Improving Early Literacy Practices for Young English Language Learners

By

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Abstract

This capstone project examined early literacy practices for young English Language Learners (ELLs). At Red Wolves Elementary, the young ELL population consist of more than half of the student population. The current issue they are facing is being one to two years behind on their reading level. This paper presents research and qualitative case studies on the challenges and effective research based methods to improve the early literacy for young struggling ELLs. A solution to the problem was the creation a professional development that aims to support early childhood teachers, English as a new language and bilingual teachers to improve the early literacy practices for young ELLs in the areas of vocabulary, phonics, comprehension and learning assessments. The professional development will help teachers understand different ways ELLs learn and ways to incorporate their background and cultural knowledge into their literacy practices. The expected outcome from this research and professional development is having teachers differentiate their literacy practices and lesson planning to support learning for ELLs in vocabulary, phonics, comprehension and learning assessments while striving for literacy gains.

Keywords: English Language Learners (ELLs), vocabulary, phonics, comprehension, learning assessment, professional development

Chapter 1: Introduction

Early childhood classrooms are becoming more and more diverse each year. In today's early childhood classrooms, teachers are likely to have children who are not learning English at home, or English language learners (ELLs). ELLs are defined as children who speak a non-English language at home and are learning English at the same time (California Department of Education, 2008; Office of Head Start, 2008). With this increased number of ELL children, providing the appropriate language support that promotes both ELL and non-ELL children's early language skills continues to be a challenge for early childhood teachers (Meng, 2019). Narrowing the reading achievement gap requires use of research-based assessments that can facilitate the identification of children who are at risk of future reading difficulty (Hung & Konold, 2014).

Regardless of their diverse backgrounds and across national education systems, all ELLs have to acquire English while keeping up with their same grade peers not only in acquiring curriculum content, but also in developing academic language proficiency, which involves increasingly more complex language skills at each grade level (Jang et al., 2013). These challenges underlie some of the achievement and opportunity gaps that arise between ELLs and their English-speaking peers in K–12 schools. For example, in the United States, Hispanic students comprise the largest ELL population, and the language of schooling is not the primary language spoken at home (Jang et al., 2013). Research has consistently shown that these children tend to show low reading comprehension ability (August & Hakuta, 1997) and require 4 to 7 years of exposure to English to reach typical age norms in academic achievement compared to their non-ELL peers (Bialystok, 2002; Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1991; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000).

At Red Wolves Elementary, located in an urban city school district in the state of New

York, the growing ELL population is evident at the early childhood classrooms. Over 51% of the student population are Spanish native speakers and qualify for English as new language services. Currently the school is implementing different reading programs for different topics or themes. Many of these reading programs used at Red Wolves Elementary do not differentiate nor meet the needs of vocabulary, phonics, reading comprehension or adequately assess student knowledge according to language acquisition or social cultural theory. According to Diallo (2020), existing reading curricula often do not align with the current science on how students learn. Studies suggest that incorporating the science of reading practices studied by psychologists, linguists, and neurobiologists into the classroom will dramatically reduce the number of children who are on track to become functionally illiterate adults (Diallo, 2020). Along with the issue of reading programs, many teachers at this school only have monolingual student teaching practices/experiences. With the student population changing and more ELLs entering this school, teachers need the support and guidance of effective literacy strategies that differentiate and meet the needs of these young ELL learners.

Thus, the purpose of this project is to successfully integrate effective literacy strategies with young English Language Learners. Allowing teachers to differentiate their current reading strategies to meet the needs of young ELLs in their classroom. In Chapter 2, I will review previous theories and studies that have explored this problem and potential solutions. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2, will help develop a professional development for teachers in Chapter 3. The professional development will give teachers an insight and support of effective literacy strategies that can be used throughout the day and achieve literacy gains with young ELLs. In Chapter 4, implications for student learning and teaching and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature exploring the challenges ELLs and early childhood teachers face with effective early literacy practices. Meng (2019) states that ELLs are defined as children who speak a non-English language at home and are learning English at the same time. With an increased number of ELL children, providing the appropriate language support that promotes both ELL and non-ELL children's early language skills continues to be a challenge for early childhood educators and administrators. Of particular concern is with ELL children of economically disadvantaged families. The low-income population is largely consisted of children with immigrant or foreign-born parents. The challenges reviewed include phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and adequate assessment in early literacy practices. The literature reviewed is based on a mixture of qualitative research conducted with early childhood ELL students.

Not all children enter kindergarten with the same level of language and literacy development, and thus not all will make progress at an equal rate (Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, & Cox, 2000). Han (2012) reported that the language abilities that dual language learners develop in early childhood programs predict their academic achievement through middle school. Thus, it is critical to determine which language and literacy areas need special attention earlier rather than later. If kindergarten teachers understand what dual language learners know and can do, they can then differentiate their instruction accordingly. Hammer et al. (2014) pointed out that, unfortunately, "relatively little research has been conducted on the language and literacy development of dual language learners (DLLs), particularly during the early childhood years" (p. 715). Most researchers who have focused on the language development of young DLLs have compared their language development to that of monolingual children in terms of vocabulary,

oral language, phonological abilities, grammatical development, and semantic abilities, among others (Hammer et al., 2014).

Although basic cognitive processes may be similar, multiple factors may influence ELLs' language and literacy development, including the age at which the learner is exposed to language learning activities and instruction, and the amount of available support both at home and school for the acquisition of the skills in both English and other languages (RAND Reading Study Group, 2005). One of the factors influencing students' academic language development that is of particular interest in the present investigation is the amount of time that it takes students to develop skills such that they no longer need additional support and may be considered proficient (Jang et al., 2013). According to Cummins (1981), ELLs can achieve basic interpersonal communication skills within 2 years of learning another language, while the acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency that they need to succeed in an academic context that matches the level of their native-speaking peers takes between 5 to 7 years to master.

Theoretical Framework

According to Vygotsky (1978), the sociocultural environment presents the child with a variety of tasks and demands, and engages the child in his world through the tools. In the early stages, Vygotsky claims that the child is completely dependent on other people, usually the parents, who initiate the child's actions by instructing him/her as to what to do, how to do it, as well as what not to do. Parents, as representatives of the culture and the conduit through which the culture passes into the child, actualize these instructions primarily through language. On the question of how do children then appropriate these cultural and social heritages, Vygotsky (1978) states that the child acquires knowledge through contacts and interactions with people as the first step (interpsychological plane), then later assimilates and internalises this knowledge

adding his personal value to it (intrapsychological plane). This transition from social to personal property according to Vygotsky is not a mere copy, but a transformation of what had been learn through interaction, into personal values. Vygotsky (1978) claims that this is what also happens in schools. Students do not merely copy teachers‟ capabilities; rather they transform what teachers offer them during the processes of appropriation” (Turuk, 2008).

The importance of language input is emphasized in theoretical framework that highlights the interactions between the children and the environment to promote early language development (e.g. Chapman, 2000; Leseman & Jong, 1998; Wong Fillmore, 1991). The interactionist model (Wong Fillmore, 1991), used to explain second language acquisition, conceptualizes learning a second language takes place in a social context that creates opportunities to enable the interactions between a native language speaker and an individual learning the language of the native speaker. Similar view can be seen in the social constructivist perspective (Leseman & Jong, 1998) and the social-interactionist theory of language acquisition (Chapman, 2000). Both the social constructivist perspective and the social-interactionist theory underscore the importance of social contexts in language development. Particularly, a dyadic relationship that is characterized with warm and positive verbal exchanges is likely to stimulate language development (Chapman, 2000).

Early childhood is an important period for language development. Language input that stimulates children’s early language skills can help lay the foundation for language and academic achievement in kindergarten and beyond (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). Consistent with the sociocultural approach of language development (Vygotsky, 1978), language interactions scaffolded by knowledgeable teachers can provide optimal learning for children of diverse language and cultural backgrounds. Further, creating a quality language environment in the

classrooms may interrupt the process in which the language gap between low-income non-ELL children and their counterparts begins to appear (Meng, 2019).

Phonics

Early success in reading is based on a student's ability to master core early literacy constructs (Invernizzi et al., 2004). The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP, 2008) conducted a meta-analysis using approximately 500 research articles and identified sets of skills and abilities that could effectively predict future reading outcomes, even after controlling for variables such as socioeconomic status and IQ. Among the variables found to be highly predictive of later literacy were phonological awareness (PA), or the ability to detect and manipulate the sound structures of spoken language independent of meaning, and alphabet knowledge (AK), or knowledge of the names and sounds associated with the letters. While there is considerably less research on examining second language literacy development, research also suggests that these same skills also are predictive of reading ability for second-language learners (Chiappe, Siegel, & WadeWoolley, 2002; Lesaux, Koda, Siegel, & Shanahan, 2006; Lesaux, Rupp, & Siegel, 2007; Muter & Diethelm, 2001).

Phonological awareness is the "awareness of sounds in spoken (not written) words that is revealed by such abilities as rhyming, matching initial consonants, and counting the number of phonemes in spoken words" (Stahl & Murray, 1994, p. 221). Parts of words can include onsets (word beginnings), rimes (word endings), or the smallest parts of meaningful speech, phonemes (Huang et al., 2014). While phonological awareness deals with sounds, knowledge of the English alphabet relates to the child's ability to recognize letter forms, names, and sounds associated with written letters of the alphabet. Alphabet knowledge in young children has been consistently shown to be one of the strongest predictors of future reading ability (Adams, 1990; Foulin, 2005;

Hammill, 2004; Stevenson & Newman, 1986). On its own, the number of letters a child can name in kindergarten appears to be as successful in predicting future reading ability as giving an entire reading assessment (Scarborough, 1998). Alphabet knowledge has also been consistently found to be one of the most powerful predictors of reading ability for native English speakers and kindergarten ELLs (Chiappe et al., 2002; Muter & Diethelm, 2001). However, Spanish speakers who are learning to spell in English may face additional challenges (Raynolds & Uhry, 2010). For example, while certain letters of the English alphabet have the same visual representation, phonemes will differ. A Spanish-speaking ELL student may spell "HAT" as JAT where the J makes the /h/ sound in Spanish. Teachers who understand the phonologies of the two alphabetic systems may be better able to help Spanish-speaking students make the transition to spelling in English (Fashola, Drum, Mayer, & Kang, 1996).

Results from the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) specify the importance of systematic and explicit phonics instruction in kindergarten and first grade to improve students' word recognition, spelling, and reading comprehension. Letter-sound correspondence is a particularly important skill in the primary grades. Letter-sound fluency consistently predicts outcomes on high-stakes reading tests later in schooling (Pickart, Sheran, Betts, & Heistad, 2007), as well as other reading-related outcomes across first and second grades (Schatschneider, Fletcher, Francis, Carlson, & Foorman, 2004). Systematic and explicit literacy interventions are particularly beneficial for students at risk for literacy difficulties early in the primary grades (NRP, 2000). For example, Vellutino, Scanlon, Small, and Fanuele (2006) found that kindergarten and first grade students who received targeted literacy interventions performed better on measures of emergent literacy when compared to similar peers who did not receive intervention support. In addition, Al Otaiba and Torgeson (2007) found that providing students

with systematic and explicit literacy interventions in combination with a strong and explicit core-reading program could reduce the percentage of poor readers by the end of first or second grade.

One intervention with evidence of effectiveness with native English speakers is Incremental Rehearsal (IR; Bums, Dean, & Foley, 2004; Volpe, Bums, DuBois, & Follen Zaslofsky, 2011). IR is a systematic and explicit intervention that teaches unknown concepts by combining them with known concepts (Burns et al., 2004). In IR, a student knows approximately 90% of the concepts, with the remaining 10% of concepts unknown and interspersed among known concepts. This drill and practice procedure is effective for teaching students in the acquisition phase of learning because it allows for teaching to mastery, introduces unknown concepts in small sets, allows many opportunities to respond, promotes errorless learning, and provides repetition (Burns et al., 2004). IR has been found to be more effective than traditional methods of drill and practice (Bums & Boice, 2009; Bruns & Sterling-Turner, 2010; MacQuarrie, Tucker, Bums, & Hartman, 2002).

Results of this study suggest that IR is a strategy practitioners may want to consider using with kindergarten and first grade English learners who have not responded adequately to whole group and small group instruction on letter sounds (Rahn et al., 2015). As previously noted, IR introduces a small set of unknown concepts (in this case unknown letter sounds), provides multiple opportunities to practice the unknown concepts, and allows the unknown concepts to be taught to mastery (Bums et al., 2004). Thus, IR provides teachers with an individualized, intensive, and targeted intervention to draw upon when teaching English learners who are struggling to acquire letter sounds (Rahn et al., 2015).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the core ingredients for reading success for children (NICHHD,

2000). Specifically for English language learners (ELLs), educational researchers recommend daily vocabulary instruction throughout the school day (August and Shanahan, 2006). With a shortage of trained bilingual educators to meet such needs, educators may consider capitalizing on developing technology resources for vocabulary instruction. Even brief vocabulary interventions have proved to increase word learning for English monolingual students (NICHHD, 2000). Children's storybooks have been identified as providing a context for vocabulary instruction and exposure (Justice et al., 2005).

Leacox and Jackson (2014) state, bilingual models represent how a shared concept connects to lexical labels in multiple languages, as well as ways to use the stronger language to facilitate learning in the weaker language. If a child already understands or knows a concept with its label in the home language, instruction in the home language can mediate or bridge the gap between the two languages to learn the second label. This bridging demonstrates how home language instruction is potentially advantageous as an instructional tool for young ELLs. Specific attention should be focused on further investigation with home language vocabulary instruction. For example, the concept of a dog (e.g. mental image and associated characteristics: function, attributes, category) has one connection with the English label (e.g. the word 'dog'), and another with the Spanish label (e.g. the word 'perro'). For a Spanish speaker learning English, the connection between the concept and the English label is weaker than the connection between the concept and the Spanish label. Hence, the strength of the connection between a concept and its lexical label may vary, depending on a learner's proficiency in each language; thus, the first language may mediate word acquisition in the second language (Jackson & Leacox, 2014).

