be associated with the correct definition, and then the process is repeated. Research provides evidence this process does not result in long term gains (Beck et al, 2002, 2008; Carlo et al, 2004; Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Although students exhibit memorization of the words it is only short term. The words are not embedded in the students' vocabulary using this method. However, after students hear the words used in context and explore definitions, when students repeatedly encounter the words during reading and use them during writing, the words become fixed into the student's working vocabulary.

Research reveals that most students need explicit teaching to acquire unknown vocabulary and that new vocabulary is most easily acquired and retained when connected to reading and writing (Carlo et al, 2004; Morris & Slavin, 2003; Slavin et al, 2009). Another essential component of vocabulary acquisition is depth of knowledge of the word. The majority of common English words have multiple meanings (Bromley, 2007). For example the word "place" has multiple meanings with subtle differences: Please save my place in line; I am going to the place where Mickey Mouse lives; Please place this dish on the table; It

is not his place to tell me what to do; She found a place in a new company; I bought one place setting of their china as a wedding present; My horse came in second place; What is the place value of the digit 2 in 123? Multiple and continued experiences with words are needed for students to understand vocabulary uses in various contexts.

Carefully crafted experiences with words are one of the strongest impacts on vocabulary development (Apthorp, 2006; Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2008, 2002; Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Vocabulary building experiences increase learning when words are thoughtfully chosen for explicit instruction (Beck et al, 2008, 2002). In reference to the example in the previous paragraph, once students understood the definition of place as a locality, further vocabulary referring to locality could be learned forming depth of learning: amusement park; building; institution; community; and, municipality (Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Lessons need to teach specific words in an explicit manner to build general and content area vocabulary to the rigor necessary for acquisition.

Powerful lessons provide explanations of words which relate to students' lives and knowledge to effectively foster learning. Explanations are understandable and are

delivered in an interesting method so students attend to entire explanation (Beck et al, 2002, 2008). Acquisition of vocabulary occurs when students understand meanings for unfamiliar words and incorporate words into usage (Beck et al, 2002, 2008; Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Effective definitions provide meanings as words are encountered, whether in oral or written communication. To fully learn a word students need to integrate the meaning of the word into a context immediately (Apthorp, 2006; Beck, McKeown & Kuçan, 2002, 2008; Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Students must have multiple opportunities to use the word and to additionally encounter the word in alternative contexts. Learning requires students to incorporate words into oral and written communications. Learning experiences should provide texts using the word and require students to use the word in multiple contexts (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002, 2008). These types of experiences reinforce initial understanding and incorporate words into students' vocabularies to provide depth of meaning. Depth of meaning is reinforced as a word is used multiple times in multiple contexts. Frequent encounters with the word results in the word becoming permanent in students' vocabularies.

California English Language Development Test

In California, teachers use an annual assessment, not just for placement and grouping of English learners, but also to guide instruction. This stems from requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation signed into law on January 8, 2002. NCLB contains carryovers from the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) which is a reincarnation of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title III of NCLB requires all states, school districts, and schools to annually assess all English learners who have not demonstrated proficiency in English to measure their progress toward English language proficiency, thus evaluating students' acquisition of skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). This mandate has been written into California Education Code (California Education Code Section 313).

California Education Code sections 313 and 60810-60812, and California Code of Regulation, title 5, division 1, chapter 11, subchapter 7.5, article 1 address the federal requirements mandating testing students whose first language is other than English using the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). As stated in California

Education Code, every student in grades kindergarten through 12 whose primary language, as reported at school registration, is other than English must be assessed using the CELDT both within 30 days of registration and annually until the student is reclassified as proficient in English (California Department of Education, 2009). Results of the assessment as maintained by the state, must be reported individually to the students and parents, individually and by grade-level groups to school site personnel, and individually and by grade-level groups to school district personnel (California Department of Education, 2009).

CELDT assesses student's acquisition of English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Within these domains each section is aligned to the California English Language Development Standards as adopted by the state board of education. Listening and speaking assess strategies and applications. In addition to strategies and applications, reading also assesses word analysis, vocabulary, comprehension, and literary response and analysis. Writing assesses strategies and applications and conventions of writing in English (California Department of Education, 2009). Students are scored for each section with scores assigned for each section and an

overall score. Both section scores and the overall score

range in achievement bands labeled from 1 to 5 denoting

general levels of acquisition and are accompanied by

descriptors: 1 is described as beginning, 2 is early

intermediate, 3 is intermediate, 4 is early advanced, and 5

is advanced (California Department of Education, 2009). The

overall score is compiled using weightings of 25 percent

for each section score. Higher scores indicate greater

acquisition of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in

English.

Fueled by fear, Public Law 107-110 was written by the

107th Congress as "An act: to close the achievement gap

with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no

child is left behind" (NCLB, 2002, p. 1). Influenced by the

report of the National Commission on Excellence in

Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational

Reform* (1983), Congress was convinced the United States was

falling behind other nations and stringent measures must be

immediately implemented or the United States would lose

its "unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry,

science, and technological innovation" (*A Nation at Risk*,

1983, p. 9), and "the educational foundations of our

society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of

mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people." (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983, p. 9), and "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983, p. 9). Rallying around the call to war, the bipartisan act received overwhelming support despite evidence there was no crisis in education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1999, 2001). The framework of the debate was such that it became virtually impossible for a legislator to argue against NCLB without possible political repercussions, thereby allowing NCLB to dominate. CELDT is California's compliance with one requirement of NCLB.

Vocabulary Instruction for English Learners

Learning experiences including vocabulary instruction are vital for all students, but especially so for English learners. Children living in homes with English speaking parents hear 13 to 45 million total words during conversations before entering school (Trelease, 2006). Additionally, children who were read to hear an average of 30.9 English words which are uncommon in conversation

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during each reading of a children's book (Trelease, 2006).
Children living in homes in which English is not spoken or
read aloud have few experiences hearing words in English
therefore they confront an even greater hindrance;
especially in California which requires classroom
instruction to be delivered only in English. Children who
enter school with fewer experiences hearing and speaking
English words are at risk for difficulties in reading and
writing (August, Carlo, Dressler & Snow, 2005; Gentile,
2003, 2006; Trelease 2006). Thus, children who have not had
these opportunities to hear and explore words in English
begin the tasks of literacy acquisition in English at a
decided disadvantage.

Students who enter school as English learners face
additional obstacles to becoming successful readers in
comparison to their peers who enter school fluent in
English. One obstacle is the vocabulary gap between native
English speakers and non-native speakers, and English
learners whose English vocabulary acquisition is slower
have greater difficulty accomplishing grade-level reading
and writing tasks (August et al, 2005). Both implicit and
explicit vocabulary instruction act to increase students'
achievement.

English learners often have the additional challenge of unfamiliarity with multiple and inferred meanings of words. Vocabulary acquisition includes knowing many aspects of words, such as, its most common meaning, connotations inherent in its uses, grammatical uses, uncommon meanings or uses, and antonyms and synonyms (August et al, 2005; Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively & White, 2004). Depth of word knowledge is a determinant of an extensive vocabulary, just as is breadth. Depth of word knowledge is often lacking for English learners, even for common words such as "bat". English learners may be able to articulate the two most common meanings of bat as nouns, but unable to express less common meanings. "In summary, previous research indicates that ELLs know fewer English vocabulary words than monolingual English speakers, but in addition, know less about the meaning of these words" (August et al, 2005, p. 51). To approach vocabulary acquisition parallel with native English speakers learning experiences for English learners must provide overt opportunities to learn numerous words deeply.

Research has shown a variety of learning experiences which have positive effects on vocabulary acquisition. Learning experiences can be receptive or productive, or

both. Research reveals that a variety of activities increases vocabulary acquisition and enhances breadth and depth of vocabulary acquisition and an effective balance of activities incorporates each of the domains of literacy: listening; speaking; reading; and, writing.

Listening is a receptive activity which increases vocabulary acquisition as students hear words. One of the most common listening activities is to hear literature read aloud. In this implicit activity words are experienced in a context of meaningful text and student's word knowledge increases in response to exposure to additional words (August et al, 2005; Carlo et al, 2004; Elley, 1991; Penno et al, 2002; Trelease, 2006). A strategy that makes listening an explicit vocabulary teaching activity includes adding explanations of words during a read-aloud. In their study of primary children, Penno, Wilkinson and Moore (2002) found that students scored significantly higher on vocabulary post-tests when the read-alouds included word explanations than when they did not. Even more explicit is instruction providing definitions before and during a read-aloud (Gibbons, 2002; Marzano & Pickering. 2005). When students hear targeted words and their definitions before listening to a read-aloud they attend more to those words

and the additional explanation of the words during the read-aloud reinforces the previous explanation thus strengthening student's control of the words. Moving from listening to speaking adds further reinforcement to vocabulary acquisition.

