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English Teachers' Perceptions of Vocabulary Instruction in English Language Learners' Classrooms

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MA., Walden University, 2008

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

English language learners (ELLs) from an urban high school in the southeastern United States struggled to achieve reading proficiency on the federally mandated reading assessments. The purpose of this case study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies affected the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. Guided by Vygotsky's theory of development, the research questions of this study addressed ELL teachers' perceptions of vocabulary instruction and its effect on reading comprehension. The purposeful sampling included 5 high school teachers, an administrator, and an English for students of other languages compliance specialist, who met the criteria of having the experience of providing instruction and/or support to ELLs. These participants were asked during their interviews about their perceptions of vocabulary instruction to improve the reading proficiency of the ELLs, effective vocabulary strategies that affect ELLs' reading comprehension, and the various methods that support and hinder vocabulary instruction to ELLs. Interviews and observations were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using thematic coding to organize the participants' responses through occurring themes and sorted categories. Participants' responded that there should be more professional development about ELL vocabulary instruction and practices. The culminating project may lead to improved instructional vocabulary strategies that will provide an impetus to respond to the learning requirements of all ELLs, resulting in positive change through increased reading success for ELLs in the district at large.

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Dedication

I want to first give honor, glory, and praise to Almighty God, the most Merciful for giving me the energy to achieve this dream. This work is devoted to my parents for their unconditional love, prayers, support, and continuous encouragement. Additionally, it is dedicated to my family and especially my children and my sisters, my nieces, my friends, colleagues, and mentors who contributed immensely throughout the magnitude of this study. I thank you.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

In recent years, ever-changing demographics are increasing the diversity in the U.S. classrooms with the number of English language learners (ELLs) expanding every day. ELLs speak a language other than English in the home and are limited in English proficiency according to assessments proctored by the schools and in accordance to the districts' selected method of ELL identification (Education Commission of the States, 2014). As these ELLs enroll in public schools, they are challenged with language and literacy (Bunch, 2013). ELLs struggle to gain proficiency in a foreign language and meet the academic and state standard requirements, placing the students at a disadvantage compared to non-ELL peers. The scores on standardized tests show that ELLs always lag behind their English-speaking, non-ELL counterparts (Polat, Zarecky-Hodge, & Schreiber, 2016). Likewise, Cervetti, Kulikowich, and Bravo (2015) found that there is a noticeable gap in the academic performance between ELLs and native-speaking students. ELLs have a bigger task than their monolingual counterparts because not only do ELLs have to work through the curriculum, but they also have to learn English as a new language (August, McCardle, & Shanahan, 2014).

In the United States, Florida is rated third in ELL population, and, even though Spanish is a major native language in the Florida schools, ELLs in the state speak more than 300 different languages (Florida Department of Education, 2018a). One of the critical challenges faced by public schools in Florida is the predicted increasing number of ELLs who will continue to arrive at schools with different levels of English language

proficiency, backgrounds, goals, and unique educational needs (Perez & Morrison, 2016). The number of ELLs in Florida public schools is an indicator that the classroom teachers must learn how to recognize the learning needs of these students, determine their language proficiency, and close the reading disparity between the two groups of students: ELLs and non-ELLs (Gibson, 2016).

A wide range of assessments and standardized tests are still being used that are not to the benefit of ELLs and other ethnic groups (Ward, 2018) and the instructional focus seems to be placed on the requirements to pass the test rather than on the individual achievement and language development of each ELL student. Therefore, the ELLs may face two educational challenges: (a) they are not successful on the standardized state tests and (b) they may not be receiving adequate and effective instruction in the classroom (Samson & Collins, 2012). In fact, ELL high school students continue to struggle to perform proficiently on the state-mandated assessments and to show yearly gains (Kim & García, 2014). Their limited proficiency and lack of literacy skills to perform at grade level is frustrating for both ELLs and their teachers as the ELLs struggle to master the English language and the curriculum content (Solari, Petscher, & Folsom, 2014).

Definition of the Problem

ELLs from an urban high school in Florida struggled to achieve reading proficiency on the federally mandated reading assessments (Florida Department of Education, 2018a). The student population at the study site was composed of 563 ELLs, a number that was largely Hispanic students. According to the high school's office of institutional research, ELLs made up approximately 21% of the total student population.

The ELLs' low achievement on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

originally and the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) recently was affecting the

school's overall results and was increasing the number of the lowest-performing students.

The ELLs who were underachieving formed 38% of the lowest-performing students in

the school under study. At the end of the year, the high school students were given the

FSA, a state-mandated assessment, to measure their academic performance in both

English language arts (ELA) and math (Florida Department of Education, 2018a). The

results of the assessment were used by the district to decide the school's position within

the district and the school's grade; a school ranking may indicate that the school is

failing. The reading achievement of ELLs at the high school under study demonstrated a

gap between ELLs' and non-ELLs' achievement because only 10% of the ELLs

demonstrated proficiency on the ELA state assessment (Florida Department of Education,

2018b). Due to the ongoing and continuous challenge with ELLs' poor reading skills,

only 9.2 %, of the entire ELL population reached a proficiency level on the reading

assessment for the 2016–2017 academic year (Florida Department of Education, 2017),

and only 10% demonstrated proficiency on the ELA assessment in the spring of 2017–

2018 (Florida Department of Education, 2018a). The ELLs scored much lower than their

non-ELL counterparts (Florida Department of Education, 2018a). The gap between ELLs

and non-ELLs continues to widen as measured by the FSA and requires immediate

attention from school and district officials. In order for the high school to achieve

learning gains and meet the proficiency goals every year, the ELLs are expected to

improve their reading comprehension and reading proficiency (Florida Department of Education, 2015).

The literacy coach at the high school reported that contributors to the low-test scores of ELLs were teachers' inexperience and lack of training. Therefore, the problem I addressed with this study was the lack of preparation of mainstream English teachers to meet the diverse needs of the ELL population and develop their reading comprehension skills to achieve reading proficiency. The high school's literacy coach also stated that ELL teachers face the challenge of supporting ELLs who come from different social backgrounds and exhibit different learning issues and that these teachers lack the knowledge to meet ELLs' academic expectations, which require a strong use of the English language and the literacy skills. According to the high school's literacy coach, although the school district requires that teachers should all be endorsed in ESOL, a course that is supposed to help teachers learn about the learning stages that the ELL students go through to learn English, teachers still lack the proper instructional equipment, the effective learning strategies, and the educational interventions to help students advance their acquisition of English and reading proficiency on state assessments.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The problem I addressed with this study was the lack of preparation of mainstream English teachers to meet the diverse needs of ELL population and develop these students' reading comprehension skills to achieve reading proficiency. ELLs presented a persistent challenge as their reading achievement kept falling below that of

the non-ELLs students (Florida Department of Education, 2015). The study site ESOL coordinator reported that although the school district developed and implemented several initiatives to improve the student achievement and meet the required state standards, ELLs continue to be misunderstood and struggle because accurate and proper teaching strategies are not focused on ELLs' unique educational needs. One factor of policymakers' alarm is the disparity between the experiences and backgrounds of many teachers versus those of the ELL students. An administrator at the high school declared that teachers have had training through professional learning communities (PLC) and professional development opportunities to acquire strategies to meet the needs of ELLs within the school and are also allowed instructional time to prepare to help ELLs pass the standardized assessment. The administrator also stated that because of the state accountability policies, teachers who work with ELLs are more worried about the standardized test results than on how to optimize academic achievement for their students.

Bringing the ELLs students up to speed with the non-ELLs at the school under study requires the school administrators to consider instructional practices educators can use to assist ELLs because the majority of these students are placed in mainstream classrooms where teachers are teaching to a variety of English-only speaking students. While the non-ELLs continue to learn, the ELLs try to catch up to become English proficient and the process becomes more cumbersome because these students not only have to grasp more challenging vocabulary in different subjects, but they also have to reach fluency to comprehend a rigorous text. If it is not corrected, the lack of teacher

preparation to meet the need of ELL deficiency in literacy will continue to widen the gap between the ELLs and non-ELLs.

Consequently, time and energy should be invested in finding instructional strategies that facilitate vocabulary learning. Because ELLs face this challenging and often demanding task when they are in the initial stages of learning a new language, it is incumbent upon researchers and educators to find instructional strategies that facilitate vocabulary learning. Vocabulary is an obvious area of importance for ELLs because it focuses on teaching the meaning of words and their structural components (August et al., 2014).

Rationale

The ELL low reading achievement scores are below proficiency at the study site as indicated by the standardized state assessments. One contributor to those low scores is a problem with instruction, particularly in reading. Through one-on-one conversations with teachers about ELL students' struggle with reading comprehension while I was trying to build the concept of the study, I learned that teachers collaborated on lesson planning and delivered reading instruction mandated by the district. As a common practice in the school under study, ELL students receive small group interventions to remediate reading deficiencies through learning strategies, such as critical thinking, and struggling students receive tutoring every Monday by a skilled English teacher. Despite all the interventions, the reading achievement on the FSA showed that ELLs score below proficiency. Reasons contributing to the lack of improvement in reading test scores may include lack of ELL teacher preparedness, lack of effective instructional pedagogies

specific to ELLs, and lack of appropriate professional development in ELL reading instruction. Some teachers who are only prepared to teach non-English subjects and are not prepared to teach reading encounter challenges in helping students overcome reading difficulties, which is a major barrier to academic success (Williams, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies affected the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. More specifically, I explored how the vocabulary instruction of ELLs might help teachers in meeting the statewide standards and state-mandated assessments in reading by improving the reading proficiency through effective vocabulary instruction. The goal was to benefit both ELL teachers and ELL students.

Definitions

Academic language: Yopp, Yopp, and Bishop (2009) defined academic language as "the language that was used by teachers and students to acquire new knowledge and skills" (p. 16).

Achievement gap: The disparity in learning among different races, classes, and socio-economic experiences (Murphy, 2009).

Consent decree: In August 1990, a judge of the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida, signed a consent decree giving the court power to enforce an agreement between the Florida State Board of Education and a coalition of eight groups represented by Multicultural Education, Training, and Advocacy, Inc. and Florida legal services attorneys regarding the identification and provision of services to students for whom English is not their first language (Bagby, Cunningham, & Lyall, 2003).

English language learners (*ELL*), or *English for students of other languages (ESOL)*: A student who is identified through the home language survey questionnaire and the English language proficiency assessment (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): The idea behind ESSA is for the states to create a balanced system of support and accountability to educate students to become prepared for 21st century college and careers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016).

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT): The FCAT began in 1998 as part of Florida's overall plan to increase student achievement by implementing higher standards. FCAT assessment was given to students in Grades 3 to 10 in mathematics, reading, science, and writing and measures student progress toward meeting the state standards (Florida Department of Education, 2005).

Florida Standards Assessment (FSA): With the Florida standards in place to help Florida students succeed, the FSA in English language arts and mathematics serve Florida students by measuring education gains and progress (Florida Department of Education, 2018a).

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): The NCLB Act of Congress supports standards-based education reform, requiring that all schools make yearly gains and held schools accountable for the test scores (Menken, 2010).

Proficiency level: The achievement levels range from Level 1 to 5. To show proficiency, a student must score a Level 3, which indicates that the student achieved a partial success on the content that he or she was tested on (Florida Department of Education, 2018b).

Reading comprehension: The mental representation of a text meaning that is combined with the readers' prior knowledge (Pourhosein Gilakjani, & Sabouri, 2016).

Significance

The significance of this study centered on the reading achievement of high school ELLs who struggled to achieve reading proficiency on the federally mandated reading assessments. Considering the importance of teachers' perceptions on effective pedagogies and the effect of reading comprehension of ELLs in the high school under study, it was important to conduct this study. In this study, I focused on gaining an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how effective vocabulary pedagogies affected the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. The findings from this qualitative case suggested the use of direct vocabulary strategies for ELLs.

I developed this study to further the research on the ELL high school teachers' perceptions of effective vocabulary pedagogies and their effect on reading comprehension. The findings from the study were vital because the data could help ELL teachers and students at the high school increase the reading proficiency. In accordance with Walden University's vision of social change, the results of this study could contribute to positive social change by offering ELL teachers effective vocabulary instructional strategies that enhance ELLs' reading comprehension and proficiency, which will be the foundation for what can be a very promising and exciting academic and career path.

Guiding/Research Questions

The problem I addressed in this study was the lack of preparation of mainstream English teachers to meet the diverse needs of ELL population and develop their reading comprehension skills to achieve reading proficiency. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies affected the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. In this study, I focused on the central research question: What are teachers' perceptions of currently implemented vocabulary instructional pedagogies in facilitating or not facilitating ELLs' ability to develop language and increase reading comprehension? The study was also guided by the following three subquestions:

1. How do ELL teachers perceive vocabulary instruction as a way to improve the reading proficiency of the ELLs?

2. What are the effective vocabulary strategies that affect ELLs' reading comprehension?

3. What are the various methods that support or do not support vocabulary instruction for ELLs?

Review of the Literature

This literature review includes information from peer-reviewed journals, professional education websites and books, and U.S. government websites. The databases searched were ProQuest, Educational Resources Information Center, EBSCOhost, SAGE Journals, Thoreau, and several other electronic databases available through the Walden University Library. The topics and keywords that I used to locate literature for this

review were: *Vygotsky, English language learners, successful vocabulary strategies, achievement gap, ELL academic achievement, professional development for ELL high school teachers,* and *teacher preparedness*. I also searched leading researchers in the areas of *constructivism, reading comprehension, vocabulary strategies, ELLs, learning communities,* and *professional development*. Over 100 relevant, peer-reviewed, and sound sources were used in this literature review and project study. A careful review of the literature revealed an achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs, the urgency of offering targeted ELL strategies, and teacher preparation through professional development. Research on teacher preparedness and vocabulary strategies shed light on how to plan effective vocabulary instruction targeted at benefiting ELLs' reading comprehension.

Conceptual Framework

The social development theory comprised the conceptual framework of this qualitative case study, specifically the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD), based on the works of Vygotsky (1978). In the social development theory, Vygotsky argued that social interaction precedes development where socialization and social behavior result in consciousness and cognition. Vygotsky argued that the community plays an integral role in meaning making and that learning occurs in two levels: interpsychological, or the social level, and intrapsychological, or the individual level. The majority of the essential learning by a child occurs during social interaction with a skillful coach (Vygotsky, 1978). In using vocabulary instructional pedagogies, social interaction may develop between teachers and ELLs, with the teachers acting as the skillful coach.

The coach may display certain behaviors and cues as well as provide verbal instructions for the child, which Vygotsky referred to as cooperative or collaborative dialogue. Therefore, the child often attempts to make sense of the actions or instructions provided by the coach (often the parent or teacher), then digests the information and uses it as a guide to their performance

The concept of ZPD in the constructivist theory emphasizes what a learner can do independently and what can be achieved with the help of a more knowledgeable person (Wertsch, 1985). This concept is critical for understanding how to use different scaffolding techniques to ensure learning. In this process, the coach or guide is instrumental in sharing valuable information and knowledge with the student (Leong, 1998). The term *scaffold* originated from Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), who believed that scaffolding means the use of the guidance of a more knowledgeable person to accomplish a task or achieve a goal. The more knowledgeable person controls the hard elements of the task allowing the learners only to accomplish what is within the range of their abilities (Fani & Ghaemi, 2011). Vygotsky (1978) stated that learning occurred in the ZPD. For instance, in learning language, interaction in shared experiences between adults, as the more knowledgeable person/s, and children, as the learners, facilitates learning. Children first learn tools, such as speech and writing, to mediate within their social environments to communicate their needs (Vygotsky, 1978) As children learned to internalize the meanings of words, children then learn higher-thinking skills and are able to apply the knowledge to accomplish tasks independently (Vygotsky, 1978).

In the current study, ELLs were often learners who could not achieve reading proficiency. Teachers of ELLs, as the more knowledgeable people, attempted to scaffold or provide support through the use of vocabulary instructional pedagogies to equip ELLs with the tools necessary to learn and ultimately achieve reading proficiency independently. In using vocabulary instructional pedagogies, ELLs are then expected to achieve reading proficiency on their own.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

Shneyderman and Froman (2012) asserted that a significant number of ELLs entering the ninth grade or higher faced more struggles academically than their non-ELL peers, juggling English proficiency along with learning the subject matter. ELLs continue to struggle because they do not just have to learn a new language but also master new concepts, skills, and benchmarks to demonstrate proficiency as measured by the state-mandated test (see Marsh, 2018), which constitutes one of the prime complications in U.S. public education today and in the county under study. Not passing these assessments because of the combination of reading difficulties and language proficiency often lead to dropping out of school because English proficiency correlates with academic performance and grade retention (Sheng, Sheng, & Anderson, 2011). Besides being unable to earn a high school diploma, failure on the state assessments may cause substantial, negative emotional and behavioral results on the part of students who are unable to pass the high school exit assessments (Li, Kruger, Beneville, Kimble, & Krishnan, 2018). Therefore, the ability to read proficiently and pass the high school state-mandated assessments are necessary for ELLs' achievement and life-long learning.

Educational research and federal mandates have shaped today's classroom, and more specifically, in a way where all students should be allowed academic growth (Spied & Dema, 2013). However, in the midst of all these changes and new thinking, ELL teachers are still concerned about some fundamental questions, such as who ELLs are and what their academic growth and schooling expectations are (Reed, Petscher, & Foorman, 2016). ELLs' major challenge is the ability to learn the English language and also be academically successful. Furthermore, ELLs generally come from different backgrounds and are a minority in mainstream classrooms (Lenski, Ehlers□Zavala, Daniel, & Sun□ Irminger, 2006). ELLs come to the classroom with their understanding and knowledge of different experiences; however, schools do not recognize the extent of the ELLs' challenges and so these schools fail to provide the right services in a timely manner (Lee, 2012). Students' lower academic achievement is not necessarily due to their limited proficiency in English; therefore, educators and researchers need to recognize the factors that influence ELLs' test scores, how these students perceive themselves, and their overall performance in life (Irizarry & Williams, 2013). The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) results from 2004, 2008, and 2012 that showed a gap in reading comprehension achievement between ELLs and non-ELLs indicated that it is vital to shift the focus to providing the ELL population with the necessary tools to bridge the gap and to enhance their English language learning (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). The government has passed different laws and acts in the hope of increasing productivity of ELLs; nonetheless, the results from the previous acts,

including the NCLB of 2001 and the current ESSA of 2015, were not promising (see

Marsh, 2018).

Learning a Different Language

ELLs have generally had low academic performance due to being prohibited or

limited to use their native language to express thoughts about English stories (Mellon,

Straubhaar, Balderas, Ariail, & Portes, 2018). ELLs do not foresee the relationship

between school and life opportunities; they feel alienated and inferior to their peers

because of language shyness (Brinton, Kagan, & Bauckus, 2017). They are also frustrated

due to their struggle with learning English and learning the same content as English

language speakers at the same pace and with the same expectations (see Marsh, 2018).

The ELL struggle can be risky for both the student population and society and may

hinder them from being productive citizens. Because of their limited English proficiency,

ELLs tend to exhibit lesser interpersonal skills and more internalization of problems than

their non-ELL counterparts (Niehaus & Adelson, 2013). Niehaus and Adelson (2013)

shared that ELLs also experience a lack of adaptive skills, and once their anxiety

increases, their academic achievement decreases. Their feelings of anxiety take the shape

of attention deficit, concerns about peers, loneliness, sadness, and worry (Niehaus &

Adelson, 2014).

Olsen (2014) acknowledged some basic principles that are essential in meeting

the ELLs' needs: identifying the urgent need to provide literary skills for language

development, offering services and pedagogies that bridge the achievement gap in their

academics, emphasizing the native language of the ELL students, encouraging active

engagement of students, offering rigorous and relevant content, and encouraging ownership of learning. In fact, teachers have to offer lessons and explicit instruction that are personalized to the ELLs' different backgrounds and academic needs. The National Education Association (2015) stated that it is very important to make the effort to incorporate targeted strategies for ELL students to facilitate their knowledge of curriculum content and language development. When ELLs are given a rigorous text in a language that is difficult to understand and information for which they have zero background knowledge, the assessments are considered unfair (Ziegenfuss, Odhiambo, & Christopher, 2014). ELLs need fair assessments that are appropriate and realistic because unless they have reached proficiency in English, they should not be required to demonstrate proficiency on the tests (The National Education Association, 2015).

Despite a plethora of research in the field of language acquisition, Bauer and Arazi (2011) claimed that teachers still struggle with meeting the needs of ELLs due to the students' unfamiliarity with the curriculum even when some teachers attempted to provide different classroom ELL strategies. Due to the dual challenges of learning a new language and keeping up with the academic content, ELLs continue to struggle, and they often end up in less challenging and low-track classrooms (see Marsh, 2018). Sometimes they are also taught by unprepared teachers who do not have enough experience to design lesson plans, tailor instruction to fit the ELLs' needs, and offer strategies that meet the different proficiency levels, which are practices that have been repeatedly recognized as effective ELL instructional methods (Calderón, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011; Goldenberg, 2013).

The constant struggle of the ELLs to grasp the content in the English language formed the basis for my central research question in this study: What are teachers' perceptions of currently implemented vocabulary instructional pedagogies in facilitating or not facilitating ELLs' ability to develop language and increase reading comprehension? To assist the student population in reaching their potential in reading proficiency, I aimed to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies was affecting the reading comprehension of high school ELLs in this case study. Offering different ways to learn provides ELLs with opportunities to gain a better understanding of the required content through ways that are amenable to their communication and cognitive styles as well as to their linguistic abilities (see Wong, Dubey-Jhaveri, & Wong, 2015). The variety of learning also may help them develop and strengthen other approaches to learning. Cummins' (1986) theoretical framework emphasized the correlation between the empowerment of students of diverse backgrounds and academic achievement. The role of a teacher should be redefined to provide the students with the ability to interact with the teacher freely. Emphasis on diverse students' ownership of the literacy processes, multicultural literature, a culturally responsive environment, authentic literacy activities, and assessments that support constructivist views of literacy eliminates bias (Cummins, 1994).

ELLs in high school may not have enough time to reach proficiency levels to be successful on state assessments because of the challenges they encounter while learning the language (Johnson, Bolshakova, & Waldron, 2016). Due to their lack of exposure to

English words at home, ELLs students do not have a rich English background compared to the non-ELLs (Marsh, 2018). As a result, ELLs' vocabulary background is weak in comparison to their native English-speaking peers. Another challenge lies in the late ELL arrivals who do not have enough time to grasp essential skills to be successful (Lee, 2012). This group of students arrives late to high schools and finds it hard to catch up with their peers. Lee (2012) remarked that it can take ELLs 4 to 7 years to acquire the academic language, and in some cases, a lack of knowledge in the ELLs' first language also makes it tougher for them to master English skills, so they do not reach a level of reading fluency comparable to native speakers even if they spend 4 years learning the English language (Shneyderman & Froman, 2012).

The Use of Vocabulary Instruction Pedagogies

Without building a repertoire of vocabulary, comprehension and language development will be difficult to achieve. Several researchers discovered progress in language acquisition and proficiency can be achieved through vocabulary development for ELLs (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2011; Chung, 2012; Hernández, Montelongo, Delgado, Holguín, & Carmona, 2014; Nam, 2010; Qanwal & Karim, 2014). In fact, there is a direct relationship between ELLs' lack of reading proficiency and their academic achievement (Sheng et al., 2011) ELLs who are not proficient in reading also struggle academically in high school due to the lack of understanding their grade-level text (Hwang, Lawrence, Collins, & Snow, 2017; Richards-Tutor, Baker, Gersten, Baker, & Smith, 2016). Despite the plethora of research that supports vocabulary instruction, there is a lack of vigorous vocabulary instruction in several American schools (Carlisle,

Kelcey, & Berebitsky, 2013). While English reading may require a variety of improved

instructional approaches with ELLs, one academic area in need of development for ELLs

is vocabulary knowledge (Brandes & McMaster, 2017).

     Vocabulary instruction should be embedded in every planned accommodation or

differentiated instruction to make meaning of each unit, lesson, or assignment. ELLs or

non-ELLs both need vocabulary instruction; they all need to have a toolbox full of words

that they can reference, understand, and use. According to Youngsun Moon (2017), the

biggest component of reading is vocabulary because it plays an important role in reading

comprehension. If the vocabulary knowledge is high, the reading comprehension by

default is high. The results from the vocabulary assessments between 2009 and 2011

obtained from NAEP Reading Assessments (National Center for Education Statistics,

2012) showed that students who did well on the vocabulary portion of the assessment

also did well on the comprehension portion of the assessment. Learning vocabulary

words and the ability to understand a text go hand in hand.