Educators and researchers typically combine repeated readings (i.e. an adult reads a story

aloud to children) and word elaborations together as vocabulary strategies to achieve word learning gains for young ELLs (Collins, 2010; Leacox & Jackson; Lugo-Neris et al., 2010). For example, Collins (2010) examined the word learning of advanced vocabulary words of 80 Portuguese-speaking preschool ELLs. Children were assigned to one of three groups: (1) a treatment group listened to stories three times with rich vocabulary explanations (e.g. general definitions, synonyms, decontextualized examples); (2) a control group listened to stories three times; and (3) an additional control group did not listen to the stories. Children who engaged in the repeated readings treatment group with rich instruction made significantly more gains in receptive vocabulary knowledge than those who did not (Collins, 2010). Although it remains uncertain which intervention features were most beneficial, educational professionals should consider combining vocabulary strategies as a potential means to enhance vocabulary learning for young ELLs as compared to book reading alone: (1) repeated readings; (2) multiple and varied exposures; and (3) vocabulary definitions in the home language (Leacox & Jackson, 2014).

Lugo-Neris et al. (2010) examined the strategy of 'vocabulary bridging' where definitions of vocabulary words were provided in Spanish to expand the meaning of a word in the home language and to provide context within a story. Vocabulary bridging used definitions provided in Spanish to bridge to the emerging language, English. Preschool and kindergarten children with limited English proficiency engaged in adult-read repeated readings in English for two conditions: (1) two weeks with embedded supplemental English vocabulary definitions in English; and (2) two weeks with embedded vocabulary definitions in Spanish (i.e. Spanish bridging). Children with basic Spanish proficiency but limited English proficiency demonstrated growth in labelling, receptive vocabulary and expressive definitions. Although embedded

instructional definitions in either Spanish or English were beneficial, vocabulary instruction in Spanish during shared reading produced greater gains in the children's ability to define or explain targeted words. Overall, children with lower skills in both languages made fewer gains in both conditions than children with stronger home language skills (Lugo-Neris et al., 2010).

Meng (2019) states, the present study found that teacher–child language interactions have similar effects on both ELL children's and non-ELL children's receptive vocabulary. This finding indicates similar effects between non-ELL children and ELL children in the association between teacher–child language interactions and children's receptive vocabulary. This evidence supports the perspective that quality-teaching practices benefit both ELL children and children of native English speakers (Castro et al., 2011). It has been shown that the teachers' use of open-ended questions, extending children's conversations, modelling language in grammatically correct forms, and the use of inferential language can promote children's vocabulary growth (Cabell et al., 2015; Justice et al., 2013; Mascareño et al., 2016). Thus quality language input, combined with sensitive and responsive teachers who are able to adjust their adults' language patterns, can create an optimal language environment for both ELL and non-ELL children's early vocabulary development (Meng, 2019).

Comprehension

Because reading is cultural, it is important to use literature by and about people of color, diverse books, to expand our perspectives of the world. According to Pahl and Rowsell (2010), "every object tells a story" (p. iii). This is the idea embraced in artifactual literacies: getting children to talk and write about what they already know; valuing their expertise. "Artifactual literacy acknowledges that everyone has a story to tell, and they bring that story into their learning" (p. 3) in many languages and varieties of language. Souto-Manning (2016) states, in

terms of books, you have in your classroom library, it is important to enhance access and representation. An example of possible bilingual mentor texts is Carmen Tafolla's What Can You Do With a Paleta?/ Que puedes hacer con una paleta? which portays a paletero yelling out, "¡Pale-ta-a-a-as!" in a barrio, offering delicious paletas of sandia, fresas, y otros sabores! Alternatively, Tafolla's What Can You Do With a Rebozo?/ Que puedes hacer con un rebozo? tells the many stories (in two languages) of a rebozo, such as being transformed by Mamá into a cozy baby cradle and by Abuela into a way to keep warm on winter nights. In both of these books, specific artifacts (namely, Popsicles and a scarf) gain cultural meaning and serve to acquire artifactual literacies. A powerful feature of these books is the weaving in and out of languages, providing access while demonstrating code switching (Souto-Manning, 2016).

Researchers have supported using graphic organizers combined with other reading strategies to increase comprehension and vocabulary skills because it helps students use contextual clues (e.g., Greenwood, 2002; Schorzman & Cheek, 2004). The word web can help students make connections between new information and prior knowledge (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Miller, 2002). Potential benefits of using word webs in a culturally responsive teaching framework are that they can help to activate background knowledge, define new concepts, make connections explicit, involve the students' primary languages, build vocabulary skills, allow for multiple perspectives, and incorporate the students' various background experiences.

Reading experts recommend giving students pre-reading strategies, such as making predictions, either as a single or integrated strategy to increase comprehension (e.g., Cunningham, Moore, Cunningham, & Moore, 2000; Eilers & Pinkley, 2006; Readence, Moore, & Rickelman, 2000; Tompkins, 2001; Wood & Endres, 2004). To make good predictions,

students should activate and reflect on their prior knowledge of the topic, which are critical to the comprehension process and gives them opportunities to connect their lives with the text (Alexander & Jetton, 2000). This is important because each student brings a different worldview and knowledge about the topic depending on his or her prior experiences, culture, and language. The prediction strategy is particularly beneficial for struggling readers, who unlike skilled readers, do not have a comprehension plan when faced with new or complex text; simply giving them opportunities to read will not help them develop metacognitive strategies (Neufeld, 2005). In addition, students have a purpose for reading, which can increase motivation (Blanton, Wood, & Moorman, 1990). The increased motivation may then support their desire to engage with the text and continue reading to discover whether their predictions were correct (Butcher & Kintsch, 2003; Schallert & Martin, 2003).

Cooperative learning may be effective for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and English learners because of the social context and opportunities to practice oral language skills. Further, in some communities, working together in a supportive manner to accomplish daily tasks is a common part of everyday life. Thus, cooperative learning gives students the opportunity to see parts of their home culture reflected at school, which may increase the likelihood of their success (Putnam, 1998). Bui and Fagan (2013) state, in addition to the mentioned strategies that help readers navigate the content of the text, multicultural literature is a strategy that may influence the context of the reader. These contextual factors include social and affective factors such as attitude and motivation, which can act as mediators to increase reading performance. Multicultural literature refers to narrative stories, folktales, or poetry that includes themes, images, characters, and dialogue from diverse cultures and languages. By incorporating multicultural literature in the curriculum, students can meaningfully

connect familiar sociocultural themes found in the text with their life experiences outside the classroom. In addition, educators may use multicultural literature to activate students' background knowledge and increase motivation (McCollin & O'Shea, 2005).

"Be certain to have books in all languages that students speak or read, even if you cannot read these books" (Souto- Manning & Martell, 2016a, p. 98). It is also essential to have books that represent children -- their images and languages. Author Junot Díaz (2009) proposed that not showing the image of all children we teach reflected in books is dehumanizing and can make a human being feel like a monster. Most of all, in teaching bilingual and multilingual children, it is important to see them as capable, to learn from them, and to communicate their importance in the curriculum. Valuing their multiple languages, supporting and encouraging children to develop bilingually and multilingual and holding equally high standards for both or all of their languages are essential. Otherwise, it is communicated to them that the language of their home, their language of love, is not valuable.

Assessment of Learning

Historically, most educational and testing contexts have been dominated by a monolingual or monoglossic paradigm in which multilingualism and multilingual practices often have been ignored (García & Torres-Guevara, 2010). The traditional way to measure bilingualism is to assess and score the two language systems separately and then compare the results (Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014). Assessments of bilingual competence that reflect a monoglossic perspective "try to account for ultimate native-like proficiency in all the languages" and "assume that the multilingual is the sum of the native-like monolingual competence in each language" (Stavans & Hoffmann, 2015, p. 157). Because multilinguals rarely achieve the same level of proficiency in all the languages in their repertoire,

they usually are viewed as language deficient in one or more languages (Baker, 2001; Grosjean, 2008). Herdina and Jessner (2002) argued, "As long as bilinguals are measured according to monolingual criteria, they appear to be greatly disadvantaged both in linguistic and cognitive terms."

When multilingual competence is assessed using monolingual constructs, test takers are expected to respond exclusively in the target language, even if they have multiple languages in their repertoire. Test takers' performances are scored using monolingual scoring rubrics, meaning that if they respond using any other language than the target language (either partially or completely), their responses are penalized. The measures used to assess bilinguals are usually the same as those used to assess monolinguals (Grosjean, 1985; Solano-Flores & Trumbull, 2003; Solano-Flores, Trumbull, & NelsonBarber, 2002). Monolingual assessments tend to ignore the different needs that bilinguals have for their two languages and do not take into account that bilinguals use these languages for different purposes, with different speakers, and in different contexts (Grosjean, 1989).

Moreover, most of these dual language assessments do not provide specific information about the Spanish version. Barrueco et al. (2012) reported that most English assessment tools have been carefully developed and validated but found that there was not much information about how the Spanish form was developed or validated. Most of the Spanish versions are simply translated versions of the English assessments. Using translated versions is problematic because the home language versions usually do not have appropriate norming samples; in fact, it is very likely that they were normed on monolingual populations (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education [AERA, APA, & NCME], 2014; August & Hakuta, 1997; Barrueco et al., 2012;

Espinosa, 2008; G. E. García & Pearson, 1994). It also is possible that the language or literacy concepts being assessed have different meanings depending on the language (G. E. García, McKoon, & August, 2006). For example, issues of construct equivalence, dialect, or register may contribute to measurement error (Solano-Flores, 2006; van de Vijver & Poortinga, 2005). Also, many of the current dual language assessments have not been culturally validated with DLLs (Espinosa, 2008), and there are concerns that assessments for DLLs in the United States could be culturally biased (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). In sum, dual language assessments that have not been designed, validated, and normed specifically for DLLs could have serious limitations when used with this population.

Another problem is that current dual language assessments evaluate each language separately (Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014). These assessments often treat the languages of bilinguals as sets of discrete skills that function independently. In other words, languages are assessed and scored separately, and the scores are then interpreted separately. For example, students may be penalized for using their home language on a test of English or for using English on a test of the home language. If the student demonstrates the target skill or conceptual understanding that is being evaluated, but uses a prohibited language, this information is not captured and is thus lost (Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014). As a result, many of the current dual language assessment measures do not provide information about the full extent of students' abilities, and the results could be interpreted as deficiencies in the language and literacy development of young DLLs (García et al., 2006).

The issue of how to teach ELL children has been an on-going debate in the scholarly community. Researchers do not seem to have reached a consensus on this issue. Some researchers (Genesee et al., 2006) argue that quality teaching practices and structured early

childhood curriculum can benefit ELL children as well as non-ELL children. Others (Nemeth, 2009) take the stand of advocating for culturally sensitive curriculum and teaching practices. Scholars who take on the latter perspective argue that quality-teaching practices are not sufficient to support ELL children because of these children's unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Thus these scholars argue that incorporating culturally sensitive curriculum and teaching practices that consider the ELL children's home languages in early childhood curriculum and instruction would benefit these children's learning and development. To bridge these two different perspectives, research shows that it is possible for teachers who do not speak the children's languages to incorporate the children's cultural backgrounds in their own teaching (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009).

This chapter has discussed challenges young ELLs face in vocabulary, phonics, reading comprehension and learning assessments every day. In addition, the research has acknowledge possible research gaps within each of these literacy components that require extensive research and studies to continue to enhance these literacy components for young ELLs. While exploring these research gaps, possible ideas were suggested to better support the learning needs of young ELLs and resolve some of these problems identified. The research has provided a rationale for a professional development to be created for teachers in order to address these concerns in vocabulary, phonics, reading comprehension and learning assessments. In chapter 3, I will discuss my professional development plan to further assist the literacy needs of young ELLs in Red Wolves Elementary. The professional development will allow teachers to be exposed to the problem while also integrating new teaching implications that align with the research to modify and improve current literacy practices.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools

In this chapter, I will present a professional development with strategies and its corresponding rationale that seeks to improve the early literacy practices for English Language Learners at Red Wolves Elementary. After seven years of working as a bilingual educator in this school building, I have noticed and gathered data from our current reading program that our young ELLs have fallen behind in the literacy components of phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and learning assessments. Each of these components are evaluated during personal reading conferences with each student in order to see the students' growth or whether or not the student can move up a reading level. A factor in this problem is the district constantly changing literacy programs that do not meet the needs of language learners. Many of these programs do not differentiate or provide scaffolds that will meet the needs of struggling ELL's readers.

The present study's findings encourage early childhood educators and school administrators to develop curriculum and pedagogy that can benefit both non-ELL and ELL children of diverse language and cultural backgrounds. In a classroom context where the teachers speak only English, engaging the children with frequent conversations and dialogues by modelling complex and advanced language can help ensure both non-ELL and ELL children's make literacy gains (Meng, 2019). After researching this problem and finding the research that supports effective teaching practices in each of the literacy components, it became evident that all of the early childhood teachers in this school needed this information to better serve the English Language Learners in their classrooms.