Speaking is a productive activity which supports receptive activities, listening and reading. Speaking augments listening through teacher directed activities. For example, following a read-aloud students may verbally share word explanations of targeted words with peers. Such activities develop vocabulary by reviewing and reinforcing word meanings (Carlo et al, 2004). Using questioning, teacher-to-student or student-to-student, students are required to use introduced vocabulary demonstrating understanding of the words' meanings as they respond to questions focusing on words from texts (August et al, 2005; Pollard-Durodola et al, 2006). Additional oral language activities suggested by Gentile (2003) incorporate speaking and listening using visual prompts. One example of listening and speaking activities supported with visual prompts focuses on words beginning with the same letter. In this teacher-directed activity, a letter is written inside a diamond shape. At each of three points of the diamond

students provide words beginning with the focus letter. At the fourth, top, point of the diamond, the teacher provides a multisyllabic word beginning with the focus letter and a word explanation. That word becomes the word of the week as the teacher and students use the word as many times as possible during the week. The word becomes a permanent part of students' vocabularies. Oral retelling of texts is also a powerful tool as students acquire vocabulary (August et al, 2005; Bear et al, 2007; Beck et al, 2008; Carlo et al, 2004; Gentile, 2003; Gibbons, 2002; Marzano & Pickering, 2005). Retelling of texts, as a speaking activity, requires students to summarize the text to another person using vocabulary from the text. In this way, the students speak the vocabulary in a meaningful context, thus increasing retention.

During reading, students explore words embedded in text. Since implicit vocabulary learning is more difficult for English learners (Carlo et al, 2004) these students need structured vocabulary activities before, during, and after reading. Research reveals thoughtfully pre-teaching targeted vocabulary improves vocabulary acquisition (August et al, 2005; Beck et al, 1987, 2002; Carlo et al, 2005; Gibbons, 1991, 2002). Since every word cannot be included

in pre-teaching activities word choice is critical. Focus words should be those generally found in the vocabularies of Standard English speakers of similar ages, and words that occur across a variety of contexts (Beck et al, 2002; Carlo et al, 2005). These words provide breadth and depth to vocabularies and due to their prominence they also provide students command of literacy skills (Beck et al, 2002). Access to texts, through increased ease of readability, is suggested by Echevarria and Graves (1998). Text adaptations, especially of content-area texts, combined with pre-teaching vocabulary, allow English learners understanding while moving them toward equality of literacy acquisition. The text is modified to include visual support such as pictures, graphs, charts, maps, and timelines. Additional modifications may include outlines or rewritten text. Post-reading activities reinforce vocabulary acquisition. Among those suggested by research is semantic feature analysis (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). This activity strengthens vocabulary acquisition reinforcing target words and overall concepts explored during reading. Essential meanings of target words are charted helping students organize and remember information from their reading (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). Reading continuous text is

a crucial component for vocabulary acquisition for English learners.

Writing allows students to produce texts which include new vocabulary. As students incorporate words into their compositions, the words become more fully acquired, a more permanent component of their working vocabularies. Writing activities which scaffold students toward permanent vocabulary acquisition compel them to think about meanings of words and appropriate uses in context. Effective activities involve individuals, small groups, and whole groups. An activity that is challenging for English learners as they are building breadth and depth of vocabulary is a multiple cloze. As in a single cloze, students must choose words that will correctly complete sentences. In contrast to a single cloze, students must meaningfully complete multiple sentences in the same activity. For example, "Our pear tree had _____ pears than it had last summer. We picked the pears as they _____ ." (CDE, 2008). Group activities requiring word manipulations, such as jumbled sentences (Gibbons, 2002) or word sorts (Bear et al, 2007), requires groups of students to cooperatively arrange words, phrases, or sentences into meaningful text. Finally, at the highest level of thinking,

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students integrate content-area vocabulary into independently created texts (Beck et al, 2002, 2008; Gibbons, 2002; Graves, 2000; Marzano & Pickering, 2005; Nagy, 1997). Many activities support students as they develop skills in writing continuous text. As students assimilate acquired vocabulary in their writing, words are embedded into effortless usage in all literacy domains.

Multiple encounters with a word across all four literacy domains increase vocabulary acquisition. "It takes multiple experiences with a word to learn it. "An English-learning classroom needs to be print rich and full of formal and informal activities to practice language throughout the day" (Bear et al, 2007, p. 61). Additional research by Apthorp (2006) supports impacts of repeated exposures and applications of words. Learning activities that link vocabulary development through listening, speaking, reading, and writing experiences provide various contacts which lead to permanent acquisition of new words.

When English learners are instructed using experiences which incorporate all four domains of literacy, increases in vocabulary acquisition result (August et al, 2005). August, Carlo, Dressler and Snow (2005) report gains in all four literacy domains when students are engaged in

integrated instruction which includes explicit vocabulary

instruction. "Teachers pretaught vocabulary, developed

vocabulary through reading and discussing each book, and

reinforced vocabulary through oral language activities that

occurred after the story had been read" (August et al,

2005, p. 53). In addition to explicit vocabulary

instruction, students participated in reading and writing

activities applying new vocabulary (August et al, 2005). To

reduce the disparity of literacy acquisition in California

between English learners and native English speakers

obstacles of vocabulary acquisition and effective literacy

acquisition are a priority.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This quasi-experimental study examined the impacts of
changes in vocabulary instruction to third grade English
learners attending a Program Improvement (P.I.) Year 5+
school in a mid-sized urban school district in Southern
California. An integral component of P.I. is evaluation by
a team of external observers. This team, the District
Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT), conducted
classroom observations, beginning in the 2008-2009 school
year continuing through the 2010-2011 school year, at the
school which participated in this study. This team
conducted numerous observations of the school's classrooms
presenting their recommendations after each observation.
Changes in instruction were implemented in response to
recommendations by DAIT members.

The DAIT members were responsible for assessing the
effectiveness of the school program and making
recommendations for improvement. Among the recommendations
made was one that all third grade teachers in the district
would explicitly teach academic vocabulary to increase
students' performance on standardized tests. Content-area

vocabulary words were isolated by teachers from the science

and social science curriculum and explicitly taught during

classroom instruction. Third grade teachers at the school

participating in this research study implemented this

instruction in January 2010 and continue to implement and

refine instruction.

Subjects and Setting

An archival data search using a convenience sample

from an urban elementary school in a mid-sized district was

conducted. This sample was selected to match the

instructional recommendations of DAIT members. The sample

included only de-identified California English Language

Development Test (CELDT) data collected through the

Assessment and Evaluation office of the district. Data was

collected for CELDT scores for third grade students whose

overall CELDT score is in the range of 1 to 5 from the

school years of: 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-

2011. Overall CELDT scores in the range of 1 to 5 may

represent English Learners who are not yet classified as

proficient in English, non-fluent English proficient.

Students who have acquired English proficiency at levels

equal to peers whose first language is English are

reclassified as English proficient and are no longer

assessed with the CELDT. As students who are not yet

proficient in English, these students can be at-risk of

non-proficiency in literacy acquisition. All

characteristics of the participants, except grade level,

were removed from the data before collection.

Interviews with each third grade teacher at the school

were conducted. With permission of the participants,

interview responses were written and stored on a password-

protected computer. Each teacher taught at the school

during all of the years for which data was examined.

Through personal verbal communication, the researcher

requested teachers' participation. Upon agreement, each

teacher signed an informed consent, provided in Appendix A.

Copies were provided to teachers for their records.

Interview questions concentrated on teacher's perceptions

of instruction before and during implementation of the

intervention and during the DAIT process. As an ongoing

process, DAIT members monitored classroom level

implementation of recommendations, and interview questions

were derived from recommendations made by DAIT members and

were revised for the purpose of this study. The first two

questions were worded to illicit information regarding the

recommended intervention. The third question, worded to allow teachers to verbalize their perceptions of changes in student achievement since implementation of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction, was intended to illicit information regarding changes in student achievement pre- and post-intervention. Teachers' response to the interview questions are provided in Appendix B.

Measurements

California English Language Development Test Assessment

CELDT assessment for continuing students occurs annually in a testing window which is every July 1 through October 31. Students participate in these assessments and data is collected by connecting to the California Department of Education (CDE) website. All data was provided to the researcher through the district's assessment and evaluation office and was de-identified.

CELDT assesses the four domains of literacy, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is defined as the ability to understand and process information received aurally (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 2009). Speaking, as assessed with the CELDT, is the student's production of social and intellectual verbal communication

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in English (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 2009). The reading section of the CELDT requires students to demonstrate competence understanding written texts in English (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 2009). Writing competence is determined by student's compositions which demonstrate abilities to communicate thoughts in English (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 2009).

