Accountable Talk as a Practice in ENL Classrooms

by

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Abstract

This capstone project aims to support both English as a New Language (ENL) and general education teachers working with English Language Learner (ELL) students. In the United States, ELLs are a rapidly growing population. This is true of many districts on Long Island, NY, including Brentwood School District. Research has shown that ELL students are not being given enough opportunities to improve their oral language development. Different factors and theoretical frameworks have been discussed and related to oral language development. Additionally, the current state of the classroom and community have also been considered in the literature review. Solutions to the problem have been proposed in this project. These solutions include accountable talk, the use of sentence starters and stems, monthly school game night events, and the implementation of an evaluation rubric to monitor students' oral language development and the progress they make over the course of the school year. Several conclusions are discussed to increase oral language development using components of accountable talk such as sentence starters/stems, talk moves, collaborative groups, language objectives, student observations, and monthly school events. Recommendations include the training of enrichment educators on accountable talk and its application to special classes. Faculty and staff are encouraged to review current practices and make changes where necessary to better support the oral language development of ELL students.

Keywords: English Language Learners, Oral Language Development, Academic Achievement, Accountable Talk, BICS, CALP, Metacognition, Socioeconomic Status, Professional Development,

Chapter 1: Introduction

One of the quickest growing populations in schools in the United States are English language Learners (ELLs). In 2019, it was estimated that there was a total of 5.1 million ELL students in the United States, increasing by nearly one million students since 2010 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). A struggle students often face when learning a new language is utilizing their new language (L2) in a conversation. From personal experience, communicating in my second language has been difficult. Like many immigrants in the United States, my grandparents wanted to learn English. They seldom spoke Spanish with me; however, it was enough that I learned some words in Spanish before learning them in English. It became more difficult to use Spanish as I got older. World language is required in many middle schools and is a requirement for graduation in New York State, and so I enrolled in Spanish to help improve my heritage language skills. Heritage language is the term used to refer to a language that a family, often immigrant families, use at home. Unfortunately, I was only ever required to speak and practice oral communication a few times throughout my 8 years of Spanish classes. World Language teachers focused primarily on reading and writing, which are also important when learning a new language. My heritage language skills were enough to pass the class with ease, although I have language errors that have fossilized and have been difficult to unlearn. These errors become very apparent when I am communicating in my L2. Studies indicate that ELLs spend most of their day in the classroom engaging in teacher-led instruction. In this setting, the teachers are doing most, if not all, of the talking. Students are at a disadvantage when they are not given opportunities to use their language in authentic settings (Brooks & Thurston, 2010). Using a framework such as accountable talk would have provided great structure in learning a language. As a student, I would have been given more opportunities to use Spanish with my

teacher and my peers. As stated by Brooks & Thurston (2010) “Social interaction is the foundation for all learning”.

For many individuals that spend time within an elementary classroom setting, they may observe many of the students are not engaging in conversations. Some may believe this is a result of the pandemic however, a study in 2002 (Soto-Hinman, 2021) indicated ELLs are only working on their oral language development for less than 2% of their day. This has been an issue for many years. During the pandemic and shutdown, students used their devices to log into classes. Teachers used Zoom Breakout rooms and other methods for input such as Jam boards and chat room functions. Unfortunately, students spent most of their time muted and therefore were not interacting with their teacher or peers. Virtual and remote education did not support student engagement in materials or with one another. And now, in a post-pandemic world, our usual “Think-Pair-Share” or “Turn and Talks” ended as a result of social distancing and extreme caution for public safety. For the last year, students have been sitting in rows rather than tables or grouped together. Students have been missing critical time communicating with their peers in a safe environment. Now, a generation of students who were not in a classroom for well over a year need to be taught how to interact with one another effectively and appropriately. ELL students need more opportunities in the classroom to work on their oral language skills.

Teachers should be using accountable talk in their classrooms. Accountable talk is defined as “a set of research-based techniques that provides a framework for teachers to use as they strive to equip students with the skills necessary to execute academically stimulating conversations” (Ferris, 2013). Accountable talk consists of three critical components: community, knowledge, and standards of reasoning. Community refers to how students engage with others in the classroom. Knowledge indicates how students are using their background information and

integrating it with new materials learned. Standards of reasoning dictates how students use strategies learned in the classroom to enhance conversations with their peers (Ferris, 2013). These would be used when students are making arguments and challenging their peers, as well as making conclusions and using key details from classroom instruction.

Accountable talk can be translated into a variety of classroom strategies and lessons to help students work on their oral language skills. Evidence shows accountable talk results in academic achievement among students from diverse backgrounds" (Ferris, 2013). Additionally, working on these skills can benefit other students such as general education or special education. One study indicated that students that adopted accountable talk in the classroom also showed improvements in other academic areas such as writing and using academic language appropriately (Zwiers & Crawford, 2009). Working on oral language can only benefit students and prepare them for the next grade levels and help them in content areas.

The Common Core Standards and New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards both summarize different speaking and listening objectives that must be met by students (New York State Education Department, 2017). Some of the key words used in these standards include ask and answer questions, collaborate, and follow rules (for discussion). As the students' progress through each grade, they are expected to meet more criteria and carry-out more complex classroom discussions. Teachers can ensure that students meet their language objectives by adopting a framework that helps to guide students in their speaking and listening. Accountable talk will help meet the standards as students will engage in a community in which they are listening, responding, engaging, and interacting with their peers.

Accountable talk also provides a method of classroom management for teachers. Students are taught and practice speaking turns, listening to their peers, raising their hands to contribute to

classroom discussion. One study indicates that students felt using Accountable talk helped them to behave better in the classroom (Ardasheva, Howell, & Magana, 2016). Students feel their input is respected and are taught to be respectful of others as well. Additionally, teachers can establish norms for classroom discussions that help students with diverse cultural norms. Doing so will encourage students to interact and participate with their peers.

Brentwood school district has an exceptionally large ELL and Bilingual student population. According to NYSED Data (*English Learners in Public Schools*, 2022), as of 2020, it was estimated that there were 19,000 students enrolled in our schools K-12 grade. Nearly 7,000 students are enrolled in either the ENL or bilingual programs. There are also students not in these programs that come from bilingual families as there is also a high population or immigrant and minority families. The purpose of this PD is to provides teachers with an evidence-based practice that can be used in the classroom to help students using their speaking and communication skills in their L2 in the classroom

The purpose of this project is to investigate the framework of Accountable talk. This teaching framework would be beneficial in any classroom setting for students from all backgrounds. It provides a foundation for speaking and listening, helps support students in other academic areas, provides a classroom norm for students from diverse backgrounds, and helps as a method of classroom management. In Chapter 2, I will review previous theories and studies that have explored Accountable Talk. The literature review will help me to develop the culminating project, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. The product will give educators strategies that are supportive of accountable talk to help include and support ENL in speaking and listening.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction:

New York State (NYS) refers to English Language Learners (ELLs) as students that speak a language other than English or score below a level of proficiency as a result of being born in another country or coming from a family that speak a language besides English (The State Education Department, 2016). In NYS, students will take the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) when they are enrolled in school. They will also take the annual New York State English as a Second Language Assessment Test (NYSESLAT) to see if they are proficient enough to graduate from their ENL program. Simply put, in education, ELL refers to a group of students that are learning English. The term ELL gives no indication of the students first language or even how many languages the students know. ELL students can come from Spanish speaking backgrounds, or Greek, Russian, Polish, Japanese, etc. Using the term ELL does not give any further information on the student. Additionally, the term English as a New Language (or ENL) is also used interchangeably for students that are in the process of learning English. In TESOL and ENL education, there are four important components that educators focus on. Students should be reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the classroom in order to build English language. This paper will continue to focus on speaking and oral language. Oral language is important and is a key component in Accountable talk.

This chapter includes a review of literature related to Accountable talk for ELL students. When completing the literature review, it is important to consider the location of which the study has been completed as the cultural norms of a region may impact how the classroom is run. Additionally, it is beneficial to find literature that is recent to ensure the accuracy and relevance

of the materials. The literature discusses different theories that serve as a basis for Accountable Talk. Before discussing the components of Accountable talk, it is important to first consider the theoretical constructs of the literature reviewed.

Accountable talk can be related to theories proposed by early psychologists such as Vygotsky and Piaget. There are various important components to consider when understanding how to help a student learn best and make the most academic gains. Understanding the way we make meaning of the world and how to use this information to better our practices will help guide this literature review.

English Language Learner Achievement

Research has shown that ELL students are falling behind their monolingual or English-proficient peers. This is not a surprise as a majority of the exams given to students are in English, and so their ability to do well is a direct reflection of their English proficiency. Proficient refers to students that are meeting or exceeding the expected or grade-level standards that are used to guide teaching. According to a study conducted in 2008, 70% of the nation's ELL students reside in Florida, Arizona, California, Texas, and New York (Fry, 2008). More current research from the United States Department of Education indicates that the number of ENL students increased by up to 4% in some states between 2009 and 2015 (U.S Department of Education, 2017). In 2018, ELL High School graduation rates were 68% (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Additionally, there is a significant gap between ELL and Non-ELL reading achievement. According to the Office of English Language Acquisition (2017), there was a thirty-six-point gap in both 2015 and 2017 in fourth grade reading scores. This gap was even higher for the eighth grade reading scores at a forty-four-point gap in 2017 (U.S Department of Education, 2017).

A study conducted by Saunder, Foorman & Carlson (2006) explored the impact of adding an additional oral language block for ELL and bilingual kindergarten students on student achievement and oral language development. In the ENL classes with the additional block, the students spent about 15% more time on English oral language skills, while the bilingual students with the additional block spent about 8% more time on English language skills. (Saunder, Foorman, & Carlson, 2006). It was found that in both the ENL and bilingual classes with the additional block for oral language development, students showed improvements in their English language skills. Students displayed higher word identification and letter sound knowledge based on scores from the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery (Saunder, Foorman, & Carlson, 2006). The researchers also stated that if teachers are planning to implement additional time on oral language development, they must indicate clear goals and learning objectives in order to be successful.

A similar but more recent study conducted in 2019 found results that mirrored this early research almost perfectly. It was found that when ELL students have a dedicated/designated time for English language development (ELD) and time to work on oral language skills that oral language scores improve over time (Edelmen, et al., 2022). By comparing groups that operated with designated ELD (D-ELD) to those with integrated ELD (I-ELD) it was discovered that those in the D-ELD groups performed significantly better on English oral language proficiency tests. (Edelmen, et al., 2022) It was even found that ELL students in the D-ELD groups did almost as well as English only speakers on these proficiency tests whereas I-ELD grouped students were much further behind. The students in the study met their goals and improved in academic achievement.

