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Increasing the Vocabulary Acquisition Rate for Third Grade English Language Learners

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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MS, University of Phoenix, 2006

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Given the ongoing demographic transformations of U.S classrooms, knowledge of the strategies teachers use to address the vocabulary needs of English language learners (ELLs) is central for improving student outcomes. The problem in a Georgia school system was that ELLs were not building grade-level appropriate vocabulary at a pace comparable to that of their peers. The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify strategies that increase the rate of vocabulary acquisition for ELLs. In this study, 10 third grade teachers were asked about their understanding of the second language vocabulary acquisition process, which vocabulary strategies they were using to address the specific needs of these students, and the outcomes of these strategies on student learning. Three qualitative instruments were used for methodological triangulation: survey, interview, and observation. Data were analyzed using thematic coding to organize the participants' answers by naturally occurring themes. A central finding was that most teachers reported that they supplemented the existing curriculum with materials from various sources, including websites, previous curriculum, and collaboration with other teachers. The culminating project may bring positive social change via the creation of a peer professional development blog, which will provide one common place teachers in the district can turn to share successful strategies and get ideas for supplementing instruction. This project could be made public to include teachers from around the country to reach a larger group of people.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

At my study site, a North Georgia school district, there was a problem with the rate of vocabulary acquisition for English language learners (ELLs). Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) results reported by the Georgia Department of Education for the local district revealed that third grade ELLs were not building grade-level appropriate academic language knowledge at a pace comparable to that of their peers.

Definition of the Problem

Alharbi (2015) found that ELLs acquire vocabulary at a slower rate in both primary and secondary languages than children learning vocabulary in only one language. These findings are commensurate with the assessment results from the district. Test scores showed that ELLs in third grade simply were not developing vocabulary at the same rate as their native English-speaking peers (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.). Scheffel, Shaw, and Shaw (2008) stated that, while typical students generally learn two new words per week, ELLs typically learn less than two new words weekly.

According to the 2010-2011 report card for the district, only 5% of all third grade students did not meet the reading standard on the CRCT. Within that group, however, the subgroup of ELLs in third grade showed a lower proficiency with 10% failing to meet the reading standard (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.). The local Georgia school district included 12 elementary schools, with a total of 54 third grade classrooms. ELLs were taught alongside native English speakers in all 54 regular third grade classrooms.

Each school was responsible for developing or adopting its own curriculum for vocabulary instruction; thus, instruction might have varied from school to school. In this study, I focused on the possible lack of effective instructional practices used to instruct ELLs in vocabulary acquisition at my study site.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

This low rate of language acquisition by third grade ELLs was significant at the local level, as evidenced by the CRCT scores. At 10%, the number of third grade ELLs failing to meet the standard in English/Language Arts was twice that of the general population of third graders, marking a pronounced language achievement gap between native English speakers and ELLs (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.).

Evidence of the Problem from Professional Literature

Other researchers in the field of education have identified similar problems in their work. Westby (2012) stated that early vocabulary development is a predictor of academic success. However, second language learning occurs in a different way than first language learning. According to Herrell and Jordan (2008), a first language is acquired naturally. There is no need to formally teach a child his or her first language. Second language is learned by making connections between the new language and the meanings connected to the home language. This means that in a classroom with students who are learning English vocabulary as second language learners and students who are learning as native English speakers, students will process their learning in different ways. For example, if given the word *broom*, native English speakers will make connections to their

experiences in hearing their parents use that word as they clean. Students whose families speak other languages, such as Spanish, at home will not immediately be able to make connections in that way. Giving them a picture of a broom or modeling for them how to use a broom, Spanish speaking ELLs will likely connect the word broom to the Spanish word, *la escoba*, which their family calls this object. The students are learning the same group of words through the same lesson, but they are going through two uniquely different mental processes to associate and store the words as they are acquired (Herrell & Jordan, 2008).

Alharbi (2015) noted that second language learners are slower in vocabulary acquisition than their peers for whom the language is primary. Further, Marzano (2003) stated that home environment issues, such as socioeconomic status, can contribute to lower academic achievement rates, and a child's immigrant status, gender, and ethnicity can also contribute to achievement gaps (Webb & Chang, 2012). In this teacher-centered project study, I attempted to identify instructional strategies that would provide support to all ELLs, regardless of socioeconomic level. The purpose of examining this problem more closely was to address the specific problem for ELLs in third grade classrooms within the district.