     Some researchers highlighted the urgency of teaching academic vocabulary

because it is a critical constituent of ELLs' reading comprehension. Ibrahim, Sarudin, and

Muhamad (2016) emphasized the importance of vocabulary knowledge on reading

comprehension, especially when the ELLs are challenged with reading texts of academic

complexity and rigor. Reading comprehension is the heart and the main goal of reading

because it is contingent upon decoding vocabulary knowledge (August et al., 2014).

     Consequently, ELL teachers should integrate strategies that help ELLs develop

and strengthen their academic skills as non-ELLs. Although academic vocabulary is

difficult to acquire, there is a correlation between academic vocabulary and content knowledge (David, 2010; Fisher & Frey, 2014). Academic vocabulary found in different contexts could help students learn a variety of skills (Reed et al. (2016). By learning different literacy skills, ELLs are likely to perform well in the classroom and on the state assessments because as Sibold (2011) explained, ELLs' difficulty in making sense of the material could be due to their struggle with understanding the vocabulary, which leads to low academic performance. Vocabulary instruction that targets academic vocabulary or any essential words that students need to be successful in content area assignments is essential (Nisbet & Tindall, 2015). Students who have a trivial repertoire of vocabulary are at a disadvantage for learning and, therefore, lack the skill to comprehend texts (see Wessels, 2011). Robb (2016) argued that vocabulary is the heart and soul of a language because it plays a pivotal role in language development. If students lack grammar and perfect pronunciation, they may be able to manage if they have a grasp of some words. However, if they have no knowledge of the essential words, communication through writing, reading, speaking, and listening can be a challenge. Effective vocabulary instructional pedagogies may or may not work with every student who was not proficient or fluent in reading. However, if every instructional teacher focuses on the educational needs of ELLs, especially these students' individual uniqueness in lesson delivery and the diversity of their backgrounds, improvement in the ELLs' reading comprehension and fluency is more likely to occur. Maxwell, Meiser, and McKnight (2011) stated that "sometimes teachers think regarding what can I teach? Rather than how can my students best learn?" (p. 24). The emphasis should be on how students learn best and how to tap

effective ways to convey a passion and ownership of learning in all students, especially the ELLs.

Furthermore, for ELLs to achieve proficiency in the English language and perform alongside the non-ELLs, they must have a strong vocabulary acquisition, which is one of ELLs' biggest challenges. Gibson (2016) argued that to eliminate or diminish the performance disparity between ELLs and their non-ELL peers, teachers should strive to use effective language instructional strategies to promote a successful linguistic track for ELLs. Wessels (2011) discovered that five effective vocabulary strategies are vital for the student's vocabulary learning: assessing background, connecting unknown vocabulary to known knowledge, ensuring opportunities for meaningful vocabulary use, providing multiple exposures, and focusing on higher level knowledge. A variety of strategies help strengthen word retention, offer multiple exposure to key vocabulary words, and assist with reading comprehension. Struggling readers are seldom aware that they have a challenge with comprehension although their difficulty stems from their lack of understanding of what they read (Connor et al., 2014). The meaning of the words is what constitutes the biggest challenge, because a breakdown in the meaning causes a breakdown in the comprehension. If there is no comprehension, language becomes difficult to use and understand, an outcome which leads to a lack of confidence and resistance to learning (see Sykes, 2015). According to Haager and Osipova (2017), successful strategies that enhance comprehension and reading proficiency are content-specific vocabulary and planned opportunities for language. ELL teachers must explore effective strategies that can yield fruitful results for EL L students' language

development. Indeed, to achieve results with students, teachers must use effective

pedagogies (Riley, 2013). Therefore, helping students with effective vocabulary lessons

will help them bridge the comprehension gap and will increase their proficiency. Graves

(2016) found a relationship between vocabulary size and ELLs' progress in reading and

language academic achievement. The ELLs' success with language development and

reading comprehension can help them pass the state assessments and be more successful

in life.

Direct Vocabulary Instruction and Scaffolding

Direct vocabulary instruction occurs when the teacher deliberately emphasizes

instruction around the meanings of focused and specific words (Wanzek, 2014). Finding

every opportunity to provide ELLs with direct vocabulary instruction is vital to their

comprehension and reading proficiency. In general, ELLs struggle with reading

comprehension because they lack prior knowledge of the vocabulary and the tools to

make sense of a given text. Without a sound understanding of the vocabulary and

strategies to make meaning of new words, ELLs are at a disadvantage. Consequently,

direct vocabulary instruction is critical for English language development because it can

benefit students in content areas as well (see Ma & Lin, 2015). In addition, ELLs will

benefit tremendously from direct vocabulary instruction because they are learning both

the content of the subject and the English language simultaneously. Direct instruction

denotes an array of instructional strategies that can guide teachers to transfer the focus

from what to teach to how to offer effective classroom vocabulary instruction that can be

used to help ELLs acquire more vocabulary words (Vasu & Dhanavel, 2016). It is

imperative that teachers provide ELLs with two essential tools; vocabulary knowledge

and experience that supports comprehension (Sweeny & Mason, 2011). Lexical

knowledge or understanding the form and meaning of words along with high quality

representations, was believed to be the foundation of reading proficiency (Reed et al.,

2016). Although the learning challenges that ELLs face are noteworthy, it remains

unclear to teachers what instructional tools they should use to enhance the educational

experience of ELLs (Gibson, 2016). To address this issue successfully on the local level,

it is necessary to explore different vocabulary instructional pedagogies that may or may

not contribute to the reading proficiency of ELLs. The uncertainty, regarding which

strategies could be applied to improve ELLs' learning experience, may be the result of

insufficient research, unreliable sources of effectively identifying ELLs' academic

challenge, and lack of using the proper innovative methods to teach ELLs (Gibson,

2016).

There are two essential elements to vocabulary instruction; it should be both

receptive and productive (Young-Davy, 2014). The receptive words are those heard when

someone is speaking, and the productive are those used in writing and speaking. After

focused exposure to vocabulary instruction, students should be able to learn and apply the

target words (Young-Davy, 2014). As a result, the students then have the ability to hear

and understand the new words, and they will also master the ability to use new words

while communicating through writing or speaking. Focused and direct vocabulary

instruction does not mean memorizing 25 vocabulary words at the end of a unit and

regurgitating their definitions on an assessment on Friday. Rather, it means flexible

language practices that promote learning, permit language experiences, provide accommodations, and break down language barriers (see Salih, 2016). A four-part vocabulary framework that enhances every child's language experience and especially that of ELLs by providing a variety of language experiences consists of the following activities: (a) providing rich and varied language experiences, (b) teaching individual words, (c) teaching word-learning strategies, and (d) developing word consciousness (Graves, 2006). Direct vocabulary instruction includes different methods that involve students in acquiring and processing new words; the acquisition can be derived from both explaining the word by giving its definition and its context and providing the students with more exposures to the words to be learned. ELLs require specific opportunities to develop academic language through the implementation of effective and individualized vocabulary strategies that will reach multiple groups of learners (Spied & Dema, 2013).

Effective vocabulary instruction has direct impact on reading comprehension and therefore it is important to be taught explicitly. Direct vocabulary development is essential because ELLs encounter unknown words for which they are not capable of using context clues to build comprehension (Nagy, Townsend, Lesaux, & Schmitt, 2012). In fact, through direct vocabulary instruction and vocabulary exposure, students will have the opportunity to experience the word multiple times, an experience which will directly affect their language development and proficiency (Young-Davy, 2014). Asking ELLs to infer word meaning using contextual clues, as do the native English speakers, will be ineffective because they are not proficient in the language. So, direct exposure and repeated contact with the words will permit students to understand and acquire more

vocabulary words. ELL students struggle with reading because these students are not given enough time and effective direct instruction to understand and acquire vocabulary knowledge (Greenwell & Zygouris-Coe, 2012). Since the English language is the vehicle used for instruction, ELLs need to learn how to use a variety of strategies to construct meaning.

Academic learning activities should stem from research and should be rigorous (Allison & Bencomo, 2015). The students should have the opportunity to learn by thinking and practicing. If the learning is meaningful and interesting, the ELLs will not encounter difficulties in absorbing and retaining new information. ELLs need to develop awareness of vocabulary learning and the relationships between the words they learn (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013). They also need to develop an interest in vocabulary learning to build their rich repertoires. For long-term learning and vocabulary acquisition, students should take ownership of their learning and should understand the positive outcomes from building vocabulary.

The underpinning argument for these instructional suggestions is the fact that putting more emphasis on direct and explicit vocabulary instruction will improve students' vocabulary knowledge, an outcome which will automatically lead to reading comprehension (Wright & Cervetti, 2017). The definitive goals of offering reading instruction to ELL students is to increase their rate of comprehension of any given text, which is the key element that facilitates the students' aptitude to make sense of the text. Therefore, teachers must offer in-depth vocabulary instruction that provides definitions, examples, non-examples, and illustrations. The instruction should encourage students to

practice the words in their writing and speaking. Additionally, teachers should explicitly

and purposefully help students understand the denotative and connotative meanings of

new words by selecting words from the content area, standard words, academic words,

and words that are central to building comprehension of a reading selection (Gallagher &

Anderson, 2016). The new words should be explained by using easy-to-understand

definitions, providing a sentence to explain the word, showing a visual representation of

the new word, and providing the students with the word's synonyms and antonyms. In

addition to practicing the vocabulary words during writing and speaking activities,

students should be encouraged to use the words in sentences and share them with their

classmates. Teachers should also choose reading activities that have useful and applicable

words. There is a great benefit from vocabulary instruction when students are engaged

and actively participating in the lesson. Increasing the number of targeted words for

direct instruction is the beginning of students' vocabulary expansion and reading

proficiency, but just increasing the number of words by itself may not yield the desired

results of word learning. In fact, teachers need effective methods to teach students how to

learn and retain vocabulary words (Brabham, Buskist, Henderson, Paleologos, & Baugh,

2012). Explicit vocabulary instruction strongly affects vocabulary growth, especially

when it comes to word meanings through direct exposure to words during reading

activities (Marulis & Neuman, 2013). Before reading, students tap into their existing

knowledge of selected vocabulary words. Then, during the reading, students should

discuss the new vocabulary word within its context. In the after-reading phase, students

should strengthen their vocabulary understanding by focusing on higher level knowledge

(Wessels, 2011). There are other ways to offer direct vocabulary instruction: Frequent exposure to words (about eight to 10 words per week), rich instruction, and extension of word application beyond the classroom setting (Beck et al., 2013).

When direct vocabulary instruction is applied, the ELLs' vocabulary will improve and so will their reading comprehension. In fact, direct instruction of vocabulary places emphasis on building academic vocabulary, leading to language proficiency (Jacobs, 2016). Furthermore, explicit teaching of vocabulary words can facilitate comprehension of the content material. So, ELL teachers must augment their vocabulary instruction with creative approaches that provide definitions and explanations of words and added opportunities for practice and implementation. Although direct and focused vocabulary may not be a magic potion to fix all the ELLs' challenges, it has the potential of offering a repertoire of possibilities for promoting vocabulary instruction beyond the traditional rote memorization strategies that include word lists (Young-Davy, 2014). Young-Davy (2014) also stated that direct vocabulary instruction heightens students' awareness about the importance of expanding their vocabulary background to benefit both their reading and writing. ELL teachers foster a learning environment where students are engaged in the learning and understand the value of developing language. Vocabulary explicit instruction should include clarifying the purpose and rationale for learning through demonstrating, explaining, and identifying learning goals (Jozwik & Douglas, 2017).

Professional Development for ELL Teachers

Professional development is considered a designed specialized knowledge that leads to a positive change in teachers' pedagogies and growth in student performance

(Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Because greater numbers of ELLs are flowing into the United States with limited proficiency in English and different educational, linguistic, and social backgrounds, ELL teachers should receive proper training to meet the needs of the ELLs. Faced with the challenge to work with a diverse group of students, teachers need focused professional development regarding how to instruct ELLs. Therefore, professional development is necessary to equip ELL teachers with effective strategies to meet the ELLs' language developmental needs (Rosa, 2015). Although districts and school leaders have required ELL teachers to take courses towards ESOL certification, ELL teachers lack the necessary training to educate ELLs (See Hansen-Thomas, Richins, Kakkar, & Okeyo, 2016). Meeting the linguistic and the cultural needs of ELLs does not mean just giving these students extended time to complete their assignments but also helping them increase their vocabulary background and improving their reading proficiency.

Federal civil rights legislation from the 1970s required that school districts recognize ELL students and endeavor to help them with services that permit these students to benefit fully from the educational system (Blazer, 2015). The goal behind this requirement is to make sure any ELL can have the opportunity to benefit from English academic instruction and bridge the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs (Olsen, 2014). The explanations for the inconsistency in achievement between ELLs and non-ELLs are controversial. However, the gap and the disparities in achievement between ELLs and non-ELLs may lead to ELLs' academic failure in high school and beyond (see Cook, 2015). Considering the lack of support and resources to assist ELLs,

these students are often in a pivotal place to fail (Kanno & Cromley, 2015). Therefore, the difference in achievement between ELL and non-ELLs indicate an urgent need for teacher preparation and a commitment from the whole school to meet the needs of the ELLs (Calderón et al., 2011). Commitment and preparation through professional development do not mean placing a label on specific students or lowering the expectations because of their language deficiency. According to Madrid (2011), it is very likely that ELLs are taught by novice and unqualified teachers. So, professional development should focus on instructing teachers on how to connect and understand the students' learning needs and cultural background and on how to better prepare the ELLs to be more successful inside and outside the classroom.

The lack of preparation and readiness may be related to the low academic achievement of ELLs (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014). If students are not confident about their knowledge of the language and their ability to compete on the reading assessments, they are unlikely to perform successfully. Johnson et al. (2016) conducted a study of science teachers for Grades 4 to 8 whose students consisted of a majority of Latinos. In the study, the teachers underwent transformative professional development (TPD) particularly aimed to improve the performance of ELLs. Most of the teachers who underwent TPD gained improved teaching quality. Teaching quality improved with the emphasis on ELLs, as teachers manifested attitudes and beliefs regarding ELLs, and how they were underrepresented in mainstream classrooms. ELLs who are assigned to teachers who underwent TPD also showed significant improvement in state assessments and overall student achievement. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of TPD was hindered by

the current curriculum, in which the schedule may not permit to pace the lessons due to the need to cover the required content. Similar to the study of TPD, Mellon et al. (2018) studied the effect of instructional conversation training on teachers of ELLs. The researchers found that teachers who underwent the training were generally able to diminish their prejudice towards ELLs, specifically their initial perception of the students' home language. Culturally responsive pedagogies, such as the instructional conversation pedagogy, aided in minimizing the prejudice towards ELLs and allowed teachers to treat them similar to non-ELLs (Mellon et al., 2018).

Implications

The school district and the county of this study enrolled a large number of students who come from families whose native language is not English. Therefore, schools and educators in this county were facing challenges to bring about fast-tracked academic growth for all students, but mainly for ELLs. Many of the students that attended the school under study were from homes where little English was spoken. To address this problem, educators must be armed with the necessary tools to teach each student that walks through their classroom doors to help these students become participant members of society. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies affected the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. Through this research, readers will understand perceptions of high school ELL teachers regarding vocabulary pedagogies as well as the need for increased professional development for mainstream teachers because according to Pettit (2011), education possesses a "poverty of language learning" (p.123).

This professional development project study may also raise awareness about the appropriateness, validity, and reliability of the FSA as well as the requirements of the ESSA Act (2015) and bring a positive social change to the community at large.

Summary

A general problem existed in the reading achievement of ELLs. The influx of immigrants in the state of Florida, and particularly in the county under study, warranted a closer look at the ELL's level of proficiency and their readiness to compete on state examinations, especially when these students arrive at schools with various social, economic, and language proficiency levels. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies affected the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. The research questions were structured to gain insight into ELL teachers' vocabulary instructional pedagogies and the effect on the reading comprehension. This study was guided by the constructivist theory that stated constructivism is "a theory of 'knowing' and a theory about 'coming to know'" (Fosnot, 1992, p. 168).

In summary, the review of literature for this study addressed major themes and data that had been collected on the different vocabulary strategies that could enhance ELLs' proficiency in reading through effective strategies and practices that may yield positive results for ELLs. In Section 2, I will explain the methodology that supports this study. I chose a qualitative case study design to complete my research. I will offer a discussion about the selection of this design and approach. In this section, there will be a

discussion of the study setting, participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis

procedures. The last discussion in this section will be about the limitations of this study.

Section 2: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers'
perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies affected the reading
comprehension of high school ELLs. More specifically, I explored how the vocabulary
instruction of ELLs might help them in meeting the statewide standards and state-
mandated assessments in reading by improving their reading proficiency through
effective vocabulary instruction. Although research on vocabulary instruction exists in
the extant literature, there has been little conducted on how vocabulary contributed to
high school ELLs' reading proficiency. Furthermore, in this study, I described vocabulary
instructional resources that ELL classroom teachers used when they were attempting to
improve the reading proficiency of ELLs.

This study was guided by the following research question: What are teachers'
perceptions of currently implemented vocabulary instructional pedagogies in facilitating
or not facilitating ELLs ability to develop language and increase reading comprehension?
To address this question, I included the following subquestions as part of my interviews
and observation protocol:

1. How do ELL teachers use vocabulary instruction as a way to improve the
   reading proficiency of the ELLs?

2. What are the effective vocabulary strategies that affect ELLs' reading
   comprehension?

3. What are the various methods that support or do not support vocabulary

    instruction for ELLs?

This section contains a description of the research design. I also describe the

rationale for using a qualitative case study research design. This section also includes a

description of the data collection methods and analysis procedures as well as the setting

and sampling procedures and measures used to protect the rights of participants.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

The research design I used for this study was qualitative because my underpinning

idea, as stated by Creswell (2012), was "exploring a problem and developing a detailed

understanding of a central phenomenon" (p. 26). Several indicators promoted a

qualitative design as the appropriate methodology for this study. In a quantitative study,

the questions are developed to understand and explore the correlation between two

variables, and the researcher usually has control over the events (Yin, 1994). Therefore, I

selected the qualitative approach for use in this study to obtain a comprehensive and

holistic knowledge of the vocabulary instructional pedagogies that promoted the reading

proficiency of ELLs. In contrast, with a quantitative research question the researcher

would seek to know *why* (Creswell, 2012), and according to Merriam (1998), a

quantitative study only offers a rational and pragmatic approach to the research. The

qualitative approach is "best suited to address a research problem in which you do not

know the variables and need to explore" (Creswell, 2012, p. 16), and it also allows the

researcher to be the primary instrument in collecting data.

Justification for Using a Case Study Design

I selected a case study to be the most effective design for this study. Yin (1994) posited that a case study is a practical investigation of a real-life experience, mainly when the relationship between the phenomenon and the context are not clear. Moreover, Yin claimed that a case study is an ideal strategy to answer how and why questions when the researcher does not have much control over the events. A case study method permits investigators to obtain a complete, real-life experience of individuals and situations as they explore the problem (Zucker, 2009). Hancock and Algozzine (2006) described the characteristics of a case study as difficult to be quantifiable. It is also imperative to acknowledge that the types of questions in a case study are used to direct the study towards an experience characterized by a predictable relationship of the events that may lead to exploring some high-yield vocabulary instructional strategies (see Stake, 1995). Therefore, using a qualitative case study design provided me with a strong understanding of which instructional vocabulary pedagogies teachers applied in ELL classrooms and allowed me to identify how the teachers perceived the implementation of the different strategies. Attaining deep insight into the research questions helped me recognize some explicit and research-based instructional vocabulary pedagogies that improved ELLs' reading proficiency. Moreover, according to Yin (1994), a case study is an ideal strategy to answer how and why questions when the researcher does not have much control over the events.

Rationale for not Selecting Other Qualitative Research Methods

I did not choose other qualitative designs for this study because they were not the optimal ones for answering the research questions. For example, grounded theory was not selected for this study because researchers who use this design require detailed measures for the data gathering and investigation that are based on a continual data sampling to create a theory about the social issue (see Glesne, 2011). However, the purpose of a case study design is to explore a local issue and to discover new themes as the researcher collects and analyzes data (Merriam, 2009). In this study, I investigated a variety of instructional vocabulary pedagogies that were thought to promote ELLs' reading comprehension and literacy skills.

Phenomenology was not selected for use in this study because the purpose was not to simply recognize the fact that there are different interpretations to the same experience when it comes to feelings and beliefs of the participants (see Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). I selected a case study for this study because it "endeavors to discover meaning, to investigate processes, and to gain insight into, and an in-depth understanding of an individual, group, or situation" (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 269). A case study is unique from the rest of the approaches because it focuses on "one single unit, or bounded system" (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 269). This choice allowed to me understand if and why vocabulary instruction helped ELLs improve their reading achievement, concerning the students in the classes of the teachers participating in my research.

According to Yin (2008), a case study explores a phenomenon within its real margins. The classrooms under study occurred in natural instructional environments and

were bounded by time and setting. Miles and Huberman (1994) depicted a bounded case study as a heart within a circle, meaning that the heart is the focal part of the study. According to Merriam (2009), a bounded system can be an individual program, classroom, person, or community. The population for this study consisted of 10th, 11th, and 12th grade teachers of ELLs.

Setting and Sample

Setting

A high school in an urban school district of Florida was the central setting for this inquiry and where the investigation took place. This facility received accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Florida Accrediting Commission. The high school study site offered different programs, including international baccalaureate, advanced placement, advancement via individual determination program, and ESOL. The school also offered programs for students with disabilities. This school district recognized the importance of developing the reading skills to ensure the success of ELLs. Of the 2,000 enrolled students in August 2015 at the high school, 31.8% are White, 6% are Black, 59% are Hispanic, 3% are Asian, 57% are multiracial, 51.5% are male, and 48.5% are female. 60% of the students receive free and reduced lunch. In August of 2015, there were 97 full-time teachers. The participants in the study included the following: two 10th grade teachers, two 11th grade teachers, one 12th grade teacher, an ESL compliance specialist, and one administrator. All classroom teachers were certified in secondary education with two teachers holding a master's degree in the field.

Participants

  Criteria for selecting participants. Participants for this study came from a
school district that had a high number of ELLs in most of its schools. Participants were
purposefully selected from the high school located in the district under study based on
criteria related to the research questions. The criteria for section of teachers were: (a) they
had to be teachers of high school English or reading that taught in the school, and (b) they
had to teach high school ELL. I selected the school principal as a participant based on the
criteria of familiarity with the NCLB requirements and handling ELLs in their school. I
selected the specialist based on the criterion of working with ELLs regarding their
reading achievement. All the five classroom teachers selected for the study had ELLs in
every class that they taught, and the other two noninstructional participants had close
dealing with ELLs. The ELL teachers' perception about vocabulary pedagogies was
essential to the research questions. The participants had between 2 to 15 years of
experience. These teachers received additional support from the ESOL compliance
specialist in their school.

  According to Creswell (2012) and Lodico et al. (2010), purposeful sampling is
appropriate when a researcher aims to select participants because of certain standards or
dispositions. Further, purposeful sampling is common among qualitative case studies
because participants are part of that phenomenon about which data are collected
(Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 2009). I used purposeful sampling for this
qualitative study because this selection is "based on the assumption that the investigator
wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore, must select a sample from

which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). Patton (2002) argued that purposeful sampling stems from the fact that the researcher chooses informational-rich cases from which learning will happen regarding an issue that is vital to the purpose of the inquiry.

Justification for number of participants. The seven interview participants were purposely sampled, and unlike random sampling, a purposeful sampling is typically used in the qualitative method. Besides the five ELL classroom teachers selected for observations and interviews, two noninstructional participants who worked closely with ELLs were selected for interviews only. Following Boyd's (2001) finding of two to 10 participants as appropriate to attain saturation, I selected a sample size of seven instructional and noninstructional participants in this study.

