

IMPROVING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION TO BETTER SERVE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

by

Jessie Chen

An education leadership portfolio submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

Summer 2015

© 2015 Jessie Chen
All Rights Reserved

ProQuest Number: 3730205

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 3730205

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

IMPROVING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION TO BETTER SERVE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

by

Jessie Chen

Approved: _____
Ralph P. Ferretti, Ph.D.
Director of the School of Education

Approved: _____
Carol Vukelich, Ph.D.
Interim Dean of the College of Education and Human Development

Approved: _____
James G. Richards, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

I certify that I have read this education leadership portfolio and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an education leadership portfolio for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed:

Sharon Walpole, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of education leadership portfolio

I certify that I have read this education leadership portfolio and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an education leadership portfolio for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed:

Steven Amendum, Ph.D.
Member of education leadership portfolio committee

I certify that I have read this education leadership portfolio and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an education leadership portfolio for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed:

Adrian Pasquarella, Ph.D.
Member of education leadership portfolio committee

I certify that I have read this education leadership portfolio and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an education leadership portfolio for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed:

Linda Grace, M.Ed.
Member of education leadership portfolio committee

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am immensely grateful to my advisor, Dr. Sharon Walpole, who gave me the freedom to explore a long-held passion of mine, and at the same time guided me step by step through this five-year journey. I feel very fortunate to be Sharon's student and to have the opportunity to learn and benefit from her profound experience and knowledge. I also would like to thank my leadership portfolio committee members, Dr. Steven Amendum, Dr. Adrian Pasquarella and Mrs. Linda Grace, for their wonderful advice and support.

My deep gratitude also goes to Dr. Douglas Archbald, Dr. Joan Buttram, Dr. Fred Hofstetter, and Dr. David Coker. Their expertise and classes were a big part of my professional growth and enabled me to accomplish my project.

I am indebted to Lombardy Elementary School and my professional friends and colleagues who helped me generously throughout my research; my principal Lynn Sharps, who always supported me in my initiatives; and the ELL program supervisor Sugely Solano and the ELL tutors who provided crucial information.

Most importantly, none of this would have been possible without the love and support of my family. My parents and children have been a constant source of support and strength all these years. I especially would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to my husband for his unwavering love, encouragement, tremendous support, patience, and understanding. I could not have achieved this goal without him.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT	xi

Chapter

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	Problem.....	1
	Approach	2
2	PROBLEM ADDRESSED.....	7
	Problem Initiative	7
	Important to Address	7
	Demographic Composition of the Organization.....	9
	My Role, Responsibilities and Expectations	10
	My Objectives	11
3	IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES	12
	Rationale for the Improvement Strategies Chosen	12
	Decisions about Improvement Strategies Based on Data.....	13
	Research	14
	Improvement Strategies.....	14
	Policies Modified and Resources Allocated to Support the Improvements	14
4	IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES RESULTS	16
	Results of the Improvement Effort	16
	The Outcomes.....	19
5	IMPROVEMENT EFFORT	21
	Result of the Overall Approach	21
	What Worked Particularly Well	21
	What Needs to Be Redesigned	22
	Influence on My Improvement Goal	23

What to Tell Others	24
Next Steps.....	25
6 REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.....	26
Growth of My Skills as a Scholar.....	26
Growth of My Skills as a Problem Solver.....	28
Growth of My Skills as a Partner	29
REFERENCES	30
Appendix	
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIO (ELP) PROPOSAL.....	32
A TEN ARTIFACTS FOR MY ELP	33
B IMPROVING TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES AND CURRICULUM TO MINIMIZE ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN ELL AND NATIVE-SPEAKING STUDENTS	35
Background.....	35
Problem Statement.....	38
Process Evaluation.....	41
Appended Artifacts.....	46
Project Proposal.....	52
Action Plan	52
C EVALUATION OF ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAM AT BRANDYWINE SCHOOL DISTRICT	56
Introduction	56
Evaluation of ELL Program at BSD.....	62
Purpose of the Evaluation.....	62
ELL Operational Process at BSD	62
BSD ELL Program Operation Process	64
Conclusion and Recommendation	65
D ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAM AT BRANDYWINE SCHOOL DISTRICT	67

	ELL Resources at Brandywine School District Data Collection Method	67
	ELL Tutors' Profile from BSD	72
	Interview Data	73
	ELL Services at BSD.....	77
	In-Depth Study at Lombardy Elementary School	78
	Instruments	81
	Data Collection Procedures	82
	Data Analysis.....	82
	Summary and Recommendation.....	85
E	CAUSES FOR READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES AMONG NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS AND SPANISH-SPEAKING ELLS IN UPPER ELEMENTAR AND MIDDLE SCHOOL	888
	Introduction	888
	Research Question and Goal	90
	Literature Review	90
	Reading Comprehension Difficulties	91
	Effect of Word Recognition Skills	92
	Effect of Vocabulary and SES.....	94
	Effect of Linguistic Differences Between English and Spanish	98
	Discussion.....	101
	Recommendation for Future Research	103
F	IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION OF UPPER ELEMENTARY ELLS: USING TEXTS RICH WITH AMERICAN CULTURE AND HISTORY	110
	Introduction	110
	Lessons from Research.....	113
	Teaching Vocabulary.....	113
	Teaching Reading Comprehension.....	115
	Combining Specific Programs with Instruction in Reading Comprehension.....	116
	Building Cultural Knowledge.....	118
	Criteria for Choosing Books.....	119
	ELL Instruction Lesson Design.....	121
	Discussion.....	125
	Conclusion of the Literature Review	126

G	PRESENTATION ON THE TOPIC OF ELL POPULATION CHANGE AND SUMMARY OF MY LITERATURE REVIEW	132
	PRESENTATION PART I.....	132
	Improving Curriculum and Instruction to Better Serve English Language Learners	132
	PRESENTATION PART II	134
	Strategies for ELL	134
H	PROGRESS MONITORING ASSESSMENT AND RTI IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE	138
	Progress Monitoring Assessments and RtI Implementation	140
I	LESSON PLANS	146
J	SELECTIONS OF TEACHING MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS AND THE ELL TUTOR AND RECOMMENDED INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW FOR USING THE BOOKS	170
	Criteria For Choosing Books.....	170
	Recommended Instructional Guidelines for the ELL Tutor to Follow for Using the Books	176
K	PROCEDURE FOR ASSESSMENT DATA REVIEW, STUDENT GROUPING, INSTRUCTION AND ELLS.....	184
L	IRB LETTER.....	188

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Organization Of The Portfolio.....	3
Table 2	Survey.....	16

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	ELL Tier II & III Students Progress Trend	19
----------	---	----

ABSTRACT

There is a significant achievement gap between English language learners (ELLs) and the native-English speaking students (or non-ELLs). On average ELLs in Delaware performed worse than ELLs in many other states according 2013-2014 NAEP report (see details in Appendix C). In addition, there is evidence that ELLs in my district are struggling. According to Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System reading scores from the 2013-2014 school year, Brandywine School District (BSD) had the third largest achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in the state.

The objective of my project was to minimize this achievement gap by analyzing the relevant factors critical to the problem, devising improvement approaches that could be implemented at current school settings, and testing them out at my pilot school, Lombardy Elementary School (LES). The outcomes of my improvement project are presented in this portfolio.

After an evaluation of the BSD's ELL Program, I found several possible causes for the achievement gap between ELLs and the native English speaking students. The controllable causes include: no systematic teacher training about providing differentiated instruction to ELLs, potentially ineffective instruction provided by both the ELL tutors and classroom teachers due to their limited knowledge about how to work with ELLs, not monitoring students' academic progress regularly, and insufficient curriculum and materials to use for teaching ELLs.

As the next step in my research, I conducted literature reviews on what researchers had done and practitioners had tried and proved to be effective in the past

for teaching upper elementary ELLs and how to provide effective instruction to ELLs. Through the literature reviews, I found the following three strategies recommended for instruction for ELL students: (1) combining collaborative learning and direct teaching, (2) intensive instruction in word meaning acquisition, and (3) cognitive strategy instruction, which includes engaging students in literacy-rich activities coupled with explicit teaching of specific literacy components.

Based on the above research findings, I designed and carried out the following improvements at LES: 1) I provided two workshops for teachers and the ELL tutor at curriculum meetings on how to work with ELLs; 2) I designed a school-wide progress monitoring schedule for teachers to follow to monitor the academic progress of ELLs; 3) I assisted teachers in analyzing progress monitoring data and grouping students based on their needs; 4) I supported teachers with materials and instructional strategies to meet the needs of ELLs; 5) I designed sample lesson plans to demonstrate how to address ELLs' learning characteristics for teachers to try out; 6) I selected supplemental materials and model lessons for the ELL tutor; and 7) I shared my concerns about the lack of resources and training for teachers with the district's ELL program supervisor.

Teachers at LES provided positive feedback about the two workshops I presented. Selected classroom teachers tried the lesson plans with mixed reactions about the lesson structure. The ELL tutor began to use the supplemental materials. Finally, the ELL program supervisor at BSD provided the very first district-wide training for teachers on the topic of how to teach ELLs with the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model/approach.

The overall intervention results are mostly positive, but not yet as effective or rapid as expected. These results highlight the urgent need for improvement in ELL education, and reveals the lengthy time needed to attain significant and sustained improvement. Further improvements can be made in many areas, including providing teachers/tutors with more knowledge about how to teach ELLs, having materials and programs that are more appropriate for ELLs, and using instructional routines and structures that match ELLs' needs. As we move forward, we will continually strive to find ways to improve ELLs' academic achievement at LES.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem

English Language Learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing part of the public school population. Over the past 15 years, the number of ELLs has nearly doubled. By 2015, ELL enrollment in U.S. schools will reach 10 million and by 2025 nearly one out of every four public school students will be an ELL (Van Roekel, 2008). Delaware's ELL population is growing consistent with the national trend (see details in appendix B). However, while the ELL population increases, the corresponding support system, including curriculum and instructional methodology, has not been updated to serve this special population. ELLs have not been doing well academically in school; they are underperforming compared to their native-English speaking peers across the country (see details in Appendix C). There is a significant achievement gap in the subject of English language art between ELLs and native-English speaking students. Improving the academic performance of ELLs is an urgent need for the country.

ELLs at Brandywine School District (BSD) and across the state of Delaware performed poorly on the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) for the 2013-2014 school year. The achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in BSD is large (see details in appendix B). Lombardy Elementary School (LES) is one of the nine elementary schools in BSD. It had 558 students enrolled in the school year 2013-2014 at six grade levels, from kindergarten to 5th grade. Students include 35 or

6.3% English language learners (ELLs) in grades K through 5. LES has one paraprofessional ELL tutor who provides support to the 35 ELLs.

Approach

To address the problem of the academic achievement gap between ELLs and native-English speaking students, I took the approach of identifying the root causes, designing solutions aimed at addressing the root causes, and then testing my improvement strategies in my actual school setting.

I conducted the process evaluation on Brandywine School District's (BSD) ELL Program and Lombardy Elementary School (LES) where I am in the position to contribute as a curriculum leader. ELL performance at LES is representative of that of the district. While I was conducting my evaluation (see details in Appendix D), I also did literature reviews.

The evaluation results unveiled the following major contributing factors to the problem: 1) educators for ELLs did not have adequate knowledge on how to provide effective instruction for ELLs, 2) educators had no curriculum, instruction or teaching materials systematically designed based on ELLs' learning characteristics, and 3) there was no on-going formative assessment and corresponding adjustment in instruction based on that assessment for ELLs.

Based on the above findings, I designed and carried out the following improvement plan: 1) I provided two workshops for teachers and the ELL tutor at curriculum meetings on how to work with ELLs, 2) I designed a school-wide progress monitoring schedule for teachers to follow to monitor the academic progress of ELLs, 3) I assisted teachers in analyzing progress monitoring data, grouping students based on their needs, and selecting materials and designing instruction to meet the needs, 4) I

designed sample lesson plans to demonstrate how to teach ELLs based on their learning characteristics, 5) I selected supplemental materials and modeled lessons for the ELL tutor, and 6) I shared my concerns about the lack of resources and training for teachers with the district's ELL program supervisor.

My portfolio is arranged in the following order indicated in Table 1 below. The chapters in the reflection are followed by Appendices detailing the project.

Table 1 Organization of the Portfolio

Chapter	Content	Page
1	Introduction	1
Chapter 1 focused on three objectives: introducing the reader to the problem, previewing the general approach taken to address the problem, and providing an organizer for the portfolio.		
2	Problem Addressed	7
Chapter 2 provides detailed information about the organizational context in which the problem exists, as well as my role and responsibility in the organization.		
3	Improvement Strategies	12
Chapter 3 addresses the actions taken I took to improvement the situation.		
4	Improvement Strategies Results	16
Chapter 4 describes the evidence of the implementation process and the results.		
5	Improvement Effort	21
Chapter 5 shares the results of the improvement plan, and suggests next steps and recommendations for continued work in this area.		

6	Reflections On Leadership Development	26
Chapter 6 records my growth as a scholar, problem solver, and partner.		
Appendix		
A	Table of Ten Artifacts	33
Appendix A contains the titles and types of the ten artifacts of this portfolio.		
B	White paper - Improving Teacher Instructional Techniques and Curriculum to Minimize Achievement Gap between ELL and Native-speaking Students	35
Appendix B is my Education Leadership Portfolio (ELP) Proposal. It includes the detailed ELL Program Evaluation and Literature Review findings as well as my proposed action plan. I included it here to show that I took actions after having worked to understand the problem.		
C	Evaluation of Elementary English Language Learner Program at Brandywine School District	57
This section focuses on the evaluation of the ELL Program at BSD, including its operational process, resources for supporting ELLs and an in-depth study at Lombardy Elementary School. It also includes a review of literature on instructional techniques to improve the effectiveness of teaching ELLs.		
D	Analysis of Resources for English Language Learner Program at Brandywine School District	68
To determine the knowledge and skills of educators who provided instructions to ELLs at BSD, data were collected through interviews and questionnaires, published newsletters, and online information from BSD and the Delaware Education Department (DOE). The analysis of the collected data clearly revealed a lack of knowledge about teaching ELLs and inadequate ELL curriculum or		

<p>supplemental materials as significant areas for improvement.</p> <p>Subsequently I reviewed literature to find out whether there were evidence-based effective ELL programs and curricula that were appropriate for ELLs.</p>		
E	Causes of Reading Comprehension Difficulties among Native English Speakers and Spanish-Speaking ELLs in Upper Elementary and Middle Schools	88
<p>The published research on this topic at the elementary level is fairly limited. Most of the research is done on Spanish-speaking ELLs as they are the main ELL population nationwide. Appendix E summarized research on why Spanish speaking ELLs and ELLs in general are not making adequate progress in reading, especially in comprehension, and suggests programs and strategies to use for teaching ELLs.</p>		
F	Improving Reading Comprehension of Upper Elementary ELLs: Using Texts Rich with American Culture and History	110
<p>Appendix F is a literature review on what researchers have done and practitioners have tried and proved to be effective in teaching upper elementary ELLs. Most ELLs are able to master constrained skills like phonics, but have trouble comprehending what they read even when reaching proficiency level verbally. How to provide instruction to improve the reading comprehension of upper elementary ELLs and prevent them from being identified as students with learning disabilities are my focal points.</p>		
G	Workshops Presented to LES Staff	132
Appendix G contains the two power presentation slides		
H	Star Progress Monitoring Assessment	138

	and RtI Implementation Schedule	
Appendix H has a detailed academic progress monitoring assessment schedule for LES teachers and BSD's RtI Cycle Schedule		
I	Examples of Lesson Plans	146
Appendix I contains a sample lesson plan for providing differentiated instruction for ELLs using text rich in American culture and history.		
J	Selections of Supplemental Teaching Materials for ELL and Teachers	170
A list of books I recommend as primary or supplementary reading materials for ELLs is included in Appendix J. The books are listed according to the school activity calendar to coordinate with school activities.		
K	Procedure for Assessment Data Review, Student Grouping, and Instruction Design for ELLs	184
Appendix K explains in details the procedure of RtI assessment data review, students grouping based on their needs, and corresponding instruction design and material selection for ELLs.		
L	IRB LETTER	188
ELPs & Human Subjects Review		

Chapter 2

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Problem Initiative

The federal government requires districts to provide services to English language learners (ELLs), but the policies allow districts to create their own services (Calderon, 2011). Brandywine School District (BSD) spends scant resources on this at-risk student population. Due to the various root causes described later in this chapter, there is a significant achievement gap between ELLs and native English-speaking students (or non-ELLs). On average, ELLs in Delaware performed worse than many ELLs in the country (see details in Appendix D). BSD had the third largest achievement gap among all public school districts according to the 2013-2014 Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) (see details in Appendix C) and the percentage of ELLs identified as students with learning disabilities is much higher than other groups in BSD.

Important to Address

Being an ELL myself at universities in the United States pursuing graduate degrees, I am especially cognizant of issues affecting ELLs. Newly arrived ELLs often feel frustrated, dumb, and angry. Many ELL children withdraw or give up after not making academic progress in the first year or two. Many of them are identified as students with learning disabilities and isolated from their peers. This isolation seriously impacts their future (Becker & Goldstein, 2011). Seeing young ELLs feeling hopeless and struggling in school daily worries me, especially when I know that many

of the root causes are external. My motivation for this project has been to identify those external root causes that can be minimized or eliminated through improvement within existing resource limitations, and to make a difference in those young ELL's lives.

Over the past 15 years, ELLs have been the fastest growing sector of the public school population in the U.S. By 2025 nearly one out of every four public school students will be an ELL (Van Roekel, 2008). This is a large portion of America's future work force. Unfortunately, on average ELLs have not been doing well academically in schools. This academic setback is affecting the overall development of ELLs and their future potential as contributing members of society.

The language barrier for ELLs certainly plays a major role in their academic achievement, but the removal of this barrier has a lot to do with what schools are doing to support them in their initial years of American education. According to the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974, examples of conditions that may violate the EEOA include when a school fails to provide a language acquisition program, fails to provide adequate language services, or fails to provide resources to effectively implement its language acquisition program. Thus, we not only have a moral but legal obligation to adequately serve our ELL population.

Of the nineteen public school districts in Delaware, BSD is the third largest, with nine elementary, three middle, and three high schools. The ELL population has increased each year, with 6.4% in the 2011–2012 school year, 6.9% in 2012-2013 and 7.3% in the 2013-2014 school year (see details in Appendix D). The school district does not have any certified ELL teachers to serve these students directly. BSD employs sixteen part-time paraprofessional tutors who do not have formal educational

training in working with ELLs. Educators and their knowledge play a critical role in the education of ELLs. According to Khong & Saito (2014), the biggest obstacle for teachers in providing effective instruction is the lack of knowledge about teaching ELLs. The learning process of ELLs differs from the non-ELLs. Because of ELLs' cultural and linguistic differences, they need educators who have proper training. In addition to lacking training, ELL tutors only had one program, *Oxford Picture Dictionary*, that was purchased last year, and classroom teachers only had a general curriculum to use for all students. The lack of an appropriate program creates a significant challenge for teachers who teach ELLs (Khong & Saito, 2013).

Demographic Composition of the Organization

LES is one of the nine elementary schools and its population has been changing over the past four years. The Hispanic enrollment has increased from 15% in the school year 2003-2004 to 27% in 2013-2014. The school had 554 students in 2012-2013 and among them 39, or 7%, were ELLs. Among the 39 ELLs from kindergarten to fifth grade, 45% of students spoke Spanish as their first language (brandywineschools.org). The rest of the ELLs were from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, India, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Germany, Russia and Belgium. Serving a diverse ELL population requires that teachers be equipped with adequate knowledge and resources (Robertson, 2014), yet the district had never provided any training to classroom teachers or part-time ELL tutors before this school year.

The ELLs are clustered in one classroom at each grade level and teachers take turns working with the ELL inclusion classes each year. The ELL tutor pulls the students out for services. Due to her limited working hours and scheduling difficulty, she groups the ELLs by grade level instead of by needs. Only when educators measure

students' needs regularly, constantly analyze what students need and adjust instruction, can student learning improve (McLeod, 2010).

My Role, Responsibilities and Expectations

I have been working at BSD for thirteen years. I am currently working at LES as the Reading Specialist, test coordinator, team leader and Response to Intervention (RtI) Cycle Review facilitator. It is my responsibility to assist teachers in assessing students, analyzing data, grouping students and selecting materials for intervention, in addition to supporting teachers to improve instruction for all students, including ELLs.

I work with students from kindergarten to fifth grade who are tested at RtI Tier III in reading in conjunction with classroom teachers, special education teachers and the ELL tutor. Discussing students' progress, needs, and concerns with the other teachers and tutor is my daily routine. During RtI Cycle Review weeks, I attend each grade level PLCs to assist teachers with the reviews. Designing the school-wide testing schedules is another major responsibility for me.

The school had several expectations for me once the teachers and the ELL tutor knew that my doctoral portfolio was concentrated on the school's ELL population. Teachers expected me to enhance their general knowledge about ELLs, broaden their view on ELL-related trends, provide them with effective strategies to better serve ELLs, and further help them with data collection/review and student placement. My principal and the school faculty were very supportive of my project and have given me the opportunities to carry out the activities documented here, such as workshops on working with ELLs, my sample lesson plans, systems for monitoring ELLs' progress by using the schedule I designed, and piloting selected supplemental materials for ELLs.

My Objectives

The objectives of my portfolio project were to identify root-cause factors for the academic achievement gap between ELLs and native English-speaking students, design improvement approaches based on my own experience and literature search for best practices in the field, and validate the approaches in a real school setting.

Ultimately I would like to see my project minimizing the academic gap as measured by standardized testing and reducing the percentage of ELLs labeled as learning disabled. I fully understand that this ultimate goal may not be achieved overnight or even in one school year; it requires a persistent effort by all educators over a long period of time. I hope my project is helping move the trend in the positive direction.

Chapter 3

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Rationale for the Improvement Strategies Chosen

Like solving any problem, identifying the root cause is the start of obtaining a fundamental solution to the problem. Thus my improvement strategies began with investigating the potential root causes of the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs, followed by a literature search on what had been done for instruction previously with respect to this subject, and then designing improvement approaches based on these analyses.

According to the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System's (DCAS) reading scores from the 2013-2014 school year, Brandywine School District (BSD) had the third largest achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in the state. ELLs in BSD were served through the BSD ELL Program. The first question I wanted to answer was "Was there anything wrong with the operational process of the ELL Program?" I decided to start my investigation of the root causes with an in-depth evaluation of the BSD ELL Program.

To determine the effectiveness of the BSD ELL program, I examined the operational process, the resources available to support ELLs, and academic instruction and progress monitoring for ELLs. Most of my investigation took place at Lombardy Elementary School (LES) since I work there and LES would be the pilot site for my improvement approaches. To find information related to the resources for ELLs at BSD, I collected data from its published newsletters, online information from BSD

and the Delaware Education Department (DOE), and from interviews and questionnaires completed by classroom teachers and ELL tutors.

From the evaluation of the operational process of the ELL Program at BSD, I concluded that the process was well designed (see details in Appendix C). There was a clear process to follow from the identification of ELL needs to defining proper support to ELL students. But then why were ELLs not doing well? Could it be related to the insufficient and ineffective instruction provided by both the ELL tutors and classroom teachers? Could they be impacted by using inappropriate curricula or teaching materials? To answer these questions, I collected additional data regarding the ELL population in Delaware and BSD, such as ELL teachers/tutors to student ratio, ELL tutors' qualifications, human resources available for ELLs compared to students with other special needs, types of instruction provided to ELLs, and descriptions of current ELL curriculum. I also conducted interviews and questionnaires with teachers and ELL tutors, focusing resources, knowledge and skills.

Decisions about Improvement Strategies Based on Data

The analyses of the data and the results of the interviews and the questionnaires revealed the following factors that might explain the academic achievement gap of ELLs: 1) educators for ELLs did not have adequate knowledge about how to provide effective instruction for ELLs, 2) educators of ELLs lacked teaching materials systematically designed to address ELLs' learning characteristics, and 3) teachers employed no on-going formative assessment and corresponding adjustment in instruction based on the assessment for ELLs.

Research

To design the improvement approaches based on the above root cause analysis, I conducted literature reviews to find out what researchers had done and practitioners demonstrated as effective in the past for teaching ELLs. I focused on vocabulary and reading comprehension instruction for upper elementary ELLs. Through my literature reviews (see details in Appendices E & F), I concluded that the following three approaches could be used: (1) instruction that combines collaborative learning and direct teaching, (2) intensive instruction in word-meaning acquisition, and (3) cognitive strategy instruction, engaging students in literacy-rich activities coupled with explicit teaching of specific literacy components. Using texts rich with American culture and history was an important component in the model I recommended.

Improvement Strategies

Based on the root cause analysis and literature reviews, I implemented the following leadership actions: I conducted professional development workshops on the topic of ELLs and how to reach and teach them; I designed sample lesson plans based on ELL's learning characteristics; I assisted with selecting reading materials for teachers and the ELL tutor to use in addition to the current material (*Oxford Picture Dictionary*); and I reinforced the process of regular academic progress monitoring assessments, and instructional adjustment based on the monitoring results for ELL students.

Policies Modified and Resources Allocated to Support the Improvements

Due to financial limitations, certain root causes, such as hiring full time certified ELL teachers, purchasing appropriate materials designed for the ELL population, or increasing the working hours of the ELL tutors from part-time to full-time, could not be addressed at this point. Therefore, my improvement plan did not

involve any major changes to the existing policies or procedures, except for strengthening the rigor of monitoring ELLs' progress and instructional adjustments based on the monitoring results for ELLs.

Having worked at LES for seven years, I have a very good professional working relationship with my colleagues. Being the school's reading specialist, I work closely with the instructional staff and know their concerns, strengths and needs. Improving instruction for ELLs is a common goal we all share; therefore, from the administrator to teachers and the ELL tutor, everyone was very supportive and open to my suggestions. There were no major additional resources needed during my portfolio project.

Chapter 4

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES RESULTS

Results of the Improvement Effort

The improvement strategies were implemented successfully in general. Thanks to the great support from the teachers, ELL tutor and principal at LES, I was able to implement all my improvement strategies.

The feedback from the two training workshops (see details in Appendix G) I conducted on working with ELL students was very positive. Thirty-four teachers attended the first workshop and 36 attended the second workshop, among whom 24 were classroom teachers, 5 were special education teachers, and the rest were specialists and support staff. I asked the attendees to fill out a short survey after the workshops and get back to me within a week. I got 29 responses as summarized below:

Table 2 Survey

Questions	Yes	No	Neutral Or N/A
Are the workshops necessary?	29	0	0
Do the workshops help you understand the ELL population better?	29	0	0
Are you willing to try different instruction for ELLs?	29	0	0
Are you willing to try a lesson with a new instructional structure next month?	11	8	10
Are you willing to do a short interview on this topic?	21	3	5

Extra comments: 16 people provided short comments.

In the comments, several teachers expressed the belief that the workshops were eye-opening. Although they knew there were now more and more ELLs, they did not know that the ELL population was growing this quickly or that ELL students did this poorly academically. Several people shared their frustration, saying that they knew it was unfair to leave their ELLs in class without providing any tailored instruction or any instruction at all sometimes, but they had no time or materials to take care of their newly arrived ELLs. The ELL tutor was able to only pull the ELLs for thirty minutes per day four times a week, which did not help the ELLs much. Others wrote that they would love to try new things, and hoped my lesson plans would help them more effectively teach their ELLs.

I interviewed all five teachers after they had experimentally implemented my lesson plans. In general, I received positive feedback on the lesson plans I designed. The teachers in particular thought the explicit instruction in vocabulary was very helpful to ELLs as well as non-ELL struggling readers. The visual support for each vocabulary word definitely assisted ELLs in grasping the meaning of the new word and helped them make connections with their previous experiences. The emphasis on cooperative learning (think-pair-share) for every lesson gave ELLs more opportunities to practice their oral English and share their thoughts. I also heard some legitimate concerns, the three main ones being: 1) no one would have the time to plan such an explicit lesson on a weekly basis; 2) it took much longer to finish a lesson than we had planned; and 3) some advanced students felt the instruction was too repetitive.

During the process of assembling the list of books as supplemental materials for ELL students, I often discussed LES' ELLs and their reading levels with the ELL

tutor. The ELL tutor felt excited about this additional information and was willing to use the books according to the order of the school activity calendar for the following school year. However, the ELL tutor asked me to plan each lesson for her as she only worked part time each day and was not paid to design lessons. Another hurdle for implementing this instruction was the fact that we only have one to three copies of most of the books on the list in LES or other elementary school libraries in the district. Thus in order to continue to implement this strategy beyond my project, more resources, such as more ELL tutor time and more books in the library, will be necessary.

With the principal and the teachers' support at LES, and the district's encouragement, I was able to design a school-wide progress monitoring schedule and have the teachers follow it throughout the year. With the data collected from the monitoring process, I worked with teachers at RtI Cycle Reviews to analyze the data, group ELLs based on their needs, and select appropriate materials for instruction. Through this process, I observed a few areas for future improvement. Sometimes the data teachers collected had nothing to do with the instruction they had just conducted. For example, a teacher provided comprehension instruction for a Tier II group but collected fluency data by using DIBELS Next. The problem was that teachers lacked aligned comprehension assessments that were needed to assess student progress. Another concern is some teachers did not want to group students based on data. A few ELLs made enough progress to be placed in a Tier I group but were not allowed to move out of their previous Tier II groups. The problem of teachers' low expectations for ELLs has been recognized for many years. ELLs are generally perceived as low achievers, unable to work on challenging material. They are exposed to much simpler

English for fear of their not understanding (Khong & Saito, 2014). It is an urgent need to make all teachers understand the importance of using assessment data to make instructional decisions at LES.

The Outcomes

Although the time for the implementation of the improvement strategies was limited and the full potential was yet to be realized, initial outcomes were positive and on the right track.

The 2014–2105 school year is the first year that newly arrived ELLs are included in the RtI process and teachers are much more alert about their ELLs' needs, their instructional options, and the need to use data to group their ELLs. In January, after two RtI cycle interventions, 32% of ELLs tested at RtI Tier III level compared to 47% in September, with 21% at the Tier II level in January compared to 25% at Tier II in September (see figure 1. below).

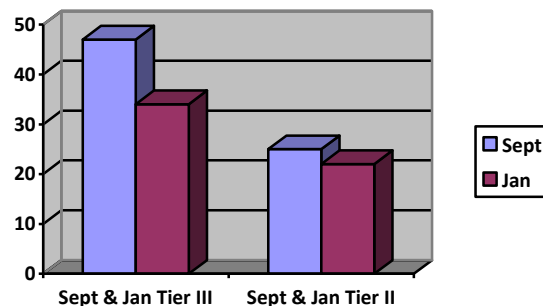


Figure 1 ELL Tier II & III Students Progress Trend

The above intervention results are trending in the right direction, but not as quickly as I expected as students should be moved to the next RtI tier after one to three

cycles. This further highlights the urgent need for improvement in the services provided for ELL education, and it shows the lengthy time and highly trained teachers/instructors needed to attain significant results. It may be unrealistic to expect ELLs in Tier II and III to make progress and eventually be dismissed from extra reading support within three RtI Cycles.