Definitions

I used the following terms and definitions throughout this study:

ELL: A person who is a native speaker of a language other than English and is learning English as a second language, which is also referred to as L2 (Coady & Huckin, 2003).

Language acquisition domains: The domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in which vocabulary is taught and learned (TESOL International, 2006).

Narrow reading: A process for allowing students to select a text to read individually from a predetermined set of books. These sets are generally chosen by the teacher because they have a common theme, reading level, author, or similar criteria (Hadaway, 2009).

Vocabulary acquisition: The process of lexical storage and retrieval from memory (Coady & Huckin, 2003).

Wide reading: An educational philosophy which allows the students to choose their texts themselves. There are no stipulations for the types of books that must be selected (Marzano, 2003).

Significance

Vocabulary acquisition of native Spanish speaking ELLs progresses at a slower rate in both English and Spanish (Jamil & Mehmood Khan, 2013). A slower rate of acquisition may explain the gap in test scores between the general population and ELLs in the district under study. Webb and Chang (2012) stated that new vocabulary is learned through a different process in second language acquisition. First language vocabulary is generally learned incidentally through natural repetition. However, vocabulary acquisition in a second language generally requires a more direct approach. Therefore, while engaged in the same vocabulary lesson, the native English speakers in the class will be more likely to be learning words they have heard in context many times before while

ELLs may be hearing the words for the first time, or at least may have heard them at a much lesser frequency than students whose first language is English.

Studying this gap in language achievement further may support district teachers in understanding why the rate of vocabulary acquisition is low for ELLs. If teachers can understand the problem and possible solutions more clearly, planning and delivering vocabulary instruction for ELLs may be more successful, and the students may have the optimal conditions to experience an increase in their rates of vocabulary acquisition. On a larger scale, teachers in other districts may use my findings on successful strategies for teaching second language vocabulary as well. ELLs, both children and adults, could potentially benefit from these strategies in an academic setting (Webb & Chang, 2012).

Guiding Questions

Puhalla (2011) found that students can be supported in retaining new words through specialized instruction. In the district I studied, third grade ELLs were not retaining words at a rate equal to that of their native English speaking peers. I thus conducted research to ask teachers about the strategies they used to address this problem. To build the guiding questions for the study, I used a constructivist paradigm, with the understanding that multiple realities might exist (see Hatch, 2002).

I developed the following research questions from the problem statement:

1. What aspects of the second language vocabulary acquisition process do third grade teachers understand?
2. What aspects of the second language vocabulary acquisition process do they not understand?

3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
4. What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using each specific vocabulary acquisition strategy with ELLs?

I designed these questions to identify teaching practices and ideas associated with effectively teaching vocabulary to ELLs.

Review of the Literature

In my review of the scholarly literature, I explored historical and contemporary perspectives on vocabulary instruction. I focused particularly on teacher collaboration in vocabulary lesson planning and vocabulary acquisition in general. Because this study was focused on ELLs, I also reviewed literature on cultural considerations in language instruction. Finally, I reviewed literature on improving phonics awareness and building vocabulary. In the literature search, I primarily used ERIC, ProQuest, and EBSCO Host in the Walden University Library. I searched combinations of the following terms: ESOL, ELL, ESL, vocabulary instruction, direct instruction, incidental learning, wide reading, and narrow reading.

Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

In 1997, TESOL International published a set of language acquisition standards to guide instruction and student progress. The standards stemmed from three broad goals established for all grade levels of ELLs (TESOL International, 1997). The first goal was that students would use English to communicate in social environments. This goal ensured that students develop the social English skills necessary to participate in

America's democracy. For this goal, the emphasis was on spoken and written English for enjoyment or personal expression (TESOL International, 1997). The second goal emphasized that students will use English for academic achievement in content areas. This required only that students use English to complete class work. Interactions in the classroom should ideally be in English (TESOL International, 1997). The third goal stated that students would use English in culturally and socially appropriate ways. Under this goal, students will learn to adapt to cultural norms amid diversity, and they should also be able to interact in a variety of social settings (TESOL International, 1997).

These foundations of the early standards for ELLs were primarily targeting social language and vocabulary development. When creating these standards, the ultimate goal was to give ELLs enough experiences with social language that they could function in society and make adequate progress in academic classes. These standards provided guidance for teachers and expectations for students as to how social English skills should be developed. While some second language standards divide domains by the mode of language, such as speaking, listening, reading, or writing, these standards divided domains by use of language. Frost, Elder, and Wigglesworth (2012) stated that domains divided by type of language use are more effective. Two modal domains may rely on each other. For example, speaking in English is reliant on listening in English. Functional domains do not generally rely on each other. Academic language, for example, does not generally rely on social language.