CELDT is a measure unique to California. This assessment measures all four domains of literacy: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Measuring all four domains provides a broader evaluation of literacy development than assessments addressing only reading and/or writing. In addition, CELDT is a standardized test in contrast to the measures used by Carlo et al (2004) in their study.

Scores for each domain are scaled and reported separately and an overall score is also reported. Each is reported as a raw score, scaled score, and performance band. Overall scores are composite scores and are computed as the truncated average of the four domain scores. Score reliability, the extent to which scores remain consistent, is retained by linking each test form to the previous form. Thus comparisons of students' achievement may be accomplished.

Reliability coefficients, the correlation between students' scores and scores on parallel test forms, for the CELDT were computed by the company which wrote the test (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 2009) using Cronbach's α and ranged between 0.73 and 0.92. Reliability of the speaking, reading, and writing domains ranged between 0.84 and 0.92. Reliability of the Listening domain ranged between 0.73 and 0.85. Standard error of measurement, how students' scores on the CELDT vary from scores they would achieve on a perfectly reliable test, ranged between 1.48 and 2.70 as units of raw scores.

The meaning of test scores and the interpretations they can support is reported as construct validity. The *Technical Report for the California English Language Development Test(CELDT)* (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 2009), reports evidence of the assessment's construct validity. Evidence from content- and criterion-related validity studies is reported. The construct the CELDT assesses is English language proficiency. The goal of the CELDT is to determine the extent to which English learners in California are moving toward proficiency in English as a means "to achieve at high levels in the core academic subjects so that those children can meet the same challenging State academic

content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet" (Title III, Part A, Section 3102). CELDT assessment is a required component of California's student assessment protocol.

This study focused on impacts of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction for English learners in six third grade classrooms. The intervention began in the 2009-2010 school year and continued for the 2010-2011 school year. The implementation of the intervention in 2009-2010 occurred after the planned measure was given to students. The length of the 2010-2011 intervention, before student assessment with CELDT was eight weeks.

The CELDT was administered by each classroom teacher for the 2010-2011 assessment. Every teacher completed eight hours of training which covered standardized administration and scoring calibration for the assessment. The listening and speaking sections of the assessment are scored during the assessment by the person administering the assessment. Reading and writing sections are scored after tests are returned to the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Individual student scores for each domain and an overall composite score are electronically distributed to districts after ETS scoring. In previous years, in contrast to the

2010-2011 administration, only selected staff members
completed the training and administered the assessment to
students.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with each third grade
teacher. Interview questions concentrated on teacher's
perceptions of instruction and student achievement before
and during implementation of the intervention. This study
sought to support Gibbons' (1993) assertion that the
difficulty English learners encounter learning English
literacy are influenced by language-related issues and that
effective instruction and intervention must begin with
examination of English acquisition through explicit
content-area vocabulary instruction.

Interview questions were:

1. How has your vocabulary instruction changed since
   the District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT)
   came to the school?

2. How has your reading comprehension instruction
   changed since the District Assistance and
   Intervention Team (DAIT) came to the school?

3. What are some of your thoughts about how your
   English learners are achieving now as compared to
   before the District Assistance and Intervention Team
   (DAIT) came to the school?

Procedure

Procedures to collect CELDT data, school level data
regarding classroom implementation of the intervention, and
student academic achievement pre- and post-intervention are
described in this section. District and school site
permission were obtained for this study, as was California
State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) Institutional
Review Board (IRB) approval. Please see Appendix C.

CELDT data was obtained through the district's
assessment and evaluation office. Data was de-identified
and forwarded to this researcher. Data included raw scores,
scaled scores, and performance level for third grade
students at the selected school for the school years of
2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011. These
school years represent two years before and after the
intervention.

Individual interviews with each of the six third grade
teachers at the selected school were conducted by this

researcher. Transcripts of interviews are presented in Appendix B. Teachers were presented with and signed an informed consent Please see Appendix A. Interviews were conducted using email and telephone at the teacher's convenience. Each teacher was interviewed once. Interview questions were identical and presented in the same order for all interviews. Data regarding classroom implementation of the intervention and student academic achievement pre- and post-intervention was collected through these interviews.

Analysis of Data

California English Language Development
Test Assessment Data Analysis

The research question, how does explicit content-area vocabulary instruction impact reading comprehension, was analyzed through use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). ANOVA with planned contrasts were used to compare CELDT overall and subtest scores between each school year, 2007-2008 through 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. ANOVA with planned contrasts were used to assess whether differences in the achievement scores were significantly different and was chosen due to the small sizes of each year's student group. Statistically significant higher

scores for students in the 2010-2011 group would demonstrate effectiveness of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction to increase reading scores as measured by CELDT.

Analysis of Teacher Interviews

Using a phenomenological approach, interviews with teachers were coded and analyzed for consistencies and inconsistencies of teacher's observations using a matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The goal was to gain an understanding of how teacher's perceptions of instruction and student achievement altered before and during implementation of the intervention. Interview transcripts were examined for associations among responses. Transcripts were also examined by another reader to determine reliability. The second reader was an expert in the literacy field.

Assumptions

As determined through the literature and this researcher's prior experiences, the following assumptions were made in advance of data collection:

- Students experiencing instruction after the intervention would produce higher CELDT scores than

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students who received instruction prior to the intervention.

- Teachers would express greater satisfaction with their classroom instruction and student achievement post-intervention.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Purpose

This study sought to strengthen the evidence that explicit content-area vocabulary instruction increases reading comprehension. Building on the body of knowledge informing classroom literacy instruction and blending research focused on explicit content-area vocabulary instruction, the purpose of this study was to build on previous research findings and methods.

This study examined how explicit vocabulary instruction of content-area vocabulary for English learners in third grade classrooms impacts reading comprehension as measured by a standardized assessment, the CELDT.

Questions

This study sought to expand on previous research to increase understanding of how explicit content-area vocabulary instruction impacts reading comprehension and gathered insights from classroom teachers related to the instructional strategies.

Data Analysis

California English Language Development
Test Assessment Data

Analysis of archival CELDT data was conducted to

investigate impacts of explicit content-area vocabulary

instruction on third grade English learners. Third grade

teachers at the school participating in this research began

explicit content-area vocabulary instruction in 2009-2010

and continuing into the 2010-2011 school year. All students

were for whom data was reported were Latino with a primary

language of Spanish. This research examined impacts of

implementation of this instructional strategy. One-way

ANOVA analyses with planned contrasts were performed due to

the directionality of hypotheses reflecting previous

research as reported in the review of literature. In this

case, p values are reported using one-tailed values. Please

see Table 1 for descriptives and results of parametric

screening. There was no missing data. Performance bands for

overall CELDT scaled scores for third grade are: 1, 230-

414; 2, 415-459; 3, 460-513; 4, 514-556; and 5, 557-700.

Performance bands for CELDT reading scaled scores for third

grade are: 1, 280-447; 2, 448-481; 3, 482-541; 4, 542-576;

and 5, 577-700. Please see Table 2 for analysis results.

Table 1

California English Language Development Test Assessment Descriptives

CELDT section and year	Total number of students	Mean of scaled scores	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Minimum	Maximum
Overall 2007-2008	26	471.42	54.58	-.61	-.53	362	553
Overall 2008-2009	37	476.14	48.71	-.41	-.27	361	558
Overall 2009-2010	48	468.13	43.69	-.53	1.24	333	561
Overall 2010-2011	40	484.90	49.34	-.66	.99	334	583
Reading 2007-2008	26	460.19	54.35	-.54	-.33	332	545
Reading 2008-2009	37	458.73	68.71	-.34	-.59	280	570
Reading 2009-2010	48	466.33	68.48	.04	-.73	280	593
Reading 2010-2011	40	480.53	61.97	-1.15	2.80	351	570

Table 2

California English Language Development Test Assessment
Analysis of Variance Planned Contrast Analysis

CELDT Section and Year	t	p^a	Cohen's d
Overall 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 contrasted to Overall 2009-2010	.61	.273	.12
Overall 2009-2010 contrasted to Overall 2010-2011	-1.62	.055	-.36
Reading 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 contrasted to Reading 2009-2010	.55	.291	-.11
Reading 2009-2010 contrasted to Reading 2010-2011	-1.03	.155	-.22