Description of the Professional Development

The professional development will be presented through a PowerPoint with a voice over

that will highlight research based teaching strategies in phonics, vocabulary and comprehension. Overall, the PowerPoint will contain research findings, data from the school currently, and teaching strategies that support the findings from the research. By providing the teachers the videos and materials for viewing at any time, it will allow teachers to absorb the information the first time hearing it, and then they would be able to put into practice and reflect on the success or what else is needed. Those materials (see Appendix A) will help guide the teachers to incorporate literacy strategies within their teaching practices that they were unaware that English Language Learners needed.

Due to the lack of time given to present this professional development and COVID restrictions currently in place this professional development was adjusted to a webinar form. Ideally, this professional development would occur in September during back to school superintendent conference days. I would have requested two hours for this professional development. Teachers would gather in the school cafeteria and sit by grade level and would be asked to bring a language arts lesson plan. Each of the literacy components would have been presented for fifteen minutes and the rest of time would have been used to discuss ways to incorporate the new strategies learned within the language arts teaching time. Teachers would have the opportunity to discuss effective strategies they have used in their classroom that have helped English Language Learners make gains in the literacy components of vocabulary, phonics and comprehension.

Each literacy component is discussed independently in the following section, including a description, rationale for its use, how it will improve early literacy practices for young ELLs and its relevance in respect to the literature reviewed.

Phonics

The first component of the professional development will address effective teaching practices for phonics usage with English Language Learners. Results from the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) specify the importance of systematic and explicit phonics instruction in kindergarten and first grade to improve students' word recognition, spelling, and reading comprehension. Letter-sound correspondence is a particularly important skill in the primary grades. Letter-sound fluency consistently predicts outcomes on high-stakes reading tests later in schooling (Pickart, Sheran, Betts, & Heistad, 2007). In this segment, teachers will be able to think about their current practices when teaching their unit on rhyming. After the reflection, teachers will observe how one nursery rhyme can be used throughout an entire week and be used to target the reading skills of fluency, phonics, sight words and comprehension. By planning ahead, a teacher can target many reading skills their ELLs students might be struggling with and incorporate the different reading abilities a student might be advanced in to help them with the one they are struggling with. The take away of this practice is for the teachers to see the different modalities that can be targeted and provide meaningful learning experiences for their ELLs.

Alphabet Knowledge in young children has been consistently shown to be one of the strongest predictors of future reading ability (Adams, 1990; Foulin, 2005; Hammill, 2004; Stevenson & Newman, 1986). On its own, the number of letters a child can name in kindergarten appears to be as successful in predicting future reading ability as giving an entire reading assessment (Scarborough, 1998). In this segment, teachers will be able to observe different teaching strategies to reinforce and make connections with alphabet recognition. The first concept introduced will be an alphabet with environmental print. I will go through the alphabet print and ask teachers to keep track of how many of the environmental print they could recall. The teachers will be asked to share how they were able to read or recognize each of the letters.

The takeaway of this activity is for teachers to see the importance of making those real life connections through learning. The second part is exposing teachers to alphabet chants they have access to through one of the least used reading supplements we have. By going over the benefits of alphabet chants teachers will see how many alphabetic principles can be taught in just one song while also making it fun and repetitive for students. The importance of having an alphabet that reflects most of the students native language and English language will be highlighted as another example of making real life connections. The last thing that will be presented in the phonics component is engaging ways the alphabet can be used throughout the day while providing incremental rehearsal intervention. Incremental Rehearsal is a systematic and explicit intervention that teaches unknown concepts by combining them with known concepts. This drill and practice procedure is effective for teaching students in the acquisition phase of learning because it allows for teaching to mastery, introduces unknown concepts in small sets, allows many opportunities to respond, promotes errorless learning, and provides repetition (Burns et al., 2004). The drills presented such as finding letters, matching letters, etc. can be taught during different aspect of the day while allowing the students to master new skills and making it age appropriate.

Vocabulary

The second component of this professional development will address effective teaching practices for vocabulary usage with English Language Learners. As stated by Jackson and Leacox (2014), educational professionals should consider combining vocabulary strategies as a potential means to enhance vocabulary learning for young ELLs as compared to book reading alone: repeated readings; multiple and varied exposures; and vocabulary definitions in the home language. In this segment, educators will be able to see how one story will be read several times

during the week and different vocabulary activities can be done to support the research in repeated readings and varied exposures. First, I will highlight the book chosen and explain how many of our ELLs will find a connection to the main character just by looking at the pictures. The second idea is showing teachers how meaningful vocabulary bridging is for ELLs when they can see a picture, read or recognize a word in their native language. Since Red Wolves Elementary has a dual language program, the idea of having the new vocabulary in a child's native language is feasible as both the bilingual and monolingual teachers plan together weekly. This method should be a team collaboration between the two teams of teachers, making sure the vocabulary makes sense in both languages. Teachers will then observe how five weekly activities can be planned and take no more than five to ten minutes a day to complete while enhancing the usage of new vocabulary in young ELLs. The idea behind these strategies is to help teachers see that the current way vocabulary is taught by the current program for one day of week is not sufficient for language learners when they need constant repetition.

Comprehension

The third component of the professional development will address effective teaching practices for comprehension usage with English Language Learners. According to Pahl and Rowsell (2010), because reading is cultural, it is important to use literature by and about people of color, diverse books, to expand our perspectives of the world. In this segment of the professional development, teachers will be shown a multitude of culturally diverse books they may consider ordering or requesting in order to diversify their classroom libraries. Many of the books will be bilingual. This means that students will be able to see both languages in one book and see how important their native language is as well. Some of the books will include, *Tito Puente* by Brown. M, Rafael Lopez and Adriana Dominguez, *My Papi has a Motorcycle* by by I.

Quientero and Pena Zeke Junot Diaz *and Islandborn* by Junot Diaz. After reviewing the school's inventory of books for students, it is evident that many early childhood classrooms need to improve the book choices available to students. Researchers have supported using graphic organizers combined with other reading strategies to increase comprehension and vocabulary skills because it helps students use contextual clues (e.g., Greenwood, 2002; Schorzman & Cheek, 2004). In the last segment of comprehension, The use of graphic organizers will be explained. As the research stated graphic organizers increases comprehension in all of the literacy components. Many teachers believe that one graphic organizer should be given for all students to fill out. For an ELL student who may be a different language acquisition as his peers the same organizer will not allow the student to show his learning or comprehension. In this part teachers will see how I found three different organizers that require the same information to be given but represented through different learning levels. A graphic organizer should help students gather their knowledge and thinking and allow them to express their ideas without feeling like they cannot write or understand the task on hand. By seeing these three organizers for different comprehension skills, the teachers will see how the current reading program does not provide these strategies. This will enable teachers to want to supplement their teaching.

Learning Assessment

Due to the lack of time in this professional development, learning assessments will not be addressed during the presentation. This portion of the research would first need to be addressed with the administrators. Monolingual assessments tend to ignore the different needs that bilinguals have for their two languages and do not take into account that bilinguals use these languages for different purposes, with different speakers, and in different contexts (Grosjean, 1989). This will allow the administrator and I to further discuss the assessments currently

administer to English Language Learners in both the monolingual and dual language program. We would have to look at our data and try to progress monitor certain classrooms and the gains they have made after implementing some of the provided literacy strategies for ELLs. After analyzing the assessments, the school leadership team made up of teachers would most likely look at different learning assessments and create one that would best fit the needs of our English Language Learners and give a better understanding of what literacy practices need to be readjusted, or which ones are working and should continue to be implemented.

Intended Outcomes from Professional Development

There are several positive intended outcomes from sharing the professional development with the teachers at Red Wolves Elementary. Principally, it provides all the early childhood staff members (Pre-K – 2nd grade) with beneficial information on practical early literacy skills to be applied with English Language Learners. In teaching bilingual and multilingual children, it is important to see them as capable, to learn from them, and to communicate their importance in the curriculum. Valuing their multiple languages, supporting and encouraging children to develop bilingually and multilingually, and holding equally high standards for both or all of their languages are essential (Souto-Manning, 2016). A company brought program does not address the needs of all the students in our school building, as these programs are created as one size fits all.

Our current student demographic consist of native Spanish speakers who migrated to the United States after Hurricane Maria. Many of the students lost six months of kindergarten instruction due to the circumstances. Given increasingly diverse student demographics and language profiles in today's elementary classrooms, teachers and educators are charged with the challenging task of ensuring the development of language and literacy competencies for all

students. This task requires a profound knowledge base and empirical evidence about children's developmental trajectories in language learning (Jang et al., 2013).Subsequently, the teaching staff will be able to reflect on their current teaching and adapt new researched teaching strategies. Furthermore, this professional development will allow teacher leaders to emerge who want to continue the research and present to the school staff in an effort to continue improving instruction for ELLs.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This capstone project has explored challenges and established effective early literacy strategies for young ELLs, including the students at Red Wolves Elementary. The literacy challenges reviewed included phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and the assessment of learning for young ELLs. The literature reviewed centered on a combination of case studies informed by the theoretical approaches social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978; Leseman &Jong, 1998), the interactionist model (Wong Fillmore, 1991) and the social-interactionist (Chapman, 2000).

In this chapter, I will summarize research findings on effective early literacy strategies for young ELLs. This will include three pertinent conclusions as well as implications for teachers and student learning. Next, I will give recommendations for future research relevant to effective literacy strategies. Finally, I will conclude with final thoughts on the future of our young ELLs.

Conclusions

In relation to my research question, several conclusions are relevant to minimizing the lack of early literacy strategies for young ELLs. Systematic and explicit literacy interventions are particularly beneficial for students at risk for literacy difficulties early in the primary grades (NRP, 2000). For example, Vellutino, Scanlon, Small, and Fanuele (2006) found that kindergarten and first grade students who received targeted literacy interventions performed better on measures of emergent literacy when compared to similar peers who did not receive intervention support. In addition, Al Otaiba and Torgeson (2007) found that providing students with systematic and explicit literacy interventions in combination with a strong and explicit core-reading program could reduce the percentage of poor readers by the end of first or second grade. Therefore, teachers need to be exposed to different methods and strategies that can help target

literacy interventions. Such activities were presented in my PowerPoint presentation with the possibility of modifications across all grade levels. Due to the lack of exposure of effective ELL practices, many teachers consider these strategies as "new findings" and quickly start to think of different ways to add new skills while also thinking of modifications to better serve the students in front of them.

Another major conclusion found is that comprehension skills need to be taught with relevance to each student. This means that culturally relevant teaching needs to be integrated during many lessons. By incorporating multicultural literature in the curriculum, students can meaningfully connect familiar sociocultural themes found in the text with their life experiences outside the classroom. In addition, educators may use multicultural literature to activate students' background knowledge and increase motivation (McCollin & O'Shea, 2005). With the professional development, teachers were given an array of book choices that they may have not had any idea books with such topics existed. By looking at the cover of each book, teachers are able to make connections and relate some of the books to a specific student. This is the same experience young children go through and such experience increases the motivation and comprehension of each student.

A conclusion that still needs more support, research and qualitative case studies is the topic of assessment for young ELLs. If the student demonstrates the target skill or conceptual understanding that is being evaluated, but uses a prohibited language, this information is not captured and is thus lost. As a result, many of the current dual language assessment measures do not provide information about the full extent of students' abilities, and the results could be interpreted as deficiencies in the language and literacy development of young ELLs (G. E. García et al., 2006). As noted by the authors**,** currently in the United States we do not have an

assessment that truly assesses the learning gains and needs of every ELL student. This information is critical to have when educational policies or federal government are using a one sided assessment to fund schools due to student growth. By having a true assessment, that states what a student knows in their native language and English, teachers are able to use this information to modify teaching practices that will help each student advance and achieve biliteracy.

Implications for Student Learning

In response to the research findings, several implications for student learning will be established to ensure young ELLs have the adequate tools and differentiation during their literacy time. These implications will help students understand the content and literacy skills that is required of them while adapting the lessons to meet their language needs according to their English Language proficiency. ELLs will be able to dig deeper into the content presented to them, while also making the content meaningful and relevant to their everyday world. Many of the strategies presented are not a one-day teaching lesson; many of the strategies require full elaboration throughout the entire week while giving the students a deeper understanding of the activity and content while expanding on their knowledge. The most important part is to keep the activities engaging, age appropriate and culturally relevant.

Many of the teaching strategies (see Appendix A) allow the students to cooperatively learn with their peers. Cooperative learning may be effective for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and English learners because of the social context and opportunities to practice oral language skills. Further, in some communities, working together in a supportive manner to accomplish daily tasks is a common part of everyday life. Thus, cooperative learning gives students the opportunity to see parts of their home culture reflected at

school, which may increase the likelihood of their success (Putnam, 1998). With many of the teaching strategies, students are able to work on their oral, listening and reading skills while engaging in age appropriate literacy skills. While learning becomes exciting for young ELLs participation in the classroom will increase and students will learn from one another.

Implications for Teaching

In response to the research findings, several implications for teaching will be established. In the professional development, teachers will witness that many of the activities presented require planning and modifications to meet the needs of the students. Each activity has the possibility of reaching grade level learning standards while using beginner and advance teaching strategies. Teachers are able to gather on going data and increase the literacy needs they see fit for the class. For example, the vocabulary activities listed (see Appendix A,) allows the teacher to observe individual students while teaching whole group and gather whether or not a student is understanding the concept if they are participating. For the following day, the teacher can decide whether or not a review of the previous day is needed or if the class should continue forward. With the professional development, teachers were presented the information needed to better understand why certain students have not made gains in certain areas due to prior skills they may need.

Another teaching implication is the introduction to artifactual literacies (see Appendix A). Many teachers at Red Wolves Elementary do not have culturally relevant books in their classroom libraries due to the reading program that only provides non-fiction books. With this new idea of having and teaching from these books the teachers are able to understand their students a little better and appreciate the wealth of knowledge they bring to the classroom. It becomes a learning experience and acceptance from both the teacher and student while building

a solid class community through the love of reading. These artifactual literacies can be used to promote all of the literacy components addressed in this research.

