Effective Strategies for Teaching ELL Students at the Elementary Level

by
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Abstract

The purpose of this capstone is to provide all teachers effective strategies that can be used with all students but specifically ELL students. The goal is to meet the needs of ELLs in mainstream classrooms through strategic strategies, modifications and accommodations. The literature review states that ELLs can improve academically, socially, and emotionally when teachers are trained to develop lessons with ELLs in mind. The problem emerges when students are placed in classrooms with teachers who do not have background or formal training on how to successfully teach and alter content. Additionally, without building in effective strategies, content will not be able to be delivered effectively and ELL students may fall behind. This capstone includes a Professional Development in order to offer practitioners a series of strategies and techniques to modify instruction and accommodate linguistic needs of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. The learning goals is for teachers to enter the classroom and deliver instruction with new skill sets of strategies, and resources that they can use to advance the academic and social emotional needs of ELLs.

Keywords: modification, accommodation, strategies, ELL

Chapter 1

Problem Statement

I am interested in the topic of all teachers receiving high quality support in teaching English Language Learners. I think that if teachers in mainstream classes are going to be teaching English Language Learners then they must first have the background and knowledge to apply to the lessons and content. This is crucial because without proper training, support, and background, the teachers and students will not be as successful at attaining instructional goals.

In New York State (NYS) as the years go on and as new groups of people immigrate to the United States, the population of English Language Learners (ELL) students increases. Yiyue (2017) reports that 25% of K-12 students across the United States speak another language other than English as their first language. Additionally, according to Li and Peters (2020) the National Center for Educational Statistics found that 21% of school enrollment and 10.9 million school students aged 5 to 17 are ELL students (Li & Peters, 2020). These students can be categorized as ENL (English as a New Language). Therefore, since there is an increase in the ELL student population, there is a need to increase professional development for teachers educating and working with ENLs. Training teachers is necessary in order for students to receive effective education. In NYS schools, regardless of a teacher's educational background, a teacher receives ELL students in their class. Since this is the norm, I feel that all teachers should receive training and become educated on ways to teach this population of students.

However, as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and subsequent legislations, schools created flexible instructional programs with increase accountability for segments of the student's population, for instance ELLs and Special Education. The reasoning behind mandated reporting is to hold school accountable for the success of all students.

Therefore, teachers are now collectively responsible for providing a clear and rigorous plan for the success of students, including ELLs. Furthermore, the classroom is impacted since teachers must be aware of how students need to be taught in a way that meets their linguistic and testing needs while also guiding them to master content and reaching their highest potential in the core academic subjects.

In this capstone I will use the term modification to identify a change in what a teacher may expect from a student or the way that they may teach a student. Another related term is accommodation; this can be defined as a change in how a student is taught or receives new information based on a topic. These terms are important because without the proper implementation of accommodations and modifications, ELL students will not receive academic rigorous instruction that fit their needs.

The overarching question I will be addressing in my capstone is: How can teachers provide lessons which implement strategies, techniques, modifications, and accommodations for ELL students at the Elementary Level? The professional development is offered to mainstream, special education, and ENL teachers.

Significance of the Problem

ELL students are being placed in classrooms with teachers without formal training on language acquisition. As a result, students may receive an education that is not designed for ELL students where the academics may not be suitable for them to learn in that environment. Additionally, students may receive low grades and scores on assessment and school grades due to the inadequate accommodations and modifications that are best suited for them. Therefore, the overarching research question is for a teacher to meet the needs of an ELL student, and to

facilitate their academic growth they must first receive adequate training. However most teachers do not have this background, or knowledge (Li & Peters, 2020).

This is a problem because all teachers are ELL teachers. Therefore, all teachers need training on how to deliver instruction that is rigorous, inclusive and accommodates the needs of English learners in mainstream classrooms. Additionally, educational practitioners and scholars have been noticing that there is a lack of effective preparation for mainstream classroom teachers to plan and implement specific and modified instruction to meet both the needs of English learners and those of the mainstream students (Diarrassouba, 2017). Therefore, pointing to the need for Professional Developments (PDs) like the one proposed in this capstone promoting teacher training to minimize the linguistic and assessment challenges that ELL students face in the classroom. there is a lack in the number of teachers who are being properly trained to adequately teach ELL students.

Additionally, if teachers do not provide and implement modifications and accommodations into their lessons and content, the school as a whole may show lower test scores. As I indicated before, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that standardized test scores be reported by schools and districts, to improve assessment results and teachers need support. Without high quality supports for teachers to teach ELL students, may suffer in other general areas. For example, without the proper modification and accommodations of lessons, students may struggle to improve English language acquisition and may face linguistic challenges when attempting to access language domains such as receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing). Without a teacher altering the material, assessments, as well as their expectations from the students, the student may not perform at their highest level.

In many cases there is a drastic contrast between ELLs' achievement and proficiency in English language arts (ELA) and math compared to the total student population of New York State (Wallace, 2014). Thus, illustrating a relationship between the need for better teaching training on best practices ELLs and results in assessment results.

Purpose

The purpose of the PD is to offer practitioners a series of strategies and techniques to modify instruction and accommodate linguistic needs of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. The PD will also offer practitioners more information on the ways that they can effectively teach the ELL population. I will provide models of lessons with strategies which implement strategies, techniques, modifications, and accommodations for ELL students. I will provide high quality support to teachers in the form of a PD to present ideas and effective strategies that can be used to accommodate and modify content, lessons, and assessments for ELL students. The PD will allow teachers to design, deliver, and revise rigorous instruction for ELLs in order to ultimately lead ELL students and teachers to better succeed. The PD will be presented in the summer before school starts. Teachers will be exposed to the research, strategies, and resources before starting the new school year. The participants will also be shown sample lesson plans for them to see successful demonstrations of lesson plans that show before and after ELL alterations. This will show the participants how lessons can be changed and how to incorporate effective strategies to better fit the needs of these students. The outcome for this PD would be for teachers to leave and embark on the school year confidently with a new skill set of strategies, and resources that they can use with their ELL students. Also, for teachers to have a new grasp on the idea of this population and why it is crucial for these students to receive the same opportunities to succeed in education as their English-speaking peers. Additionally, the PD would be beneficial because in

the NYSED blueprint for ELL/MLL success, it indicates that all schools need to provide

practitioners with high quality training, support, feedback and direction in order to improve

instructional practices. This PD would help to provide the high-quality training that is necessary

in order to accomplish the NYSED blueprint success principle (NYSED, n.d.).

Conclusion

In summary, it is necessary for all teachers to receive training on how to deliver

instruction that is rigorous, inclusive and accommodates the needs of English learners in

mainstream classrooms. This is why my PD will train and support all teachers in learning how to

accommodate, modify and alter instruction and content for ELL students. In the rest of the

Capstone, I will do the following. In chapter 2, I will present a review of the literature on

strategies, techniques and resources mainstream teachers can use to modify and accommodate

their lessons to in order to meet the needs of ELLs. In chapter 3, I will present the PD which

aims to provide high quality support to all teachers that they can use in order to modify and

accommodate lessons and instruction for ELL students. Participants will also be receiving

training regarding the necessary modifications and accommodations that they must make for this

population when it comes to their content and lessons. In addition, I will also include appendices

with PD materials that will include figures, handouts, and materials from the PD. Moreover, in

chapter 4, I will discuss the implications of this issue regarding ELL student and touch on further

research which is needed.