[a] p values reported for one-tailed tests

Tests of the four a priori hypotheses were conducted. Each hypothesis was rejected based on results as reported, although analysis for H_1: CELDT overall scores for the school year 2010-2011 for third grade students at the selected school will demonstrate an increase compared to CELDT overall scores for the school year 2009-2010 does approach significance. Lack of significance is also demonstrated using error bar charts. Please see Figures 1 and 2. Effect sizes for all analyses were small.
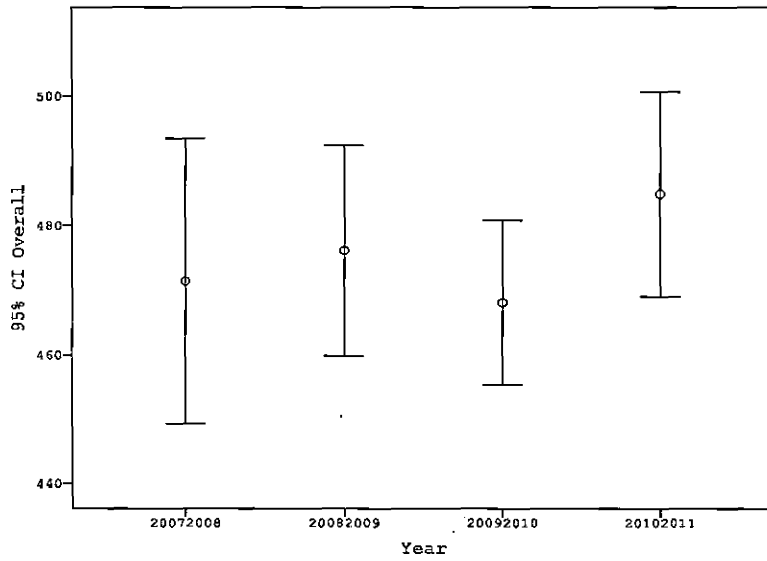
Figure 1. Error bar chart overall California English Language Development Test scores by year.
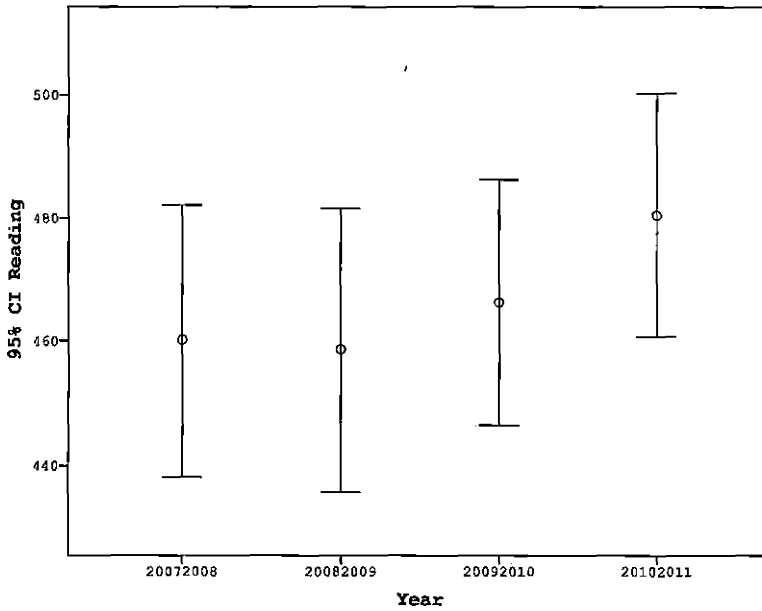
Figure 2. Error bar chart reading California English Language Development Test scores by year.

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Teacher Interviews

Interviews with teachers were examined using a phenomenological approach to explore their perceptions of changes in classroom instruction and student achievement. This approach was chosen to allow teachers to voice their experiences, opinions, and evaluations of their implementation of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction (Moustakas, 1994) since capturing day-to-day classroom instruction is difficult. This approach provided illustrations of instruction and teacher's observations of student achievement. Following recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Moustakas (1994), interviews were read in their entirety to derive broad meanings. Interviews were then dissected to "describe the lived experience" (Groenewald, 2004, p.12) resulting in a matrix of commonalities and differences of words found in responses. The matrix was used as an initial analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Please see Appendix D.

The goal was to gain awareness of teachers' opinions of how vocabulary instruction and student achievement in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension changed over time as results of changes in instructional strategies. Inter-rater reliability was verified by an

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expert in the literacy field. Using the context of the matrix and Microsoft Word, the three interview questions were examined for commonly occurring words (see Table 4.3). Teachers' utilization of words during their interviews provided insights into their perceptions of classroom instruction and student achievement (Moustakas, 1994). Interview results will be discussed in comparison with CELDT results to reconcile discrepancies between teacher's perceptions of increased student achievement and lack of quantitative evidence of increased student achievement. Table 3 is organized so the first number after each word displays the number of teachers who used the word, and the second number indicates the number of times the word was used.

Commonly occurring words were grouped by their correspondence with the interview questions. The questions directed teachers to reflect on classroom instruction and student achievement. Based on responses to interview questions words used by teachers were classified as addressing either classroom instruction and/or student achievement. As stated by Beck et al (2008), teacher's awareness of words they used during instruction impact student's absorption of classroom instruction and student

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Table 3

Words Commonly Occurring During Teacher Interviews

Student(s) 6, 35	Word(s) 6, 32
Vocabulary 6, 27	More 6, 19
Meaning/means 6, 10	Comprehension/ comprehend(s) 6, 13
Understand(s)/ understanding 6, 10	Use(s) 5, 22
Reading 5, 21	Instruction 5, 21
Teach/teaching 4, 26	Better 4, 8
Picture(s) 4, 5	Change 3, 9
Strategy(ies) 3, 5	Higher 3, 4
Drawing(s)/draw 3,3	English learners 3, 3
Definition(s) 2, 5	Speak/speaking 1, 9
Growth 1, 2	Improving 1, 1

achievement. Words addressing classroom instruction include: student(s), word(s), vocabulary, meaning/means, comprehension/comprehend(s), reading, teach/teaching, instruction, picture(s), strategy(ies), English learners, drawing(s)/draw, definition(s), and speak/speaking. These words specifically focus on lessons delivered both before and after the intervention. These words focus on classroom instruction as delivered by these teachers and were

isolated to emphasize thoughts exhibited among their
responses. Words addressing student achievement include:
student(s), more, comprehension/comprehend(s),
understand(s)/understanding, better, change, higher,
English learners, speak/speaking, growth, and improving.
These words focus on student achievement and were also
isolated to specify teacher's thoughts.

Further examination of the focus of interview
questions, classroom instruction and student achievement,
by aggregating words (Moustakas, 1994) led to exposure of
categories within interview responses. Categories were
determined by commonalities among responses addressing
interview questions. Please see Appendix D. Categories
included instructional strategies, word choices,
instructional time, instructional changes, reading choices,
instructional foci, achievement changes, vocabulary, DAIT
feedback, expressions about DAIT, and expressions about
teaching. Analysis of words occurring in each category
provided consolidation into four fundamental themes. Themes
assigned were: instructional strategies, vocabulary
instruction, reading comprehension, and English learners.
Themes were determined to match convergences of interview

responses with the scope of this study and the review of literature.

Instructional strategies describe teaching methods used in classrooms before and after implementation of DAIT recommendations. Every teacher addressed changes in classroom instruction in their responses.

I think that since the visits that we are focused and have fine tuned the things that we were missing before… I honestly think sometimes it is hard to listen and change but I believe that my teaching is better and having to be accountable for my students is a heavy burden so I need to be the best teacher I can be to get there. (Teacher 1, personal communication, 6/13/2011)

Previous researchers, such as August (2005), Bear (2007), Beck (2008), Carlo (2004), Gibbons (2002), and Slavin (2009), describe instructional strategies which coincide with DAIT recommendations. Recommended instructional strategies present recurring learning experiences in which students continually build literacy skills needed for academic achievement. Instructional strategies described within interview responses correspond with recommendations.

Vocabulary instruction expresses techniques used to teach vocabulary before and after implementation of DAIT recommendations. Every teacher stated that their vocabulary instruction has changed as a consequence of implementation of DAIT recommendations,

> Before the DAIT team visited, my vocabulary instruction was done out of context of the story. I would present the vocabulary words to the students before we read the story and ask them to copy a definition down and draw a picture to help remember the meaning of the word.(Teacher 6, personal communication, 6/18/2011)

Vocabulary instruction clarifies instructional strategies used as students increase the number of words with which they are fluent. Instruction directed toward words students will require in academic circumstances which are more difficult to learn (August et al, 2005; Beck et al, 2002; Cummins, 1994) and academic vocabulary acquisition requires explicit instruction with repeated experiences applying the words in literacy practice.

Four teachers reported they now incorporate visual support such as pictures and objects to support student's understanding of word meanings, and six teachers report

their lessons involve seeing, hearing and using vocabulary in context to increase vocabulary acquisition.