Further time spent focusing on oral language, such as with Accountable talk, students will make further academic gains. A more recent study from 2012, indicated that teachers are speaking up to 89% of the day (Gewertz, 2019). Using this information, we may be able to presume that students are given opportunities to speak for less than 11% of the day after consideration of other events that occur. Accountable talk provides a framework in which students are encouraged to use vocabulary learned in instruction and apply them in classroom discussions. Students are using the words authentically and will be more likely to retain the words and definitions as well as apply them to other contexts.

Student Interactions

Much of the basis of Accountable Talk can be drawn back to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Cognitive Development Theory which relates to a student's social, cultural, and environmental interactions. His theory states that the cognitive development of a child depends not only upon the child itself but is also influenced by the social interactions with others (Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999). This can be through interaction of peers, family members, teachers, etc., each person that a child interacts with builds upon the cognitive abilities that the child has already obtained (Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999). From this we can see how a student's interactions with another student via accountable talk could benefit the child. By simply moderating discourse in the classroom teachers are not only keeping students engaged in learning but helping them advance their overall cognitive abilities. Furthermore, the more often this type of talk occurs the more students will be able to enhance their social and academic skills. Vygotsky affirms that learning should be based on the student's prior knowledge. Typically, the individual that the child is interacting with is more experienced in the subject of the interaction which allows the knowledge of that individual to be imparted on the child. Teachers use what the students know and build on

it to support learning. This is also known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Students are given a task that will be completed with the help of an individual that is more knowledgeable. Students benefit from problems being modeled in order to learn how to then do it themselves (Castrillon, 2017). There is a fine line in which this zone occurs, if the task is too easy for the child, they simply will not use the help of the individual in the social interaction. If the task is too difficult the child will not retain anything the individual explains and once the social interaction is complete the child will still lack understanding of whatever concept is being taught. When the students are engaged in accountable talk it is possible for one more knowledgeable student to bridge the gap between the students ZPD. A more knowledgeable student may be able to explain material in a logical way that a less knowledgeable student can understand and then add that information to their own library of knowledge. Similarly, the child's culture relates to the way they take information in. If the child is unable to find a way to relate to the information being presented to them, they may have a more challenging time comprehending and solidifying that knowledge (Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999).Therefore, teachers must be vigilant in which tasks are assigned for small group or partner activities. In some cases, it may be more beneficial for accountable talk to occur between students of differing demographics to help students gain different perspectives on issues.

Vygotsky also emphasizes the importance of both input and output in learning. This idea is discussed in Swain's Output Hypothesis. Swain (2005) states "the act of producing language (speaking or writing) constitutes, under certain circumstances, part of the process of second language learning". Swain (2005) argues that the processes used in writing or speaking are different from those used for comprehension. When students are using accountable talk in the classroom, they are able to hear their other classmates articulate words they may not know. This

allows the student to make a mental note and pay attention to how certain words are used and how they can then use them in conversation. Once they have grasped some understanding of the words or phrases, they originally did not know they begin to test their knowledge (Pannell, Partsch, & Fuller, 2017). In an accountable talk setting ELLs are able to test words and phrases in a positive way, in that there is no judgment from peers or the teacher if what the student says is wrong. Instead, logic and knowledge of other students is used to guide the student to the correct phrase/answer. Swain's hypothesis also states that students will then reflect on what is known/unknown, again showing how important metacognition is in accountable talk and subsequently language acquisition (Pannell, Partsch, & Fuller, 2017). According to research, output was far more influential in the acquisition of a second language than input. This is because students are working on their fluency, using their second language, and receiving feedback (Castrillon, 2017). Additionally, Vygotsky states that students learn when they interact with one another. Students are able to question, challenge, elaborate and build on what their peers are saying, a hallmark of accountable talk that is necessary for building students' understanding and knowledge (Gillies, 2013).

Piaget also believed it was important for students to interact with one another in the classroom. The perspectives of Piaget differ slightly in that his theories suggested development defined social interaction whereas Vygotsky claimed the opposite. When students talk with one another, they are given the opportunity to gain perspectives from their peers. They have the opportunity to reflect and question their understandings and new understanding which is referred to as Cognitive conflict (Gillies, 2013). This conflict allows students to challenge the knowledge of other students during accountable talk, if they do not agree with what is said they can frame a rebuttal to question or correct a student. As stated by Gillies (2013), "Students are presented

with situations that are challenging or puzzling". Students will experience cognitive dissonance and thus must figure out how to solve their problem. This is referred to by Piaget as equilibrium and disequilibrium. This type of dichotomy occurs frequently throughout accountable talk, when students are paired with another student and their ideas are challenged, they are brought out of equilibrium. They must then decide to add the new knowledge to what is already known about the subject (assimilation)((Kimberly-Webb, 1980). In other cases what they know is wrong and they must adjust their current knowledge of a subject (accommodating) (Kimberly-Webb, 1980). After solving these discrepancies in knowledge, the student is brought out of disequilibrium back to equilibrium until the next time they have a conflict. By increasing student interactions, children are able to challenge others as well as themselves, handle discrepancies, as well as problem solve using reasoning. In the instance of language acquisition, students may be faced with challenges such as difficult words or unknown phrases. Students would then collaborate with their peers to better their understanding, build their vocabulary, and become more comfortable speaking in their L2.

Socioeconomic Impact on Language Development

According to the American Psychological Association, socioeconomic status (SES) refers not only to income, but other factors such as education, financial security, social status, and social class (American Psychological Association, 2017). Low SES is associated with less education and poverty. In 2019, 38% of children under the age of eighteen were from low SES households (Clark, Van Dyke, Tussey, & Haas, 2022). Additionally, students that are immigrants, homeless, or enrolled in Title I schools are more likely to be ELLs (U.S Department of Education, 2017). Research has shown that students from low SES families and/or communities progress slower academically than their peers. Students from low-SES households

have less experiences that would promote the development of reading acquisition (Clark, Van Dyke, Tussey, & Haas, 2022). Additionally, children from poor households only heard one-third as many words as their higher income peers (Clark, Van Dyke, Tussey, & Haas, 2022). This gap becomes apparent by the time children are eighteen months old and only continues to grow. The gap in vocabulary has been indicated to be nearly thirty million words by age 4 (Clark, Van Dyke, Tussey, & Haas, 2022). Children's early exposure to oral language in their households has an impact on their literacy skills later on in their education.

Another cause for the language gap is the quality of conversations parents and/families are having with their children. Children should be engaging in conversations that require listening and responding. Studies show that children who in turn-taking conversations (such as is listening and responding) performed better on language comprehension tasks (Clark, Van Dyke, Tussey, & Haas, 2022). Students from low SES encounter these types of conversation less, and therefore are not exposed to new vocabulary. Low SES parents may not have access to materials such as print books or toys to help provide an environment for language development (American Psychological Association, 2017).A s many ELL students are lacking in conservations at home that help to support language development, schools must find ways to help decrease these gaps and further support ELLs from low-SES households. Accountable talk can provide this framework for students to make progress in their oral language development and help decrease the achievement gap between ELLs and their monolingual peers.

Accountable Talk

According to New York State, Accountable Talk is defined as a practice that "enables the acquisition of academic language through the modeling by teachers and reinforced and extended through classroom discourse" (The State Education Department, 2016). A strategy that can be

used to promote Accountable talk is metacognition. Metacognition is referred to as “Both one’s knowledge about their own cognition as well as their ability to regulate it ” (Zepeda & Hlutkowsky, 2019). More simply put, metacognition is thinking about thinking. Gillies (2013) outlines that understanding is reliant on one’s metacognition. Students must be able to self-assess honestly and question their understandings and perspectives (Gillies, 2013).

According to discourse from Piaget , many children have egocentric thoughts relating to only themselves, which may make easy tasks difficult (Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999). This makes accountable talk difficult as students think that their ideas are the only correct ideas. In order to effectively use metacognition in a peer interaction setting one must reflect on other thoughts and feelings towards a subject. This idea is what drives effective accountable talk if students did not find ways to adjust their own frame of reference and ideas about things collaborative work would not enhance learning. When discourse in the classroom challenges one’s previous self-narrative and thoughts it is up to the students to carefully think and modify their knowledge.

Teachers should make an effort to model metacognitive behaviors in the classroom. They can do so by using metacognitive questions as prompts and encourage students to reflect on their learning (Zepeda & Hlutkowsky, 2019). It was found that students that have a greater understanding of their own metacognition are more successful in their academics (Ge & Land, 2003). They are able to understand their own limits within their knowledge database and find a suitable way to overcome that limit. This may include asking peers for help in a way that relates to their metacognitive abilities (Ge & Land, 2003) .With metacognition, students are monitoring their learning producing new ways to solve problems. When students articulate their methods of problem-solving with their peers, it opens up a new way of thinking for others and allows students to edit and adapt their own problem-solving methods. Through interactions, students

are able to make improvements and learn from others in the classroom besides the teacher. This enables the classroom to become a true learning community where students are able to question themselves and others so they can make connections and improvements. Unfortunately, one study indicated that only 6.82% of teacher talk consisted of metacognitive prompts or behaviors (Zepeda & Hlutkowsky, 2019). In a study by Zepeda & Hlutkowsky (2019), there were only forty-four metacognitive statements made out of a total of 644 (Zepeda & Hlutkowsky, 2019). By adopting the Accountable Talk framework, students take responsibility for their learning and are able to expand their knowledge.

Discourse Communities

Discourse refers to the ways in which individuals within a particular group use language. Language refers to words, non-verbal language (such as gestures), and values that those within a group use or have in common. Conversely, discourse (with a lowercase *d)*, refers to the language as is used within a Discourse or particular discipline (Ardasheva, Howell, & Magana, 2016). It is important to discuss and understand Discourse before understanding the benefits of Accountable talk in the classroom. This is particularly relevant to students that are ELLs as they tend to enter into school with a differing discourse pattern then that of the classroom in the United States. This can be a result of cultural differences and how the schools that the students attended prior may have had different expectations. These distinctions impact how ELL students choose to participate in the classroom. Classroom Discourse is simply the language educators and students use within their classroom setting. The classroom has discipline-specific features that may be different than from home and other settings. Students are expected to be seated during class. They raise their hands to ask questions, and sometimes to ask for permission to leave their seats. Students have a schedule they follow and are guided by the teacher for the

majority of the day. This is unlike what students are used to within their homes or even in their previous schools. Within an elementary classroom during a science block, students are exposed to content-specific discourse. Students learn specific vocabulary such as hypothesis, variables, observations, etc. Students engage in hands-on activities and investigations that are different yet specific to this subject area. Students need to be explicitly taught how to participate and engage in the classroom appropriately to benefit themselves and their peers' experience in the classroom.