In addition to interviews, I also conducted classroom observations of the same teachers who were interviewed. I observed two 10th grade classrooms, two 11th grade classrooms, one 12th grade classroom, and one ESL classroom that combined different grade levels. Apart from the ESL teacher whose students were all enrolled in the ELL program, each of the three grade-level classroom teachers taught ELLs in regular English and intensive reading classes. For example, the 10th grade teachers had ELLs in regular English II and intensive reading classes. The same situation applied to 11th grade teachers and 12th grade teachers.

Procedures for gaining access to participants. The procedure for gaining access to participants began by mailing a request to the superintendent of the school district explaining the intent of the study. After approval, I sent another request to the principal

of the school requesting permission to have the selected 10th, 11th, and 12th grade

teachers participate in the study. Once I received the permission, then I sent an invitation

to the targeted participants as agreed upon by the principal of the school. Because I

worked in the same school, the communication between the participants was much easier,

but no communication occurred before the proposal to the Institutional Review Board

(IRB) approvals. I sent the invitation letters to the participants via e-mail to avoid any

sense of coercion.

   Methods for establishing a researcher-participant working relationship. The

researcher-participant relationship was maintained by positive relationships with the

participants who happened to be my coworkers since I was a 9th-grade English teacher in

the school under study. The relationship was further established once I chose a

comfortable and familiar setting to conduct participant interviews. Moustakas (1994)

stated that the time of the study is a time to prepare for new knowledge, to get rid of any

prejudices and biases, and to consider the new information again and again as if you see

it for the first time. Therefore, bracketing despite familiarity with the participants and the

setting helped minimize bias, and contributed to data analysis. In a further effort to

reduce bias, I purposefully did not include participants from my 9th-grade department.

   I requested written informed consent from participants to participate in the study

by e-mailing the consent forms to the specific teachers and having them fill out the

information with the signature and returning them to me upon completion via e-mail. I

also provided them information about the reasoning behind the interview, how long it

would take for the interview, and the time when results will be available from the interviews and observations.

      Measures for ethical protection of participants. To guarantee that all participants received ethical protection, sound measures were taken to make certain that the rights of those participating in this study were safeguarded. Before beginning to recruit participants, I received the permission of the IRB (0415150058352). As a doctoral student at Walden University, I was required to participate and pass the National Institute of Health (NIH) Human Subject Protection Training. The approval and request to begin this study were forwarded to the superintendent of the school district and the principal of the high school under study. I presented the focus of this study and the methodology to the superintendent of the school district through an application I filled out to request approval of the research. However, I also met with the principal of the school under study and thoroughly explained the methodology and the focus of the research. Once permission was granted from the administrators, I asked the teachers to participate in this study. I provided all participants a letter of consent clarifying the research plan and procedures of the study. The letter thanked the participants for being part of a research study that would inform improvements in the life of ELLs' education journey. The letter primed the participants about the importance of confidentiality as well as the timeline and the duration of the interviews and observations. I informed them that they had the right to leave the study any time they felt uncomfortable or for any reason. The participants received the opportunity to ask questions about any component of the study or any part of the study that seemed unclear. I asked the participants to respond to the e-mails by saying

agree or disagree to participate. After receiving the responses from each participant, I secured confidentiality by ascribing a number to the individual participants. The collection of the data did not interfere with the normal instructional activities of the participants and their daily routine. Data collection, documents, transcripts, recordings, and notes relating to the study were kept confidential by being coded in order not to identify the participants and were stored in a locked cabinet. Research data were stored in password-protected computer files.

The purpose of this process was to make the participants aware of the possible risks of their participation in the study, the essential goal of the study, and how privacy would be preserved. Furthermore, I addressed terms of confidentiality by ensuring that the participant reports would not be shared with anyone to protect the participant identity (Lodico et al., 2010). Likewise, I explained the procedures of the interview, provided my contact information, and allowed the interviewees to clarify any doubts about the interview

Data Collection

Interviews and direct observation were the major sources of data collection for this qualitative instrumental case study. Merriam (2009) referred to this type of data collection as data production. Merriam also stated that in qualitative research, data are collected through people's experiences, feelings, behavior, and perceptions. This case study provided an opportunity to interview and observe teachers and understand their perceptions of effective vocabulary strategies that they believed could make a difference in ELLs' achievement. The purposeful selection of the participants and the school

provided a better understanding of how some vocabulary instructional strategies may work better than others to enhance ELLs reading comprehension.

Data were collected from face-to-face interviews and observations. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) defined the interviews as semi structured and an integral part of the case study. The interview questions were semi structured questions, which contained scripted questions as well as opportunities for the teachers, the administrator, and the ESOL specialist to elaborate on their answers. The questions were open-ended to encourage the participants to share their opinions (see Creswell, 2009). The questions focused mainly on a description of the teachers' daily vocabulary instruction that happened in their classroom. All the questions were systematically planned to answer the research questions. A total of seven interviews were conducted involving five high school English mainstream teachers, one ESOL compliance specialist, and one administrator in the high school under study. The interview questions were tailored to each participant role with the ELLs. Shared, or incompatible, perceptions from the participants were collected. These interviews lasted for approximately 30 minutes and were electronically recorded by the use of a phone, with participant permission, for future evaluation and analysis. The interviews took place in the participants' main work location. I attached an interview guide as Appendix C.

Systematic and careful examination of the different methods of teaching vocabulary used to teach ELLs was accomplished through observations. Five observations of selected high school classrooms were conducted over the course of 6

weeks. The observations provided objective information that could be contrasted or compared with the interview data. The observations lasted for about 45 minutes.

I developed an observational protocol (Appendix B) for the collection of data (see Lodico et al., 2010). For example, I used a recording sheet to organize the details about what took place in the setting. This observational tool allowed me to use a recording sheet that had the space for the date and the time of the observation, the setting, the participants' behavior, conversations, activities, comments, and direct quotes as well as some space for the observer's reflections. I also recorded field notes that included a description of my feelings and thoughts about what I was observing. Records from the observations included key features such as an explanation of the physical setting, individual, group activities, group interactions within the classroom; the participant verbal and nonverbal communication; and my behavior because I was part of the setting (see Goetz & LeCompte, 1994).

Role of the Researcher

I was about to start my third year of teaching at the school under study, and I had worked in the same district for 13 years before conducting my research. Before the district decided to mainstream ELLs, I taught ESL ninth grade through 12th grade for 5 years, and I then taught in a middle school for 7 years before I moved to the study school. My relationships with the participants could be described as positive and trusting, facts which enabled the participants to be comfortable, open, and honest with me about their perceptions. I had no direct administrative oversight over the participants, and the participants indicated that they experienced no coercion during interviews. I conducted

individual interviews and observations, and I recorded the data from both the interviews

and the observations as a passive observer and not being involved with the reading

lesson. I had to be careful not to carry forward any predispositions during the study. I had

to be aware of my verbal and nonverbal behavior. My role in the research was a learner

as I reflected on all the aspects of the research procedures and findings. This was the

reason why I excluded the grade level that I teach in my school from this research.

Data Analysis Procedures

Manual content analysis was adopted as an analysis method for the interview and

observations transcripts. Qualitative instrumental case study analysis best answered the

research questions. Merriam (2009) explained that both collection and analysis of data in

qualitative research should be used simultaneously, but the incorporation of data analysis

with other tasks differentiates the qualitative research from the traditional research.

Merriam added that data analysis is the method with which to make sense of data. Glesne

(2011) reported that a case study "tends to involve in-depth and other longitudinal

examination with data gathered through participation, in depth interviewing, document

collection and analysis" (p. 22). To better identify the most effective instructional

vocabulary pedagogies that may improve reading achievement for ELLs in high school, it

is essential to examine a variety of data.

A few of Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) beneficial suggestions for making sense of

data analysis are to narrow the study, decide what type of study one wants to complete,

develop critical and detailed questions, and write personal memos about the findings to

address the research question. Data analysis and data collection for this study happened

simultaneously, and data analysis occurred after all interviews, classroom observations, and all transcribing had been accomplished. Merriam (2009) posited that the simultaneous data collection and analysis is acclaimed by qualitative researchers to rationalize data collection and analysis.

The analysis began with data coding to help in the search for patterns, in equating similar results, and in generating explanations (Gibbs, 2007). To analyze data, I used category construction to identify which vocabulary instructional pedagogies were most likely to improve high school ELLs' reading proficiency. I used coding to set apart the most valuable data that helped address the research questions. I also used coding schemes to keep my focus on the specific research questions and not deviate from that. Coding was pivotal for data analysis because it provided the researcher an interpretation of the type of data he or she was essentially analyzing (Gibbs, 2007). To code the data, I used symbols, instrumental words and category names to mark segments of data. I assigned symbols and categories until all the data were segmented. I assigned each important code a different page and page number as suggested by Glesne (2011). Then, I categorized the codes into major themes. By organizing the data this way, I analyzed the relationships among the coded data and began to arrange the different strategies and the different influences they may have on students. I began to analyze patterns in attitudes, consequences, and causes.

Next, I began by making folders with different categories such as interview questions category, observations category, teacher category, and grade category. Dey (1999) theorized that "with categories, we impute meanings, with coding, we compute

them" (p. 95). As the analysis progressed, I assembled codes into categories and themes. During this process, emergent codes, categories, and themes were organized through the coding model system (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014), that identified and indicated consistency in the categories and themes, which suggested the data analysis reached saturation. The use of category files helped me keep track of useful information and ideas. One of those files was used specifically to record how I interacted as a researcher with the information collected from the participants and my interpretation of the information. By keeping track of my thoughts, feelings, and understanding, I was able to separate those from the participants' thoughts and any discrepant cases. Glesne (2011) confirmed that the use of analytic files helps organize the researcher's and the participants' thoughts. The consistency of themes and patterns was displayed on a matrix, which serves as a visual summary for review and data analysis.

Procedures for Dealing with Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases are data that appear to contradict emerging themes in a qualitative researcher's analysis of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). When discrepant data occur, it may be because the researcher has overlooked information, or it may show that there is a necessity for further research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). If discrepant cases arise, further analysis of the cases will be necessary, such as a reevaluation of the questions that produced the discrepancy. When a researcher actively seeks discrepant data, it is more likely that saturation will be achieved, and the researcher may increase or modify their understanding of the phenomenon under review (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I looked for discrepant data in my findings, but I found no discrepant cases.

Evidence of Data Quality, Accuracy, and Credibility

Merriam (2009) stated that to ensure validity and reliability, a researcher must do the best to address and minimize ethical issues. To check the accuracy of my research, I utilized various validation procedures to make sure that the interpretations characterize the participants' real situations (see Schwandt, 1997). Because the qualitative research is socially constructed, the paradigm shifted to the participants' involvement in examining if the accounts were accurate (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Some of the different ways I assessed the accuracy, validity, and reliability was through member checking, taking the information collected back to the participants and asking for their confirmation about its accuracy (see Creswell & Miller, 2000). I also used triangulation, the use of multiple methods to study one research question (see Schutt, 2015). I sorted the data and collected evidence using different sources such as interviews and observations.

Data Analysis Results

A problem exists at a high school in a school district in Florida where ELLs were performing below the reading proficiency level as assessed by the nationally standardized mandated-tests. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies was affecting the reading comprehension of high school ELLs.

Data collection for this study took place through one-on-one semi structured interviews and classroom observations. Using an interview guide, I explored the perspectives of five teachers, one single principal, and one single ESOL compliance Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each. Once the interviews were over, I

observed the five teachers in their classrooms and recorded data on an observation

protocol form. I then coded the data collected from participant interviews and classroom

observations and analyzed the data using thematic analysis.

The data were used to determine the teachers' perceptions and experiences

teaching vocabulary to ELLs in high school as well as possible improvements to promote

positive social change. The results from the data analysis were in narrative form. The data

from the interviews and the classroom observations completed the answers to the

research questions with the themes presented below.

The research questions were designed to be answered through data gathered

during semi structured one-on-one interviews and classroom observations of reading

instruction. Through the analysis of interview data, themes emerged to address the

research questions regarding vocabulary instruction as a tool to improve reading

proficiency of the ELLs, teachers' use of effective vocabulary strategies that affect ELLs'

reading comprehension, and teachers' various methods that support vocabulary

instruction to ELLs.

Seven themes emerged from the data to answer the research questions. The seven

themes were the following: (a) vocabulary is the core of comprehension, (b) use

strategies to focus on vocabulary and comprehension, (c) recognize the struggles of

ELLs, (d) recognize the differences between ELLs and non-ELLs, (e) ELL teacher must

have support and preparedness, (f) support received outside the classroom is essential,

and (g) there must be a continuous effort to address ELLs' reading proficiency needs. A

detailed description of the themes is in Table 1.

Table 1

Overview of Emergent Themes

Themes	Codes
Theme 1: Vocabulary is the core of comprehension	Code 1: Focus on vocabulary development Code 2: Difficulty in comprehension and meaning breakdown

Theme 2: Using strategies to focus on vocabulary and comprehension
   Sub-theme 1: Use of visual representation
   Sub-theme 2: Morphology instruction using root words
   Sub-theme 3: Incorporating play
   Sub-theme 4: Cooperative learning
	Code 3: The dictionary is not recommended
	Code 4: Different Vocabulary strategies

Theme 3: Recognizing the struggles of ELLs	Code 5: challenges with attendance, lack of interest, number of students in the classroom. Code 6: Learning a new language
Theme 4: Recognizing the differences between ELLs and non-ELLs	Code 7: Struggle with English Code 8: Different way of learning Code 9: A non-ELL student uses higher vocabulary
Theme 5: Teacher support and preparedness	Code 10: ESL certification Code 11: ESL classes Code 12: ESL for Linguistic Learners
Theme 6: Support received inside and outside the classroom	Code 13: Support in the classroom Code 14: Support from home Code 15: Support at school Code 16: Solicit support from teachers Code 17: ELL support services Code 18: Interventions in ESL class Code 19: Additional support in the classroom
Theme 7: Continuous effort to address ELLs' reading proficiency needs	Code 20: Teacher certification. Code 21: Create a vocabulary program. Code 22: Update material

The themes mentioned above played an important role in the teacher's perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies was affecting the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. The findings are organized according to themes and presented according to the research question the theme answered. The findings contain narratives, excerpts from the interview data, and evidence from the classroom observations.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked the following: How do ELL teachers perceive vocabulary instruction as a way to improve the reading proficiency of ELLs? The interview protocol used in the study involved questions intended to provide participants with the opportunity to express their opinions regarding vocabulary instructional strategies and their impact on reading proficiency. During the interviews, I had conversations with the participants about their perspectives on vocabulary instruction when teaching ELLs, asked questions for more explanation, and recognized the themes that emerged from their answers. I looked for common concepts among the identified codes and grouped the codes into themes. One major theme emerged to answer RQ1was Theme 1: vocabulary is the core of comprehension.

Theme 1 reflects the fact that reading is at the core of comprehension. One of the explanations that leads to the comprehension breakdown is word recognition. When ELLs encounter difficult words, they also encounter difficulties in making meaning of the text. Each teacher responded with a different strategy used to teach vocabulary to their students. Teachers used different strategies to teach vocabulary ELLs. Although teachers

were expected to differ in their lesson delivery and practice, not all students' instructors taught in the same manner, a difference which created gaps in learning among ELLs and their ability to grasp vocabulary. Therefore, the major finding was the relationship between reading comprehension and the mastery of vocabulary. P3 and P5 both agreed on the validity of the relationship concept. P3 confirmed,

It is essential for them to understand the vocabulary for them to understand what they are reading. If they do not know the vocabulary, they get lost, and they misinterpret their reading, so they have to understand the vocabulary to comprehend what they are reading. As they comprehend what they are reading, their reading level goes up.

Simlarly, P5 reported,

Oh, there is definitely a correlation between learning vocabulary and reading proficiency. If they do not know what the word is if they cannot pronounce the word, or they do not know what it means, then they are not going to understand what they are reading, and so we have to start at the beginning with going through ... Even starting with the elements of literature and going over what is an onomatopoeia or alliteration, so they know that stuff and work up through, and it is just scaffolding throughout the entire school year.

The findings from this interview showed that vocabulary is a key component of the reading proficiency. Without having a grasp of strong reading background, the ELLs will find the text more complex and difficult to comprehend. Not having knowledge of vocabulary creates a break down in the meaning and so students will not have a chance to

comprehend any reading material. There is a correlation between vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked the following: What are the effective vocabulary strategies that affect ELLs' reading comprehension? Individual semi structured interviews were used to pose questions to participants, which were intended to elicit responses to help me understand effective vocabulary strategies that affect ELLs' reading comprehension. In order to provide optimal instruction plans, I asked participants to describe how they tried to differentiate between ELLs and to provide an example from their classroom instruction. By engaging participants in the interview process, I was able to have conversations with the participants about the effective vocabulary strategies that affect ELLs' reading comprehension. From the results of this question emerged three major themes: using strategies to focus on vocabulary and comprehension, recognizing the struggles of ELLs, and recognizing the differences between ELLs and non-ELLs. Theme 2: Using strategies to focus on vocabulary and comprehension.

The second theme that emerged was the importance of using strategies to focus on vocabulary and comprehension. Analysis of the interview and observation data also developed four subthemes under this theme. The sub-themes were the following: (a) use of visual representation, (b) morphology instruction using root words, (c) incorporating play, and (d) cooperative learning.

Most of the teachers noted that all strategies could be useful to some degree. All students are different, so what works for some students might not work for other students.

P6 shared vocabulary strategies, interventions, and tools that may be useful to ELLs in general and specific to teaching vocabulary. Some of the strategies are common practice with teaching vocabulary to ELLs and non-ELLs. P6 shared,

> What we do is we teach the students how to use context clues, which shows them how to read the text around the word to determine the meaning of the unknown word. A few other interventions are to reread the sentence, and the tools they can use are the vocabulary in the back of their textbook and their ESL dictionary.

Subtheme 1: Use of visual representation. Based on current research, graphic organizers are extremely important learning tools because they serve as visual representations that help visually showcase the concept. Graphic organizers are visual tools that convey information in different forms. For example, one of the participants in the first setting raved about the use of foldables and how this graphic organizer helped students see the text structure when reading and motivated the students to become active learners.

In the first setting, an 11th-grade classroom consisting of seven males and 10 females, the students read a play and performed different roles depending on the characters in the play. The students created foldables for 15 vocabulary terms from the first act of the play. The teacher then assessed students on the vocabulary words using context clues. On the second day, students recieved homework assignments where they were assigned a vocabulary word and had to determine the definition at home. The teacher stamped their homework every day for completion. On the third day, the teacher shared a word out loud, and the students shared their opinion of the word. The teacher

corrected their pronunciation and used an analogy to help them better understand the word. On the fourth day, the students finished reading Act 1 of the play *Crucible*, and began answering questions on a packet, where vocabulary words were embedded in the questions; students took a test the next day. On the fifth day, the teacher assigned 10 more vocabulary words from Act 2 of the play, and the students added those to their foldables. Students took turns reading different parts of Act 3. The students and the teacher then discussed what they were reading. The students were then asked to choose a scene from the play and rewrite it from a modern perspective. The students then led a class discussion after which the teacher gave the students 14 comprehensive questions to answer.

The observation suggests that the teacher's guidance in this learning is so essential. Chunking and scaffolding the information from one day to another help students retain the information. By scaffolding, the ELL teacher discovered appropriate ways to tap the students' cultural and personal backgrounds.

Regarding vocabulary, P7 shared a strategy that is also common while teaching vocabulary to any students by drawing a picture or having the vocabulary word translated into the student's language to provide ease of understanding. P7 stated,

An intervention that really works well for the students who I work with is, I actually have them draw a picture of the vocabulary word after I explain it to them for the first time. Also, if I have a student in a classroom that happens to speak that language explain the vocabulary word to them using their language, which helps them understand it in the new English language

However, P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 agreed to discontinue the use of the dictionary. There are some challenges regarding using the dictionary as a vocabulary strategy with ELLs. Some of the definitions may be harder and more abstract than the word to be defined. In fact, not having a context for the definition may be even more confusing because words have multiple meanings. Therefore, ELLs may feel intimated by the dictionary and may give up on looking up words. They may resort into skipping the word instead. P3 explained,

> The "Here is a word; look it up in a dictionary" does not work because if they do not understand the dictionary meanings, it means nothing to them. They have to be able to apply it, so that does not work. When they do it on a test, like a matching just the word to the definition from the dictionary, that is just testing their memorization skills. That is not testing their comprehension of vocabulary.

In agreement, P4 reported the following:

> One of the strategies that I would not use or discontinue would be the use of a dictionary. I do not think it is beneficial for them to just give them a dictionary and say, Hey, here. Just look at the word and try to look for the definition. First of all, most of our ELLs they do not know how to use a dictionary, so they get all frustrated because once they find a definition, it leads to another, perhaps to find another word, so I would definitely discontinue such strategy.

Some participants believed that most vocabulary strategies are essential for reading proficiency and reading comprehension. P1 reported, "I do not think anything necessarily should be discontinued strategy-wise because it could help somebody. Tools-

wise, I do not think we should take anything out; I think improving on it, including more, might work." P2 agreed and reported, "Discontinued. None, because they all have some kind of merit. They all can be used to some degree." P5 reported, "I cannot think of anything that I would discontinue. I just think it is constantly evolving, constantly changing, and modifying."

The findings brought to light that each teacher used a different method ranging from games like scavenger hunts, foldables, and independent work such as journals. One teacher highlighted the combined use of direct and indirect techniques such as halting mid story and asking for definitions and applications as well as using and labeling visuals for emphasis. Despite the variety of the strategies used to teach vocabulary, there was a consensus and similarities among all teachers about the strong association between vocabulary level and reading proficiency. The majority of the teachers prompted the students to familiarize themselves with vocabulary words before reading, steps which increased their understanding of the content and their ability to pronounce the word in context. Most of the teachers explained all strategies could be used because all students are different in their way of learning. In fact, their proposal of using different strategies proved that there is no consistency in what the most effective strategy should be to affect ELLs' learning and reading comprehension.

Some of the recurrent patterns were that the participants expressed an inclination towards the use of visuals to teach ELLs vocabulary words. They emphasized adding additional visuals to teaching vocabulary by incorporating online games and group activities to enhance the students' ability to build a repertoire of words. They claimed that

a visual of the word and writing it down could give a chance for ELLs to familiarize themselves with the word. P4 mentioned the use of additional visuals would be a successful strategy that can be more effective in assisting ELLs with vocabulary acquisition. P4 reported,

I would recommend using visuals and, like I mentioned before, online games and group activities when it comes to vocabulary, teaching vocabulary, perhaps writing them down in like cardboards. Once they write the word, they get more familiar with it. Having posters, having sort of like a set of word visually in the classroom.

Lastly, P5 stated encouraging non-context vocabulary would be useful. The participant reported the following: "Pushing non-context vocabulary for our ELL's. They definitely need the non-context vocabulary." In some situations, words in context do not support the meaning of the word.

Subtheme 2: Morphology instruction using root words. The second theme was morphology instruction using root words. For ELL, a regular vocabulary classroom instruction is not enough. Teaching word roots, which are the words that derive from other languages and are the origin of many English words, is essential to their language development. Most English words come from Latin or Greek origins, so for the struggling readers, it is important to learn about the root words. Research shows that students who learn how to decipher complex academic words and their morphemes have an advantage in accelerating in academic vocabulary learning (Crosson & Moore, 2017).

In the following setting, the teacher focused on teaching root words to drive the vocabulary learning with the students.

This second setting was also an 11th grade classroom consisting of 11 girls and 10 boys (11 Hispanic and two Asian). On the first day of the observation, the students participated in an activity called Down to the Root where the students chose the word that best completed the root word. On the second day, the teacher went over the root word and explained it. The teacher then gave the students an example with the root word and explained it again. Every week, the students had a quiz after learning four root words and four vocabulary words with specific roots that the teacher taught. Here, the students had to match the root to the correct definition. On the third day, the students took a quiz that consisted of writing the correct word that corresponded to four different pictures. The teacher went over the quiz and students were given positive reinforcement by the teacher for doing well. On the fourth day, the teacher read a passage about zebras to the students and asked the students to specify what type of reading it was (e.g., nonfiction). On the fifth day, the main activity was a review by matching the words to the roots. The theme of teaching root words is an example of how participants use different vocabulary strategies to enhance the ELL's reading proficiency. In many cases, the teachers used only one strategy for everyone if they believe it is effective. The one-size-fits-all approach may be suitable for certain students, but may not be effective with other students.