I have continued to read research on the topic of instruction strategies for ELLs. According to the literature reviews, further improvements can be made in the following areas: ELLs' needs can be addressed at multiple stages of the teacher-preparation process (Samson & Collins, 2012); we can provide instructional conversations to improve ELLs' comprehension (Goldenberg, 2013); and we can provide more high-interest and varied English language development materials for ELLs who have basic English proficiency (Khong et al., 2014). As we move forward, we will continually strive to find better ways to improve ELLs' academic achievements at LES.

Chapter 5

IMPROVEMENT EFFORT

Result of the Overall Approach

The goal of my project was to improve curriculum and instruction to better serve ELLs, and eventually to minimize the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs. Based on the previously presented evidence, I believe my overall approach for meeting the improvement goal has been successful. My conclusion is based on the following results: 1) teachers have a better understanding of ELLs in general and are more alert to their specific needs; 2) teachers embraced the lessons I designed based on ELLs' learning characteristics and came back with comments and suggestions, which are helping me plan follow-up steps; 3) ELLs are now included in the RtI intervention program and periodically monitored by following the schedule I designed; 4) the list of American culture and history related books selected based on ELLs' needs and the school's activity calendar provide additional resources for teachers and the ELL tutor; and 5) Brandywine School District (BSD) had its very first training for teachers on the topic of providing instruction to ELLs. It may be that this project contributed to the district's awareness of the needs of our ELLs.

What Worked Particularly Well

The lack of progress monitoring of ELLs and subsequent adjustment of instruction was one of the key root causes I identified for the achievement gap. I am thrilled to see that ELLs are now included in the RtI intervention program and are grouped and serviced according to their academic needs. The assessment schedule I

designed provided a structured approach teachers can follow easily. With the ongoing formative assessment data, teachers are able to provide tailored instruction and select appropriate teaching materials. The teachers and tutor have found the example lesson plans I designed and the list of books I selected based on ELLs' needs particularly helpful.

The lack of time to support ELLs is another possible cause of the achievement gap. The cognitive demands on the students are greater than non-ELLs because ELLs are learning not only the language but also the content knowledge simultaneously (Goldenberg, 2013). This means we need to devote more resources and time to this population. Since ELLs are included in the RtI intervention groups, they now receive extra reading support in a small group setting. I would like to see them receive even more support.

What Needs to Be Redesigned

My sample lesson plans need to be redesigned according to teachers' feedback. The three main concerns were that no one would have the time to plan such an explicit lesson on a weekly basis, it took much longer to finish a lesson, and some advanced students felt the instruction too repetitive. I will need to do some research to find better strategies to improve these weaknesses.

In an article I recently read, Goldenberg (2013) stated that in his study he randomly assigned a group of ELLs either to an instructional conversation group, where the teacher led discussions designed to promote better understanding or to a control group, where the teacher only used comprehension questions in the instruction. He found that the instructional conversation group produced much deeper understandings of complex concepts at the heart of stories that ELLs read than the

other group. This is a great approach and very similar to what I suggested in my lesson plan, the difference being that conversations were led by teachers instead of peers. I will research more into this approach.

All of the improvement strategies I proposed in my project have worked to varying degrees. Although some need to be modified, such as the lesson plans, and others given more time to see effects, such as the progress monitoring and adjustment in instruction, none should be dropped due to ineffectiveness.

Influence on My Improvement Goal

Teaching ELLs can be very challenging. This means we need to devote more resources and time to this population. To minimize the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs, the leadership of our current education system must appreciate the urgency of this issue and devote more resources to it. Currently BSD is focusing on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and Delaware is using the remaining funds from the Race to the Top initiative to improve overall student achievement; thus, the emphasis on improvement of ELL education has not been high on leaders or policy makers agendas. Consequently, the lack of adequate resources for ELL education is still prevalent. I hope the Delaware Education Department and BSD will not repeat what happened when Boston public schools. Boston failed to provide adequate services to their 4,000+ ELLs, which violated the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pascopella, 2011). Consequently, lack of adequate resources for ELL education is still prevalent. The Boston scenario should not be repeated in Delaware.

Although teachers who work with ELL clustered classrooms and all the ELL tutors received the SIOP training this year, BSD still does not have certified ELL

teachers, and ELL tutors still only work part time and have no other teaching materials to use except the *Oxford Picture Dictionary*. The ELL tutor at LES is not paid to provide progress monitoring assessments. The lack of time, knowledge and money also inhibits the ELL tutor from fully utilizing the list of books I prepared for ELLs.

Minimizing the academic gap between ELLs and non-ELLs will require long-term sustained effort by all educators. Although the teachers are much more aware of the ELL population and their needs because of the training I conducted, a couple of workshops is insufficient for long-term improvement. Samson & Collins (2012) argue that teachers who work with ELLs need to know ELLs' oral language development, must support academic language and must employ cultural sensitivity to the backgrounds of their ELLs. The knowledge should be provided to teachers through various means on an ongoing effort.

What to Tell Others

To people who are trying to improve the ELL academic performance at his or her school or district, I would recommend the same approach I took for my leadership portfolio project, i.e., starting with analyzing the specific root causes, learning historical best practices, then designing solutions based on the analysis and learning. I would also caution that making long-lasting, significant improvement in academic performance takes time, effort and power. Unless our education leaders and policy makers see the importance of solving this problem and provide adequate resources, it will be difficult to achieve the goal completely. Khong and Saito (2014) have looked at various problems that confront teachers who teach ELLs and found the most significant ones to be inadequate professional development, lack of tailored curriculum or materials, improper assessments, and inadequate time to service this

most disadvantaged student population. To address these problems, we will need education leaders and policy makers' support.

Next Steps

Since the improvement strategies I proposed and tested have shown encouraging results, I strongly recommend that they be continually practiced and modified with more resources allocated to ELL education. I will continue my own efforts in supporting the teachers in my school and communicating any new findings from my practice and literature search to contribute to the improvement of ELL performance at school.

Chapter 6

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Growth of My Skills as a Scholar

Being an English language learner myself, I went through countless obstacles and disappointments when I first came to the U.S. My own frightening experiences as a newcomer to a country imprinted in my brain and trigger my sympathy and understanding whenever I see similar situations. After becoming an educator and seeing young ELLs struggle through their days in school, I have the urge to help them. But due to my own limited English language ability and competency level, the thought of reaching out my hand to help young ELLs was postponed for many years.

Learning how to design a website and write effective essays in Dr. Archbald's class made me realize that I would have so much to learn in the University of Delaware's doctoral program. I did not know how to design a website or what was key to writing a powerful paper. Following that first course, I learned how to conduct different types of interviews and observations, and used Excel to organize collected data and then analyze them to draw the proper conclusions. I remember I was assigned a partner to observe customers at a coffee shop based on the instructor's guidelines. Through that activity, I learned about bias and stereotyping, which helped me tremendously in my classroom observations and evaluations. The Curriculum Theory course helped me understand the logic, history and arguments behind designing curricula and later helped me select the books for ELL tutor and teachers to use as part of my leadership portfolio project.

In my opinion, the hardest courses in the ADPO program were the four literacy courses. I struggled in the first of the four courses, the Writing Processes in Educational Settings course. That was the first time I had to write a literature review. The professor assumed we all knew how to write literature reviews, thus there were no explanations, modeling, or specific guidelines as to how to do it. I felt dumb and discouraged and was ready to quit the program. A friend of mine, who was also in the same program, heard my intention and decided to sit in the class with me just to be there to support me. I was so grateful for her support. This experience made me an even more sensitive teacher when teaching my students, as I knew a teacher's attitude and statements to a student could make or break his/her dream.

In the Program Evaluation course, I learned how to evaluate an organization, a program, and the solution to a problem. Equipped with this knowledge, I was able to evaluate BSD's ELL Program and find part of the root causes for why the ELLs had been struggling academically and why there was an achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs.

With a very nervous feeling, I registered for my last course, Critical Issues in Literacy Development. It turned out to be the best course and should have been the first of all the four literacy courses. It was in this course that I learned the history of literacy, began to understand how to do literature research, and how to write literature reviews. The professor was one of the most prepared teachers, guiding us step-by-step through the literature research process. Through this course, I read many peer reviewed journal articles and began to understand how to narrow down my search and organize my thoughts. I started to feel more and more like a scholar through this

course and gained confidence that I could fulfill my dream of becoming an EdD.

Going through the proposal process further sharpens my skills as a scholar.

While making progress towards being an educational scholar, I have noticed my English language skills, both verbal and written, have gotten better as well. I am able to better organize my thoughts in writing and give presentations more professionally. This helped me conduct my two training workshops on ELL education smoothly, and I am hopeful that the ELP project I am preparing now will be helpful to future leaders who study the topic of ELL education.

Growth of My Skills as a Problem Solver

I had taught for 5 years in Albany, New York before coming to Delaware. I noticed Delaware was far behind New York in terms of providing services to the ELL population and the ELL academic achievement. At first I thought something must be wrong with BSD's ELL Program, but I did not know how to prove it. From the Program Evaluation course, I learned skills for program evaluation, applied them to examining the ELL Program in BSD, and found that the root cause for the academic achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in BSD was not its ELL Program design. To find out the true root cause, I interviewed teachers and ELL tutors, and also conducted surveys at LES. From the result of the interviews and surveys, it is clear that the lack of knowledge for teaching ELLs, lack of a good ELL curriculum and supplemental materials, and lack of systematic progress monitoring and instructional adjustment based on monitoring results were the most significant areas for improvement. This identification of root causes of the problem laid a solid foundation for my subsequent literature search and design of improvement strategies.

Growth of My Skills as a Partner

To test and implement my improvement strategies, I needed the support of my principal, the faculty and the ELL tutor at Lombardy Elementary School (LES). I have been working at BSD for thirteen years and established great working relationship with my colleagues; however, this was no substitute for the need to explain clearly to them my analysis of the problem, the rationale for my improvement strategies, and my expectations for the outcome. I felt very fortunate that my colleagues all shared my vision and gave me their utmost support during the course of my project. I was glad to see that BSD hosted its first workshop on the topic of ELLs for all the elementary teachers who work with ELLs and the ELL tutors. I hope that this was partially the result of my contact with the district ELL program supervisor. In the process I also realized that to fundamentally solve the problem of ELL academic achievement, we would need continued effort by all educators, leaders and policy makers.

In the past five years of the ADPO program, I stumbled many times but have learned tremendously on the journey from a merely concerned teacher for ELL students to a scholar and problem solver. During this journey, I became better able to make a difference for young ELLs as they become America's future. I am glad that I took the step to enroll myself in the ADPO program. I also feel very lucky that Dr. Walpole has been guiding me with her wisdom, expertise and patience throughout this journey. I will continue the journey after graduation from the program and take what I have learned to a higher level.

REFERENCES

- Becker. H. & Goldstein. S. (2011). English language learners and special education: A resource handbook. Retrieved from <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/bilingual/>
- Calderon. M., Slavin. R. & Sanchez. M. (2011). Effective instruction for English learners. *Future of Children*, 21, 103 - 127.
- David. J. (2010). What reach says about closing the vocabulary gap. *Reading to Learn*, 67, 85 - 86.
- Goldenberg. C. (2013). Unlocking the research on English learners - What we know and don't yet know - About effective instruction. *American Educator*, July, 4 - 38.
- Khong. T. & Saito. E. (2014). Challenges confronting teachers of English language learners. *Educational Review*, 66, 210 - 225.
- McLeod S. (2010). Essential competencies for data-driven teachers. *Innovative Teachers Thought Leaders*. Retrieved from <http://www.microsoft.com/Education/ThoughtLeaders.aspx> Essential Concepts
- Robertson. K. (2014). Essential actions: 15 Research-based practices to increase EL student achievement. *HISD Multilingual Education*, Summer. 4 - 24.

Samson. J.F. & Collins. B.A. (2012). Preparing all teachers to meet the needs of English language learners - Applying research to policy and practice for teacher effectiveness. *Center for American Progress*, 1-23.

Whitsett. G. (2009). Supporting English language learners in the elementary and secondary classrooms: How to get started. *SRATE Journal*, 18, 41-47.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIO (ELP) PROPOSAL

Appendix A

Ten Artifacts for My ELP

Appendix	Artifact	Type	Audience
A	Table of the ten artifacts of the ELP	schedule	Advisor and committee members
B	White paper on improving teacher instruction techniques and curriculum to minimize the achievement gap between ELL and native-speaking students	argument	Members of ELP Committee, school administrators and faculty
C	Evaluation of elementary English language learner program at Brandywine School District	data analysis, empirical study	Members of ELP Committee, school administrator and faculty
D	Analysis of resources for English language learner program at Brandywine School District	data analysis, empirical study	Members of ELP Committee, school administrator and faculty
E	Causes to reading comprehension difficulties among native English speakers and Spanish-speaking ELLs in upper elementary and middle schools	lit review	Members of ELP Committee
F	Improving reading comprehension of upper elementary ELLs: Using texts rich with American culture and history	lit review	Members of ELP Committee
G	Workshop on the topic of understanding ELLs	lit review	School administrators and faculty
H	Design a school-wide STAR progress-monitoring schedule for teachers and monitor their implementation	workplace communication	School administrators, faculty and ELL tutor
I	Examples of lesson plans	instruction, workplace communication	School administrators and faculty

		tion	
J	Selections of teaching materials for the ELL tutor	instruction, workplace communication	School administrators, faculty and ELL tutor
K	RtI data review, grouping and instruction	data analysis, workplace communication	School administrators and faculty

Appendix B

IMPROVING TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES AND CURRICULUM TO MINIMIZE ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN ELL AND NATIVE-SPEAKING STUDENTS

Background

Imagine entering a school where everyone else speaks a language that is completely unfamiliar to you. You feel your IQ drops from 140 to 70, and you go from a once straight-A, popular student to a "dumb" person and an outcast at school. This is the reality that many ELL students have to face every day.

I will never forget the conversation I had with a 4th grade ELL student who was just identified as a student with learning disability (LD). With her almost perfect English she said that her head was "messed up" after she came to the U.S. three years ago from Bangladesh. She had trouble understanding things here. Her father told her that it was a mistake to bring her over to the U.S. She felt that she had wasted the opportunity and let her family down. The anxiety created by the language and cultural shock may be associated with great difficulty performing well academically. The feeling of anxiety is exacerbated by the ignorance of others. It is too common that ELL students are seen as inferior in other people's eyes, including their peers, teachers, and school administrators. This can lead to a lack of motivation and self-esteem. Students will not put effort into learning once they lose their confidence, self-esteem, and hope. Researchers noted that "Low self-esteem and motivation are factors that prevent them from learning their new language" (Stewart, 2010, p. 20). "Many ELL students believe that their school's priorities don't involve them. They feel, if not

invisible, unknown" (Scherer, 2009. p.7). I will use my ELP work to try to improve the social situation and academic performance of the ELLs in my school.

Lombardy Elementary School (LES) is one of the nine elementary schools in the Brandywine School District (BSD). It had 558 students enrolled in the school year 2013-2014 at six grade levels, from kindergarten to 5th grade. Students include 35 or 6.3% English language learners (ELLs) in grades K through 5. The demographic data for students at LES are presented below. The school's enrollment profile has been similar for the past three years. The ELLs are mostly from the countries of Mexico, Puerto Rico and Bangladesh. The native languages of the ELLs are shown below.

Student Characteristics

Characteristic	Percent
English Language Learner	6.3
Low Income	37.5
Special Education	11.3

Each year about 15% of these ELLs are identified as students with learning disabilities. That figure is much higher than the 3% for the non-ELL population. Among the 11.3% students with special needs, about 25% are ELLs.

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (doe.k12.de.us)

Race	Percent
African American	22.0
American Indian	0.7
Asian	5.6
Hispanic/Latino	4.8
White	62.4
Other	4.5

LES ELLs' Native Languages

Language	Number	Language	Number
Spanish	17	German	1
Bengali	5	Uzbek	1
Haiti	4	Japanese	1
Korean	2	Turkish	1
Chinese	2	English (non US)	1

There are 47 teachers at LES whose race and years of experience are shown below. There are 45 teachers who are Caucasian, one is Asian, and one is African American. Among the 30 classroom teachers, 30% have fewer than 5 years of teaching experience, 20% have more than 20 years, and the other 50% have teaching experience between 10 and 19 years. All of the 30 classroom teachers are female Caucasians except for one male and one African American. Compared with other

grade levels, the classroom teachers for grades 3-5 have fewer years of teaching experience.

Lombardy Elementary School Teacher by Race/Ethnicity (doe.k12.de.us)

Race	Percentage
African American	2.4
American Indian	0
Asian	2.4
Hispanic/Latino	0
White	95.2

Lombardy Teacher's Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Gr. K	Gr.1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5
0-5	1	0	2	3	4	1
6-10	0	1	0	1	0	2
11-15	1	2	1	0	1	2
16-20	2	1	0	0	0	0
20 above	1	1	2	1	0	0

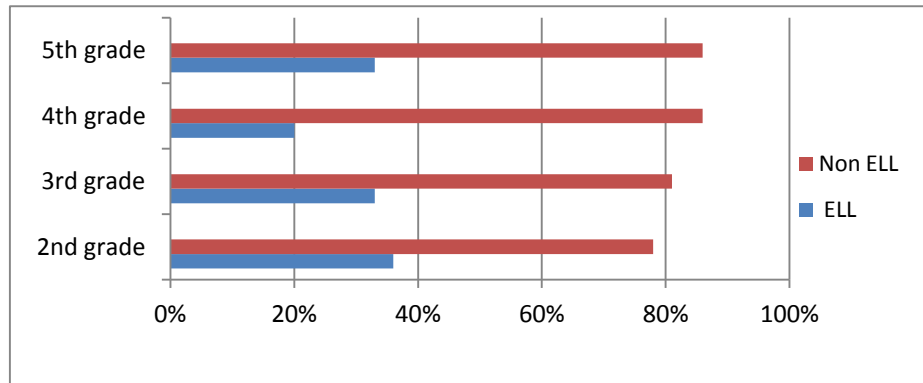
At LES, there is only one ELL tutor, who has a college degree in Art Design from Mexico. She has never attended school in the United States. Spanish is her first language. This is the third year she has been working at LES.

Problem Statement

English language learners are underperforming compared to their non-ELL peers, and the percentage of ELLs identified as students with learning disabilities is much higher than non-ELLs at Lombardy Elementary School (LES). The

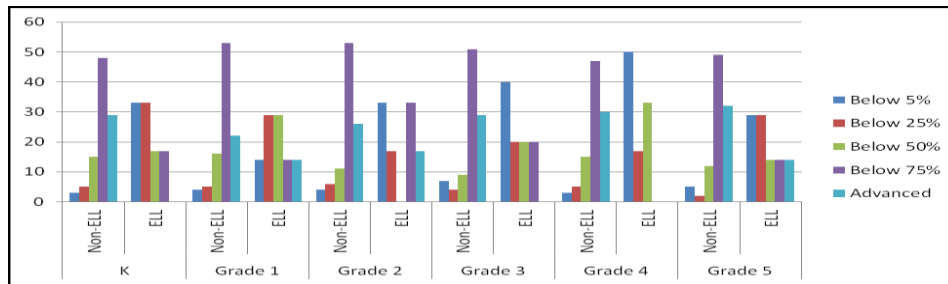
performances on Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) for ELLs and non-ELLs at LES are compared below.

Lombardy Spring DCAS Reading Proficiency Report



The achievement gap is confirmed by the school-based assessment used at BSD, called STAR—Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading. All students are required to take the STAR test three times annually. The difference in performance between non-ELL students and ELL students is clear. The distribution of non-ELL reading performance is skewed towards high proficiency levels whereas those of ELLs towards low proficiency levels. Non-ELLs have much higher median performance level than ELLs. For example, in 5th grade 50% of non-ELLs performed below 66% proficiency level while 50% of ELLs were below 19%. The large Z-scores and zero p-values confirm the significant difference between non-ELLs and ELLs in reading performance.

Comparison of Non-ELL and ELL Performance on STAR at LES



Median Performance Level Comparison Between ELL and Non-ELL

Grade	K		Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
	Non-ELL	ELL	Non-ELL	ELL	Non-ELL	ELL	Non-ELL	ELL	Non-ELL	ELL	Non-ELL	ELL
Median Performance	64%	15%	62%	31%	64%	25%	65%	15%	64%	5%	66%	19%
Z-Score	7.0877		4.3948		5.5491		7.2169		8.7762		6.7229	
p-Value	<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	

This achievement gap is not only a LES phenomenon. The ELLs at BSD and across the state of Delaware performed poorly on the DCAS for the 2013-2014 school year. The achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs among different school districts in Delaware and within BSD are shown below. The ELLs at BSD performed significantly below the non-ELLs at grades 3-5, as shown by the large Z-scores and significant p-values.

2013-2014 Reading DCAS Grade Average ELL vs. Not ELL Report (DOE, 2014)

<u>District</u>	<u>ELL % Proficiency</u>	<u>Non ELL % Proficiency</u>	<u>Achievement Gap in % Proficient</u>
Appoquinimink	44.2	83.8	-39.6
Brandywine	36.4	73.8	-37.4
Cape Henlopen	58.8	82.1	-23.3
Capital	51.2	68.3	-17.1
Christina	35.2	63.4	-32.4
Colonial	35.2	66.8	-31.6
Indian River	51.7	81.6	-29.9
Laurel	39.3	67.0	-27.7
Milford	54.4	78.3	-23.9
Red Clay	27.6	74.2	-46.6
Seaford	30.8	62.8	-32.0
Woodbridge	35.1	64.1	-29.0

<u>BSD DCAS Reading Achievement Gap for Grades 3-5 in Reading</u>					
<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>ELL</u>	<u>Non-ELL</u>	<u>Achievement Gap</u>	<u>Z-Score</u>	<u>p-Value</u>
3	36.44	73.01	36.57	5.2539	<.001
4	34.89	75.46	40.57	5.6854	<.001
5	33.55	78.07	44.52	6.2678	<.001
Average	34.96	75.51	40.55	5.8337	<.001

Process Evaluation

The reasons for the achievement gap may be many. Based on my study and personal experience, I believe the three main reasons include 1) insufficient knowledge and training of ELL educators, 2) lack of instructional techniques suitable for ELLs, and 3) no systematic curriculum for ELL students.

Since I started working at BSD twelve years ago, there have been no workshops or training sessions provided to teachers on the topic of working with ELLs. Teachers at LES often feel frustrated and do not know what to do with their ELLs—especially those ELLs who can read fairly fluently but have limited comprehension.

Since there are no certified ELL teachers working with ELLs, BSD uses an immersion system augmented by tutoring to serve ELLs. Each school is assigned a part-time ELL tutor. There have been sixteen tutors serving the ELL population in the past five years at BSD. Most of the sixteen tutors speak English as their second language (Appendix B). Since many of the ELL tutors did not attend US schools, they have limited experience with the organization and goals of US schools. With limited language proficiency and knowledge of the public school system, the tutors themselves face tremendous challenges. In addition, the ELL tutors are not paid to attend any workshops and trainings for teachers, or regular grade-level PLCs provided by the district (see details in Appendix D). Without background knowledge of American schools or evidence-based reading instruction, it would be naive to expect high-quality instruction in these tutoring sessions.

All too often, people assume that any English-speaking teacher can teach ELL students. But simply knowing the target language is not enough. Professional organizations as well as state licensure agencies recognize that teachers need specialized competencies to work effectively with ELL students. Children will not perform well when they lack confidence in their own abilities. Self-efficacy is a cognitive construct that represents individuals' beliefs and personal judgments about their ability to perform at a certain level and affects choice of activities, effort, and

performance (Zimmerman, 1989). This can eventually lead to the ELLs being identified as students with an LD.

In Krashen's 2009 *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*, he says that ELLs possess distinctive second language development needs and come to the mainstream classroom with myriad cultural differences and experiences. Therefore, instruction must be aimed at both language development and content development. Sheltered instruction is one method that accomplishes that goal. Sheltered Instruction is an approach to teaching content to ELLs in strategic ways that make the subject matter comprehensible while promoting the students' English language development. For example, anticipation guides are one of several sheltered instruction strategies which enable students to make predictions and use their background knowledge related to topics in class. It is advantageous to ensure that selected items for an anticipation guide make content concepts explicit. To provide sheltered instruction, teachers must know their ELLs and their language proficiency levels.

As teachers face increasing pressure from state and local accountability policies to improve student achievement, the use of data has become more and more central to how educators evaluate their practices and monitor students' academic progress. At LES, teachers are required to use student achievement data to support instructional decision making. These decisions include, but are not limited to, how to adapt lessons or assignments in response to students' needs; how to alter classroom goals or objectives; and how to modify student-grouping arrangements.

LES has been implementing Response to Intervention (RtI) for the past four years. RtI in Delaware comprises three tiers of intervention. The first tier, or Tier I

instruction, consists of the core curriculum and is provided to all students. If students fail to respond to Tier I instruction—meaning they fail to meet benchmark assessment goals—they are eligible to receive Tier II instruction based on their needs. Tier III is the most intense level of intervention on the continuum of pyramid options. At Tier III, the goal is remediation of existing academic, social, or emotional problems and prevention of more severe decline. Chronic non-responders to Tier I instruction and Tier II support are candidates for these Tier 3 intensive interventions (DOE, 2010).

With differentiated instruction based on varying student needs, students in Tier II and III are expected to be dismissed from extra reading support if they are responsive to the individualized instruction within one to three RtI Cycles. Each RtI Cycle lasts six weeks and student progress data is reviewed at RtI Cycle Review Meetings.

Students at LES take the STAR three times annually to monitor their progress and needs, while students who receive Tier III or Tier II extra reading support take STAR Assessment biweekly. Students who perform below the 25th percentile on the STAR Reading or STAR Early Literacy Test in the Fall receive RtI Tier III extra reading support, and students who perform below the 40 percentile receive RtI Tier II support. Although required by the district's RTI protocol, due to limited time and understanding of the importance of data-driven instruction, only 30% of the teachers periodically monitor their ELLs' progress by using STAR Reading. Some teachers implement the STAR Reading progress monitoring assessment twice a week right before the end of the RTI cycle just to have data for the RTI Reviews.

ELLs are not included in RtI in the same way that native speakers are. The quality of services the ELLs receive is uncontrolled. ELLs typically do not receive

support in addition to that provided by the ELL tutor. The ELL tutor uses the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) TM twice a year, September and May, to screen the ELLs' eligibility for receiving ELL services and their English proficiency level, which is supposed to assist her with identification and placement of ELLs. WIDA ACCESS tests have six reading proficiency levels, but due to her limited working hours each week and the complexity of scheduling, the ELL tutor usually groups her ELLs by grade level despite the students' reading ability. Since each school only has one reading specialist, there normally is no space for ELLs to receive "double dipping" services.

Another important root cause for the poor performance of ELLs may be the dearth of well-designed curricula and teaching materials. ELL tutors spend most of their instructional time working on math drills, spelling words, or doing picture word matching games when pulling students out for ELL service. To provide reading services to ELLs in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade, the tutors use *Oxford Picture Dictionary Content Areas for Kids*, the only reading material purchased by BSD for ELLs. *Oxford Picture Dictionary* is a language development program that uses illustrations to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and academic language success. Krashen (2009) asserts that ELLs need to experience new language in a context-rich, authentic environment, and that teachers must create a welcoming environment in which learners feel comfortable trying out new vocabulary and language structures without fear of embarrassment or criticism. The program seems unsuited for those goals.

Appended Artifacts

At the beginning of my Ed. D. journey, I set out to explore the causes of the wide achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs and the reasons that so many ELLs were being identified as LD at LES. My goal then became investigating ways to reduce the achievement gap and the number of ELLs being identified as LD at LES. Since I did not know what the exact causes were, I started by analyzing the ELL Program at BSD and LES.

In the courses EDUC850 and EDUC863, I did research on the ELL Program at BSD to identify potential causes for the problems we were experiencing and to identify areas that needed to be improved. Through construction of a Logic Model in EDUC 863, I realized that the operational processes are quite efficient and reasonable. ELLs are identified through a Home Language Survey and the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test, a screening tool that is administered shortly after registration in a BSD school. This entry test determines eligibility and English Language Proficiency Levels (1-6), for each new ELL student. In the overall process, students who are eligible to receive ELL services work with the school's ELL tutor daily as well as with their homeroom teacher either individually or in a small group setting based on their needs and proficiency level. Students are given the ACCESS Test again in the Spring to decide about continuation of ELL service. According to the information on the WIDA World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment's website and the BSD's ELL program supervisor, it takes about three to four years for an entry-level ELL to exit the program.

I conducted further research on ELL tutors and the ELL curriculum in EDUC 850. I found out that BSD only purchased one ELL curriculum, *Oxford Picture Dictionary*, for ELL tutors to use for their ELLs from Kindergarten to 5th grade. This

two-volume curriculum is a language development program that uses illustrations to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and academic language success. I also learned that BSD was the only public school district in Delaware that lacks certified ELL teachers. To find out more details about the causes of weak achievement for ELLs, I conducted interviews and designed a questionnaire. I interviewed two ELL tutors, one from LES and one from Claymont Elementary School, who had the highest ELL percentages in the district, as well as two classroom teachers at LES. My questions were focused on the curriculum, instruction, and services provided to the ELLs, as well as the trainings received by tutors. All four interviewees were asked identical questions. A Likert-type scale was used to measure teachers' attitudes and behaviors. The scale allowed me to uncover degrees of opinion, and having a range of responses helped me more easily identify areas for improvement. The classroom teacher questionnaire had nine questions, focusing on the ELL progress monitoring process and the effectiveness of the ELL program according to the Star Assessment.

From the result of the interviews and the answers from the questionnaire, it is clear that knowledge about instruction for ELLs and the ELL curriculum are the most significant areas for improvement. These areas have the lowest Likert score (1.3) and 100% of the respondents either strongly disagree (75%) or disagree (25%) that they have a good ELL curriculum or supplemental materials. On the other end of the spectrum, the highest Likert score (4.3) indicates that the majority of the participants (80%) think that it is important to progress monitor ELL's academic progress periodically. However, there is a varying degree of implementation of the progress monitoring—only 30% of the teachers agree/strongly agree that they progress monitor

periodically, and only 30% say they provide instruction based on the progress monitoring data.

In order to investigate ways to help teachers understand ELLs and provide differentiated instruction, I did two literature reviews—one in EDUC 816 and the other in EDUC 822. In EDUC 816, I reviewed twenty empirical articles comparing ELLs and native English speakers in upper elementary and middle schools. The review revealed the unique characteristics and reading difficulties that ELLs, especially Spanish-speaking ELLs, exhibit in the development of reading comprehension skills (see details in Appendices E & F). The goal of my literature review was to determine what research had been done previously in the field related to my area of interest. I learned that most ELLs of different language backgrounds exhibit similar characteristics during the transition period and in the process of learning English. I focused on Spanish-speaking ELLs because among the nearly 11 million school-age ELLs, over 77% speak Spanish as their first language. Delaware's ELL student demographics closely mirror the nation's. The largest ELL populations in the K-12 schools are Spanish-speakers, at 78% according to the Delaware 2009 ELL Report. Both BSD and LES have similar proportions among their ELL population, with majority Spanish-speaking ELLs.