Accountable talk provides a framework in which students learn and understand the classroom discourse. Teachers instruct on and discuss the rules and expectations of the classroom discourse and teach students how to align themselves with said rules and expectations. This is particularly important for ELL students as it helps to make sure they have equitable access and understanding in the classroom. When the rules and expectations are clearly articulated to students, they will be able to interact with the teacher and peers and gain all the benefits that come with classroom conversations and discussion as discussed in the previous paragraphs. Teachers should work to support students so they can fully participate within the classroom and school setting. Once students are well-versed in a particular discourse or discipline, they will then be successful and perform well (Brooks & Thurston, 2010). Accountable talk provides students with the means to have a collaborative and educational conversation. Teachers can equip students with sentence starters or stems to discuss, clarify, and acknowledge others in which they are holding a conversation with.

Student's Perspectives of Discourse

In another study by Ardasheva, Howell, and Magana (2016), the researchers aimed to understand student perspectives of discourse in the classroom. The study was conducted in a seventh-grade mathematics classroom. The teacher was trained in Accountable talk and had

sixty-eight students participate in the study. The students came from a variety of language backgrounds such as Spanish, French, Russian, Amharic, and Somali. The researchers interviewed the students and teachers as well as conducting observations.

At the beginning of the school year, the teacher led the students in discussions about communication and language-use in the classroom. The teacher created posters with the help and input from students to summarize the classroom expectations for discussions. The posters were referred to whenever students needed a reminder. The findings indicated that the students overall had positive views of accountable talk in the classroom. Students felt it helped to improve the quality of classroom discussions. They felt they had more opportunities for learning, and therefore they were "getting ahead." (Ardasheva, Howell, & Magana, 2016). Students indicated that using Accountable talk, they felt they had a better understanding of how to appropriately interact in the classroom, such as raising hands to speak or ask a question. Others indicated that they felt they were better behaved and more respectful to their peers as they were intentionally using proper body language and listening attentively to their peers. Students were able resolve conflicts and get to know other students they may not have spoken to otherwise if it were not for the class. In other words, a respectful and responsible learning environment has been created in this classroom.

Current State of Talk in the Classroom

There have been few studies regarding accountable talk and how it was impacted in the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic that elicited a nationwide shutdown. The reason for this is obviously due to the recency of the event, however one study has explored the effects of accountable talk in remote classrooms. This study examined how accountable talk was implemented during classroom discourse remotely by surveying students and teachers on online

curriculum. Since the shutdown was so abrupt many teachers were not trained for remote instruction and even fewer were able to adapt teaching methods that were used face to face to an online medium (Gutentag, Ornir, & Asterhan, 2022).

According to teachers in this study instruction that included accountable talk was implemented at a lower rate during remote instruction than in person. Students reported similar values of accountable talk that took place during whole class instruction but reacted positively to it (Gutentag, Ornir, & Asterhan, 2022). Students in this study were surveyed on motivation, engagement, and achievement while accountable talk was integrated into online instruction. It was found that although class instruction was shorter and there was far less interaction between peers, students reported positive motivation and engagement with material relating to accountable talk. However, student achievement was not positively affected by the accountable talk, this could be due to factors such as decreased class meeting time, distractions stemming from being at home, and other environmental factors not found in a classroom (Gutentag, Ornir, & Asterhan, 2022).

Shifting Classroom Practice

Accountable Talk is a framework used in a classroom that encourages students to be responsible for and attentive to their learning. There are a variety of factors that contribute to the successful implementation of Accountable talk. Teachers need to be explicit in their instruction of Accountable talk and model the expected behaviors as well as practice what this would look like in the classroom. The grouping and/or pairing of students is important in order to be sure students are engaging with a peer that is not too challenging or conversely, not challenging enough. Different studies indicate the success of Accountable talk and therefore the implication of such classroom framework would benefit ELL students.

Towell & Hawkins (1994) discuss the stages of second language acquisition. They include Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS refers to skills that are necessary for social interaction, whereas CALP refers to academic language that is used in the classroom (Colorin Colorado!, 2022). BICS contains three parts, pre-production, early production, and stage speech emergence. It can take six months to two years to acquire this stage. The parts of CALP include intermediate fluency and advanced fluency and can take up to five to seven years to acquire (Towell & Hawkins, 1994).

In our ENL classrooms, many teachers are using lower-level questioning with their students that do not require critical thinking or engagement. This might be a question such as "What did the character do?" whereas a higher-level question would be "Why did the character do that? What else could he have done?" We must explicitly teach students to use higher order thinking skills to ensure they can effectively express themselves (Mota–Altman, 2006).

It is important to understand the differences between BICS and CALP as they both take time to acquire. One issue faced by ELL students is referred to as the 'silent period.' Stephen Krashen discusses different variables that impact a student's ability to acquire a second language. Factors such as anxiety and self-esteem may prevent the ELL student from processing the language as needed for acquisition (Krashen, 2013). Often, when a new student enters into an ENL classroom, they are resistant or unable to speak or communicate orally. Many new ENL students are uncomfortable using their new language as it is difficult for them (Cunningham & Shagoury, 2022). In Mota-Altman's (2006) classroom, she stated that teaching critical thinking skills explicitly and allowing students a safe place to practice their communication skills, her students shared they felt more confident to speak up in the classroom. ENL teachers can help

their students overcome this silent period by giving students time to listen to their peers and observe the classroom interactions (Cunningham & Shagoury, 2022). Additionally, providing a solid foundation and structure in the classroom for communication will allow students to have opportunities to speak and listen to their peers.

Collaborative Learning Groups

One study by Brooks & Thurston (2010) seeks to compare the influence of different learning configurations in an ENL classroom. The five types of instructional groups were whole class, small group, one to one, individual, and none. Whole class instruction was defined as addressing the entire class with the teacher leading discussion in the classroom. Small groups included students collaborating with one another with or without the help of a teacher or aide. One to one instruction included one ELL student working with either a native English speaker, native language speaker, or a teacher/aide. Lastly, the individual condition included the student working independent of any peers or teacher/aides (Brooks & Thurston, 2010). The researchers chose ten teachers from two different schools to conduct classroom observations. They picked the teachers based on the number of ELL students in the classes as well as other factors such as schedules, willingness to participate, and types of groupings used by teachers. The students were from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes (Brooks & Thurston, 2010).

From the observations, it was found that student engagement in academic behaviors varied across conditional groups. Researchers observed academic engagement behaviors during whole class instruction which accounted for 38% of observational time. Students were much less likely to engage in academic language production during whole class instruction. Academic language production included writing, academic talk and reading aloud (Brooks & Thurston, 2010). Students would, however, participate in non-language production. Non-language

production academic activity includes paying attention or working silently. During small group instruction which accounted for about 14% of observational time, students were more likely to participate in academic language production than non-language production and other activity (Brooks & Thurston, 2010). While collaborating independently with another person, whether a teacher or peer, students engaged in academic language production more than half of the time. The results from the individual instruction observations were not significant across all conditions, in that no particular type of engagement was most prominent during this time which accounted for about 38% of class observational time (Brooks & Thurston, 2010).

As a result of this study, teachers can decide which configurations would help increase academic engagement of ELL students. Students were more likely to use academic language in small groups and one-to-one groupings. Teachers may argue that allowing students to work in groups may result in more off-task behavior, however the studies indicate otherwise. Additionally, when teachers adopt a framework such as Accountable talk, students are accountable and responsible for their learning. The framework would provide additional support in this context to be sure students are truly remaining on task (Brooks & Thurston, 2010).

Deliberative Discourse

Accountable talk can seem like an easy method to implement from an outside theoretical perspective, in practice there are many intricacies of discourse that have to be considered. In an article by Michaels et al., 2008, researchers introduce the three most important facets of accountable talk and how they lead positive classroom discourse that benefits learning for the group (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008). The first of these facets is designated as accountability to the learning community and encompasses classroom culture and behaviors. This is one of the paramount fragments of accountable talk as it helps the students become more

comfortable and confident in participating in classroom discussions. This type of talk includes statements that support or refute the ideas of others in a polite and constructive way. When done correctly we see conversations led by the teacher between other students discussing ideas related to classroom instruction (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008). The next facet discussed by the author is accountability to standards of reasoning. This type of talk emphasizes not only listening to others' ideas on a subject but taking those ideas and integrating logic into them to make connections. This can be seen when students disagree on a subject, the student that has the correct answer must find a way to reason his answer to a question is correct. This not only reinforces the students' understanding of the idea but also allows the other students that may disagree with the correct student to reanalyze their own ideas and eventually come to the correct conclusion (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008). The final and as the author argues, most important and difficult to implement is accountability to knowledge. Although having classroom discussion is beneficial for students from a social perspective, academic discussions must be based on facts. Therefore, it is the teacher's responsibility to facilitate a discussion that uses those facts to synthesize innovative ideas or clarify any misinformation. This is a challenging task as you do not want to shrink a student's confidence in speaking in discussion by flatly declaring they are incorrect. Teachers must find a balance using all three aspects of accountable talk to guide students in the right direction (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008). This can be related to ELL students as we have learned from Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (2013) that factors such as anxiety and low-self-esteem may impact second language acquisition. Using a classroom discourse will help mitigate these 'affective variables' and help develop oral language.

Conclusion

From this literature review, it is evident that the use of oral language is beneficial for English language development and academic achievement. It is understood that students learn when they are interacting with others in the classroom. Students are able to reflect and monitor their own learning. Accountable talk provides a framework for classroom discussion and encourages students to use the classroom discourse and academic language. Students improve their speaking skills, while also learning how to listen actively and respond appropriately. Students are given opportunities to respond, question, and discuss with their classmates.

Teachers will be given professional development on the implications of accountable talk in the classrooms. Various methods will be identified as well as their applications to other content areas such as math, science, and social studies. Teachers will understand how to establish a classroom discourse and how it can be assimilated into the classroom culture for students to learn.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools

In this chapter, I will be presenting professional development and a rationale for improving oral language development for ELL students at Hemlock Park in Brentwood Union Free School District. In discussion with other educators that have been working with this population for the entirety of their careers, it is evident that oral language communication is a struggle for ELLs. The issue that is existing in the district is concurrent with the research that has been presented. Students are not given enough opportunities to use their oral language skills in the classroom. There are many ways in which Hemlock Park can help mitigate the problem at hand.