Chapter 2

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) the population of students that made up the ELL population in 2018 was equal to 10.2% which was equivalent to 5.0 million students (NCES, n.d.). Also, in 2014-2015 there were over 4,800,000 ELL students who made up the population in the United States. Additionally, between the years of 2009 and 2015 the percentage of ELL students increased in more than half of the States in the Country. This increase was a result of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which mandated that states must provide assessments, reasonable accommodations for ELL students on assessments, and developed accountability systems which allow for progress monitoring for all ELL students (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Since this research shows that ELL students make up such a large population of students in the United States, it is crucial that supportive and valuable training for all mainstream teachers at the Elementary level is implemented into all schools. This review of literature aims to examine the overarching research question which is how can teachers provide lessons which implement strategies, techniques, modifications, and accommodations for ELL students at the Elementary Level? This review of literature will also highlight effective strategies and techniques that teachers can use with ELL students in order to meet their needs.

Strategies for Reading Comprehension

Brown and Endo (2017) provided research that noted that ELL students struggle in school due to the lack of prior background knowledge that they have based on specific content topics. Therefore, the task of having ELL students comprehend text can be daunting for both the teacher and the student. Although there are multiple strategies that can be used in order to support the students which focus on the topic of reading comprehension. Dreher and Gray (2009) also reported that it is crucial that teachers spend sufficient time providing these strategies to ELL

students because according to a Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority, children and youth ELL students often struggle with reading vocabulary and comprehension. Additionally, ELL students lack essential linguistic-processing skills that are necessary for reading comprehension. This shows why it is necessary that teachers implement deliberate and specific instructional strategies to use with ELL students in order to improve their reading comprehension skills.

Anticipation Guide

DelliCarpini (2011) provides multiple strategies that can be used with ELL students. Anticipation guides allow the students to make predictions and recall background knowledge about a specific topic of the text. The anticipation guide also can be modified in order to target before, during and after reading sections of the lesson depending on which segment it best fits. Additionally, this strategy is useful because it functions as a scaffold during reading. Teacher to stops and asks student questions they must focus on during that specific time of the reading. The guide can also be helpful after reading by asking students to look back and revisit their pre-reading responses in order to edit them based on what information they found out after reading more of the text.

According to Hamedi et al. (2020) this strategy is specifically effective when students have a lack of prior knowledge. This strategy allows ELL students to interact with the text and compare their own backgrounds and beliefs with what they understood from the readings. Anticipation guides are also useful because they can be used in multiple content areas. These guides provide a clear and direct format that students can follow as they read the text in order to analyze and synthesize information and content. Furthermore, anticipation guides can engage ELL students in the process of questioning and exploring a text. Anticipation guides can be

beneficial to teachers because they serve as a formative assessment. Lastly Kozen et al. (2006) reported that reviewing an ELL student's explanation as well as the information that they use to prove their claim can allow a teacher to assess the students level of understanding and their ability to comprehend the text.

Hamedi et al. (2020) investigated the success of anticipation guides on eleventh grade students. The study divided 50 eleven graders (participants) into two groups. One group receive an anticipation guide and the other half of the group did not. The data analysis showed that there was a significant effect from the anticipation guide which increased the students reading comprehension.

Hamedi et al. (2020) noted one study that was done with 90 ELL students at an elementary level. These students were split into three separate groups in order to assess each group of ELL students differently. During this study one of the experimental groups used a concept mapping technique, one group used anticipation guides, and one group used no activity. This study showed that anticipation guides had a statistically significant effect on the learners reading comprehension. This study also demonstrated that the students who did not receive any anticipation guide performed significantly better than the students who did receive an anticipation guide, on a reading comprehension assessment.

These studies demonstrated how ELL students showed an increase of reading comprehension when an anticipation guide was implemented into the lesson. These studies also showed how ELL students were able to perform at a higher level on reading comprehension assessments after using an anticipation guide during the instruction and lesson. Although anticipation guides can be used with any type of student, they should be used with ELL students more regularly during reading activities before, during and after reading a text.

Directed Reading- Thinking Activity

Another strategy that can be effective to support reading comprehension is using the *Directed Reading- Thinking Activity (DR-TA)*. This strategy can be used during a reading to have students critically think and make predictions, verify claims, and interpret information. With this strategy the teacher stops and asked the students to make predictions on what may happen next. This strategy is successful because it asks the ELL student to interpret text in order to assess the student's level of understanding.

Santi (2011) wrote that The college of Islamic State College of Palangka Raya researched the use of the DR-TA strategy in order to determine if this strategy improved reading comprehension. During this study, 33 students were assessed and monitored in order to track their progress. This study had the students participate in three separate phases. These phases were the pre-reading stage, while reading stage, and the post reading stage. This study monitored the students' responses and documented their answers as the students went through each stage. At the end of the cycle students answered questions and were assessed through a questionnaire. This study concluded that the DR-TA strategy increased students' achievement in terms of their reading comprehension as well as strengthened their participation and provided a positive and engaging environment for the students to work.

An additional study done by Megawati (2019) researched whether students taught with DT-RA would score higher than students taught by a conventional teaching method. The testing population was made up of 45 students. Students in the control class were taught by using the conventional way of teaching and the other group was taught using DT-RA. Based on the findings, the results showed that students that were taught using the DT-RA method scored higher than students who were taught using the conventional way. The findings also

demonstrated that there was a significant difference in English reading comprehension between the experimental group. Overall, the students who were taught using DT-RA had a higher average score. The students who were taught by DT-RA got higher scores with average scored 14.381 while students who were taught by the conventional way scored an average of 13.230. Additionally, this study showed that there was a high correlation between the use of DT-RA and English reading scores. The findings also showed that there was a correlation between reading and motivation. This study showed that reading and motivation has a significant correlation. This shows how there was a correlation between students' motivation and their overall reading comprehension.

These studies showed how this strategy was effective at increasing students reading comprehension and also was effective at increasing student's overall motivation in the learning process as well as student's willingness to participate. The use of DT-RA was also effective because students had a chance to practice anticipating, predicting, confirming, and modifying their own ideas compared to the ideas from the text. DT-RA also allowed the student to experience the process of constantly monitoring their own reading comprehension by making connections between their own prior knowledge and the text that they are interacting with. Furthermore, this studied showed how DT-RA can improve on a student's self-confidence as well as their active involvement in order for their reading skills to be strengthened.