Teachers who don't understand their ELL students' background may unintentionally marginalize them, which may then lead to low self-esteem and disrespect for their heritages. The curriculum used in America's public schools is largely Eurocentric and has a distinctive American style (Miller & Endo, 2004). When ELL students enter schools here, they may be unfamiliar with our curriculum, teaching style, and learning environment. Lacking background knowledge, ELLs are

unable to draw on their own experiences to complete assignments, which may compound their language difficulties.

My literature review revealed many strategies for working with ELLs, such as providing explicit instruction in word study and word meanings and how to derive the meanings of unknown words (Conner, 2011). Since the majority of English words have been created through the combination of morphemic elements—that is, prefixes and suffixes with base words and word roots (Baumann, 2009)—systematically teaching the meaning of prefixes, suffixes, and root words is necessary. Poor readers may experience vocabulary growth much more quickly if they understand how this combinatorial process works (Baumann, 2009). Since increasing ELLs' vocabulary is vital to their reading comprehension, particularly of abstract and academic words, this type of instruction is essential (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2010).

Reading comprehension is the process of drawing meaning from texts that consist of three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity (Connor, 2011). It involves a broad range of text types at a high level. Text reading comprehension draws on many different language skills, including word reading efficiency, vocabulary knowledge, sentence-level skills (including knowledge of grammatical structures), and higher-level text processing skills such as inference generation and comprehension monitoring (Lipka & Siegel, 2012). Such skills are challenging for many students and are a persistent difficulty for the ELL population.

To further understand how to teach vocabulary and improve reading comprehension of ELLs in the upper elementary students, my second literature review, which I did in EDUC 822, focused on how to improve the reading comprehension of upper elementary ELLs by using texts rich with American culture and history.

Children in the upper elementary grades must be able to strategically comprehend increasingly sophisticated texts. Yet oftentimes ELLs who are able to quickly develop sufficient word recognition still struggle with comprehension. Among the explanations, inadequate vocabulary and lack of background knowledge in culture and history are two significant barriers. Lacking background knowledge of American culture and history may hinder the reading comprehension of ELLs at the elementary level where the curriculum is heavily dependent on such information. The purpose of that review was to review existing research on vocabulary and reading comprehension instruction for upper elementary ELLs, and to recommend an approach to strengthen ELLs' reading comprehension by incorporating texts rich with American culture and history.

What programs can better meet ELLs needs for improving comprehension? And what are some particular instructional strategies teachers can use to minimize the achievement gap? With these two questions in mind, my literature review was focused on finding successfully implemented ELL programs so that I could begin to tailor new instructional strategies.

Existing research helped me understand that there are three commonly recommended instructional approaches for working with ELLs, which are 1) instruction that combines collaborative learning with direct teaching, 2) intensive instruction in word meanings, and 3) cognitive strategy instruction, which includes engaging students in literacy-rich activities coupled with explicit teaching of specific literacy components. The findings of the studies reveal that increased opportunities for speaking in the classroom could contribute to reading comprehension of ELLs by building students' oral language skills through meaningful communication and

practice (O'Day, 2009). Explicit instruction, which includes modeling, telling, and comparing, is highly effective when combined with vocabulary and comprehension lessons. ELLs who struggle with reading comprehension often have a limited vocabulary (Yildirim, Yildiz & Ateş, 2011). Even proficient readers face the challenge that the English vocabulary they possess is only a fraction of that of native speakers, and the failure to understand even a few words in a text can have severe negative effects on comprehension. The studies also recommend using meaningful literature combined with a collaborative learning approach and explicit instruction.

I also learned that it is imperative for older ELLs who come to the U.S. with their own culture and background knowledge to make connections with their prior knowledge when introducing the new information. Background knowledge is an individual's previously acquired knowledge, also called schemata (Zhang, 2008). New knowledge is best learned and retained when it can be linked to existing "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzale, 1990). Schema theory highlights reader problems related to absent (often culture-specific) schemata, as well as non-activation of schemata (Zhang, 2008). Therefore, based on ELLs' unique situation, new knowledge should be built on the basis of what is already known.

Learning a language is not only learning the linguistics, but also the associated culture and history (Clayton, 2009). Learning to read for meaning relies on understanding the references in the text being read. However, frequently, when students are behind their peers in reading, as is often the case for ELLs, their remedial programs emphasize isolated vocabulary instruction. They are not exposed to authentic texts or challenged to think critically or inferentially about stories. This may be what happens with the ELLs at LES. According to my semi-structured interview

and several informal lesson observations, the ELL tutor spends most of her time working on spelling words and picture word matching activities.

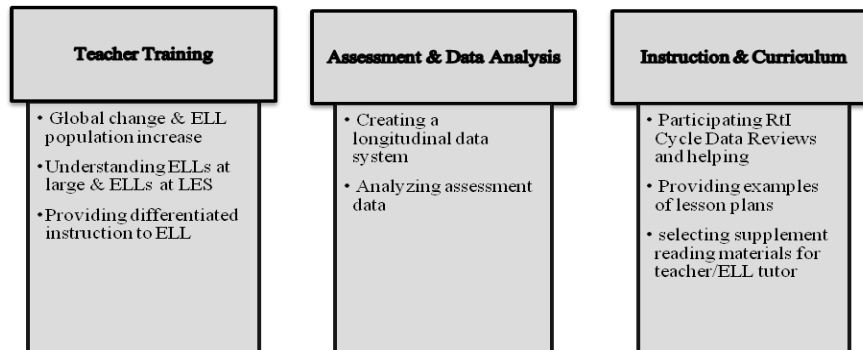
Project Proposal

Based on my analysis and prior research, I believe ongoing teacher training in second language acquisition, cultural awareness, and sheltered instruction for ELLs are essential for all staff members who implement ELL reading instruction. ELLs are capable of high academic achievement when provided with qualified teachers, appropriate learning environments, and the proper materials. To complete my Ed. D. research on how to decrease the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL at LES, I have designed the following action plan.

Action Plan

The actions are grouped into three areas: Teacher Training, Assessment and Data Analysis & Instruction & Curriculum. The following graphics illustrate the grouping of actions and the schedule, aimed at completion by the end of March 2015. A more detailed description of each action follows.

Graphic illustration of actions



Action plan schedule

	Actions	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Teacher Training	Provide workshop for teachers and ELL tutor on Global change and ELL population increase							
	Provide workshop for teachers and ELL tutor on understand ELLs at large and ELLs at Lombardy E.S							
	Provide workshop for teachers and ELL tutor on differentiated instructions for ELLs							
Assessment & Data Analysis	Design schedule & monitor progress - STAR & DIBELS							
	Create a longitudinal data system							
Instruction & Curriculum	Review data with teachers at RtI Cycle Reviews and assist them with grouping and instruction							
	Provide examples of lesson plans							
	Select supplement reading materials for teachers and ELL tutor							

For Teacher Training

Action 1: Design trainings on the topic of understanding ELLs and present them at

either faculty meetings or grade level PLCs. The specific training focus will be on: global change and ELL population increase; understand ELLs at large and ELLs at Lombardy E.S.; and providing effective instruction for ELLs.

- a) Discuss my presentation plan with LES's principal about and finalize the dates for presentation – at least two 30 minute sessions at faculty meetings or PLCs
- b) Read more articles on the topic and design a PowerPoint presentation
- c) Present the presentation to teachers at faculty meetings or a PD day

Evidence to collect: copy of the PowerPoint presentation and the documentation from embedded activities during the presentation and collect a short evaluation.

For Instruction

Action 2: Design a Star Progress Monitoring Schedule for teachers to follow and work with the school administrations to make sure teachers are following the schedule

Action 3: Review data for first and second cycles with teachers at RtI Cycle Reviews and assist them with grouping and instruction

- a) Attend RtI Cycle Review meetings and analyze assessment data with teachers
- b) Assist with grouping ELLs and recommending instruction

Evidence to collect: Record of RtI Cycle Review meeting minutes

Action 4: Design a unit of five lessons using text rich in American culture and history and present it at grade level PLCs

- a) Meet with teachers to plan the lesson implementation schedule, 20 minutes per day.
- b) Use approaches recommended by the authors from my literature reviews by following the three strategies:
 - 1) instruction that combines collaborative learning and direct teaching,
 - 2) intensive instruction in word meaning acquisition, and

- 3) cognitive strategy instruction, which includes engaging students in literacy- rich activities coupled with explicit teaching of specific literacy components. Specific strategies for grades K-1, 2-3 and 4-5
- c) Choose texts and design plans
- d) Present the lesson plans at grade level PLCs

Evidence to collect: lesson plans and student work that relates to the lessons

For Curriculum and Teaching Materials

Action 5: Aassist the ELL tutor in choosing reading materials for teaching in addition to the Oxford Picture Dictionary Program and demonstrate a lesson

- a) Find information about the ELLs in the upper grade levels from the ELL tutor
- b) Choose reading materials based on the needs, their interest and reading levels
- c) Design and demonstrate a lesson for the ELL tutor
- d) Discuss future lesson plans with the ELL tutor

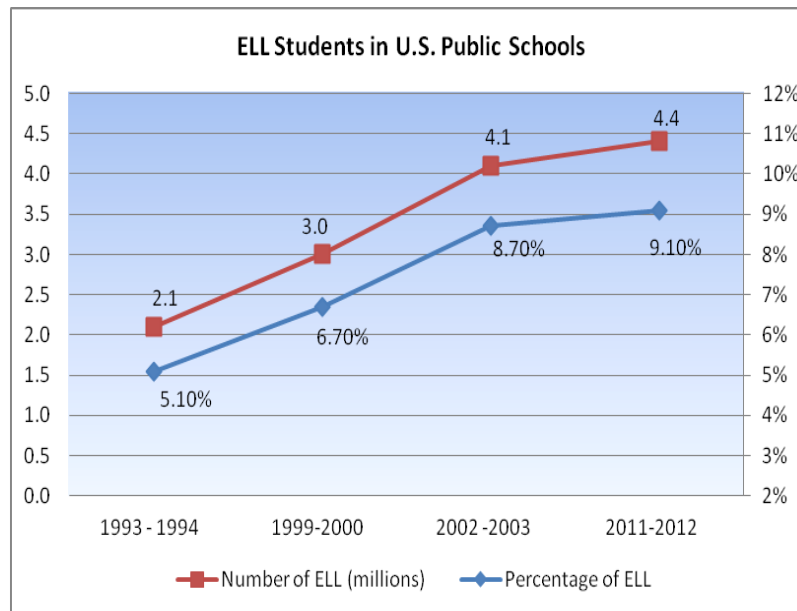
Evidence to collect: list of reading materials and reading skills and strategies for the ELL tutor to work on for the ELLs

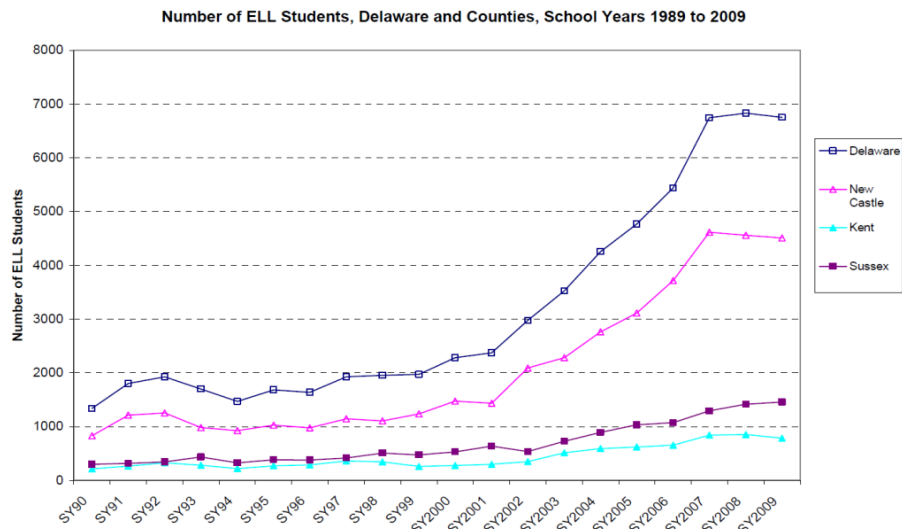
Appendix C

EVALUATION OF ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAM AT BRANDYWINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduction

America's public schools currently enroll about 5 million English language learners (ELLs) – twice the number from just 15 years ago, and that figure is expected to double again by 2015 (Migration Institute, 2010). Delaware's ELL population follows the national trend (DOE, 2012).

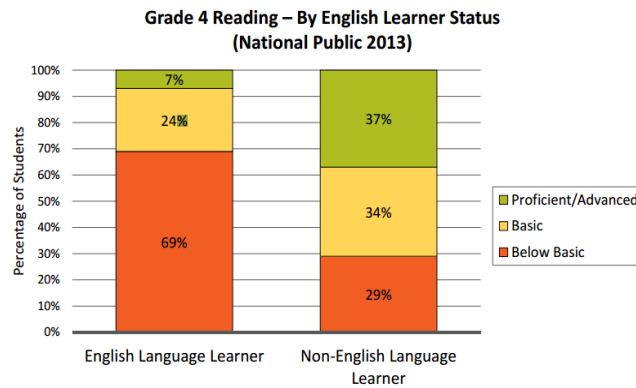




Among the three counties, New Castle has the largest gain, from under 1000 from 1990 to 4500 ten years later. BSD is one of six public school districts in the county.

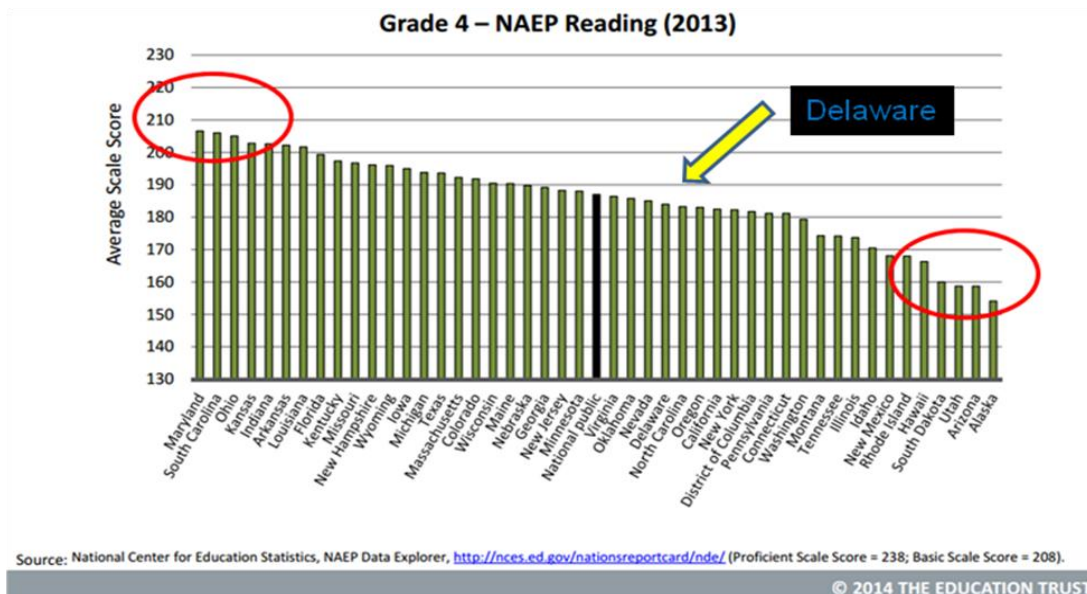
ELLs have not been doing well academically in school, underperforming compared to their native-English speaking peers across the country. There is a significant achievement gap between ELLs and the native-English speaking student population. As an example, illustrated below is how 4th grade ELLs in the nation performed on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Test in comparison with the non-ELLs.

4th Grade Reading: Nationwide, English learners over twice as likely to show below basic skills



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Data Explorer, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/>.

ELLs from Delaware performed worse than the average of ELLs in the country. According to 2013 NAEP report, in Delaware, 4% of fourth-grade English language learners performed at or above proficient in reading. That number was 7% nationally (DOE, 2013).



Based on the 2013-2014 school year DCAS Report for 3rd and 5th grade reading, ELLs, for which separate scores are tracked, had the lowest average scores among all groups.

2014 Delaware DCAS 3rd and 5th Grade Reading Percent Proficiency (DOE, 2014)

<u>Grade</u>	<u>ELL</u>	<u>Non ELL</u>	<u>Low SES</u>	<u>Non Low SES</u>	<u>SWD</u>	<u>Non SWD</u>
3	36.44	75.46	64.31	87.36	36.94	79.24
5	33.55	78.07	68.14	88.72	35.16	83.45

Brandywine School District

Brandywine School District is the third largest public school district of the nineteen public school districts in Delaware. BSD has nine elementary, three middle, and three high schools. The district had 10,802 students in the school year of 2013-2014, and among them, there are 427 or 4% English language learners (ELL). The demographics of the student enrollment is provided below.

According to the report of the DCAS Reading scores from the 2013-2014 school year, Brandywine School District had the third largest achievement gap between ELL and Non ELLs in the state. ELLs from BSD performed statistically the same as the average of other ELLs in the state, as indicated by the low Z-scores and p-values larger than 0.05, while native English-speaking students at BSD did better than most other public school districts. More details within BSD on the performance gaps between ELLs and non-ELLs, as proven by the large Z-scores and significant p-values, are provided.

2013-2014 School Year Brandywine School District Enrollment

BRANDYWINE DISTRICT FALL ENROLLMENT (SCHOOL YEAR 2013-2014)

Fall Student Enrollment																					
Grade	Students	Male		Female		African American		American Indian		Asian American		Hawaiian		Hispanic		White		Multi Racial		ELL	
	#	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Pre-Kindergarten	157	110	70.1	47	29.9	42	26.8	10	6.4	9	5.7	0	0.0	6	3.8	88	56.1	2	1.3	0	0.0
Kindergarten	860	479	55.7	381	44.3	265	30.8	10	1.2	58	6.7	1	0.1	57	6.6	426	49.5	43	5.0	108	12.6
Grade 1	830	432	52.0	398	48.0	263	31.7	12	1.4	52	6.3	1	0.1	57	6.9	421	50.7	24	2.9	103	12.4
Grade 2	856	430	50.2	426	49.8	288	33.6	6	0.7	55	6.4	0	0.0	58	6.8	431	50.4	18	2.1	63	7.4
Grade 3	869	441	50.7	428	49.3	305	35.1	3	0.3	61	7.0	0	0.0	64	7.4	415	47.8	21	2.4	41	4.7
Grade 4	841	420	49.9	421	50.1	303	36.0	3	0.4	57	6.8	1	0.1	59	7.0	401	47.7	17	2.0	23	2.7
Grade 5	817	435	53.2	382	46.8	296	36.2	1	0.1	49	6.0	0	0.0	46	5.6	412	50.4	13	1.6	6	0.7
Grade 6	801	415	51.8	386	48.2	319	39.8	2	0.2	50	6.2	0	0.0	42	5.2	375	46.8	13	1.6	7	0.9
Grade 7	870	426	49.0	444	51.0	332	38.2	1	0.1	56	6.4	0	0.0	42	4.8	429	49.3	10	1.1	20	2.3
Grade 8	865	419	48.4	446	51.6	353	40.8	1	0.1	50	5.8	2	0.2	27	3.1	419	48.4	13	1.5	11	1.3
Grade 9	900	470	52.2	430	47.8	395	43.9	1	0.1	37	4.1	0	0.0	40	4.4	416	46.2	11	1.2	16	1.8
Grade 10	756	374	49.5	382	50.5	288	38.1	1	0.1	40	5.3	0	0.0	31	4.1	387	51.2	9	1.2	16	2.1
Grade 11	697	331	47.5	366	52.5	239	34.3	1	0.1	35	5.0	0	0.0	22	3.2	391	56.1	9	1.3	4	0.6
Grade 12	683	333	48.8	350	51.2	259	37.9	1	0.1	34	5.0	0	0.0	25	3.7	358	52.4	6	0.9	9	1.3
Total	10,802	5,515	51.1	5,287	48.9	3,947	36.5	53	0.5	643	6.0	5	0.0	576	5.3	5,369	49.7	209	1.9	427	4.0

2013-2014 Reading DCAS ELL vs. Not ELL Report (DOE, 2014)

<u>District</u>	<u>ELL % Proficiency</u>	<u>Non ELL % Proficiency</u>	<u>Achievement Gap in % Proficient</u>
Appoquinimink	44.2	83.8	-39.6
Brandywine	36.4	73.8	-37.4
Cape Henlopen	58.8	82.1	-23.3
Capital	51.2	68.3	-17.1
Christina	35.2	63.4	-32.4
Colonial	35.2	66.8	-31.6
Indian River	51.7	81.6	-29.9
Laurel	39.3	67.0	-27.7
Milford	54.4	78.3	-23.9
Red Clay	27.6	74.2	-46.6
Seaford	30.8	62.8	-32.0
Woodbridge	35.1	64.1	-29.0

DCAS Statewide Achievement Gap - All Grades Combined (DOE, 2014)

<u>Description</u>	<u>ELL % Proficiency</u>	<u>Non ELL % Proficiency</u>	<u>Achievement Gap</u>
Statewide	36.8	73.4	36.6
Brandywine	36.4	73.8	37.4
Z-Score	0.1469	0.1602	0
p-Value	0.88076	0.87288	<.001

BSD DCAS Reading Achievement Gap for Grades 3-5 in Reading

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>ELL</u>	<u>Non-ELL</u>	<u>Achievement Gap</u>	<u>Z-Score</u>	<u>p-Value</u>
3	36.44	73.01	36.57	5.2539	<.001
4	34.89	75.46	40.57	5.6854	<.001
5	33.55	78.07	44.52	6.2678	<.001
Average	34.96	75.51	40.55	5.8337	<.001

Improving the academic performance of ELLs is an urgent need for this country. As part of my graduate study at the University of Delaware, I evaluated the current ELL program at the BSD, including its operational process, resources for supporting ELLs and an in-depth study at Lombardy Elementary School, and reviewed literature for research on instructional techniques to improve the methodology for teaching ELLs.

Evaluation of ELL Program at BSD

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the current ELL program at BSD by examining the operational processes, the resources available to support ELLs, and the academic progress monitoring for ELLs.

ELL Operational Process at BSD

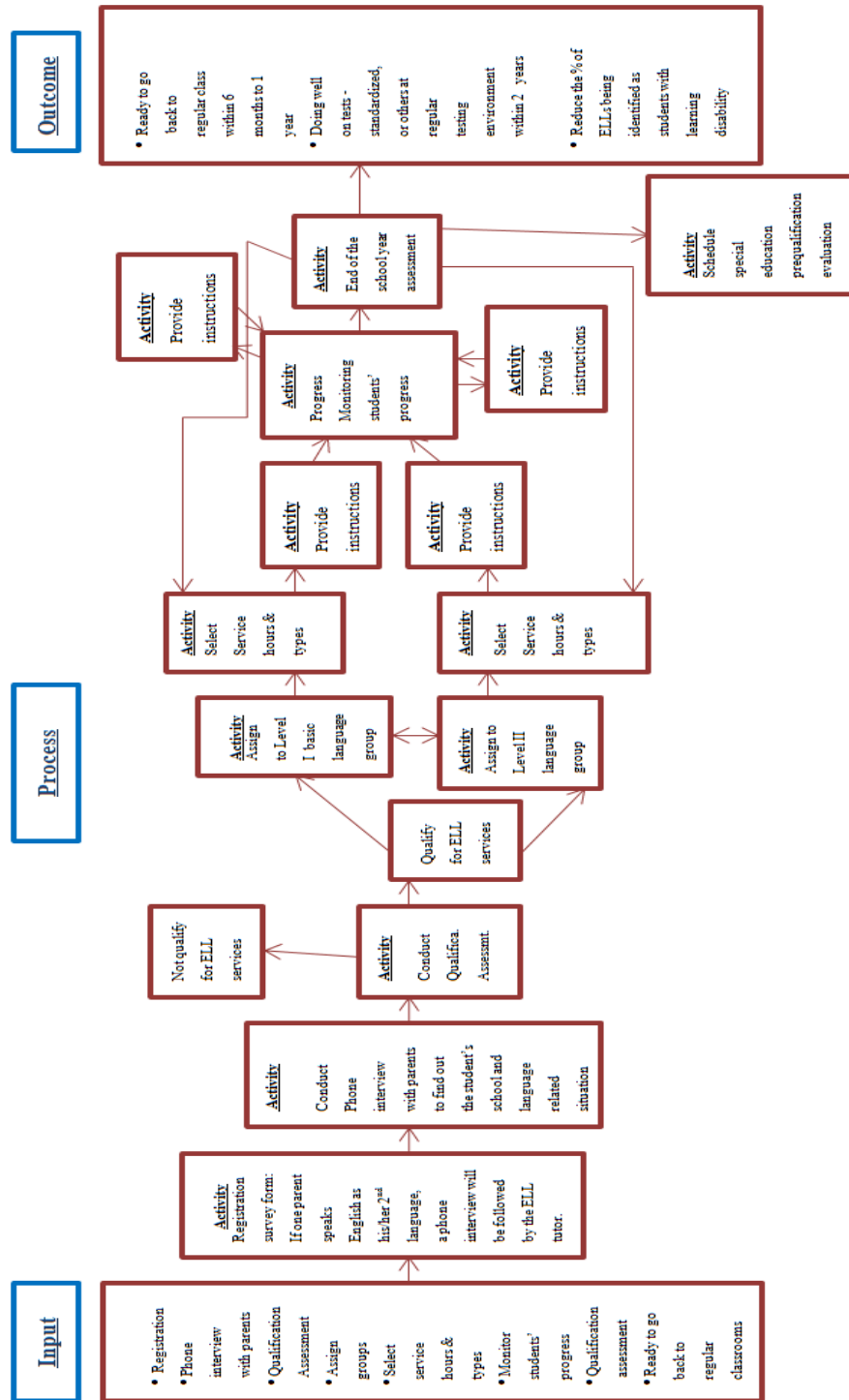
In order to provide immediate and appropriate services to ELLs, BSD has established an operational process/procedure for ELLs, their parents and teachers to follow. In this process, students who are eligible to receive ELL services work with the school's ELL tutor daily as well as with their homeroom teacher either individually or in a small-group setting based on their needs. Students are monitored for their

academic progress periodically to guide teachers' instruction. At the end of each school year, the ELL tutor administers the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State test (ACCESS) for English Language Learners to determine whether the students are ready to exit the ELL Program, need to stay in the program for another year, or receive further evaluation for services such as speech or special education. A graphic depiction of the operation process is presented in the Logic Model below.

Conclusions from the analysis of BSD's ELL program operation process were encouraging. ELLs are identified through a Home Language Survey and the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) TM which is a screening tool that is administered shortly after registration in BSD. This entry test determines eligibility and English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels for each new ELL. The ELL program is an immersion in English, with tutor support. Each school is assigned an ELL tutor to work with ELLs within the building. Tutors work with ELLs throughout the school year to meet their academic needs. It is clear that BSD has a well-designed ELL program operational process.

If the ELL operational process at BSD seems to be well designed, then why are ELLs not doing well? To answer this question, I needed to change my research direction.

BSD ELL Program Operation Process



Conclusion and Recommendation

From the evaluation results I learned that the operational process for the ELL Program at BSD functions well. Students who are identified as ELLs are able to receive immediate support from their school's ELL tutor and classroom teacher. However, according to interviews I conducted, after receiving one year of service, only 10% of ELLs were able to exit the ELL program upon passing Level 4 of English language proficiency on the ACCESS test, an English language proficiency assessment given to Kindergarten through 12th grade ELLs. According to the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) (WIDA Consortium, 2014), most ELLs who mastered Level 4 on the ACCESS test should be able to graduate from the ELL program within one year.

Could this result be influenced by the insufficient and ineffective instruction provided by both the ELL tutors and classroom teachers, because they had limited knowledge about how to work with ELLs and insufficient training on providing differentiated instruction to this population? Could this result be impacted by the lack of reading materials to use? Was this why ELLs at Lombardy Elementary School struggled to make expected progress, which led to the achievement gap and large number of them being identified as students with LD?

Definitions for the Levels of English Language Proficiency
(The WIDA Consortium, 2014)

6-Reaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specialized or technical language reflective of the content area at grade level • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level • oral or written communication in English comparable to proficient English peers
5-Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specialized or technical language of the content areas • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports • oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade-level material
4-Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specialized or some technical language of the content area • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs • oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
3-Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general and some specific language of the content areas • expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative, or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
2-Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general language related to the content areas • phrases or short sentences • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
1-Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas • words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice, or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support • oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statement with sensory, graphic or interactive support

Based on the findings from this research project, the following action is recommended: conduct research on knowledge and skills of educators who provide instructions to ELLs at Brandywine School District.

Appendix D

ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAM AT BRANDYWINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

ELL Resources at Brandywine School District Data Collection Method

To find out information that relates to the resources for ELL at BSD, I collected data from its old newsletters, online information from BSD, the Delaware Education Department (DOE), interviews and questionnaires. The collected data is about the ELL population in Delaware and BSD, ELL teacher/ tutor and student ratio, ELL tutors' profiles at BSD, human resources available for ELLs compared to students with special needs, data from interviews and questionnaires, and data about ELL curriculum.