> Currently, we read the story through one time. I then show the students vocabulary cards with the word, the sentence from the story, and a picture. I have them predict the meaning of the word and then I reveal the definition. I still have them add the "book's" definition to their own words. We also use sentence frames so that the students can practice using the vocabulary. (Teacher 6, personal communication, 6/18/2011)

"I now find myself thinking more about words that my students may not know, and making sure that they understand what they mean" (Teacher 5, personal communication, 6/17/2011).

Reading comprehension encompasses student's knowledge of texts. Reading comprehension is influenced by a broad array of literacy skills and strategies applied within diverse learning circumstances. It has been the subject of intensive study for decades and results demonstrate reading is a complex process used separately by each student (Adams, 1995; Cambourne, 1995; Clay, 1991; Holdaway, 1979; Slavin, Madden, Chambers & Haxby, 2009). All teachers

established their reading comprehension instruction changed with implementation of DAIT recommendations.

Before DAIT, I thought reading it over and over that they would understand the message or comprehend the stories. I have learned that comprehension does not automatically come without good instruction that ties in with vocabulary. If they do not understand the words then they aren't going to understand meaning. I now spend time (not enough time for my liking) on teaching author meaning, comprehension checks, using a beach ball to ask questions, a lot of graphic organizers, and question and answer periods. This has helped a lot with retention also. (Teacher 1, personal communication, 6/13/2011)

Three teachers stated their use of Accelerated Reader[©] has increased. Accelerated Reader[©] is an online subscription with which students take quizzes on books they have read or which have been read to them. Teachers monitor student's progress by accessing the reports available through the subscription, using the information to support student's learning.

We have incorporated accelerated reader and now have core data on kids. We make sure the kids are

increasing reading levels by making sure they are

reading books in their ZPD and keep better tabs on how

they're doing. That's changed too for us. They are

reading at their level, not just their lowest level of

ZPD and give the kids feedback. We use that

information to remediate; the struggling readers get

identified right away. (Teacher 2, personal

communication, 6/15/2011)

ZPD is this teacher's abbreviation for the zone of

proximal development. As discussed in chapter 3, teaching

within a student's zone of proximal development guides the

student to increasing learning. "I use comprehension in a

guided way. I first will walk them through what is expected

and give several examples and then once most of them seem

to have an understanding I'll have them try it on their

own" (Teacher 4, personal communication, 6/17/2011).

English learners, as a theme, contrasts teacher's

previous instruction and perceptions of these students'

learning and achievement with depictions of current

instruction and perceptions. English learners need

carefully crafted learning experiences to maximize their

vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension (August et

al, 2005; Gibbons, 1993; Shanahan & Beck, 2006; Slavin et

al, 2009). As English learners participate in classroom instruction which incorporates all four domains of literacy, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, their academic achievement increases (August et al, 2005).

> We've seen a lot of growth in our ELs because we know so much more about them from our data. They are achieving better because of vocabulary instruction and the ELD differentiation we do. We are incorporating more listening and speaking in our classrooms. We speak with them. They speak with each other. As we speak to our kids we know what they need. Getting them to speak in complete sentences was a brilliant idea. It has made such a difference. They speak more and are learning more vocabulary because of that change.
>
> (Teacher 2, personal communication, 6/15/2011)

In classroom experiences, students employ acquired vocabulary within reading and writing. Reading and writing require application of vocabulary into academic situations (Anthony, 2008; Gentile, 2003, 2006).

Through these interviews teachers expressed their observations of modifications they have made to their classroom instruction and their assessment of changes in

student achievement since the implementation of DAIT recommendations.

Results for this study indicate that explicit content-area vocabulary instruction might have positive impacts on reading comprehension. ANOVA with planned contrasts produced results contrary to teacher perceptions and CST data. Possible inferences of results from data analysis, teacher interviews, and integration of the two are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This study was designed to investigate the impacts of explicit content area vocabulary instruction on literacy acquisition as measured by the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Overall CELDT scores, a composite score including all subtests of the assessment, and CELDT reading scores were examined before and after the intervention. The intervention was short-term targeted instruction in third grade classrooms. Previous studies have also focused on explicit vocabulary instruction demonstrating efficacy of directed instruction. Combining analysis of archival data and interviews with teachers who implemented the intervention, this chapter will discuss findings of this study, limitations, recommendations for future research, and implications for educational leadership.

Discussion of Results

California English Language Development
Test Assessment Results

Student scores for four consecutive years of third grade students were analyzed. Scores were produced by

individual students in each of the four years; these scores were not for the same students over a four year span. Four hypotheses were examined to investigate possible impacts of explicit content area vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension. Overall CELDT and CELDT Reading scores were analyzed to identify changes in reading achievement.

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were considered in this study. All hypotheses were rejected based on results of planned contrast ANOVAs. The reasons for rejection are discussed below.

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis addressed impacts of the intervention, explicit content area vocabulary instruction, comparing archival data of overall CELDT scores for 2009-2010 to the most recent data available, the 2010-2011 school year. It was expected that scores for students assessed during the 2010-2011 school year would be significantly higher than the previous year.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis focused on results of the intervention comparing archival data of overall CELDT scores for the two years before the intervention, the 2007-

2008 and 2008-2009 school years, to the 2009-2010 school year. It was expected that scores for students assessed during the 2009-2010 school year would be significantly higher than previous years.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis addressed impacts of the intervention comparing archival data of CELDT reading scores for 2009-2010 to the most recent data available, the 2010-2011 school year. It was expected that scores for students assessed during the 2010-2011 school year would be significantly higher than the previous year.

Hypothesis Four

The fourth hypothesis focused on results of the intervention comparing archival data of CELDT reading scores for the two years before the intervention, the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years, to the 2009-2010 school year. It was expected that scores for students assessed during the 2009-2010 school year would be significantly higher than previous years.

Significance was not found for any of the hypotheses, so all hypotheses were rejected. Many factors may have contributed to the lack of significance found for all hypotheses. Sample sizes for each year were quite small.

Data from other Program Improvement schools in the district may have been collected after verification that those schools had also implemented DAIT recommended explicit content-area vocabulary instruction in third grade classrooms. However, since the focus of this study was a specific school, this alternative was outside the scope of this study. Additionally, the length of the intervention before CELDT assessment was short, 8-10 weeks. This is true for all years presented in this study. Further discussion of implications of the length of the intervention is presented in the section focusing on teacher interviews. A final factor that might have influenced data analysis is the under- or over-representation of English learners who were also gifted and talented or resource specialist program students in scores collected for specific years.

Teacher Interviews

Interview data provided a clear view of how participants experienced implementation of explicit content area vocabulary instruction. Phenomenological studies scrutinize participant's experiences to derive thorough descriptions of those experiences which can then be evaluated. Each teacher reported classroom experiences reflecting implementation of explicit content-area

vocabulary instruction. The qualitative segment of this study presents what the experiences meant for the participants and permits an investigation of evidence of the experiences as reported by the participants (Moustakas, 1994). The experiences and actions of the participants are inseparable from this study.

Interview results will be discussed in comparison with CELDT results to reconcile discrepancies between teacher's perceptions of increased student achievement and scarcity of quantitative evidence of increased student achievement. Interview data provided participant perspectives on the implementation of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction. Since CELDT assessment occurs at the beginning of each school year teachers continued explicit content-area vocabulary instruction after completion of the assessment. Teachers implemented explicit content-area vocabulary instruction throughout the year.

Implementation might have been successful; however, the expected results were not seen in analysis of CELDT data. Interviews with teacher participants indicated value of instruction to student achievement. Interviews allowed participants to demonstrate impacts of explicit content area vocabulary instruction which were not revealed in

archival CELDT data. Additionally, other measures of
student achievement indicate growth. For example, STAR ELA
CST scores for English learners increased each year. CST
results from the 2007-2008 school year indicate 14% of
English learners at the target school scored proficient and
above. In 2008-2009 20% scored proficient and above, and in
2009-2010 22% scored proficient and above. For the most
current year, 2010-2011, 31% scored proficient and above
(CDE, 2011). Artifacts of student work resulting from
explicit content-area vocabulary instruction might have
demonstrated student's increases in vocabulary acquisition.
Unfortunately, other sources to document student
achievement were not included in this study.

Interview responses addressed changes in instructional
strategies for vocabulary lessons and reading comprehension
practices. Five of the six teachers discussed increased
usage of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction using
context of readings to increase student's understandings of
meaning. These teachers also described integrating
vocabulary into contexts of assignments and conversations
to increase use of acquired words. Previous research
demonstrates effectiveness of vocabulary use in a variety
of applications (August et al, 2005; Bear et al, 2007; Beck

et al, 2008; Carlo et al, 2004; Marzano & Pickering, 2005).
Increased attention to explicit vocabulary instruction
incorporating strategies which are more interactive for the
students was reported. Examples reported include student
discussions with peers in response to questions or prompts.
Such strategies lead to increased student engagement with
words which increases vocabulary acquisition (August et al,
2005; Pollard-Durodola et al, 2006). Since these teaching
strategies continued to be employed after CELDT
administration student's vocabulary acquisition also
continued as demonstrated by CST ELA results reported
previously.