With these implications for teaching, teachers will begin to see an increase in student participation as the content presented becomes more engaging for all students, including ELLs. Teachers will also be able to formally and informally assess student learning on the spot and have opportunities to differentiate at the moment or at a later time the work/content so all the students are successful. This will allow teachers to strategically plan for any interventions that may also include the English as a New Language teacher or bilingual teacher. As for the English as a New Language/ Bilingual teacher these implications allow for effective co-teaching among the teacher. The data a teacher gathers can further assist the ENL/ Bilingual teacher in providing additional effective strategies at the language level of the group of students receiving services.

Recommendations for Future Research

The professional development planned, researched and presented by an early childhood elementary teacher that currently teaches at Red Wolves Elementary is a great way to make progress in the literacy needs of young ELLs at this school. Many outside reading consultants present their reading program as the best reading program for all students with the idea of "one size fits all." These reading programs focus more on monolingual literacy education. The reading programs fail to establish different teaching strategies or resources that will help ELLs advance through all five English Language Proficiency Levels. In general, they fail to understand the needs each ELL student and teacher faces depending on the location of their school.

During this school year, more work related to the early literacy needs of young ELLs can be accomplished. First, teachers should begin to implement some of the early literacy ideas presented during the first quarter that consist of nine weeks. In this period, teachers will be able

to provide observations, feedback, and student growth while exploring new teaching strategies to present to the pre-kindergarten - second grade teachers. Before the new quarter begins, the early childhood staff should meet to discuss next steps to continue to support ELLs during their literacy block. These meetings should take place during the weekly professional development time already established for the school. Each grade level should come into a consensus of which literacy teaching strategy they would like to focus on for a certain amount of time. The English language learner teacher should be supporting these teaching practices during their integrated time and support those teachers needing additional support.

Further research in the United States needs to be done to study, review and modify early literacy practices with young ELLs. One of the biggest issues I ran into while researching my problem is that the current research is outdated or does not target ELLs at the Pre-Kindergarten through second grade. As many educators are aware, early literacy skills learned at the Pre-kindergarten through second grade level are the main indicators of each student's literacy accomplishment throughout the remainder of their school years to come. With new research that analyzes the young English language learner population, their native language skills, home and community, reading companies will be better equipped to serve the population with best practices and changes in the curriculum. Furthermore, researchers need to develop a literacy assessment that will highlight the language acquisitions of ELLs at each learning stage. This will help teachers understand next steps and what is needed to insure reading growth. As well as stop the inequality of testing ELLs endure, due to the fact that they are assessed at the same level as their monolingual peers.

Final Thoughts

Most of all, in teaching bilingual and multilingual children, it is important to see them as

capable, to learn from them, and to communicate their importance in the curriculum. Valuing their multiple languages, supporting and encouraging children to develop bilingually and proud of their multilingualism, and holding equally high standards for both or all of their languages are essential. Otherwise, we communicate to them that the language of their home, their language of love, is not valuable (Souto-Manning, 2016). The lack of English language learner's knowledge in the education system comes from an educational system that was set up for monolingual education only. Many teachers go through their college teaching programs with maybe one class that talks about ELLs and some strategies to use, while others get no information and become aware of this population when they start teaching. With the growing numbers of ELLs in the United States, it is important that teachers have a deeper understanding of this population and effective teaching strategies to help this population motivation and expectancy of success. That passion in reading that we try to instill in our monolingual students' needs to evident for ELL students as they are fully capable but just need more time and supports. Thus, instilling this passion at such a young age will eventually provide us culturally relevant and bilingual text in the near future.

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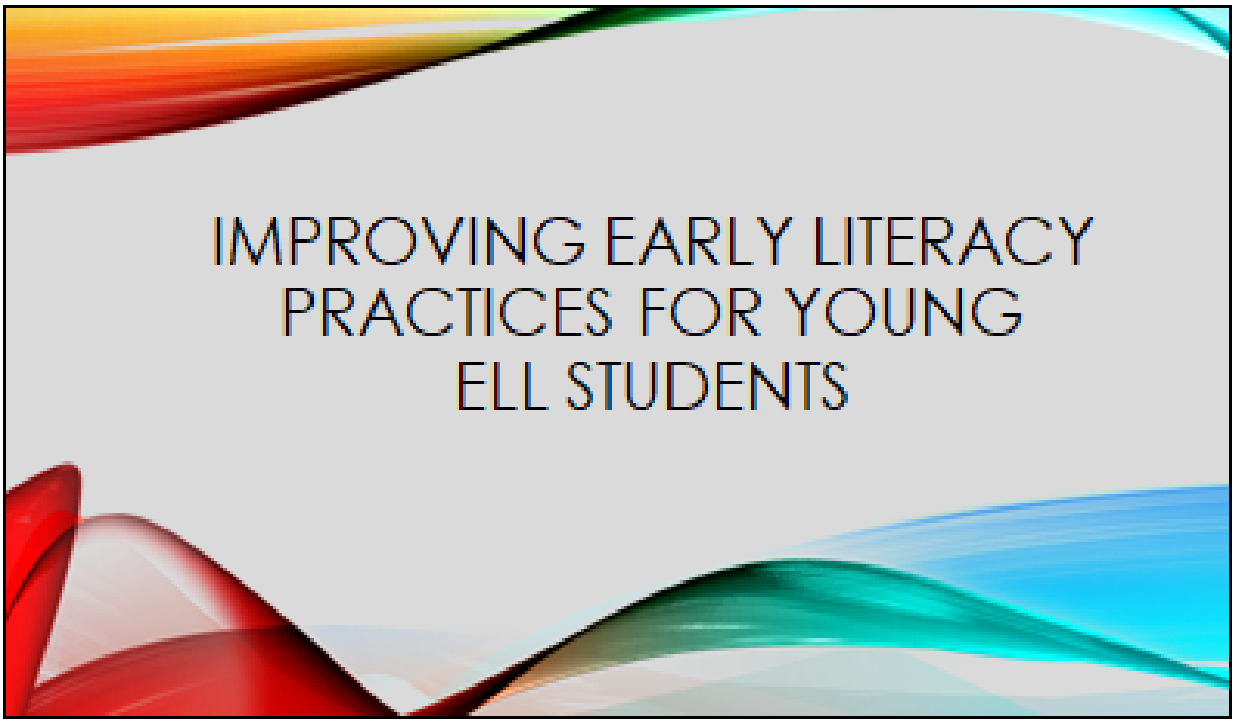
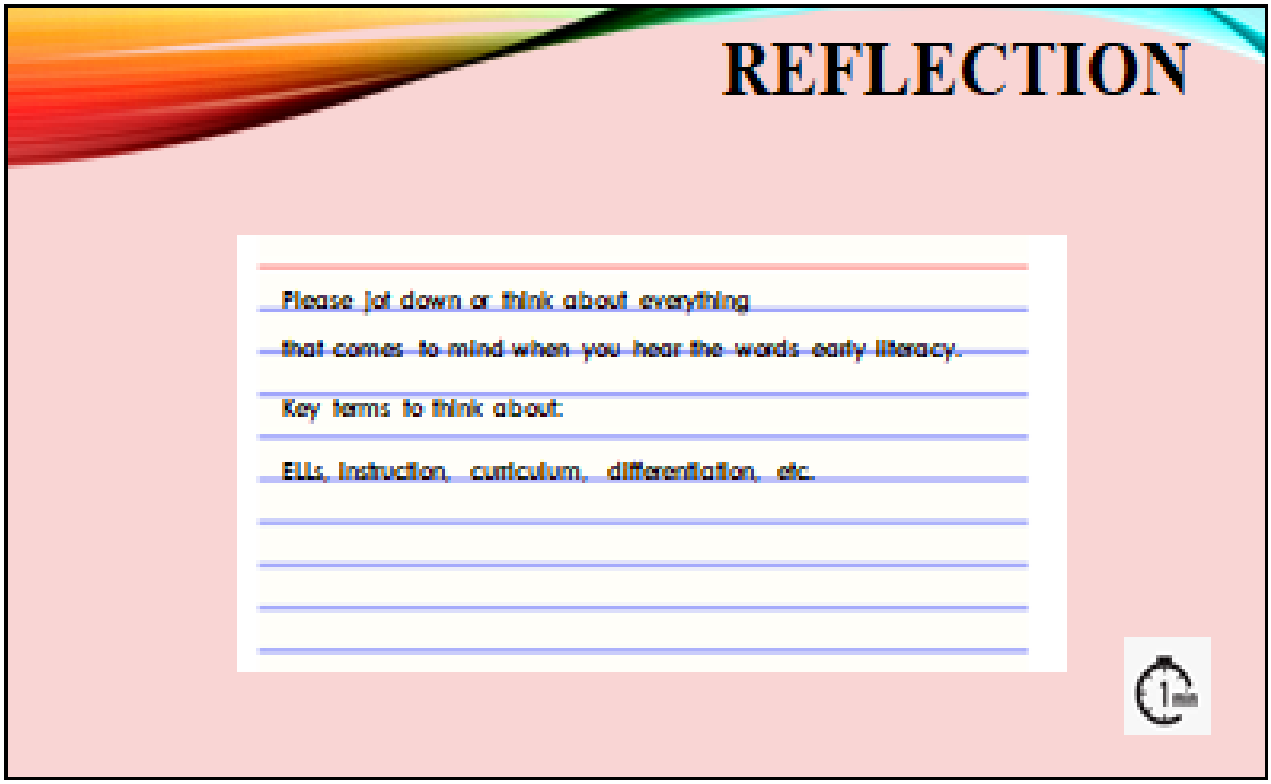
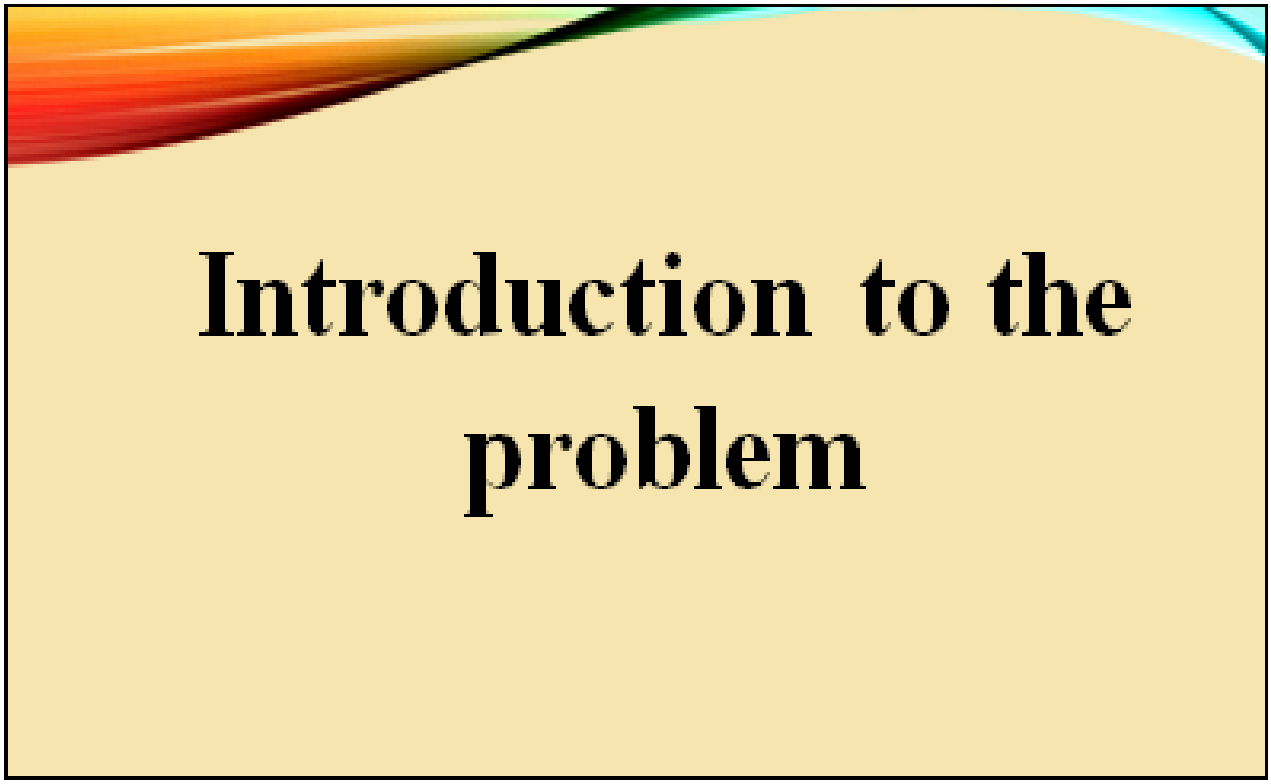
Appendix A:


IMPROVING EARLY LITERACY PRACTICES FOR YOUNG ELL STUDENTS


AGENDA
Reflection of the topic that will be discussed
Introduction to the problem
What is the problem?
Discussion of the problem
Understanding the problem
How this problem impacts our students
Let's take a look at our data
Solutions to the problem Literacy Strategies
Phonological Awareness
Alphabet Knowledge
Vocabulary
Comprehension
Moving forward
Intended outcomes and the future

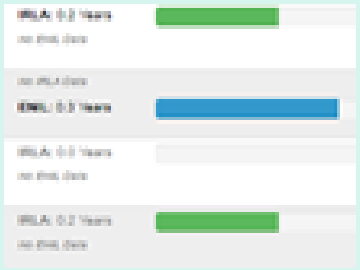

REFLECTION
Please jot down or think about everything
that comes to mind when you hear the words early literacy.
Key terms to think about:
ELLs, Instruction, curriculum, differentiation, etc.