In the 2011-2012 school year (DOE, 2012), the State of Delaware had nineteen public school districts with a total of 133,369 students, of which 8057 were English language learners. Brandywine School District (BSD) is the third largest school district in terms of student enrollment with 10,852 students, of which 499 were ELLs

Grade	Students	Male		Female		African American		American Indian		Asian American		Hawaiian		Hispanic		White		Multi Racial		ELL		Low Income		Special Ed	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Pre-Kindergarten	160	107	66.9	53	33.1	33	20.6	38	23.8	5	3.1	0	0.0	5	3.1	76	47.5	3	1.9	0	0.0	159	99.4	159	99.4
Kindergarten	780	427	54.7	353	45.3	228	29.2	16	2.1	51	6.5	1	0.1	45	5.8	414	53.1	25	3.2	95	12.2	382	49.0	77	9.9
Grade 1	858	432	50.3	426	49.7	283	33.0	6	0.7	54	6.3	0	0.0	60	7.0	437	50.9	18	2.1	114	13.3	431	50.2	58	6.8
Grade 2	882	465	52.7	417	47.3	314	35.6	2	0.2	63	7.1	0	0.0	65	7.4	422	47.8	16	1.8	68	7.7	447	50.7	82	9.3
Grade 3	836	419	50.1	417	49.9	281	33.6	5	0.6	59	7.1	1	0.1	61	7.3	414	49.5	15	1.8	58	6.9	414	49.5	103	12.3
Grade 4	819	444	54.2	375	45.8	284	34.7	1	0.1	54	6.6	0	0.0	45	5.5	424	51.8	11	1.3	31	3.8	408	49.8	111	13.6
Grade 5	780	396	50.8	384	49.2	287	36.8	0	0.0	51	6.5	0	0.0	47	6.0	384	49.2	11	1.4	19	2.4	385	49.4	124	15.9
Grade 6	847	412	48.6	435	51.4	332	39.2	1	0.1	58	6.8	0	0.0	41	4.8	407	48.1	8	0.9	23	2.7	421	49.7	131	15.5
Grade 7	880	430	48.9	450	51.1	355	40.3	1	0.1	49	5.6	1	0.1	30	3.4	431	49.0	13	1.5	14	1.6	435	49.4	108	12.3
Grade 8	845	445	52.7	400	47.3	340	40.2	0	0.0	43	5.1	0	0.0	34	4.0	423	50.1	5	0.6	17	2.0	402	47.6	107	12.7
Grade 9	880	440	50.0	440	50.0	377	42.8	2	0.2	37	4.2	0	0.0	39	4.4	413	46.9	12	1.4	22	2.5	461	52.4	104	11.8
Grade 10	815	401	49.2	414	50.8	311	38.2	2	0.2	37	4.5	0	0.0	24	2.9	432	53.0	9	1.1	13	1.6	360	44.2	85	10.4
Grade 11	693	338	48.8	355	51.2	270	39.0	1	0.1	35	5.1	0	0.0	26	3.8	354	51.1	7	1.0	14	2.0	273	39.4	72	10.4
Grade 12	777	367	47.2	410	52.8	272	35.0	0	0.0	42	5.4	0	0.0	33	4.2	426	54.8	4	0.5	11	1.4	308	39.6	80	10.3
Total	10,852	5,523	50.9	5,329	49.1	3,967	36.6	75	0.7	638	5.9	3	0.0	555	5.1	5,457	50.3	157	1.4	499	4.6	5,286	48.7	1,401	12.9

The ELL student population increases each year. Among the 499 ELLs in the 2011-2012 school year, over 77% of the students are at the elementary level. Finding out who provided support to the 499 ELLs at BSD led me to the following information.

A detailed picture of ELL students and their teachers in Delaware public school districts is presented below. It includes the latest information I was able to obtain from the DOE website. There were 97 certified ELL teachers who provided services for the ELLs in Delaware. In comparison to other districts, BSD had the fewest certified teachers per student.

ELL Student/Certified Teacher Ratio by District (DOE, 2009)

<u>District</u>	<u>ELL Students</u>	<u>Certified Teachers</u>	<u>ELL Teacher & Student Ratio</u>
Appoquinimink	232	4	1:58
Brandywine	408	1	1:408
Christina	1142	10	1:114
Colonial	934	16	1:58
NCC Votech	57	0	0:57
Red Clay	1773	19	1:93
Caesar Rodney	123	1	1:123
Capital	19	4	1:5
Lake Forest	71	2	1:36
Milford	292	3	1:97
Polytech	2	0	0:2
Smyrna	83	1	1:83

Cape Henlopen	197	3	1:66
Delmar	4	0	0:4
Indian River	727	17	1:43
Laurel	87	1	1:87
Seaford	303	3	1:101
Sussex Technical	1	0	0:1
Woodbridge	139	1	1:139

In a consecutive year comparison report among the New Castle County districts in terms of ELLs and certified ELL teacher-student ratios, BSD still had only one ELL certified teacher although the number of ELLs rose from 408 to 499.

Public School Districts (DOE, 2013)

<u>District</u>	<u>07-08</u>			<u>08-09</u>		
	<u>ELL</u>	<u>C. T</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>ELL</u>	<u>C. T</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Appoquinimink	161	4	1:58	160	4	1:40
Brandywine	408	1	1:408	499	1	1:499
Christina	1142	30	1:38	1144	26	1:44
Colonial	934	16	1:58	928	16	1:58
NCC Votech	57	0	0:74	57	0	0:57
Red Clay	1773	26	1:51	1755	45	1:39

BSD had 408 ELLs in the 2007-2008 school year, and these students were taught by one certified ELL teacher and ELL tutors. But in 2008 and 2009, the numbers of ELLs increased to 499. The number of certified ELL teachers changed among the six public school districts in the New Castle County: three decreased, one

remained the same, while two increased. BSD continues to have the fewest ELL teachers per student. Furthermore, BSD dismissed its only ELL teacher in the school year of 2009-2010 due to cut in funding.

I also collected data about the types of instructions provided to ELLs. The Pull-Out model is used for the largest percentage (31.6%) of ELLs across the state. Due to limited resources, most BSD elementary schools also used the Pull-Out model. With no certified ELL teachers in the BSD district, who provided the services and what was the structure of the ELL Program? With these questions in mind, I did more research inside the district.

Types of Instruction Provided to ELLs in 2008 and 2009 (DOE, 2012)

<u>Types of Instruction and Program</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>	<u>2008-2009</u>	<u>% of ELLs</u>
Dual Instruction	0	0	0.0%
ELL Push-In	661	718	10.6%
ELL Pull-Out	2,125	2,133	31.6%
Sheltered English	175	106	1.6%
Two-Way Bilingual/Dual Language	340	372	5.5%
Developmental/Maintenance	330	353	5.2%
Transitional	632	625	9.3%
Regular Class Instruction -Total	2,166	2,044	30.3%
Not Specified	402	401	5.9%
Total	6,831	6752	

ELL Tutors' Profile from BSD

BSD does not have certified ELL teachers. To serve the ELLs, BSD hired sixteen part-time paraprofessionals/tutors; whose profiles are listed below.

BSD ELL Tutor Profile (BSD, 2012)

<u>School and ELL Tutor</u>	<u>Certified ELL Teacher</u>	<u>College Degree</u>	<u>Graduated from a U.S. College</u>	<u>Speak another language as first language other than English</u>
Carrcroft Elementary	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Claymont Elementary	No	Yes	No	Yes
Claymont Elementary	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Claymont Elementary	No	Yes	No	Yes
Claymont Elementary	No	Yes	No	Yes
Forwood Elementary	No	Yes	No	Yes
Hanby Elementary	No	Yes	No	Yes
Harlan Elementary	No	Yes	No	Yes
Lancashire Elementary	No	Yes	No	Yes
Lombardy Elementary	No	Yes	No	Yes
Maple Lane Elementary	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mount Pleasant E.S.	No	Yes	No	Yes
duPont (Pierre S.) Middle	No	Yes	No	Yes
Springer Middle	No	Yes	No	Yes
Talley Middle	No	Yes	No	Yes

Brandywine High	No	Yes	No	Yes
Concord High	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mount Pleasant High	No	Yes	No	Yes

All of the 16 tutors obtained at least a college degree but the majority of them were not from the United States or in the K-12 education field. Among the sixteen tutors, 12 tutors work with 77% of ELLs at the elementary level. The tutors provide lessons to ELLs who range from beginning language learners to fairly fluently readers. To provide instruction to this special population effectively, educators not only need to equip themselves with knowledge in the areas of phonics and fluency but also in other reading skills and strategies. Without the appropriate knowledge, how do tutors instruct ELLs? To find out more in-depth information, I interviewed two tutors.

Interview Data

There are three types of research interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews are verbally administered questionnaires, in which a list of predetermined questions are asked, with little or no variation and with no scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration. Consequently, they are relatively quick and easy to administer. However, by their very nature, they only allow for limited participant responses and are, therefore, of little use if 'depth' is required. A semi-structured interview is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored. To find out more in-depth information from the ELL tutors, I conducted a

semi-structured interview. The purpose of the interview was specifically to explore how ELL tutors worked with students and to document their concerns.

I interviewed two ELL tutors. There were no other people involved in the interviews but the two interviewees and myself. I interviewed the two interviewees separately after school in their own school office. I brought my clipboard and my guideline questions with me. I first spent about five minutes talking about our own families and children, and then started the interview. I explained the purpose of my interview and told the interviewees that they did not have to answer my questions if they did not feel comfortable. I also told them that I would only share the results with my college professors. The result would not affect their employment at BSD. Both ELL tutors were willing to answer all my questions. Each interview lasted about 45 minutes.

The interview results were not surprising. There are three areas that the two interviewees felt needed to be changed immediately: 1) training, 2) materials and 3) working hours.

Two of the hiring requirements from BSD are a college degree and speaking English as a second language. Since most tutors did not attend schools in the US, they may not be familiar with the American school system and have no background knowledge regarding America's public education. They need training in the following areas: how the school system works in America, knowledge about instruction, and how to work with ELLs and the district's core curriculum. Given that the tutors are paid by the hour, they are not included in any district-hosted trainings, workshops or PLCs, "Go figure it out yourself" seems to be the attitude from the district. "With \$11 per hour and no benefits or respect, we do the best we can and that's pretty much it,"

said one of the tutors. The turnover rate of the tutors is high. Lombardy has had three different ELL tutors within the past four school years.

Many ELLs at the upper elementary level can read fairly well but struggle with comprehension. Just using the vocabulary-focused program the district provides for ELLs with intermediate to advanced level is not appropriate. Reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from texts and it is influenced by three elements: the reader, the text and the activity (Connor, 2011). It involves a broad range of text types at a high level. Text reading comprehension draws on many different language skills, including word reading efficiency, vocabulary knowledge, sentence-level skills such as knowledge of grammatical structure, and higher-level text processing skills such as inference generation and comprehension monitoring (Lipka & Siegel, 2012). Such skills are challenging for many students and are a persistent difficulty for the ELL population. Yet, due to limited knowledge, ELL tutors spend most of their instructional time working on math drills, spelling words, or doing picture word matching games when pulling students out for ELL service.

In the past twelve years, BSD has purchased only one program, *Oxford Picture Dictionary for the Content Areas*. This integrated vocabulary development program has two volumes, progressing from essential words to the more complex. The tutors use this program to instruct their ELLs, from beginning language learners to students who can read just about any on-grade-level materials but struggle with comprehension. "We help students with their weekly spelling words and math drill in addition to the lessons from the *Oxford Picture Dictionary*." Learning a language is not only learning the linguistics, but also the associated culture and history (Clayton, 2009). Learning to read for meaning relies on understanding the references in the text

being read. However, frequently, when students are behind their peers in reading, as is often the case for ELLs, their remedial programs emphasize isolated vocabulary instruction. They are not exposed to authentic texts or challenged to think critically or inferentially about stories. This is exactly what happens with the ELL situation at BSD.

The tutors are paid by the hour, with a maximum 25 hours per week for most schools. Some principals do not like to group their ELLs in one homeroom, so most of the tutors follow a pull-out model. They group their ELLs by grade level to fit with their part-time working hours. Some tutors do not have a personal space to work with their students. One interviewed tutor squeezed her small student desk and a computer into the School Store/storage room for before and after school YMCA activities. The physical education class is next to it. "With the noise and the limited space, it's difficult for my students to concentrate or even move around a little bit. I have no wall space to even hang up one poster" said the tutor in tears. Tutors make decisions as to scheduling their day and grouping their students. Working with 36 ELLs with six grade levels and different reading abilities within 25 hours is the reality the tutors have to face on a daily basis in addition to the other challenges.

On the 2013 DCAS Report, students with special needs in Delaware did better than the ELLs. Students in the two groups may be similar in that both have special needs, but why is the achievement gap between the two groups so extensive? With this question in mind, I conducted further research and collected data from BSD's website.

Resources for ELLs and Students with Special Needs (BSD, 2012)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Enrollment 2011-2012</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Students with Special Needs	1,401	130 Full-time certified Spec Ed Teachers
English Language Learners	499	16 Part-time Paraprofessional ELL tutors

To serve the 1,401 students with special needs, there are 130 full-time certified special education teachers. But for the 499 ELLs, there are only sixteen part-time tutors. The ratio between students with special needs and certified special education teachers is 11:1, whereas the ratio between the ELLs and the ELL tutors is 31:1, not to mention the tutor qualification status and limited working hours.

ELL Services at BSD

From the results of the data collected, it is clear that the lack of knowledge for teaching ELLs, an insufficient ELL curriculum and supplement materials, and limited working hours stand out as the most significant areas for improvement. Without proper training, knowledge, materials and time, the tutors cannot help ELLs make the expected progress, leading to poor academic performance that often results in loss of confidence and self-efficacy.

Professional organizations as well as state licensure agencies recognize that educators need specialized competencies to work effectively with ELL students. It is time for BSD to rethink the policy, reevaluate the ELL curriculum, and make training available to ELL tutors. ELLs will be more successful when they are provided with learning opportunities and sufficient support.

In-Depth Study at Lombardy Elementary School

To seek more specific root causes for the achievement gap between ELLs and the native English speakers, I did more research at Lombardy Elementary School (LES). ELLs underperformed compared to their non ELL peers in spite of additional ELL services and test accommodations. The proportion of ELLs identified as students with learning disabilities is much higher than in the non-ELL population, 15% versus 3%. To explore this gap, I examined the ELL education process.

I am currently working at LES as the Reading Specialist and also the Response to Intervention Cycle Review facilitator. I review students' data with teachers periodically, and that data can be used for this evaluation. LES demographic characteristics are presented below.

Lombardy E.S. Student Enrollment (DOE, 2014)

<u>Enrollment by Ethnicity</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
African American	26.5
American Indian	0.7
Asian	5.6
Hispanic/Latino	4.8
White	62.4
Other	4.5

Lombardy E.S. Student Characteristics by Category (DOE, 2014)

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
English Language Learner	6.2
Low Income	37.5
Special Education	11.3

Lombardy E.S. Staff by Race/Ethnicity (DOE, 2014)

<u>Race</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
African American	2.4
American Indian	0
Asian	2.4
Hispanic/Latino	0
White	95.2

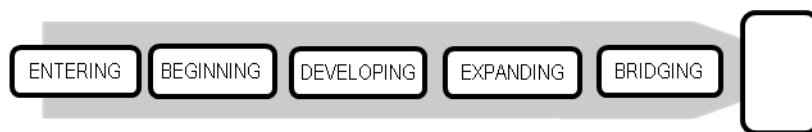
Lombardy E.S. Teacher Characteristics

<u>Years of Experience</u>	<u>Gr. K.</u>	<u>Gr. 1</u>	<u>Gr. 2</u>	<u>Gr. 3</u>	<u>Gr. 4</u>	<u>Gr. 5</u>
0-5	1	0	1	1	4	2
6-10	3	1	1	0	0	2
11-15	0	2	1	0	1	1
16-20	1	1	0	0	0	0
20 above	0	1	2	4	0	0

A comparison of the above demographic characteristics with those of the BSD suggests that the sample is representative of the teacher population among the nine elementary schools with regard to race, gender and the years of teaching experience except for 4th and 5th grade teachers. Fourth and 5th grade teachers at LES have less experience than teachers from most of the other elementary schools in the district, but this factor alone is unlikely to explain the current achievement gap at LES.

Since the ELL program operational process was clear, I focused on academic progress monitoring as it is part of the ELL Program operational process. Teachers provide instruction based on the periodic progress monitoring assessment results. Only when teachers know what their ELLs need to be supported might sufficient progress be made.

I identified one process and one outcome question for the evaluation. The process question was: what is the percentage of teachers who use their progress monitoring data to guide their instruction on a monthly basis? The outcome question was: what percentage of ELLs have mastered Level 4, the Expanding stage, after receiving one year of service based on the ACCESS assessment, and are ready to exist the ELL Program? ELLs need to pass the six PLC levels in order to be dismissed from ELL service. ELLs are given the ACCESS assessment at the end of each school year.



Six Levels of ACCESS (The WIDA Consortium, 2013)

STAR is required by the district to assess students' reading level and monitor their progress. STAR Reading and STAR Early Literacy are standardized, computer-adaptive assessments created by Renaissance Learning, Inc., for use in K-12 education. STAR Reading assesses students' reading skills and comprehension, and STAR Early Literacy assesses students' early literacy skills in preparation for reading. Students take the assessment on the computer and it is scored immediately and automatically. The purpose of the STAR assessments is to provide information to teachers about students' strength and weaknesses in reading skills and to document growth. Teachers are able to view and print a number of reports at the individual, classroom, and grade level in order to use the information for tailoring instruction. All BSD students at the elementary level are required to take STAR Reading or STAR

Early Literacy three times a year: August, December and May. Students who receive extra reading support, including ELLs and other struggling readers, take STAR Assessment biweekly.

Instruments

The process questions were answered through structured interviews and an evaluator-created questionnaire. The outcome questions were answered in the form of rubrics composed of four items based on the STAR Test (renaissance.com).

Interview: Structured interviews were conducted to collect in-depth and detailed data from a 3rd grade teacher, a 5th grade teacher and also the ELL tutor. Note taking was used during the interviews. The questions focused on the curriculum, progress monitoring process and the STAR Assessment Report of the ELLs who were ready to exit the ELL program after receiving one year of service (see details in Appendix D). The interviewees were asked the same questions.

Questionnaire: For measuring teachers' attitudes or behaviors, a Likert-type scale is appropriate. A Likert-type scale measures attitudes and behaviors using answer choices that range from one extreme to another (for example, not at all likely to extremely likely). Unlike a simple “yes / no” question, a Likert-type scale allowed me to uncover degrees of opinion. This is particularly helpful for sensitive or challenging topics or subject matter. Having a range of responses also helped me to more easily identify areas for improvement (see details in Appendix D). The classroom teacher questionnaire had eight questions focusing on the ELL progress monitoring process and the effectiveness of the ELL support according to the STAR Assessment blow.

Data Collection Procedures

I took great care to protect the rights of potential participants.

- **Structured interviews:** I met with the three interviewees and shared with them the questions I planned to ask and the duration, location and format of the interview. If they agreed to be interviewed, I would ask them to sign the Research Participant Consent Form.
- **Questionnaire:** I sent an email explaining the purpose of my project, gave directions, and then placed printed questionnaires in each teacher's mailbox during the week of April 8th. I left an envelope in my mailbox and asked teachers to put their completed questionnaires in the envelope before April 17th in order to ensure anonymity. I taped a self-check list to the envelope for teachers to check their name off after they put their questionnaire in the envelope.

Data Analysis

Interview. I coded the interview data using thematic analysis, looked for patterns or themes among the data. I searched for trends among the three interviewees, and concluded by describing how teachers felt about the current ELL Program.

Questionnaire. Given that my questionnaire had a 5-point Likert Scale, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral or n/a, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree, I used the criterion of a mean score of 3 or above to determine whether teachers thought the current ELL Program was effective or needed improvement. If the overall mean score was below 3, I created recommendations for improvement based on the responses

from the questionnaire. I also analyzed the results of the questionnaire by examining the trends that might be related to demographic variables (e.g., responses from male and female, years of working experience), although my sample was very small for this.

Data Analysis. The answers from the three interviewees were similar. The two teachers felt that since they had many other students to take care of, they did not spend more time providing special instruction to their ELLs, especially because they had no curriculum or materials to use. They also did not have time to progress monitor their ELLs' academic progress. Both teachers talked about their need for some training on the topic of how to support ELLs. The ELL tutor felt that the ELLs were an underserved population. She wished all ELL tutors could be included in trainings provided by the district. With insufficient knowledge, resource and time, she felt her hands were tied to do her job well.

Among the 30 homeroom teachers who received the questionnaire, 20 provided answers. From the result of the questionnaire, we can see that the lack of a good ELL curriculum and supplemental materials stands out as the most significant area for improvement. It has the lowest mean score (1.3) and 100% of the responses either strongly disagree (75%) or disagree (25%) that they have a good ELL curriculum or supplemental materials. On the other end of the spectrum, the highest mean score (4.3) indicates that a majority of the participants (80%) think that it is important to progress monitoring ELLs' academic progress periodically. However, there is a varying degree of implementation of the progress monitoring – only 30% of the teachers agree/strongly agreed that they progress monitored periodically; and 30% said they provided instruction based on the progress monitoring data.

No.	Questions	# of Strongly Agree	% of Strongly Agree	# of Agree	% of Agree	# of Neutral	% of Neutral	# of Disagree	% of Disagree	# of Strongly Disagree	% of Strongly Disagree	Libert Scale
1	I have ELLs assigned to my class every year.	3	15	4	20	0	0	6	30	7	35	2.5
2	My ELLs benefit from receiving the ELL Program service	3	15	4	20	0	0	10	50	3	15	2.7
3	I have a good ELL curriculum and supplement materials to us for teaching	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	25	15	75	1.3
4	It is important to progress monitoring my ELLs academic progress periodically.	9	45	7	35	4	20	0	0	0	0	4.3
5	I progress monitoring my ELL students progress periodically	2	10	4	20	4	20	5	25	5	25	2.7
6	I provide my instructions based on the ELLs progress monitoring data.	3	15	3	15	6	30	7	35	1	5	3.0
7	I believe my ELLs academic progress directly relate to my periodic progress monitoring assessment.	1	5	3	15	7	35	7	35	2	10	2.7
8	Most of my ELLs make expected progress.	5	25	8	40	0	0	5	25	2	10	3.5
9	Most of my ELLs are able to exit the ELL Program after receiving one year service	3	15	2	10	1	5	6	30	8	40	2.3
	Mean	3.2	16.1	3.9	19.4	2.4	12.2	5.7	28.3	4.8	23.9	2.8
	Standard Deviation	2.59	12.94	2.42	12.1	2.83	14.17	2.65	13.23	4.68	23.42	0.82

From the result of the interviews and the answers from the questionnaire, it is clear that the lack of knowledge for teaching ELLs and a good ELL curriculum or supplemental materials stand out to be the most significant areas for improvement.

One puzzling finding came from the last two questions – although 65% of the people thought most of their ELLs were making expected progress, only 25% of them agreed/strongly agreed that most of their level 4 ELLs were able to exit the ELL program after receiving one year of service. This could indicate a disconnect between the teachers' expectations and the exiting criteria for the ELL program. Overall, the mean Likert Scale for all nine questions is 2.8 ± 0.82 , less than 3, indicating that there is room for improvement in the process of providing support to the ELLs at LES.

Summary and Recommendation

From the evaluation result one can tell that the operational process for the ELL Program at BSD functions well. Students who are identified as ELLs are able to receive immediate support from their school's ELL tutor and classroom teacher. However, according to the interviews, only 10% of level 4 ELLs are able to exit the ELL program after receiving one year of service. It may be that this result is caused by the insufficient and ineffective instruction provided by both the ELL tutor and classroom teachers. Due to limited knowledge about how to work with ELLs and insufficient training on providing differentiated instruction to this population, plus the lack of reading materials to use, ELLs at LES struggle to make expected progress, which leads to the achievement gap and perhaps to the high number of them being identified as students with learning disabilities. The following actions are recommended to be taken immediately: conduct professional development workshops on the topic of ELLs and how to reach and teach them, including the ELL tutor in the

trainings; assist with selecting reading materials for teachers and the ELL tutor to use in addition to the *Oxford Picture Dictionary*, and work with school administrators and teachers to make a STAR and DIBELS progress monitoring schedule to follow throughout the school year.

Appendix C

Research Participant Consent Form

Evaluation of English Language Learner Program at Brandywine School District

Education Department of University of Delaware

Jessie Chen

Purpose of Research

The number of English Language Learners (ELL) has continued to explode in many states, particularly in those without a history of serving ELL students. America's public schools enroll about 5 million ELL – twice the number of just 15 years ago, and that number is expected to double again by 2015. ELL are the fastest growing group of students in the United States today. Services provided to those students in Delaware lag far behind many other states. In order to provide sufficient services to the ELL student, I am conducting a research and gathering information, including your suggestions about our current ELL Program.

Duration of Participation and Types of Interview Questions

I will conduct one 20 minute interview at a convenient location to you after your work. I will ask some questions, such as, How long have you been working with ELL students in the district? How many days do you work per week? How many students do you work with? Do you have a curriculum/program to follow? If you do, what is the name of the program? If you do not, what do you use for your instructions?

How often do you progress monitoring your students' learning? What do you do with the progress data?

Risks and Confidentiality of the Interview to the Participant

This interview is part of my doctoral dissertation research, all the input will be anonymous and shared with my selected college professors and the completed dissertation will be stored at the university library. There is not any risk to you by participating the interview.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

I do not have to participate in this research project and can withdraw my participation at any time.

Initial: JB Date: 3/20/13

Human Subject Statement:

If I have any questions about this research project, I can contact Dr. Buttram of the Education Department. The phone number is 302-831-4434. The email address is jbuttram@udel.edu

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND AM WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT.

[Signature] 3/20/13
Participant's Signature Date

Jessie Chen 3-20-13
Researcher's Signature Date

Appendix E

CAUSES FOR READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES AMONG NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS AND SPANISH-SPEAKING ELLS IN UPPER ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Introduction

Providing differentiated literacy instructions based on students' learning characteristics is critical to students' academic growth and achievement. To be able to read and understand texts is a key skill for students to be successful in their future lives. However, more than 70% of students reaching 4th grade have trouble comprehending text at or above proficient levels (Connor, Fredrick, Morrison, Giuliani, Luck, Underwood, Bayraktar, Crowe, & Schatschneider, 2011). There are many causes for this problem, but ineffective instruction due to lack of understanding of students' learning characteristics is possibly the most important reason. The process of learning to read and comprehend texts is very complex. It requires a child to have speaking proficiency, fluent decoding skills, word knowledge, and the proper skills to actively extract and construct the meaning from the text (Connor et al., 2011). Identifying students' learning characteristics and specific cause(s) for reading difficulties are essential for providing effective instruction.

Approximately 50 million students are enrolled in public schools in grades K-12. About 10% of them are identified as having one or more learning disabilities (LD), and most LD students struggle with reading (Swanson, Orosco & Lussier, 2011). Reading difficulties are defined as students have trouble reading on-grade level materials (Swanson et al., 2011). Researchers have conducted myriad studies on students' reading difficulties, mostly focused on native English speakers. However, in the last 15 years, there has been a significant increase nationwide in the English

Language Learner (ELL) population (60% increase from 1996-2006, according to the report from Pew Hispanic Center, 2011). With more and more ELLs enrolling in U.S. schools and their low levels of academic achievement compared to native English speaking students (NAEP report, 2011), educators face new challenges in providing effective reading instruction.

Among the nearly 11 million school-age ELLs, over 77% speak Spanish as their first language, whether they are American-born or immigrant. In 2011, 23.9% of the nation's pre-kindergarten to high school students were Hispanic (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). This student population does not excel in school and lags behind other ethnic groups academically (NAEP report, 2011). Only 55.5% of Hispanic students graduated from high school in four years (Fry & Gonzales, 2008).

Delaware's ELL student population resembles that of the nation. The largest ELL population in the K-12 schools is Spanish-speaking ELLs, at 78% according to Delaware 2009 ELL Report, and this population has performed poorly on both the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System Assessment (DCAS) and NAEP tests. According to the 2012 DCAS report (2012) prepared by Delaware Education Department, the average scores on the DCAS Reading Test for grade 5 White and African-American students are 82.3% to 62%, respectively, but the average score for ELLs is 20.2 points lower than the African-American students (DOE, 2013). In order to provide effective instruction, teachers need to know second language acquisition related issues in the process of learning English. There are many studies about ELL in general, but studies on upper elementary ELL vocabulary and comprehension are scarce. It is argued that ELLs have more challenges than native English speaking students since they have to acquire oral proficiency and literacy skills in a second

language. It is important to determine whether ELLs are different than their native English speaking peers when experiencing reading difficulties.

Research Question and Goal

My goal is to find the possible causes to the achievement gap, especially in reading comprehension, of ELL students. My research question is this: In comparison to native English speaking students in upper elementary and middle schools, what unique characteristics and reading difficulties do Spanish-speaking ELLs exhibit in the development of reading comprehension skills? The goal of my literature review is to determine what research has been done in the past in this field.

Literature Review

Method

Reading comprehension is a topic that many literacy researchers and psychologists have been studying in the past 30 years. However, due to the fast growing ELL population and new issues stemming from this change, the research on ELL reading comprehension is still very much a work in progress. In this review I was able to find many articles, dated from the 1980s through the present, concerning reading difficulties of the general student population, such as Stanovich's article (1986) on Matthew effects in reading, Catts et al. (2006) on language deficits in poor comprehenders, and Baumann's (2009) study on vocabulary instruction and effects on reading comprehension. I then was able to find several peer-reviewed articles on the topic of why Spanish-speaking ELLs didn't make adequate progress when learning English. Several databases and public websites were used, such as ERIC, Education Full Text, DELCAT, and WWC. The types of references I searched included: empirical articles, reports, books, and handbook chapters. The criteria for my search

were: reading comprehension strategies for Spanish-speaking ELLs at elementary level, causes for reading comprehension struggles for Spanish-speaking ELLs at upper elementary level, reasons that slow Spanish-speaking ELL's English learning, and the achievement gap in reading for Spanish-speaking ELLs at elementary level.

Among the limited research on Spanish-speaking ELLs at the upper elementary and middle schools, I reviewed the studies conducted by the following researchers: Mike Kieffer (2010, 2012), Nonie Lesaux (2010, 2011,), Jeannette Mancilla-Martinez (2010, 2011), Lipka & Siegel (2012) and Rose Vukovic (2012, 2013). The reviewed articles focused on the following areas: reading difficulties, reading comprehension, word reading fluency, vocabulary, ELL, Spanish-speaking ELLs and students with low social economic statuses (SES). All the articles are peer-reviewed and published in professional journals, such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, and *Reading and Writing*.

Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Reading comprehension difficulties can be caused by several reasons, such as processing (auditory processing, phonological processing, and language processing), memory (short-term memory, working memory, and long-term memory), attention (ADD and ADHD), and English language learning. ELLs often struggle with reading comprehension in the process of learning English.

Reading comprehension is the process of creating meaning from texts; it is influenced by three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity (Pardo, 2004). Text reading comprehension draws on many different language skills, including word

reading efficiency, vocabulary knowledge, sentence-level skills (such as knowledge of grammatical structure), and higher-level text processing skills, such as inference generation and comprehension monitoring (Lipka & Siegel, 2012). Such skills are challenging for many students with LD and are a persistent difficulty for the ELL population (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2010). Research over the past 30 years, mostly on native English speaking students who have difficulty in comprehending texts, documented that there were many reasons for why students struggle with comprehension, including phoneme awareness, orthographic and phonics knowledge, fluency, vocabulary, prior knowledge, working memory, and reading strategies (Stanovich, 1986; Lipka & Siegel, 2012). The student population of interest to me is Spanish-speaking ELLs at upper elementary and middle school levels. Surprisingly, 92% of them are born in the United States (Lesaux, 2010).

Effect of Word Recognition Skills

In order for students to focus their attention on discerning the meaning of texts, they need to have automatic word recognition. Many students exhibit difficulties in this skill due to their lack of morphological and syntactic awareness (Ehri, 1995). Word recognition fluency is defined as words that readers recognize instantly without having to stop and figure them out (Lipka & Siegel, 2012). The more proficient readers are, the more words they recognize by sight. When students struggle with any part(s) of the developmental phases, which including phonics, word patterns, context, word parts, and word recognition, comprehension failure may occur (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2008).

The National Reading Panel (NRP) in 2000 reported that fluency is a crucial factor needed for reading comprehension. Rasinski, Rikli & Johnston (2009)

commented that reading fluency, without doubt, contributes to students' reading comprehension for upper elementary and middle grade students. Researchers and teachers are fully aware of the large number of students who have difficulty with fluency, which negatively impacts their ability to comprehend texts. Instead of addressing reading fluency as a whole, this review focuses on the word recognition fluency/skill, since the students I am interested in should possess basic knowledge of phoneme awareness and phonics skills.