These standards were set and made available for any states that chose to adopt them until the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. In order to comply with the act, each

state had to develop or adopt appropriate standards for ELLs, grounded in academic content standards. Furthermore, the standards would have to address each of the four language domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (TESOL International, 2006).

Teachers use the TESOL standard domains to measure academic language at school, but social language domains are important for student home life as well. Dixon, Zhao, Quiroz, and Shin (2012) stated that English proficiency depends on the amount of English used in the home, which can affect speed of English acquisition. In second language acquisition, standards are the foundation for instruction. After modifications and additions by TESOL International, today's standards for teaching ELLs look very different. In 2006, the modification of the standards changed the way teachers were to structure their lessons for ELLs. While the 1997 standards only focused on social language, the new standards were based on five proficiency standards, only one of which addresses social language (TESOL International, 2006).

The first standard states that within the school setting, learners will communicate for social, intercultural, and instructional purposes. This first standard addresses the same skills that all three of the 1997 goals addressed. The new set of standards, then, has four additional goals, one for each content area. The goals state that students will communicate information, concepts, and ideas in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. With the new goals, students are to learn not only social language, but also academic language for each content area. As TESOL has noted, "The focus on

academic language is supported by research on effective second language instruction as well as by the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001" (p. 6).

Teacher Collaboration

Nassaji (2012) reported that a teacher's knowledge of second language research and proven instructional strategies improves second language instruction. Because the process of acquiring a second language is different from the process of acquiring a first language, teachers benefit from a thorough understanding of the process. Classroom teachers without specific training in teaching English as a second language may need to use different instructional strategies support ELLs in acquiring new vocabulary (Babayiğit, 2014). Teachers can collaborate with other teachers for support in addressing the specific needs of ELLs. De Lima (2010) said that teachers could collaborate at school, county, state, and national levels. Farrell (2011) stressed that teachers can observe each other to provide advice and support on reaching ELLs during whole group instruction. During observations, teachers can note how many times the students are given visual prompts with oral directions, or when the teachers they are observing use other strategies than they are familiar with to support second language understanding. De Lima (2010) added that teacher learning in these collaborative networks can be experience-based, or based on a transmission of concepts learned. For instance, teachers who have had the opportunity to teach many ELLs will have anecdotal stories to share with other teachers. Other teachers may have information to share from training or classes on differentiation.

Vocabulary

Asgari and Mustapha (2011) maintained that vocabulary is the central focus of language acquisition, as language will have limited meaningful use without a wide vocabulary. Newton (2013) stated that a vocabulary is learned through incidental learning as well as direct vocabulary instruction. Puhalla (2011) has claimed that special instruction helps third grade students retain new words. Such vocabulary instruction can take different forms. One method for teaching vocabulary is to teach directly in structured vocabulary lessons. Another method is to allow students to infer meaning through incidental learning in the context of reading and spoken language (Jacobs, 2016). Some teachers place little value on direct vocabulary instruction, believing that new words are learned through natural interaction (Walther & Fuhler, 2008). However, Beck (2002) made a case for the importance of direct vocabulary instruction, claiming that oral context and oral environments play a role in early learning, but they typically begin to play a lesser role. For native English speakers, the vocabulary words students learn during the first 2 years in school are words for which they already know the meaning. They are just learning what the words look like in print (Beck, 2002). However, this theory may not apply to ELLs who have not yet been exposed to the English word. If students only hear a language other than English at home, then they may not have been exposed to a given word before seeing it at school. Students may have heard the word, but they are not yet ready to recognize it in print (Babayiğit, 2014).

In my literature review on vocabulary development for ELLs, I found strategies that follow these contemporary theories on second language acquisition. These strategies

address academic vocabulary development and can be utilized in every content area. ELLs must develop good foundations of vocabulary in order to achieve reading comprehension goals (Jamil & Mehmood Khan, 2013). Tran (2006) offered several strategies for helping ELLs develop academic vocabulary, such as keeping student-made word dictionaries and reading regularly.