Teachers changed instructional strategies to teach
vocabulary in response to DAIT recommendations. Multiple
tools and devices, such as incorporation of realia,
pictures, reading, repetition, and cessation of out-of-
context uses of dictionary work to determine word
definitions, were utilized to bring depth of vocabulary
acquisition to students. The strategy of asking students
what they think a word means before the word is further
explored leads students to engage with the word, think
about possible meanings, and reason through potential
meanings, in contrast to rote repetitions of out-of-context

meanings. Directly supported by published literature, one teacher indicated choosing fewer words to maximize students' acquisition and two teachers indicated using words from the curriculum (Bear et al, 2007; Beck et al, 2008). Responses by these teachers suggest word choices for explicit instruction might be an indication of student achievement in contrast to CELDT data.

Teachers credit increased use of instructional time targeting reading comprehension with increased student achievement. Addressing instructional time for reading comprehension, one teacher discussed the grade-level team's tactic of increasing instructional time focusing on reading comprehension by extension of the school day by providing after school instruction directed at reading comprehension. In addition, teachers stated some increases in reading comprehension can be attributed to classroom incorporation of online comprehension quizzes used to monitor student progress and guide instruction. Depicting instructional changes, one teacher indicated a pedagogical shift with implementation of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction, discussing a conversion that the strategy improved student's acquisition and retention of vocabulary leading to increased reading comprehension. Finally,

interview responses pointed to increased guidance to students during reading comprehension instruction as a pivotal instructional change.

Responses to interview questions state achievement of English learners has increased since the DAIT consultants began visiting the school, citing instructional changes focusing on vocabulary instruction and targeting English learners. Included within responses are reports that changes in instructional practices, differentiation of instruction, teaming within the grade level, incorporating increasing opportunities for students to speak, and requiring students to speak in complete sentences, increased time focusing on reading comprehension, and effective vocabulary teaching techniques have increased academic achievement for English learners. CELDT assessment was chosen for this study because it is an instrument unique to English learners. Only English learners are measured for literacy acquisition using the CELDT assessment. However, teacher responses, exhibiting a high level concern for students and student achievement, suggest inclusion of additional assessments would provide a more correct depiction of student success.

Responses from teachers also indicated they were reactive to visits by the DAIT consultants and built insights into instructional practices and student achievement from the team's feedback. Based on responses, all teachers implemented explicit content-area vocabulary instruction. Additionally, teachers communicated increased student achievement resulting from implementation of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction. Teacher's reports of implementation of instructional strategies recommended by the DAIT team, and endorsed by previous research, shows points of reconciliation between CELDT data analysis and perceptions of improvements in student achievement. Inclusion of teacher interviews in this study presented additional insights into impacts of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension. The combination of archival data and participant interviews leads to suggestions for further research and implications for educational leadership.

Future Recommendations

The compelling nature of literature reviewed in preparation for this study combined with findings of previous research suggests other studies with different

structures than this study. Possible structures could

include one that combines CELDT data with CST ELA data to

more clearly determine effectiveness of the intervention.

Another suggestion is that students who have benefited from

classroom implementation of explicit content-area

vocabulary instruction be assessed with the CELDT following

a year of instruction. In this structure, students would be

assessed after their third grade year immediately when the

CELDT assessment window opens, July 1 of each year.

Future research might also examine student achievement

resulting from explicit content-area vocabulary instruction

as measured by classroom assessments alone or in

combination with standardized assessments. Use of classroom

assessments would be enhanced by curriculum calibration in

which classroom assignments are compared to content

standards to insure rigor equal to the content standards.

An additional direction for future research could be

designed to examine explicit content-area vocabulary

instruction combined with a variety of reading experiences

for students. As the review of literature demonstrated, it

is easier for students with numerous reading occurrences to

acquire substantial vocabularies and efficient reading

comprehension (Trelease, 2006). A broader range of

interactions with texts could be provided by books with audio renditions which would be sent home with students. Students would then have access to texts they might otherwise be unable to read. These experiences with texts would be similar to read-alouds experienced in the classroom, and if they were non-commercially produced they could include word explanations.

Building on reading experiences, multiple encounters with targeted vocabulary using listening, speaking, and writing in addition to reading would be worth examination. Literature reviewed demonstrated effectiveness of numerous manipulations to increase vocabulary acquisition. Depth and breadth of vocabulary acquisition is enhanced through repeated exposures and applications of words (Apthorp, 2006). A study which included analysis of multiple encounters with targeted vocabulary would add to the body of knowledge on this subject.

Implications for Educational Leadership

The mission of the California Department of Education is "California will provide a world-class education for all students, from early childhood to adulthood…Together, as a team, we prepare students to live, work, and thrive in a

highly connected world" (CDE, 2011). It would be easy to reach agreement that every student deserves a world-class education. Educational leaders make decisions toward that goal. This study provides some interpretations that could inform future decisions.

Review of the literature addressing explicit vocabulary instruction specifies strengths of explicit vocabulary instruction. Teacher interviews reflect benefits to students of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction. Coupled with near significance of increases in overall CELDT scores and steady increases in CST ELA scores evidence was presented that explicit content-area vocabulary instruction provides benefits to student's literacy achievement.

The need to support increased achievement by English learners continues. Evidence provided by standardized test scores, high school completion rates, and numbers of English learners who enroll in college demands allocation of resources to strengthen programs in which these students are enrolled. Support may be provided through adoption of instructional materials which are aligned to the content standards and by providing staff development. To enhance previous staff development explicit content-area vocabulary

instruction could be augmented with in-class coaching.

Coaching provides teachers with feedback regarding

implementation and is considered more effective staff

development.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

College of Education
Office of Doctoral Studies

Informed Consent

The study you are being asked to participate in is designed to investigate the effects of explicit content-area vocabulary instruction for English learners on academic achievement. The study is being conducted by Catherine Terrell, doctoral student at California State University, San Bernardino under the supervision of Dr. Bonnie Piller, Director, Doctorate in Educational Leadership, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the California State University, San Bernardino, and this consent form should bear the official stamp of approval. The University requires that you give your consent before you can participate in this study.

During this study, the researcher will be interviewing third grade teachers at U. S. Grant Elementary School during the school year 2010-2011, Colton Joint Unified School District. Interview questions are:

- How has your vocabulary instruction changed since the District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) came to the school?
- How has your reading comprehension instruction changed since the District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) came to the school?
- What are some of your thoughts about how your English learners are achieving now as compared to before the District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) came to the school?

All information shared with the researcher will be coded to protect the identity of students, teachers, administrations, school, and school district. Due to the nature of the study, there are no foreseeable risk or harm to students, staff or the school district. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Bonnie Piller at bpiller@csusb.edu or (909) 537-3605

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and understand, the nature and purpose of this project, and entering into this agreement voluntarily, and understand I can withdraw participation and data at anytime without penalty. I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Date: _____

_____ _____ _____
Signature   Title   Phone #

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APPENDIX B

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Teacher 1 (Interviewed on 6/14/2011)

1. I think that my vocabulary instruction has changed greatly since DAIT has been coming around and we now are acutely aware of the needs of our student population. I now put a lot more time into vocabulary instruction using words, pictures, realia, songs, drawings and lots of repetition. I only use a handful of words instead of the 20 or 25 given. I spend a lot of time using GLAD strategies every day. I think this is key to our population of students. Before DAIT or training, I didn't concentrate on vocabulary as much because I thought they would just get it through the readings.

2. Before DAIT, I thought reading it over and over that they would understand the message or comprehend the stories. I have learned that comprehension does not automatically come without good instruction that ties in with vocabulary. If they do not understand the words then they aren't going to understand meaning. I now spend time (not enough time for my liking) on teaching author meaning, comprehension checks, using a beach ball to ask questions, a lot of graphic organizers, and question and answer periods. This has helped a lot with retention also.

3. I think that since the visits that we are focused and have fine tuned the things that we were missing before. I think that we have upped our game and if we listened, we have taught all of our students better, not just our EL's. I think that anytime that you can have someone outside come in and make suggestions to be a better teacher or better at your craft then we need to stop thinking egocentrically. I honestly think sometimes it is hard to listen and change but I believe that my teaching is better and having to be accountable for my students is a heavy burden so I need to be the best teacher I can be to get there. I also would have liked to have had specific third grade objectives to work on but I'm also glad that they liked what they saw.