As readers' word recognition fluency improves and becomes automatic, students will be able to free their working memory and focus on the meaning of texts (Stanovich, 1984). Sight words refer to those words that are repeatedly used in our communications, which are important to effectively read and comprehend texts. Pikulski & Templeton (2004) stated that 50% of English texts comprise 100 words and 90% of the running words of materials through third grade comprise 200 words. Rasinski, Rikli & Johnston, (2009) worked in a 45% Spanish-speaking elementary school, and found that repeatedly reading the same words would significantly increase sight word recognition for African-Americans and Latinos, which improved reading comprehension.

Although word recognition fluency does not directly help a student understand the meaning of designated words, readers with automatic word recognition fluency do not need to concentrate on recalling words. They can focus their attention on what the text actually means and make mental connections throughout the text, as well as apply those connections to their personal backgrounds and experiences. Stanovich (2011) believes that word decoding automatically leads to the use of our semantic memory. We can learn about new concepts by applying our knowledge learned from things in

the past. For readers who struggle with word recognition fluency, it is critical that these skills and words be taught systematically and effectively (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004).

Lipka & Siegel (2012) compared the development of reading comprehension skills of native English speaking students and ELLs. Word recognition fluency was one of the areas they studied. In their studies, they measured real word reading, pseudo-words reading, and word attack. During the word recognition fluency assessments, students were asked to read as many words, sight words or pseudo-words as possible from a list of nouns, adjectives, prepositions, and verbs with increasing difficulties. The researchers discovered that there were significant differences between good and poor comprehenders on word recognition fluency but no significant difference between native English speaking and Spanish-speaking ELLs. When children lack automaticity, their comprehension suffers. Lipka and Siegel concluded that skills underlying reading comprehension were similar in the native English speaking students and ELLs. This finding correlates with a 5-year longitudinal study by Lesaux, Rupp and Siegel (2007). The authors concluded by saying that after investigating the reading development of a sample of 824 kindergarten and 4th grade children, 689 native English speaking children and 135 ELLs from 33 different native languages, despite slightly lower performance of the ELLs on several kindergarten tasks, differences at 4th grade were negligible. The findings suggested that the reading development of native English speaking children and ELLs is similar at this age level.

Effect of Vocabulary and SES

Another major research finding is that there is a strong relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension (Baumann, 1995). NRP (2000) reported that

the comprehension process cannot be defined without vocabulary development and instruction in detail. Baumann (1995) stated that vocabulary is an essential component of reading comprehension. If students do not know the meaning of the words they read in a text, their comprehension of that text is likely to be compromised. Having a large vocabulary bank is more predictive and reflective of high levels of reading achievement. From this perspective, it can be said that vocabulary size is an important distinction between good readers and poor readers. Indeed, it has been found that students who have reading comprehension problems often have a limited vocabulary (Yildirim et al., 2011).

The amount of vocabulary that children need to acquire is staggering—estimated to be about 3,000 words per year (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004). Children who live in poverty in their early years have significantly less verbal interaction with their parents and consequently begin school with far less vocabulary development compared to their more privileged peers. According to the Pew Hispanic Center report (2011) a record of 37.6 million people aged 5 years and older speak Spanish at home, and many of them will miss their early years of exposure to English. Children must hear language to acquire language (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004).

Kieffer & Lesaux (2010) conducted research to find the similarities and differences between first and second language learners in terms of knowledge of words and about words. The 583 sixth graders, 47% of them Spanish-speaking ELLs, were assessed on 13 reading-based measures targeting various aspects of vocabulary knowledge. They found that vocabulary was comprised of three highly related, but distinct dimensions, which are breadth and depth, contextual sensitivity, and morphological awareness (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2010). Breadth of the vocabulary refers

to the number of words known, and depth of vocabulary refers to the knowledge about the words known, such as the knowledge of multiple related meanings and how to use a word in specific contexts. Contextual sensitivity refers to student's sensitivity to the information about word meanings in written text. Morphological awareness means student's knowledge on how words are formed and structured, such as prefixes and suffixes.

Kieffer and Lesaux discovered that ELLs performed significantly more poorly than native English speaking students on all three vocabulary dimensions. Compared to native English speaking students, Spanish-speaking students have an extensive disadvantage at the beginning reading stage. Most native English speaking students bring background knowledge to the process of learning to read before they even enter preschool. By listening and speaking the language in their toddler years, an average native English speaking child knows approximately 1000 words and acquires approximately 90% of adult language structures by age 6. The words on printed materials are largely already part of the child's oral vocabulary (Biemiller & Boote, 2006). But Spanish-speaking ELLs, especially the ones who enter the U.S. schools in the upper elementary schools or later, must simultaneously learn linguistic structures and vocabulary if they are to make meaning of the text they are learning to decode. Unlike word reading skills, Spanish-speaking ELLs do not develop to age-appropriate levels even after several years in U.S. schools. (Lesaux et al, 2010). Furthermore, the "rich get richer" effect has been observed in vocabulary interventions with young children (Stanovich, 1986).

In recent years, some researchers such as Kieffer and Lesaux have begun to pay attention to ELLs in general, as well as to some subgroups of ELLs, such as

Spanish-speaking students, due to population size and SES status factors. As with any acquired skill, experience plays a crucial role in the development of reading competence. Research shows that the lack of vocabulary for children from low-income families causes them to struggle with reading and that this vocabulary deficit causes them to lag behind their middle-income peers throughout their school years. More Latino children live in poverty—6.1 million in 2010—than children of any other racial or ethnic group (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011). Latino median household income was \$38,039 in 2009; in comparison, the median household income for White families was \$54,461. The influence of SES on vocabulary learning for ELLs should not be overlooked (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). Students in low SES families have less background knowledge, experience, and language transfer to academic texts. Like many native English-speaking students with low SES, Spanish-speaking ELLs face risk factors to their reading capabilities, such as poverty, low parental education and literacy rates, and an under-resourced learning environment (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). For example, a recent study by Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux (2011) suggests that since parents play an important role in children's vocabulary acquisition, their level of education may be as important a factor as language spoken at home in children's developing vocabulary knowledge. In the study, they interviewed 168 mothers of the 387 Spanish-speaking participants. 66% of students were from low-income families and over one third of mothers had less than a high school education and over 50% of families lived in deep poverty. Pikulski & Templeton (2004) state that students' vocabulary accumulation relates directly to their family background. According to their research finding, parents of working professionals had a cumulative vocabulary of about 1,100 words, from working class families had about 650 words, and from

welfare families had just over 400 words when entering kindergarten. This vocabulary deficit puts students with low SES at a disadvantage for academic success upon entering elementary schools. Biemiller & Boote (2006) estimated that the average child adds an average of at least 840 root word meanings (the form of a word after all affixes are removed) a year in the early elementary school years, but children in the lowest SES quartile only add an average of 570 root word meanings. When those students reach upper elementary grades the achievement gap is even more significant. Students who read well and have good vocabularies will read more and learn more word meanings; consequently, they will become better and better readers. Students with inadequate vocabularies read slowly and less frequently; as a result, they will have slower development of vocabulary knowledge, which inhibits further growth in their reading ability. This phenomenon is known as the Matthew Effect or the “rich get richer” effect (Stanovich, 1986).

In a study conducted by Farnia and Geva (2009), comparing native English speakers with ELLs from grades 1 to 6, ELLs appeared to be more vulnerable than native English speakers when it came to vocabulary learning. The researchers found that although ELLs could quickly master phonological skills, and even made more gain in vocabulary growth comparing to their native English speaking peers, they did not close the gap after attending six years of English speaking schools. This suggests that ELLs need significant support to develop English vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension skills.

Effect of Linguistic Differences Between English and Spanish

Cognates in linguistics are words that have a common etymological origin. Spanish speaking ELLs have some advantages in learning English since the Spanish

language shares many words with English. By knowing a few simple rules about cognates, students can quickly expand their vocabulary in English, such as - absurd - absurdo, abrupt - abrupto, balance - balancear, general expression - expresión general. Using cognates as a strategy, teachers can provide some kind of shelter, so that Spanish speaking ELLs may feel more confident and motivated when they realize that they already know something about English. This may contribute to building their self-confidence and motivation.

However, by using this strategy teachers need to be careful because not all cognates have the same meaning. This is due to the fact that when languages develop separately, they can eventually become false friends or false cognates. False cognates can cause confusion, which may lead to disadvantage in the process of learning English. For example, the English word “actually” and the Spanish word “actualmente” seem to be cognates, as well as the word forms “interesting” in English and “interesante” in Spanish do. However, although the second pair are cognates, the first pair are not, since they differ in meaning. This kind of error shows evidence of negative or disadvantage due to native language influence. In order to deal with false cognates, we can have activities aimed at breaking false cognate’s word form similarities by means of visual differences in meaning. Students will be able to connect, in a natural way, a new word with its corresponding concept.

There are a few other factors that may contribute to word reading and comprehension difficulties. For example, Spanish is considered a syllable-timed language, while English a stress-timed language (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2010). Spanish has syllables that fall within words. Each syllable has the same duration, no matter where the stress in the word may fall. In contrast, English has an accentual

rhythm of speech in which the accented syllables have a longer duration than the unaccented syllables. Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux (2010) state that learners whose first language is syllable-timed often have problems producing the unstressed sounds in a stress-timed language like English. This may result in Spanish-speaking ELLs having trouble mastering the intonation patterns of English, which slow them down when reading (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2010). Good readers read effortlessly and with automaticity. Without fluency, they do not have the mental energy for comprehension.

The difference in vowels and consonant systems can also cause confusion. For example, “ch” and “sh” are two different phonemes in English, but Spanish-speaking ELLs may pronounce change as "shange" because in Spanish these two consonants are interchangeable without changing word meaning. Additionally, all nouns in Spanish have a gender (Ramirez et al, 2007). A door in Spanish is a feminine noun, while a desk, masculine. So it is understandable that a Spanish-speaking student may take time to get used to the neutral pronoun "it" for objects.

In addition, Spanish has a strong correspondence between the sound of a word and its spelling (Ramirez et al, 2007). The irregularity of English in this respect causes predictable problems when Spanish-speaking ELLs write a word they first encounter orally or say a word first seen in writing (Ramirez et al, 2007). Children learn through listening and oral practice. Due to the different language systems, Spanish-speaking ELLs may feel confused with the meaning of their spoken words versus written texts while their native English speaking peers do not face this confusion. In Lipka & Siegel's (2012) study, they discovered that ELLs’ knowledge of English syntax still lagged behind their native English speaking peers.

Another striking difference between English and Spanish that may relate to Spanish-speaking ELLs' reading comprehension is in sentence structure (Ramirez et al., 2007). Spanish has a relatively rich morphological system and more freedom of word order than English (Martinez & Lesaux, 2010). For example, English places the indirect object between the verb and the direct object. Spanish places the indirect object between the subject and the verb. As a result, the more subtle differences between the languages may present significant difficulties for Spanish-speaking ELLs.

Discussion

Reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading and plays a critical role in students' academic success. Yet, many students, native English speaking students and Spanish-speaking ELLs alike, struggle with this skill. Among the various causes, word recognition fluency and vocabulary contribute greatly to reading comprehension difficulties. Students who have not mastered phonics skills in their early elementary school years tend to lag behind others in reading when reaching upper elementary grades. Vocabulary is central to the English language because without sufficient vocabulary, students cannot understand others or express their own ideas.

The lack of vocabulary, caused by different reasons including second language learning status and the effect of low SES, which is one of the causes for reading comprehension difficulties that may result in school failure. Decoding skills contribute to word reading fluency, and practicing the irregular sight words builds students' automaticity in recognizing high frequency words (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Teaching vocabulary will not guarantee success in reading, just as learning to read words will not guarantee success in reading. However, lacking either adequate word identification skills or adequate vocabulary will ensure failure (Biemiller, 2006).

Research suggests that poor readers of native English speaking students and Spanish-speaking ELLs share many similar characteristics in the areas of word recognition fluency and vocabulary caused by lack of exposure, experience, and practice, and low SES impact. Because of the prevalence of poverty among Spanish-speaking ELLs, they perform worse in assessments of vocabulary, especially on the syntax test, than native English speaking students (Lipka & Siegel, 2012). This is also caused by the confusion between the different language systems of English and Spanish. The intensity of students' awareness of morphology, syntax, and semantics directly contribute to reading comprehension (Goodwin, 2013). Students' sensitivity to the morphemes in words is another ability that is important for successful word reading and reading comprehension. Of course, in addition to word recognition fluency and vocabulary, there are other possible causes for why students struggle with reading comprehension. Working memory, cognitive ability, language processing, and background knowledge all can result in students' reading comprehension difficulty.

Many strategies to improve reading comprehension have been suggested for both groups of students, such as providing explicit instruction in word study and word meanings, and lessons on how to derive the meanings of unknown words from their component parts (Conner, 2011). Since the majority of English words have been created through the combination of morphemic elements, that is, prefixes and suffixes with base words and word roots (Baumann, 2009), systematically teaching the meaning of prefixes, suffixes, and root words is extremely helpful. Poor readers may gain vocabulary growth far more quickly if they understand how this combinatorial process works (Baumann, 2009). It is suggested that increasing students' vocabulary is vital towards their reading comprehension, particularly of abstract and academic

words (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2010). Some people suggest focusing on breadth instead of depth, while others think deep modes of vocabulary teaching are more effective (Lesaux et al, 2010). Determining the best approach in providing instruction on vocabulary requires more study. To help older Spanish-speaking immigrant students who are literate in Spanish but lack English proficiency, some specific strategies may help with learning, such as using charts featuring common differences between English and Spanish, the correct usage of English, and sight words and academic vocabulary in a classroom.

Recommendation for Future Research

The ELL population is fast-growing and presents opportunities for further research and investigation on new issues and solutions. My recommendation for future research focuses on three areas:

- Identify and analyze the reasons *within* Spanish-speaking ELLs for disparities in reading comprehension. Why do some students do well academically, but others fail to meet standards? Is the difference related to their country of origin, their family culture and environment, and/or their innate intelligence? For example, the high school graduation rate for students of Mexican origin was 57%, but for Puerto Rican students it was higher, at 75% and higher still for Cuban students, at 82% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010).
- Based on the knowledge on characteristics of Spanish-speaking ELLs and the difference between native English speaking students and Spanish-speaking

ELLs, identify modifications to mainstream curricula with tailored reading programs and suitable literacy instructions for Spanish-speaking ELLs.

- Evaluate current programs and approaches designed for Spanish-speaking ELLs in the Brandywine School District in Delaware to learn a more efficient way to reach this population and provide effective instructions.

Building upon the foundation from this literature review, I plan to follow up on one of the above-recommended studies in my Ed.D. project.

REFERENCES

- Baumann, J. F. (2009). Intensity in vocabulary instruction and effects on reading comprehension. *Topics in Language Disorders, 29*, 312-328.
- Biemiller, A. & Boote, C. (2006) An effective method for building meaning vocabulary in primary grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98*, 44-62.
- Catts, H. W., Adlof, S. M. & Weismer, S. E. (2006). Language deficits in poor comprehenders: A case for the simple view of reading. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 49*, 278-29.
- Connor, C. M., Fredrick J. Morrison, B. F., Giuliani, S., Luck, M., Underwood, P. S., Bayraktar, A., Crowe, E. C., & Schatschneider, C. (2011). Testing the impact of child characteristics \times instruction interactions on third graders' reading comprehension by differentiating literacy instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly, 46*, 189–221.
- Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System. Delaware Department of Education.
Retrieved from:
www.doe.k12.de.us/dcas/files/StateSumOverviewReport2012.pdf
- Ehri, L.C. (1995). Phases of development in learning to read by sight. *Journal of Research in Reading, 18*, 116–125.
- Farnia, F. & Geva, E. (2009). Cognitive correlates of vocabulary growth in English language learners. *Psycholinguistics, 32*, 711–738.

Fry, R. & Gonzales, F. (2008). One-in-five and growing fast: A profile of Hispanic public school students. Retrieved from

<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2008/08/26/one-in-five-and-growing-fast-a-profile-of-hispanic-public-school-students/>

Goodwin, A. P., Huggins, A. C., Carlo, M. S., Diane, A., & Calderon, M. (2013).

Minding morphology: How morphological awareness relates to reading for English language learners. *Reading and Writing*, 26, 1387-1415.

Kieffer, M. J. & Lesaux, N. K. (2010). Knowledge of words, knowledge about words:

Dimensions of vocabulary in first and second language learners in sixth grade. *Read Writ*, 25, 347–373.

Kieffer, M. J. & Vukovic, R. K. (2012). Components and Contexts: Exploring

sources of reading difficulties for language minority learners and native English speakers in urban schools. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 45, 433-352.

Lesaux, N. K., & Kieffer, M. J. (2010). The effectiveness and ease of implementation

of an academic vocabulary intervention for linguistically diverse students in urban middle schools. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 15, 196-228.

Lesaux, N. K., Rupp, A. A. & Siegel, L. S. (2007). Growth in reading skills of

children from diverse linguistic backgrounds: Findings from a 5-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99, 821–83.

- Lipka, O., & Siegel, L. S. (2012). The development of reading comprehension skills in children learning English as a second language. *Reading and Writing, 25*, 1873-1898.
- Mancilla-Martinez, J. & Lesaux, N. K. (2010). Predictors of reading comprehension for struggling readers: The case of Spanish-speaking language minority learners. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*, 701-711.
- Mancilla-Martinez, J. & Lesaux, N. K. (2011). The gap between Spanish speakers' word reading and word knowledge: A longitudinal study. *Child Development, 82*, 1544–1560.
- Nakamoto, N., Lindsey, K. A. & Manis, F. R. (2007). A longitudinal analysis of English language learners' word decoding and reading comprehension. *Reading and Writing, 20*, 691-719.
- National Center for Education Statistics. *National Report Card*. Retrieved from <http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>
- Pardo, L. S. (2004). What every teacher needs to know about comprehension. *International Reading Association, 58*, 272–280.
- Pikulski, J. J. & Chard, D. J. (2005). Fluency: The bridge from decoding to reading comprehension. *International Reading Association, 58*, 510-519.
- Pikulski, J. & Templeton, S. (2004). Teaching and developing vocabulary: Key to long-term reading success. Retrieved from http://www.eduplace.com/marketing/nc/pdf/author_pages.pdf

- Proctor, P.C, August, D., Carlo, M. & Snow, C. (2005). Native Spanish-speaking children reading in English: Toward a model of comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 97, 246-256.
- Ramirez, D. R., Shapiro, E.S., & Edward, S. (2007). Cross-language relationship between Spanish and English oral reading fluency among Spanish-speaking English language learners in bilingual education. *Psychology in the Schools*, 44, 795-806.
- Rasinski, T. V., Rikli, A., & Johnston, S. (2009). Reading fluency: More than automaticity? More than a concern for primary grades? *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48, 350-361.
- Rothmier, L. A. (2011). Improving literacy achievement of low-income students. University of Central Missouri Warrensburg, Missouri.
Retrieved from
<http://centralspace.ucmo.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10768/104/>
- Stanovich (1986) Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly* , Fall, 1986.
- Swanson., H. L., Orosco., M. J., Lussier., C. M. (2011). Cognition and literacy in English language learners at risk for reading difficulties. *Journal of Education Psychology*, 104, 302 – 320.

Yildirima, K., Yildiz, M., & Ateş, S. (2011). Is vocabulary a strong variable predicting reading comprehension and does the prediction degree of vocabulary vary according to text types. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 11, 1541-1.

Appendix F

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION OF UPPER ELEMENTARY ELLS: USING TEXTS RICH WITH AMERICAN CULTURE AND HISTORY

Introduction

As part of my graduate study on the topic of improving the academic performance of ELLs, I did a few literature reviews trying to find out what researchers had done and practitioners had tried and proved to be effective in the past for teaching ELLs. I focused on the upper elementary level because most ELLs are able to master constrained skills like phonics, but have trouble comprehending what they read even when reaching proficiency level verbally. How to provide instruction to improve reading comprehension of upper elementary ELLs and prevent them from being identified as students with learning disabilities are my focal points.

Children in the upper elementary grades must be able to strategically comprehend increasingly sophisticated texts. Yet ELLs who are able to quickly develop sufficient skills in word recognition often struggle with comprehension. Among the causes, inadequate vocabulary and lack of background knowledge in culture and history are two significant barriers. Lacking background knowledge about what they read about American culture and history may hinder the reading comprehension of ELLs at the elementary level where the curriculum is heavily dependent on such information. The purpose of the present article is to review existing research on vocabulary and reading comprehension instruction for upper elementary

ELLs, and to recommend an approach to strengthen ELLs' reading comprehension by incorporating texts that are rich with American culture and history.

English Language Learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing part of the public school population. Over the past 15 years, the number of ELL students has nearly doubled. By 2015, ELL enrollment in U.S. schools will reach 10 million and by 2025 nearly one out of every four public school students will be an ELL (Migration Institute, 2010). Besides the increase in sheer numbers, what else do we know about them? These students' academic performance is well below their non-ELL peers. According to the report from the Pew Research center (2014), there was little or no improvement in the proportion of 4th and 8th grade ELLs' reaching "proficiency" levels on tests in reading from 2005 to 2013. NEA president Dennis Van Roekel points out that English language learners are the fastest-growing student population group, so providing them with high-quality services and programs is an important investment in America's future. He believes closing the achievement gap for ELLs must be a priority for the educators in the U.S. (NEA ELL Policy Brief, 2008)

Among the barriers for ELLs in upper elementary school to reach higher reading achievement, reading comprehension is a major challenge and clearly related to vocabulary knowledge and development (Taboada, 2011). Therefore, to improve ELLs' reading achievement, vocabulary and comprehension are two main areas that need to be addressed. Since more ELL readers struggle with comprehension than English-speaking students (Silverman & Hines, 2009), researchers and teachers need to understand second-language development needs during the process of learning English in order to design and provide effective instruction in reading comprehension. Because older ELLs come to the U.S. with their own culture and background

knowledge, researchers have suggested that making connections with their prior knowledge when new information is introduced may also be important.

Background knowledge is an individual's previously-acquired knowledge, also called schemata (Zhang, 2008). Why is it imperative for ELLs' schemata to be activated when learning new knowledge? New knowledge is best learned and retained when it can be linked to existing "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1990). Schema-theoretic research (schema theory) highlights reader problems related to absent (often culture-specific) schemata, as well as non-activation of schemata (Zhang, 2008). Therefore, based on ELLs' unique situation, new knowledge should be built on the basis of what is already known.

What programs can better meet their needs for improving comprehension? And what are some particular instructional strategies teachers can use to minimize this gap? With these two research questions in mind, I examined research reported in the literature on ELL programs and attempts to tailor instructional strategies for ELLs.

I reviewed classroom-based programs, instructional strategy programs, and combinations of reading curricula and instructional strategy approaches. There have not been many studies conducted on ELLs' development of reading comprehension, and even fewer about effective interventions to support ELLs' reading comprehension improvement in the upper elementary grades. Although relatively few resources offer specific, innovative ideas for teaching reading comprehension for ELLs based on their needs, I was able to locate 15 studies where researchers and practitioners attempted to design and deliver programs to address ELLs' unique needs. Below I present what I learned from these studies.

Lessons from Research

There are three commonly recommended instructional approaches within the selected studies, which are (1) instruction that combines collaborative learning and direct teaching, (2) intensive instruction in word-meaning acquisition, and (3) cognitive strategy instruction, engaging students in literacy-rich activities coupled with explicit teaching of specific literacy components. In addition, increased opportunities for speaking in the classroom could contribute to reading comprehension of ELLs by building students' oral language skills through meaningful communication and practice (O'Day, 2009). Explicit instruction, including modeling, telling and comparing, is highly effective when teaching vocabulary and comprehension. ELLs who struggle with reading comprehension often have a limited vocabulary (Yildirim et al., 2011). Even quite proficient readers face the challenge that the vocabulary they possess is only a fraction of that of native speakers and a failure to understand even a few words in a text can have severely negative effects on comprehension.

Teaching Vocabulary

The National Reading Panel (2000) reported that the comprehension process could not be defined without considering vocabulary development and instruction in detail. Many upper elementary and middle schools do not provide direct instruction in vocabulary and comprehension strategies (National Reading Panel Report, 2000). When this component is missing it can directly impact students', especially ELLs', understanding of complex texts. Lesaux and Kieffer (2010) ran a pilot study to find out if regular, systematic instruction of academic vocabulary implemented in the mainstream classroom with ELLs and native speakers could be effective in boosting students' reading comprehension skills. Their findings showed promise in developing effective, multifaceted vocabulary instruction, but the study did not discuss the

relationship between improved vocabulary and achievement in reading comprehension. Tam, Heward, Heng, and Mary (2006) also recommended direct vocabulary instruction. They examined the effects of vocabulary instruction, error correction, and fluency building on the oral reading rates and reading comprehension of ELLs who were struggling readers. This intervention program improved the oral reading rates and reading comprehension of the ELLs.

Likewise, Silverman (2013) explored the relationship between teachers' instruction and ELLs' vocabulary and comprehension in grades 3-5. Using field notes and student utterances to understand the context, researchers coded teacher statements as vocabulary instruction, comprehension instruction, other instruction, or non-instruction. The one-year investigation showed that (a) frequency of teachers' instruction related to definitions, word relations, and morpho-syntax was positively associated with an increase in vocabulary; (b) frequency of teachers' instruction related to application across contexts and literal comprehension was negatively associated with change in vocabulary; and (c) frequency of teachers' instruction related to inferential comprehension was positively associated with an increase in comprehension.

In a different study conducted by Taboada (2011), findings suggested that academic vocabulary and reading comprehension skills were crucial and should be integrated to foster the academic language development of ELLs. In this study, two types of vocabulary instruction were tested for their effects on reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and perception of autonomy and reading engagement in fourth-grade ELLs. In the contextualized vocabulary instruction (CVI) framework, four reading comprehension strategies were integrated with two autonomy-supportive

(motivation) practices and implicit instruction of scientific vocabulary. In the intensified vocabulary instruction (IVI) framework, students experienced explicit instruction of scientific vocabulary in relation to reading, without explicit strategy instruction or attention to autonomy supports. The results of the study suggested that CVI supported both reading comprehension and the perception of autonomous learning in students and IVI increased academic vocabulary skills.

The findings are helpful in understanding reading instruction for ELLs. When the instruction in academic vocabulary is delivered as part of meta-cognitive instruction along with choice and relevance in text selection, ELLs' reading comprehension and sense of autonomy increases. However, the above studies suggest that providing instruction in vocabulary alone does not necessarily improve reading comprehension. How to impact on reading comprehension is further explored in the next section.

Teaching Reading Comprehension

A few reading comprehension instructional strategies have been used effectively with ELLs. Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is an instructional technique designed to improve reading comprehension (Hitchcock, Dimino, Kurki, Wilkins & Gersten, 2011). It provides a set of instructional strategies designed to improve the reading comprehension of students with diverse abilities. These strategies include: putting students in small, heterogeneous groups that spend large amounts of time engaged in academic-related strategic discussion and assist one another in understanding word meanings, getting the main idea, asking and answering questions, and relating what they are learning to previous knowledge. Hitchcock et al. (2011) had teachers implement CSR at the classroom level using scaffolded instruction to guide

students in their independent comprehension strategy use. Students applied the strategies while working in small cooperative learning groups. CSR can be used in all subject areas. CSR may be an effective approach for ELLs because the peer interaction component increases opportunity for ELLs to discuss texts with their native-speaking peers in a non-threatening and low-anxiety atmosphere. However, this study revealed that CSR did not have a statistically significant impact on ELLs' reading comprehension. This is a very surprising finding as similar methods have proven to be effective for ELLs in other studies, such as in O'Day (2009).

Another potential instructional strategy is the balanced literacy instruction (BLI) (O'Day, 2009). Specifically, BLI includes a balanced combination of interactive instructional strategies such as using more difficult texts, guiding students to actively engage in activities, including accountable discussion about texts and writing and explicit teaching of literacy skills. This instruction allows the creation of meaning through readers' active interaction with both the written text and with others. Reading aloud to students and providing them with explicit information through direct instruction are two instructional strategies used in BLI. In addition to explicit instruction, teacher-students' and students-students' interactions are also important. Increasing the opportunity for ELLs to engage in discussion through meaningful communication and practice with native English speakers in the classroom may also contribute to reading comprehension (O'Day, 2009).

Combining Specific Programs with Instruction in Reading Comprehension

Some researchers go beyond experimenting with instructional designs for teaching vocabulary and comprehension. They attempt to understand whether integration of content-area texts could improve ELLs' reading comprehension. Akrofi

(2012), Biemiller and Boote. (2006) and McKay (1982) argue that to promote English language learning, educators should not only provide sound instruction, but also carefully select texts for students to read.

Akrofi (2012) claims that the aesthetic interaction between the reader and the text is key to promote English language learning. He urges educators to use the five stages of the reading process — pre-reading, reading, responding, exploring, and applying — to teach English to ELLs. Additionally, Biemiller and Boote (2006) argue that by using children's literature and providing word meaning acquisition during instruction (Study 1) as well as increasing the percentage and number of word meanings acquired (Study 2), ELLs can effectively and efficiently improve vocabulary development and reading comprehension.

In the same vein, Hinde et al. (2011) used a program called GeoLiteracy for English Language Learners with 1431 students between grades 3 and 8. They argue that ELLs are unfamiliar with geography as well as civics, history and economics — all of which are important components in the GeoLiteracy for English Language Learners program. By using this program, ELLs could learn both language and also content, which could help them with comprehension. The findings revealed that the reading comprehension achievement of students, especially ELLs, who use GeoLiteracy, improved significantly. Having adequate background knowledge is necessary if one is to comprehend what one is reading, and lack of instruction with a focus on background knowledge building may ultimately affect students' reading achievement negatively (Hinde et al., 2011).

Building Cultural Knowledge

The existing studies promise positive results in improving reading comprehension of ELLs when combining content-specific teaching and careful text selection with language skill acquisition. If one of the goals of education is to prepare students for life, schools need to provide an environment where all students can become empowered by understanding cultural demands (Akrofi, 2012). Learning a language is not only learning the linguistics, but also the associated culture and history (Clayton, 2009). Learning to read for meaning relies on understanding the cultural references in the text being read. However, frequently, when students are behind their peers in reading, as is often the case for ELLs, their remedial programs often emphasize isolated vocabulary instruction. They are not exposed to authentic texts or challenged to think critically or inferentially about stories. In the English language, words often have multiple meanings and these meanings are often embedded in culture-related texts (Biemiller et al., 2006). Frequently, ELLs work diligently to translate and visualize concepts literally. Figurative language such as "sweet tooth" and American cultural activities such as third base in a baseball game, or turkey for Thanksgiving can't be translated literally but may be taught through culturally-rich texts.