Visual strategies

The use of visual strategies is extremely necessary when instructing ELL students. Since many students may not have background knowledge to apply to content, visuals can help them to form the connection between words and a pictorial representation. Furthermore, visuals provide an additional explanation of a topic or concept and provides the ELL student with another way of

presenting information. Visuals are also extremely important because they can be implemented into every subject whether it is Math, ELA, Science or Social Studies. For example, a teacher may use visuals with ELL students in order to represent a shape in Math, a character in ELA, a state of matter in science, and a map in Social Studies. Lastly, the use of visuals is a flexible strategy category because visuals can be modified to fit the needs of the students as well as the content area very easily.

Vocabulary Self-Selection

Masoudi (2017) reported that one strategy that can be used with ELL students is the strategy of using vocabulary self-selection. With this strategy the students choose what words they want to learn about. This strategy also encourages students to use the vocabulary words in the classroom as well as outside the classroom in discussions. This strategy solidifies vocabulary words through the process of making concrete and concise personal connections. Vocabulary self-selection can also be linked with the strategy of using vocabulary squares. Vocabulary squares provide 4 squares for the student to fill in. The students fill in the center square with the word they are focusing on and then provide a definition, sentence, synonym and picture. This strategy allows ELL students to associate words with visuals. This strategy promotes ELLs to transition from memorization and towards the synthesis and meaning of words. This strategy can also be modified in order to meet the needs of the students more successfully. For example, a teacher may modify this strategy by providing a picture and a word from the student's native language. This allows them to practice building the skill of using a bilingual dictionary. Another modification that can be made to this strategy is to have students write their own definition using their own words. This allows ELL students to practice their linguistic skills in a different way.

Masoudi worked with Iranian ELL learners investigated the effect of the Vocabulary self-selection strategy. In this study, students were split into two separate groups. One group used the vocabulary self-selection strategy while the other group did not. The students who practiced the strategy of using the vocabulary self-selection strategy were allowed to pick out a word from the text that they wanted to define while working with the text.

After the ELL students were monitored and assessed, the results revealed that the students who used the strategy of using a vocabulary self-selection outperformed the students who did not use the strategy. The findings illustrate the benefits of the use of this strategy in order to allow students to be engaged and enables them to take charge of their own learning. This strategy also allowed students to practice the skill of what to do when a word is unfamiliar and how to become word conscious.

Graphic Organizers

Another successful strategy to provide ELL students with a visual is the use of graphic organizers. The use of graphic organizers can be very helpful to provide ELL students with a clear way to organize their work as well as a more concrete to understand material while processing new vocabulary. Graphic organizers can also help ELL students simplify concepts and ideas by breaking larger ideas down into smaller pieces. Graphic organizers can also add an underlying deeper dimension to content that allow students to make connections and overall make content more meaningful. For example, graphic organizers can serve a starting point for teachers to use in supporting students since they can aid students in articulating ideas and relationships that they need scaffolding to express (Fairbairn, Jones-Vo, 2010).

Oteikwu et al. (2017) conducted a study with a school in Nigeria which focused on the effectiveness of using graphic organizers within the instruction of a lesson. During this study,

100 students were sampled from a secondary school. The study had students use different types of graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams, cause and effect, compare and contrast, and circle organizer. The study concluded that graphic organizers would enhance the quality of instruction and make the teaching and learning experiences reflective. Additionally, students were better able to interact, observe, question, and overall make sense of content when they used graphic organizers.

Venn Diagrams. Another strategy that can be used with ELL students in order to provide a visual is the use of a Venn diagram. These can be used in order to help a student make connections between their own prior knowledge and background and the new content being introduced. Dreher and Gray (2009) indicated that these connections are crucial because these can be important for ELL students, who may bring different funds of knowledge to school compared to their English-speaking peers. These funds of knowledge can include including different interests, experiences, and additional pieces of background knowledge. By providing ELL students with visuals and strategies that build on their own knowledge, interests and experiences encourages them to make connections and overall become more motivated to participate.

DelliCarpini (2011) also reported that Venn Diagrams can be used in order for the teacher so successfully model how to compare and contrast two topics. Venn diagrams can be very flexible and allow for the implementation into any content area. For example, a teacher can use Venn diagrams in Math when comparing and contrasting shapes, Science when comparing and contrasting different animals, ELA when comparing and contrasting characters in a story, and Social Studies when comparing and contrasting different historical figures and their accomplishments. Since Venn diagrams are so flexible, they are a great strategy to use with all students including ELL students. Additionally, Venn diagrams can be very helpful because a teacher can model how to use this strategy

before inviting ELL students to try it on their own. Additionally, Venn Diagrams offer students the change to show and practice knowledge in non-language dependent ways by filling in information in the corresponding spaces.

Although visual strategies and Venn Diagrams can be used to help solidify content for any student, they should be used with ELL students more regularly in order to provide a visual and organize content in order for ELL students to process content and information more efficiently.

Strategies For Improving A Student's Self-Efficacy

Ni (2012) defines the affective filter as a filter that reduces the amount of language input the learner is able to understand. Lowering an ELL students affective filter as well as improving their self- efficacy can make a huge impact on the student's success in the classroom. By lowering a student affective filter, a learner will have higher motivation, self-confidence, as well as less anxiety when it comes to school and content as a whole. For example, Krashen (1982) defined the concept of an affective filter as "a kind of psychological obstacle that prevents language learners from absorbing available comprehensible input completely" (p.31). This explains how a language learners' input, and intake can be affected due to issues and factors such as a lack in motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Therefore, when an ELL student has one of these contributing factors, they may impact their level of success. This is why it is necessary that teachers use strategies in order to attempt to lower the affective filter for ELL students to succeed.

Parsons and Shim (2019) indicated that there are many strategies that a teacher can do in order to lower a student's affective filter and boost their self-confidence. One strategy is to welcome ELL students to the classroom by hanging flags, artwork, and posters which represent

these students' backgrounds and cultures. This will allow students to feel represented, accepted

as well as more comfortable in the classroom. This will also promote diversity and acceptance to

other students in the classroom as well. Another strategy that can be used is to learn key phrases

from an ELL students first language to build relationships with students as well as motivate ELL

students to participate more and have discussions with. Additionally, a teacher can improve on a

student's motivation by informing students of lesson objectives for each lesson both in terms of

language and content. This will allow the student to be clear on specific learning goals and

expectations for the lesson. Teachers should also modify instruction and assignments as well as

assessments in order to align with the level of the ELL student. This will allow instruction to best

meet the level and needs of the student. Furthermore, teacher should provide written directions to

correspond with oral directions to ensure that an ELL is clear on what is being asked from them.

Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010) also wrote that "teachers should consider posting

templates for assignments regularly utilized in their content areas" (p. 57) . Additionally, in order

to increase an ELL student's motivation a teacher should appreciate and incorporate ELL's

background and prior experiences. Since many students come with a wealth of information and

experiences, a teacher should use these. A teacher can create lessons which focus on content

areas such as a writing pieces in order for them to share their stories. Lastly, a teacher can lower

a student affective filter by involving a student's family in school activities. Parent involvement

can support student's achievement and can promote communication amongst the student and

their family members. For example, ELL students are unable to reach their potential without

teachers moving beyond barriers. In order for students to be more successful, districts must go to

the parents with the community, together, to properly engage and involve all English Language

Learner families. This shows why it is crucial for a teacher to involve parents in the classroom.