Subtheme 3: Incorporating play. The third theme was incorporating play. Some teachers used roleplay, while others used games to provide the ELLs with a comfortable

and fun way to learn language. Role playing while learning English can boost the students' moral and help them retain what they learn. While following the method of role playing, students have to perform some particular acts verbally, physically, or through sharing something (Altun, 2015). Through role playing, students may master acquire and master vocabulary words.

In the third setting, a 10th grade classroom consisting of 15 boys and 10 girls, the teacher showed students on the first day how to write a prosecution, an opening, and a closing statement. There was a class debate assignment provided and explained by the teacher. The teacher provided a rubric, gave details about the different criteria, and assigned a presentation. The teacher passed around sticky notes and asked everyone to write down the name of a character. She collected all the sticky notes and put them all in a hat for a drawing. She then passed the hat around, and each student picked one sticky note.

This theme focused more on how the teacher guided the students throughout every activity on making sure that ELLs are not lost, especially that this mainstream classroom where both ELLs and non-ELLs are learning in this environment and following the same lesson. The teachers added asked the students to perform the role of characters whose name appears on the sticky note to make sure that students were showing their knowledge of they know about the story. Having the students work with another student can be beneficial for students who may be lost.

At the end of Day 1, the teacher passed around information on how to write a witness statement and a log where students could write down the name of the character

and the character's name. Lastly, the teacher explained the role and the meaning of a witness, and how to write the witness statement. On the second day, the students worked on journal writing, play writing, and soliloquy. The teacher passed around projects and students worked in groups to create project ideas for *The Crucible*. The students made posters of the accused and hung them around the classroom. The students then picked a scene to act out. On the third, fourth, and fifth day, the students came dressed up and acted out their scenes. The students held a mock court consisting of lawyers, judges, and a jury.

This example of the use of role playing accompanied by group work in the classroom emphasized the conceptual framework of social development. A student can be proactive and engaged or, on the other hand, passive and alienated depending on the environment that is created by the teacher. The more the student is engaged, the more natural and spontaneous learning of words will happen.

Learning vocabulary through games is a valuable and an effective tool that should apply to vocabulary instruction. The use of games may be interesting and fun for students, especially when learning new words. By interacting with a partner and the rest of the class, the students will learn in a social way that may enhance the readiness of the learning.

In the sixth setting, a 12th grade classroom consisting of 17 boys and seven girls, the objective of the class for the first day was to introduce and learn the term *irony*. The teacher read a scenario involving two students' study habits and discussed with the students why the outcome was ironic. The teacher introduced definitions and examples of

three different types of irony and had the students match three examples with each type of irony. To modify the vocabulary instruction for this group of students, the teachers used a game for ELLs to remember the words taught by the teacher. Therefore, to move the students from one stage of learning to another, the teacher decided to use stems to allow students to explain their thinking.

On the second day, the teacher attempted to refresh the students' memories of the vocabulary words, so the students read situation cards and discussed the types of irony. Students used sentence stems again to explain their thinking. Students were able to share if they were able to agree or disagree with each classification using sentence stems. With this strategy, the students verified if they absorbed the information. Thus, they recorded their answers on the worksheet given to each group. Students shared their irony type for each situation card and discussed with the whole class as why they chose that type of irony for that card. This way the students were able to ensure that their learning was solid. Then the teacher challenged the students with the next stage of learning. Each student selected a card and explained in writing how that card illustrated a particular type of irony. They also wrote about a time they experienced that type of irony in their life. The students were assessed on their performance during the matching activities, and the teacher collected student writings. As a homework assignment, students were instructed to look for examples of irony outside the classroom. On the third day, the teacher introduced an excerpt from Julius Caesar's speech. Students looked at the vocabulary word definitions using a dictionary as they worked with a partner. The students took turns reading the passage, discussed, and analyzed the speech. On the fourth day, the students

completed a graphic organizer for types of irony identified in a reading. Lastly, on the fifth day, pairs of students wrote a speech and incorporated the vocabulary words learned and the three types of irony they learned. The theme reinforced a scaffolding strategy often used to reinforce learning.

Subtheme 4: Cooperative learning. Group work is a classroom strategy that may minimize frustration during learning of a new language. The idea that working in a comfortable group with friends may yield more positive results than would accomplishing a new task independently. There are several reasons why cooperative learning works as well as it does. Cooperative learning is naturally an active method that promotes communication, a learning community within the classroom, and a shared goal as students learn to work in a group.

In the fifth setting, an ESOL classroom consisting of six boys and three girls, the students worked on a book report project. They were instructed to write the title of a book, four to five facts they already knew about the topic, along with six new words they learned from the book. The teacher in this setting attempted to use different strategies to reach the ELLs. However, there was no guided instruction on how to use the words. The observation did not cover the initial stage of how they acquired the words.

On the second day, students read an article about Memorial Day and practiced vocabulary words. They completed a word search activity and were asked to circle the words that were difficult. Students worked in pairs and individually to explain and understand the vocabulary words. The teacher was an advocate of working in groups to make meaning of the reading and the vocabulary words. Much can be lost in this process

if the teacher does not offer any guided instruction of the strategies. Lastly, students

watched a video of the air show during a previous Memorial Day.

On the third day, the teacher handed out a list of words from a memorial

celebration on cards. The teacher called a pair of students to come in front of the class,

showed one student the card, and let the pair of students draw on the blackboard what

was on the card. The other student was facing the class without looking at the board.

Once the student finished drawing, the other student guessed what the drawing was. The

rest of the class responded by stating yes or no accordingly. On the fourth day, the

teacher assigned vocabulary words to the students. The students wrote three paragraphs

about the memorial holiday and used words from the lesson before. The students gathered

in groups and peer edited their paragraphs. Lastly, on the fifth day, the students shared

what they wrote with the rest of their class. They were also asked to read an article about

Memorial Day and discuss it in groups. The teacher incorporated some vocabulary

strategies to help ELLs understand the material at hand. However, no explicit or direct

instruction was offered although the teacher attempted to modify the lesson delivery to

meet the needs of ELLs.

Theme 3: Recognizing the struggles of ELLs

The third theme focused on barriers. Some of the participants expressed a struggle

to teach ELLs because the students lack motivation and interest in the language. Another

struggle was the students' attendance. If the students are not there, then learning will be

missing. It is tough to understand whether or not some methods to remediate were more

effective than the rest of the methods. Some strategies may be; however, some might not

be as effective. The limited time for direct instruction could be an issue because there is

not enough time during the day to develop better ways to give ELLs the opportunity to

interact with words in ways that strengthen understanding of word meaning inside or

outside of the school.

Further, some students do not have the support needed at home for homework

completion. The teachers were also asked to share how they overcame the obstacle. All

the teachers agreed that the barrier lies with the students themselves. They listed the

barriers as student attendance, student lack of interest, student academics, and student

homework incompletion. Some other barriers were classroom structure and the teacher's

inability to give individualized attention due to the number of students within one

classroom. Teachers discussed barriers that have come in the way during vocabulary

instruction and how they have attempted to address these barriers.

The idea of having students work and learn in small groups or large groups

depended on the mix of the students. Some students might have been ahead than others in

their acquisition of the words, so putting them together might not have been an effective

strategy. P1 reported,

> I cannot use the same strategy for the entire class; sometimes I have to break it up
>
> into groups, like I was saying before, to smaller groups. I still have them in
>
> groups, I have them in larger groups, but sometimes that does not quite work
>
> because if I have to pair somebody who has been improving a little more with
>
> somebody who has not, that does not actually always work, sometimes I have to
>
> put somebody that is closer to each other, maybe. A majority yes because they

have to start from scratch a lot of times; they do not understand the English

language on where to put their punctuation, how to exercise certain words, the

phonetics, phonology kind of stuff.

In other examples, the classrooms were filled, leaving fewer chances to one-on-

one learning. P3 observed that it is difficult to find the time to give more attention to

ELLs and their needs. Trying to focus on one group led to classroom disruptions.

Nevertheless, P3 encouraged the students to work in groups, and in most situations, the

ELLs would work in their group. P3 stated,

> The sheer number of students in the classroom, you cannot focus in on the ELLs
>
> who needed that extra vocabulary help. I could not give them the time that I
>
> wanted to because I have to attend to the other students who, if you left them
>
> alone too much, will become a classroom disruption. That was the problem. The
>
> way that I overcame some of those barriers was I would have them working in
>
> groups. Many times, the ELLs will choose to work with themselves in their own
>
> groups, so I would go to that group, and I would make sure that I would ask them
>
> about those certain vocabulary words that they may not know.

Another challenge that P2 encountered in the classroom was the inconsistency

between a student's language mastery and their classifications. P2 observed that some

students received a classification as ELLs, but they sat in a mainstream classroom, and

they had no idea what the teacher was teaching. Hence, completing one assignment

would be very difficult for them to do. P2 confirmed,

For example, I have one girl, she is not classified as an ELL, but you can see that

English is not her first language, so her writing, although she is very, very bright,

I will notice in her research papers or essays ... She will write like she speaks, and

so it is not necessarily broken English, but you can tell that it is not always proper

English. I think those are challenges. Then, of course, the real ELLs that are

classified that way that I have had, some have had major challenges just with

language in general where they really do not understand if I am speaking too fast,

so they have challenges as far as understanding the assignments, things like that.

P2 also believed that some students exhibited signs of weakness in the English

language and struggled with their assignments and their learning in the classroom, but

they were not in the ELL program. Hence, the teachers did not know how to

accommodate. Asking the students to translate the words in their native language, to use a

native language dictionary, or simply requesting outside support from the school were

some of the examples that P2 believed might help the students maximize their learning of

vocabulary words, especially when they lacked interest or were absent most of the time.

P2 explained,

Typical things like attendance or lack of interest. Other barriers as far as academic

barriers ... Sometimes there is just that issue if the kid just does not understand the

word, and so in that case, sometimes to overcome it, you have to have them look

it up in their native language, or you have to rely on additional support. Mainly if

they are not understanding the strategy that I am teaching, I will rely more heavily

on perhaps some other strategies, or rely on the heritage dictionary, or resort to the ELL specialist for assistance.

Another challenge that ELL teachers had to deal with was when students did not do their homework. P5 asserted that this problem affected the students' ability to keep up with the learning in the classroom, especially that the participant could not balance moving one group ahead and help the other group catch up at the same time. P5 believed that due to the time constraint in the classroom, further homework is necessary. P5 mentioned,

Getting my kids to do homework that is my biggest issue is getting them to actually do work outside of the classroom. I have noticed in my 11 years that structure at home, there is not a lot of emphasis on education, and doing your work, and getting the education that you need. Every year, there is more and more students who are not doing their homework and just not doing well in the classroom. It is really hard to fit everything in that we need to do without giving them homework, but they will not do the homework, which means that they are lagging behind in the classroom. I think that correlates very well with the vocabulary.

Some studies have shown that that ELL learners often resort to their first language to transfer some skills to the speech and writing of the second language (Karim & Nassaji, 2013). However, if the students' mastery of their first language is low, they find it hard to transfer skills to the new language. So, because they struggle in the first language, there is a big chance that they will struggle with the second language. P3 and

P4 both commented that ELLs, unlike the rest of the students, struggle with a brand-new language and culture. Some of them struggled with their language, and that made their learning situation worse. P4 elucidated,

> Absolutely. Well, you have to understand that the ELL student's challenges will be a whole lot because they are learning a new language. Even if their first language is Spanish because Spanish is the language that most of ELLs speak, even though they speak Spanish, they might not have the correct reading skills, so that makes it even challenging for them when they start learning that new language.

P3 shared a similar perspective:

> Of course, they have to learn a second language; they have to learn another culture, they have to learn how to transfer their skills from their native language and from their own culture to this culture, new system of writing for many of them, they may not come from a regular ... What is it called: A regular writing. They may have totally, completely different types of writing systems. They may read from, not left to right, but right to left depending on what language they come from.

The barriers listed above explain why teachers need solid strategies that may help them achieve positive results with their students. If students are not motivated to do their homework or show up to school may be the result of their struggle with the language. A more effective way of teaching vocabulary may be to motivate students and empower them to own their learning.

Although the participants shared different strategies, the use of visuals to teach vocabulary was a common theme among the teachers. Other strategies include breaking down the word, using a heritage dictionary, consulting the ELL specialist, and implementing of different strategies for different students. The use of contextual clues is sometimes difficult because ELLs may not make sense of the surrounding words. The teachers determined it was much easier for non-ELLs to understand the vocabulary. Regarding what the teachers would do differently next time, they reported strategies such as group activities including additional use of online activities, direct teaching, visuals, and vocabulary. Some other reports mentioned the usage of smaller groups or implementation of new strategies as acquired from different reading and vocabulary workshops.

Theme 4: Recognizing the differences between ELLs and non-ELLs.

The fourth theme that emerged was about the variances in acquisition between ELL and non-ELLs. Teachers do not have specific textbook material for ELLs. They are asked to differentiate, a notion that is foreign to some of them because they have no training in how to differentiate for all types of students. Teachers discussed whether or not ELLs have different challenges than the non-ELLs. Because some of the ELLs do not know the language, they have more challenges than their counterparts. The results from the NAEP showed that the average vocabulary scores were significantly lower in English for language learners than for non-English language learners (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Moreover, Sibold (2011) reported that ELLs' challenge with

making sense of vocabulary words was the cause of their difficulty with text comprehension.

P1 shared that vocabulary acquisition was different between ELLs and non-ELLs. When the classroom has a mixed level of abilities, the use of different strategies was warranted. However, the challenge remained the same because the participant was not sure after all if the ELLs grasped the meaning of what they were taught or not. Specifically, P1 reported,

I have such a broad level of students who are so different; sometimes it is hard to answer that question this way. I have the complete opposites in my classes; I have some who barely understand English at all so breaking down the word is sometimes as far as we get, and then I have students who like my regular students understand certain words, but they cannot comprehend the sentence for some reason. If I am able to break down that word my students understand it better, so my regular students actually do not understand certain words in sentences because they just assume what definitions are, so I think they just run through a sentence, but I do not know. That is a hard question for me to answer.

P4 shared the same perspective and stated,

Absolutely since you have to understand that ELLs they are learning a new language. When it comes to reading, I have found that … so you have asked me if ELLs have different reading skills from the non-ELL students. Definitely. You have to understand that ELL students, their first language is English, so absolutely they have more advantage over the non-ELL students since their first language is

reading, I am sorry, is English, so it will be a lot easier for them to read in their first language, which is English, versus the non-ELL students.

P4 and P6 discussed how vocabulary acquisition differs among ELL students and non-ELL students. P4 explained,

Once again, for non-ELL students, even though teachers might use visuals with them, it is a lot easier for them to grasp, to perhaps learn a new word by just looking at the definition in the dictionary, but for ELL students they require more. They require visuals; they require perhaps even their prior knowledge, perhaps the use of cognates, etc.

P5 added a new perspective from the non-ELL point of view,

I think it is easier for my non-ELL because they grew up learning the English language and they know the vocabulary, they know the parts of speech, they know sentence structure where it is different with my ELL Hispanic students with sentence structure and how different words mean different things depending on the context of the sentence, or how it is pronounced differently based on the context of the sentence. It is very hard for ELL's to understand even the simplest text compared to my non-ELLs.

P6 added more insight into the differences,

The vocabulary acquisition differs between the ELL students and the non-ELL students because, for a non-ELL student, the student is able to use vocabulary much higher than their grade level. They can expand their answer, they can analyze the text, they can use context clues, and they can make the answer so

much more enriched, whereas a student who is an ELL student is trying to figure

out what the text is saying, so they might not even be able to answer it, because

they do not understand the vocabulary at all.

P5 believed that ELL students struggled with English because it is a difficult

language that contains words that do not translate into the Spanish language, especially

for the Spanish-speaking students. Therefore, breaking down words and making sense of

them is extremely difficult. P5 mentioned,

I think they are at a disadvantage. I think it is more of their challenges, which is

question number four. I think they have more challenges because English is such

a hard language to learn and with it being their second language, they have issues

with vocabulary, and we have words that do not translate into their language. We

have a high Hispanic population, and there are numerous words that do not

translate, and it is hard for them to understand what the words are and to explain

something to them, to break it down, it is very hard. I think there are more

challenges then strengths with my ELLs.

However, P3 had a different experience with ELLs and established that ELLs

learn faster because they pay more attention and know the importance of learning

vocabulary more than the non-ELLs. P3 stated,

I find that non-ELL students will learn more vocabulary than ELL students. I

think it is because they are paying more attention and they realize how important

it is to learn that vocabulary than the non-ELL students who are checked out and

do not care sometimes ... or think they know when they really do not know. That

is the difference.

Two participants differed in their views about vocabulary acquisition in particular

and language acquisition in general for ELLs and non-ELLs. P2 reported not to have

noticed a discrepancy in learning amongst ELLs and non-ELLs, and P3 reported that

ELLs learn faster than the non-ELLs. Nonetheless, the rest of the participants confirmed

there is a difference and provided explanations. For example, ELLs are not familiar with

the English language; the students' background knowledge affects their learning, and

non-ELLs have no challenge because their first language is English. So, the consensus

was that ELLs students were at a disadvantage compared to their English counterparts.

ELLs had different challenges than the non-ELLs. Some of the explanations given were

ELLs did not understand the English language and its structure, and some students had

challenges writing in English properly.

Additionally, at times the ELLs do not make sense of the assignments because

they do not understand what the teacher is asking them to do. Another example was

learning a new language is a challenge because students find difficulty transferring their

skills from one language to another. Everything is so new to them, especially the writing

procedures. Therefore, a sound strategy that can prove effective is necessary for these

classrooms.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, What are the various methods that support or not

support vocabulary instruction for English language learners? The essential theme

extracted from the interviews was certification courses prepared some of the participants to teach ELLs but not others. Some participants expressed similarities in their complaint about the lack of adequate training to support the ELL learning challenge. Some of the participants expressed the need to have time for collaboration with other teachers. In addition, some of the participants shared that there is no vocabulary program in their school although the notion of vocabulary integration existed; instead, it was up to the individual teacher to implement. From the results of this question emerged three major themes. The themes were the following: ELL teacher support and preparedness, support received outside the classroom, and continuous efforts to address ELLs' reading proficiency needs.

Theme 5: ELL teacher support and preparedness.

The fifth theme that emerged was about teacher support and preparedness. Some of the participants indicated that they were not prepared through their education programs for teaching ELLs. Many participants shared their perspectives about their inadequate training to support the ELLs in their classroom. They also commented that they had insufficient experience with the ELL population. Some of them took some online classes or classes to receive certification in ELL teaching, but they did not get any classroom practices.

As public schools focus on creating high level standards to improve the educational system for all students, it is imperative that they invest on ELL teachers' skills and instructional effectiveness to be capable of teaching some students who are

very diverse culturally, linguistically, and socially. P1, P2, and P3 discussed how they were not fully prepared and trained to teach English language learners. P1 explained,

> I really was not prepared to teach ELLs. I was kind of thrown into a classroom.
> However, coming from a background, not me personally, but living somewhere where I became the minority, and everybody else around me spoke a different language, I kind of understood that, so I kind of try to apply those things, I guess. I have taken four ESL classes online, but they do not actually give me a lot of information, but some of those things I can apply to the classroom, but very few.

P2 mentioned the various requirements teachers need to have to become an official ELL teacher.

> When I was hired it was ... obviously, it was a requirement to get the five courses to become ELL certified. Currently, I am on my ... I just completed my third course, so I have two more to take. There is also support facilitators on campus that help prepare somewhat as well, and that is it. Just the courses provided, but no additional workshops. Just the ELL certification courses.

P3 stated,

> Let's see, I had some certification classes in the county, mostly through experience, my most preparation that I have to teach the English language learners, because my college, I do not remember that they ... No, they did not provide any direct "how do you teach English language learners" in my college. I have done all kinds of workshops for language arts, for ESL, reading, for [FCAT

00:01:21], for essay writing, classroom management, technology, how do you incorporate technology into the classroom, that is pretty much it.

Lastly, P5 said, "I have my ESL certification, so I did take classes for that, plus the ESL test. I have gone to numerous workshops in the last 11 years." P6 discussed how the support was offered to ELL teachers in the classroom:

A good way to support ELL teachers in the classroom is to make sure they are given the support they need in the classroom. They are going to need extra help because their students are not going to understand the material right away because they come from a completely different language as their first language being taught. They need more support, whether it being a support teacher, extra books, textbooks, things like that.

P6 expressed a similar sentiment and described the process in of interacting with ELLs,

I go into the classrooms of two teachers twice a week and make sure the teacher has me there to assist, help, and guide all the students who are in the classroom who need extra help, whether they need an accommodation, directions read in a different way. Sometimes their vocabulary words, they are not sure the English meaning, so I have to make sure they understand the meaning if it is in their language.

P7 described how she was prepared to assist and lead ELLs as well as about the professional development that she attended. The ESL classes that were offered online through the county were the only workshops that prepared P7 to lead the ESL students in the school. P7 did not have any other training besides the ESOL courses. P7 explained,

My first experience in teaching was ... I was kind of thrown into it just because I was bilingual, as I was born in the United States, and then I started taking classes in college issues and bilingual education. Actually, that was the class that helped me understand what it is to be a second language learner. It dealt with the cultural aspects of learning a new language and how sometimes assimilation of a language has to do with assimilation of a culture. Sometimes it is a clash between identities; whom am I? I am this person, this culture, new culture, or do I keep my own identity.

Regarding professional development, P7 noted that the focus is often somewhat limited in scope,

Most of the professional development that has been offered has to do with implementing strategies; vocabulary, reading, writing. Here at Florida, most of them are oriented towards the general language arts programs, very few have been offered for specifically ESOL and that is sometimes a little bit challenging. Why in Puerto Rico? Because they are second language learners, most of the workshops are all for second language acquisition.

Theme 6: Support received inside and outside the classroom.

Providing support for ELLs is important for their growth and success as the participants in the study attested. The support may consist of family, school, and the community at large. To ensure the success of ELLs, everyone in the school community should be committed to one common vision that advocates for ELLs and insists on improving instruction as well as services provided for this subgroup of students

(Stepanek, Raphael, Autio, Deussen, & Thompson, 2010). My interviews with the teachers revealed that they used different strategies to reach all the students in the classroom, but they noticed that the non-ELLs were learning faster than the ELL. This finding means that the teachers did not use intentional and focused strategies for ELLs. Therefore, targeted strategies have to be strategically designed to help ELLs acquire the language and improve the proficiency level required for each grade level. Showing support from both school and home is imperative to the success of ELLs. P6, the principal, discussed how he ensured the ELLs receive enough support from school and home. Specifically, P6 stated,

> You have to make sure that your ELL students are receiving the support from school as well as from home by making sure that the parents are on the same page as the teacher, and also making sure the students are getting the accommodations they need to be receiving in school.

> Regarding parent communication, P6 stated, "I think having a communication log with parents is a good way for you to communicate those academic needs with their parents, as well as having the parents see the grades for them online." Regarding assessing instructional effectiveness, P6 stated,

> You have to make sure all the students who are ELL are getting the support services they need. If they are required to use a dictionary, then there is no teacher who can tell them they cannot use it, and they can even use that for the statewide assessments.

P6 shared programs they have at the school for vocabulary instruction and further explained,

> We have an ESL class on top of having a language arts class. That is a huge support for vocabulary. Also, if they do not have a high enough score on their FSA exam, then they will be placed in an intensive reading class, which helps with vocabulary.

> P6 then discussed the relationship between learning vocabulary and reading proficiency of ELL students over the course of the year as quantified by state assessments, district assessments, or teacher-generated tests. P6 said,

> A huge help this year is making sure the students are learning vocabulary and reading proficiently. The state assessments and the district assessments, you need to be aware of that learned vocabulary, and you have to be reading proficient in order to do well on those tests.

> P6 described how ELL students received enough support from school and home. P6 explained that both parents and teachers should work together to make sure the students receive the support they need not only in school but also at home. Based on the interviews, different participants agreed that an effective way to assure the students received efficient support at school and home was a communication log online, in which the parents could have access to check their child's grades online. The classroom teachers also should be given all the support they require, including a support teacher, extra books, materials, or textbooks.