Culture is a part of the educational process that has been virtually invisible in ELL instruction, but can no longer remain so (Cummins, 2005). Many children's books are filled with American culture and history. Culture may be an abstract concept, but it can be felt ubiquitously. The American culture is filled with rich contents: Western ghost towns, Barbie dolls, Superman, jazz, baseball, Star Wars, etc.. The goal is to teach students to learn from text that include specific aspects of

American culture, so that ELLs can integrate such information with what is already known and draw valid inferences.

According to Hinde et al.'s (2011) philosophy, teaching the program *GeoLiteracy* which is rich with knowledge of civics, history and economics — content that may be unfamiliar or inaccessible to ELLs because of their lack of background knowledge— has helped ELLs improve their reading comprehension. Using texts rich with American culture and history may achieve the same effect in a different area of study. According to schema theory, text does not carry meaning itself but rather provides hints to allow readers to create meaning from prior knowledge; the text triggers and builds on existing schemata (Zhang, 2008). By using texts rich with American culture, students may be able to activate and deepen their understanding of their own culture by comparing and contrasting it with the American culture they are experiencing. For ELLs, it is imperative to make both teaching and learning culturally relevant, and to enable access to knowledge upon which new skills and concepts can be built. It is critical for teachers to understand the ways in which students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds influence their experiences when learning to read.

Criteria for Choosing Books

Akrofi et al. (2013) suggest that using children's literature can improve ELLs' language learning and provide an implicit endorsement of acculturation. They think that biculturality is a powerful gift and should be promoted. In promoting the idea of biculturality, literature is an ideal vehicle for introducing cultural assumptions and provides comprehensible input for ELLs at any stage of their second language acquisition. It can be useful in developing both linguistic knowledge and content knowledge. Akrofi et al. (2013) argue that an examination of a foreign culture through

literature may increase students' understanding of that culture. Thus carefully selecting texts rich with American culture and history is an important step in the model I am recommending. American culture can be presented with children's books that include a wide range of topics, such as holidays, sports, music, home practices, school, society, government, and law. By using children's books rich with these topics, ELLs may be able to develop not only linguistic knowledge, but also content knowledge, which may improve their reading comprehension. A sample list of books I recommended is below.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Gr.</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>History</u>
109 Forgotten American Heroes	Chris Ying and Brian McMullen	5	X	X
A Christmas Carol	Charles Dickens & Jane Resnick	4	X	
A Fine, Fine School	Sharon Creech	3	X	
A Picnic in October	Eve Bunting	3	X	X
A Turkey for Thanksgiving	Eve Bunting	4	X	
Amber on the Mountain	Tony Johnston	4	X	
Any Small Goodness	Tony Johnston	4	X	
Araminta Spookie 1: My Haunted House	Angie Sage	4	X	
Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky	Faith Ringgold	5		X
Baseball in April and Other Stories	Gary Soto		X	
Bully	Patricia Polacco	4	X	
Catch a Tiger by the Toe	Ellen S. Levine	5		X
Centerfield Ballhawk	Matt Christopher	3	X	
Clemente!	Bryan Collier & Willie Perdomo	4		X
Colonial Kids	Laurie Carlson	5		X
Creativity	E. B. Lewis	4	X	
Everything on a Waffle	Polly Horvath	4	X	
Frida Maria: A Story of the Old Southwest	Deborah N. Lattimore	4		X
George Washington	Ingri D'Aulaire;	3		X
How Tia Lola Came to Stay	Julia Alvarez	5	X	X
I Am Rosa Parks	Rosa Parks	5		X
I Have a Dream, Writings and Speeches That Changed the World. Martin Luther King, Jr.	Harper Collins	5		X
Landed	Milly Lee, Yangsook Choi	5		X
Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.	Doreen Rappaport, Bryan Collier	5	X	X
Matilda	Roald Dahl	3	X	

Nobody Gonna Turn Me 'Round: Stories and Songs of the Civil Rights Movement	Doreen Rappaport, Shane W. Evans	5		X
Nutcracker, The	E.T.A. Hoffman	3	X	
Safe At Home	Sharon Robinson	3	X	X
Smokey Night	Eve Bunting	5	X	
Squanto's Journey	Joseph Brucha	5		X
Thanksgiving on Thursday	Mary Pope Osborne	4	X	
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever	Barbara Robinson	4	X	
The Best Halloween Ever	Barbara Robinson	4	X	
The Composition	Antonio Skarmeta, Alfonso Ruano	4	X	X
The Cricket in Times Square	George Selden	4	X	
The Cricket in Times Square	George Selden	4	X	
The Fourth of July Story	Alice Dalgliesh	3		X
The Light and the Glory for Children	Peter Marshall and David Manuel	5		X
The Pledge of Allegiance	Bill Martin	3		
The Recess Queen	Kinuko Y. Craft	3	X	
The Story of America's Birthday	Patricia A. Pingry	3		X
The Story of the Star Spangled Banner	Patricia A. Pingry	3		X
The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig	Eugene Trivizas	3	X	
Turkeys, Pilgrims and Indian Corn: The Story of the Thanksgiving Symbols,	Edna Barth			
We the People: The Story of Our Constitution	Lynne Cheney	3		X
When the Horses Ride by: Children in the Times of War	Eloise Greenfield, Jan Spivey Gilchrist	5	X	X

There are other suggestions regarding choosing curriculum for ELLs. For example, culturally responsive literacy instruction requires choosing relevant multicultural literature and other reading materials to which the student can personally relate. Students benefit from “windows, bridges, and mirrors,” windows so that they can see into other worlds, mirrors so that they can see themselves reflected in what they read, and bridges to connect the two.

ELL Instruction Lesson Design

According to existing research, a number of strategies have been proven effective when working with proficient ELL readers who struggle with comprehension. These include collaborative learning (Hitchcock et al., 2011; Lesaux

et al., 2010; O'Day, 2009; Taboada et al., 2011), extensive instruction on vocabulary through literature (Lesaux et al., 2010; McLaughlin et al., 2000; O'Day, 2009; Silverman, 2013; Taboada et al., 2011; Yildirim et al., 2011), scaffolding instruction (Akrofi, 2012; Barbar, 2013; Biemiller, 2006; Hinde, 2011; Taboada et al., 2011), guided reading (Akrofi, 2012; Tam et al., 2006), read alouds (Akrofi, 2012; O'Day, 2009; Taboada et al., 2011), and promoting higher levels of text analysis and communication of ideas (Akrofi, 2012; Hinde et al., 2011; Taboada et al., 2011; O'Day, 2009). Effective scaffolding to enable ELLs to access complex text is recommended by multiple researchers. To scaffold effectively, teachers should know their ELLs' reading proficiency levels and preferences by monitoring and documenting specific aspects of achievement and related instructional actions. For example, in O'Day's article (2009), he mentions that most teachers kept written notes on each student. These notes indicated students' reading behaviors and achievements students could perform either independently or with assistance. The aesthetic reading mentioned by Hitchcock (2011), a process in which both readers and writers attempt to come to a conclusion about a given text, is also a critical approach when working with ELLs since it emphasizes the connection between the readers' previous experience and the reading text.

As discussed before, intensified and contextualized vocabulary instruction (Taboada, 2011) is recommended. Introducing identified vocabulary, phrases or idioms is an important step. There are two systems involved when learning word meanings. One includes verbal information; the other, non-verbal (images) (Biemiller, 2006). When we learn a word, we activate real-world images that we associate with the concept. Therefore, accessing a word in the lexicon involves both the verbal and

the imagery system, especially with ELLs. Therefore, teachers should use as many images as possible when teaching new vocabulary. To promote higher order thinking, aesthetic interaction, teachers explain and model through a think-aloud, answering the questions that students have identified. Students read the text between partners or in teacher-guided reading. Guided reading is an important step to model accurate pronunciation and intonation for ELLs. Teachers can also use multi-media to complete this task such as book-on-tapes or videos. To expose their students to quality literature and higher order thinking skills, teachers should utilize graphic organizers, model thinking aloud, and stop often during the text to question and summarize.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (Hitchcock et al., 2011) is another important instructional technique designed to improve reading comprehension. Teachers use more difficult texts, ask higher-level questions, and then guide student in a series of actively-engaged activities, such as accountable discussion about text and writing. Here is a sample lesson plan template.

Vocabulary, phrase and idioms		
Culture related words, phrases, idioms	General academic vocabulary	Domain-specific words
Lesson Plan		
Objective(s)		
Foundational knowledge		
Check for understanding - formative questions	1. 2. 3.	
Possible answers	1. 2. 3.	
Instruction Strategies	Process	Procedure
Cognitive engagement	Select high quality texts	Based on students' proficiency reading levels, teacher selects texts that are challenging and can also trigger and build on students' existing schemata. By using texts rich with American culture, students are able to activate and deepen their understanding of their own culture when comparing it with the American culture they are experiencing.
	Preview and set purpose for reading (help activate background knowledge)	The goal is to teach students to learn from text, to discern which information is critical, to integrate such information with what is already known, and to draw valid inferences. Teacher may ask students questions, such as What do you know about this topic? What kind of questions do you have regarding to this topic?

Intensive instruction	Explicit instruction on vocabulary, phrases and idioms	<p>Teacher models and teaches -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. read the selected words, phrases, idioms 2. analyze the words' structure, such as prefix, suffix, syllables, compound words 3. introduce the meanings of the words, phrases and idioms 4. use the words, phrases and idioms in contexts 5. show visual cues <p>Students practice -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. practice reading them individually 2. practice reading them with a partner 3. teacher guided reading the words, phrases and idioms 4. students make sentences by using these words, phrases and idioms (verbally and/or in written form) 5. draw pictures of the words, phrases and idioms 6. groups discuss students' sentences to check for understanding
Collaborative learning & direct instruction	Read the text	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. students read one section (paragraph, section, page) individually for the 1st time 2. either partner read or teacher guided reading for the 2nd time (section by section)
	Think and talk about the text	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify text elements (whole group or partner activity, using graphic organizer) 2. tackle tough section(s) (students write down section/sentence, phrase or idiom they have trouble understanding) 3. teacher discusses student raised questions
	Make connections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. students compare and contrast newly read text knowledge with previous experiences to foster newly learned knowledge (Venn Diagram, two column notes) with a partner or in a small group 2. sharing time: partner, small group or class discusses about similarities and differences among different cultures that relate to the read text
	Check for understanding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. students answer questions (verbal or in written form) either individually or with a partner 2. teacher discusses students' answered questions

Discussion

In my over years of experience of working with ELLs, it is not unusual for an ELL student to read a passage beautifully but then be unable to answer comprehension

questions correctly. This is because decoding and comprehending the text require different processes. With ELLs, difficulties with comprehension tends to be associated with limited vocabulary and background knowledge. The studies cited in this article support instructional practices and programs that make extensive use of collaborative learning, vocabulary instruction, and high quality texts. Although most of the interventions led to positive results, only a few of the research studies lasted longer than a year and some only experimented with a few students. For reliable and optimal conclusions, we need to design longitudinal research studies with large-scale and randomized samples. There are many possible ways for us to explore this subject. We have to systematically experiment with a variety of different programs that combine quantitative and qualitative studies to fully understand how various interventions affect the development of ELLs' reading comprehension.

Conclusion of the Literature Review

It is clear that to improve reading comprehension, providing vocabulary instruction in isolation is not enough. We need to also emphasize the role of cognitive engagement in ELLs' development of literacy skills through using high quality texts (O'Day, 2009). This literature review addressed two objectives. The first was to examine research articles that relate to instruction on vocabulary and comprehension, as well as programs for improving upper elementary ELLs' reading. Among the findings are several proven instructional strategies that can be grouped into three categories: (1) instruction that combines collaborative learning and direct teaching, (2) intensive instruction in word meaning acquisition, and (3) cognitive strategy instruction. Teachers can provide opportunities to encourage interactions through discussion among students and between teachers and students, use scaffolding to

model and coach, and frequently read aloud to students. In addition to providing research-based instruction, teachers also need to emphasize on the role of cognitive engagement in learners' development of literacy skills through high quality texts.

The second objective of the article is to recommend a specific instructional design for teaching reading comprehension to ELLs in the upper elementary level, including what texts should be considered when teaching. Using texts rich with American culture and history can enhance ELLs' learning and comprehension and create excitement in the classroom. The most wonderful thing about adding a cultural perspective to the lessons is that teachers can provide opportunities for all their students to engage in culturally-relevant discussions while their ELLs learn new U.S. culture and history. Students will be motivated to engage in the texts since they know they will have chance to share their own stories. As native English-speaking and ELL students share insights with each other, they will develop appreciation for one another's cultural perspectives.

As we enroll more and more ELLs in the U.S. school system, we must find a way to design tailored programs to reach out to ELLs who struggle with reading comprehension. It is time to focus on well-designed scientific research to define more effective teaching practices for ELLs. In the meantime, though, teachers should apply what is known so far.

REFERENCES

- Biemiller, A. & Boote, C. (2006). An effective method for building meaning vocabulary in primary grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98, 44-62.
- Brandywine School District. Information retrieved from www.brandywineschools.org/
- Clayton, J. B. (2003). One classroom, many worlds: Teaching and learning in the cross-cultural classroom. Retrieved from www.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/chapter6pdf
- Comber, B. and Nixon, H. (2011). Critical reading comprehension in an era of accountability. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 38, 167-179.
- Cummins, J., Bismilla, V., Chow, P., Cohen, S., Giampapa, F., Leoni, L., Sandhu, P., and Sastri, P. (2005). Affirming Identity in Multilingual Classrooms. *The Whole Child*, 63, 38-43.
- Hinde, E.R., Osbourn Popp, S. E., Jimenez-Silva and Dorn, R.I. (2011). Linking geography to reading and English language learners' achievement in US elementary and middle school classrooms. *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*, 20, 47-63.
- Hitchcock, J.H., Dimino, J., Kurki, A., Wilkins, C., and Gersten, R. (2010). The impact of collaborative strategic reading on the reading comprehension of

- grade 5 students in linguistically diverse schools. *Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education*. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/REL_20114001.pdf.
- National Center for Education and Regional Assistance*, March.
- Key, L. V., Bradley, J. A., Bradley, K. S. (2010). Stimulating instruction in social studies. *The Social Studies, 101*, 117-120.
- Lesaux, N. K., & Kieffer, M. J. (2010). The effectiveness and ease of implementation of an academic vocabulary intervention for linguistically diverse students in urban middle schools. *Reading Research Quarterly, 15*, 196-228.
- McKay, S. (1982). Literature in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 16*, pp. 529-536.
- McLaughlin, B., August, D., Snow, C., Carlo, M., Dressler, C., White, C., Lively, T., Lippman, D. (2000). Vocabulary improvement and reading in English language learners: An intervention study. *Reading Research Quarterly, 49*, 31-60.
- McNabb, M. (2006). Evaluation study of "Language, Literacy, & Vocabulary!" *National Geographic, 1-28*.
- Moll, L.C., Amanti, C. Neff, D. and Gonzalez, N. (1990). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 31*, 132-141.
- NEA ELL Policy Brief. (2008). Retrieved from [http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/ELL_Policy_Brief_Fall_08_\(2\).pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/ELL_Policy_Brief_Fall_08_(2).pdf)

- National Reading Panel Report. (2010). Retrieved from
www.nationalreadingpanel.org/
- O'Day, J. (2009). Good instruction is good for everyone—Or is it? English language learners in a balanced literacy approach. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 14*, 97-119.
- Proctor, P.C., Dalton, B., Grisha, D.L. (2012). Scaffolding English language learners and struggling readers in a universal literacy environment with embedded strategy instruction and vocabulary support. *Journal of literacy research, 39*, 71–93.
- Ruiz, P. J. (2010). Art as a tool for teachers of English language learners.
 Retrieved from <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/>
- Silverman, R. & Hines, S. (2009). The effects of multimedia-enhanced instruction on the vocabulary of English-language learners and non-English language learners in pre-kindergarten through second grade. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 101*, 305-314.
- Silverman, R.D., Proctor, C.P., Harring, J.R., Mitchell, M.A. , Meyer, A.G. (2013). Teachers' instruction and students' vocabulary and comprehension: An exploratory study with English monolingual and Spanish–English bilingual students in grades 3–5. *Reading Research Quarterly, 49*, 31–60.
- Snow, C., Proctor, C. P., Carlo, M., & August, D., (2005). Native Spanish-Speaking children reading in English: Toward a model of comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 97*, 246-256.

- Staden, A.V. (2012). Put reading first: Positive effects of direct instruction and scaffolding for ESL learners struggling with reading. *Perspectives in Education*, 29, 10–21.
- Taboada, A. & Rutherford, V. (2011). Developing reading comprehension and academic vocabulary for English language learners through science content: A formative experiment. *Reading Psychology*, 32, 113-157.
- Tam, K. Y., Heward, W. L., & Heng, M. A. (2006). A reading instruction intervention program for English-language learners who are struggling readers. *Journal of Special Education*, 40, 79-93.
- Wilson, N., Jackson, M., and Cruce, D. (2008). *DE English Language Learners Reports*. Retrieved from <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/info/reports/ellr/default.shtml>
- Yildirim, K., Yildiz, M., & Ateş, S. (2011). Is vocabulary a strong variable predicting reading comprehension and does the prediction degree of vocabulary vary according to text types. *Educational sciences: Theory & practice*, 11, 1541-1547.
- Zhang, X. (2008). The Effects of Formal Schema on Reading Comprehension—An Experiment with Chinese EFL Readers. *Computational Linguistics and Chinese Language Processing*, 13, 197-214.

Appendix G

PRESENTATION ON THE TOPIC OF ELL POPULATION CHANGE AND SUMMARY OF MY LITERATURE REVIEW

PRESENTATION PART I

Improving Curriculum and Instruction to Better Serve English Language Learners

This workshop was presented at our curriculum meeting on October 14, 2014 right after school. There were 34 staff members attended this thirty minute presentation.

Improving Curriculum and Instruction To Better Serve English Language Learners

Part I

ELL Population Change Summary of My Literature Review Action Plan



Jessie Chen
October 14, 2014

Why Are We Here?

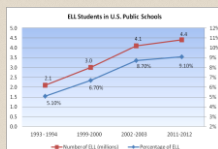
- Have you seen an increase in ELL population in your class?
- Is ELLs' academic performance meeting your expectation?
- Do you often feel frustrated with working with ELLs?
- Do you want to find ways to better serve the ELL population?

Let's Work Together to Improve

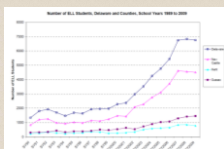
Introduction

National ELL Population Growth

In 2004, ELL enrollment in U.S. schools was 5.1 million
Now, ELL enrollment in U.S. schools has reached 9.1 million
By 2015, ELL enrollment in U.S. schools will reach 10 million
By 2025 one out of every four public school students will be an ELL



(Migration Institute, 2014)



New Castle County ELL growth trend, 1989 to 2009 (latest)

Goal of My Presentation

- Share my research- and evidence-based findings on effective reading instructions for ELLs at the elementary level
- Discuss how to improve reading instruction to Lombardy's ELLs

ELL at Lombardy

	2012-2013	2013-2014
English Language Learner	6.9%	7.3%
Low Income	35.6%	26.9%
Special Education	12.2%	11.3%

<http://profiles.doc.k12.de.us/SchoolProfiles/>

Native Languages Spoken at Lombardy

Language	Language	Language
Spanish	Chinese	Pashto
Bengali	Creole	Urdu
Panjabi	Korean	Hindi
German	Turic	Vietnamese

Lombardy Star Assessment Report

Spring, 2013- 2014

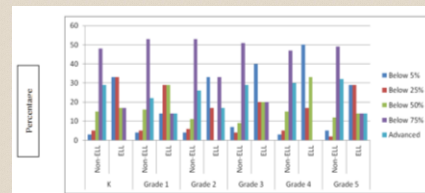


Figure 2. Comparison of Non-ELL and ELL performance on STAR at Lombardy

Research Findings

ELLs have more challenges than Native English

Speaking students when learning to read because ELLs

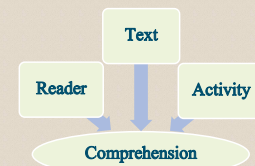
have to acquire oral proficiency and literacy skills in a second language at the same time.

(Pikulski & Templeton, 2004)

Reading Comprehension

RC is influenced by 3 elements:

Reading comprehension (RC) is the process of creating meaning from texts and is the ultimate goal of reading.



(Pardo, 2004)

Suggested Instructional Strategies

- I. Instruction that combines collaborative learning and direct teaching
- II. Intensive instruction in word meaning acquisition
- III. Cognitive strategy instruction

(Hitchcock et al., 2011; Lesaux et al., 2010; O'Day, 2009; Taboada et al., 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2008; Silverman, 2013; Yildirim et al., 2011; Akroff, 2012; Barba, 2012; Riemiller, 2006; Hinde, 2011; Tam et al., 2006)

Schema Theory

- Text triggers and builds on existing schemata
- Text does not carry meaning itself but rather provides hints to allow readers to create meaning from prior knowledge.
- By using texts rich with American culture, students may be able to activate and deepen their understanding through their own culture by comparing and contrasting it with the American culture they are experiencing.

(Zhang, 2008)

Focus of Instruction

Emphasize the role of cognitive engagement in ELLs' development of literacy skills through using high quality texts

(Hitchcock et al., 2011; Lesaux et al., 2010; O'Day, 2008; Taboada et al., 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2006; Silverman, 2013; Yildirim et al., 2011; Akroff, 2012; Barber, 2013; Biesmiller, 2006; Hinde, 2011; Tam et al., 2008)

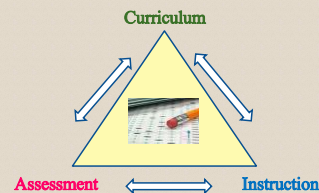
For example:

Culture and History

- Learning a language is not only learning the linguistics, but also the associated culture and history.
- Learning to read for meaning relies on understanding the cultural references in the text being read.

(Clayton, 2009)

Teaching & Learning Process



Action Plan

	Curriculum	Assessment	Instruction
I DO	Select supplement reading materials for you to use in addition to your Journey's reading program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist you to progress monitoring your ELLs' progress ▪ Assist you to analyze the collected assessment data ▪ Assist you to group your students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide 5 lesson plans each for 3 ELL clustered classrooms ▪ Provide all necessary materials for the lesson implementation ▪ Demonstrate a lesson if needed
You DO	Use the selected materials in your classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow the progress monitoring assessment schedule that I provided ▪ Use the assessment tools that I prepared for you ▪ Implement the assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the lesson plans ▪ Collect related data, which includes students' work and your reflection

Action Plan & Implementation Timeline

Date	Activity
October 14, 2014	Presentation Part I (faculty meeting) •Research finding & Action Plan
October 27 -31, 2014	Presentation Part II (grade level PLC) •Share specific strategies for grades K-1, 2-3 and 4-5 & lesson plans
October 27 -31, 2014	Meet with individual teacher to plan the lesson implementation schedule based on their daily schedule
October, 2014 – March, 2015	Lesson implementation, progress monitoring assessment, data collection, review data for first and second cycles at RtI Cycle Reviews and student grouping and instruction

Feedback and Suggestions Welcome!

PRESENTATION PART II

Strategies for ELL

I presented the second workshop on October 28, 2014 at our curriculum meeting, which was schedule right after school. There were 36 staff members attended this thirty minute presentation. Before the workshop I passed a short survey asking teachers to provide feedback for the two workshops and also let me know who would be willing to try out my lesson plans and interviews. I asked the staff to return the survey in my mailbox within a week.

Improving Curriculum and Instruction To Better Serve English Language Learners

Part II

- Strategies for ELLs
- Grade Level CCSS
- Lesson Plan Template
- Recommended Reading List
- Assessment Schedule (Grade 2 and up)



Jessie Chen
October 28, 2014

Suggested Instructional Strategies

- Instruction that combines collaborative learning and direct teaching
- Intensive instruction in word meaning acquisition
- Cognitive strategy instruction

(Hinchcock et al., 2011; Lesaux et al., 2010; O'Day, 2009; Taboada et al., 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2006; Silverman, 2013; Yildirim et al., 2011; Akrofi, 2012; Barber, 2013; Biemiller, 2006; Hinde, 2011; Tam et al., 2006)

CCSS Speaking and Listening Standard #1

Grade	Description
K	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small groups and large groups
1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small groups and large groups
2	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small groups and large groups

CCSS Speaking and Listening Standard #1 (Cont'd)

Grade	Description
3	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
4	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
5	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Lesson Plan Template (Kindergarten and 1st Grade)

Vocabulary, phrases and idioms		
Culture related words, phrases, idioms	General academic vocabulary	Domain-specific words
Lesson Plan		
Objective(s)	Skill focus for the lesson	
Check for understanding - formative questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What does the author want you to know? What did you learn from the story? What new words or phrases did you learn today? 	
Instruction Strategies	Process	Procedure
Intensive instruction	Explicit instruction on vocabulary, phrases and idioms, and build background knowledge	
Collaborative learning & direct instruction	Read the text	1. Teacher reads the story
	Think and talk about the text	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly text elements - whole group Tackle tough section(s) - ask students to share their confused parts or words/phrases of the story Teacher discusses student raised questions
	Make connections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students compare and contrast newly heard text knowledge with previous experiences to foster newly learned knowledge - whole group Sharing time: class discusses about similarities and differences among different cultures that relate to the read story
	Check for understanding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students verbally answer teacher asked questions Students draw pictures based on teacher asked question(s)

Lesson Plan Template (2nd grade and up)

Vocabulary, phrases and idioms		
Culture related words, phrases, idioms	General academic vocabulary	Domain-specific words
Lesson Plan		
Objective(s)	Skill focus for the lesson	
Check for understanding - formative questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is the theme of the passage/text (what does the author want you to know)? What did you learn from the passage/text? What new words or phrases did you learn today? Please use your own words to summarize (verbal or written) the passage/text 	
Instruction Strategies	Process	Procedure
Intensive instruction	Explicit instruction on vocabulary, phrases and idioms, and build background knowledge	
Collaborative learning & direct instruction	Read the text	1. Teacher reads the story or students read with a partner
	Think and talk about the text	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify text elements (whole group or partner activity, using graphic organizers) Tackle tough section(s) (students write down section sentence, phrase or idiom they have trouble understanding) Teacher discusses student raised questions
	Make connections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students compare and contrast newly heard story with previous experiences to foster newly learned knowledge (Venn Diagram, two column notes) with a partner or in a small group Sharing time: partner, small group or class discusses about similarities and differences among different cultures that relate to the read text
	Check for understanding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students answer questions (verbal or in written form) either individually or with a partner teacher discusses students' answered questions

Strategies

Teaching vocabulary

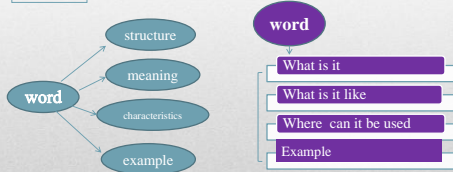
- Role playing or pantomiming
- Do quick drawings on the board
- Use gestures
- Show real objects
- Point to pictures

Strategies

Teaching vocabulary (cont'd)

Use a word web to organize details about a word.

Examples:



Strategies

Teaching vocabulary (cont'd)

Word-Information-Memory Strategy

Word	Information	Memory

Strategies (cont'd)

Teaching Comprehension

- Show and read the front and back pages of the book, as well as the dedication or table of contents page
- Provide background knowledge on concepts that students will need to comprehend the story
- Use pictures, maps, objects, or drawings on the board
- Pre-teach five to six key words they will encounter frequently and will need to use for the discussions
- Think aloud about what you are reading; stop every once in a while and ask students to summarize what you have read so far
- Provide opportunities for students to discuss the story and make connections through the read aloud

Focus of Instruction

Emphasize the role of cognitive engagement in ELLs' development of literacy skills through using high quality texts

(Hitchcock et al., 2011; Lescure et al., 2010; O'Day, 2009; Taboada et al., 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2006; Silverman, 2013; Yildirim et al., 2011; Aksofi, 2012; Barbar, 2013; Bicmiller, 2006; Hinde, 2011; Tam et al., 2006)

For example:

Culture and History

- Learning a language is not only learning the linguistics, but also the associated culture and history.
- Learning to read for meaning relies on understanding the cultural references in the text being read.

(Clayton, 2009)

Kindergarten

Title	Author
Arthur's Valentine	Marc Brown
Happy Mother's Day	Steven Kroll
Halloween	Gail Gibbons
Happy Thanksgiving	Margaret McNamara
Arthur's Perfect Christmas	Marc Brown

1st Grade

Title	Author
Arthur's First Sleepover	Marc Brown
Martin Luther King, Jr.	David Adler
George Washington	Philip Abraham
Johnny Appleseed	Patsy Jensen
The Journey of the One and Only Declaration of Independence	Judith St. George

2nd Grade

Title	Author
Christmas Around the World	Mike Jackson
Liddy's Sayings	Lee Justice
Wagon Wheels	Barbara Brenner
The April Fool's Day Mystery	Marion Markham
The Bravest Dog Ever – the True Story of Balto	Natalie Standiford

3rd Grade

Title	Author
Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride	Pam Muñoz Ryan
Centerfield Ballhawk	Matt Christopher
Christopher Columbus	Stephen Krensky
Presidents Day	Lynda Sorensen
How the Grinch Stole Christmas	

4th Grade

Title	Author
If Your Name was Changed at Ellis Island	Ellen Levine
So You Want to Be President?	Judith George
America's Lighthouses: An Illustrated History	Francis Ross Holland, Jr.
Thanksgiving: The True Story	Penny Colman
Celebrating Columbus Day	Elaine Landau

5th Grade

Title	Author
Fire! In Yellowstone – a True Adventure	Robert Ekey
Eagle Song	Joseph Bruchac
Molly's Pilgrim	Barbara Cohen
God Bless Us, Every One!: The Story Behind a Christmas Carol	John Rhys-Davies
Sunder	William Armstrong

Appendix H

PROGRESS MONITORING ASSESSMENT AND RTI IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

ELLs have not been doing well in reading comparing to their native English speaking peers at Lombardy. As part of my research project, I set out to determine the cause to this problem through interviewing teachers and conducting a questionnaire survey. The results assisted me in identifying a critical step that is missing from many teachers in the process of ELL students' learning: the academic progress monitoring and corresponding intervention. Only 30% of the teachers agreed/strongly agreed that they progress monitored periodically and provided instruction based on the progress monitoring data. Only when teachers know what their ELL's needs are, can they begin to provide effective instruction for students to make satisfactory progress.

STAR Reading is a standardized, computer-adaptive assessment created by Renaissance Learning, Inc., for use in K-12 education (Renaissance.com). STAR Reading assesses students' reading skills and comprehension. Students take the assessment on the computer, and their performance is scored immediately and automatically. The purpose of the STAR assessments is to provide information to teachers about students' strength and weaknesses in reading skills and to document growth. Teachers are able to view and print a number of reports at the individual, classroom, and grade level in order to use the information for tailoring instruction. All BSD students at the elementary level are required to take STAR Reading three times a year: August, December and May. Students who tested below the 40th percentile on

Star are identified as Response to Intervention (RtI) Tier II students, students who tested below 25th percentile are identified as RtI Tier III students. These students will receive extra reading support. Students who receive extra reading support, including ELLs and other struggling readers, are required to take STAR Progress Monitoring Assessment biweekly. However, due to limited time and lack of administrative reinforcement, most teachers do not progress monitor their ELL students' progress. Some teachers think since the ELL tutor works with the ELLs, they do not need to spend time on their ELLs including progress monitoring their s progress.