Overall, these strategies combined will lower a student affective filter and will increase a student's self- efficacy. By doing so a student's motivation and self-confidence will increase, as well as their participation, and their anxiety will lower as well.

Strategies For Building Student's Vocabulary

In order for ELL students to be successful at comprehending material and content, they must first understand the vocabulary that corresponds with the topic or content area. A student simply will not be able to move through the lesson without having a concrete understanding of the vocabulary that makes up the unit. This idea is believed for all subject areas. A student must understand the vocabulary in a lesson for ELA, Math, Social Studies and Science in order to answer questions which revolve around the given topic.

Word Wall

The first strategy that can be used with ELL students in order for them to form a deeper understanding of vocabulary is the use of a word wall. A teacher can tap into an ELL student's prior knowledge by displaying all of the vocabulary words that a unit will focuses on. Then the teacher can ask the ELL student to try and define any of the words or think of a time they have heard this word come up before. This vocabulary introduction allows the student to become exposed to the word and recall any prior knowledge that may help them in mastering the definition and meaning of the word. Additionally, a teacher can use this strategy in a different way by introducing a word and using the word in a sentence in order to give the ELL students context for what the word means. Following this, ELL students can say the word, chant the letters of the word and write the word on a piece of paper, index card, or white board. This allows the students to become exposed and understand how the word is spelled and what the word means.

Roberts and Truxaw (2013) found that word walls can be extremely effective because they encourage student participation and provide a visual reinforcement and resource that students can turn to during a lesson. Before adding a word to the word wall, teacher should use the word in context of the unit, present clear definitions and examples, as well as visuals correspond with the word. Additionally, by focusing on vocabulary from the word wall, this can promote and support long-term retention. Furthermore, Jackson et al. (2011) researched word walls and concluded that word walls are useful to students in order to unify related vocabulary but also to help students make connections between terms, and subjects. Moreover, ELL students can become more self-sufficient during lessons since they can find information, they are looking for instead of asking a friend or the teacher.

Although word walls can be used with any type of student, they should be used with ELL students more regularly in the start of a unit to provide an ongoing resource that they can use in order to provide a concrete piece of information that they can reference. Additionally, word walls can provide a way for ELL students to see a visual of all of the words that they have been introduced to in the unit they have just learned.

Cognate Use

The use of cognates in a lesson can be very successful in increasing an ELL student's vocabulary comprehension and retention. By using cognates, a teacher can make a connection and bridge the gap between a student's native language and their L2. The use of ELL students' cognates from their listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabularies can be transferred in order to make sense of new topics. Additionally, by a teacher supporting and using an ELL students' native tongue, this will allow the student to feel more accepted in the classroom. Research has also found that ELL students who have increased their cognate identifying skill

outperform those who have not yet developed this strategy. Additionally, by scaffolding this strategy and providing students with pictures to match the vocabulary will allow students to increase their vocabulary comprehension.

Montelongo et al. (2011) reported that there are more can 20,000 English-Spanish cognates and many of these words are used on a frequent basis. Therefore, teachers can help their ELL students by playing on their linguistic background by implementing the strategy of using cognates in order to scaffold acquisition and reading strategies. Studies also show that by using cognates, this helps students do develop their self-confidence and their skills at guessing the meaning of a word that they do not know. Additionally, these authors wrote that "through the cognate strategy ELL students learn to prize their ability to speak two languages as their teachers tap into this rich linguistic reservoir" (para. 5). This quote demonstrates that by a teacher using this strategy, they will be able to introduce and successfully implement a strategy that students can use in order to comprehend and use vocabulary.

Kelley and Kohnert (2012) studied the effective of using cognates in instruction. This study assessed thirty 8- to 13-year-old native Spanish speaking children learning English as their L2. During this assessment these students took a standardized vocabulary test in English. Each question on the test was distinguished into a cognate or noncognate group based on the phonological similarities the word has with the Spanish translation. Groups of students as well as induvial were examined in order to determine the effectiveness of cognate instruction. The study concluded that the children's test scores were higher for questions which were in the cognate category. Therefore, this study overall demonstrated that Spanish- speaking school age ELL students showed an advantage when cognates were being implemented into instruction. This study also found that "At the group level, school-age Spanish-speaking ELL students both

identified and named more spoken vocabulary items that were cognates as compared to noncognates. These results indicate some level of Spanish-to-English, phonological-to-lexical-semantic bootstrapping" (para. 3). This study demonstrates how using cognates during instruction as well as on assessment can help to increase a student's vocabulary comprehension and application. This strategy is successful because it allows students to see how their own native language compares to their L2 in order to make connections between words.

Overall, this research supports the idea of a teacher using cognates in order to strengthen content with ELL students. This strategy can be beneficial at making sense of vocabulary, and by showing the ELL student connections between their L1 and L2. Lastly, by using cognates supports the idea of acculturation rather than assimilation. This is because students will be able to see and have their L2 be valued and incorporated in the process of a second language acquisition.

Modifications and Accommodations for lessons

Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2019) found that a teacher can use modifications in order to change what they are expecting from a student or the way that they may teach a student. A teacher may also use accommodations to change how a student is taught. The implementation of modifications and accommodations are crucial at increasing an ELL student's success in any classroom environment. There are many modifications and accommodations that a teacher can use in order to alter material, lessons and content in order for the it to better meet the needs of an ELL student. Some examples of these modifications are the following. One idea would be to allow ELL students to answer a question by providing an alternate response such as a drawing in order for the ELL to show their level of understanding. This will allow the student to show what they know but in a visual way instead of using words. Another alteration would be providing

simplified written and verbal instructions. This allows the ELL student to receive clear and concise directions that are straight to the point, so the student is not confused on what the expectations for the assignment are. Another idea would be to allow the student to use an eDictionary or a bilingual dictionary in order to use translations during the lesson and activities. This would allow the student to use the prior skills and knowledge that they have in their L1 to help make sense of material in their L2. Another alteration is to provide ELL students with sentence starters on worksheets, exit slips, and assessments. This provides the student with context in order to direct them on the preferred and expected answer. This also provides them with a starting place to begin in order to make the question less intimidating. Lastly, this provides them with the question partially filled in, so they will only need to fill the content information in and none of the filler words.

Accommodations for assessments

In order for an ELL student to efficiently demonstrate their understanding on an assessment, a teacher must also implement deliberate and appropriate testing accommodations for the student. Testing accommodations can include time extensions, separate locations, bilingual dictionaries and glossaries, directions read orally, extended breaks, reduced choices on multiple choice tests, sentence starters, fill in the blanks, as well as word blanks. These accommodations provide ELL students to demonstrate their skills and level of knowledge without being limited or unfairly restricted due to their language acquisition skills lacking in their L2.