An overview of the professional development will be outlined in this segment. Methods and strategies will be described for ENL educators to use in their classrooms to promote and improve oral language development. Some implementations include accountable talk, sentence starters and stems, anchor charts and the use of visual aids in the classroom, Talk Moves, and monthly board game nights (Ferris, 2013) (Mota–Altman, 2006) (McGlynn & Kelly, 2018). To help support oral language development, the classroom environment, and the needs of the ELL students in Brentwood School District have been considered.

Description of Professional Development

The professional development will be presented at Hemlock Park Elementary School at a faculty meeting held prior to the first week of school. The meeting will be held from 10:00-11:30 to have an appropriate amount of time to present the materials and have time for discussion following the meeting.

The professional development will be presented using Nearpod. Teachers will be able to access the materials and interact with the slides. Several handouts will also be provided to the

teachers to save for their own personal use and applications in the classroom (see Appendix). The name of the professional development will be "Let's Talk" as we are hoping to further engage students in the classroom and develop their oral language. The topics of designated oral language blocks, Accountable Talk, sentence starters and stems, anchor charts and the use of visual aids in the classroom, an Oral Language Observation rubric and a monthly board game night will all be covered individually. Each topic will include a rationale and how it relates to the problem of lack of oral language use in the classroom.

Making Time for Oral Language

As shown in research, students are spending less than an estimated 11% of their day engaging in oral language (Gewertz, 2019). Studies have shown that students benefit from an additional block of time to work on their English-speaking skills. One important implementation that teachers at Hemlock Park will do is designating a section of time to focus on oral language development. This block of instruction should be about 35-40 minutes of time spent dedicated to speaking in the classroom and oral language skills. Teachers may choose which block they would like to use and attempt to give the students the opportunity to practice their skills in different content areas. During this block of time, educators may choose to use small group configurations. Brooks & Thurston (2010) indicated that students were more likely to produce academic language in small group instruction or working independently with another individual. Teachers should work to support their students' academic engagement by utilizing different learning configurations in the classroom. The product detailed can be used in any configuration, although the research suggests small groups will yield better engagement. Educators will be asked to utilize an instructional method discussed today or one they have used that will support and encourage students to use their oral language skills.

For this tool, teachers will be given a handout (see Appendix D) indicating several key words that can be used when focusing on language objectives such as speaking and listening. Teachers are encouraged to utilize and incorporate these terms when creating content-area lessons. Using language objectives helps educators focus on what aspect of language development they will be focusing on and how the students will be able to make improvements to this aspect of the language. In this instance, we are focusing on oral language. Teachers should use language objectives that include terms such as "ask/answer, describe, give examples, orally define, restate, rephrase, etc."

Following through with this implementation will benefit the students. Both studies by Edelmen et al (2022) and Saunder, Foorman, & Carlson (2006) indicated that students made improvements in oral literacy. Students showed improvements in word and letter sound identification, and oral language proficiency. In the application of an additional/designated block of time for oral language development, students will have more opportunities to practice and improve their language skills. ELL students need to be given the time and space to make mistakes comfortably and learn from their errors (Mota–Altman, 2006). When students gain confidence, they will take more risks and use their language more, resulting in improvements to their oral language development.

Accountable Talk

In addition to designated time focusing on oral language, teachers should also use the accountable talk framework in the classroom. Accountable talk is a framework that can be used to encourage the use of oral language in the classroom. New York State defines accountable talk as a practice that promotes language acquisition through modeling by educators and the reinforcement of classroom discourse (The State Education Department, 2016). This framework

needs to be explicitly taught to students. Holding the professional development before the school year will give teachers the opportunity to model and practice accountable talk early in the school year so it may be implemented throughout the year. As stated in Chapter 2, Accountable talk is also a method for outlining the rules and expectations in the classroom. The beginning of the year is a beneficial time to integrate Accountable talk into the classroom management plan. An important topic teachers should explicitly teach is turn taking in conversations. Students learn and understand when they are actively listening so they can respond appropriately and build on what their peers have said to them. Appendix B provides an example of a classroom poster in the Bilingual Kindergarten classroom at Hemlock Park. Ms. Canales has been utilizing Accountable talk with her students to help ensure their conversations are meaningful. The students were assigned a role of either "Peanut butter" or "Jelly." They have been explicitly taught that while "Jelly" is talking, "Peanut Butter" is attentively listening so they can respond appropriately. Additionally, students learn to raise their hands when they would like to speak and involve themselves in a classroom discussion. As stated by Ardasheva et al. (2016) "The teacher's role is to provide students with access and skills for navigating school and in making explicit the "rules" of being successful." There will be uniformity in the classroom in terms of expectations and behaviors, especially in regard to speaking and listening.

To introduce accountable talk, the classroom teacher can begin very simply by using phrases they would expect their students to use in an academic conversation. This can be "I agree with/ I disagree with," "What do you think about…?" or "Would someone explain…?" The questions allow for conversations to be open-ended and provide students with opportunities to participate in classroom conversation. The teacher may want to use a mentor text the students are confident and comfortable with to begin the explicit instruction. When the students respond,

the teacher should give students the opportunity to respond to their peers as well. "Does anyone agree with ____? Why or why not?"

Scaffolding for Oral Language

McGlynn & Kelly (2018) discuss the importance of differentiating between talk and accountable talk. In many of our classrooms, teachers will often ask a question, solicit a response from a student, and then dictate whether that answer is correct or incorrect. With Accountable talk, we want students to contribute to conversations with their teachers and peers in a meaningful way. As educators, we should encourage students to have sophisticated and engaging conversations. A strategy that can be used to support this level of classroom discussion is sentence starters and stems.

Sentence starters and stems have been used as a method for scaffolding for ELL students when writing. When students are provided with a sentence starter or stem, they are better able to understand what they are expected to do in an assignment. Sentence starters are also beneficial for oral language and speaking. Appendix C provides a few examples of what this can look like in a conversation for both the listener and the speaker. These are similar to the sentence starters as seen in Ms. Canales' class in Appendix B, however these provide more academic language such as in "I understand." or "Can you explain?" These allow for students to build and expand the conversations. Additionally, students can use these sentence starters in any content area. Teachers should encourage students to use any academic language or vocabulary learned in these conversations. Students will make meaning of the new learned terms and apply them in a conversation appropriately. A sentence stem is a bit simpler in the sense that it provides a cue or prompt for students to write a simple sentence. This method would be beneficial for the early grades such as kindergarten and first grade. An example of a stem would be "I like____." Later,

the teacher can encourage students to add more details by adding words like "And" or "Because." Students learn about the structure of a sentence and will later be able to write sentences about relevant topics and that support their learning.

The use of sentence starters helps to develop students' oral language development. By using this scaffolding method, teachers are promoting the use of higher order thinking skills. Doing so will help students improve their CALP. Students are encouraged to use academic language in addition to the sentence stems and starters (Mota–Altman, 2006). Students can build confidence while collaborating with a peer. Studies have shown that students experiencing anxiety or low-confidence are less likely to orally engage in their L2 (Krashen, 2013).Students also have the ability to question what they have learned and discuss any misunderstandings with a peer that may have a better understanding of the topic or a different perspective that may encourage more thinking and conversation.

Scaffolding can be attributed to the Zone of Proximal development. In both examples, sentence stems and starters, students are completing a task with assistance. Students benefit from modeling so they can later complete the task independently (Castrillon, 2017). Additionally, using sentence starters and stems is beneficial in both speaking and writing. Output, as discussed in Swain's Output Hypothesis, facilitates second language learning and oral language development (Pannell, Partsch, & Fuller, 2017) and is far more influential in facilitating language acquisition (Castrillon, 2017).

During this tool, teachers will be given a handout with examples of sentence stems and starters as seen in Appendix E. There will be examples that can be used in the early grades such as kindergarten and first grade, as well as starters that will be beneficial in the older grades to elicit the use of academic language and critical thinking skills. Teachers may choose to use these

sentence starters as an anchor chart to display in the classroom for all the students to see, or the teacher may choose to print, laminate, and fix the sentence starters to the desks of their students. Students will then be able to have conversations using complete sentences and add in learned vocabulary from the content learned. Using sentence starters provides a framework for classroom discussions. In a study by Ardasheva, Howell, & Magana (2016), it was indicated that students felt they were being given more opportunities in the classroom when provided the scaffolding to conduct conversations in the classroom.

Talk Moves

Concurrent with sentence starters and stems, teachers can also use Talk Moves in the classroom to encourage academic language development (Ferris, 2013). Talk Moves refers to a variety of discussion strategies that can be used to promote participation and engagement in the classroom. The strategies include revoicing, repeating, reasoning, adding on, waiting, and revise thinking (University of Colorado Boulder, 2022). With revoicing, the teacher repeats what the student has said. The teacher can verify if it is correct to be sure the student has communicated as they meant to. (Ferris, 2013) Students are given the opportunity to either correct themselves or expand on what they have already said. Students are encouraged to speak without being correct or incorrect as the teacher is seeking to understand the student. This can be related to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (2013) as we understand that students may experience anxiety when participating in the classroom discourse. Students can gain confidence with this structure. The following talk move is repeating. Teachers repeat what the students have said to ensure the students know they were heard and understood. With reasoning, students are asked to think and compare what someone has said to their own reasoning. This can be related to Piaget's cognitive conflict in which students question what has been said and frame a response

using their knowledge and understanding as the basis for their reasoning (Gillies, 2013). When students are adding on, they connect their ideas and opinions to what their peers have said. This can be drawn back to assimilation (Kimberly-Webb, 1980), as students are adding on to information that is already known. Wait time allows for students to be given time to think and form a response. Finally revise thinking, in which students amend their knowledge and understanding based on the input from their peers in classroom discussion. Students make adjustments to their current understanding as discussed in early work by Piaget (Kimberly-Webb, 1980). Following this structure encourages the use of language to construct thinking (Ferris, 2013).