Scholars working on second language acquisition have addressed appropriate ratios of incidental and direct vocabulary instruction. Spencer, Goldstein, and Kaminski (2012) discussed that it is unrealistic to expect to provide direct vocabulary instruction for every new word acquired. Therefore, it is important to choose carefully which words are important enough for devoting instructional time. Tran (2006) also stated that some words should be introduced with more fervency than other words. For instance, high frequency words have been identified for third grade students. These are the words third grade learners will encounter most often in their grade-level reading experiences. The high frequency words should be reviewed regularly and attention should be paid to the high frequency words as they are incorporated into every content area (Tran, 2006). Thordardottir (2011) reported that bilingual children may also be able to understand the vocabulary they are learning long before they are comfortable expressing it either through speaking or writing. Therefore, time and practice in small groups will support ELL children as they learn to comfortably express new vocabulary of any type.

Cultural Considerations

Teachers' understandings of students' cultural practices is important to the process of second language acquisition. A teacher who does not understand the cultural

considerations of their ELLs may hold those students to a lower standard than native English speakers, believing that the ability to learn is lower for these students (Hertzog, 2011). Nekovei and Ermis (2006) described the second language acquisition process as a journey not only through an unfamiliar language, but also through unfamiliar customs. They noted that "children must acquire the ability to visually track cues that provide information about the give-and-take of conversation and listener emotion as well as other forms of nonverbal feedback" (Nekovei & Ermis, 2006, p. 1). An ELL's culture may prevent him or her from gaining experience with spoken English that is needed for building vocabulary. In some cultures, for example, children are hesitant to make eye contact or have conversations with adults.

However, teachers in the United States may look for eye contact as a sign of respect during conversations (Nekovei & Ermis, 2006). Therefore, new communication customs may provide another barrier to language acquisition. Before students can focus on the new vocabulary, they must be comfortable in their environments. Lambert et al. (2002) stated that as they examine test data, school leaders cannot ignore the achievement gap between the minority and majority of the student populations. Cultural and language differences contribute to this achievement gap. In order to make the cultural transition less traumatic, teachers should be aware of the cultural norms in the students' countries of origin. Then American customs can be introduced gradually through modeling (Nekovei & Ermis, 2006). Because the goal is to help ELLs grow comfortable with American culture, best practice is for teachers is to make an effort to understand the cultural aspects of the ELLs (Ivers, Ivers, & Duffey, 2013).

In a study of supplemental multi-sensory instruction to third grade students, Scheffel et al. (2008) found that students who received 30 additional minutes of multi-sensory instruction daily developed phonics skills more quickly than those who did not. Scheffel et al.'s (2008) study indicated that providing supplemental instruction for students who are struggling academically may be one possible solution to the problem of ELLs developing phonics skills at a slower pace than other students do.

Learning to see how words relate to each other, helps equip students with the skills to become better readers (Cummins, 2008). Wasik (2006) noted that "according to what linguists call the neighborhood theory of word acquisition, children more readily learn words that are phonologically similar to words they already know" (p. 1). Therefore, when students have practice changing beginning or ending sounds to create new words, they begin to see how words are related. When students encounter unfamiliar words, they can use the knowledge of similar words already acquired to help them decipher the new words. Students can develop a strong base of spelling patterns and word family knowledge that will serve them well in attempting to read new words (Zhang & Lu, 2014). For instance, students can write high frequency words on a dry erase board in the writing center. They can then erase one letter, changing the word to another high frequency word. This same skill used with the word tiles can address writing as well. In writing, it is important to be clear about the topic. He and Shi (2012) stated that writing can be a difficult task for ELLs if they do not understand the topic given. It is crucial to make sure that students have an understanding of the prompt or topic of the lesson before asking them to speak or write about it.

Speaking and listening are important vehicles for helping students develop vocabulary (TESOL International, 2006). Classroom activities that support the practice of patterns in oral discourse, such as chanting and rhyming, build phonics skills (Vazirabad, 2013). Teachers can choose 10 high frequency words per week for study and practice. Students can chant the letters that make up each of the high frequency words. They can also find rhyming words within the set of high frequency words. The students will be learning to recognize the high frequency words as well as to recognize patterns among the words. These strategies will help students to develop decoding skills, which will ease the vocabulary development process (DelliCarpini, 2008).

Building Vocabulary

Why do some students develop vocabularies at a much slower pace? "Research…supports the relationship between vocabulary development and access to a wide variety of experiences" (Marzano, 2003, p. 138). Generally, children who have access to an assortment of varied experiences have significantly larger vocabularies than students who do not have access to these experiences. Because students in higher socioeconomic status levels typically have more opportunities, vocabulary levels tend to differ between socioeconomic status levels. In fact, third grade students who are in the middle range of socioeconomic status know about 50% more words than students in the low range (Marzano, 2003). Socioeconomic status is not the only reason some students are lacking in life experiences necessary to build a solid base for receptive English skills. Families of a different culture will have diverse experiences which may not offer a solid receptive English foundation (Xuan, 2014).