Abedi et al. (2004) wrote about the effectiveness of testing accommodations and reported on 6 studies that were done. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness and validity of accommodations for ELL students. Abedi et al. reviewed the literature on which

assessment accommodation would be the most beneficial, and the extent that assessment

accommodations can increase the score of an ELL student. Abedi et al. explains each study and

describes each accommodation that was assessed. These assessment accommodations included

the impact of language modifications, modified English assessments, simplified assessments,

receiving extra time, using published dictionaries, using glossaries and customized dictionaries,

oral administration, and receiving additional breaks. Abedi et al. then decided which

accommodation was the most beneficial by making categories to assess each accommodation.

These categories include effectiveness, validity, differential impact, and feasibility. Abedi et al.

came to the conclusion that accommodations increase the performance of ELL students by

encouraging them to overcome any language barriers that may be apparent.

Adedi's et al. review of literature concludes that appropriate and deliberate assessment

accommodations can allow a student to perform higher by giving them assessment

accommodations that meet their needs. Although modifications and accommodations can be

helpful to a variety of different students depending on their backgrounds and needs, they should

be used more frequently with ELL students. By using accommodations and modifications, ELL

students will be able to better depict their level of understanding and demonstrate their abilities.

Conclusion

In sum, all students can benefit from a teacher implementing these strategies into lessons,

content, and within assessments. However, ELL students will benefit even more and will

perform more successfully when a teacher provides these accommodations and modifications for

them. Providing ELL students with strategies to use when improving reading comprehension,

visual strategies, self-efficacy strategies, vocabulary building strategies, and modifications and

accommodations for assessments, will lead to students performing higher than they would if they

did not use these strategies and did not receive altered materials to fit their needs. This is why

teachers must use effective strategies with their ELL students in order for ELL students to

succeed.

In chapter 3, I will present in detail a professional development (PD) designed for

educators. The PD will be informed by the research presented here. The goal is to provide

practitioners effective ways to improve ELLs academic and self-efficacy outcomes.

Chapter 3

This chapter will detail a description for the product which was influenced by the literature found and complied from the Chapter 2 literature review. The product created for this capstone will be a professional development (PD) presentation and PowerPoint. This PD is designed with the intention to train and support all teachers including mainstream, special education, and ENL teachers. My overarching research question is: How can teachers provide lessons which implement strategies, techniques, modifications, and accommodations for ELL students at the Elementary Level? This PD will provide high quality support to present ideas and effective strategies to be used with ELL students with varied backgrounds. This will encourage and train all teachers on the ways to accommodate as well as modify lessons, content, and assessments to better fit the needs of ELL students. As the research shows 21% of school enrollment and 10.9 million school aged students 5 to 17 are ELL students (Li & Peters, 2020). Therefore, all teachers must be trained on how to effectively teach and alter content in order to successfully teach the ELL student population.

Agenda for Day 1

9:00-9:15 Pair Share

9:15-9:30 Warm up

9:30-11:00 Presentation on strategies with PowerPoint, handouts, and videos

11:00-11:20 Wrap up discussion

Participants will be asked to start the session by pair sharing and answering the questions: What do you think is the most effective strategy that you have used with an ELL student? Why do you think this strategy was effective at supporting this student? The participants will be asked to start with this in order to activate any prior knowledge and this discussion will allow them to start thinking about any of the strategies that they have used in the past with their ELL students.

The participants will also be asked these questions in order for the participants to begin critically assessing what strategies that they have used in the past that may have not been as effective in leading ELL students to success. This critical thinking will allow the participants to be open to the idea of being trained on new strategies that will allow them to teach ELL students more effectively.   After the participants have pair shared for 15 minutes, the group will come back together in order for each partnership to present to the group on what they spoke about during their pair share. This will allow the group to be better informed on each teachers background as well as what strategies each teacher has used prior to this PD.

After this pair share and group discussion I will present each strategy that can be used in order to effectively teach ELL students at the elementary level. I will also present different accommodations and modifications that can be used in order to alter lessons and assessments to better fit the needs of the participants ELL students.

I will start the presentation by focusing on strategies for reading comprehension. The first strategy that I will present on is the anticipation guide. I will present on the anticipation guide because this strategy allows teachers to activate and grow on student's prior knowledge, when they are lacking. Additionally, Hamedi et al. (2020) stated that "this strategy allows ELL students to interact with the text and compare their own backgrounds and beliefs with what they understood from the readings. Anticipation guides are also useful because they can be used in multiple content areas" (para. 11). I will also present on this strategy because studies have shown how ELL students showed increase in their reading comprehension when anticipation guides were used in the lesson. I will also speak about how although anticipation guides can be used for any group of students, these teachers must use anticipation guides more regularly such as before, during, and after reading a text. This will allow students to perform higher and develop their

reading comprehension. I will also provide my own example of an anticipation guide (see Appendix A) and will hand out copies of this in order to provide an example for the participants. After this I will read a short story and ask the participants to fill in their anticipation guides as if they were their own students.

Next, I will play a YouTube video to the participants which allows them to see an additional way of how an anticipation guide can be used in the classroom with elementary students.

The second strategy that I will present is the Directed Reading- Thinking Activity (DR-TA) strategy. I will present this strategy because it can be used in order for ELL students to make predictions, verify their own claims, as well as interpret different pieces of information. Additionally, Santi (2011) found that DR-TA can increase students' achievement in terms of their reading comprehension and strengthen their participation. Furthermore, this strategy provides an engagement environment which can provide more motivation for the students. DR-TA is also effective at allowing the student to experience the process of constantly monitoring their own reading comprehension. This is done by the student making connections between their own prior knowledge and the text that they are interacting with. I will also explain how although DR-TA can be used with all students, participants should use this strategy more regularly with ELL students since this strategy can be effective at improving an ELL student's self-confidence and motivate the student to actively engage and participate. Teachers will receive a handout with a list of questions that can be asked before, during and after a DR-TA (see Appendix B). This will allow the participants to receive an example which they can use later on during their teachings. Lastly, I will also show a YouTube video to the participants which will allow them to receive more insight on how this strategy can be effectively used in the classroom.

The third topic that I will speak about are visuals and why the use of visuals is extremely important when teaching ELL students. Visuals are important because many students do not have background knowledge to apply to lessons and content. Therefore, visuals can provide ELL students with additional explanations and pictorial representations. Moreover, teachers will receive a packet handout which provides example of visuals that can be used with ELL students (see Appendix C). This handout will include charts, graphic organizers, number lines, concept maps, a Venn Diagram, and tables in order for the teacher to be aware of how to use visuals with ELL students.