The support facilitator acted as a teacher in different classrooms to make sure that the students understand the material. The support facilitator also supported the families by keeping the communication door open for any questions about the curriculum, testing, and graduation requirements. The compliance specialist reported experience as an ESOL teacher for about 29 years. The main responsibility was to organize parents' nights because communication between the school staff and ELL parents is essential. The compliance specialist also made sure that teachers were certified.

Theme 7: Continuous effort to address ELLs' reading proficiency needs.

The seventh theme that emerged is recommendations for future plans. Some of the recommendations include enhancing the vocabulary strategies and instruction. The participants advocated for direct instruction instead of whole language instruction. Indeed, whole language instruction has been considered by some researchers as ineffective because this method views the child as the learner but views the teacher as merely a guide (Smith, 1978). This method will not be productive for ELL students who require more attention and focus. So, direct instruction is a better strategy because it provides implicit and explicit language instruction based on the needs of the students; hence, the need of a directed approach that promotes vocabulary and language development (Yahia & Sinatra, 2013). (. The participants also recommended opportunities for regular communication with the ELL students' parents because learning begins in the family. Butler (2014) asserted families are a key element in the social life of the children as well as in their academic motivation and success. Therefore, engaging

parents in their child learning is significant. Also, their collaboration with the school and the teachers may yield important results. P7 reported,

> I suppose I would love to see, in addition to the certification courses, which are outdated, I would recommend that some of the materials be updated, like some of the studies that we are looking at are from 1991 and I always find that to be a little bit. I also feel like some of the strategies that they have taught in the classes are really, really geared for Spanish speaking students, like one of the strategies they use is ... I forget what it is called, but it is when the word sounds the same as it does in English, but it is really for those Spanish languages, or the ones that are similar, so sometimes I feel like it is not just Spanish speaking kids. There is a lot of other kids, and I feel like sometimes those ... I understand that the majority are Spanish speakers, but all the students need to be addressed. Sometimes there needs to be perhaps some additional strategies for kids that are non-Spanish speaking.

P6 shared recommendations he had for future ELL students. P6 stated, "I think ELL students need a little bit more support in the classroom. I think they would benefit from having an elective class that supports the ESL strategies, instead of having two electives that they can choose from." Additionally, P3 recommended removing holistic teaching instruction. P3 stated,

> The way that we were talking about it. I think both direct teaching and indirect teaching have its values. I do not think you can just do the holistic instruction where they say that you just learn it in context. That is not the only way for a

really low ESL/ELL student; you have to do some direct teaching right in the beginning. That should not be taken out completely like some people argue.

Evidence of Quality

Data from interviews and observations were collected during this study to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collection process. The two methods of data collection provided triangulation, a method that was used to increase the validity of findings. According to Anney (2014), triangulation assists the researcher in reducing bias and analyzes the truthfulness of participants' responses. Evidence from the interviews showed that all the participants were aware that effective vocabulary strategies lead to reading comprehension. Similarly, data from classroom observations showed that the study group of teachers used different vocabulary strategies to reach their ELL students.

In addition, I used member checking once the data were collected to allow the participants to review the specific interview transcripts as well as the overall study findings. Member checking is a process used to determine accuracy and to allow the participants access to the final report for confirmation (Creswell, 2012). Thus, I e-mailed each participant a copy of the participants' transcripts and a summary of the study findings. Participants reviewed the findings to confirm the themes that were the basis of those findings. The use of member checking and triangulation helped to ensure the trustworthiness of the results. Furthermore, after I completed the analysis of the findings and discussion, I met with each participant for feedback regarding the accuracy of their quotations. I had a chance to share the findings and collect their reactions regarding the outcome.

Outcomes

During the data collection process of this case study, I applied Vygotsky's (1978) concept of ZPD, which emphasizes what students can learn by themselves and what students can learn with a knowledgeable guide. The problem that this study addressed was a challenge with ELL students performing below the proficiency level assessed by the state-mandated tests in a high school at a school district in Florida. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies was affecting the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. Common themes among participants' interview responses and classroom observation data were recognized. To effectively implement vocabulary strategies into reading instruction, participants need to feel prepared to use vocabulary instructional strategies with ELL students, and they would benefit from professional development that was targeted to the ELL vocabulary strategies to be inclusive of a diverse group of students. Participants desired additional classroom preparation and more time to observe other teachers in their classrooms. If the participants were well-prepared to offer direct instruction with effective vocabulary pedagogies that cater to the needs of the ELL students, the latter would be more likely to develop better reading skills and gain proficiency in reading. Barrio (2017) confirmed that ELLs require an extra push in the learning of the English language. The author suggested that direct instruction in the academic language facilitate the understanding of abstract concepts and different types of vocabulary words. While participants shared constructive perspectives of the benefits of using effective vocabulary instructional strategies specific to the ELL students, they

would be more prepared to apply those strategies if provided with targeted professional development that focused on vocabulary strategies and pedagogies that are inclusive of the ELL students' needs. Samson and Collins (2012) argued that after completing the education courses that teachers take in college to become certified teachers, it should not be taken for granted that the general teachers will acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding to be qualified to work with ELLs on academic language and culture inclusiveness. Additional support and development is needed, especially with the rapid growth in the ELL population in the district under study. It is very crucial that ELL students are offered direct instruction about academic vocabulary to ensure their success academically. Samson and Collins believed that when school districts clarify expectations for teachers, that will result in improved student outcome.

The most recent professional development program that was presented to the teachers was about reading instruction, but it did not cover direct instruction and vocabulary strategies as an integral part of reading proficiency specifically for ELL students. Without an emphasis on direct instruction and vocabulary strategies, ELL teachers will continue to flounder as to how to help increase the ELL students' reading achievement. Participants also wanted to have the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues as a segment of the professional development. Traditionally, high school teachers work independently, and they do not have a chance to design lessons with other teachers as is the case with the elementary teachers. Therefore, they sought more time for cooperative planning and training.

Because of the findings from the study, I created a project that will consist of a 3-day professional development series. The series is designed to support ELL high school teachers in their implementation of effective vocabulary strategies that promote reading proficiency through direct instruction and scaffolding. The findings from this study serve as a vehicle that will drive the development of the project. Additionally, monthly follow-up meetings will be scheduled to provide more support to the teachers and to ensure that the strategies are implemented.

Conclusion

In this case study, I explored high school English teachers' perspectives of vocabulary instructional strategies when teaching ELL students as well as how that impacted reading proficiency. Using a case study design, qualitative data were gathered through interviews and classroom observations to explore the following research questions: How do ELL teachers perceive vocabulary instruction as a way to improve the reading proficiency of the English language learners? What are the effective vocabulary strategies that affect ELLs' reading comprehension? What are the various methods that support or not support vocabulary instruction for English language learners? Five ELL teachers, a principal, and an ESOL specialist formed the sample of participants for this study.

Research Questions 1 to 3 were evaluated using open coding to determine vocabulary pedagogies that promote reading proficiency of ELLs in a high school in an urban school district. Findings from the coding yielded interesting and expected results mainly focused on the fact that ELL students reading proficiency was less than their non-

ELL counterparts due to their lack of understanding of the English vocabulary. ELL students require more instruction, assistance, and ways to understand the vocabulary than non-ELL students. According to Samson and Collins (2012), ELLs need the teachers' undivided attention, essentially because of their influx into the American schools, and more importantly because of their low achievement compared to the rest of the students.

The seven themes that emerged from the interviews were (a) vocabulary and reading proficiency, (b) strategies and interventions, (c) barriers, (d) differences between ELL and non-ELL in language acquisition, (e) teacher support and preparedness, (f) ELL student support, and (g) recommendations for future efforts. Additionally, the classroom observations yielded the following themes: (a) visual representation and morphology instruction, (b) Down to the root strategy, (c) role play, (d) cooperative learning, and (e) use of games. Ultimately, I discovered that each teacher had a different method and perception of teaching. All participants agreed that instruction needs to be more individualized per student, so each student can accomplish the same goals, whether an ELL or non-ELL student. The greatest emphasis was on including more visuals into their teaching strategy. It was determined that the use of online and group activities could potentially be beneficial and should be utilized more often.

The principal responded to the question regarding preparation to assist ELLs in understanding vocabulary words by confirming that the school was generally prepared because workshops. In fact, online classes were taken to help prepare teachers in assisting students who spoke different languages; however, many of the participants were not as prepared as they would like to be in teaching ELL students. Additionally, the participants

confirmed that parents and teachers should work together to make sure a student receives the support they need in school and at home. Lastly, it was determined that teachers should receive all the support they require, including a support teacher, extra books, materials, or textbooks. Ultimately, the findings suggested teachers had their strategy when it comes to teaching ELLs and non-ELLs, but the goal was mutual about the need to offer a scaffolded instruction and direct instruction to the students regardless. Each student deserves every opportunity to learn at the same capacity.

The teachers, the principal, and the specialist were active in creating, and implementing individualized plans for each student. For example, teachers generally expressed the need to include additional direct instruction through visual aids as a teaching strategy. This practice may or may not provide the additional support needed to improve teaching practices, given the lack of research on the topic, although a general consensus on its value was expressed. Teachers did not discuss the type of visual aids that they used or planned to use in the future. So, the strategy to deliver visual aid may need to be ferreted out by teachers and researchers. The issue still remains as to how ELL students can benefit from all the strategies that each teacher used in their classroom.

Section 2 described the methodology and results from the case study for this project. Indeed, this section included the study research design, criteria, and justification for selecting participants, access to participants, data collection, data analysis, and validity and reliability procedures. A detailed narrative that explained the study findings was also in Section 2. I used the findings from the study to create a project to promote positive social change by preparing ELL teachers to use effective vocabulary

instructional strategies to teach ELL students. Improvement in ELL teachers' use of

effective vocabulary instructional strategies when teaching ELL students may increase

reading achievement as well as students' overall ability to reach proficiency in reading,

which will promote positive social change. The description and details of the project are

outlined in Section 3. Section 3 includes a description of the proposed project and the

project's purpose, goal, learning outcomes, target audience, project genre, and fit to the

problem. A scholarly review of the literature about professional developments is also in

this section.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The problem that I addressed in this project study was that an urban high school in Florida was having a problem with low performance on federally mandated reading tests on the part of the growing number of ELLs (see Florida Department of Education, 2016). Consequently, the high school was not meeting the reading achievement levels set forth by the Florida Department of Education. The results from this study revealed that ELL teachers perceived teaching ELL students requires additional instruction, assistance, and ways to understand the vocabulary than non-ELL students. The participants shared their perception of not being well-trained to offer quality education to ELL students and that they require support, more focused vocabulary strategies, and the opportunity to observe other teachers in the classroom. Hutchinson (2013) argued that the effect of the teachers' lack of preparation touches teachers, administrators, and parents. Most importantly, the lack of preparation affects the ELLs who often exhibit a lack of academic progress (Hutchinson, 2013).

There is a disparity in achievement between ELLs and non-ELLs. In the literature review and the findings explained in Section 2, I showed teachers' perception about the use of vocabulary instructional strategies affects the students' reading proficiency and language development. Furthermore, the teachers perceived that direct vocabulary instruction directly affects ELLs' reading achievement. Kieffer and Lesaux (2012) confirmed that offering language learning students a focused vocabulary instruction can close the gaps in learning results between these learners and non-ELL students. The gap

in ELL students' vocabulary competence and literacy development will continue if there is no intentional and focused vocabulary instruction to meet each diverse learner's needs. Marzano (2004) asserted that direct instruction in vocabulary is a critical aspect of literacy development.

In the high school under study, professional development is offered to the reading and English teachers, but there is no emphasis on the effective vocabulary instruction of ELL students. In addition, professional development programs do not correlate with the classroom experience. Mockler (2013) stressed that professional development programs for teachers constitute an essential instrument used in meeting federally mandated state standards. Therefore, to assist ELL teachers with direct vocabulary strategies, I developed a project in the form of a 3-day intensive professional development series with a series of monthly follow-up meetings that will permit ELL teachers an opportunity to discover scaffolding and direct vocabulary instructional strategies and provide time for teachers to collaborate with peers. The professional development series will take place at the start of the school year during the teacher preplanning week. All ELL teachers who teach English and reading will be invited to attend the series. The attendees will not receive compensation for attending the series of the professional development; therefore, their attendance is voluntary.

The professional development is titled "Direct Vocabulary Instruction in the ELL Classroom," and it will be conducted during the start of the school year and will be followed with monthly meetings beginning in September. Each day will start at 8:00 a.m. and will end at 3:30 p.m. Attendees will have a break at 9:30 a.m. and lunch from 11:15

a.m. until 12:30 p.m. On Day 1 of the professional development program, attendees will learn about the ELL students' background information and the importance of teaching vocabulary to ELL students. They will learn about the school and district reading data regarding ELLs and the difference in reading achievement between the ELL students and non-ELL students. The attendees will listen to the superintendent's presentation of the district data of the number of ELL students and their unique academic needs in the classrooms. The attendees will also learn about Marzano's (2004) six steps of vocabulary instruction. Day 2 will also include learning about Marzano's six steps of vocabulary instruction and viewing videos of ELL high school students learning vocabulary through direct instruction and the six steps. Day 3 will include professional development attendees analyzing their students' data on the latest results from the FSA. The attendees will design lesson plans with vocabulary direct instructional strategies using Marzano's six steps as the foundation for their instruction. Lastly, the lesson plans will be shared and discussed among the teachers. Attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions and share comments at the closing of each day.

I selected professional development as the project format because teachers need training to keep current with teaching practices and are required to advance their skills through professional development (see Hudson, 2013). Additionally, professional development requires a collaboration between participants who share a similar location, subject department, or grade level to be able to share common goals and understanding of the student needs (Diaz Maggioli, 2012). Therefore, I developed this project to allow teachers an opportunity to work side-by-side with other teachers, collectively recognize

effective vocabulary methods, and, more importantly, implement their knowledge by designing comprehensive lesson plans. A series of 1-hour monthly meetings will follow the 3-day intensive series to allow the teachers more collaboration and follow up on the implementation of the vocabulary strategies.

The findings of this study suggested that ELL teachers were not satisfied with the lack of preparation to teach ELL students the English language. The participants used different vocabulary strategies but focused mainly on whole language instruction as opposed to direct instruction. The participants recognized the differences between ELLs and non-ELLs regarding comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. ELLs are learning a new language; therefore, teachers incorporated pedagogies including language instruction. Some participants believed in the significance of visual representations, while other participants believed in using play and games to help ELLs with vocabulary. The majority of the participants believed ELLs also gained benefits from cooperative learning.

The study participants did not believe that they were adequately prepared to use effective vocabulary instructional strategies to bring ELL students up to speed with the rest of the students. To understand the core of the problem, on the first day of the professional development, attendees will learn about Marzano's six steps to vocabulary direct instruction. According to Botts, Losardo, Tillery, and Werts (2014), direct instruction emphasizes learning in chunks, explicit and direct learning through step-by-step instruction, becoming skilled, identifying errors, and reviewing at the end of the lesson. Equipping students and teachers with direct vocabulary instructional strategies is

vital to the language development and reading proficiency of the ELL students. Gibson (2016) emphasized that, in order to address the challenges with ELLs' academic achievement, it is necessary to develop an assessment of the most effective instructional methods and practices for educators to use so that ELL students' learning experience could be maximized.

Section 3 includes the project goals, the rationale for choosing a professional development series as the project genre, and a literature review. The literature review comprises current literature about professional development, Vygotsky's theory of learning, vocabulary strategies, direct vocabulary instruction, and collaboration. This section also includes the project description, implementation, needed resources, existing supports, potential barriers and solutions, and a timetable. Finally, I will discuss the implications for social change at the local level and the community at large.

Description and Goals of the Project

The objective of the professional development is to equip the attendees with a comprehensive view of ELLs' background, strong knowledge of scaffolding and direct vocabulary instructional strategies, a thorough analysis of ELL students' data to drive instruction, collaboration in designing lesson plans, and discussion of the implementation of strategies with other teachers through the monthly meetings. I created the professional development series and monthly meetings because such programs apply to teachers and are required to advance student learning, student motivation, and achievement results (Getenet, Trimble, & Nailon, 2013). According to McComb and Eather (2017), teacher learning through a collaborative approach drives an effective professional development.

Gándara and Santibañez (2016) also argued that it is crucial to listen to what teachers are sharing and respond with the sound professional development they are requesting.

Furthermore, Gándara and Santibañez (2016) reported that the most effective way to help enhance instruction for ELLs is to allow teachers to observe other stellar teachers and implement what they learned under the mentorship of a coach. The attendees will have a chance to work in collaboration with other teachers to design lesson plans during the last day of the 3-day intensive program as well as during the series of 1-hour monthly meetings that will last for 8 months after the professional development series. Studies showed that productive professional development is future focused, relevant, and sustained (Barrera-Pedemonte, 2016; Getenet et al., 2013).

The overall goal of this professional development program and monthly follow-up meetings is to make sure that the participants are well-equipped to offer instruction using direct vocabulary strategies and ensure ELL vocabulary learning and reading proficiency. The monthly follow-up opportunities to meet with other teachers of ELL students will facilitate an environment where all the teachers can share best practices and celebrate successes. The collaboration between the teachers will entice them to work towards enhancing the ELL students' experiences by making students become active learners and reading-proficient students.

Project Content Rationale

I chose the professional development series and the monthly meetings as the project to help ELL teachers improve their vocabulary repertoire. Participants shared the need for support regarding ELL vocabulary instructional strategies that would improve

ELLs' reading proficiency as well as language development. Although the teachers were employing a variety of strategies to teach, ELLs still showed lower performance than their non-ELL peers. While English reading may be more complex and necessitate a variety of instructional approaches with ELLs, the area that requires further development in the ELLs' learning is English vocabulary knowledge because it is underdeveloped compared to that of non-ELL students (Brandes & McMaster, 2017).

The responsibility of helping students develop strategies for vocabulary learning by including both direct instruction and scaffolding lies in the hands of ELL teachers. I applied the findings of this study to the planning of the professional development series and the monthly meetings. The program focuses on providing the teachers with direct vocabulary strategies that will impact ELL students' learning (see Kim, 2013) as well as opportunities to collaborate and share best practices with other teachers. An effective professional development program can be beneficial for the entire school and the school district.

Review of the Literature

In the literature review in this section, I address professional development, the benefits of professional development on instructional strategies, vocabulary strategies, direct vocabulary strategies and scaffolding, and teacher collaboration. In addition, I explain how this project addressed the problem and describe how the social development theory guided the development of the project. To demonstrate saturation of the topic, I gathered materials from sources found in the following Walden University Library education databases: EBSCOhost, Education Research Complete, ERIC, Google Scholar,

Thoreau, SAGE, and ProQuest Central. The following terms and phrases were used in locating the extant literature: *professional development, benefits of professional development on teachers' growth, professional development and vocabulary strategies, ELL vocabulary strategies, professional development and direct instruction*, and *collaboration between teachers.*

Project Genre and Rationale

I selected professional development as the genre for my project study because the professional development of teachers' performance levels has long been a spotlight for analysis by both research and policy-makers (see Avalos, 2011). Nonetheless, the research has shown that insufficient support has been provided for the teachers to adjust and develop new approaches to their teaching, showing that teachers need to attend professional development sessions to update and advance their practices and skills (Camburn & Han, 2015). Effective professional development invites teachers to work together on matters and issues that concern them. Additionally, professional development contributes to school improvement, teacher quality, and student learning (Girvan, Conneely, & Tangney, 2016). According to Lowenhaupt, McKinney, and Reeves (2013), coaching teachers on key skills is effective because it permits not only the exchange of teaching expertise and strategies but also the chance to share different viewpoints about the art of teaching and plan cooperatively.

Liu and Zhang (2014) recognized that professional development plays an essential role in school change. Professional development should not always be seen as a tool to fix the teachers, but rather a tool for the teachers to expand their horizons and bring new

change to the school they work at. Professional development must be relevant to the teachers' experiences and not dictated by someone in an office remote from the real experiences that these teachers are involved with in their classrooms with students. As Coady, Harper, and De Jong (2016) noted, specialized training that is designed to meet the challenges at hand will yield well-prepared teachers. When teachers learn, students learn as well. A confident teacher who is well-prepared to meet all students' challenges is a motivated teacher who can offer students better educational opportunities (Karabenick, & Clemens Noda, 2004). Durgunoğlu and Hughes (2010) posited that self-efficacy plays a role in teachers' performance; if teachers doubt their abilities, for implementation of successful strategies and question their part in implementing positive change in the ELL classroom, they do not achieve successful results. Gándara and Santibañez (2016) confirmed that to close the achievement gaps and to build on English learners' strengths, ELLs need to be taught by teachers who have acquired more skills and abilities in the ELL instruction field. If ELL students are taught by instructors with no qualifications to accommodate their diverse backgrounds, the result will not improve.

Avidov-Ungar (2016) investigated the way teachers perceived their professional development system and discovered two different perspectives. Some of the teachers perceived professional programs to be a system that examines and identifies tools by which to raise the teachers' performance while another group of teachers perceived it as a reform system for an existing problem. In fact, professional development should aim at solving a problem in the education system, but also enhancing existing instructional strategies. Also, professional development should be a venue for classroom teachers to

enhance their knowledge and skills related to what they identified as personal and

professional needs. Meissel, Parr, and Timperley (2016) reported that teachers learn best

through professional development that recognizes their professional obligations.

Additionally, professional development is a system that comprises of real and factual

learning experiences as well as focused activities that will impact the recipient directly or

indirectly and will contribute to the betterment of the classroom learning (Sariyildiz,

2017). It is a system that brushes up on teachers' existing expertise and brings about

change to deficient practices. Polkinghorne (2013) confirmed that not only do teachers

prefer professional development that applies to their area of need, but they also prefer

professional development that facilitates teacher input and collaboration with other

colleagues. Indeed, through professional opportunities, teachers learn how to be

successful learners and intrinsically motivated recipients of new knowledge.

Because of the value professional development holds in the arena of educational

practices, Kibler and Roman (2013) declared that several states, school districts, and

schools acknowledged the inevitability for professional development of teachers to assist

ELL students with their diverse learning needs. Owen (2014) argued that the best

professional development model is one that invites colleagues to explore new ideas,

connects previous learning with new knowledge, reflects on the classroom practices, and

jointly shares and discusses educational plans. Implementation of professional

development in education often seeks the transformation of the practices of both learning

and teaching (Nomishan, 2014). Professional development is the most appropriate genre

for my project because it will help prepare ELL teachers with sound vocabulary strategies

geared specifically toward the ELL students' English development and reading comprehension. In their responses, participants revealed that they were not adequately prepared to cater to the needs of the ELL students and they do not have enough training to teach this diverse population. Therefore, professional development will be a tool that enhances teachers' competencies by providing training and support (Holm & Kajander, 2015). More importantly, professional development will give the participants the opportunity to learn how to facilitate the language development as well as the reading proficiency for the ELL students, especially as it applies to the teachers' classrooms' needs (Leko, Roberts, & Pek, 2015). Moreover, professional development will allow the participants a chance to share and collaborate with colleagues who are facing the same challenges.

Above all, the professional development series I designed for this project concentrates on helping high school ELL teachers feel more prepared to use the right vocabulary strategies that will yield promising results for the ELL population. Participants will have the opportunity to gain knowledge about the vocabulary strategies and will have a chance to share their knowledge with other teachers (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015). Moreover, monthly follow-up meetings will be held to provide participants the opportunity to reflect on the implementation of the vocabulary strategies, collaborate with peers, and share best practices including the strengths and the weaknesses of the strategies. Equally important, the professional development series will encourage teachers to attain both self-development and competence on a professional

level (Lin & Ying, 2014). The ultimate result is for the ELL teachers to become open-minded and diversified, and to build a strong fondness for their students.

Furthermore, I developed this project to facilitate a platform for ELL teachers to learn more about direct instruction as a sound vocabulary strategy that will yield productive results for the ELL population specifically and the non-ELL population in general. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies was affecting the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. The findings from the semi structured one-on-one interviews and classroom observations revealed distinguishing themes: vocabulary and reading proficiency, strategies and interventions, barriers, differences between ELL and non-ELL in language acquisition, teacher support and preparedness, ELL student support, and recommendations for future efforts, including visual representation and morphology instruction—down to the root strategy, role play, cooperative learning, and games. The themes indicated that ELL teachers are using vocabulary strategies, but only the non-ELL students are benefitting. The themes also indicated that ELL teachers believed they were unprepared to respond to the vast needs of a diverse student population.