Teachers will be given two handouts on using Talk Moves in the classroom. One handout provides an example of a classroom anchor chart (Appendix F), in which teachers can create with the help of their students. The second handout (Appendix G) provides an example of sentence starters that can be fixed to students' desk to promote the use of oral language in the classroom. Both provide visual aids for the students to use and gain confidence. Talk Moves in the classroom may also be attributed to metacognition. As discussed in research, metacognition encourages students to question their own knowledge and understandings. When using these strategies in the classroom, they are giving students the opportunity to self-assess and question themselves (Gillies, 2013). Other students in the classroom are provided with opportunities to reflect on their own learning and understandings as well (Zepeda & Hlutkowsky, 2019). In this interaction, students can make improvements to their oral language and learn from their peers.

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix

In order to measure student progress, teachers will be using the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM). The SOLOM is a rubric or rating scale for teachers to use and

assess their students' oral language skills. Teachers are expected to execute this assessment using student observations. They will pay mind to students during class discussions or other settings the child may experience such as recess or lunch. The students are assessed on their ability to listen & comprehend, as well as their pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary. If students receive a 5 in each performance area, they will have a perfect score of 25 points. In order to be deemed proficient, students need to score at least a 19 or a 20.

Using this rating scale allows for teachers to monitor progress. In this tool, teachers will be given a copy of the scale as seen in Appendix H. Teachers should attempt to revisit this scale frequently to have a better understanding of their students' needs. Doing so will allow teachers to make changes in their instruction and use additional scaffolding where needed. Teachers have been given different instructional methods that can be used in this instance.

Monthly Board Game Night

One final and exciting implementation that will be occurring at Hemlock Park is a monthly Board Game night. Since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, Hemlock Park has not had the opportunity to host events after school to involve both students and their families. In order to improve students' oral language skills and support their development, we need to provide opportunities for students to use language. Hosting a board game event will allow for students to use some of the skills they have learned in the Accountable Talk framework such as listening and speaking. As discussed in Chapter 2, students learn through social interaction with others (Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999). These interactions can be with their peers or an adult such as a family member or teacher. Students are able to use language and communicate with their peers in an environment that is both enjoyable and engaging Students will learn vocabulary that is specific to playing board games and further develop their abilities to listen and speak, and engage in a

turn-taking conversation that helps to develop oral language development (Clark, Van Dyke, Tussey, & Haas, 2022). Additionally, as stated by Clark et al., (2022) "Oral language development is directly influenced by home environment and experiences with family". Encouraging students to visit the school and engage with their families can help to further develop their oral language skills. Teachers will also have the opportunity to interact with families and students in an informal setting, which. According to Wassell (2017), parental involvement in their child's education, such as attending a school-based event, can have positive impacts on relationships between educators and their students' families. Additionally, having a relationship with students' parents will help teachers learn more about their students' needs and how to better meet those needs (American Federation of Teachers, 2007).

Intended Outcomes of "Let's Talk"

There are many anticipated positive outcomes that will come as a result of sharing the professional development at Hemlock Park Elementary School. First, prior to the beginning of the school year, educators will be given new perspectives and ideas of how to better support oral language development in their classrooms. These new methods that can be used and implemented in the classroom have been supported by research and will be beneficial to both the students and staff. Second, during the PD, the teachers will be able to discuss the learned information and how they may apply it to their own classroom practices. Teachers will participate in their own Accountable Talk by discussing their plans with one another and learning of additional ways they can facilitate this new information into their practices. Teachers will be able to share any methods of Accountable Talk they are already using in their classroom and how they can enhance it using the provided research. Third, the students will find they are given more opportunities this school year to communicate their thoughts and opinions in the classroom.

Additionally, students will have the monthly opportunity to engage with their peers and community in a fun event that will support the use of oral language. Overall, the goal of this professional development is to support teachers and students in the improvement of oral language development and overall academic achievement. The teachers must implement the practices and be consistent to ensure the success of their students. As we progress through the school year, we can make any necessary modifications and adjustments to our practices to better meet the needs of our students.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This capstone has discussed the lack of oral language use in ENL classrooms around the United States, and in Hemlock Park Elementary School in Brentwood Union Free School District. The lack of oral language use in the classroom impacts ELL students' overall academic achievement and has caused them to fall behind their monolingual peers in speaking, listening, and other areas such as reading and writing (U.S Department of Education, 2017). Students are not able to gain confidence in their oral language skills and refrain from engaging in academic discussions (Mota–Altman, 2006). This avoidance prevents students from using academic language and engaging with peers in a meaningful way that would promote their oral language development. This capstone explored different instructional methods and procedures that can help teachers support their ELL students in the classroom to support their ability to listen attentively and speak. In order to make improvements to oral language in the classroom, we must first discuss where we are falling short to fill in any gaps and support students. The questions that lead this research include:

(1) How big is the academic achievement gap between ELL students and their monolingual peers?

(2) What puts our students at risk for lower oral language development?

(3) How are schools currently supporting oral language development?

(4) What implementations would help to facilitate improvements in speaking and listening among ELLs students?

(5) How can teachers use various components of Accountable Talk in their classrooms?

In this chapter, I will be summarizing the literature. I will then discuss implications for future teaching, as well as recommendations for future research.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

Many conclusions were drawn from a thorough review of various studies relevant to ELL students and their oral language development. Research from the American Psychological Association (2017) indicated that ELL students are falling behind their monolingual peers and have lower graduation rates. Although the data shows that more ELL students are graduating than previously, estimated at 68% in 2018 (U.S. Department of Education, 2020), ELL students are falling behind by 17 percentage points below all students in 2018. A study by Saunder, Foorman, & Carlson (2006) and a study by Edelmen, et al., (2022) both indicated that allotting a specific block of time for oral language development resulted in improvements from ELL students. Students performed almost as well as their monolingual peers. When students are given more opportunities to build oral language skills, they have the ability to use academic language authentically with their peers. Applying academic language to classroom discussions with other students will promote the retention of words and definitions and students will be able to apply the language to other contexts.

Theories as shared by Piaget and Vygotsky support the importance of social interactions. Vygotsky's theory states that a child's cognitive development is influenced by their social interactions with others (Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999). When educators moderate social interactions in the classroom, they are not only engaging students in the materials but also supporting their cognitive abilities. Piaget used the term cognitive conflict, to illustrate the importance of social interactions, in that students are able to gain perspectives from their peers and question their understandings (Gillies, 2013). Students are able to challenge themselves and their classmates. This is also understood as 'metacognition.' Students understand their knowledge and regulate it. Teachers can promote metacognition by modeling metacognitive

behaviors in the classroom (Zepeda & Hlutkowsky, 2019). Metacognition helps students build oral language by providing opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned. Students can question and challenge themselves and their peers using accountable talk (Gillies, 2013). Additionally, Swain's Output Hypothesis states that actively speaking or writing, both output, allow and facilitate second language learning (Pannell, Partsch, & Fuller, 2017).

Hemlock Park Elementary School has a high population of economically disadvantaged students (New York State Education Department, 2021). Further research indicates that students from a low-socioeconomic household progress slower academically than their peers (Clark, Van Dyke, Tussey, & Haas, 2022). Our student population may be further at risk for lower oral language development as a result of their socioeconomic status. Students may not be engaging in high quality conversations at home as a result of the education of their families, and therefore are exposed to less vocabulary and language than their higher socioeconomic peers by the time they enter into schools (Clark, Van Dyke, Tussey, & Haas, 2022). Students at Hemlock Park Elementary School need further support and structure in order to ensure their success and oral language development.

Discourse and Discourse communities are also important to consider when considering how to improve oral language development for ELL students. Discourse is language used within a specific context (Ardasheva, Howell, & Magana, 2016). ELL students may not be familiar with the classroom discourse and must be explicitly taught the expected behaviors in the classroom. Research showed that students felt they were given more opportunities for learning when the classroom discussion expectations were clearly defined. Students felt the classroom was more respectful and responsive to themselves and their peers.

Accountable talk is a framework for teaching that encompasses much of the described research. Accountable talk consists of purposeful talk that is accountable to community, knowledge, and standards of reasoning (Ferris, 2013). Students learn to engage in their classroom discourse community, and how to be respectful of one another. Standards of reasoning are the ways in which students support their understanding and question one another, as one does metacognitively. Knowledge is supported by the classroom teacher. When using this framework, teachers allow students to work with their peers in academic discussions. A study by Brooks & Thurston (2010) supports the notion that students are more engaged and produce more academic language when working in small groups or in a partnership. Teachers can support their student's oral language development by providing opportunities for them to utilize the components of accountable talk in the classroom.

Implications for Teaching

The intent of "Let's Talk" is to influence oral language development of ELLs in a positive way using accountable talk and to give teachers the tools to successfully implement accountable talk in their classrooms. This research provides some guidance to teachers and staff on the components of accountable talk and how it may look during instruction. Teachers will be given multiple handouts as well as access to the professional development as a resource to return to when necessary. Teachers will be provided with information and research on the benefits of collaborative groups and its impact on oral language development. A handout with guidance of multiple keywords that can be used when writing lesson plans to engage students in both listening and speaking will be given to teachers to help develop instruction that encourages oral language development. Educators will be able to implement scaffolding methods such as sentence starters and stems in their instruction. They have been provided examples of anchor

charts and visual aids that can be provided to students in the classroom. By using discussion strategies such as Talk Moves, teachers will support student participation in the classroom and provide a successful learning environment Using the scaffolding methods will help build the confidence of the students and further facilitate conversations. Finally, teachers will be given the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix. This will allow educators to monitor and track student progress. Changes can be made to instruction and material based on the collected data to better meet the needs of the students.

Implications for Learning

As a result of the research and professional development, students will show improvements to their oral language. Students will be provided more time in the classroom to practice oral language, allowing for ELLs to further develop their oral language skills. The additional oral language block and the monthly board game night will allow students to work on their academic language and progression of their L2 overall with help from the accountable talk framework. With an additional block of time solely meant for oral language development ELL students will be able to participate in class discussion and share ideas with one another to strengthen their knowledge by explaining ideas in a logical way facilitated by their teacher. With a similar model being implemented during the board game night, students will have the opportunity to collaborate orally with peers and teachers to solve puzzles and challenges prompted by the games. It is possible that within this more casual setting, students may feel more confident to speak up and use their L2 in a low stakes environment with peers rather than in a classroom setting. Along with using the time as a chance to build students confidence in a fun environment, student engagement may increase thus promoting oral language development.

Students will engage in small groups more frequently and be given more opportunities to communicate with their peers.