To make sure teachers progress monitor their ELLs' progresses, so they can provide tailored instruction based on Star and Dibels testing results, with my principal's support, I designed the following Progress Monitoring Assessment and RtI Implementation Schedule based on the district's requirements. To assist teachers with the progress monitoring, I hung a big calendar on the wall outside the school's computer lab with testing dates and teachers' names on them. Since all teachers bring their students to the computer lab once a week, the calendar serves as a reminder for them. I also coordinated with teachers, so that they could take turns to assess their grade level ELLs as a group. Before I asked the teachers to follow my schedule, I explained the schedule with teachers at grade level PLCs beforehand to gain their support.

Progress Monitoring Assessments and RtI Implementation

2014-2015 School Year Lombardy Elementary School

Date	Activity	Assessment
Fall Screening 8/24–9/20 All students need to be tested Screening Assessments: Grades: K-1 DIBELS Next Grades: 2-5 Star		
8/24–9/19	Students in grades 2-5 who tested below the 25 th percentile on Star in the above screening will be further assessed by using:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIBELS Next: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ First Sound Fluency (FSF) ✓ Letter Naming Fluency (LFN) ✓ Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) ✓ Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) ✓ DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF)
9/20–9/29	Placement discussions in grade level PLCs	Data analysis and determination of placement of RtI Tier II and III students
9/30–11/7	RtI Cycle I	120 minutes instruction per week for Tier III students and 90 minutes per week for Tier II students
10/27–11/7	RtI Cycle I Assessment	Tier II and Tier III students only. Based on the targeted areas, the following assessment tools can be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIBELS Next Grade K <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ First Sound Fluency (FSF) ✓ Letter Naming Fluency (LFN) ✓ Phoneme Segmentation Fluency

		(PSF) Grade One and Above ✓ Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) ✓ DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) Grade Two and Above • Star
11/10–1/17	Placement discussions in grade level PLCs	Data analysis and determination of placement of RtI Tier II and III students
11/18–1/9	RtI Cycle II	120 minutes instruction per week for Tier III students and 90 minutes per week for Tier II students
End of RtI Cycle II & Mid-Year Assessment 1/5–2/4 All students need to be tested Grades: K-1 DIBELS Next Grades: 2-5 Star		
1/12–1/23	Students in grades 2-5 who tested below the 25 th percentile on Star will be further assessed by using:	• Walpole Assessment (for grades 2-5) ✓ Informal Decoding Inventory Part I and II (IDI) • DIBELS Next (for grade -5) ✓ First Sound Fluency (FSF) ✓ Letter Naming Fluency (LFN) ✓ Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) ✓ Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) ✓ DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) ✓ DIBELS Comprehension (DAZE)
1/26–1/30	Placement	Data analysis and determination of

	discussions in grade level PLCs	placement of RtI Tier II and III students
2/2–3/13	RtI Cycle III	120 minutes instruction per week for Tier III students and 90 minutes per week for Tier II students
3/2–3/13	RtI Cycle III Assessment Based on the targeted areas, the following assessment tools can be used:	Tier II and Tier III students only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walpole Assessment (grades 2-5) ✓ Informal Decoding Inventory Part I and II (IDI) • DIBELS Next (grades K.-5) ✓ First Sound Fluency (FSF) ✓ Letter Naming Fluency (LFN) ✓ Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) ✓ Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) ✓ DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF)
3/16–3/20	Placement discussions in grade level PLCs	Data analysis and determination of placement of RtI Tier II and III students
3/23–5/8	RtI Cycle IV	120 minutes instruction per week for Tier III students and 90 minutes per week for Tier II students
Spring Assessment 5/11– 5/29 All students need to be tested Grades: K-1 DIBELS Next Grades: 2-5 Star		
5/11–5/22	RtI Cycle IV Assessment Based on the	RtI Assessment for Tier II and III students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walpole Assessment (grades 2-5) ✓ Informal Decoding Inventory Part I

	targeted areas, the following assessment tools can be used:	and II (IDI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIBELS Next (grades K.-5) ✓ First Sound Fluency (FSF) ✓ Letter Naming Fluency (LFN) ✓ Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) ✓ Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) ✓ DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF)
5/22–5/29	Placement discussions in grade level PLCs	Recommendation for placement for next school year

RtI - Star and DIBELS Next Progress Monitoring Schedule

October, 2014

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6	7	8 K. & 1st	9 4th & 5th	10
13	14	15 2nd & 3rd	16 Parent conference	17 Parent conference
20	21	22 K. & 1st	23 4th & 5th	24
27	28	29 2nd & 3rd	30	31 Halloween Parade

November, 2014

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	4 School Closed	5	6 4th & 5th	7 End RtI Cycle I K. & 1st
10	11 School Closed Veterans Day	12 Placement discussion	13 Placement discussion	14 Placement discussion
17 Placement discussion	18 Cycle II starts	19	20	21
24 2nd & 3rd	25 Work Day School Closed	26 School Closed	27 Thanksgiving	28 Thanksgiving

December, 2014

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3 K. & 1st	4 4th & 5th	5
8	9	10 2nd & 3rd	11	12
15	16	17 K. & 1st	18 4th & 5th	19
22 2nd & 3rd	23 P.D. Day	24 Winter Break	25 Winter Break	26 Winter Break

January, 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5	6	7	8	9
12 mid-term test	13 mid-term test	14 mid-term test	15 mid-term test	16 mid-term test
19 mid-term test	20 mid-term test	21 mid-term test	22 mid-term test	23 mid-term test
26 Placement discussion	27 Placement discussion	28 Placement discussion	29 Placement discussion	30 Placement discussion

February, 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 Rtl Cycle III starts	3	4	5	6
9	10	11 K. & 1st	12 2nd & 3rd, 4th & 5th	13 Parent conference
16 Presidents' Day School Closed	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26 K. & 1st	27 P.D. Day

March, 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	3 2nd & 3rd	4 4th & 5th	5	6 End of Cycle III
9	10	11	12 K. & 1st	13 Parent conference
16 Presidents' Day School Closed	17 Placement discussion	18 Placement discussion	19 Placement discussion	20 Placement discussion
23 Rtl Cycle IV Starts	24	25	26	27 P.D. Day

April, 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
30	31 2nd & 3rd	1 4th & 5th	2 K. & 1st	3 Spring Break
13	14	15	16	17
20	21 Parent Conference	22 2nd & 3rd	23 4th & 5th	24 K. & 1st
27	28	29	30	1

May, 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4	5	6	7	8
11 end year test	12 end year test	13 end year test	14 end year test	15 end year test
18 end year test	19 end year test	20 end year test	21 end year test	22 end year test
25 Placement discussion & Recommendation for next year	26 Placement discussion & Recommendation for next year	27 Placement discussion & Recommendation for next year	28 Placement discussion & Recommendation for next year	29 Placement discussion & Recommendation for next year

Appendix I

LESSON PLANS

ELLs have some unique learning characteristics that teachers should pay attention to in planning their lessons. Through my reviews of literature, I found the following three strategies recommended for instruction to ELL students: (1) instruction that combines collaborative learning and direct teaching, (2) intensive instruction in word meaning acquisition, and (3) cognitive strategy instruction, which includes engaging students in literacy-rich activities coupled with explicit teaching of specific literacy components.

In designing the example lesson plans, I set out to demonstrate the above strategies through teaching some important reading skills, such as identifying central idea, organizing timeline of events, defining cause and effect, describing character's feeling and emotions, and identifying story elements.

The five selected classes are inclusion classrooms with a heavy cluster of ELL students. The reading levels of these ELL students are different, therefore, pairing them up with native English speaking students is an essential strategy for the success of the planed lessons. In addition, pictorial aids are effective in teaching ELLs vocabularies, all the pictures will be printed in big size for teachers to use in front of the class.

There are many books that have contents rich with American culture and history in our school library and are available for the teachers to use for my

project/experiment. After discussing with five volunteer teachers who have ELL clustered class this year at grades 1 to 5, I have selected the following five books.

Lesson Plan #1 - Fifth Grade Introduction to American Immigration History	
"...If your name was changed at Ellis Island" by Ellen Levine informational text, Lexile Level: 880L	
Reasons for Choosing the Book	Summary of the Book
It is a tradition at Lombardy that 5th grade students visit Ellis Island in May every year. This book prepares students for that visit by laying a foundation of history and background for them. The ELL students will be able to reflect on their entrance to the U.S. This is an educational book written in a question-and-answer format.	This book depicts what it was like when Ellis Island was opened in 1892 as a center for immigrants coming to America. The question-and-answer format covers all aspects of immigration during the turn of the century. It begins with who came and why the people left their homeland (willingly or not).

Lesson Plan #2 - Fourth Grade Introducing American Civil War	
<i>The Civil War: An Interactive History Adventure</i> by Matt Doeden Historical fiction, Lexile Level: 650L	
Reasons for Choosing the Book	Summary of the Book
Social studies is the focus in the 4th grade curriculum. American history is one of the most important sections in the curriculum. Students will take their Delaware State Test at the end of the school year. This	The book focuses on the Civil War, allowing readers the opportunity to explore three story paths as they learn about four important events in the war. The text is written from a

book is designed to hook young readers on learning about American history and getting themselves involved in history by allowing students to choose whether they want to be a confederate, rebel, or civilian.	young person's point of view, drawing readers into the action. The approach realistically portrays the complexity of decision making and emotional demands on not only the president and generals but the average citizen as well.
--	--

Lesson Plan #3 - Third Grade Introducing American depression and dustbowl	
<i>Leah's Pony</i> by Elizabeth Friedrich Historical Fiction, Lexile level: 600L	
Reasons for Choosing the Book	Summary of the Book
This is a good book to open up students to discussions about persevering in the face of hardships. Additionally, the main character is an eight-year-old girl and the setting is a farm during the Great Depression, an important period in American history. Describing characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, and feelings) and explaining how their actions contribute to the sequence of events is also one of Delaware's literary common core standards for 3rd graders.	The story happened during the Great Depression. Leah's parents are farmers in the Great Plains of the 1930's. Amid locusts and drought, their bank forecloses on their loan, necessitating a farm auction. Leah sells her beloved pony and uses the money to bid one dollar for her father's tractor. No one has the heart to outbid her. Her action inspires others at the auction to buy the rest of the goods cheaply and return everything to Leah's family. It is a moving, effective sketch of a child's bravery and its power to trigger generosity in the adults around her.

<p>Lesson Plan #2 - Second Grade</p> <p>Introducing American public school culture</p>	
<p><i>I Pledge Allegiance</i> by Pat Mora</p> <p>Realistic Fiction, lexile level: 580L</p>	
Reasons for Choosing the Book	Summary of the Book
<p>This is an educational book that explains the importance of the Pledge of Allegiance and what it means in language that young children can understand. It also tells the story of why Libby's great aunt immigrated to the United States from Mexico, and why it was important for her to become a US citizen. The setting took place in an elementary school and the plot is similar to Lombardy's daily routine.</p>	<p>Libby's great aunt, Lobo, is from Mexico, but the United States has been her home for many years and she wants to become a U.S. citizen. At the end of the week, Lobo will say the Pledge of Allegiance at a special ceremony. Libby is also learning the Pledge this week; at school at the end of the week, she will stand up in front of everyone and lead the class in the Pledge. Libby and Lobo practice together, asking questions and sharing stories and memories, until they both stand tall and proud in mastery of saying the Pledge.</p>

<p>Lesson Plan #5 - First Grade</p> <p>Introducing American history and culture</p>	
<p><i>The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto</i> By Natalie Standiford</p> <p>Informational text, Lexile Level: 330L</p>	
Reasons for Choosing the Book	Summary of the Book
<p>The theme/subject is animals, entertaining and adventurous for young readers. It focuses on character, American culture and values. The language throughout the story is evocative for 1st graders, and the plot was easy to follow. It is an appropriate story to teach children the concept of story elements, a required skill for 1st grade students.</p>	<p>In Alaska, sled dogs are important to man's survival. Balto was the lead dog of a sled team. This story is about his most important trip: trying to get medicine to sick children miles away in Nome, Alaska during a diphtheria epidemic in 1925.</p>

Example of Detailed Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan #3 - Third Grade

Leah's Pony by Elizabeth Friedrich (Historical Fiction, Lexile level: 600L)

Objective
Students gain understanding of the American Midwest during the dust bowl days and the Great Depression in the 1930's, and be able to identify and analyze the text structure Cause and Effect
Common Core State Standards
<p>ELA-LITERACY:</p> <p>RL. 3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events</p> <p>RI. 3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring</p>

explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
SL. 3.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
At the End of the Lesson
Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. • Understand the text structure - Cause and Effect • Understand that nature can affect the economy of a community and therefore affect the world globally.

Schedule	Instruction
Day 1 (20 minutes)	Build background knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher asks students - What was the most difficult time you experienced in the past? • Teacher introduces the American Midwest during the dust bowl days and the Great Depression in the 1930's. • Students watch a short video about the dust bowl days and the Great Depression https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42Z4ztn3RgY
Day 2 (30 minutes)	Introduce the text structure "Cause and Effect", provide instruction in vocabulary Teacher - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviews the concept of "Cause and Effect"

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduces the 1st set of vocabulary words for day 2 reading • partner practices the new vocabulary • choral reads the story with students • provides comprehension instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ models analyzing text structure ▪ models organizing information by using the graphic organizer
Day 3 (30 minutes)	<p>Direct instruction in vocabulary and collaborative learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • class reviews the vocabulary learned from the previous day and summarizes the section read from the day before • teacher choral reads the story with students • teacher provides comprehension instruction • students work with their partners to organize Cause and Effect related information from text using the graphic organizer • teacher checks students' understanding by discussing students' work
Day 4 (30 minutes)	<p>Direct instruction in vocabulary and collaborative learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • class reviews the vocabulary learned from the previous day and summarizes the section read from the day before • teacher introduces the 2nd set of vocabulary words for day 4 reading • teacher choral reads the story with students • students organize Cause and Effect related information from text by using the graphic organizer individually • teacher checks students' understanding by discussing students' work

Day 5 (20 minutes)	Reinforce learned knowledge and share students' learning and written response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students reread the whole text with their partner • teacher discusses students' written responses and provides instruction as needed
-----------------------	---

Day 1. Build background knowledge

Dust Bowl

The Dust Bowl during the 1930s was a period of severe dust storms caused by severe drought and land erosion by wind. During the previous decade, farmers had conducted extensive deep plowing of the virgin topsoil of the Great Plains with the aid of newly acquired farm equipment, and displaced the native, deep-rooted grasses that normally trapped soil and moisture even during periods of drought and high winds. During the drought of the 1930s, the unanchored soil turned to dust and was blown away in huge clouds that sometimes blackened the sky. These "black blizzards" or "black rollers" traveled cross country, reaching as far as such East cities as New York City and Washington, D. C. On the Plains, they often reduced visibility to 3 feet or less.

The Dust Bowl forced tens of thousands of families to abandon their farms and migrate to California and other states, only to find that the Great Depression had rendered economic conditions there little better than those they had left (<http://www.history.com>).

Great Depression

The Great Depression was a period of harsh worldwide economic difficult time in the decade proceeding World War II. The Depression originated in the United

States, after the fall in stock prices that began around September 1929. There were many causes for the first downturn, including insufficient financial regulations, but mistakes by policy makers, such as shrinking money supply, caused an ordinary business cycle to descend into the Great Depression.

The Great Depression had devastating effects in countries rich and poor. Personal income, tax revenue, profits and prices dropped, while international trade plunged by more than 50%. Unemployment in the U. S. rose to 25%. Farming and rural areas suffered as crop prices fell by approximately 60%.

It was the longest, deepest, and most widespread economic depression of the 20th century. Some economies started to recover by the mid-1930s. In many countries, the negative effects of the Great Depression lasted until after the end of World War II (<http://www.history.com>).



Students watch a 2 minute video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42Z4ztn3R>

Day 2. Introduce the Text Structure "Cause and Effect" and Provide Vocabulary Instruction

"Cause and Effect"

Teacher: This is a historical fiction text. A fiction text is a made up story. Historical fiction means the story could have happened in real life in the past, but it did not. In today's lesson we will focus on identifying how the author used the text

structure cause and effect of each section to help us understand the text and assist us draw conclusions. Cause and effect is a text structure that authors often use in their writing, which helps us understand a character's behavior or the result of an event. A cause is why an event happens. An effect is what happens because of a cause. A cause and effect analysis is an attempt to understand why things happen as they do. Sometimes several causes can contribute to one effect or multiple effects can come from a single cause. I will show you a cause and effect chart to help you organize the information from the text. In addition to the cause and effect chart, there are some frequently used signal words and phrases that help readers recognize cause and effect in a text. They are: If, then, so, since, because, therefore, due to, so that, and as a result.

For example:

- Jackie lost her library books. As a result, she has to pay a fine. (one cause and one effect)

cause

effect

Cause	Effect
Jackie lost her library books	she has to pay a fine

- Since Maria came to America 6 months ago from Mexico, she has trouble understanding

cause

effect 1

others, failed all her tests and feels discouraged. (one cause and multiple effects)

effect 2

effect 3

Cause	Effect
Maria came to America 6 months ago from Mexico	has trouble understand others
	failed all her tests
	feels discouraged

- Sean doesn't pay attention in class, never does his homework, and rushes through all of

cause 1
cause 2

cause 3

his tests. As a result, he earned a D for reading. (multiple causes and one effect)

effect

Cause	Effect
Sean doesn't pay attention in class	He earned a D for reading
never does his homework	
rushes through all his tests	

Practice: (students work with their partners to identify the cause and effect from the sentences)

- The streets were packed with snow and ice, therefore, the schools were closed.
- Because I forgot to turn on the light, my sister fell and broke her glasses.
- If you follow the school rules and stay on Green for the month, you will be Sparkler for the month.

Cause	Effect

Vocabulary Instruction (1st part of the book from pages 216 - 221)

Teacher: before we begin to read our new book, I would like to introduce 7 vocabulary words. The 7 words are: girth, swift, snip, pasture, droop, wobble, and auction.

Teacher reads the words and then students practice reading the words with teacher and a partner. Teacher introduces the meaning and usage of each word.

- Girth** (noun): the measurement around the middle of something, especially a person or animal waist; a band attached to a saddle to secure it on a horse by being fastened around its belly

Synonym: circumference, perimeter

Example: This is a big animal and has a large **girth**.

The **girth** of a tree is affected by its growing conditions.

2. **Swift** (adj.): happening quickly or promptly

Synonym: rapid, sudden, prompt

Example: Her answer was **swift** and positive.

He and his friend started a **swift** walk.

3. **Snip** (p. 216)(verb)(noun): cut (something) with scissors or shears; a small cut made with scissors

Synonym: cut, clip, slit, nick

Example: I just **snipped** the wire close to the wall.

He cut the tin into **snips** as if it were paper.

4. **Pasture** (p. 217)(noun)(verb): land covered with grass and other low plants; put (animals) in a pasture to graze

Synonym: grazing land, grassland, grass

Example: They rode across the pasture on horses.

They **pastured** their cows in the water meadow.

5. **Droop** (p. 218)(verb)(noun): bend or hang downward limply

Synonym: dangle, sag, flop

Example: Stand up, don't let your shoulders **droop**!

The flower has a noticeable **droop**.













6. **Wobble** (p. 219)(verb)(noun): move unsteadily from side to side

Synonym: rock, jiggle, sway

Example: The table **wobbles** because of uneven legs.

She stood up with a **wobble**.

Visual support: Images of the vocabulary words

  <p>girth</p>	  <p>pasture</p>
  <p>swift</p>	  <p>droop</p>
  <p>snip</p>	  <p>wobble</p>

Collaborative Learning

After teacher provides instruction in the seven vocabulary words, partners choose two words from the seven, and demonstrate their understanding by using the following graphic organizer. Partners share their work with the class.

Four blocker word graphic organizer

Definition	What it is like
Synonym	Sentence

Day 3. Comprehension Instruction

Continuing the instruction on "Cause and Effect", teacher reads the text with students chorally and provides comprehension instruction. (1st part of the book from pages 216 to 221)

Teacher: On page 216, the text says, "The year the corn grew tall and straight, Leah's papa bought her a pony." What is the author stating about the time that Leah received her pony? Let's use the Cause and Effect chart to answer the questions.

Modeling:

Cause	Effect
The year the corn grew tall and straight,	Leah's papa bought her a pony.

From this information, we can infer that Leah's father bought her a pony when his corn crop was growing well. It would also mean that their family had more money from selling the corn to be able to afford a pony for Leah. What is the effect after dad bought Leah the pony that summer?

Modeling:

Cause	Effect
Dad bought Leah a pony	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leah and her pony crossed through cloud-capped cornfields and chased cattle through the pasture.• Everyday Leah scratched that special spot under her pony's mane and brushed him till his coat glistened like satin.• Each day Leah rode her pony into town just to hear Mr. B. shout from the door of his grocery store, "That's the finest pony in the whole county."

From this information, we can infer that Leah cared about her pony and loved her pony very much.

On page 218, the author writes, “The year the corn grew no taller than a man’s thumb.” This means the corn did not grow very tall at all. A thumb is being used to compare the corn because it is only about 2 inches. This helps one infer that the corn did not grow tall enough to yield any corn. The author chose these words because she wanted the reader to understand that the crops were not growing during this part of the story.

Now partners work together to answer the following question by using the graphic organizer.

What was the effect that caused by this situation?

(answer)

Cause	Effect
The year the corn grew no taller than a man’s thumb	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mama’s hushed voices sounded sad• Papa sold the pigs and even some of the cattle• Mama used flour sacks to make underwear for Leah.

From this information, we can infer that Leah's family didn't earn much money from selling the corn. They faced a hard time.

On pages 219 and 221, did the story talk about the cause(s) of why the year the corn grew no taller than a man's thumb? Talk with your partner and try to find the cause(s).

(answer)

The story mentioned about hot, dry nights and also described the wind blowing so hard it turned the sky black with dust. The author tried to describe what the "dust bowl" looked like. The Dust Bowl during the 1930s was a period of severe dust storm caused by severe drought and land erosion by wind.

On page 219, it says “grasshoppers turned the day into night.” The expression means that because there were so many grasshoppers the sun was blocked out by them flying and it made the day dark like the night.

Now partners work together to answer the following question by using the graphic organizer.

What were the effects that caused by the dust bowl?

Cause	Effect
Dust Bowl	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mama's petunias drooped• grasshoppers ate the trees bare and left only twigs behind• people could almost taste the soil in the air

From this information, we can infer that people didn't have much money to buy things, including food, since they had a bad year growing crops due to the dust bowl, which was caused by severe drought.

Closing:

- Teacher: Let's summarize what we learned from the story today:
Leah was given a pony by her father when times were good and crops were growing well. She loved her pony and rode it through town. Due to the

drought which caused the dust bowl in the plains, Leah's family struggled. Leah's dad had to sell their pigs and even some of the cattle. Mama even used flour sacks to make underwear for Leah. Leah sensed the sadness from her parents' voice.

- Review the six new vocabulary words learned yesterday. Teacher says the words, students either explain the meanings of the words, use them in sentences or act them out. The words are girth, swift, snip, pasture, droop, wobble, and auction.
- Review the concept of Cause and Effect by repeating some details from the text.

Day 4. Vocabulary and Comprehension Instruction

Review the six vocabulary words learned from the day before by reading the words and also using the words in sentences. Ask each student to pick 2 words and use them in sentences. Students read their sentences in their 4-person group.

Word	Sentence

Students reread the 1st section (pages 216 - 221) of the story with a partner.

Vocabulary Instruction

Teacher introduces seven new words to prepare for reading the next section. Students practice reading the words with the teacher. The words are: eager, gully, bid, fertilize, cultivate, coop, auction and auctioneer.

1. Eager (adj.): wanting to do or have something very much
Synonym: anxious, longing, keen
Example: She was eager to answer the questions.
Kiera stepped forward, eager to reach the book.
2. Gully (noun): a narrow waterway
Synonym: channel, trench, drain
Example: I was stopped by a gully on the way to my uncle's house.
Roadside gullies are generally cleaned at least once a year.
3. Bid (verb)(noun): to offer a certain sum of money for something
Synonym: offer, propose
Example: He bid \$500 for an antique table.
Several buyers made bids for the painting.
4. Fertilize (verb): to make (soil or land) more fertile or productive by adding suitable substances to it
Synonym: enrich, feed
Example: These flowers are fertilized by insects.
Farmers fertilize their fields with manure.
5. Cultivate (verb): to prepare and use (land) for crops; try to acquire or develop (a quality, sentiment, or skill)
Synonym: raise, tend, grow
Example: These crops are very easy to cultivate and do not require extra work.
He always tries to cultivate strong self-confidence in his students.
6. Coop (noun): a cage or pen for confining poultry; to confine in a small space
Synonym: cage, pen, confine
Example: The family keeps their egg laying hens in a coop.
Being cooped up indoors all day made him fidgety.
7. Auction (verb): a sale of items in which buyers bid how much they are willing to pay
Synonym: sale, mart

Example: We will earn some money at tomorrow's auction.

His collection of cars is to be auctioned off tomorrow.

auctioneer: a person who conducts auctions by accepting bids and declaring goods sold

Synonym: broker, agent

Example: The auctioneer speaks loud and fast.

Only one bid was raised to the auctioneer.

Visual support: Images of the vocabulary words

 <p>eager</p>	 <p>fertilize</p>
 <p>gully</p>	 <p>cultivate</p>
 <p>bid</p>	 <p>coop</p>
 <p>fertilize</p>	 <p>auction</p> <p>auctioneer</p> <p>watch a 2 minute video of an auction - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5CZ62E3vD0</p>

Collaborative Learning

After teacher provides instruction on the seven vocabulary words, partners choose two words from the seven, and students demonstrate their understanding by using the following graphic organizer. Partners share their work with the class.

Four blocker word graphic organizer

Definition	What it is like
Synonym	Sentence

Teacher lists example sentences from students for each word and makes sure students understand the meaning and usage of the seven words.

Comprehension Instruction

Today students answer a few questions individually by using the graphic organizer. Teacher reads the story with students chorally and provides comprehension instruction from pages 222 to 228.

Teacher: The days were getting more and more difficult for everyone including Leah's family. Some people in the neighborhood moved to Oregon hoping to have a better life there. At this time, papa did something, which made the situation even worse.

What did he do and why did he do that? Please reread pages 222 and then discuss the question with your partner. After the discussion, students will answer the questions individually.

(answer)

Cause	Effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papa borrowed money from bank • Papa bought some seeds and planted them • Nothing grew • Papa had no money to return the borrowed money to the bank 	Leah's family had to sell things at an auction

Discussion: from this information we can infer that Leah's family had to make tough decisions about what to sell at the auction.

Teacher: read page 223 again and then students talk with their partner about the following questions. Students answer the questions individually.

The story says all week Leah worried and waited and wondered what to do. What does the author try to tell you? What made Leah so restless?

(answer)

Cause	Effect
Leah's family had to sell things at an auction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah wanted to run away from her house because she was feeling upset that the auction was going to occur in her house. • Leah worried about Papa would sell his best bull and Mama's prize rooster and her favorite calf. • Leah often raced her pony past empty fields lined with

	<p>dry gullies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah galloped past a house with rags stuffed in broken windowpanes. • Leah rode her pony in town to see Mr. B.
--	---

Discussion: from this information we can infer that Leah felt very anxious and tried to find solutions.

Teacher: At the auction, neighbors bit unreasonably low prices for the items Papa sold. What made the auction change after Leah bought the tractor for one dollar?

Answer the question individually.

(answer)

Cause	Effect
Neighbors heard that Leah sold her loved pony and wanted to save her family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many neighbors came to the auction to help • A neighbor down the road bit ten cents for Mama's whole flock of chickens • Another neighbor bit twenty-five cents for Papa's Ford pickup truck • Neighbors bid a penny for a chicken or a nickel for a cow or a quarter for a plow. One by one, they gave everything back to Mama and Papa • Mr. B. returned Leah's pony

Discussion: from this information we can infer that people at the auction understood what Leah was trying to do and they wanted to help. Leah was a good example for the people. She bought the tractor for her father for only one dollar and that could save

her farm. The other people also wanted to help save the farm. Then after the bidding was over, Leah's father got many of his supplies and livestock back.

Teacher: reread the last two paragraphs on page 228 and explain what did Leah feel after at night and why she felt that way? Students answer the question individually.

(answer)

Cause	Effect
Leah missed her pony.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only Leah lay awake, listening to the clock chime nine and even ten times. Leah could not sleep because she was sad thinking about her pony.• Leah's heart seemed to copy that slow, sad beat.• The farm was quiet. Too quiet. No familiar whinny greeted Leah when she entered the barn in the morning.• Leah swallowed hard and straightened her back. She was trying not to cry• She stood straight up and walked around the barn.

Discussion: from this information we can infer that Leah loves her pony and she sacrificed a lot to save her family.

Closing:

Let's summarize what we read from today's reading:

Due to the drought in the plains, neighbors moved to Oregon because they could not keep their farms working. Leah's family struggled as well, and her father borrowed money from the bank to buy seeds. The seeds dried up and were blown away. The bank had an auction to get back the money that was owed by Leah's father. Leah sold her pony to Mr. B and used the money to buy her father's tractor at the auction for a dollar. The other people followed, bidding low amounts as well and gave the items back to Leah's family. Things were better at the farm, but Leah still missed the pony. Moved by Leah's sacrifice to save her family, at the end of the story, Mr. B gave the pony back to Leah.

Day 5. Reinforce Learned Knowledge & Share Students' Learning

- Students read the whole story with their partner
- Students write a letter to Leah. In the letter students need to reflect their thoughts about Leah's action and why they think that way (Cause and Effect).

Example of letter format

January 10, 2015

Dear Leah,

Sincerely,
ABC

Students share their letters in class

Appendix J

SELECTIONS OF TEACHING MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS AND THE ELL TUTOR AND RECOMMENDED INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW FOR USING THE BOOKS

Criteria For Choosing Books

Akrofi et al. (2013) suggests that using children's literature can improve ELLs' language learning and provide an implicit endorsement of acculturation. They think that bi-culturality is a powerful gift and should be promoted. In promoting the idea of bi-culturality, literature is an ideal vehicle for introducing cultural assumptions and providing comprehensible input for ELLs during all stages of their second language acquisition. It can be useful in developing both linguistic knowledge and content knowledge. Akrofi et al. argue that an examination of a foreign culture through literature may increase students' understanding of that culture. Thus carefully selecting texts rich with American culture and history is an important step in the model I am proposing. American culture can be presented with children's books that include a wide range of topics, such as holidays, sports, music, home, school, society, and government. By using children's books rich in these topics, ELLs can develop not only linguistic skills, but also content knowledge, which helps build their background information about America and improve their reading comprehension.