Introduction to the problem

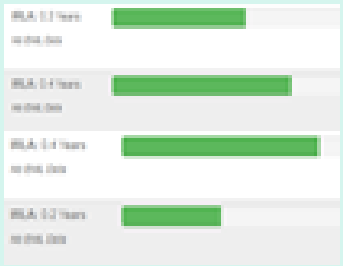
WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Currently, the kindergarteners, first and second graders at Red Wolves Elementary are not mastering their foundational skills in phonics, vocabulary or reading comprehension. These students are below grade level reading abilities. More than half of the student population at these grade levels consist of English Language Learners (ELLs).

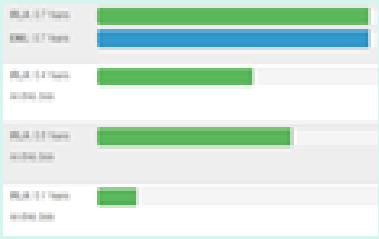
Kindergarten



First Grade

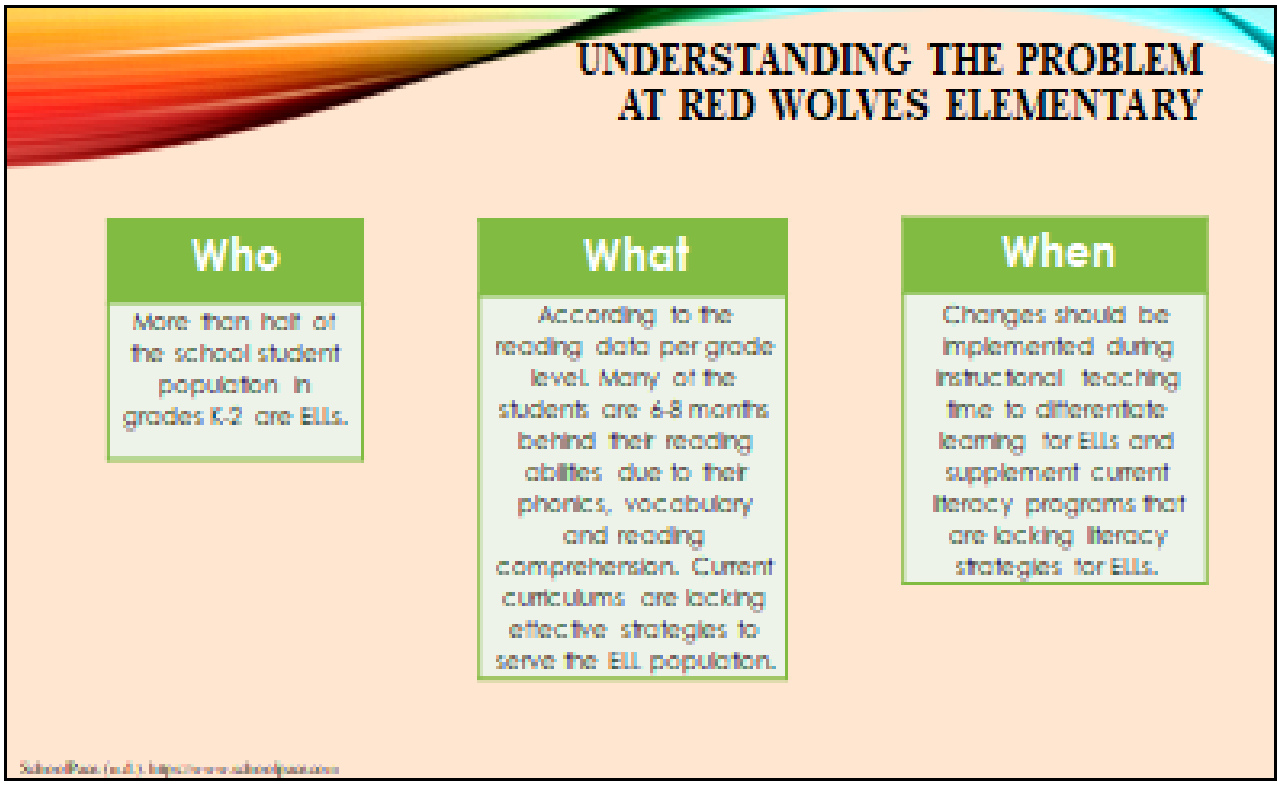


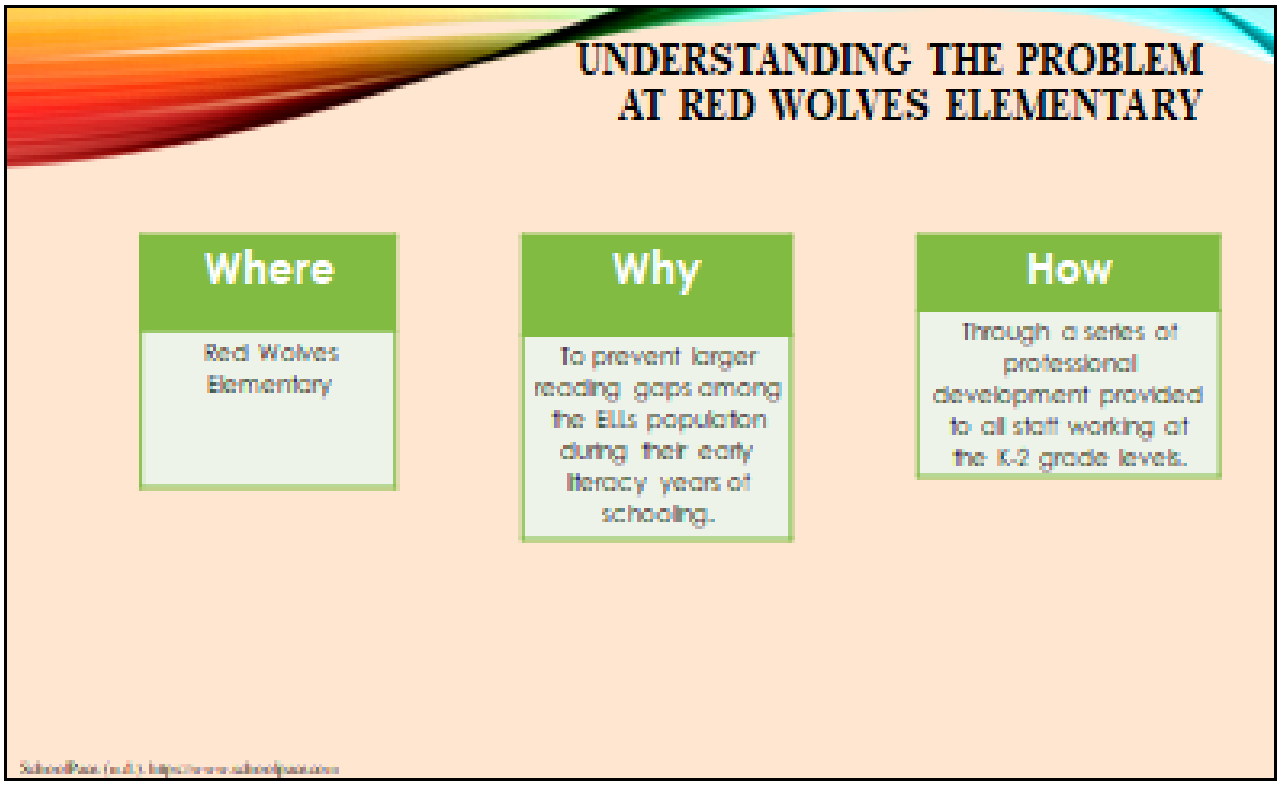
Second Grade



SchoolPace. (n.d.). https://www.schoolpace.com

Discussion of the problem

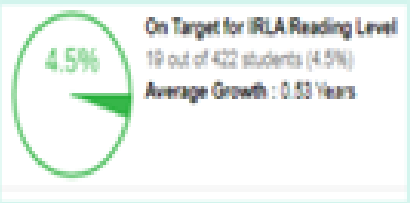

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM AT RED WOLVES ELEMENTARY
Who
More than half of the school student population in grades K-2 are ELLs.
What
According to the reading data per grade level. Many of the students are 6-8 months behind their reading abilities due to their phonics, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Current curriculums are lacking effective strategies to serve the ELL population.
When
Changes should be implemented during instructional teaching time to differentiate learning for ELLs and supplement current literacy programs that are lacking literacy strategies for ELLs.

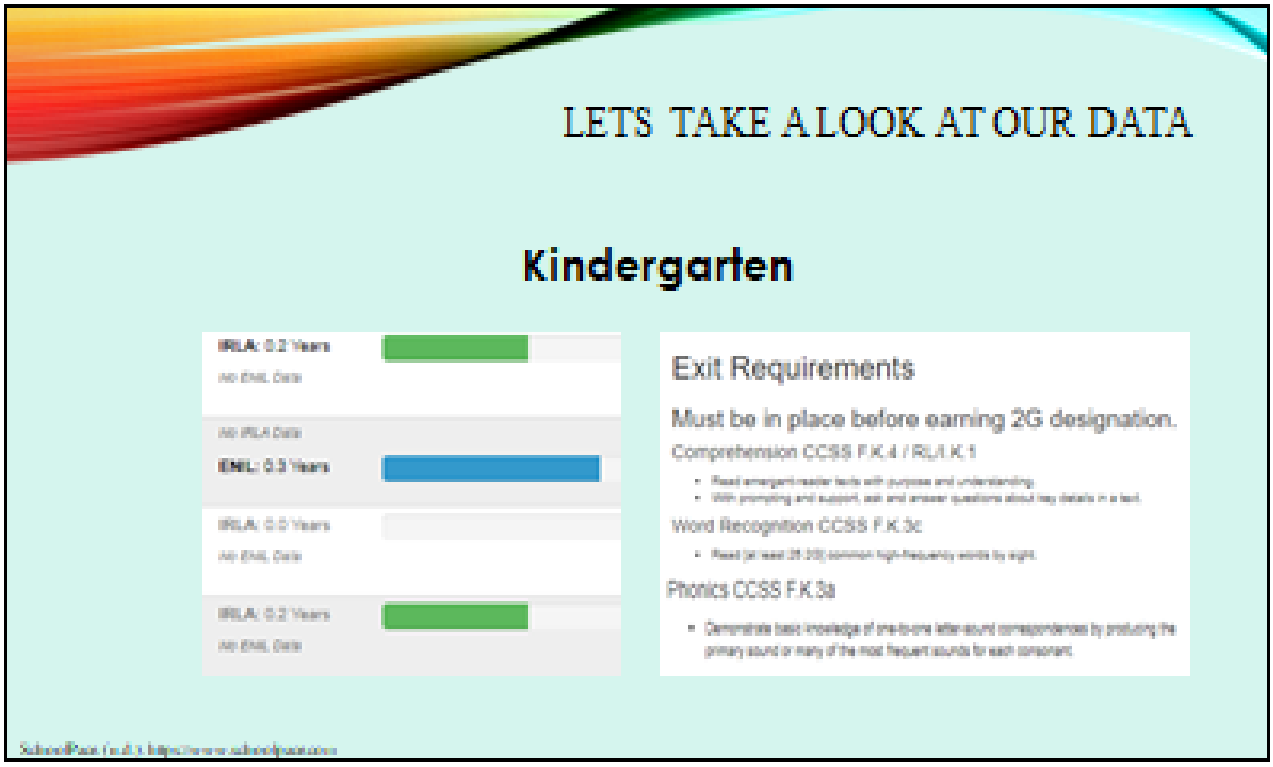

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM AT RED WOLVES ELEMENTARY
Where
Red Wolves Elementary
Why
To prevent larger reading gaps among the ELLs population during their early literacy years of schooling.
How
Through a series of professional development provided to all staff working at the K-2 grade levels.