Recommendations for Future Research

The professional development will guide Hemlock Park Elementary School in making improvements for their ELL population. In the future, more research related to accountable talk can be conducted. There was not much research on the use of accountable talk in enrichment or special classes, such as gym, music, and art. All ENL students are provided with these classes, although it is not common for these educators to have formal training on how to work with this student population. All educators working with ENL students should make it a classroom practice to use accountable talk and encourage oral language use. Enrichment educators can be expected to create lessons that integrate this framework. In this proposal, enrichment teachers would also be expected to create learning objectives using key words as proposed for the ENL teachers. This implementation would ensure that students are not only expected to use accountable talk within their classrooms with their typical teacher. Students will be able to apply this framework in other contexts to build their confidence and improve their overall academic achievement.

Additionally, there lacked a focus of research related to accountable talk in regard to BICS and CALP. Accountable talk can have an incredibly positive impact on a student's academic language use, however much of the research did not discuss the implications of improvements to the students' CALP. Generally, students are also improving their everyday social skills, which are implicated by BICS, when they are participating in classroom discussions and interacting with their peers. This, however, was also not discussed in the research. In the

future, this would be important to further investigate as we want to improve the oral language of our ELL students.

Final Thoughts

ELL students are a rapidly growing population in the United States (U.S Department of Education, 2017). ELL students are faced with learning a second language, which can be particularly challenging. Teachers must improve and adapt their teaching practices to meet the needs of this student population. ELL students are falling behind their monolingual peers academically, and so teachers must use the research and data to help close the achievement gap (U.S Department of Education, 2017). Additional research indicates that students are not using their oral language skills, and this is impacting other academic languages such as reading and writing. The use of accountable talk in the classroom provides students with a sense of responsibility and accountability to their learning. Working in groups with their peers will facilitate classroom discussion. Using accountable talk in the classroom will improve oral language development and promote overall academic growth.

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Appendix A:

Presentation Slides and Link

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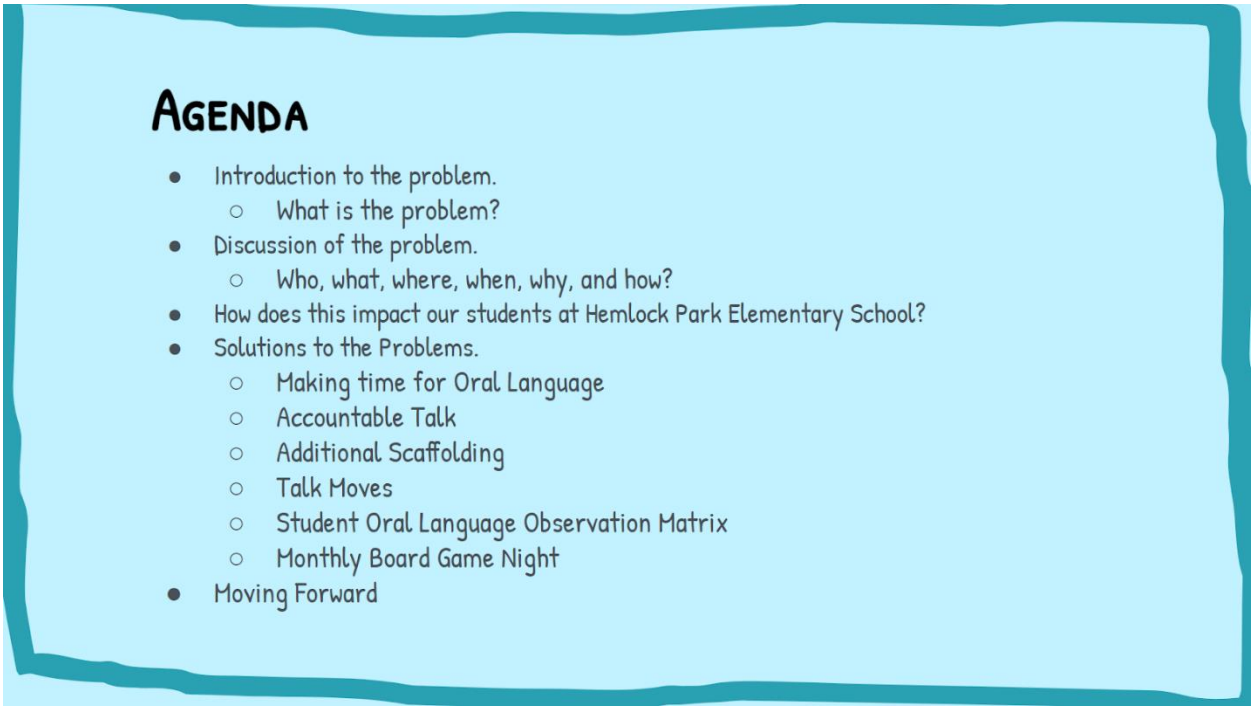
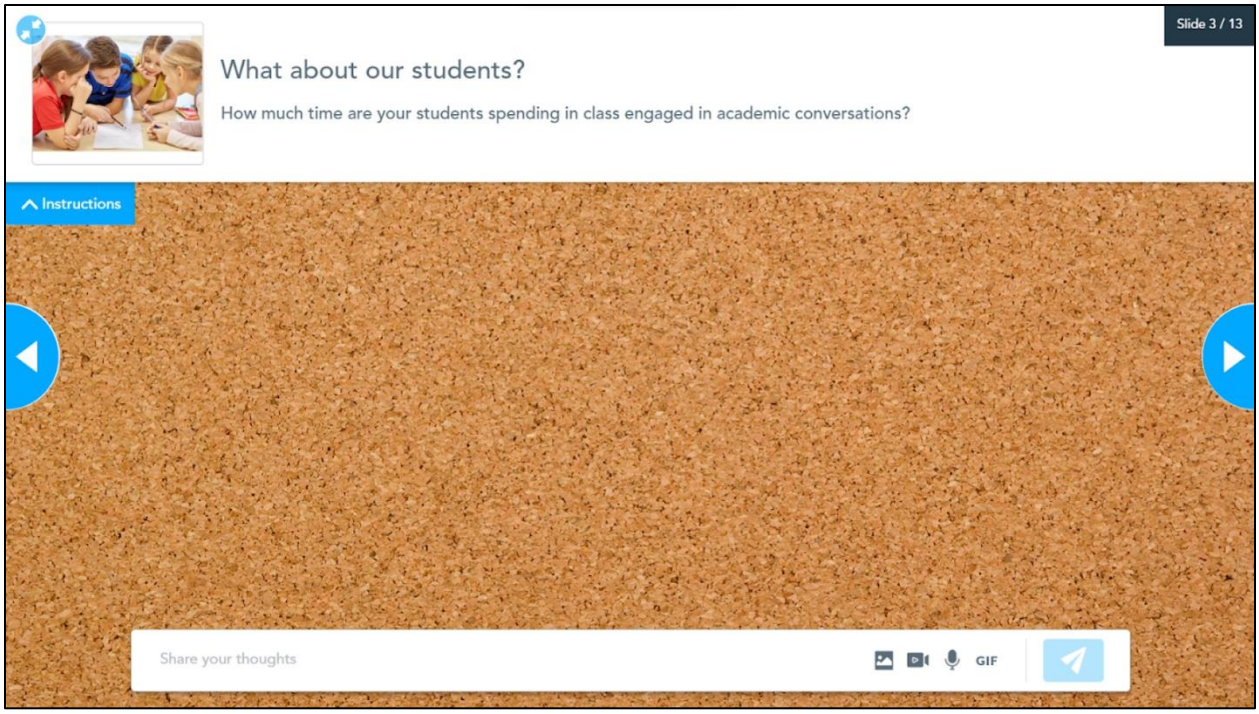
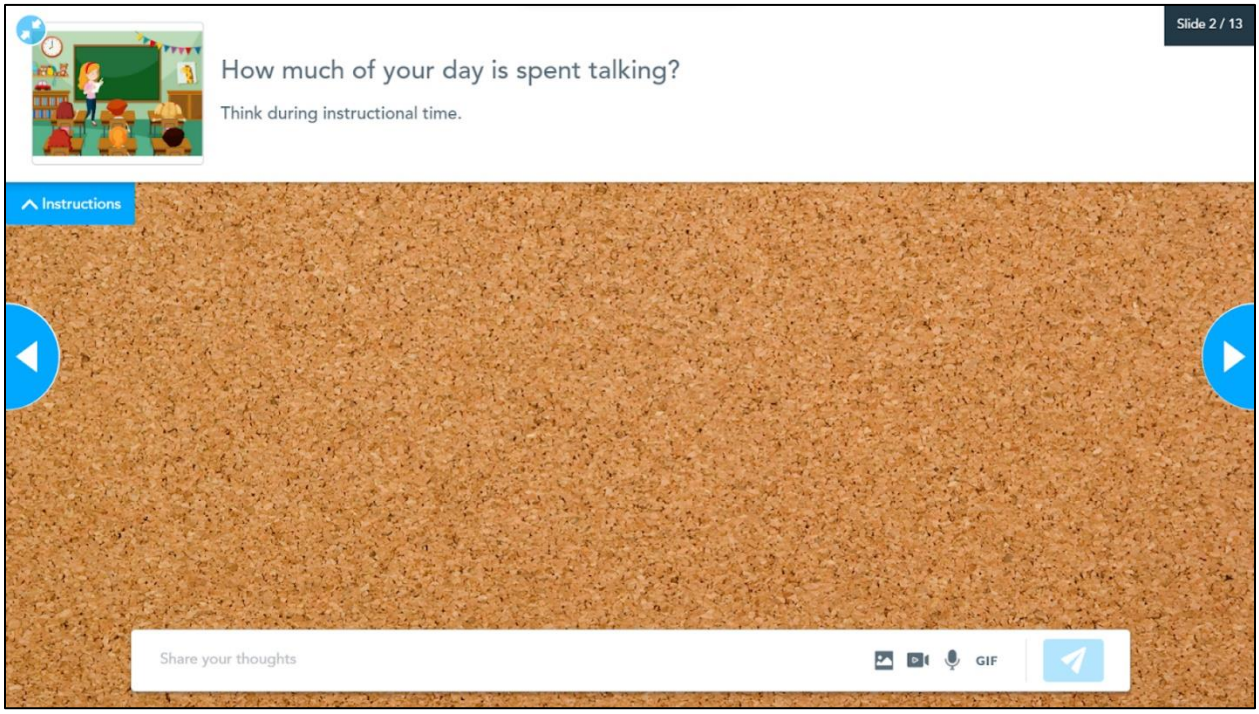
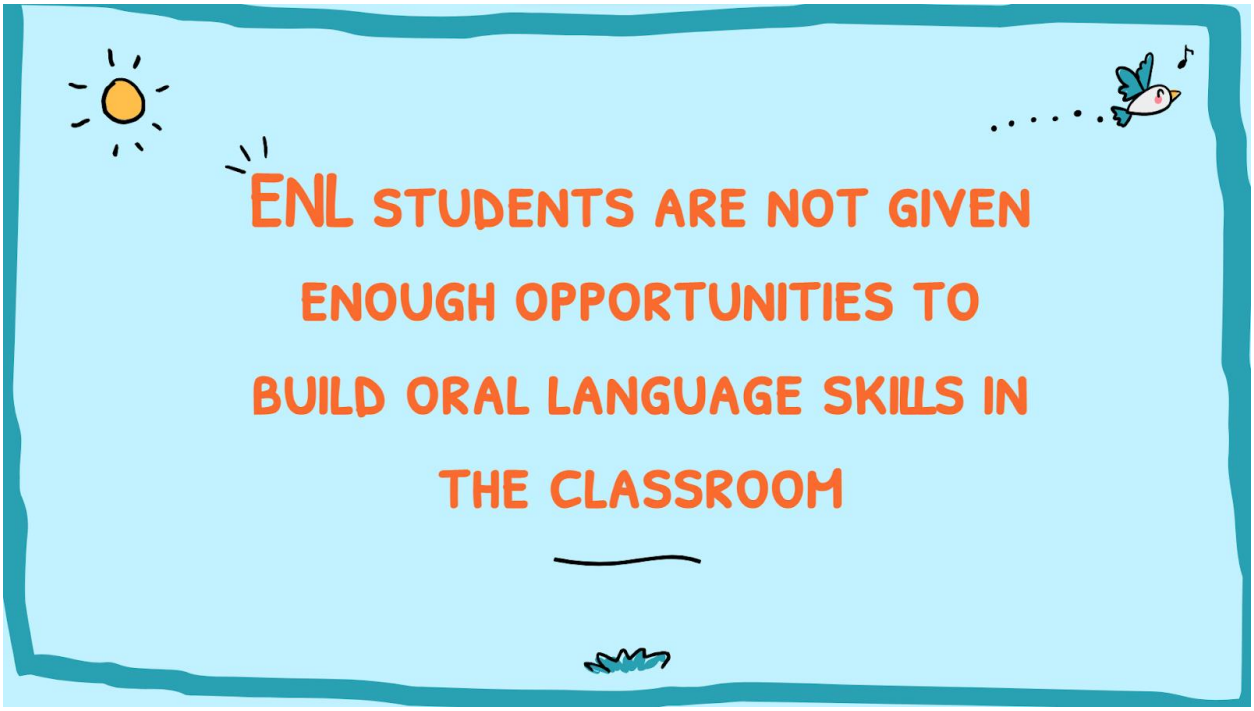
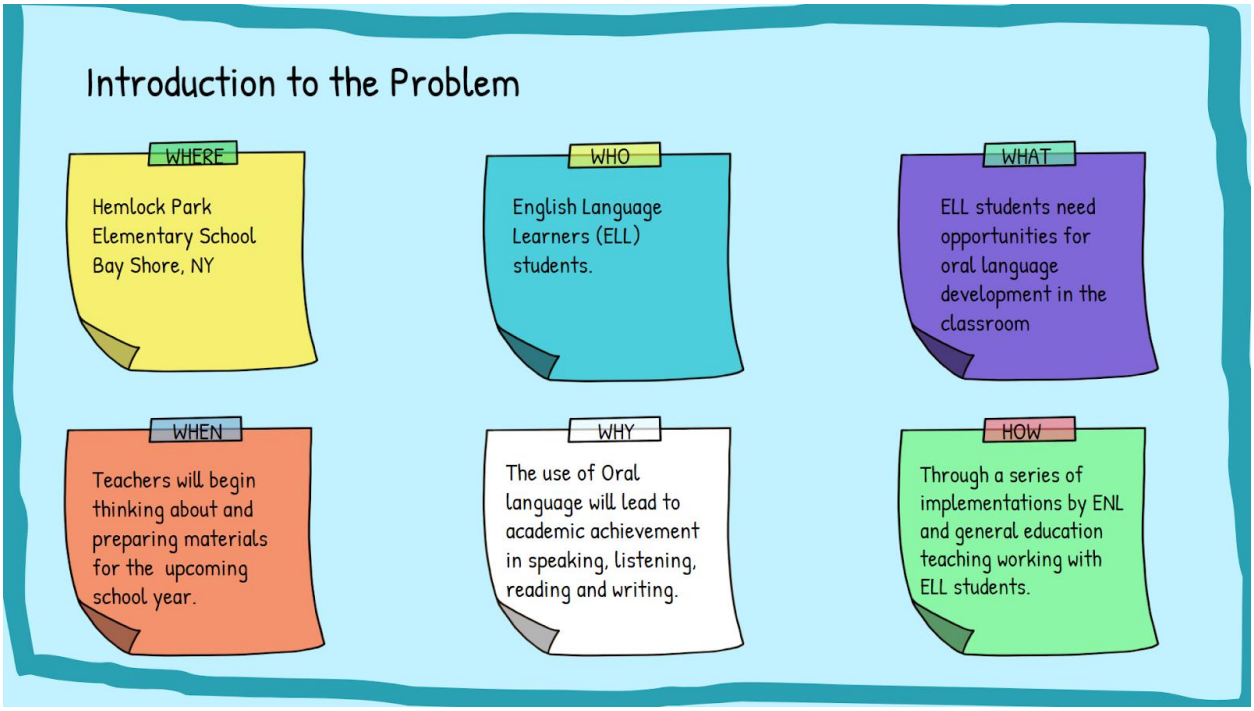