According to Mott and Holmes (2012), when students are not familiar with the concepts of the words they are learning, they will also be less likely to remember them. They stated that students would more easily learn words the meaning for which they already have a deep understanding. For instance, students reading the word "monkey" for the first time may not understand what the meaning is. Therefore, the next time they see the word, it will still hold no meaning even though it has been previously decoded. The word will be approached as an unfamiliar word again. If the student has the opportunity to see and interact with an actual monkey at the zoo, he or she will understand the concept of a monkey. Afterward, when they see the printed word "monkey" for the first time, they will give that label to the memory of their experience with a monkey. Students will then be more likely to recognize the word the next time it is encountered (Greene, 2015). Proper nouns can cause more confusion for ELLs. Kobeleva (2012) recommended that if the purpose of the reading exercise is that students understand the general plot and the pronunciation of names is not important to comprehension, teachers should not spend very much time on these words. Proper nouns can be skipped or quickly corrected before moving on and continuing to read the text or focus on the goal of the exercise.

Are textbooks alone enough to support ELLs in learning new words? Nguyen (2011) stated that textbooks are generally developed with the native language speaker in mind and, therefore, do not adequately address the present levels or language sounds of second language learners. Teachers can supplement in this area as they become familiar with the students' speech patterns. Brown (2011) found that textbooks generally focus vocabulary instruction on word form and meaning, while ignoring other important

aspects of the new vocabulary. There are several strategies for addressing this need. O'Loughlin (2012) stressed that supplemental books should be included to support the work of the main textbook. When supplemental books are not the most convenient option for addressing the need of further analyzing the word beyond what the textbook has to offer, Herrell and Jordan (2008) recommended using realia and visual aids when possible to support students who may have no prior knowledge of a particular concept or word. In this case, when presenting the word "monkey," the teacher can show a video, picture, or toy monkey to help students visualize the word meaning.

Keeping in mind the matrix of proficiency descriptors, a preview/review strategy can be used before and after a lesson (TESOL International, 2006). Before the lesson, a teacher can briefly preview the words. After using the words in the lesson, the teacher can review the meanings in closing the lesson (Herrell & Jordan, 2008). This process of previewing and reviewing the words will help the students retain the meaning of the new vocabulary. Crossley, Salsbury, and McNamara (2011) offered that when ELLs use words of multiple meaning, it requires a more complex acquisition process. Teachers will want to provide more background knowledge of meanings and allow for more instructional time as well as time in practice using the words.

Marzano (2003) pointed out that, for many students, low vocabulary is the result of lower socioeconomic status. Students from families in low socioeconomic status often do not have the opportunity to visit museums, attend concerts, and travel as often as other students. These students are lacking the experiences needed to familiarize them with new words they may not encounter in their daily lives. Arnold and Colburn stated, "Children

with good word knowledge usually have good world knowledge, too" (2008, ¶ 2, p. 5). There are students who cannot afford to have these cultural experiences with their families. The schools and communities must address this inequality. Small group field trips to local museums, festivals, zoos, concerts, etc. can be planned relatively inexpensively. Fundraisers and donations will help these students be able to afford to have similar experiences to those of their peers who are of higher socioeconomic status.

Wide or Narrow Reading Versus Direct Vocabulary Instruction

How can we help these students improve vocabulary? Wide reading and direct vocabulary instruction are the two most commonly used methods of vocabulary instruction (Brown, 2015). Brown stated that the wide reading approach, which allows students to choose their own literature, is the key to increasing vocabulary. While wide reading has advantage, a more specific strategy of narrow reading is often used with ELLs. This strategy, which narrows the students' selection by genre, author, or other criteria, is more suitable for addressing the needs of ELLs (Hadaway, 2009). Can either method sufficiently address the vocabulary acquisition needs of ELLs without direct vocabulary instruction?

Marzano (2003) stated that the wide reading philosophy includes such programs as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). In SSR, students read for 10 to 20 minutes from books they have selected themselves based on reading level and personal preference. Teachers frequently read during this time as well. The philosophy supporting this practice is that vocabulary will be incidentally increased as students are exposed to new words in

a natural way. Marzano (2003) made a case for using wide reading with the general student population, but did not address how this practice works for ELLs specifically.