Vygotsky's (1978) human development and learning development theory will be used to guide the delivery of the professional development program because, according to Vygotsky, the learner engages in a development process that permits the learner to gain new knowledge. According to Eun (2011), Vygotskian theory indicated that learning is a lengthy process that involves constant assistance from other people and closer people such as teachers, friends, parents, and tutors in addition to time for personal reflection.

This basic concept that holds Vygotsky's development theory together is now known as the principle of social progress and the ZPD. The professional development program will offer support to teachers, an opportunity to learn with other teachers, as well as time for reflection and feedback. The ELL teachers expressed concern about not being prepared to teach ELL students properly. They also expressed the need to learn from other peers. ZPD refers to the difference between what one can achieve independently and what one can only do with the assistance of a more skilled coach (Vygotsky, 1978). The participants believed that they would learn more if they have the opportunity to interact with other peers. This concept is supported by Vygotsky's theory, which is based on the idea that a more talented person supports the development of a less competent person until the latter becomes competent (Eun, 2011). This view holds true for a teacher supporting another peer, or for the teacher supporting the student in the classroom. Therefore, I developed this 3-day professional development session and 1-hour monthly meetings to make sure ELL teachers receive effective vocabulary instructional strategies that will impact the ELL reading strategies. In addition, the data analysis revealed that ELL teachers shared their concern that they were not equipped with the right training to help improve the ELLs' linguistic needs. Therefore, the professional development attendees will cooperate with other teachers in designing lesson plans with direct vocabulary instructional strategies. Finally, once the professional development attendees have been given the necessary vocabulary strategies, they will have a chance to examine their students' reading data, devise learning goals, and design appropriate lesson plans. Throughout the monthly meetings, the attendees will have the opportunity to see how

other teachers made use of the direct vocabulary instruction strategies and how they can benefit themselves from other teachers' experiences.

Benefits of Professional Development on Instructional Practices

The origin of reflective thinking, which is a crucial element for learning, emanates from Dewey's (1910) book *How We Think.* In a classroom setting, a reflective teacher recognizes the obligation of offering the right instructional strategies to the right group of students by investigating problems, asking questions, addressing the current reform situation, discovering new skills, and challenging outdated theories (Letseka & Zireva, 2013). The constant and rapid changes in today's society and the requirement for educational reform to meet the pressing challenging needs and goals of different learners call for improvement in instructional practices to achieve student success (Sellars, 2012). There is a correlation between well-trained teachers and high student achievement. In today's classrooms, teachers must adapt their teaching styles to students in different social, economic, and cultural settings. Liu (2015) posited that due to complex and demanding role of teachers today, critical reflection on the teaching practices are paramount. The common belief is that every student deserves a world-class education offered by an expert teacher, but the reality is different. Due to the increasing number of ELLs in the U.S. classrooms, a shortage of highly qualified teachers has been observed. Additionally, faced with the demands of standardized testing and the political upheaval, existing classroom teachers have concerns and doubts about their own preparation and skills. As described in the findings from the study, participants requested additional professional development in the field of ELL learning and instruction to assist ELLs in

conquering the two milestones, which are the English language development and the academic content requirement. In fact, successful ELL professional programs must be inherently engrained in research to support ELL teachers. Indeed, Vermunt (2014) asserted that teachers' learning is directly influenced by the learning environment such as collaboration with teammates and peer coaching, which yield better results. If the professional development focuses on the actual experiences, goals, and aspirations then both students and teachers will benefit. Giraldo (2014) asserted that if professional development programs take into consideration teachers' requests, expertise, and best practices, there is a strong possibility that professional development will yield constructive outcomes. Furthermore, providing an adequate learning environment that fosters professional and personal growth for teachers affect the learning outcomes for students. Korthagen (2017) emphasized the necessity to link the professional and personal facets of professional development where teachers grow on both the personal and the professional aspects of their practice.

Professional development is considered to be an important instrument necessary to enhance teachers' classroom and professional practices. According to Gheith and Aljaberi (2018), there is noticeable emphasis on professional development because effective instruction essentially means providing students with ample opportunities of learning, which implicitly means that teachers already have in their possession the right tools and pedagogies that assist them in offering such learning experiences to their students. Kennedy (2016) described a classroom teacher as someone who wears different hats and so the design of their professional development is more operational if it pertains

to the teacher's daily responsibilities. The author asserted that professional development should not be limited only to those who volunteer to learn on their own; it should be an ongoing growth process that aims at analyzing student data and developing solutions that would benefit students' learning. For indeed, a teacher's role extends beyond that of an expert in the subject matter, but also includes the role of a motivator, evaluator, researcher, and challenger (Vermunt, 2014). The extent of professional development's benefits stems from the teachers' ongoing involvement in improving their skills and practices to be able to meet the demands of a diverse group of students. According to Killion (2014), the effects of teacher professional development depend on the teachers' extent of participation in the professional development opportunities.

Teachers' viewpoints are essential elements of professional development programs because their reflections shape the teachers' attitudes and opinions of their teaching experiences (Richards, 2011). A stellar teacher in any given classroom should be invited to encourage other teachers to embrace innovative practices and ensure student success. Farooq (2016) proclaimed that language teachers require training opportunities to enhance their language instructional skills and knowledge. The author explained that those teachers who keep abreast of the newest techniques are often very effective. These are the teachers who desire more learning to stay on top of all the students' needs and the classroom instructional challenges as well as become experts in their own classrooms. Klieger and Yakobovitch (2012) recognized the value of having teachers learn by their examination of their skills and strategies through collaboration with peers. De Vries, van

de Grift, and Jansen (2014) argued that the teachers' reflection on their own methods and views are important for their learning and growth.

School leaders should emphasize and ensure teachers are provided with the right knowledge and training in successful instructional strategies for teaching ELLs. Professional development in the schools should allow teachers field experiences and training opportunities in culturally diverse classrooms. School leaders should also be aware that some existing instructional practices need to change and provide professional development opportunities for teachers to change and expand their repertoire of instructional practices. An organized professional development opportunity should be able to offer the teachers wide-ranging occasions to practice and grow. Professional development programs are more effective if they address and allow time for more collaboration and peer feedback. Adequate time for dialogs regarding standards, data, and strategy application is beneficial for teachers in a professional development program (Pujol, 2018). The author also claimed that the teachers will also benefit if more information and training were given regarding ELLs' diverse backgrounds and their levels of language proficiency. Additional professional development training regarding how some teachers perceive ELL students learning and integration is essential considering the influx in the numbers of ELLs in the U.S. classrooms. Pujol (2018) suggested that training related to teachers' attitudes towards ELLs and knowledge about their proficiency level assessments can improve the teachers' instructional strategies from that of a person that delivers instruction to that of a practitioner who facilitates learning. It is imperative for the teachers to be equipped with valuable strategies to help ELLs

(Trevino Calderon & Zamora, 2014). Professional development programs are more beneficial when they are run by expert teachers in the classroom, especially when teachers serve as coaches to their peers. The more coaching and collaborating that happen between classroom teachers and their peers, the more gains student make from their learning. The consistency of professional development supports teacher learning (Rodriguez, Abrego, & Rubin, 2014). In order to show dedication to student academic achievement, it is imperative for districts and schools to also show support towards teachers' mastery of effective instructional strategies (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010).

Collaboration and Peer Observation

Participants will benefit tremendously from collaboration and peer observation (Darling-Hammond, 2017). For this reason, a component of the professional development should be about collaboration to allow the participants the opportunity to meet with their colleagues to learn and reflect on their learning as well as share their skills with another teacher (Motallebzadeh, Hosseinnia, & Domskey, 2017). By collaborating, teachers and administrators will spread the feeling of commitment towards the improvement of the instructional practice within the ELL classroom (DuFour & Reeves, 2016). During this collaboration, the participant observer will have the opportunity to think about their instructional strategies in comparison to the other teacher's strategies and will provide and receive feedback. Therefore, the collaboration can be multifaceted as it covers the assessment of personal instructional strategies, evaluation of another teacher's instructional strategies, valuing the ELL teacher's constant desire to learn, and recognizing the common challenges among ELL teachers.

Furthermore, collaboration with other teachers is another key component of the professional development, and Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, and Kyndt (2015) claimed that most teachers had not had preparation to work in collaboration with peers. Vangrieken et al. believed there are two predominant factors in facilitating active teacher collaboration. He called them structural components and process characteristics, which provide a clear description of how shared time to plan as well as mutual relationships and leadership. Egodawatte, McDougall, and Stoilescu (2011) added that successful teacher collaboration leads to more creative methods and strategies, enhanced understanding of the system and its methods, and increased school achievement. Therefore, it is obvious why teachers tend to want a chance to learn and collaborate with colleagues while at the same time acquiring new instructional strategies (Bradley, Munger, & Hord, 2015). An added element that will make professional development more effective is empowering educators to design their instructional skills and obtain constructive criticism regarding that; this idea will ensure that teachers discover their potential and limitations for themselves as well as develop competence in their professional development (Balyer, Özcan, & Yildiz, 2017).

In summary, professional development that recognizes collaboration and physical proximity at its core will be very effective in building learning communities between teachers and their peers. To be innovative in their teaching, teachers will need to learn from one another and model the behavior for the ELLs, who are in turn in need of moral support as they learn a foreign language. Working with peers will enhance learning opportunities for the novice and the expert teachers. Moreover, empowering the teachers

to be experts in the subject area will entice them to think out of the box and embrace teaching using world-class strategies. Their learning will enhance their practice and their pedagogies, and they will reach out to every student in the classroom because knowledge creates comfort and openness.

Discussion of the Project

To assist ELL teachers with their implementation of effective vocabulary strategies that promote reading proficiency, I propose a 3-day intensive professional development series that will include teacher participation, collaboration, lesson planning, and classroom observation of an expert in the vocabulary instruction. The 3-day intensive professional development program will be followed up with a series of eight 1-hour-long monthly meetings. These will last for 8 months to allow attendees the opportunity to collaborate and share successes and challenges in their application and implementation of direct instruction and scaffolding. Through the monthly meetings, participants will have the opportunity to receive ongoing support for their implementation of vocabulary direct instruction and scaffolding in the English language instruction and reading lessons. I included a detailed description of the professional development series in Appendix A.

I will conduct the professional development program at the high school in August during the teacher preplanning days. I will invite all the English and reading teachers. The principal of the school will have the final decision if the professional development sessions are mandatory or optional. I will conduct the initial professional development series over 3 full and consecutive school days. Each day will begin at 8:00 a.m. and finish at 3:30 p.m. Attendees will take a lunch break from 11:15 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

My study findings suggest that ninth to 12th grade ELL reading, and English teachers are not prepared to use effective and sound vocabulary strategies when teaching ELLs. They are eager to learn vocabulary instructional strategies that will make a difference in the reading proficiency of ELLs. The participants also noted that they needed time for collaboration with other teachers and time to observe their colleagues.

To address the needs of the teachers as indicated in the study, the first day of the professional development will involve the discussion about ELLs' academic requirements and the necessity for a professional development that will enhance their learning. The first day will be informative by providing background information about ELLs and their challenges in the public schools and the participants' school. I will share reading data from the latest state standardized assessment and point out the learning gap between the ELLs and the non-ELLs. I will present the purpose of the professional development, emphasize the benefits of using direct instruction while teaching ELLs about vocabulary, and share findings from the study. Day 1 will end with words of wisdom from the superintendent, who not only taught ELLs as a teacher but has also witnessed the dramatic growing of ELLs in the district and recognizes the dire need for the professional development. The superintendent served the district for over 20 years and believed that teachers are compelled to be knowledgeable about the instructional and the linguistic needs of the ELLs. The participants need to identify the benefits of using direct instruction to benefit ELLs' growth. The attendees will also learn about the first three steps of Marzano's (2004) six steps to effective vocabulary instruction strategies.

On the second day of the professional development, attendees will continue with hands-on activities as they learn the last three steps of Marzano's (2004) six step process. Attendees will work collaboratively using instructional activities that will increase their understanding of how direct instruction works. The participants will have time to discuss the benefits of using Marzano's research-based strategies and will view selected videos on direct instruction and the implementation of Marzano's six step to vocabulary instruction will be the selected vocabulary strategies. At the beginning of the session, participants will have a chance to watch a video about the use and importance of direct instruction when teaching vocabulary as well as how to use the steps to teach students vocabulary. Participants will be asked to split into groups and try to role play some of the activities. They will choose a word and see how they can teach it to the rest of the group.

On the third day of the professional development sessions, the attendees will wrap up the sessions with creating individual lesson plans. The participants will have the opportunity to experience with mini-lessons and share with the rest of the teachers. Then, they will be asked to write a full lesson plan using Marzano's (2004) six steps to effective vocabulary instruction. Attendees will have to use sample activities suggested during the program, or they can create different direct instruction methods that have the potential to fulfill the literacy needs of the ELLs. Before the end of the day, attendees will be able to share their lesson plans with the rest of the teachers. Attendees will also share feedback about their lesson plans and other teachers' lesson plans. I will direct attendees to capitalize on each other's lesson plans by sharing them within the school and the district.

Before exiting the session, the participants will take a summative assessment to capture their feedback and reflections on the program.

After the 3-day intensive series, participants will be invited to the eight monthly follow-up meetings. These meetings will be 1 hour in length and will take place on Wednesdays. During these 1-hour monthly meetings, attendees will collaborate and share the successes and challenges they have faced in their implementation of vocabulary direct instruction lessons. As the project developer, I will ensure that these monthly meetings are ongoing and will last for the entire 8 months. I will also invite the reading coach to assist by facilitating some of the meetings. It is important that the reading coach is knowledgeable and can share the knowledge with the rest of the other core subject teachers

Resources, Supports, and Potential Barriers

The resources I need to conduct this professional development are a laptop, a projector, and access to the Internet. I will distribute PowerPoint presentations used in the professional development of the participants. I will need paper, markers, chart paper, pens, pencils, and the pre- and post-assessments. I will need access to the library to hold the professional development sessions.

Several barriers could potentially affect the professional development. The first barrier is that technical issues could occur with an internet connection. To address this barrier, I will request access to the technology director to assist with making sure there are no technology difficulties. The library not being available could present a challenge considering it will be the beginning of the new school year. If this outcome occurs, I will

request the use of an alternative location within the school. Another possible barrier

would be participants' willingness to give up 3 days of their preplanning to participate in

the professional development. If I advertise the professional development through the

overall goals and the teacher learning requirements, I may be available this barrier. A

barrier for the follow-up meetings is the time needed on Wednesdays because that is the

time when administrators hold their meetings with the teachers and staff members, and it

is also the shortest school day of the week. This barrier can be overcome by getting the

assistance from the administration and by focusing the follow-up meetings on

collaboration and teacher needs for growth and assistance for ELLs.

Project Implementation and Timetable

I will serve as the training facilitator. Being the researcher, I am by default more

knowledgeable about the problem and more qualified to propose possible solutions so

that I will be leading the professional development series as well as the follow-up

meetings. First, I will present the program to the school leadership as well as the results

of the study and the proposed professional development program. Then I will request the

approval to implement the professional development with ELL teachers. Once I receive

approval, I will choose a training room within the school library, specifically the one that

has enough space for the participants to move around as well as the equipment needed for

the program. Once I receive permission to use the library, I will make a reservation for

the 3 days. I will submit the agenda for the professional development, a request to use the

equipment, and the PowerPoint presentation. I will also ask permission to use the training

room for the monthly meetings. The timetable for the professional development program

is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Professional Development Program: Timeline of Actions

Time before implementation	Steps for researcher
5 months	1. Share the project study and supporting literature with the school 2. Present reasons for professional development program/Share goals and objectives 3. Obtain permission to implement the professional development for teachers 4. Reserve the dates for the 3-day series and the monthly meetings
4 months	1. Meet with staff for room set up plan 2. Reserve the guest speaker (Superintendent)
3 months	1. Reserve library training room and equipment
2 months	1. Get a list of all ELL teachers and emails 2. Send a save-the-date to the attendees
1 month	1. Set up menu for breakfast/snacks 2. Contact vendors for catering (breakfast and snacks) 3. Request copies of school district ELL results on the latest standardized assessment
2 weeks	1. Confirm catering 2. Confirm professional development with guest speakers 3. Confirm room set up 4. Send the final invitations to the superintendent and the teachers
1 week	1. Prepare agenda for the 3-day series and the monthly meeting 2. Assemble packets
Event	1. Hold the 3-day intensive series 2. Hold the 8 monthly meetings
Final Report After Implementation	1. Set up a meeting with the school leadership to discuss the final report and the assessments 2. Discuss plans for more professional development

The professional development is designed to encourage collaborations among the

series attendees. Therefore, the professional development will heavily rely on

participants' sharing of ideas and discussions. I will partner with the administrators and

the reading coach when preparing for the professional development. I will ensure a welcoming and non-threatening environment to all for sharing, discussing, collaborating, reflecting, and evaluating. At the beginning of the first day, I will provide the attendees with a packet that contains copies of the PowerPoint presentation slides, a journal for notetaking, index cards for the formative assessment, a copy of Marzano's (2004) six step to vocabulary instruction, and samples for graphic organizers. The PowerPoint handout will include information about data obtained from the study and the six vocabulary steps explained. I will also offer an icebreaker through which the participants will introduce themselves, the grade level they teach, and the positive experiences they had with ELLs. The attendees will review Marzano's six steps to effective vocabulary instruction, focusing on the first three strategies of the process.

On the following day, I will start with a warm-up activity. Then I will encourage the participants to engage in conversations about direct vocabulary strategies and how to use in the classroom to ensure reading proficiency. The focus is to create a belief in the importance of implementing effective vocabulary strategies that will yield positive results in ELLs' language development. The attendees will review Marzano's (2004) six steps to effective vocabulary instruction, and they will focus on the last three strategies. Further, I will show three videos of how to implement Marzano's six steps to vocabulary instructional strategies. The attendees will have the opportunities to play games and experience some of the activities that they may implement in their classroom. The attendees will have a chance to share their feedback about the six vocabulary steps and ask for any clarifications.

On the last day, I will also start with a warmer activity, but then encourage the participants to create and design lesson plans with the six steps to vocabulary instructional strategies. The participants will have the opportunity to share their lesson plans with the rest of the group. They will also take time to reflect on their lesson plans as well as on other teachers' lesson plans. They will give constructive feedback on how lesson plans may benefit from extra improvement to maximize the ELL learning experience in the classroom. The attendees will also be given a chance to ask questions and share their feedback. At the end of the day, the participants will share their reflection on the program through a summative assessment.

Project Goals and Objectives

The objective of this project is for ELL teachers to understand and apply the direct vocabulary instruction strategy to help improve ELLs' content knowledge and language proficiency. Because participants from the study indicated that they were not adequately prepared to reach out to the ELLs and make a difference, did not have time to collaborate in designing effective lesson plans, and did not observe other teachers in the classroom, they believed that they were not ready to help the ELL population. The main goal for the project is to create a collaborative environment where the participants become engaged learners, understand the value of using direct vocabulary instruction, and create lesson plans that use direct vocabulary instruction that can be useful in the classroom with their students. As Gresalfi and Cobb (2011) stated, participants' motivation to learn stems from working in real-life situations. The most significant

stakeholders are the ELL teachers, the reading coach, and the school administrators. I created an evaluation plan to assess if the project met the goals and objectives set forth.

Project Evaluation Plan

An evaluation plan is necessary to determine if the program was successful and recognize areas of improvement. At the beginning of the 3-day intensive series, I will administer a pre-assessment survey (Appendix A) to gather information regarding the attendees' background knowledge and experience with direct vocabulary instruction. Further, before closing the day each day, an evaluation form (Appendix A) will be handed to all the participants to assess their interest and learning. This evaluation will serve as a formative assessment of their feedback regarding the training sessions. The formative evaluation will be used to determine interest, improvement, and the need for any additional professional development sessions. I have to assess if the goals and objectives are achieved using the formative assessment during the duration of the professional development. I will collect important information regarding their experiences in the classroom, their struggles, and their achievements.

Through the formative assessment, I will also get an idea about the participants' learning during the professional development sessions because a formative assessment investigates, evaluates, and analyzes of daily learning activities (Qu & Zhang, 2013). At the end of every day, the attendees will have time to reflect and write down their feedback regarding the professional development series' strengths and challenges. The feedback can be anonymous to achieve objective and sincere comments. The summative

evaluation occurs at the closing of the 3-day intensive series and the monthly sessions. I will analyze the information from this form to help me build future workshops.

During the last day of 3-day intensive series, I will ask the attendees to write down their feedback about the six steps to vocabulary instruction. They will share how those steps and strategies may help ELLs with vocabulary retention. They will also write down their feedback about the first and last three steps of the process and how those steps will benefit them and their students in vocabulary retention.

At the end of the program, the attendees will share their views on the effectiveness of the 3-day series and the monthly meetings through the use of a questionnaire. This feedback will be used as the summative assessment. Furthermore, throughout the monthly meetings, the attendees will share their feedback about their successes or challenges with the implementation of the vocabulary steps.

Project Implications

This project has the potential to be valuable for ELL teachers and students. The 3-day intensive professional development and the 1-hour monthly follow-up series may prepare ELL teachers with using direct vocabulary instruction and scaffolding, which may have a positive impact on their instructional strategies and the ELLs' language development and reading proficiency. To ensure the effective use of the professional development, it must be sustained through ongoing and continuous opportunities (Brown & Militello, 2016). Through the eight monthly follow-up meetings, attendees will have the chance to share their challenges and successes with their peers. They will have the opportunity to get support for the implementation of direct vocabulary support and seek

constructive feedback from their peers. Moreover, the ongoing monthly follow-up meetings may give the school administrators the opportunity to assess the impact of direct vocabulary instruction on ELL reading and language proficiency and how the ELLs are responding to the teachers use of direct instruction. Improvement in ELLs' language proficiency and reading achievement will promote positive social change.

This project study has the potential for positive social change on the local level for ELL teachers, administrators, and students. According to Girvan et al. (2016), professional development is a vital plan for students, teachers, and school improvement in general. Therefore, by providing the professional development, the whole school and the district will benefit from effective direct vocabulary instruction strategies. Using direct vocabulary instruction will permit ELLs to have direct involvement with vocabulary words, which results in effective vocabulary learning and more vocabulary retention (Kim, 2011). In addition, direct instruction in reading skills and language components is crucial for ELLs because students become more engaged and deliberate in their comprehension (Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009). Using the findings from my study, the school administrators may be better equipped to support ELL teachers in their implementation of direct vocabulary instructional strategies. The administrators may push for a schoolwide ELL curriculum that enhances ELLs' reading proficiency through direct vocabulary instruction. The project developed from the findings of this study may lead to improved reading instruction and better scores on the state assessment as well as positive social change through the improvement of ELL and non-ELLs reading proficiency.

The professional development series and the monthly meetings created in this project study have the potential for broad positive effects on student reading achievement. The whole district may adapt the professional development to provide ELL teachers and content teachers with support in using direct vocabulary instruction strategies to improve ELL reading and language proficiency. I will be available as a resource to help other schools in the district apply, adapt the professional development, and train the reading coach in assisting with the monthly meetings. I will also train other literacy coaches in facilitating the professional development in their respective schools.

Conclusion

The proposed project developed for this study is a 3-day intensive professional development workshop with monthly follow-up meetings. In Section 3, I discussed the project, the rationale for adopting the professional development as the project genre, a literature review on the topic of professional development, and the benefits of professional development. It also includes a description of the project, a plan for implementation and evaluation, and potential project implications. In Section 4, I reflect on the project strengths and limitations and my personal growth as a researcher and scholar.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers'

perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies affected the reading

comprehension of high school ELLs. The project, which resulted from the findings of the

study, was a 3-day professional development series along with monthly follow-up

meetings that incorporated direct vocabulary instruction. I developed the program to

allow ELL teachers the opportunity to learn direct vocabulary strategies and collaborate

with each other to design and implement lesson plans with some of the selected

strategies. The success of the program necessitates the teachers' desire to learn and

implement what is learned. This section includes an evaluation of the strengths and the

limitations of the proposed program and recommendations of some alternate plans. In this

final section, I also present a self-reflection; the implications of social change; and the

direction for future research on the topic of using direct vocabulary instructional

strategies to affect ELLs' language development, academic vocabulary, and reading

proficiency.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

In creating the project, I considered the ELLs' learning predicament, the

importance of vocabulary instruction, and the required strategies for teaching vocabulary

to ELLs. Therefore, I tried to provide the teachers with effective and research-based

strategies to facilitate ELL instruction in the classroom. The data collected from the study

gave me a platform from which to design the project based on both the needs of the ELLs and teachers. Participants had the opportunity to express their views, communicate their needs, and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. An additional strength of the project is that it provides ELL teachers the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers through follow-up meetings as well as receive support from school leaders. Most importantly, the project may be adopted by other schools in the district because it addresses the use of vocabulary research-based instructional methods in ELL classrooms.