Slide 3 / 13
What about our students?
How much time are your students spending in class engaged in academic conversations?
Instructions
Share your thoughts
GIF


Slide 2 / 13
How much of your day is spent talking?
Think during instructional time.
Instructions
Share your thoughts
GIF


ENL STUDENTS ARE NOT GIVEN ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE CLASSROOM


Introduction to the Problem
WHERE
Hemlock Park Elementary School Bay Shore, NY
WHO
English Language Learners (ELL) students.
WHAT
ELL students need opportunities for oral language development in the classroom
WHEN
Teachers will begin thinking about and preparing materials for the upcoming school year.
WHY
The use of Oral language will lead to academic achievement in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
HOW
Through a series of implementations by ENL and general education teaching working with ELL students.

English Language Learners

- Also referred to English as a New Language (ENL), or English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)L students.
- A rapid growing population in the United States.
    - Estimated to be 5.1 million ELL students in the United Stated in 2017. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022)

ELLs at Hemlock Park

Our students population:

- In the 2020-2021 school year
    - 42% of students identified as ELL students
    - 90% of the school population identified as "economically disadvantaged" (New York State Department of Education, 2021)

Impact of Low-SES on Language Development

- "Children from low-SES families are less likely to have experiences that encourage the development of fundamental skills of reading acquisition, such as phonological skills, vocabulary, and oral language" (Clark et al. , 2022)
  - Students have less experience engaging in conversations that require both speaking and active listening.
  - Media and technology have contributed to the decrease in interactions at home and in school.
  - By the time students enter Pre-Kindergarten at age 4, there is a 30-million-word gap in low-SES students when compared to their higher SES peers. Clark et al. (2022)

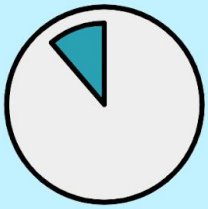
The Statistics on the Problem

2%

2002

Earlier studies indicate that students were only using oral language about 6% of the day. (Soto-Hinman, I. 2021).

11%



2012

Recent studies show teachers are speaking for up to 89% of the day, leaving less than 11% of the day for students to use oral language (Gewertz, 2021).

Studies have indicated that students' engagement, comprehension, and overall academic achievement improve when they are given opportunities to discuss what they are learning (Clark et al., 2022).

Proposed Solutions

- Additional Blocks of time for Oral Language development
- Accountable Talk Framework
- Sentence Starters & Stems
- Talk Moves
- Student Oral Language Observation Matrix
- Monthly Board Game night hosted by the school.

Additional Time for Oral Language development

- Teachers will be asked to designate a section of time in the day to work on oral language skills
  - 35-40 minute block during any content area in which students are expected and encouraged to speak.
  - Students should be working one-on-one or in small group settings.
  - When writing lesson plans, teachers should indicate clear language objectives for speaking and/or listening.

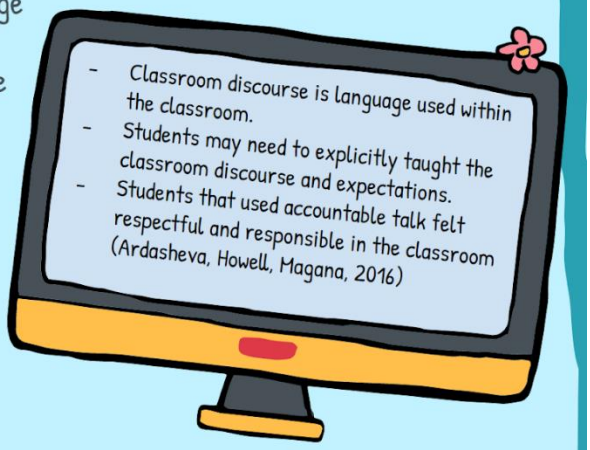
- Study by Sauner, Foorman, & Carson (2006) indicated students who received a learning block dedicated to oral language development showed improvements in their english language skills, particularly in word identification and letter sound knowledge.
- In another study by Edelmen et al., 2022) students that participated in an additional block showed improvement in proficiency and academic achievement.
- Students are more likely to produce academic language when working in a small group of peers (Brooks & Thurston).

Key Words for Language Objectives

Listening	Speaking	
- Arrange	- Agree/disagree	- Justify
- Distinguish	- Answer/ask	- Predict
- Duplicate	- Debate	- Pronounce
- Categorize	- Define	- Rehearse
- Choose	- Describe	- Rephrase
- Copy	- Discuss	- Respond
- Follow Directions	- Explain	- Restate
- Identify	- Express	- Share
- Indicate	- Give examples	- Summarize
- Label	- Give instructions	- Tell
- Match	- Hypothesize	- Use Vocabulary
- Order	- Identify	
- Point		
- Recognize		
- Reorganize		
- Role play		
- Show		
- Sort		
- Tell		

Accountable Talk

- A framework that can be used to encourage oral language in the classroom.
- NYS defines accountable talk as a practice that promotes language acquisition through modeling by educators and the reinforcement of classroom discourse (The State Education Department, 2016).