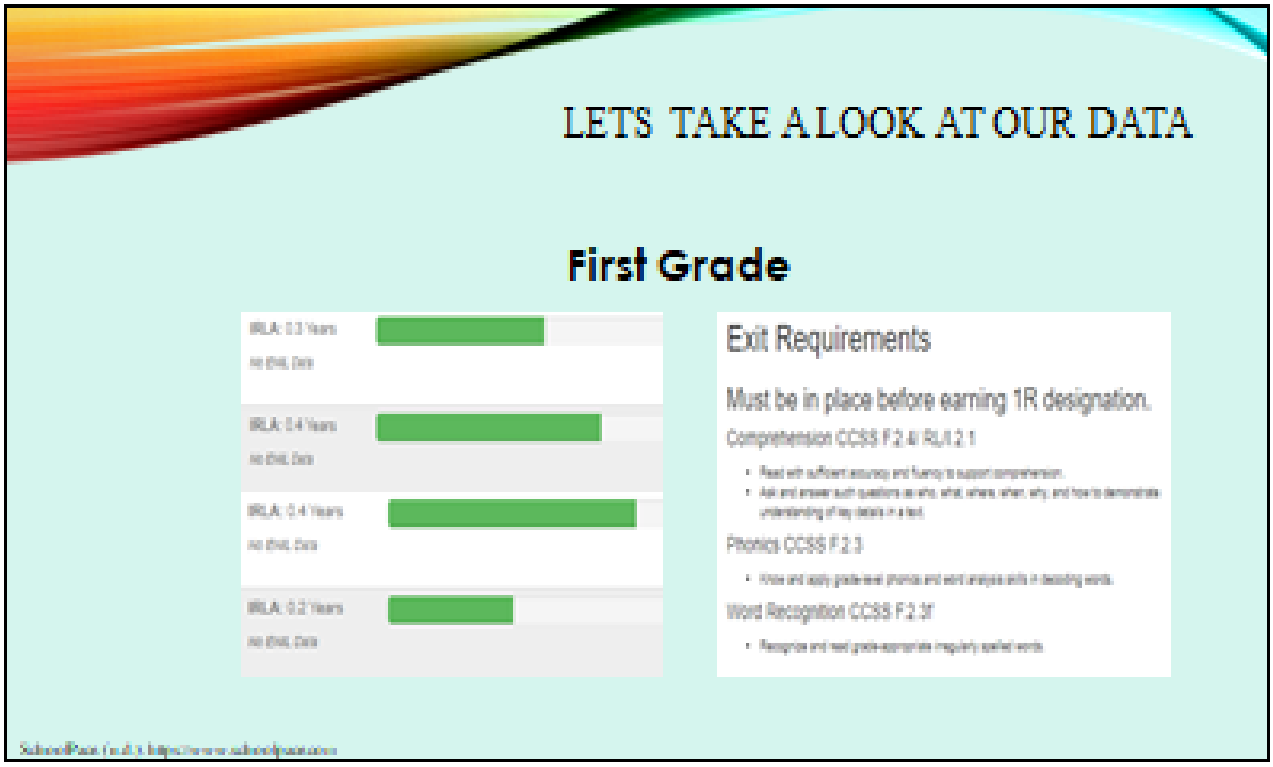
How this problem impacts our students

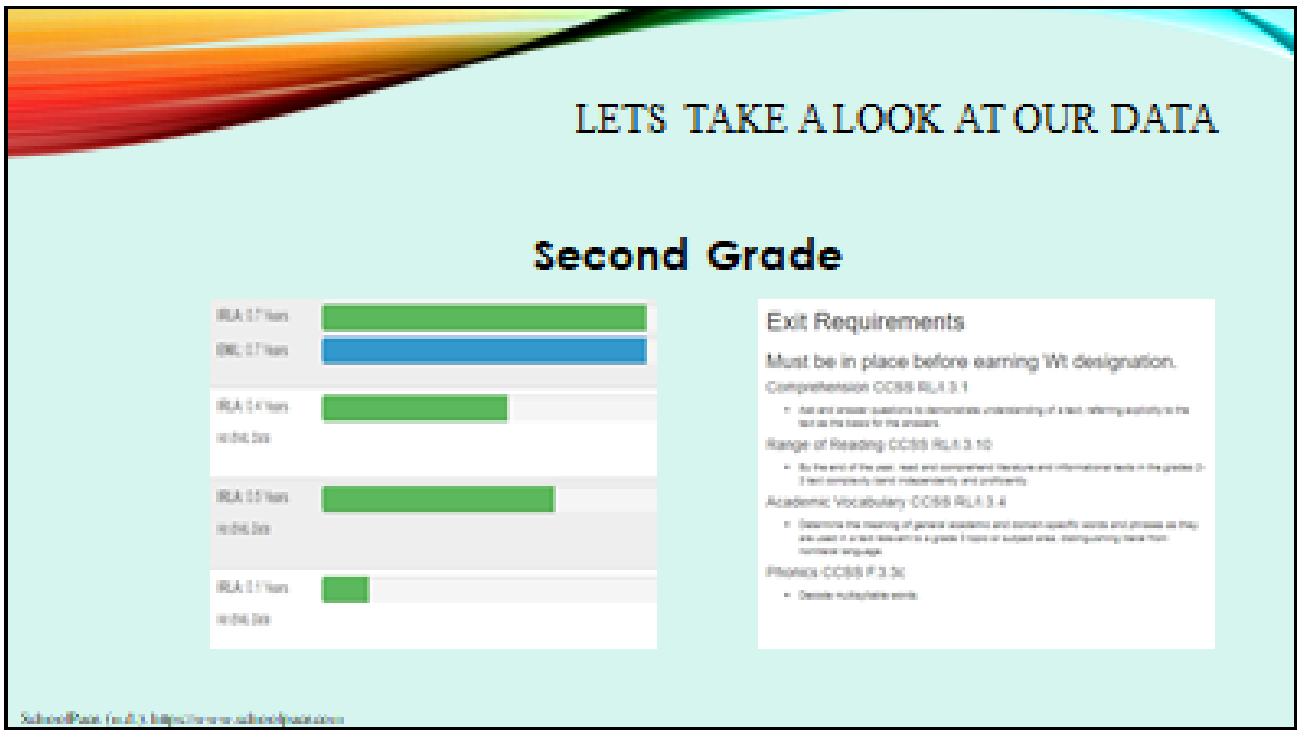
LETS TAKE A LOOK AT OUR DATA

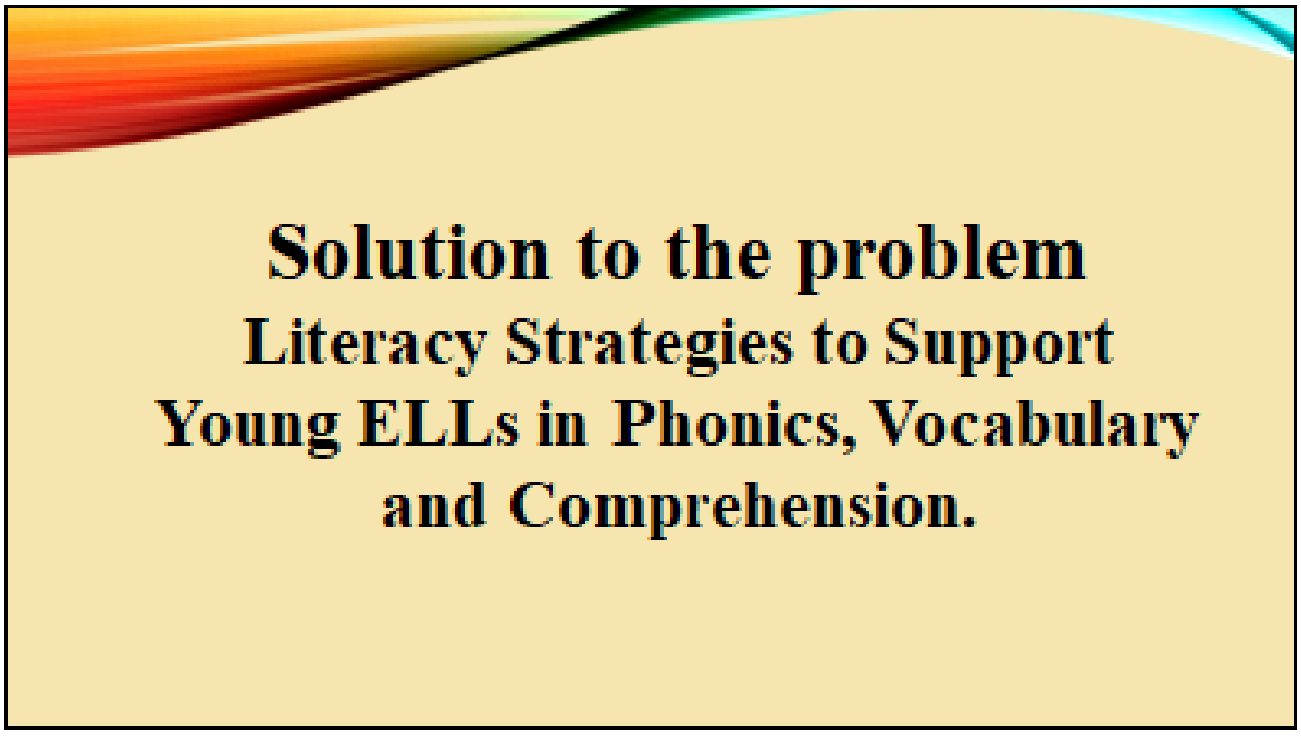
Entire School Data




LETS TAKE A LOOK AT OUR DATA
Kindergarten
IRLA: 0.2 Years
All ENL Data
All IRLA Data
ENL: 0.3 Years
IRLA: 0.0 Years
All ENL Data
IRLA: 0.2 Years
All ENL Data
Exit Requirements
Must be in place before earning 2G designation.
Comprehension CCSS F.K.4 / RL/I.K.1
Word Recognition CCSS F.K.3c
Phonics CCSS F.K.3a


LETS TAKE A LOOK AT OUR DATA
First Grade
IRLA: 0.2 Years
All ENL Data
IRLA: 0.4 Years
All ENL Data
IRLA: 0.4 Years
All ENL Data
IRLA: 0.2 Years
All ENL Data
Exit Requirements
Must be in place before earning 1R designation.
Comprehension CCSS F.2.4/ RL/I.2.1
Phonics CCSS F.2.3
Word Recognition CCSS F.2.3f


LETS TAKE A LOOK AT OUR DATA
Second Grade
Exit Requirements
Must be in place before earning 'W' designation.
Comprehension CCSS RL1.3.1
Range of Reading CCSS RL1.3.10
Academic Vocabulary CCSS RL1.3.4
Phonics CCSS F.3.3c

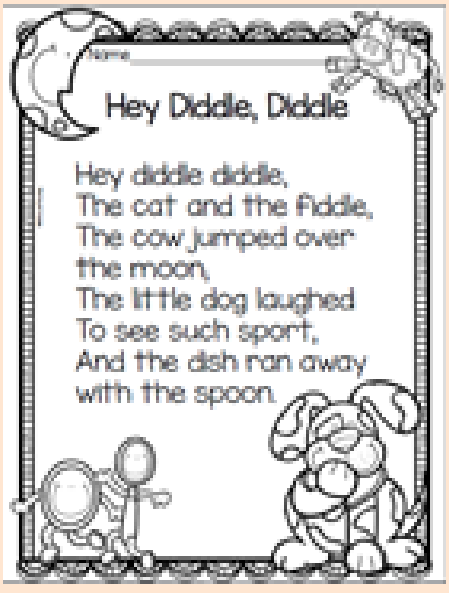

Solution to the problem
Literacy Strategies to Support Young ELLs in Phonics, Vocabulary and Comprehension.

Phonological Awareness

Letter-sound correspondence is a particularly important skill in the primary grades. Letter-sound fluency consistently predicts outcomes on high-stakes reading tests later in schooling (Pickart, Sheran, Betts, & Halstad, 2007), as well as other reading-related outcomes across first and second grades (Schatschneider, Fletcher, Francis, Carlson, & Foorman, 2004).

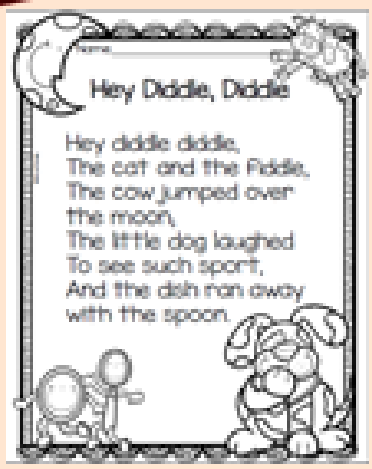
RHYMING TEACHER REFLECTION

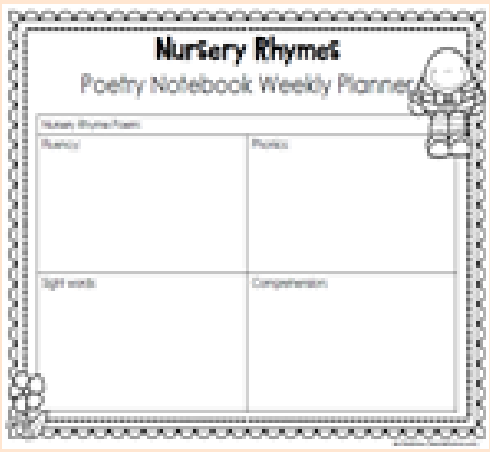
Jot down or think about any teaching strategies you use when teaching nursery rhymes.



1 min

TEACHER PLANNING





Days of Reading. (n.d.). *Five Nursery Rhyme Activities*. Teachers Pay Teachers.
Teacher Karma. (n.d.). *Poetry Notebook Nursery Rhymes Edition*. Teachers Pay Teachers.

TEACHER PLANNING

Fluency: Echo read after the teacher Read the poem to a partner If technology is available have students record themselves reading the poem and listening to themselves.	**Phonics:** Words that rhyme in the poem: diddle > fiddle moon > spoon Other words in the rhyme that can rhyme with words you know: dish, cat, cow Make a list of words with long and short vowels
Sight Words: the and see with	**Comprehension:** Have students draw what they visualize is happening in the poem. What did you learn from the poem? Explain the setting of the poem. What didn't you understand from the poem? Write your own poem using the same characters? What connections did you make to the poem?

Teacher Karma. (n.d.). *Poetry Notebook Nursery Rhymes Edition*. Teachers Pay Teachers.

Alphabet Knowledge

"The number of letters a child can name in kindergarten appears to be as successful in predicting future reading ability as giving an entire reading assessment" (Scarborough, 1998).

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT

What is environmental print?