Many culture-related events happen in school, such as saying the Pledge each morning, Halloween parade, class Valentine's party and having an assimilating Thanksgiving lunch. ELL students often feel lost at such occasions. Having the ELL tutor read books relating to these topics beforehand will not only teach ELLs new

linguistic knowledge but also ease their nervousness. I noticed sometimes if the school announced that the next day would be a pajama day, some ELLs would not show up because they did not know what to wear and how to act.

A list of selected books I recommend for this work is included below. A rationale is provided for each book in the last column. The books are listed according to school calendar to coordinate with school activities. All of the books are available in school libraries in the school district.

Month	Book Name	Author/ Illustrator	Lexile Level & # of pages	Theme	Brief Summary	Why This Book
Sept.	Get Ready for Second Grade, Amber Brown	Paula Danziger/ Tony Ross	300L 32	Fiction School	Amber Brown is excited to be going into second grade in the fall--and a little nervous, too. The book tells about how Amber copes with her nervousness and gets ready for whatever may happen.	This book includes school routines and activities, which will ease new ELLs fears about school and get familiar with school activities.
	This School Year Will Be the BEST!	Kay Winters/ Renee Andriani	440L 32	Fiction School	New classmates are asked on the first day of school to share what they would most like to happen in the upcoming year. Everyone's wishes are shown in humorously exaggerated illustrations, whether it is looking good on picture day or skateboarding at school. As the first day draws to a close, every student has no doubts that this school year will definitely be the best! A great book to read on the first week of school to help teachers get to know their students.	This book includes many school routines and activities, which will ease new ELLs fears about school and get familiar with school activities.
	Field Trip Day	Lynn Plourde/ Thor Wickstrom	530L 32	Fiction School	Juan loves to explore. During the Field Trip Day to visit Fandangle's Farm, Mrs. Shepherd and the chaperones have trouble keeping track of him! This story will have readers laughing and learning as Juan's discoveries lead to new teaching opportunities for Farmer Fandangle and Mrs. Shepherd.	School activity
	I Pledge Allegiance	Pat Mora and Libby Martinez/ Patrice Barton	580L 32	Fiction School	Libby's great aunt, Lobo, is from Mexico, but the United States has been her home for many years and she wants to become a U.S. citizen. At the end of the week, Lobo will say the Pledge of Allegiance at a	Relate to school activity

					special ceremony. Libby is also learning the Pledge this week; at school at the end of the week, she will stand up in front of everyone and lead the class in the Pledge. Libby and Lobo practice together, asking questions and sharing stories and memories, until they both stand tall and proud in mastery of saying the Pledge.	
	The Gingerbread Man Loose in the School	Laura Murray/ Mike Lowery	580L 32	Fiction School	A just-baked Gingerbread Man heads out to find the class of students during a recess. He'll run, slide, and skip. After a mishap with a soccer ball, he limps as fast as he can because: "I can catch them! I'm their Gingerbread Man!" With help from the gym teacher, the nurse, the art teacher and even the principal, the Gingerbread Man does find his class, and he's assured they'll never leave him behind again.	The book is perfect for the ELL tutor to introduce new students to the school environment and staff of school.
Oct.	A Picnic in October	Eve Bunting/ Nancy Carpenter	310L 32	Fiction School	Tony is embarrassed that his Italian immigrant family goes to the Statue of Liberty each year to celebrate Lady Liberty's birthday, but when he understands what the Statue of Liberty means to Grandma, he understands.	American culture and history
	Ira Sleeps Over	Bernard Waber	310L 48	Fiction Culture	Ira is thrilled to be invited over to Reggie's house for his very first sleep over, but he has a dilemma - whether he should bring his teddy bear named Tah Tah. He's never slept without him, but what will Reggie think if he knew Ira slept with a teddy bear? An appealing picture book which depicts common childhood qualms with empathy and humor, this is an outstanding, read-aloud bedtime tale. It is written with a firm grasp of kindergarten language and will appeal to children and parents alike.	Happens among students. It is an American culture that ELLs may not understand.
	Halloween Parade	Abby Klein	390L 32	Fiction Culture & Holiday	Freddy and his friends are in the school's Halloween parade. The all wear different costumes and some with carved pumpkins. There is a costume competition – who will win the prize?	Halloween Parade is a tradition at Lombardy E.S.
	A Picture Book of Christopher Columbus	David Adler/ Alexandra & John Wallner	710L 30	Historical Fiction History & Holiday	The book provides important information about Columbus' early life and later achievements, including his historic 1492 voyage west and his experiences in the New World.	Most classroom teachers talk about this historical event on Columbus Day
Nov.	If You Sailed on the	Ann McGovern and Anna DiVito	600L 80	Historical Fiction History	Written to entertain anyone over the age of 4, this question/answer book covers such curious topics as: Did they bathe on the Mayflower? What	Important history and also part of 4th grade Soc St. curriculum

	Mayflower in 1620				did they eat? How were people who broke the law punished? And what did children do?	
	Veterans Day	Mir Tamim Ansary	LL not available GL:1-4 32	Nonfiction History & Holiday	It is November 11 and school is closed. The book explains why veterans wear flowers on Veterans Day, what happens at the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day, of the eleventh month each year, who were the Axis Powers.	Important history and holiday
	The Night Before Thanksgiving	Natasha Wing	520L 32	Fiction Culture	Helping family preparing the Thanksgiving dinner is full of fun.	Introduce traditional Thanksgiving food to ELLs.
	Election Day	Lynn Peppas	680L 32	Nonfiction History & Holiday	Election Day is an important day when citizens choose their leaders. It is a privilege of democracy. Young readers will learn about democracy and its history, and mechanisms of election, such as how a polling station works and how votes are counted on election day.	Lombardy E.S. is used as a polling station. It is important for ELLs to understand why there are many people come to Lombardy on this day.
	Thanksgiving Day	Gail Gibbons	730L 32	Historical fiction History & Holiday	The book highlights the origins of the first Thanksgiving, as well as the way the celebration has evolved over the years. The author presents both historical and current contexts in a way that satisfies the curiosity of young children.	Lombardy's traditional school-wide Thanksgiving lunch and class activities
Dec.	The Polar Express	Chris Van Allsburg	520L 32	Fiction Culture	Polar Express is an old-fashioned steam train that takes children to the North Pole on Christmas Eve to meet the red-suited gentleman and to see him off on his annual sleigh ride. A worldwide bestseller and Christmas classic, this book is a perfect keepsake for any family.	A project many teachers do at Lombardy before winter break
	The Night Before the Night Before Christmas	Natasha Wing	520L 40	Fiction Culture	It's December 23, the author follows the rhythms of Clement Moore's classic Christmas poem, yet gives it her own original twist as she describes a family overwhelmed by holiday preparations comes to realize that "Christmas is about love."	Most teachers host a Christmas party before winter break. This book will help explain the holiday.
	Pajama Day	Lynn Plourde/Thor Wickstrom	540L 40	Fiction Culture	Drew forgets his pajama on the Pajama Day, and everyone else in Mrs. Shepherd's class is wearing their favorite PJs to school. Undaunted by his forgetfulness and not wanting to be the "odd man out," Drew uses his imagination and comes up with some creative solutions for the needed items.	Lombardy's traditional activity before winter break
	Gifts of the Heart	Patricia Polacco	660L 40	Fiction Culture	Trisha and Richie want to buy Christmas gifts for their family, but they don't have enough money. Kay, the housekeeper, teaches them	Christmas gift exchange party is a tradition in many classrooms

					something about gifts: the kind that comes from the pocketbook and the unforgettable kind from the heart.	at Lombardy. It's good to introduce the concept to ELLs.
Jan.	Squirrel's New Year Resolution	Pat Miller/ Kathi Ember	450 32	Fiction Holiday & Culture	This holiday book takes kids into the New Year and teaches children that the New Year Resolution is to set an important, attainable goal for the coming year.	Lombardy's tradition for students to write and post their New Year Resolution
	Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.	Doreen Rappaport/ Bryan Collier	410 36	Biography History & Holiday	The author weaves the immortal words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. into a captivating narrative to tell the story of one of the world's most influential leaders. The book provides an unforgettable portrait of a man whose dream changed America and the world forever.	Important history and holiday
	Balto, the Bravest Dog Ever	Natalie Standiford/ Donald Cook	330L 48	Informational Text History & Culture	Balto, the lead dog of a sled team, must get through one of the worst storms ever. He is carrying medicine to sick children miles away in Nome, Alaska. He is their only hope.	Winter reading unit
	Akiak : A Tale from the Iditarod	Robert Blake	590L 32	Informational Text Culture	On the fourth day of the famed dogsled race through 1,151 miles of Alaskan terrain race, Akiak can no longer compete because of an injured paw. Her musher has no choice but to leave her behind. But nothing will stop Akiak from catching up to her team. Will she be able to help her team win the race?	Winter reading unit and teaching students never give up easily.
	If You Lived In Colonial Times	Ann McGovern/ June Otani	590L 30	Historical Fiction History	This book is about how the children lived in the New England colonies during the years 1565 to 1776. Since everything revolved around the family in their house, this is about family life from the perspective of children. What they wore, what they ate, the work they did during the day, what they did for fun, what their schools were like, and how they behaved on Sunday.	Important history and also part of 4th grade Soc St. curriculum
Feb.	Presidents' Day	David Marx	410 40	Nonfiction History & Holiday	A part of the Rookie Read-About Holidays series, the author introduces the Presidents' Day and highlights George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, two of the best presidents who have ever led the United States.	Lombardy celebrates Presidents' Day
	The Night Before Valentine's Day	Natasha Wing/ Heidi Petach	520L 32	Fiction Holiday & Culture	The night before the sweetest holiday of the year, kids are getting ready! Join in on all of the preparation fun, and then come along to school the next morning for a day of parties and games!	Lombardy celebrates Valentine's Day. All classrooms invite parents to the Valentine's party.
	Most Loved in All the World	Tonya Hegamin/ Cozbi Cabrera	530L 40	Historical Fiction History	The book tells the account of a little girl whose mother sews a quilt for her before sending her north to freedom, to guide her with its symbols of moss and the north star,	Lombardy celebrates black history month in

					and also to remind her always that the smiling girl in the center of the quilt is "most loved in all the world."	February.
	Almost to Freedom	Vaunda Nelson and Colin Bootman	530L 40	Historical Fiction History	The book talks about the hardships endured by enslaved African American people in the pre-Civil War South. The main character is a young girl's who escaped from slavery via the Underground Railroad.	Lombardy celebrates black history month in February.
Mar.	Hooray for Reading Day!	Margery Cuyler/ Arthur Howard	380L 32	Fiction School	The upcoming Reading Theater day has Jessica more worried than ever before as when she tries to read aloud in class, she stumbles over words and everyone laughs. What if she makes a mistake in front of all the parents? With the help of her family, and some practice with her dog, Wiggles, Jessica finds that reading can be as easy as A-B-C!	March is National Reading Month. Lombardy has all kinds of reading activities. The book will help ELLs overcome their fear and embarrassment about reading.
	The Night Before St. Patrick's Day	Natasha Wing/ Amy Wummer	450L 32	Fiction Holiday	Tim and Maureen are setting traps to catch a leprechaun the night before St. Patrick's Day. When they wake up the next morning to the sound of their dad playing the bagpipes and the smell of their mom cooking green eggs, they're shocked to find that they've actually snared a little green creature. But will they be able to find his pot of gold?	Most teachers have St. Patrick's Day craft project. Wearing green is encouraged.
	Bullies Never Win	Margery Cuyler/ Arthur Howard	450L 32	Fiction School	The story is about how Jessica finds the courage and stands up for herself in front of class bully, Brenda.	ELLs are often being bullied in school. The book provides tips for what to do when being bullied.
	The Silent Witness: A True Story of the Civil War	Robin Friedman	570L 32	Historical Fiction History	At the beginning of the Civil War, Lula McLean's family home in Manassas, Virginia, is taken over by the Confederate army and used as its headquarters. Forced to flee by the oncoming Union army, Lula and her family and her favorite rag doll move south to a small village called Appomattox Court House.	Part of the Social Studies curriculum
Apr.	April Fool's Day	Melissa Schiller	440L 32	Nonfiction Holiday & Culture	The book describes the tradition and what people do for this fun day.	Fun holiday for ELLs to know
	Independence Day	Trudi Strain Trueit	690L 32	Nonfiction Holiday & History	It is a book for children who want to know about the development of the holiday and how it is celebrated today.	Important history and holiday
	The Biggest Easter Basket Ever	Steven Kroll/ Jeni Bassett	680L 32	Fiction Holiday Culture	The book introduces the culture of Easter as Mouseville prepares for the holiday, complete with a biggest Easter Basket contest, and two lovable mice learn a lesson in cooperation -- and fun!	Important holiday for ELLs to know.
	Gold	Catherine McMorro	560L 48	Informational Text	This book traces the history of the California Gold Rush from 1848 to	Part of the Social Studies

	Fever!			History	1859. Beginning with the first discovery at Sutter's Mill, McMorrow gives a gripping, richly anecdotal account of those wild-and-woolly days when gold fever seized the nation...and the world.	curriculum
	The Recess Queen	Alexis O'Neill/ Laura Huliska-Beith	450L 32	Fiction School	Mean Jean is the reigning Recess Queen and will slammer anyone who crosses her. And then one day a puny new girl shows up on the playground and catches Mean Jean completely off-guard. In no time flat, Jean and Katie Sue become best buddies, and the playground is safe for all again.	ELLs are often being bullied in school. The book provides tips for what to do when being bullied.
May	Memorial Day	Mir Tamim Ansary	470L 32	Historical fiction History & Holiday	The book explains why we observe Memorial Day: what great idea Abraham Lincoln talked about, how a group of women started a new holiday, and who Americans remember on Memorial Day.	Important history and holiday
	The Night Before Mother's Day	Natasha Wing/ Amy Wummer	600L 32	Fiction Holiday & Culture	Dad and the kids want to show Mom just how much they love her the night before Mother's Day. They whip up a cake from scratch, and offer a special coupon for a day at the spa, right in their own kitchen! The whole family will love reading this sweet story aloud together for a fun way to celebrate Mother's Day.	Lombardy celebrates Mother's Day and teachers have activities and parties during the day.
	Labor Day	Mir Tamim Ansary	GE:1-4 32	Nonfiction History & Holiday	A part of the Holiday Histories series, the book explains why parks are crowded on Labor Day, why children today go to school and do not work in factories, and why Americans rest on a holiday that celebrates working.	Important history and holiday
	If Your Name Was Changed at Ellis Island	Ellen Levine/ Wayne Parmenter	880L 80	Informational text History	Ellis Island was opened in 1892 as a center for immigration. This book describes what it was like for people who came to live in America through Ellis Island.	It's Lombardy's tradition that 5th graders visit Ellis Island at the end of May.

Recommended Instructional Guidelines for the ELL Tutor to Follow for Using the Books

ELLs have some unique learning characteristics that teachers should pay attention to in planning their lessons. Through my reviews of literature, I found the following three strategies recommended for instruction to ELL students: (1) instruction that combines collaborative learning and direct teaching, (2) intensive instruction in word meaning acquisition, and (3) cognitive strategy instruction, which

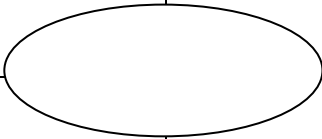
includes engaging students in literacy-rich activities coupled with explicit teaching of specific literacy components. Based on my research, I recommend that the ELL tutor focuses on the following two areas: vocabulary teaching and comprehension instruction through discussion.

Vocabulary Teaching:

- introduce vocabulary words
- model reading the words
- explain the definition of the vocabulary words and use them in sentence
- students may use the Four Square Graphic Organizer to practice their learned words

Four Square Graphic Organizer

Definition	What it is like
Synonym	Sentence

A diagram of a Four Square Graphic Organizer. It consists of a large rectangle divided into four equal squares by a horizontal and a vertical line. In the center of the four squares is an oval. The top-left square is labeled 'Definition', the top-right square is labeled 'What it is like', the bottom-left square is labeled 'Synonym', and the bottom-right square is labeled 'Sentence'.

Comprehension Discussion:

When facilitating the small group discussion, the ELL tutor may focus on the following areas with sample questions that can assist the ELL tutor to facilitate the discussion and check students' understanding.

Focus	Definition	Possible Questions to Ask
Setting	The setting of a story answers the questions of where and when the story takes place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did the story take place? • When did the story take place?
Character's traits	Character traits are the aspects of a person's behavior and attitudes that make up that person's personality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the character's traits. • What do you know about the character? • Why does the character say or do that? • Do you think the character is ...and why: (Some positive character traits - honest, kind, happy, sincere, patient, courageous. Some negative character traits - rude, angry, mean, untrusting, greedy, arrogant, bossy.)
Compare & Contrast	To compare means to find how things are alike (similarity), to contrast means to find how things are different.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you see any similarities between the...? • What is the difference between the...? • Did you ever...?
Summarization	When summarizing something, you use your own words telling the general/main idea and most important points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you use your own words tell me what the paragraph/text is mainly about?

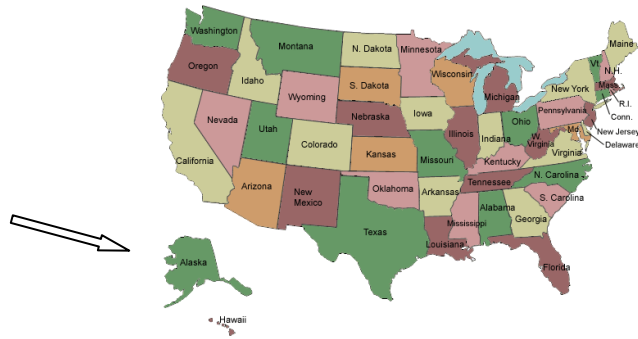
Model Lesson Plan:

The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto

By Natalie Standiford (informational text, Lexile Level: 330L)

Build Background Knowledge

Introduction to Alaska - Alaska is the 49th state of the USA



Basic facts about Alaska

Capital	Juneau
Population (2014 est.)	736,732
Average daytime winter temperatures	5 to 30° F (-15 to -1° C)
Average daytime summer temperatures	55 to 78° F (13 to 26° C)

Dogsled

A dogsled is a sled pulled by one or more sled dogs used to travel over ice and through snow.



To remember Balto's heroic act, on March 3, 1973, Alaska held its first dogsled competition, which was called the Iditarod. The Iditarod dogsled race now is an annual event that takes place every March in Alaska. It is sometimes called the

"Last Great Race." The race is 1,049 miles long. The Iditarod trail goes from Anchorage to Nome. The race starts on the first Saturday in March and takes about 10 days to complete.

There are statues of Balto in Anchorage, Alaska, and in Central Park, New York (below).



Anchorage, Alaska



Central Park, New York City

A movie called *Balto* was made about the tortuous sled journey. Balto died on March 14, 1933 at the age of 14. A monument to him is currently on display at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in Cleveland, Ohio.

Direct instruction on vocabulary

Vocabulary Instruction

Before reading the story, the tutor introduces 6 words for today's reading. The words are: *frontier*, *gold-mining*, *diphtheria*, *mayor*, *relay race* and *rescue*. Teacher phonetically analyzes the words.

mining	mine	ing	/	/	2 syllable
relay	re	lay	/	/	2 syllables
rescue	res	cue	/	/	2 syllables
mayor	may	or	/	/	2 syllables
frontier	fron	tier	/	/	2 syllables
diphtheria	diph	the	ri	a	4 syllables

Students read the words with the tutor while doing the syllable clap.

Tutor introduces the meaning and usage of each word.

1. **Frontier** (n.) (p. 5): the outer limit of what has been explored; the district near a border separating two countries, the border between two countries

Synonym: border, borderland, boundary, edge

Example: I passed the **frontier** between America and Canada.

We need to add more people to guard our **frontier**.

2. **Gold-mining** (p. 7): the process of finding and extracting gold from the ground

Example: People did **gold-mining** in California during the gold rush over a hundred years ago.

There are many techniques for **gold-mining**.

3. **Diphtheria** (n.) (p. 12): an upper respiratory tract illness caused by bacteria, typically with sore throat, low fever, a swollen neck

Example: **Diphtheria** is an infectious disease spread by direct physical contact.

Diphtheria has now largely been eliminated in developed nations through vaccination.

4. **Mayor** (n.) (p.18): the leader of a city

Example: Mr. Dennis Williams is the **mayor** of Wilmington.

We elected our **mayor** last November.

5. **Relay race** (p. 18): during a relay race, members of a team take turns running or doing other activities, one after another

Example: **Relay race** is part of Olympic Games.

A runner needs to hand off the baton to the next runner during a **relay race**.

6. **Rescue** (v.) (p. 19): save (someone) from a dangerous situation

Synonym: save, help, come to the aid of

Example: I didn't need you to **rescue** me.


He helped me **rescue** my dog from the fire.

Visual support: Images of the vocabulary words

 <p>frontier</p>	 <p>mayor</p>
 <p>gold-mining</p>	 <p>relay race</p>
 <p>diphtheria</p>	 <p>rescue</p>

Example:

Four Square Graphic Organizer

<p>Definition</p> <p>save (someone) from a dangerous situation</p>	<p>What it is like</p> 
<p>Synonym</p> <p>Save</p>	<p>Sentence</p> <p>He helped me rescue my dog from the fire.</p>

Comprehension Instruction

This is an informational text, a type of nonfiction. The author chooses to make this information text follow the same rules as a fictional text. Informational text includes any text that is factual, meaning the information in the book is true. The tutor can ask questions like the ones listed below.

Focus	Definition	Possible Questions to Ask
Setting	The setting of a story answers the questions of where and when the story takes place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where did the story take place?• When did the story take place?
Character's traits	Character traits are the aspects of a person's behavior and attitudes that make up that person's personality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the character's traits.• What do you know about the character?• Why did the character say or do that?• Do you think the character is ... and why? <p>(Some positive character traits - honest, kind, happy, sincere, patient, courageous. Some negative character traits - rude, angry, mean, untrusting, greedy, arrogant, bossy.)</p>
Compare & Contrast	Compare and contrast means you find the similarities and differences between two or more objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you see any similarities between the...?• What is the difference between the...?
Summarization	When summarizing something, you use your own words telling the general/main idea and most important points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you use your own words tell me what the paragraph/text is mainly about?

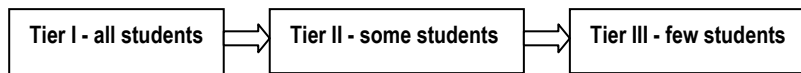
Spend five minutes review the newly learned knowledge for the day.

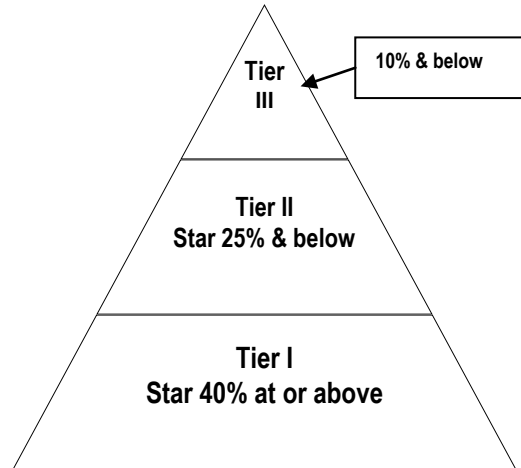
Appendix K

PROCEDURE FOR ASSESSMENT DATA REVIEW, STUDENT GROUPING, INSTRUCTION AND ELLS

Analysis of assessment data provides information about what students know, what they still need to learn, and what adjustment to instruction should be made to meet their academic needs. With appropriate analysis and interpretation of data, teachers can make informed decisions that effectively affect student achievement.

Lombardy Elementary School (LES) has been implementing Response to Intervention (RtI) for the past four years as an intervention process. RtI in Delaware comprises three tiers of intervention. The first tier, or Tier I instruction, consists of the core curriculum and is provided to all students. If students fail to respond to Tier I instruction, they are eligible to receive Tier II instruction based on their needs. Tier III is the most intense level of intervention on the continuum of pyramid options. At Tier III, the goal is to remedy existing academic problems and prevent more severe regression. ELLs would most likely fall into either the Tier II or Tier III category.



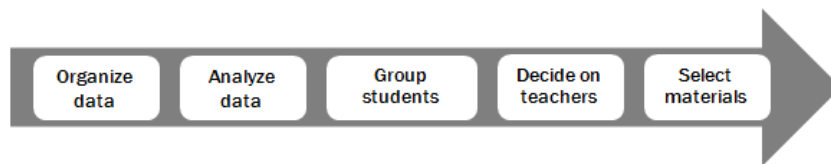


To determine which student needs intervention we need assessment results. Brandywine School District (BSD) requires elementary schools to use the following two Assessment tools - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for Kindergarten and first grade with subtests including Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Initial Sound Fluency (ISF), and First Sound Fluency (FSF), and Standardized Testing and Reporting (Star) for grades 2 through 5. Students who perform below grade level are placed in Tier II and Tier III reading groups, within which students are further grouped by their academic needs in the following five categories: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. There are different materials and programs that are available for teachers to use.

Student progress is monitored weekly or bi-weekly based on the Progress Monitoring Schedule that I designed (see Appendix G). At each RtI Cycle Review meeting, grade level teams analyze students' progress monitoring data, group students by their needs and select materials for instruction for the next RtI Cycle. Brandywine School District has four RtI Cycles, each lasting six weeks.

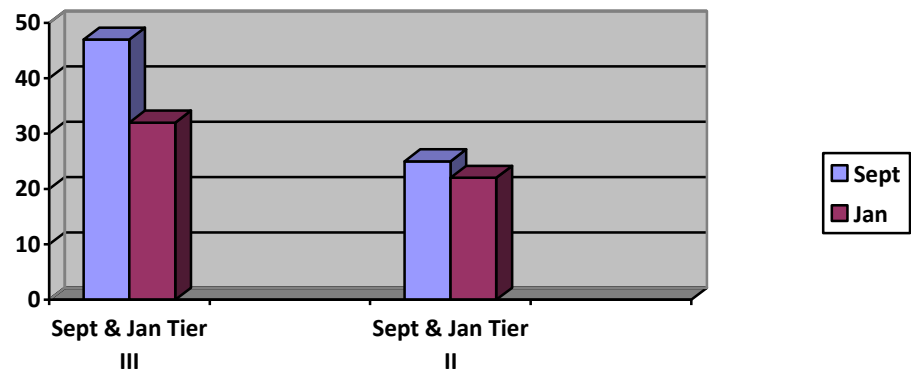
Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4
9/30 – 11/7	11/18 – 1/9	2/2 – 3/13	3/23 – 5/8

I am LES' reading specialist and RtI cycle review facilitator. It is my responsibility to assist teachers to analyze data, group students and decide on materials for instruction. Before the RtI Cycle Review week, I ask teachers to fill out a form, which helps them organize students' data. During the RtI Cycle Review week, I attend each grade level PLC to assist teachers in looking at the collected data and place students in the appropriate intervention reading groups. Along with classroom and special education teachers, I discuss the provision of instruction for each group. After the teacher for each group is selected, I meet with individual teachers to choose teaching materials and structure instruction when necessary.



Beginning ELLs have not been included in the RtI process in past years because these students were served by each school's ELL tutors. The situation is improving; this year at least at LES, ELLs are included in the RtI intervention groups.

There are thirty-nine ELLs at LES this year. Among them, 72% tested below grade level requirements in September with 47% at Tier III level and 25% at Tier II. These ELLs were placed in different RtI intervention Tier II and III groups together with other non-ELL students who have similar needs. In January, after two RtI cycle interventions, 32% of ELLs tested at RtI Tier III level compared to 47% in September, with 21% at the Tier II level in January to 25% at Tier II in September.



Although the time for the implementation of the improvement strategies was limited and the full potentials were yet to be realized, the initial outcome was positive. The above intervention result is trending in the right direction, but not as good as expected. Compared to non-ELL students who were placed in similar intervention groups, the ratio of students who graduated from current intervention group is 21% ELL to 28% non-ELL students. This further highlights the urgent need for improvement in ELL education, and the lengthy time needed to attain improvement in monitoring and intervention. Further improvement can be made in many areas, including providing teachers/tutors with more knowledge about teaching ELLs, having materials and programs that are more appropriate for ELLs, and using instructional routines that further match ELLs' needs. As we move forward, we will continually strive to find better ways to improve ELLs' academic achievement at LES.

Appendix L

IRB LETTER



College of Education
& Human Development
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Willard Hall
Newark, DE 19716-2922
Phone: 302-831-2573
Fax: 302-831-4110

To: Graduate Office
From: Sharon Walpole, Chair of ELP Committee
Re: Jessie Chen's ELP
Date: July 31, 2015

As per the policy copied below, we reviewed Jessie Chen's work at the time of her proposal and deemed that it did not require human subjects review as it did not constitute research as per the definitions cited below.

ELPs & Human Subjects Review

Is an Executive Position Paper (ELP) project, conducted under the auspices of the Ed.D. Program in the School of Education, required to undergo human subjects review and approval prior to the collection of data?

ANSWER:

- a. To necessitate human subjects review, a project must meet the federal definition of research, which is "...a systematic study...designed to add to generalizable knowledge" (CFR 45, HHS 46.102).
- b. The issue turns not so much on whether a project is conducted within the Ed.D Program or the Ph.D. Program, i.e., not whether it is nominally an Ed.D. thesis or a Ph.D. dissertation, but rather on the purpose of the project.
- c. If the knowledge gained from the project has both local relevance and national relevance (i.e., generalizability) and if the activities are beyond those that naturally take place in the agency or school, then in most cases the proposal should be submitted for an expedited review.
- d. The nature of the project's activities and the audience with whom the results will be shared are not critical to the determination. In addition, the act of publishing the results in a national or international publication does not in and of itself make the project research.
- e. When a project does not meet the federal definition of research and therefore does not require Human Subjects approval, however, the investigator is not relieved from upholding the ethical principles of her/his professional discipline. As a responsible institution of higher education, we should be and are concerned about how individuals in a program evaluation are treated and respected -- but it simply is not under the auspices of an "institutional review board" to dictate the terms of that evaluation.
- f. When a project involves collecting data from subjects from an organization outside the University of Delaware, regardless of whether or not the project meets the federal definition of research, the investigator must comply with all of the data-collection guidelines and permission requirements of that organization. When a project meets the federal definition of research, clearance by an external organization does not exclude the investigator from also obtaining Human Subjects approval by an authorized UD committee before the project begins.

www.udel.edu/education



College of Education
& Human Development
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Willard Hall
Newark, DE 19716-2922
Phone: 302-831-2573
Fax: 302-831-4110

g. When an Ed.D. candidate is uncertain about the need for Human Subjects approval of her/his ELP project, s/he must consult with the Chair of her/his doctoral committee. (If the Chair of the doctoral committee is uncertain, s/he should consult with the Chair of the SOE Committee on the Review of Human Subjects in Research.) The Chair of the candidate's doctoral committee will communicate the decision about the need for Human Subjects review in a letter to the candidate, with a copy of the letter to the Chair of the SOE human subjects committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sharon Walpole'.

Sharon Walpole, Ph.D.
swalpole@udel.edu

www.udel.edu/education