Scaffolding Using Sentence Starters & Stems

- Teachers want to encourage students having sophisticated and engaging conversations.
- Students that are building and expanding on conversations are using accountable talk rather than simply talking.
- Scaffolding using these techniques will help promote oral language as they will be understand what is expected of them.

Sentence Stems & Sentence Starters

Kindergarten to 1st Grade	2nd Grade to 5th Grade
• I like….	• The text is about…
• I think that…	• The main idea is…
• I want…	• The most important details are…
• I wish…	• The author wrote that…
• I went	• I learned…
• My favorite…	• I believe that…
• Yesterday, I…	• My partner pointed out…
• I learned…	• My partner mentioned that…
• This weekend, I…	• He/She noted that…
	• We agreed/disagreed that…
	• We decided that…
	• We still want to know…

Sentence Starters & Stems

Talk Moves

- Talk Moves are a variety of discussion strategies used to encourage participation and engagement (University of Colorado Boulder, 2022).
- Attributed to metacognition, as students reflect on their own learning.
- Students have the opportunity to make improvements to their oral language and learn from other students.

Talk Moves

- Students build confidence and are able to feel comfortable to answer whether they are correct or incorrect.
- Krashen's Affective Filter (2013) tells us about student anxiety.
  - Students are able to learn in a safe and respectful learning environment that is supportive of their learning.

Talk Moves

ADD ON
"I would like to add on to what _____ said."

REASONING
"I agree because_____."
"I disagree because_____."
"This is true because _____."

REPEATING
"I heard you say _____."
"Can you repeat what you said?"

REVOICING
"So, you are saying _____."
"What I think you said was _____."
"Did you mean _____?"

SAY MORE
"Can you say more about that?"
"Can you give us more examples?"

PRESS FOR REASONING
"Why do you think that?"
"What is your evidence?"

Source: King Middle School in Portland, Maine, developed these Talk Moves inspired by *Classroom Discussions: Using Math Talk to Help Students Learn, Grades 1-6*, Second Edition, written by Suzanne H. Chapin, Catherine O'Connor, and Nancy Canavan Anderson (Math Solutions, 2009). Via Edutopia.

Monthly Board Game Night

- Students have not had the opportunity to host events in school since Covid-19
- Students work on oral language skills in an environment that is both comfortable and fun.
- Accountable talk and listening can be encouraged by educators as students work together.
- Students learn best through interactions (Lloyd & Fernyhough, 1999).
- Interactions can be with either peers, educators, or family members.

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix

- Teachers will be asked to benchmark and monitor student growth using the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM).
- SOLOM is a rubric/rating scale using student observations.
- Students are monitored during class discussions and monitored on listening, comprehension, pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary.

SOLOM Teacher Observation
Student Oral Language Observation Matrix

Student's Name:				Grade:	Date:
Language Observed:			Administered By (signature):		
	1	2	3	4	5
A. Comprehension	Cannot be said to understand even simple conversation.	Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only social conversation spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.	Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.	Understands nearly everything at normal speech. Although occasional repetition may be necessary.	Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussions.
B. Fluency	Speech so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Usually hesitant: often forced into silence by language limitations.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by the student's search for the correct manner of expression	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions generally fluent, with occasional lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions fluent and effortless; approximating that of a native speaker.
C. Vocabulary	Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Misuse of words and very limited: comprehension quite difficult.	Student frequently uses wrong words: conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Student occasionally uses inappropriate terms and/or must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.	Use of vocabulary and idioms approximate that of a native speaker.
D. Pronunciation	Pronunciation problems so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently repeat in order to make him/herself understood.	Pronunciation problems necessitate concentration on the part of the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.	Always intelligible, although the listener is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation patterns.	Pronunciation and intonation approximate that of a native speaker.
E. Grammar	Errors in grammar and word order so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	Grammar and word order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase and/or restrict him/herself to basic patterns.	Makes frequent errors of grammar and word order that occasionally obscure meaning.	Occasionally makes grammatical and/or word order errors that do not obscure meaning.	Grammar and word order approximate that of a native speaker.

Turn and Talk

- Take a few seconds and think about how do you plan on using the information provided today to better your teaching practices?

  Share ideas with one another.

Intended Outcomes

- Educators are given new perspectives and idea that are supportive of oral language development
- Teachers discuss with one another ways they can adjust classroom practices and participate in their own accountable discussion
- Students will be given opportunities to develop their oral language in the classroom by sharing their thoughts and opinions and communicating them with their peers.
- Student progress will be monitored throughout the year to provide educators with information on how to improve their practices and what their students need.

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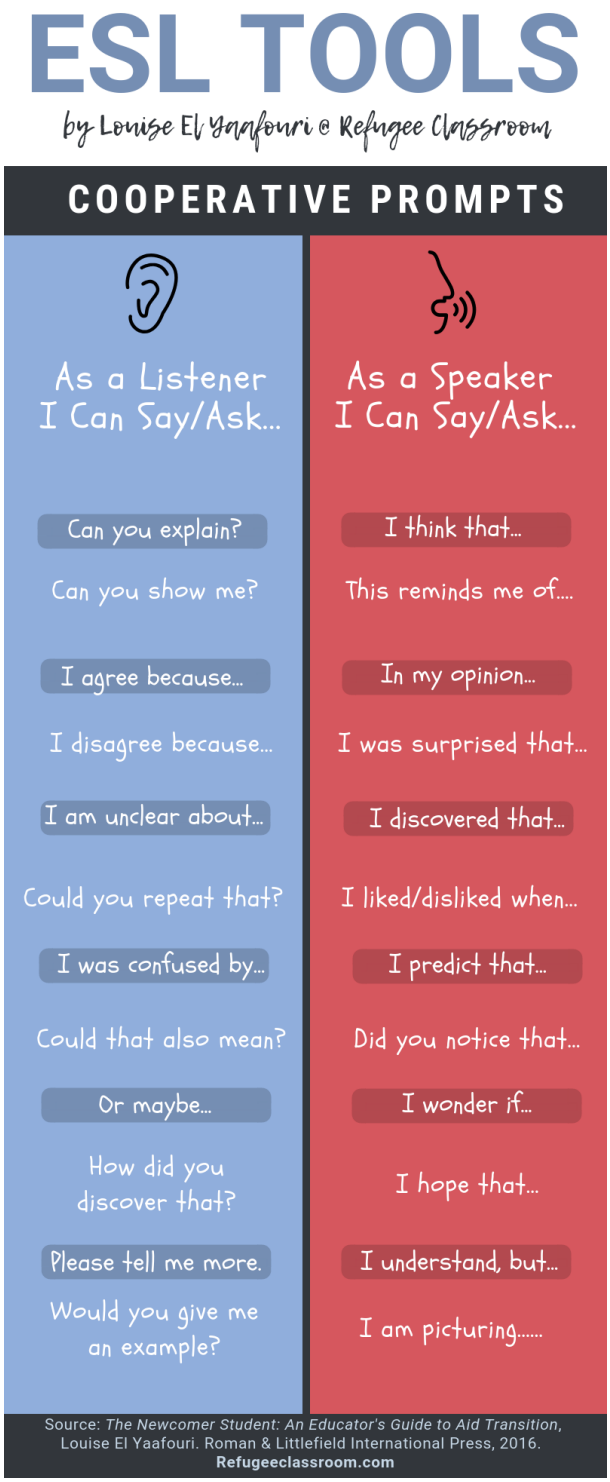
Appendix B:

Classroom "Partner Talk" Poster

Appendix C

Sentence Starter Infographic



Appendix D:

Speaking Language Objectives 'Action' Terms

Listening	Speaking	
- Arrange - Distinguish - Duplicate - Categorize - Choose - Copy - Follow Directions - Identify - Indicate - Label - Match - Order - Point - Recognize - Reorganize - Role play - Show - Sort - Tell	- Agree/disagree - Answer/ask - Debate - Define - Describe - Discuss - Explain - Express - Give examples - Give instructions - Hypothesize - Identify	- Justify - Predict - Pronounce - Rehearse - Rephrase - Respond - Restate - Share - Summarize - Tell - Use Vocabulary

Appendix E:

Sentence Stems and Starters

Sentence Stems & Sentence Starters	
Kindergarten to 1st Grade	2nd Grade to 5th Grade
• I like…. • I think that… • I want… • I wish… • I went • My favorite… • Yesterday, I… • I learned… • This weekend, I…	• The text is about… • The main idea is… • The most important details are… • The author wrote that… • I learned… • I believe that… • My partner pointed out… • My partner mentioned that… • He/She noted that… • We agreed/disagreed that… • We decided that… • We still want to know…

Appendix F:

Talk Moves

Appendix G:

Talk Moves for Students

Talk Moves

ADD ON

"I would like to add on to what _____ said."

REASONING

"I agree because _____."
"I disagree because _____."
"This is true because _____."

REPEATING

"I heard you say _____."
"Can you repeat what you said?"

REVOICING

"So, you are saying _____."
"What I think you said was _____."
"Did you mean _____?"

SAY MORE

"Can you say more about that?"
"Can you give us more examples?"

PRESS FOR REASONING

"Why do you think that?"
"What is your evidence?"

Source: King Middle School in Portland, Maine, developed these Talk Moves inspired by *Classroom Discussions: Using Math Talk to Help Students Learn, Grades 1-6*, Second Edition, written by Suzanne H. Chapin, Catherine O'Connor, and Nancy Canavan Anderson (Math Solutions, 2009). Via Edutopia.

Talk Moves

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"I would like to add on to what _____ said."

REASONING

"I agree because _____."
"I disagree because _____."
"This is true because _____."

REPEATING

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"Can you repeat what you said?"

REVOICING

"So, you are saying _____."
"What I think you said was _____."
"Did you mean _____?"

SAY MORE

"Can you say more about that?"
"Can you give us more examples?"

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Appendix H:

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM)

SOLOM Teacher Observation
Student Oral Language Observation Matrix

Student's Name:			Grade:	Date:
Language Observed:		Administered By (signature):		

	1	2	3	4	5
A. Comprehension	Cannot be said to understand even simple conversation.	Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only social conversation spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.	Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.	Understands nearly everything at normal speech. Although occasional repetition may be necessary.	Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussions.
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