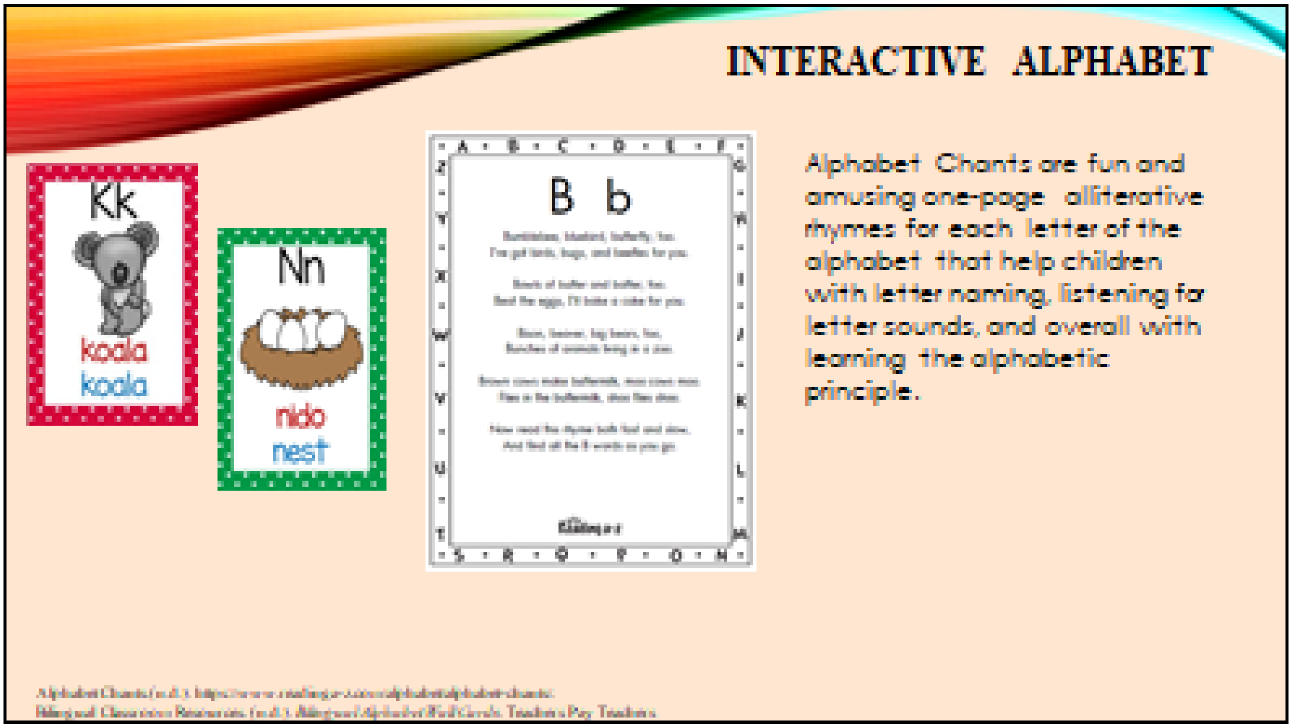
Environmental print is letters and words we see everyday while walking, driving, watching TV, etc. You recognize the logo and letters and what it represents.

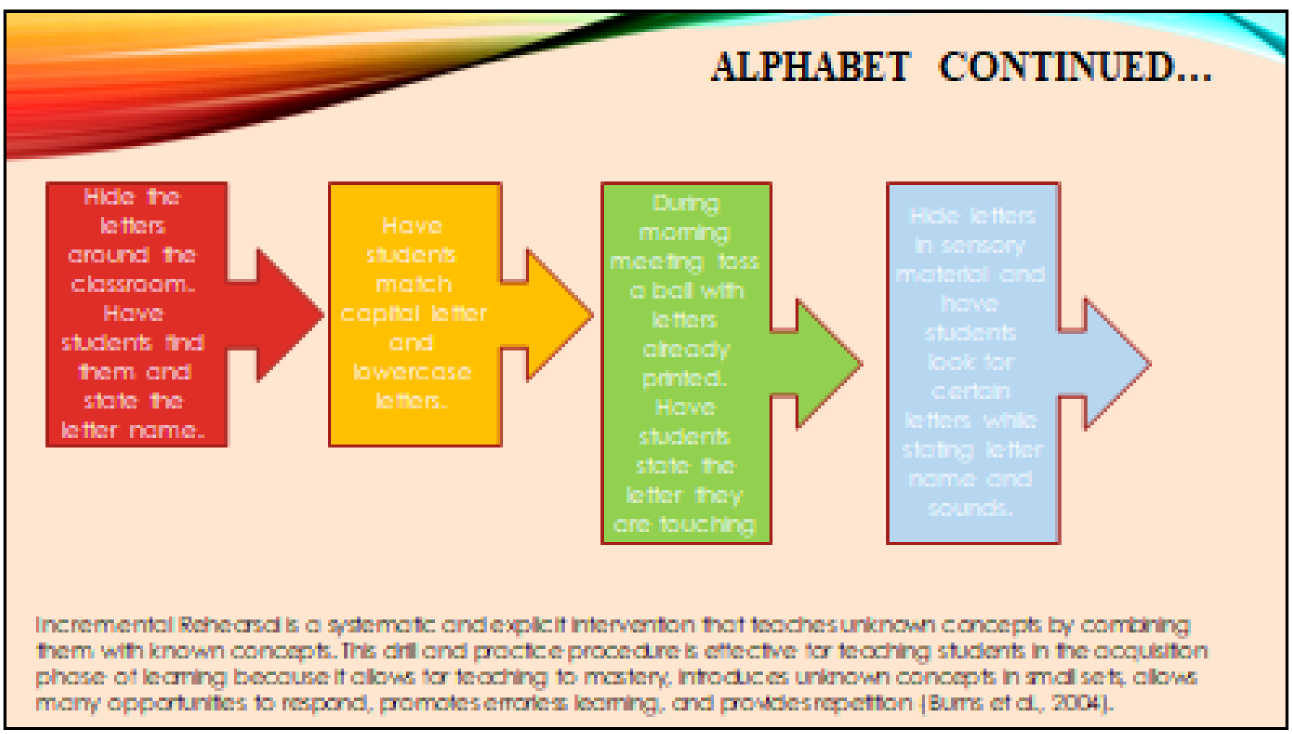
Benefits for Young ELLs:

- Being able to make real life connections.
- Being able to recognize the letter or letter sound.
- Using the alphabet to help them complete sentence stems.

Miss Elyssa Kindergarten. (n.d.). *Environmental Print Alphabet Chart*. Teachers Pay Teachers.

Reading Rockets. (2019). *Environmental print*. Reading Rockets. https://www.readingrockets.org/article/environmental-print


INTERACTIVE ALPHABET
Kk
koala
koala
Nn
nido
nest
B b
Alphabet Chants are fun and amusing one-page alliterative rhymes for each letter of the alphabet that help children with letter naming, listening for letter sounds, and overall with learning the alphabetic principle.

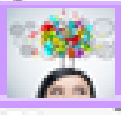
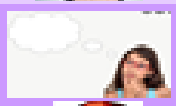

ALPHABET CONTINUED…
Hide the letters around the classroom. Have students find them and state the letter name.
Have students match capital letter and lowercase letters.
During morning meeting toss a ball with letters already printed. Have students state the letter they are touching
Hide letters in sensory material and have students look for certain letters while stating letter name and sounds.
Incremental Rehearsal is a systematic and explicit intervention that teaches unknown concepts by combining them with known concepts. This drill and practice procedure is effective for teaching students in the acquisition phase of learning because it allows for teaching to mastery, introduces unknown concepts in small sets, allows many opportunities to respond, promotes errorless learning, and provides repetition (Burns et al., 2004).

Vocabulary

Lugo-Neris et al. (2010) examined the strategy of 'vocabulary bridging' where definitions of vocabulary words were provided in Spanish to expand the meaning of a word in the home language and to provide context within a story. Vocabulary bridging used definitions provided in Spanish to bridge to the emerging language, English. Children with basic Spanish proficiency but limited English proficiency demonstrated growth in labelling, receptive vocabulary and expressive definitions. Although embedded instructional definitions in either Spanish or English were beneficial, vocabulary instruction in Spanish during shared reading produced greater gains in the children's ability to define or explain targeted words (Lugo-Neris et al., 2010).

READ ALOUD FOR THE WEEK

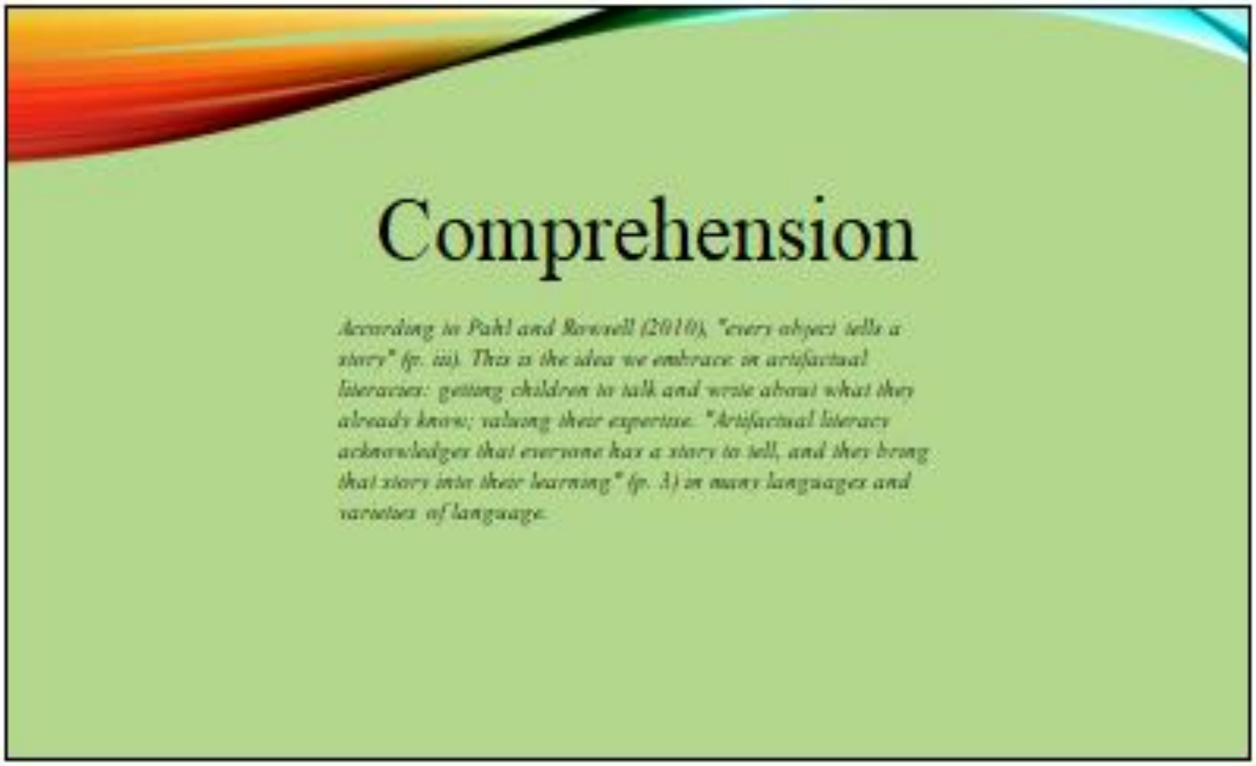
VOCABULARY BRIDGING

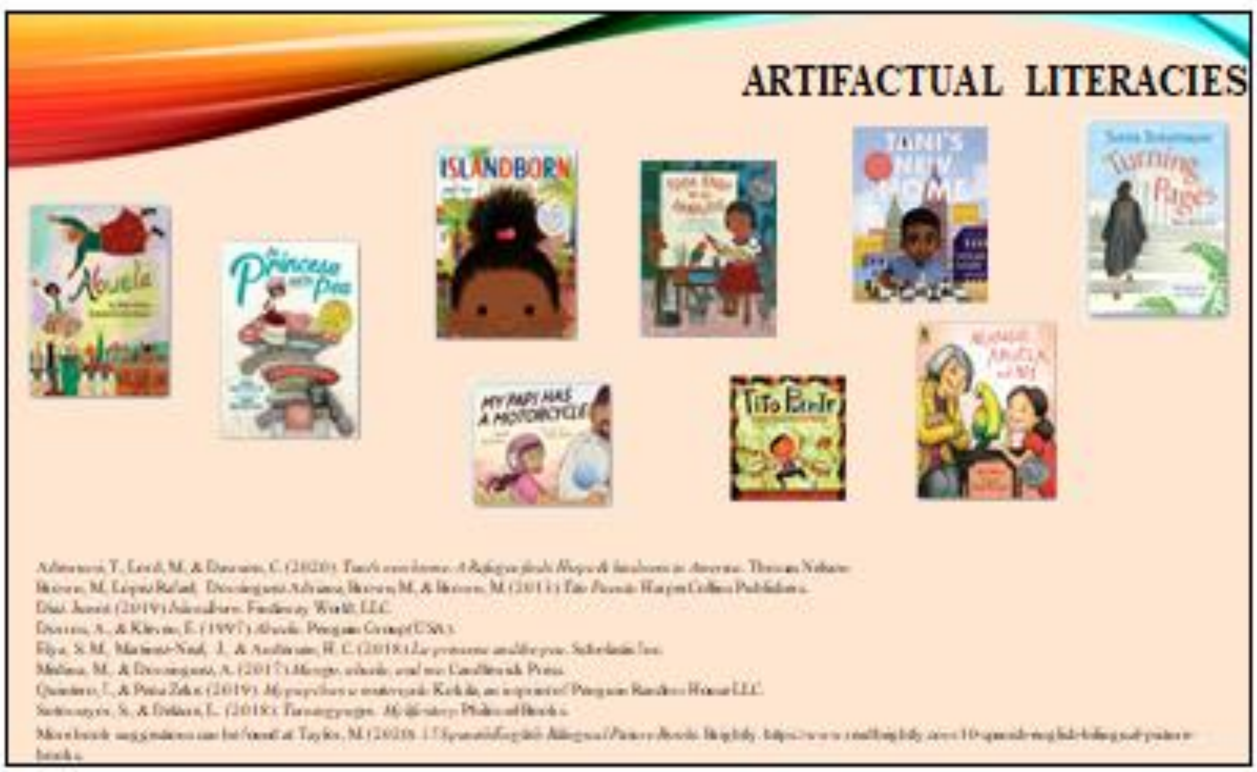
English	Pictures	Spanish
rhythm- sounds or movements that repeat		el ritmo
mind- the part of a person that thinks or understands		la mente
thought- an idea or opinion produced by thinking		el pensamiento
looked- looking at someone or something		mirar
heard- listen with your ears sounds made.		escuché

VOCABULARY USAGE DURING THE WEEK

Day	Activity
Day 1	Introduce the new vocabulary. Bridge vocabulary, gestures and images.
Day 2	Use new vocabulary in morning meeting message and have students look for the vocabulary words in the message.
Day 3	Use games such as tic-tac toe, hangmen, scrabble to identify the letters used to make up the new vocabulary. Helps with spelling.
Day 4	Have students use vocabulary in a sentence. Teacher will make sure student is using it properly and make corrections if needed.
Day 5	Fill in the vocabulary four corner worksheet (word, illustration, definition and sentence) and add to notebook for future reference.