Limitations

One limitation of this project was that I left out many factors that could potentially lead to ELLs' growth and success in schools, such as parental involvement, student motivation to succeed, the lack of student success in their first language, and student attendance. In this study, I only focused on one aspect of language development, vocabulary instruction. Although vocabulary learning and instruction is key to language development, other factors may hinder student learning if they are not brought to the surface and dealt with rigorously. However, I focused on direct instructional vocabulary because of the data collected from the interviews and classroom observations. ELL teachers will benefit from the professional development series by becoming better equipped with research-based vocabulary strategies to help ELLs enhance their reading proficiency. ELL teachers may also require additional professional development in the areas mentioned that might affect the holistic aspect of the ELLs' experience to learn and grow in U.S. schools.

Another limitation was that the research study was limited to only one school in this large district. It would have been better to extend the study to other schools in the district that are serving the ELL population because the study would have included more participants. Even if the schools were different and had different demographics, the whole district would have benefitted with additional data from many schools. To help overcome this limitation, the school under study could become the model for the district and share the instructional strategies and training they are using with the rest of the schools. Although the schools may be different in many aspects, the research-based strategies that can be helpful for ELLs remain the same.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Apart from the professional development used to address the problem, one alternative approach would have been to revisit the implementation of current policies concerning ELLs. Currently, with the NCLB Act of 2001 and ESSA of 2015, policies existed to govern the rights of ELLs to equal access and opportunity as non-ELLs; however, these policies lacked specific instructions as to how to provide for the needs of ELLs (see Kearns, 2011). Because the findings of this study presented the teachers' perceptions on the struggles of ELLs and the differences between ELLs and non-ELLs, one alternative approach to address the problem could have been to implement pedagogies or revise the curriculum to fit their needs. For example, parts of the curriculum could be in ELLs' native languages. This way, equal access would be offered by adding a section in the curriculum in the students' native language.

Another alternative approach might have been interventions involving parents of ELLs. The findings of this study revealed that ELLs might benefit from having support for the language acquisition outside the classroom, specifically in their homes. Because English is not the first language ELLs use at home, having their parents involved in practicing English at home could help address the problem. Because some parents may not have the language ability to support their students, schools would need to offer after-school English classes for ELL parents.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

The amount of time I spent as a student at Walden University taught me valuable lessons. First, I learned how to conduct and analyze research keeping my personal opinions and biases away from the outcomes. I also learned to appreciate every challenge I encountered on the journey by keeping my goal clear and obvious when finding the right tools for ELL teachers to use to help ELLs reach their academic goals. Looking back on the first day I started my first courses at Walden, I noticed a big difference after learning about several methodologies and research designs. I spent hours reading articles online through the Walden Library and reflecting on different research studies. The extensive reading and coursework helped expand my horizons in accessing pertinent information and incorporating accurate researched-based tools and strategies. I must say that, at this point, I feel very confident in discerning between different methodologies and research designs. I have become more experienced as a researcher, and I am now equipped with various skills to conduct interviews, classroom observations, and data

collection. At the beginning of my journey, I struggled to differentiate between qualitative and quantitative methodologies, different research studies, and different conceptual frameworks. Now it has become more manageable for me to read a study and understand quickly what type of study it is.

As an educator, my ultimate goal is to contribute to the education arena and show support to students, teachers, and parents in particular as well as the community at large. Walden has helped me grow as a person, an educator, and a scholar. My experience at Walden has also helped me in setting goals for making positive changes in the educational arena. I am very confident that with the skills I acquired through my studies at Walden that I will continue not only to find solutions to problems but also find opportunities to make positive contributions to education.

Project Development

Using the findings of my study to develop a project to benefit educators in the area of ELL reading gave me the opportunity to grow in the area of project development. Although I had the opportunity to design small workshop sessions in my school as an academic dean, I never used the data extensively as with the current project. Creating project plans for the teachers was a challenge; however, once I learned the necessary steps and the overall goal through the feedback from and guidance of my committee chair, the plan became less daunting. The guidance I received to design the professional development and the process I followed from collecting data to designing the plan has been invaluable. Exploring the Walden website and reading about the purpose of professional development projects through research studies helped me value the process

of professional development projects and their effectiveness. This experience will help me design and lead future professional development programs and projects.

Leadership and Change

My journey at Walden has taught me the value of becoming an inspirational leader and making positive changes in education. I learned many different skills that will put me at the forefront of educational leadership. I have learned to become an influential leader and a problem solver at my job and in my community. I have always enjoyed helping teachers, especially when I served as a teacher mentor for many years, but this doctoral experience has grounded my passion and desire to help and inspire the teachers around me. Today, I feel more prepared to take on this task of leading others toward problem solving in education.

As a scholar, I learned about the research process and study design through my doctoral work. Working in a high school, there is much emphasis on school and student growth, and my experience at Walden has given me the confidence to start conversations with my peers regarding their growth as well as that of their students. My learning has built my confidence in the belief that researching any field contributes to the improvement of the educational system. Through this doctoral process, I also grew as an academic and scholarly writer. Although I also completed my master's degree at Walden, I believe that my doctoral study increased my knowledge in the area of academic writing through revisions and the acceptance of feedback, no matter how many times I had to rewrite a section of my project.

As a practitioner, my doctoral process led to becoming a lifelong learner as well as the goal of instilling that in the teachers that I meet with on a daily basis. Some of them have started or completed their master's degree and are on the path to begin work on their doctoral journey. As a practitioner, I also gained confidence in striving to make a difference in the field of education. I have become a strong proponent of positive change and the operational efficacy of the school in which I work. I have become a reading resource for ELL teachers through the confidence I have gained in preparing ELL teachers to become more equipped in their classroom.

In my current job, I have been asked to offer professional development sessions for the teachers. I have never thought about the extensive research studies that were developed concerning professional development until I went through the experience of reviewing the literature on different professional development projects and their effectiveness in bringing valuable information to the schools, especially when data are involved in the creation of the professional development sessions. As a project developer, I learned that designing professional development should be based on current and valid data. I feel very confident and knowledgeable in effectively designing and evaluating different professional development projects in the future.

Reflection on the Importance of Work

As a teacher in my school, my ultimate goal is to ensure that all teachers have the right tools to lead students to success. It is important that ELL teachers have the right strategies to improve students' reading proficiency. When teachers use the right vocabulary tools to teach ELLs, the students will eventually learn. Through interviews

with teachers, I learned the importance of supporting and listening to teachers' concerns, enabling me to find a solution to their concerns and instructional needs. If teachers are equipped with the right strategies and feel supported, they are more successful in their jobs (see Agustiani, 2016).

<div align="center">**Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**</div>

A professional development plan was my project for this study. The project plan will improve ELL teachers' confidence in using research-based vocabulary instructional strategies to improve ELL student learning and achievement. The project has the potential to help teachers beyond the school level and can be applied to other schools and districts. Any ELL teacher can use this plan. I developed the project to offer research-based vocabulary instructional strategies and time for teachers to collaborate with colleagues; additionally, it does not require any funding or specific space and is ready to be implemented in most schools in the district. Future research could include other schools in the district and participants who all had secondary ELLs in their classrooms.

After my experience as an ELL student in high school, adding a fourth language to my language baggage, I learned to be an advocate for any ELL student in any school around the world, especially high school ELLs. It is hard to arrive at a school to learn a language and find out that instructors do not have the necessary experience and skills to support students' academic aspirations. As a professional educator, I strive to make sure that every ELL student has the opportunity to learn and become a productive citizen. I would like to be able to support ELL teachers with best practices and strategies that will help students become more successful. This effort may lead to an increase in ELLs'

reading achievement and open doors for these students to do well beyond the classroom walls, which will promote positive social change.

Conclusion

Direct vocabulary instructional strategies are key to enhancing ELL students' reading achievement and language development. These steps are critical to bridging the gap between ELLs and non-ELLs. The influx of ELLs into public high schools and their challenge with the state-mandated assessments necessitated a serious examination of ELLs' struggle to pass the reading portion of the assessments. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of ELL teachers' perceptions about how using effective vocabulary pedagogies affected the reading comprehension of high school ELLs. The results of this study revealed ELL teachers' concerns in meeting the needs of the ELL population. The ELL teachers' lack of training in ELL education gave me the courage to help in the area of ELL education. The overall themes of this study were vocabulary strategies, collaboration with other teachers, and differences between ELLs' and non-ELLs' language reading proficiency. The findings of the study indicated that teachers perceived they lacked training in ELL instructional strategies; therefore, when considering the themes, I developed a 3-day intensive professional development and a series of eight monthly follow-up meetings to aid ELL teachers in helping ELLs enhance their reading proficiency and become capable of success on the state-mandated tests.

Furthermore, as a result of the project, the teachers will be more equipped to use research-based strategies in the classroom and guide ELLs to the next level of becoming productive citizens in society. The process of putting this project together helped me

become a better scholar, practitioner, and project facilitator. In Section 4, I discussed the

project strengths and limitations and possible directions for future research as well as

concluded the study.

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Appendix A: The Project

This professional development is intended to support ELL teachers overcome the challenge of teaching vocabulary to ELLs. The goal is to help ELL teachers become equipped with vocabulary strategies that best support vocabulary learning needs of English language learners in a district and school in which ELLs have performed below the reading proficiency as measured by the state mandated assessments. The program will involve research-based vocabulary instructional strategies, presentations, reflective opportunities, and lesson planning.

The professional development will be carried over three consecutive days. Additionally, this professional development will include research-based instructional approaches.

Timeframe

The professional development is a 3-day intensive session followed with 1-hour monthly meetings that will last for 8 months. The 3-day sessions will include, presentations, discussion, and collaborations with peers. On the first day of the professional development, I will provide information about district and school data regarding the ELLs' reading achievement and share the benefits of using researched-based effective and direct vocabulary reading strategies. The second day, I will invite the attendees to view videos on direct vocabulary instruction and Marzano's six steps to effective vocabulary instruction. Day Two session will include collaboration time for attendees to discuss the vocabulary instructional strategies that were viewed in each video and how those strategies can directly benefit ELLs in mastering academic vocabulary and

enhance their reading proficiency. On the third day of the professional development, ELL teachers will create lesson plans for their students using their activities. They will also have the opportunity to share their lesson plans with each and report how they will implement the lesson plans with their students. A formative and a summative evaluation will be provided at the beginning of the first day, at the end of the first two days, and after the conclusion of the sessions. A formative and a summative evaluation will be provided at the end of every monthly meeting and at the end of the last month.

Target Audience

The target audience for the professional development in the high school English language teachers.

Title of Project

Direct Vocabulary Instruction in the ELL classroom

Purpose: To provide the ELL teachers with effective vocabulary strategies to enhance the ELLs' reading proficiency.

Target Audience: The target audience for this project is ELL teachers.

Evaluation: Participants will complete formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations will be a pre-assessment, discussions held throughout the professional development, and participants' reflections. The post-assessment will be professional development evaluation at the end of the professional development series and the monthly meetings.

Professional Development Program Goals

The implementation of this project is important for various reasons. The project addresses the main concern of ELL teachers not being prepared to teach ELLs and help them acquire a number of researched-based vocabulary instructional strategies.

Goals: Participants will engage in conversations about direct instruction in English and reading lessons. Participants will reflect upon the use of Marzano six steps process to effective vocabulary instruction and its implementation in the classroom. This project gives the ELL teachers the opportunity to enhance their instructional strategies with researched-based methods. It also allows them the opportunity to design lesson plans, collaborate, observe other teachers, share their thoughts and concerns, and receive constructive feedback.

Objectives: Participants will understand and apply the direct vocabulary instruction strategy in the ELL English and Reading classrooms using Marzano's six steps to effective vocabulary instruction. The participants will be able to help ELLs enhance their reading and language proficiency through the use of direct vocabulary instructional strategies.

Preparation:

Materials: Projector, Laptop, Copies of PowerPoint for attendees, Markers, Index Cards, Chart Paper, Pens and pencils, Pre-assessment and Post-assessment worksheets. A packet with the schedule and the rest of the handouts in the other pocket.

Room setup: Six tables with four chairs, a flip chart, and the sign-up sheet.

Professional Development 3-day Series Plan

Introduction

Day 1:
Welcome Statement/Icebreaker
Administer pre-assessment/summative assessment
PowerPoint presentation displaying ELL reading achievement concerns
(research data results, supportive graphics)
PowerPoint Presentation
Review school and district ELL reading data
Superintendent presentation
Overview of direct vocabulary instruction
Vocabulary Gap and Research Findings
Overview of direct vocabulary instructional strategies: Marzano's six steps to effective
vocabulary instruction/ Go over the first 3 strategies.
Overview of the implementation strategy and activities

Day 2:
Welcome Statement/Icebreaker
PowerPoint Presentation
Watch videos on the use of direct vocabulary instruction.
Share feedback with the group
Overview of direct vocabulary instructional strategies: Marzano's six steps to effective
vocabulary instruction: The last 3 strategies
Overview of the implementation strategy and activities

Day 3:
Welcome Statement/Icebreaker
PowerPoint presentation displaying an overview of Marzano's six steps to effective
vocabulary instruction
Lesson plan activities
Lesson plans design with the six steps
Share lesson plans and different activities
Post-assessment/Formative assessment
Celebrate successes

Day 1—
Morning
8:00   Continental Breakfast/Sign up/Icebreaker Activity
Fill out the pre-assessment form
8:15   **Welcome and Introduction/Schedule and Goals/Developing**
Norms
Introduce myself; ask participants to introduce themselves, share a
fun fact about them, the grade they teach, and the years they have
been teaching. Also ask them what they hope to learn in this
workshop.
Briefly give an overview of the 3-day workshop and introduce the
procedures, goals, and objectives for the PD session.
Ask the participants to write down their expectation from the
workshop and post it on the wall on a section reserved for that.

8:30   **What is the challenge? What do data report?** (Slide 2–4)
Participants will discuss the achievement gap and the reason behind
it.
Participants will share if they were aware of the data for the district
and the school regarding the ELLs' performance on the standardized
assessment

9:00   **Guest speaker/ Superintendent** (Slide 5)
Guest speaker will give an overview of the number of the ELLs in the
district
Guest will share the challenges of the ELLs in the district
Guest speaker will share the importance of teaching vocabulary
Guest speaker will share her expectations of the ELL teachers
Teachers will have a chance to comments and questions
9:30   **Break**
9:45   **What are the challenges in teaching ELLs? What are the**
interventions to the challenge (Slide 6-7)
Participants will individually brainstorm about the issues they
encounter when teaching ELLs. The problems with teaching
vocabulary to ELLs. At their table, participants will share, discuss,
and compare the issues they have written down. Each group will
select 3 main issues. Each group will share what they discussed and
the three key challenges they picked.
In groups, participants will brainstorm three interventions to their
issues.
Wrap up the activity by highlighting the common challenges and
interventions.
Allow time for questions and comments.

10:00	**What is direct instruction? (**Slide 8-11)

Participants will read the passage on slide 8 and will share their feedback with their group members. Participants will volunteer their feelings after reading the text. Participants will share their connection with ELLs who may not understand any word on the passage.

In their groups, participants will brainstorm and engage in discussions about what direct instruction is with regard to ELL reading. Each group designates one person to write their group definition as well as strategies used in the classroom. Participants will share their own definitions and strategies.

Present to participants research findings regarding direct instruction. Present to participants the benefits of using direct instruction with the ELLs per research studies.

Explain that direct instruction of vocabulary has been proven to make a difference in the reading comprehension. Explain that it is not necessary for all vocabulary terms to be directly taught, but direct instruction of vocabulary has to be implemented in the classroom.

10:45	**What is Academic Vocabulary?** (Slide 12-18)

Participants will brainstorm in their groups about the definition of academic vocabulary.

Present the list of the different terms and have participants share what they think the definition of academic vocabulary might be. Share the terms as defined by (Baumann and Graves, 2010).

The Vocabulary Gap

Instruct the participants to guess the word gap by age 4 between impoverished and middle-class children. Explain that the majority of our students live at or below the poverty line. Allow time for questions and answers

Share the data about the vocabulary gap and extract ideas and opinions about why the gap exists. Then write what the participants say on a flip chart

11:15	**Lunch**

Day 1—Afternoon

12:30	**Why Teach Academic Vocabulary?** (Slide 19-21)

As a group, participants will discuss both the definition and the importance of vocabulary. Share the findings from the research studies that pointed to the vocabulary instruction and development as one of the main strategies that teacher should rely on to build language and reading proficiency. Allow time for questions and answers. Have the participants share in groups the importance of

teaching academic vocabulary. Instruct participants to reflect on how they taught academic vocabulary in their classrooms. Have them share different strategies they used to teach academic vocabulary to their ELLs. Participants will share how the strategies directly impacted their students' learning.

Present the findings behind teaching academic vocabulary and how that directly impacts the learning.

Allow time for questions and answers

Keeping Track of Student Progress

Instruct participants to brainstorm ideas about how they keep track of their student progress in vocabulary learning. Have them share with the rest of the group. Then instruct one from each group to share their process.

Explain Marzano's Keeping Track of Student Progress Chart

12:45	**Marzano Six-Steps for Teaching New Terms** (Slide 22- 24))

Have the participants brainstorm ideas about the first 3 steps and the last 3 steps of the process of vocabulary instruction. Instruct the groups to share the difference between the first 3 steps and the last 3 steps.

Have the participants share with their group. Ask volunteers from each table to share their ideas.

The Importance of Using the Academic Notebook and Word Cards

Group discussions about the why/what/how of using the notebook

1:30	**Step 1-** (Slide 25- 28)

Have the participants share their list of strategies that fall under Step 1 and have them explain the reason behind their choices.

Reveal the list on the slide. Have the participants compare their lists to the list on the slide. Have them write any strategy that missed and share any additional strategy that was not on the slide.

Step 1 Activities

Instruct the participants to choose one of the activities and share how they used it in their classrooms.

Examples and Non-examples

Verbal/Visual Context

2:00-2:15	**Break**
2:15	**Step 2:** (Slide 29- 30)

Have the participants share their list of strategies that fall under Step 2 and have them explain the reason behind their choices.

Reveal the list on the slide. Have the participants compare their lists to the list on the slide. Have them write any strategy that missed and share any additional strategy that was not on the slide.
Monitor and correct misunderstandings
The student should be instructed to use their own wording.
Step 2 activities
Have the participants share how they use the activities in their classroom. Have them add other activities that shared in the past. Have them also discuss which of the activities seemed to be more effective.

2:45   **Step 3-** (Slides 31- 33)
Have the participants share their list of strategies that fall under Step 3 and have them explain the reason behind their choices.
Reveal the list on the slide. Have the participants compare their lists to the list on the slide. Have them write any strategy that missed and share any additional strategy that was not on the slide.
Step 3 Activities
Model
Allow them to work together

3:15   **Reflections**
Give index cards to participants and have them complete the formative evaluation questions and put the cards in the basket before they leave.

3:30   **End of the First Day**
Day 2—
Morning

8:00   **Video**
The benefits of using direct vocabulary instruction
Video link (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3w97Iep2yU)
Participants will watch a video and write down key strategies.
Examine what was discussed in the video and present the characteristics of direct vocabulary strategies. Participants will share their ideas as a group.
Allow time for comments, and questions about the video.

9:30   **Break**

9:45   **Step 4:** (Slides 35-36)
Have the participants share their list of strategies that fall under Step 4 and have them explain the reason behind their choices.

Reveal the list on the slide. Have the participants compare their lists to the list on the slide. Have them write any strategy that missed and share any additional strategy that was not on the slide. Share powerful strategies.

to share whether they have used any of the strategies and what they think about their potential effectiveness with their ELLs.

Step 4-Activities
Presentation
Group activity
Participants in groups will discuss and categorize different vocabulary activities. Explain to the participants how to play this game.
Choose a target term: For example: Volcano. Each participant in the group will take turn saying any word that comes to his/her mind related to the target term. Use a timer to let the participants know when the game will be over.
The last person to say a word after the game is over will give explanation about the word.
Have the participants play the game at their tables.
Group discussion and feedback

10:30   **Step 5:** (Slides 37-39)
Have the participants share their list of strategies that fall under Step 5 and have them explain the reason behind their choices.
Reveal the list on the slide. Have the participants compare their lists to the list on the slide. Have them write any strategy that I missed and share any additional strategy that was not on the slide.

Step 5- Activities
Word whacker –
whack the word for the definition that is read if there is an error.

11:15   **Lunch**

Day 2—
Afternoon

12:30   **Step 6-** (Slides 40-45)
Have the participants share their list of strategies that fall under Step 6 and have them explain the reason behind their choices. Reveal the list on the slide. Have the participants compare their lists to the list on the slide. Have them write any strategy that missed and share any additional strategy that was not on the slide.
Step 6 Activities
Game Activities:

Have each group to choose a game and play it at their table. If participants know other games that they have used in their classroom, they can play that game at their table. Vocabulary Charades

2:00-2:15   **Break**

2:15   **Video viewing and group discussions** (Slide 46)
How to use the six steps to effective vocabulary instruction by Marzano
Video link (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NMzKYWRBJg)
ELL learning and vocabulary
ELLs can benefit directly from direct vocabulary instruction.
Video link (https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/vocabulary-for-ells)
Participants will watch each video and write down key strategies.
Examine the benefits of the strategies for their own students.
Allow time for comments, and questions about the video.

3:15   **Reflections**
Give index cards to participants and have them complete the formative evaluation questions and put the cards in the basket before they leave.

3:30   **End of the Second Day**
Day 3—
Morning

8:00   **Review of Marzano Six Steps to Effective Vocabulary Instruction Mini-Lessons**:
Instruct participants to get up and choose two strategies from those posted on the wall. Participants should not have the same strategies.
Each participant should find a partner who has chosen the same strategy.
They can use any material available to them to create a mini lesson.
Each presentation should not last more than 15 minutes. Each will present their strategy and their mini lesson plans to the whole group.
Each group will discuss how the strategy will benefit their students.
The pairs should also plan an activity that matches the strategy.

9:20   **Project Instructions**
Instruct the participants to move on to the last project
Focused lesson plans
In groups of three, participants will design a vocabulary focused

lesson plan to present to the group. The lesson plan should take 15 minutes and to teach within 15 minutes to present. The rest of the participants will act as students. They will ask questions and use their notebooks to take notes.

9:30   **Break**

9:45   **Project: Putting the Knowledge to Use**
Time for designing the lessons.

11:15   **Lunch**

Day 3—
Afternoon

12:30   **Participants' Lesson Plan Presentations**
Each pair will have the opportunity to present their lesson to the rest of the participants. All groups will be given time to share their feedback about their own lesson as well as receive constructive feedback from the rest of the participants.

2:00   **Break**

2:15   **Participants' Lesson Plan Presentations (continued)**

3:00   **Wrap-Up Activity**
Instruct the participants to share one strategy and one activity that will be effective for their students**.**
Celebrate!

3:25   **Evaluation**
Participants will complete the PD evaluation form.