After this, I move onto presenting effective strategies for providing visuals to ELL students. I will present on Graphic organizers and Venn Diagrams as well. The use of graphic organizers can be beneficial because they provide ELL students with a way to organize different ideas and thoughts. Additionally, graphic organizers encourage the ELL student to stay organized and therefore can simplify concepts and topics into smaller pieces. I will focus on the strategy of using Venn Diagrams because Dreher and Gray (2009) found that providing ELL students with graphic organizers served as a visual strategy that can be used in order to build on their own knowledge. This can encourage them to make connections and increase their participation. I will also explain although Venn Diagrams can solidify content and information for any type of student, they should be used in every lesson for ELL students. This is because ELL students lack background knowledge, therefore by providing visuals such as graphic organizers will allow them to make deeper connections for content to make more sense. I will also provide the participants with a Venn Diagram to fill in. I will read a story and I will ask the participants to fill in the Venn Diagram to distinguish the similarities and differences between the two characters. This will allow the participants to practice the use of strategy by seeing it from their student's perspective. Lastly, I will show them a YouTube video

which illustrates how Venn Diagrams can effectively be used in the classroom and with ELLs in particular.

The next segment of the PD will focus on strategies' for improving ELL student's self-efficacy. I will present on this because Parsons and Shim (2019) indicated that by improving an ELL student's self- efficacy can boost their self-confidence and their willingness to participate and perform. I will describe the ways that teachers can decorate their classrooms in order to promote diversity and show representation for their ELL students. Additionally, I will explain why teachers should provide ELL students with clear lesson objectives. This will allow the student to understand what is the goal of the lesson and expectations for success is. In addition, when teachers post this information, ELLs can refer to it as needed to accomplish the lesson goals. what the teacher's expectations are for them. I will provide more explanation on this by handing out a worksheet which lists examples of clear lesson objectives (see Appendix D). After the participants read the worksheet over. I will present a standard on the screen, and I will ask the participants to write one clear lesson objective regarding this standard. After this, the participants will pair share to discuss what they wrote as their learning objective.

The next strategies that I will present on will be regarding the topic of building ELL students vocabulary. The first strategy that participants can use with their ELL students is a word wall. I will present on the use of word walls because Roberts and Truxaw (2013) found that word walls can be helpful in encouraging students to participate more frequently. Furthermore, Jackson et al. (2011) found that word walls can be useful for ELL students and unifying related vocabulary and making connections between words and subjects. Additionally, they can provide a visual reinforcement and a resource for students to use during a lesson. During my PD I will also explain how although word walls can be used with any type of student, they should be used

more with ELL students. Teachers should use word walls more regularly in the start of a unit to provide an ongoing resource that they can use in order to provide a concrete piece of information that they can reference. After this I will give the participants different word cards and they will be asked to work as a group in order to organize the words on the wall (see Appendix E). For example, the participants may organize the words with the beginning first letter in the word, or they may organize the words based on subjects and content. After this the participants will explain to me why they chose to organize the words on the word wall in the way that they did. Lastly, the participants will watch a YouTube video which explains helpful hints to keep in mind when using a word wall.

The next strategy that I will explain is the use of cognates in the classroom. I will explain this strategy because Montelongo et al. (2011) found that teachers can help their ELL students by implementing cognates from the students L1 and scaffolding acquisition and reading strategies. Additionally, Kelley and Kohnert (2012) found that using cognates during instruction can help increase a student's vocabulary comprehension and application. I will explain how teachers can use cognates in order to introduce new words in a unit to ELL students by comparing the vocabulary word to a word from the students L1. I will also pass out a cognate list for the participants to see how different words in English and Spanish look similar and are spelled similarly (see Appendix F). Lastly, I will show a YouTube video which speaks on how teachers can successfully use cognates in the classroom.

The next topic that I will present on is different modifications and accommodations that teachers can use with their ELL students. I will explain the difference of modifications and accommodations to the participants in the form of PowerPoint slides. I will explain how teachers can simplify written and verbal instruction. I will provide a link to the New York State Education

Department (NYSED) in order for teachers to access and print dictionaries for content specific

course and multiple languages. Also, they can provide different dictionaries to their ELL

students in order to use on assessments. Additionally, I will explain to the participants how they

can provide sentence starters on assessment for their ELL students to have a starting place on

questions. I will also present about accommodations. I will present on this topic because Abedi et

al. (2004) found that appropriate and deliberate assessment accommodations can allow a student

to perform higher by giving them assessment accommodations that meet their needs.

Additionally, NYSED has handouts on what accommodations ELLs have for state exams and I

will provide this information as well in order to encourage teachers to modify assessments for

students using the mandated modifications in their lesson and units. I will also explain how

although many students benefit from testing modifications and accommodations, they can be

even more beneficial to ELL students. This is since testing accommodations such as sentence

starters allow the students to better showcase and demonstrate their level of understanding.

Although, the use of sentence starters is not prohibited for state exams, they can be used in the

classroom during teacher made summative and formative assessments. I will then provide a

worksheet which lists sentence starters (see Appendix G). This allows the participants to

successfully see how sentence starters look and how they can effectively alter their questions in

order to provide a starting place for ELL students. Lastly, I will play a YouTube video which

clearly defines the difference between accommodations and modifications for ELL students.

Lastly, in order to complete Day 1 the participants will pair share in order to answer the

following questions: Which strategy do you feel would be the most beneficial? Which strategy

have you effectively used with ELL students in the past? What was a new strategy that you

learned about for the first time? How will you use these strategies with your ELL students? After

participants pair share, we will come back together as a group in order to discuss the participants answers what the partnerships discussed. Additionally, participants will be asked to bring copies of their original lesson plans for Day 2.

Agenda for Day 2

9:00- 9:15 Pair share

9:15- 10:30 Lesson edits and implementation

10:30 -10:45 Pair share

10:45- 11:30 Group wrap up / discussion

11:30- 11:40 Pair share

11:40 – 12:00 Exit ticket

Day 1 and Day 2 will be held consecutively. The first thing that participants will do on Day 2 is pair share with their partner to answer the question: What was the biggest piece of information that you learned yesterday and what was your biggest take away? After this the group will come back together and participants will take turns sharing their answers to the questions previously posed.

After the pair share activity participants will be asked to take out their original lesson plans. From here, the participants will practice incorporating the 12 different strategies presented on Day 1, into their lesson plans. In order for participants to be aware of all the strategies, the PowerPoint will be shared, and the participants will access the presentation before going into their pair share groups.

Following this activity, participants will pair share for 15 minutes in order to discuss what edits they made and what strategy did they decide to add and why. After the pair share, participants will come together in order to have a group discussion where participants take turns

going up to the front of the room and displaying their edited lessons on the projector. This will

allow the participants to see examples of how to effectively edit their old lesson plans in order to

implement strategies to help ELL students.

To end Day 2, the participants will be asked to fill out an exit slip which asks them to

self-reflect and answer the questions: What was the biggest take away that you received from

this session? What strategy did you implement into your old lesson? Why do you think this

would be beneficial for your ELL students?

Agenda for Day 3

9:00- 9:15 Warm up

9:15- 10:00 New lesson writing

10:00- 10:15 Group share

10:15- 11:15 Wrap up

Day 2 and Day 3 will be held consecutively. Day 3 will start by participants pair sharing

about their biggest take away from both Day 1 and Day 2. This is a quick activity about what

strategies they implemented from Day 1 and Day 2. The participants will also focus on what

worked and what did not and how they will alter the lessons to include the strategies.