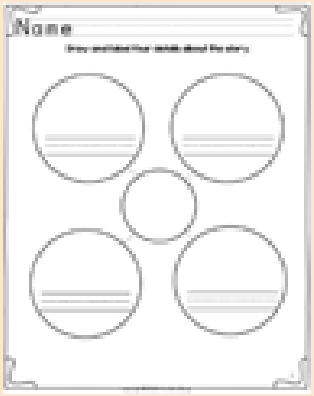
National Education Association (2010) Vocabulary Activities for your first/second Reading Rockets.


Comprehension
According to Pahl and Rowsell (2010), "every object tells a story" (p. iii). This is the idea we embrace in artifactual literacies: getting children to talk and write about what they already know; valuing their expertise. "Artifactual literacy acknowledges that everyone has a story to tell, and they bring that story into their learning" (p. 3) in many languages and varieties of language.


ARTIFACTUAL LITERACIES
ISLANDBORN
The Princess and the Pea
Tani's New Home
Turning Pages
My Papi Has a Motorcycle
Tito Puente

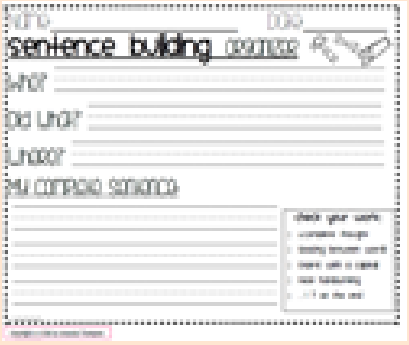
GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS FOR COMPREHENSION

Researchers have supported using graphic organizers combined with other reading strategies to increase comprehension and vocabulary skills because it helps students use contextual clues (e.g., Greenwood, 2002; Scheerman & Cheek, 2004).



LMN Team. (n.d.). *Free writing graphic organizers grades 1-3*. Teachers Pay Teachers.

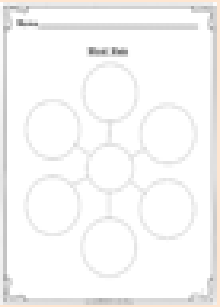
GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS FOR COMPREHENSION



Thorspirate, A. (n.d.). *Sentence Builders: Leveled Graphic Organizers FREEBIE*. Teachers Pay Teachers.

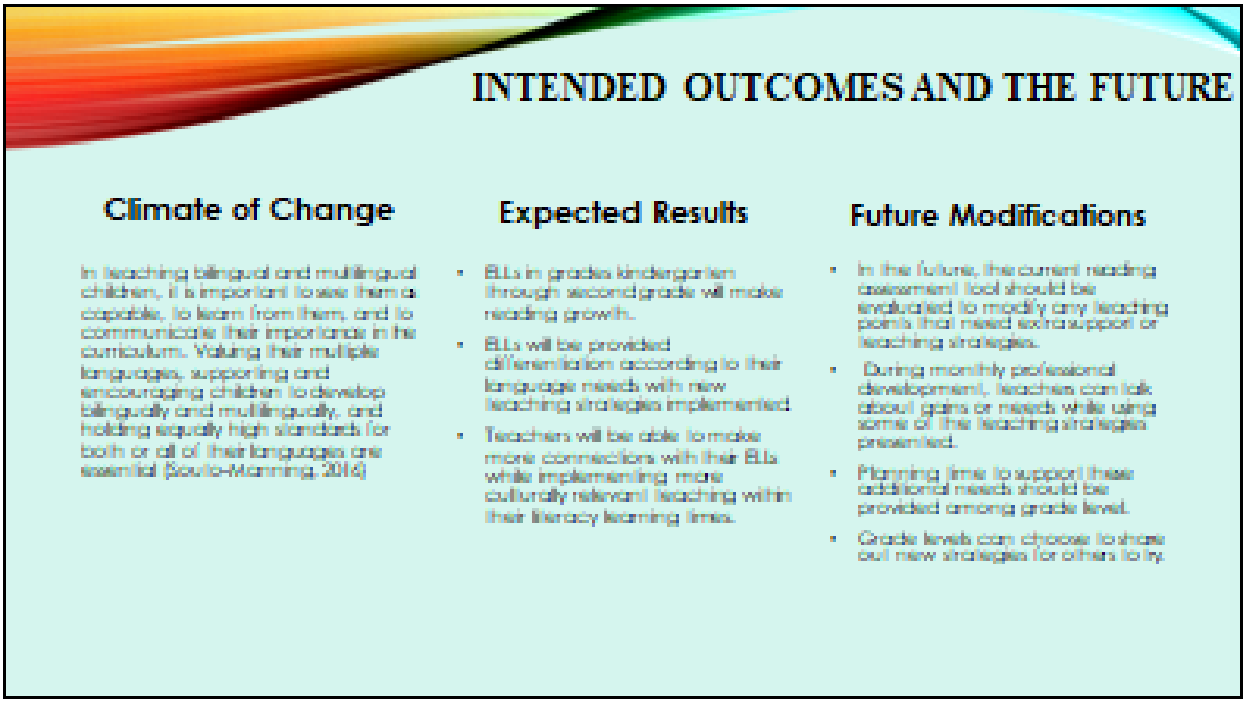
WORD WEBS FOR COMPREHENSION

The word web can help students make connections between new information and prior knowledge. Potential benefits of using word webs in a culturally responsive teaching framework are that they can help to activate background knowledge, define new concepts, make connections explicit, involve the students' primary languages, build vocabulary skills, allow for multiple perspectives, and incorporate the students' various background experiences (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Miller, 2002). .

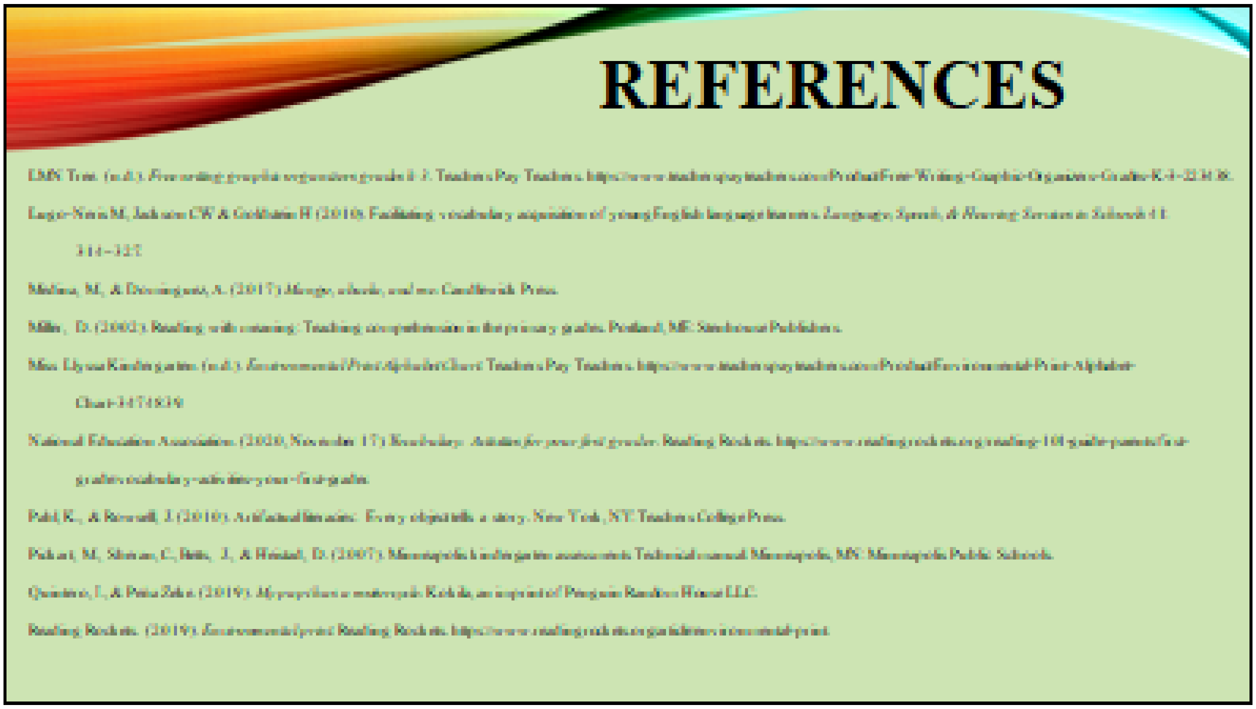


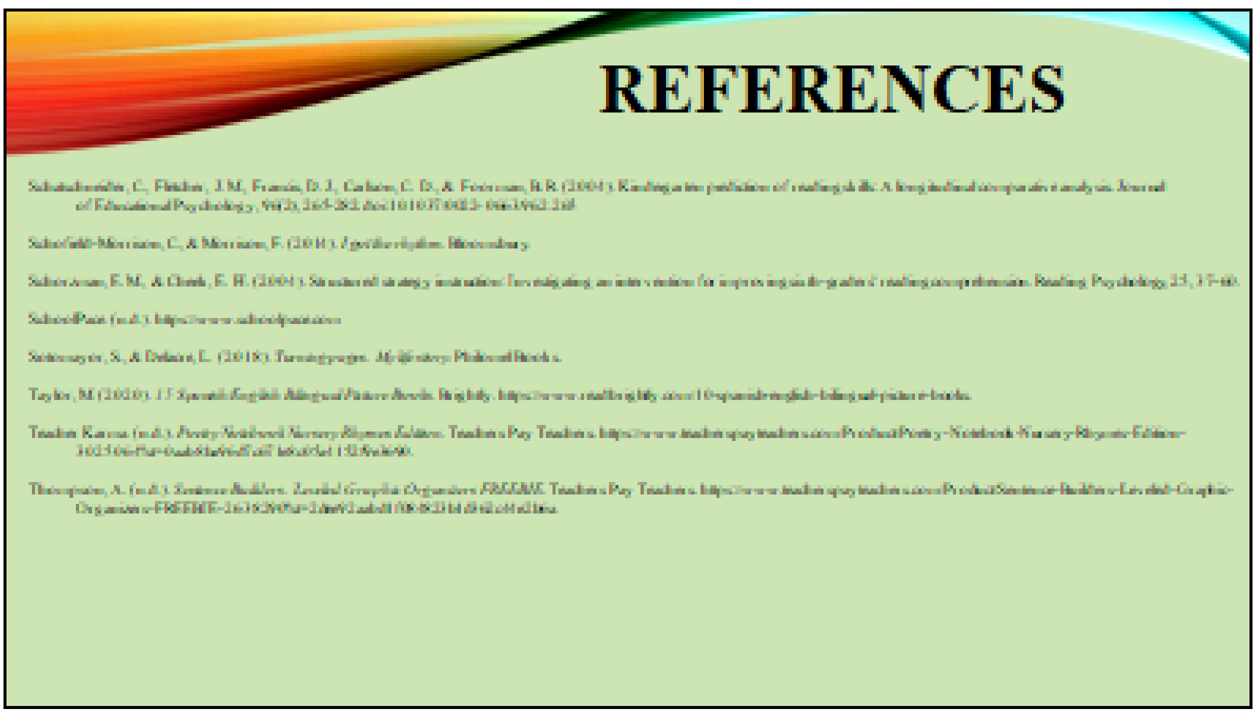
Carson, D. (n.d.). *Word Web Graphic Organizer "Sports"*. Teachers Pay Teachers.
LMN Tree. (n.d.). *Free reading graphic organizers grades k-3*. Teachers Pay Teachers.

Moving forward for Red Wolves Elementary


INTENDED OUTCOMES AND THE FUTURE
Climate of Change
In teaching bilingual and multilingual children, it is important to see them as capable, to learn from them, and to communicate their importance in the curriculum. Valuing their multiple languages, supporting and encouraging children to develop bilingually and multilingually, and holding equally high standards for both or all of their languages are essential (Souto-Manning, 2016)
Expected Results
• ELLs in grades kindergarten through second grade will make reading growth.
• ELLs will be provided differentiation according to their language needs with new teaching strategies implemented.
• Teachers will be able to make more connections with their ELLs while implementing more culturally relevant teaching within their literacy learning times.
Future Modifications
• In the future, the current reading assessment tool should be evaluated to modify any teaching points that need extra support or teaching strategies.
• During monthly professional development, teachers can talk about gains or needs while using some of the teaching strategies presented.
• Planning time to support these additional needs should be provided among grade level.
• Grade levels can choose to share out new strategies for others to try.


REFERENCES


REFERENCES


REFERENCES

Appendix B:

Voice thread Professional Development Link:

https://voicethread.com/myvoice/thread/18006300/114176844/106132509