Fien et al. (2011) stated that wide reading is effective in developing vocabulary for students who are reading in their first language. However, students who are reading in their second language need additional support. Hadaway (2009) claimed that wide reading programs do not provide the same benefits for ELLs as for native English speakers. The problem with wide reading programs is that the selection of books students have to choose from is so broad that ELLs may be at a disadvantage (Hansen & Collins, 2015). In wide reading, each text can present new vocabulary and new author styles in addition to the new information. "Effective teachers understand the need to balance cognitive and language demands so ELLs don't become overloaded" (Hadaway, 2009, p. 5). Having to concentrate on new language as well as new information can impede comprehension. By narrowing the reading choices into thematic sections or organizing books by author or genre, the teacher gives ELLs an opportunity to read a series of similar books. The students will begin to see language patterns in the text. Each book will convey different information, but books within the same category or by the same author will allow students to focus more on content rather than the language or format of the book (Hansen & Collins, 2015). Therefore, narrow reading could be a better option for ELLs.

The question remains: is a reading program enough without direct vocabulary instruction? Wide reading can be used as a more natural way to let students study words incidentally (Gardner, 2008). However, is that really enough without direct instruction?

While Hadaway (2009) offered a method of narrow reading that could better meet the needs of ELLs than a general wide reading program, he did not specifically address the benefit of vocabulary development from narrow reading over a direct vocabulary instruction approach. Nguyen and Nation (2011) also found that repetition alone is not enough to increase vocabulary in second language acquisition.

Herrel and Jordan (2008) stated that in direct vocabulary instruction, students study select unfamiliar words for meaning, which can help ELLs to have more experiences using new words. Direct vocabulary instruction teaches students strategies to help them focus on the meaning of the new words (Lightbown, 2014). Marzano (2003) stated that in expanding on the vocabulary, students often generate images to remember new words. When students connect new words with images, the word knowledge gain is higher than when images are not introduced. In direct vocabulary instruction, some teachers use high frequency words to generate lists, and others use academic words from the content. Students who learn content related words experience a greater increase in vocabulary (Marzano, 2003).

Which approach is more effective? While some vocabulary can be attained through incidental vocabulary experiences, direct instruction better equips students for improved reading comprehension (Lightbown, 2014). The purposeful discussion about the new vocabulary terms better prepares students for encounters with the words in text. Fien et al. (2010) believed that ELLs need a systematic sequence of lessons that build on each other in order to successfully learn the material. This seems to support the call for purposeful discussion in vocabulary instruction.

Marzano (2003) provided an estimate of the number of words gained annually through wide reading, stressing that students regularly reading for 25 minutes daily at a rate of 200 words per minute would encounter around a million words per year, between 15,000 and 30,000 of which are estimated to be unfamiliar. If only one in 20 unfamiliar words is learned, the increase in vocabulary is between 750 and 1,500 words annually (Marzano, 2003).

For direct vocabulary instruction, Marzano (2003) provided an estimated annual increase in vocabulary for students who study around 10 new words per week or 400 new words per year. If students master 75% of these words, the annual increase in vocabulary is around 300 words. Compared to the final estimate of 750 to 1,500 new words learned through wide reading, it seems that the most effective teaching method is wide reading (Long, 2000). However, there are other factors to consider. Supporters of both theories agree that students must encounter new words multiple times before those words become a part of their vocabulary (Marzano, 2003).

The rate of vocabulary acquisition through reading alone can depend on the types of books students are reading (Richards-Tutor, Baker, Gersten, Baker, & Smith, 2016). They stated that narrative and expository books, for example, do not generally offer the same level of academic words for vocabulary learning. Assuming that the new vocabulary does not include high frequency words, unfamiliar words typically occur few times in a text. Does reading alone adequately expose students to the new words? Supporters of direct vocabulary instruction argue that students need more practice using the words than just encountering the words incidentally in reading (Marzano, 2003). If

students are learning their new vocabulary primarily through books they choose in a wide reading program, they can choose to read only their favorite genre exclusively, resulting in primarily experiencing new words associated with that genre (Richards-Tutor et al., 2016). If a student experiences only wide reading for increasing vocabulary, will the student be able to decipher meaning from the unfamiliar words encountered in a text?