Additionally, participants will focus on how will individualized lesson plans look for one or

more students. After the warmup activity, the teachers will be assigned groups to work with for

the day. The groups they will be getting assigned a Next Generation NYS Common Core

standard to work on from a PowerPoint slide. In groups, the participants must write a lesson plan

from scratch, and it must implement at least two of the strategies that were previously talked

about. The participants will take turns collaborating and discussing the standard, content, and

vocabulary surrounding the topic. They will choose an effective strategy that they feel would

benefit ELL students the most based on this topic and standard. Participants will all follow the

same lesson model. After completing this activity, the group will discuss their lessons and

project them on the projector in order for all of the participants to see how each group

approached this activity.

Chapter 4

Introduction

      The problem this capstone addresses is the overarching research question: How can

teachers provide lessons which implement strategies, techniques, modifications, and

accommodations for ELL students at the Elementary Level? This is a problem because the population of ELL students is increasing as years continue. Since this is the case teachers must be trained on the ways to accommodate as well as modify lessons, content, and assessments to better fit the needs of ELL students. This is since more people are immigrating to the United States as years go on.

Therefore, the ELL population is also growing, which means that teachers will be placed with more ELL students in their classrooms. Therefore, my capstone answers the question on how teachers can provide lessons which implement strategies, techniques, modifications, and accommodations for ELL students at the Elementary Level. This means that there must be an increase in professional development for teachers educating and working with ELL students.

However, some teachers do not have adequate background knowledge or sufficient training on how to teach and alter content to fit the needs of ELL students. Since this is the case, some students may be placed in classrooms with teachers that are not successfully fitting the needs of the students. Therefore, some students may overall be less successful and have a hard time attaining instructional goals. Additionally, training teachers is necessary in order for ELL students to receive effective education.

Conclusion

The takeaway from my research is that effective strategies can be used in order to increase reading comprehension, provide visuals, improve student's self-efficacy, and build students vocabulary. Although, strategies can be used with all students in order to strengthen their academic skills. These strategies should be used more frequently with ELL students in order for them to improve English language skills and gain content knowledge effectively.

The research supports the idea that through the implementation and use of strategies - ELL students perform at a higher rate and there is overall success in school. Additionally, studies showed that using targeted strategies frequently in multiple content areas, lead to academic success in a variety of content area instruction.

What I learned through the research is that by incorporating effective strategies, as well as accommodations and modifications into lessons and assessments, ELL students attain positive educational and social emotional gains. Therefore, effective strategies, modifications, and accommodations will lead to successfully meet linguistic, socioemotional and assessment challenges.

Implications for Student Learning

There are many ways that I see ELL students benefiting from the implementation of effective strategies, modifications, and accommodations. Hamedi et al. (2020) studies showed that when teachers implemented anticipation guides into lessons, ELL students showed increases in reading comprehension. Megawati (2019) research also demonstrated that using DT-RA can effectively increase a student's reading comprehension and increase student's overall motivation in the learning process as well as student's willingness to participate.

Additionally, graphic organizers and other visual aids can provide ELL students with a way to structure concepts without demands on linguistic skills they may not possess. Oteikwu et al. (2017) study showed how graphic organizers can enhance the quality of instruction and make the teaching and learning experiences reflective. Word Walls can also be very effective to use with ELL students in order to provide additional visuals for students to reference. Roberts and Truxaw (2013) found that word walls can be extremely effective because they encourage student

participation and provide a visual reinforcement and resource that students can turn to during a lesson.

Cognates can also help to benefit ELL student success in school as well. Kelley and Kohnert (2012) research shows that using cognates during instruction as well as on assessment can help to increase a student's vocabulary comprehension and application. ELL students can also benefit from receiving accommodations and modifications on assessment. Abedi et al. (2004) research found that appropriate and deliberate assessment accommodations can allow a student to perform higher by giving them assessment accommodations that meet their needs.

Implications for Teaching

TESOL, general education teachers, as well as special education teachers will also benefit from implementing and using effective strategies, modifications, and accommodations with ELL students. As teachers incorporate visual strategies with ELL students, teachers will be able to build on background knowledge and strengthen context of topics through the use of pictorial representations.

Moreover, teachers can use visual strategies in a variety of different content areas in order to teach multiple subjects and topics. This can benefit teachers because visuals can be brought into different lessons which gives educators flexibility to construct content and deliver content. Dreher and Gray (2009) found that visuals and graphic organizers can be used in order for a teacher to aid a student to make connections between their own prior knowledge and background and the new content being introduced. Additionally, the use of strategies, incorporating accommodations and modifications to deliver instruction and assessment increases students self-efficacy. As teachers make these changes students participation, motivation, and self-confidence increases. Thus, benefiting teachers because by a student participating more, higher leveled

discussions will be able to occur, and content will be synthesized for all students participating on a deeper level.

Recommendations

In order for teachers to provide lessons which implement strategies, techniques, modifications, and accommodations for ELL students at the Elementary Level to be researched even more, I propose few recommendations. The first being that studies should continue to be done in order to assess which strategies are most effective with ELL students. Moreover, these studies should assess multiple age groups and also should focus on repetitiveness in order to determine how often each strategy should be used. Furthermore, additional strategies should continue to be created in order to provide new strategies to be used with.

Final Thoughts

In my capstone project, many of the studies showed the academic, social, and emotional benefits which can occur when teachers use effective strategies with ELL students. By using effective strategies students can become more motivated and students may be more willing to participate. Additionally, when teachers implement effective strategies for ELLs into the classroom student's self-confidence increase and their anxiety decreases. Lastly, effective strategies allow ELL students to analyze and synthesize information and content more efficiently. These reasons show why all teachers need to implement effective strategies into the classroom, not only to help ELL students but all students.

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Appendix A
Anticipation Guide

Before		Statement	After	
Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree

Appendix B
Sample questions during a reading of the three little pigs

Before:

1. What do you think the front cover tells you about what might happen?
2. Can you do a picture walk? What do you learn?
3. Can you make any predictions on what might happen?