Teacher 2 (Interviewed on 6/15/2011)

1. My vocabulary instruction has changed quite a bit as a result of going to that ELPD training. That's where we learned about Kate Kinsella and her vocabulary cards. The vocabulary cards ask the students what they think the word means before instruction, and how they rate their understanding of the word before and after instruction.

We got the information from Kate and we began using a 5 step process, showing them the word, pronunciation, show pictures, its part of speech, have them use it. We still use dictionary skills, but not vocabulary from the dictionary any more.

2. We do a lot of team teaching. We have incorporated accelerated reader and now have core data on kids. We make sure the kids are increasing reading levels by making sure they are reading books in their ZPD and keep better tabs on how they're doing. That's changed too for us. They are reading at their level, not just their lowest level of ZPD and give the kids feedback. We use that information to remediate; the struggling readers get identified right away. We provide after school tutoring and work with target groups. We make sure the really low kids come in. Also, we use small group instruction in the classroom and differentiated instruction among the grade level.

3. We've seen a lot of growth in our ELs because we know so much more about them from our data. They are achieving better because of vocabulary instruction and the ELD differentiation we do. We are incorporating more listening and speaking in our classrooms. We speak with them. They speak with each other. As we speak to our kids we know what they need. Getting them to speak in complete sentences was a brilliant idea. It has made such a difference. They speak more and are learning more vocabulary because of that change. We also use grade-level differentiated instruction among ELs. As we group students within classroom we make sure we don't sit 2 ELs at the same level together. Sometimes we can't seat a native speaker with an EL, but a

higher speaker.   Grouping kids in the classroom has changed
too.

Teacher 3 (Interviewed on 6/16/2011)

1. I'm sorry that I don't have the paperwork stating
specific DAIT instructions regarding vocabulary
instruction, and my reply may show that I am doing things
differently from how the Team intended.   I know without a
doubt that my vocabulary instruction has become less
varied, less differentiated, and less authentic than it
previously was.   I teach fewer words because I am more
limited in the types of books that I am able to use.   I
adhere much more strictly to the state adoption and its
limited vocabulary words and worksheets.   The amount of
time that I have to spend with the official state
selections gives me little time to spend differentiating
vocabulary instruction beyond the state adoption.   Higher-
level readers receive opportunities to complete "challenge
activities" that are often not engaging, while slower
learners are bogged-down trying to understand specific
worksheet instructions.   Rather than selecting books to
suit their interests and levels (lending authenticity to
the vocabulary instruction, as the students would have a
genuine interest in understanding the stories), the
students primarily read those selections made for them by
state officials.   Therefore the words chosen by the state
become a state requirement, and more of a chore to learn.

2. The students read a lot less self-selected, high-
interest literature.   Comprehension is now mostly taught
through worksheets, passages, and previewing, taking, and
reviewing multiple-choice tests.   The students read one
picture book from the adoption every seven days.   The
stories are often fun and interesting, but lack the depth
of a good chapter book.   The accompanying leveled readers
that attempt to add variety and differentiation are
typically contrived and uninteresting, with comprehension
activities that seem forced and, at times, cumbersome.
When testing comprehension, the students are given passages
to speed-read, and then have to recall as many words from
the text as possible.   If the student does not perform at
the right level, we must print out more passages for the
student to practice.   In the past, we gave students reading

tests that helped to determine the types of mistakes the students were making, so that we could gear instruction toward correcting those mistakes. Now we just test their speed and rote memory, then throw more and more words at them when they don't perform at grade-level. An analogy for this new approach is when teaching a student to play tennis you hit a ball to him. If he doesn't hit it back properly, you just hit a bunch of balls at him rather than working on holding the racket properly, using a proper stance, and moving the body correctly to hit the ball accurately.

The heavy reliance on Houghton Mifflin and Dibbles seems to be a cookie-cutter approach to teaching contrived by companies to satisfy state requirements, and then forced on classes in a one-size-fits-all style that is designed to ease the burden of box-checking bureaucrats who have little genuine trust in the ability of teachers.
When I first started teaching, I had no experience or training (just an emergency credential and a degree in anthropology). I relied heavily on worksheets, but wanted desperately to do the sorts of activities that I observed in experienced teachers' classrooms using a rich variety of literature. I worked hard to gain the knowledge that those teachers had in order to use the methods of comprehension that would work for the variety of students that I had, and that would work with my teaching style. Now I have been forced to revert back to teaching with worksheets.

3. I previously taught at a school where the EL students were concentrated on one track. I was not a teacher on that track, and therefore have little experience to draw from regarding the differences in achievement for those students. I can say with confidence, however, that the students I work with at third grade are much better academically than those with whom I worked when I started fourteen years ago. I believe that difference to be the result of the twenty-to-one student-to-teacher ratio that has been in place during that period of time. With fewer students in the classroom, teachers are able to overcome the restrictions set by the state. We are able to teach in spite of the limitations forced on us by bureaucrats, though those limitations are being more strictly enforced year after year.

Teacher 4 (Interviewed on 6/17/2011)

1. I don't think I can say it changed just because of DAIT but I use vocabulary in just about everything now. How to use context clues to find the meaning, looking words up in the dictionary, using GLAD strategies. I make them really try to find the meaning without just giving it to them first.

2. I use comprehension in a guided way. I first will walk them through what is expected and give several examples and then once most of them seem to have an understanding I'll have them try it on their own.

3. I believe the focus has become more on vocabulary. I think they seem to be doing better. There is such a strong emphasis on vocabulary now that they are getting it all over the place and their understanding seems to be improving.

Teacher 5 (Interviewed on 6/17/2011)

1. I now find myself thinking more about words that my students may not know, and making sure that they understand what they mean. Also, I have students repeat and tell partners the meaning of new words.

2. I find myself pushing AR more now which I feel helps with comprehension.

3. I feel my English learners are achieving as well as they did before D.A.I.T.

Teacher 6 (Interviewed on 6/18/2011)

1. Before the DAIT team visited, my vocabulary instruction was done out of context of the story. I would present the vocabulary words to the students before we read the story and ask them to copy a definition down and draw a picture to help remember the meaning of the word. Currently, we

read the story through one time. I then show the students
vocabulary cards with the word, the sentence from the
story, and a picture. I have them predict the meaning of
the word and then I reveal the definition. I still have
them add the "book's" definition to their own words. We
also use sentence frames so students can practice using the
vocabulary.

2. Since the DAIT team's visit, I have incorporated more
charts and graphic organizers while teaching reading
comprehension. These are kept out so that the students can
refer back to them while we work with the stories.

3. I think that my English Learners are much more connected
to the stories now, and, therefore, are achieving at higher
levels than before the DAIT team's visits.

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Colton Joint Unified School District

Jerry Almendarez, Superintendent
Mollie Gainey-Stanley, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services Division

Mr. Mel Albiso, *President*
Mr. Frank A. Ibarra, *Vice-President*
Mr. David R. Zamora, *Clerk*
Mr. Robert D. Armenta, Jr.
Mrs. Patt Haro
Mrs. Marge Mendoza-Ware
Mr. Kent Taylor

November 16, 2010

To the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino:

Catherine Terrell, doctoral student at California State University, San Bernardino, who is working with Dr. Bonnie Piller, Chair of her Doctoral Committee, has permission to use public data regarding the academic performance and demographics for U. S. Grant Elementary School in the Colton Joint Unified School District. Along with the public data, Catherine has permission to contact the third grade teachers at U. S. Grant Elementary School to request their voluntary participation in a survey related to the study. I understand, as part of participation, the schools' California English Language Development Test (CELDT) data of third grade students enrolled at U. S. Grant Elementary School during the school years of 2005-2006 through 2010-2011, Colton Joint Unified School District. This data will include individual and group overall CELDT scores and sub scores in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. All data will be de-identified removing all student identification information except for grade level.

I understand the purpose of the study is to determine the impact to student achievement in response to explicit content-area vocabulary instruction. All information shared with the researcher will be randomly coded to protect the students', teachers', administrations', schools' and school district's identity. Due to the nature of the study, there are no foreseeable risks or harms to students, staff or the school district.

I am entering into this agreement voluntarily, and understand I can withdraw participation and data at anytime without penalty. If questions or concerns should arise, I have been provided contact information for the researcher and her co-committee chairs.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate to call me at (909) 580-5000.