Alternately, in direct vocabulary instruction, students thoroughly discuss word meaning and pair the word labels with images. So wide reading exposes students to a greater number of unfamiliar words, but there is no emphasis on meaning. Direct vocabulary instruction exposes students to far fewer words, but the study of those words is much more thorough (Wong Sze & Attan, 2014). Therefore, a combination of wide reading and direct instruction will give students the benefit of experiencing the new words naturally as well as having an instructional time where the vocabulary is discussed (Texas Education Agency, 1996).

While Asgari and Mustapha (2011) offered that allowing students to naturally learn vocabulary meaning from reading context works, at the third grade level students are still just learning to read. In order to use this strategy effectively, students need to have understanding of what most of the words in a sentence are. Therefore, given the reading level of third graders and the fact that ELL students are reading in their second language, they will need some degree of direct instruction along with naturally occurring acquisition through reading and conversation. Akbari (2012) even said that using context clues for gaining meaning from second language vocabulary is a test-taking skill and not a vocabulary-learning strategy. He stressed that if teachers rely on contextual clues in

reading for vocabulary acquisition, careful planning will be needed to make sure that a target word will be read 20 times in sentences where 98% of the other words are already solidly in the student's vocabulary in order to be successfully learned.

Strategies

Akbari (2012) stated that one important strategy for introducing new vocabulary to ELLs is to place emphasis on the root meaning of the word or the etymology. This is a way to introduce the meaning right away. Akbari believed that this is a much more effective strategy than showing the new word and asking students to guess what it means. Guessing and incidental interaction with new vocabulary takes around 20 separate instances of incidental exposure before the word is learned (Akbari, 2012). When teachers introduce the word in a meaningful way, the meaning is gained more quickly (Akbari, 2012).

Asking questions that are on the student's speaking level is important (Thorstensson Davila, 2015). The proficiency descriptors of the WIDA matrix can guide teachers in knowing what kind of questions individual students are equipped to understand and answer based on their language score. Fien et al. (2010) stated that tiered instruction is especially important for ELLs in early grades. This supports the WIDA matrix for use in scaffolding for vocabulary instruction.

Playing instructional games based on the word meanings can help students retain the meaning of new vocabulary (Vazirabad, 2013). Sorting words according to meaning, rather than alphabetical order, is one activity to support vocabulary acquisition. Teachers can also ask the students to use new words by describing their prior knowledge of the

word. With the word "monkey," students might be asked when and where they have seen a monkey. Farley, Ramonda, and Liu (2012) recommended that pairing a visual with a new word is especially important if the new word is abstract. When the concept is concrete, a visual pairing is not as critical.

One additional activity for students whose writing level is not yet equal to that of their native English-speaking peers is to ask students to complete an idea rather than write out the entire idea on their own (Cole & Feng, 2015). When students are asked to create and write sentences for their spelling words, the content may not actually prove that the students understand the word. For example, a student might write, "I have a *monkey.*" This sentence does not indicate knowledge of word meaning. However, if the students complete sentences that do hint to meaning, the activity may be more meaningful to the students (Cole & Feng, 2015). De Lima (2010) stated that it is important for teachers to collaborate at multiple levels, such as school level, county level, state level, and national level. Teacher organizations often provide these opportunities to network outside of the school building. The local school district does not currently have a tool to help classroom teachers collaborate on ESOL issues at the county level. With 12 elementary schools and 54 third grade classroom teachers, there is potential for collaboration on this problem.

Conflicting Arguments

Some professionals still argue against the use of direct instruction for vocabulary acquisition. Direct instruction can make vocabulary acquired less meaningful than if encountered in a more natural way (Spencer, 2012). By not teaching vocabulary

specifically, the hope is that the child will acquire vocabulary through incidental learning in reading and speaking.

Visual aids accommodate ELLs in the classroom by providing two kinds of sensory input (Rojas, 2006). Students not only receive auditory information, but they will be stimulated visually as well. This helps them to keep up with the fast pace of the regular classroom in their second language (Rojas, 2006). The problem with supplementing lessons with multiple visual aids is that it is not expected that all ELLs are visual learners. Some ELLs may learn better through kinesthetic means. For these students, frequent auditory and visual stimulation only could lead to frustration and lack of ability to focus. While it is important to provide visual aids for ELLs, teachers must also keep in mind the other learning modalities (Rojas, 2006).

Implications

The potential of this research adding to the existing research on vocabulary development was in the above-noted debate on direct instruction verses incidental learning. The data collected from the district did in some ways yield accepted philosophies held by this district. Another potential for contributing to the existing body of knowledge on this topic was in the literature on using specific strategies for vocabulary instruction in second language learning. The data yielded examples of strategies listed in the literature review being put into practice. In addition, other useful strategies were observed and included in the results.