During:

1. How do you think the pigs might react to the wolfs actions?
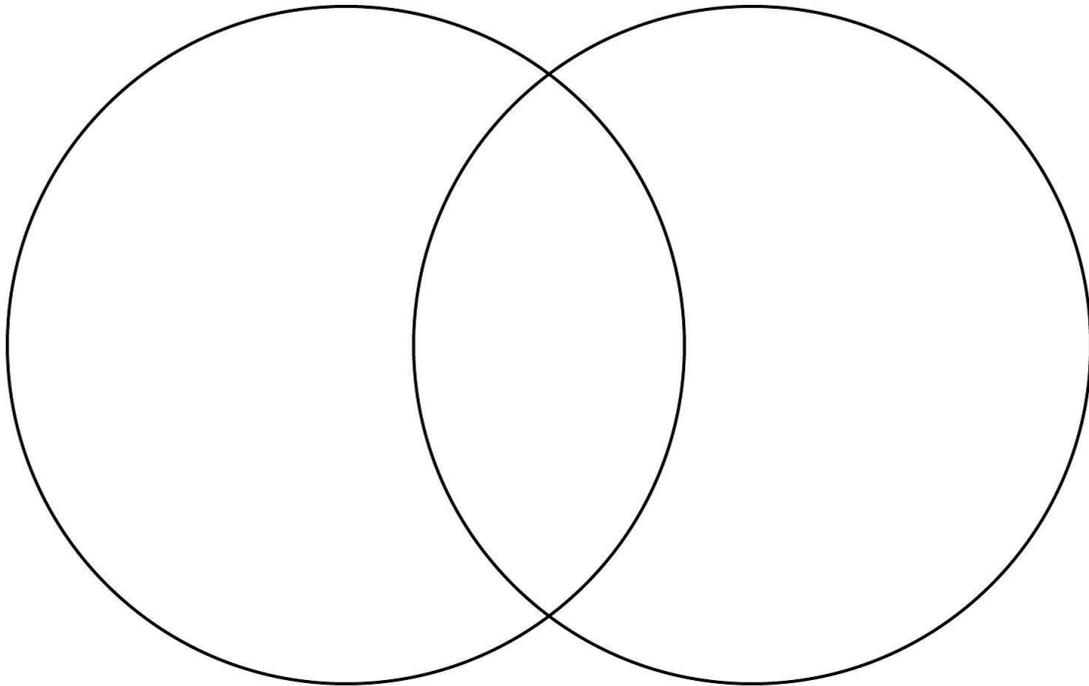2. How do you think the pigs feel?
3. How do you think the wolf feels?

After:

1. Were your predictions, right? How were they right or wrong?
2. Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

Appendix C
Visuals

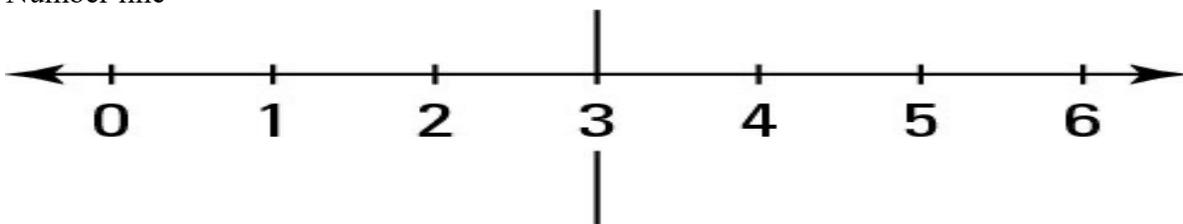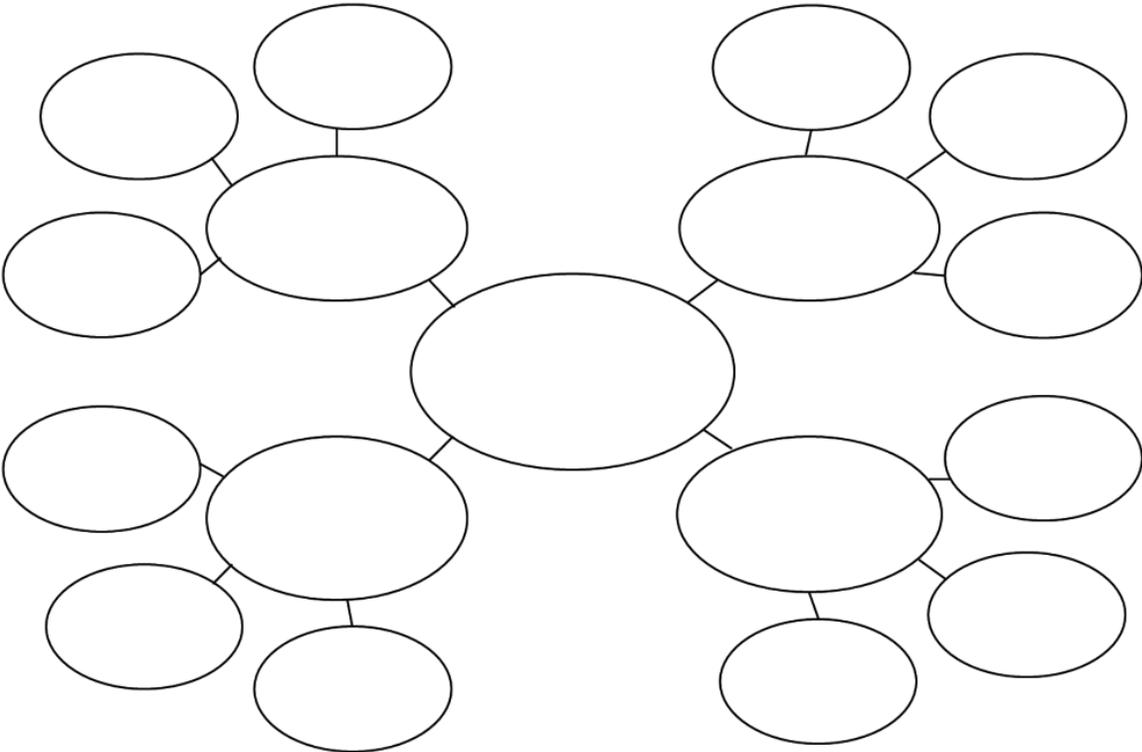What are the similarities and differences between the two characters in the book?

Venn Diagram

Chart

K-W-L Chart

Topic: _____

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned

Number line

Effects

Graphic organizer

Cause

Table

Character	Character Trait	Evidence from book

Concept Map

Appendix D
Clear Objective list

1. Students will be able to categorize types of animals into the correct classes with a graphic organizer after reading an article on animal traits.
2. At the end of a reading unit, students will be able to identify the character, setting, and plot.
3. Students will be able to accurately name the parts of a flower after learning a song to describe each part and its function.
4. Students will be able to describe the life cycle of a butterfly in a graphic organizer after reading *From Caterpillar to Butterfly*.

Appendix E
Word Wall list

1) Matter
2) Property
3) Volume
4) Area
5) Perimeter
6) Characters
7) Setting
8) Problem

Appendix F
Cognate list

Here is a list of cognates that can be used regarding different content areas:

1. accident   accidente
2. adventure   aventura
3. camera   cámara
4. camouflage   camuflaje
5. astronomer   astrónomo
6. directions   direcciones
7. extraordinary   extraordinario(a)
8. immigrants   inmigrantes
9. history.   historia
10. lesson   lección
11. observatory   observatorio
12. paper.   papel
13. rock   roca
14. vote (to)   votar

Appendix G
Sentence Starters

1) The first step of a caterpillar's life cycle is called _____. This is when _____.
2) The second step of a caterpillar's life cycle is _____. During this stage the caterpillar _____.

1) In a book the character is _____.
2) The setting in a book is _____.
3) The plot in a book is _____.

1) I agree with, at the beginning, _____. But then _____. However, I think _____.
2) The story took place at _____.
3) The main character reacted to the problem by _____

The conflict took place between _____ and _____.