Sincerely,

Mollie Gainey-Stanley
Assistant Superintendent
Educational Services Division

Permission Letter

Colton Joint Unified School District

U. S. Grant Elementary School
550 West Olive Street, Colton, CA 92324 * Phone (909) 876-4126*

Mrs. Kathleen Houle-Jackson, Principal

November 9, 2010

To the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino:
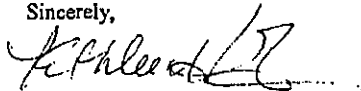
Catherine Terrell, doctoral student at California State University, San Bernardino, who is working with Dr. Bonnie Piller, Chair of her Doctoral Committee, has permission to use public data regarding the academic performance and demographics for U. S. Grant Elementary School in the Colton Joint Unified School District. Along with the public data, Catherine has permission to contact the third grade teachers at U. S. Grant Elementary School to request their voluntary participation in a survey related to the study. I understand, as part of participation, the schools' California English Language Development Test (CELDT) data of third grade students enrolled at U. S. Grant Elementary School during the school years of 2005-2006 through 2010-2011, Colton Joint Unified School District. This data will include individual and group overall CELDT scores and sub scores in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

I understand the purpose of the study is to determine the impact to student achievement in response to explicit content-area vocabulary instruction. All information shared with the researcher will be randomly coded to protect the students', teachers', administrations', schools' and school district's identity. Due to the nature of the study, there are no foreseeable risks or harms to students, staff or the school district.

I am entering into this agreement voluntarily, and understand I can withdraw participation and data at anytime without penalty. If questions or concerns should arise, I have been provided contact information for the researcher and her co-committee chairs.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate to call me at (909) 876-4126.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Houle-Jackson
Principal, U. S. Grant Elementary School

December 03, 2010

Ms. Catherine Terrell
c/o: Prof. Bonnie Piller
Department of Education
California State University
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

> **CSUSB**
> **INSTITUTIONAL**
> **REVIEW BOARD**
> Expedited Review
> IRB# 10033
> Status
> **APPROVED**

Dear Ms. Terrell:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Explicit Vocabulary Instruction for English Language Learners Effects on Reading Comprehension Implications for Acceleration" has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The attached informed consent document has been stamped and signed by the IRB chairperson. All subsequent copies used must be this officially approved version. A change in your informed consent (no matter how minor the change) requires resubmission of your protocol as amended. Your application is approved for one year from December 03, 2010 through December 02, 2011. One month prior to the approval end date you need to file for a renewal if you have not completed your research. See additional requirements (Items 1 – 4) of your approval below.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee include the following 4 requirements as mandated by the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 listed below. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

1) Submit a protocol change form if any changes (no matter how minor) are made in your research prospectus/protocol for review and approval of the IRB before implemented in your research.
2) If any unanticipated/adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.
3) Too renew your protocol one month prior to the protocols end date,
4) When your project has ended by emailing the IRB Coordinator/Compliance Analyst.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, IRB Compliance Coordinator. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Sharon Ward, Ph.D.
Sharon Ward, Ph.D., Chair
Institutional Review Board

SW/mg

cc: Prof. Bonnie Piller, Department of Education

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How has your vocabulary instruction changed since the District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) came to the school?

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6
Instructional Strategies	Key , words, realia, songs, and lots of repetition, GLAD strategies every day	Kate Kinsella and her vocabulary cards, ask the students what they think the word means before instruction, and how they rate their understanding of the word before and after instruction, 5 step process, showing them the word, pronunciation, show , its part of speech, have them use it	limited vocabulary words and worksheets, Higher-level readers receive opportunities to complete "challenge activities" that are often not engaging, while slower learners are bogged-down trying to understand specific worksheet instructions	How to use context clues to find the meaning, looking words up in the dictionary, using GLAD strategies,	students repeat and tell partners the meaning of new words	read the story through one time, then show the students vocabulary cards with the word, the sentence from the story, and a . I have them predict the meaning of the word and then I reveal the definition. I still have them add the "book's" definition to their own words. We also use sentence frames so that the students can practice using the

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6
						vocabulary
Word Choices	a handful of words instead of the 20 or 25 given		fewer words, words chosen by the state			Words from reading selections
Instructional Time	Greatly increased		little time, little time to spend differentiating vocabulary instruction			
Instructional Changes	didn't concentrate on vocabulary as much because I thought they would just get it through the readings	changed quite a bit as a result of going to that ELPD training, We still use dictionary skills, but not vocabulary from the dictionary any more.	my vocabulary instruction has become less varied, less differentiated, and less authentic than it previously was	I use vocabulary in just about everything now, I make them really try to find the meaning without just giving it to them first.	I now find myself thinking more about words that my students may not know, and making sure that they understand what they mean.	Before the DAIT team visited, my vocabulary instruction was done out of context of the story. I would present the vocabulary words to the students before we read the story and ask them to copy a definition down and a ▓▓ to help remember the meaning

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
	Acutely aware of student needs		I'm sorry that I don't have the paperwork stating specific DAIT instructions regarding vocabulary instruction, and my reply may show that I am doing things differently from how the Team intended, a chore to learn

Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6

of the word.

2. How has your reading comprehension instruction changed since the District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) came to the school?

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6
Instructional Strategies	good ▓instruction▓ that ties in with ▓▓▓▓▓, author meaning, ▓comprehension▓ checks, using a beach ball to ask questions, a lot of graphic organizers, and question and answer periods	a lot of team ▓teaching▓, the kids are increasing reading levels by making sure they are reading books in their ZPD, use that information to remediate; the struggling readers get identified right away, provide after school tutoring and work with target groups, use small group ▓instruction▓ in the classroom and differentiated ▓instruction▓ among the grade level	▓comprehensio n▓ activities that seem forced and, at times, cumbersome	first walk them through what is expected and give several examples and then once most of them seem to have an understanding I'll have them try it on their own.		▓▓▓▓▓ charts and graphic organizers kept out so that the ▓students▓ can refer back to them while we work with the stories

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6
Reading Choices			students read a lot less self-selected, high-interest literature, The students read one picture book from the adoption every seven days. accompanying leveled readers that attempt to add variety and differentiation are typically contrived and uninteresting			
Instructional Time/Foci	now spend time (not enough time for my liking) on teaching	make sure the really low kids come in	lack the depth of a good chapter book.			

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6
Instructional Changes	I thought reading it over and over that they would understand the message or comprehend the stories,	incorporated accelerated reader, keep better tabs on how they're doing, not just their lowest level of ZPD and give the kids feedback	Comprehension is now mostly taught through worksheets, passages, and previewing, taking, and reviewing multiple-choice tests	use comprehension in a guided way	pushing AR more now which I feel helps with comprehension	more charts and graphic organizers while teaching reading comprehension
	If they do not understand the words then they aren't going to understand meaning, helped a lot with retention also	core data on kids	When testing comprehension, the students are given passages to speed-read, and then have to recall as many words from the text as possible. If the student does not perform at the right level, we must print out more			

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
			passages for the student to practice. I n the past, we gave students reading tests that helped to determine the types of mistakes the students were making, so that we could gear instruction toward correcting those mistakes. N ow we just test their speed and rote memory, then throw more and more words at them when they don't perform at grade-level

Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6

3. What are some of your thoughts about how your English learners are achieving now as compared to before the District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) came to the school?

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6
Achievement Changes		a lot of growth in our ELs because we know so much more about them from our data, It has made such a difference (speaking in complete sentences),	the students I work at third grade are much better academically than those with whom I worked when I started fourteen years ago	they seem to be doing better, their understanding seems to be improving	English learners are achieving as well as they did before	English Learners are much more connected to the stories now, and, therefore, are achieving at higher levels than before the DAIT team's visits.
Instructional Changes	since the visits that we are focused and have fine tuned the things that we were missing before, we have upped our game, we have taught all of our students better, not just our EL's, sometimes it is hard to listen and change but I believe that	They are achieving better because of vocabulary instruction and the ELD differentiation we do, incorporating more listening and speaking in our classrooms, we speak to our kids we know what they need, Getting them to speak in		the focus has become more on vocabulary		

my teaching is
better

complete
sentences was a
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We also use
grade-level
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among ELs, As
we group
students within
classroom we
make sure we
don't sit 2 ELs
at the same
level together.
Sometimes we
can't seat a
native speaker
with an EL, but
a higher
speaker

Vocabulary

They speak more
and are
learning more
vocabulary
because of that
change

DAIT Feedback   I also would
have liked to
have had
specific third
grade
objectives to
work on but I'm
also glad that

such a strong
emphasis on
vocabulary,
they are
getting it
all over the
place

	they liked what they saw
Expressions about DAIT	I think that anytime that you can have someone outside come in and make suggestions to be a better teacher or better at your craft then we need to stop thinking egocentrically.

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Expressions about teaching	having to be accountable for my students is a heavy burden so I need to be the best teacher I can be to get there

We are able
to teach in
spite of the
limitations
forced on us
by
bureaucrats,
though those
limitations
are being
more
strictly
enforced
year after
year.

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