Slides for Day 1, 2, and 3 Agenda

"The limits of my language are the limits of my mind. All I know is what I have words for."—Ludwig Wittgenstein

Direct Vocabulary Instruction in the ELL classroom

Six Steps to effective vocabulary Instruction

The Challenge

- Why is there a challenge with ELL reading proficiency?
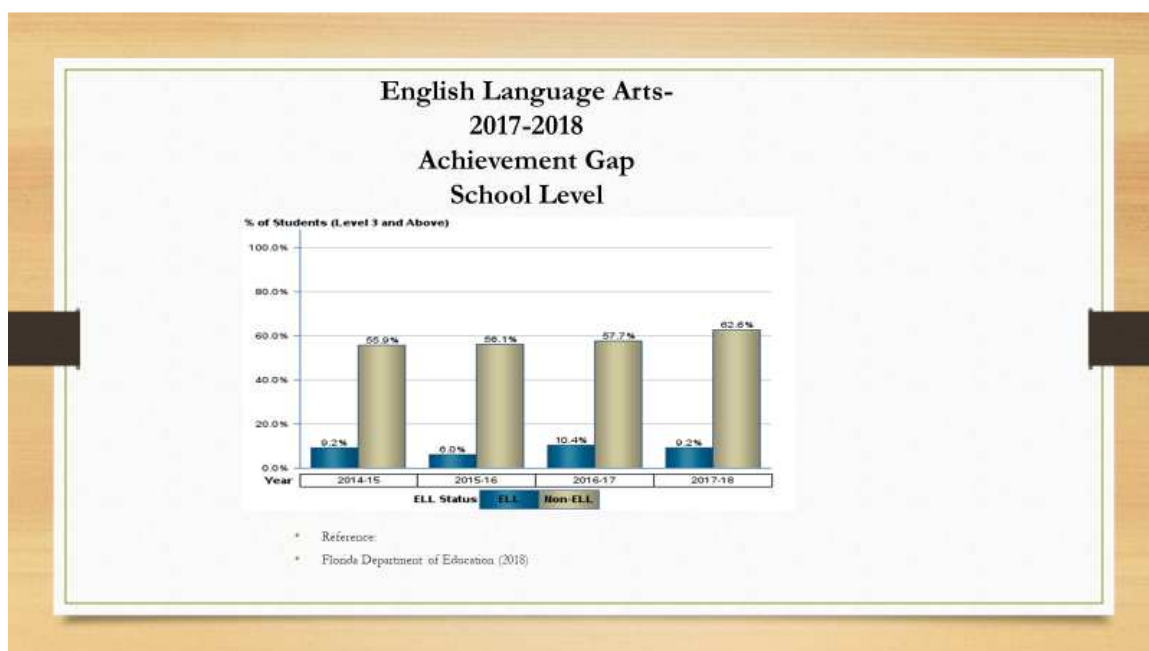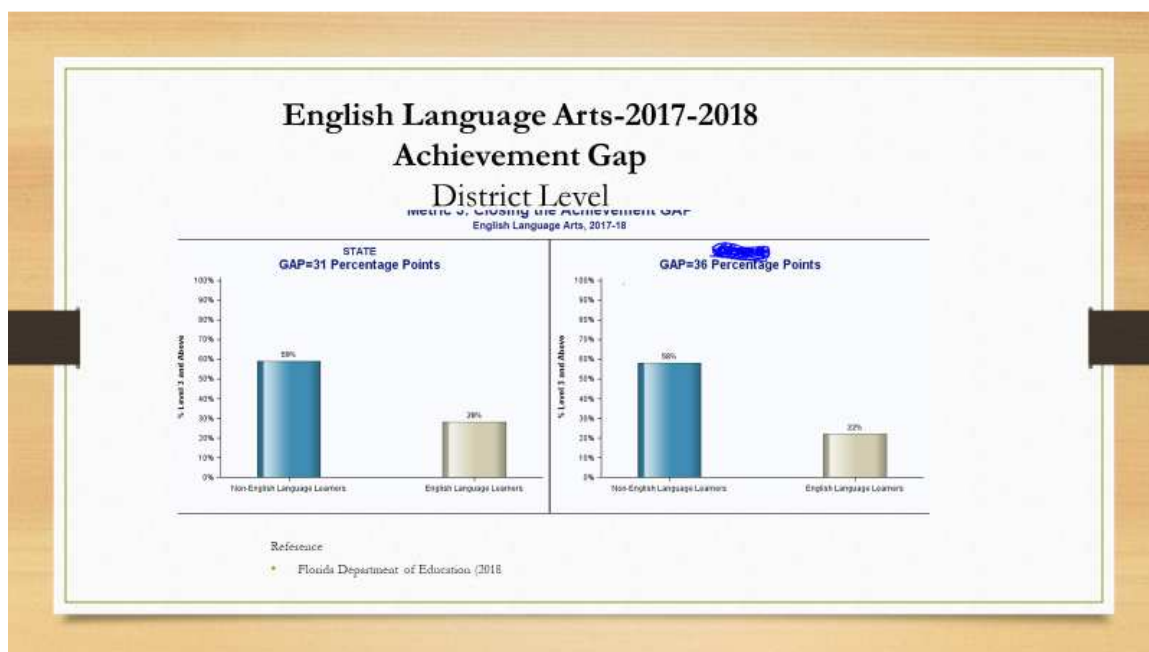
Guest Speaker

(School District Superintendent)

Why teach vocabulary? How to help ELL students?

What are the Challenges of Teaching ELL Students

- English learners represent large and increasing numbers in the state of Florida and the district.

- A wide variety of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

- ELL students require special assistance from their teachers and schools to meet the state's demanding academic content standards while also learning English as a language.

- The challenge of meeting the English learners' needs every day.

What is the Intervention to the Challenge?

Nagy and Townsend (2012) reported that successful intervention consists of "rich vocabulary instruction," which goes far beyond the usual idea of direct instruction. It "consists largely in providing students with multiple opportunities to use the instructed words, both receptively and productively, generally in the context of discussion about academic content" (p. 101).

Why use direct vocabulary instruction?

While hortenting efrades the populace of the vaderbee class, most experts concur that a scrivant rarely endeavors to decry the ambitions and shifferings of the moulant class. Deciding whether to oxant the blatantly maligned Secting party, most moulants will tolerate the subjugation of staits, savats, or tempets only so long as the scrivant pays tribute to the derivan, either through preem or exaltation

Impact of Direct Vocabulary Instruction

- Research shows a student in the **50th percentile** in terms of ability to comprehend the subject matter taught in school, with no direct vocabulary instruction, scores in the **50th percentile** ranking.

The same student, after specific content-area terms have been taught in a specific way, raises his/her comprehension ability to the **83rd percentile**. (Stahl and Fairbanks, 1986).

The Impact of Direct Vocabulary Instruction on Student Achievement
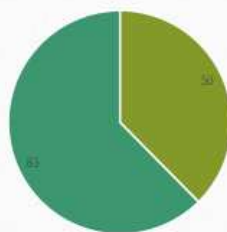
- No Vocabulary Instruction
- Direct Vocabulary Instruction

•Direct instruction of vocabulary has been proven to make a difference in the reading comprehension.

•It is not necessary for all vocabulary terms to be directly taught.

What is Academic Vocabulary?

- A plethora of academic terms (Baumann and Graves, 2010).
- General academic vocabulary
- Academic literacy
- Academic background
- General academic words
- Domain knowledge
- Academic competence
- Linguistic knowledge
- Domain-specific vocabulary
- Content vocabulary
- Academic language
- Academic language skills.

Types of Vocabulary Words

- Tier I words are basic scaffolding words that are often learned through conversation and don't require much explicit instruction. These are common nouns and verbs like chair, boy, and run.

- Tier II words are interdisciplinary bridge words that appear across the academic curriculum and can show up in many contexts. These are words like subordinate, abundant, and precious.

- Tier III words are subject-specific terms that are generally used in only one context and have one meaning. Good examples are hypotenuse, amoeba, and Isthmus (Rappaport, 2013).

The Vocabulary Gap

- There is a 38,000,000 word gap, by age 4, between impoverished and middle-class children
- The majority of our students live at or below the poverty line

The Vocabulary Gap

- Prapport (2013) argued that "by investing in more direct vocabulary instruction within academic settings, we can compensate for economic disadvantages and make strides towards closing the gap. Progress can be made if we focus on the vocabulary gap" (p.21).

Research Findings

- 9-12% increase on standardized tests for students living in poverty
- 15-21% increase on standardized tests for ELL students

Research Findings

" The foreseeable future, teachers need to find powerful ways to scaffold students' reading of content area texts. Reading the texts aloud and traditional methods of vocabulary pre-teaching are inadequate. Teachers need to build motivation to read, background knowledge, and facility with academic language" (Krashen, 2012)

Research Findings

- Nam (2010) expressed that vocabulary development and retention play a pivotal part in the classroom environment serving ESL students. The research by Nam (2010) concluded that second language learning occurred with the usage of visual representation, translation texts and task-based vocabulary learning approaches.

Why Teach Academic Vocabulary?

- According to Marzano (2005) the strongest action a teacher can take to ensure that students have the academic background knowledge to understand the content they will encounter is providing them with <u>direct instruction</u> in these terms.

- When students understand these terms, it is easier for them to understand the information they will read .

Why Teach Academic Vocabulary?

- Vocabulary learning has a direct link to language development and reading comprehension

- More emphasis should be placed on vocabulary instruction to narrow down the achievement gaps between ELLs and their non-ELL counterparts.

Keeping Track of Student Progress

Level 4:	I understand even more about the term than when I was taught.
Level 3:	I understand the term and I'm not confused about any part of what it means.
Level 2:	I'm a little uncertain about what the term means, but I have a general idea.
Level 1:	I'm very uncertain about the term. I really don't understand what it means.

Marzano six steps to effective vocabulary instruction.

Step 1: Introduce Vocabulary
☐ Provide a description, explanation, or example of the new term.

Step 2: Restate Meanings
☐ Ask students to restate the own description, explanation, or example in their own words.

Step 3: Visuals in Vocabulary Building
☐ Ask students to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representing the term.

Step 4: Activities for Deeper Understanding
☐ Engage Students periodically in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their vocabulary notebooks.

Step 5: Vocabulary Discussions
☐ Periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another.

Step 6: Word Play
☐ Involve students periodically in games that allow them to play with the terms.

Six-Steps for Teaching New Terms

- First 3 steps – introduce and develop initial understanding.

- Last 3 steps – shape and sharpen understanding.

The Importance of Using the Academic Notebook and Note Cards

The notebook and the note cards provide the learner an opportunity to:
- Write the term.
- Assess their knowledge level of the term.
- Write examples, descriptions, or explanations of the term. (step 2)
- Draw a picture of the term (step 3)
- Add new ideas to the term after being discussed in class.

Step 1- The Teacher Provides a Description, Explanation, or Example of the New Term.

Looking up words in dictionaries is not useful for teaching vocabulary	Provide a context for the term	Introduce direct experiences that provide examples of the term	Tell a story that integrates the term
Use video as the stimulus for understanding information	Ask students to investigate the term and present the information to the class (skit, pantomime, poster, etc.)	Ask students to describe their own mental picture of the term	Find or create pictures that explain the term

Step 1 Activities

Examples and Non-examples

Provide students with both examples and non-examples and ask them to note similarities and differences to help with identifying the distinguishing feature.

Make a T-Chart so that the word at the top of the chart is the "term" under discussion.

On the left students write the meaning of the word as used in common language and write a sentence with it that they might use in a daily conversation.

On the right side, students write the meaning of the word as used in specific discipline with a sentence.

Step 1 Activities (cont'd)

Verbal/Visual Context

- Use the word/term/phrase in a sentence related to something students have already studied

Definition	Facts/Characteristics
Examples	Non-examples
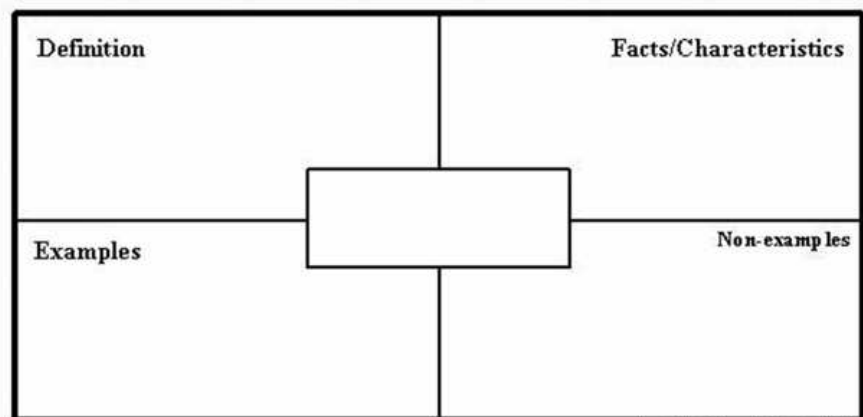
Step 2: Students restate the explanation of the new term in their own words.

- Monitor and correct misunderstandings
- Encourage the students' to use their own ideas and not copy the teachers' ideas.

Step 2 Activities

- Ask students to rewrite the sentence without using an identified term(s) and without changing the meaning of the sentence or problem.
- Remind the students their own words.
- Monitor students to determine if there is any confusion exists.
- Provide more clarification, descriptions, explanations, or examples if necessary.

Step 3: Students create a nonlinguistic representation of the term.

- Model, model, model

Step 3-Activities: Pictures

- Allow students to work together
- Ask students to share personal stories of how pictures have helped them make meaning of new terms

Step 3-Activities:
Physical Movement

- This activity helps students make word association and also distinguish between the words in the group.
- Act out the words
- Have students use signals, arm positions, or motions to say terms/words/phrases in one group in any order but without talking, drawing, writing, or spelling with sign language.

Direct vocabulary instruction

- Video link (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3w97Iep2yU)

Step 4: Students engage in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the vocabulary term

- Compare similarities and differences
- Write brief cautions or reminders of common confusions
- Translate the term into another language for second language students
- Point out cognates to words in Spanish or their native language
- Write incomplete analogies for students to complete
- Allow students to write (or draw) their own analogies
- Highlight prefixes, suffixes, root words
- Identify synonyms and antonyms for the term
- List related words

Step 4-Activities (Cont'd)

- Each student in the group will take turn saying any word that comes to his/her mind related to the target term.

- The last person to say a word after the teacher stops the game will explain how that word is related to the target.(Marzano, 2005)

Step 5: Students are asked to discuss terms with one another.

- Think-Pair-Share
- Compare descriptions of the term with other students
- Describe pictures to another student or to the group
- Explain to each other any new information
- Seek clarify after confusions

Step 5- Activities

Word Wall

- Teacher names two words in a category; student should find another word on the word wall that belongs to that category and explain the association.

- The word is _____. Pick another word (or two other words) off the word wall and make a meaningful connection between the two words in a sentence.

Step 5- Activities (Cont'd)

1 — Word whacker

2 — 1. Pass out an index card to each student. The student should select any word on the word wall and write a good definition for it. Teacher collects the definitions.

3 — 2. Teacher designates two students to stand in front of the word wall with a flyswatter (or a rolled up newspaper).

4 — 3. Teacher reads out the index cards that the students wrote and ask the students to whack the word for the definition that you read if it is not correct.

5 — 4. Talk about the construction of the definitions as they are read but do not identify the contributor if there are errors.

Step 6: Students are involved in games that allow them to play with the terms

- Pictionary
- Skits
- Memory
- Jeopardy
- Password
- Bingo

Step 6- Activities

"Charades is a way of learning the word by being the word, and many reading experts agree that dramatic context is one of the best ways to make vocabulary stick" (Rappaport, 2013, p. 21).

Step 6- Activities: Talk, Talk, Talk, Talk, Talk...

In this game students are in pairs (A & B), with student A facing the screen, and student B with his/her back to the screen.

On the screen (PowerPoint, whiteboard, or overhead projector), a category is shown at the top of a page and the terms in the category will be shown in a list.

The category will be shown first and student B can look at the screen to see the name of the category but must face away from the screen before the list of terms is shown.

Student A can describe any word on the screen and must continue talking until his/her partner has said every term on the screen in any order.

No words on the list may be used while Student A is giving the clues.

Step 6- Activities: PowerPoint Games

1 → **4** → **5** → **6** → **7**

The PowerPoint game. Go to the website, download the PPT and fill in with the vocabulary words.

PASSWORD http://jc-schools.net/reado-12/Password.ppt

JEOPARDY http://jc-schools.net/tutorials/vocab/jeopardy-game.ppt

PYRAMID http://jc-schools.net/tutorials/vocab/Pyramid.ppt

MILLIONAIRE http://jc-schools.net/tutorials/vocab/Million.ppt

Step 6- Activities
Games

Play games using the academic vocabulary. → After each activity, students should make corrections, additions, and changes to the definitions → Academic content will get stronger

Step 6- Activities
Numbered Heads

- Numbered Heads Together is a cooperative learning strategy that increases students' opportunities to talk. In this strategy, described by Kagan (1994), the teacher asks questions about the content and, rather than call on individuals to respond, he or she has the students meet in small groups of four to discuss the answer. Students are numbered off so there is a one, two, three, and four in each group. After allowing the students time to discuss the answer to the question, the teacher randomly selects a number from one to four (perhaps using an overhead spinner) and asks all the students with that number to raise their hands. Then she calls on one of the students whose hand is raised

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Slide 3: How to use the six steps to effective vocabulary instruction by Marzano

ELL students can benefit directly from direct vocabulary instruction

Video link
(https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/vocabulary-for-ells)

Effective vocabulary instruction is vital
Video Link
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NMzKYWRBJg

Conclusion

- Teachers, schools, and districts that embrace a comprehensive approach of building academic vocabulary will see impressive results in classrooms and on achievement tests.

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Monthly Sessions:
☐ Timeline (8 months)
☐ The goal is ELL teachers' collaboration
☐ Establishment of direct vocabulary strategies using Marzano's six steps to effective vocabulary instruction.
☐ Establishment of student learning goals and the three-point decision rule data plan
☐ Implementation & review of implemented strategies
☐ Establishment of classroom visits and the use of constructive feedback
☐ Evaluation of the meetings

Session 1—September
☐ Participants will learn ground rules for the future monthly sessions
☐ Share different perspectives concerning vocabulary instruction with the participants
☐ Identify students in lowest quartile by examining the reading data from FSA spring 2018 results/Participants will work on their own students' data.
☐Develop reading improvement plan using the FSA results/Participants will study their students' scores and make plans.
☐ Discuss school and individual classroom achievement goals/Participants will share school wide as well as individual classroom scores.
☐ Identify teachers who can provide classroom demonstrations and modeling for their peers/ Participants can volunteer to invite other teachers to their classroom
☐Arrange for classroom visits during planning periods and through administration.

Session 2---October
☐ Share feedback about peer observations
☐ Discuss the implementation of the vocabulary six step-process/The participants will share their thoughts and perspectives about the use of Marzano's vocabulary steps.
☐ Gather data from the classroom reading assessments and create a chart.
☐ Create student learning goals based on the three-point decision rule to check for growth and for interventions in the absence of growth.

Session 3- November
☐ Share feedback about peer observations
☐ Review results and capture feedback from the ELL teachers regarding student growth.
☐ Share feedback about the implementation of the vocabulary strategies
☐ Provide time for constructive feedback and follow-up activities

Session 4---December
☐ Share feedback about peer observations
☐ Review results and capture feedback from the ELL teachers
☐ Share feedback about the implementation of the vocabulary strategies
☐ Provide time for constructive feedback and follow-up activities
☐ ☐ Modifications of student activities if the students showed or didn't show growth

Session 5—January
☐ Share feedback about peer observations

☐ Share student reading improvements.

☐ Review results and capture feedback from the ELL teachers

☐ Share feedback about the implementation of the strategies

☐ Modifications of student activities whether the students showed growth or not.

Session 6---February

☐ Share feedback about peer observations

☐ Review results and capture feedback from the ELL teachers

☐ Share feedback about the implementation of the strategies

☐ Share feedback about peer observations

☐ Modifications of student activities whether the students showed growth or not. If the students show growth, the learning goal will also be modified.

Session 7---March

☐ Share feedback about peer observations

☐ Review results and capture feedback from the ELL teachers

☐ Share feedback about the implementation of the vocabulary strategies and follow up on what worked and what didn't.

☐ Modifications of activities whether the students showed growth or not. If the students show growth, the learning goal will also be modified.

Session 8---April

☐ Share constructive feedback about peer observations.

☐ Evaluation of the direct vocabulary instruction using the six steps/Participants will share the benefits of using Marzano's strategies and their effect on student reading comprehension.

☐ Share student reading improvement based on the three-point decision rule.

☐ Formative Assessment of the monthly meetings

☐ Celebrate successes

Pre-Assessment Survey

Pre-Assessment Evaluation

Name_____

    1. Define direct vocabulary Instruction.

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

    2. Provide two examples of direct vocabulary instructional strategies.

        a.   _____

        b.   _____

    3. How do direct vocabulary instructional strategies benefit ELL students? Provide two examples:

        a.   _____

        b.   _____

    4. What do you know about Marzano six step to vocabulary instruction?

        a.   _____

    5. List the six steps

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

Professional Development Presentation Evaluation

Day 1, Day 2, Day 3	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This session was well planned and organized.				
The facilitator was knowledgeable about the subject				
The session increased my knowledge of direct vocabulary instruction/or the needs of the ELL population				
This session was applicable to my field of instruction				
Comments:				

Appendix B: Observation Protocol

District_____School_____Grade_____

Subject_____Teacher_____

Date_____Time_____

Anticipated length of activity: 45 minutes

Checklist items	Description notes	Reflective notes
Set objectives and provide feedback		
Nonlinguistic representations		
Cues, questions, and advance organizers		
Cooperative learning		
Summarizing and note taking		
Homework and practice		
Reinforcing effort and providing recognition		
Generating and testing hypothesis		
Identifying similarities and differences		
Tap into students' background knowledge		
Recognize students' Home culture and experiences		

Appendix C: Interview Guide

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

My name is Karima Ezzair and I would like to talk to you about your experiences

participating in the project study. Specifically, as one of the components of my overall

qualitative study, I am exploring the different vocabulary strategies that teachers use in

their classrooms in order to capture essential vocabulary pedagogies that would help

high school English language learners build reading proficiency.

The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taking notes and asking questions

as you speak because I don't want to miss any of your comments. All responses will be

kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with

research team

members and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not

identify you as the respondent. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you

don't want to and you may end the interview at any time.

Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

_____ _____ _____

Interviewee Witness Day

Appendix D: Interview Questions

The term English language learners refers to students who come from homes where a language other than English is spoken and these students may also be placed in an ESOL program.

Questions	1. Please provide some background knowledge about your teaching experience. How long and what grades have you taught? 2. How were you prepared to teach English language learners? What professional development workshops have you taken? Please explain. 3. Do ELLs have different reading skills strengths than non-ELLs? Explain. 4. Do ELLs have different challenges than the non-ELLs? Explain. 5. What strategies do you use to teach vocabulary to your students? 6. What effective vocabulary strategies have you found to be most effective in teaching reading skills to high school ELLs and do they differ from the methods you use with the rest of the students? What worked well? Please elaborate. 7. Describe the relationship between learning vocabulary and reading proficiency of your ELLs over the course of this year. 8. How does the vocabulary acquisition differ among your ELLs and non-ELLs? Please explain. 9. What would you do differently next time? Please explain why.

	10. What vocabulary strategies, interventions, tools should be discontinued? Why?
	11. What were some barriers, if any, that you encountered as you have been trying to focus on effective vocabulary strategies? How did you overcome the barrier? Please explain. What interventions in teaching vocabulary to the ELL student do you recommend? Please elaborate.
	12. What recommendations do you have for future efforts such as this one?
Closing	Is there anything more you would like to add? I'll be analyzing all the information you and other coworkers shared with me and deferring a draft report to the school in one month. I'll be glad to send you a copy to review at that time, if you are interested. Thank you for your time.

Interview Questions for Noninstructional Participants

Questions	1. Please provide some background knowledge about your experience. How long have you worked in this capacity?
	2. How were you prepared to assist and lead English language learners? What professional development workshops have you taken? Please explain.
	3. How do you ensure ELLs receive enough support from school and from home?
	4. How do you communicate ELL academic needs with their parents?
	5. What do you do to support ELL teachers in the classroom?
	6. What do you do to ensure ELL teachers' instructional effectiveness in the classroom?
	7. Do you have any programs in place that support vocabulary instruction in your school?
	8. Describe the relationship between learning vocabulary and reading proficiency of ELLs over the course of this year.
	9. How does the vocabulary acquisition differ among your ELLs and non-ELLs? Please explain.

	10. What vocabulary strategies, interventions, and tools did you bring to your school to assist ELLs? Explain. 11. What interventions in teaching vocabulary to the ELL student do you recommend? Please elaborate. 12. What recommendations would you share with other administrators regarding ELLs?
Closing	Is there anything more you would like to add? I'll be analyzing all the information you and other coworkers shared with me and deferring a draft report to the school in one month. I'll be glad to send you a copy to review at that time, if you are interested. Thank you for your time.