The genre of the resulting project is professional development. It focuses on peer oriented professional development in which the project provides a platform for teachers

and their peers to share their discoveries of workable strategies useful to teach their students. This professional development project takes the form of a peer professional development blog in which third grade teachers will be able to post strategies and share ideas about strategies and their effectiveness. This peer professional development blog is intended to be offered as a professional development opportunity to district third grade teachers only. Participating teachers will be able to learn from the information provided from all 12 district schools. This provides teachers with another level of collaboration. Classroom teachers and ESOL teachers need to collaborate to effectively provide language support to ELLs (Maxwell, 2014). Therefore, this project study can potentially contribute to the effective practice of teaching vocabulary to ELLs across the district. A collaborative narrative is also provided. The narrative describes the findings from the qualitative surveys as well as research-based findings from the literature review. These projects offer an element of social change by supporting teachers as they close the gaps in communication present between their English-speaking students and ELLs, thereby improving future communication in English for the community.

Summary

The problem in the local school district was identified as a slower rate of vocabulary acquisition occurring among third grade ELLs. A review of current literature identified philosophies and strategies relating to vocabulary development and ELLs. In summary, a combination of direct and indirect vocabulary instruction would support the students in having more experiences with the new vocabulary. Strategies such as pre-teaching and re-teaching would also give the students the additional experience necessary. The

following chapter discusses research design and methodology for data collection and analysis. Through qualitative triangulation, participants provided their philosophies and experiences, responding in this study in a social constructivist manner. The participants expressed their experience and knowledge of the second language acquisition process, and they identified the strategies they found to be successful with teaching new vocabulary to their ELLs. A final project addresses the themes derived from the data. The resulting project takes the form of a professional development opportunity, a collaborative peer professional development blog. This peer professional development blog provides an online platform where classroom teachers and ESOL teachers across the district can share strategies and ideas for addressing the vocabulary needs of third grade ELLs in the school District.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

Third grade ELLs in the local school district were not acquiring vocabulary at a rate comparable to their native English-speaking peers. To develop a greater understanding of the causes of and potential solutions to this problem, I asked teachers about the strategies they used to teach vocabulary to third graders. I developed the research questions in a constructivist paradigm, with the understanding that multiple realities may exist in this research. The methods, design, and instruments I have identified in this section followed the constructivist paradigm as well. The research was qualitative in nature, and was conducted under IRB approval number 04-08-14-0152269. The design of the research was in the form of case study within the constructivist framework. This design allowed the qualitative data on vocabulary strategies to be gathered through qualitative instruments with constructivist framework, which was crucial to the research. By working in a constructivist framework, I was better able to understand the multiple realities that informed participants' answers and resulted in many different responses. In this section, I address the method and design of the research, and provide information about the participants. I discuss the data collection and analysis procedures of the qualitative survey delivered to third grade teachers. The paradigm, population, sample, materials, data collection, and data analysis for the study are also identified.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

Hatch (2002) stated that the first step in determining the design of a qualitative study best suited for a research project is making a declaration of research paradigm. The paradigms commonly used for research are (a) positivist, in which only one reality exists; (b) postpositivist, in which reality is only approximated; (c) constructivist, in which multiple realities exist; (d) critical/feminist, in which reality is viewed through the lens of race, gender, and class; and (e) poststructuralist, which can include constructivist and critical/feminist frameworks as well, and in which individuals create meaning for themselves in a meaningless world. For this study, critical and constructivist paradigms could potentially have been effective. In a critical paradigm, I would have analyzed the data, taking into consideration the cultural aspects of having one language and culture at home and another at school.

However, as the guiding questions in this research were related to instruction and education, the critical paradigm seemed a less likely fit than did the constructivist paradigm. With several participating teachers, there were likely to be varied responses and multiple solutions to the problem of teaching vocabulary to ELLs, which was in line with the multiple realities associated with a constructivist approach. Therefore, I adopted Vygotsky's constructivist framework. As the participants shared their experiences and beliefs about vocabulary instruction for ELLs, more than one theme emerged. The constructivist paradigm was thus most useful for exploring multiple realities because the conclusions were likely to be derived from the experiences of a group of people of comprised of members with different years of experience and different philosophies (see Hatch, 2002).

I adopted a substantive theory of social constructivism within the constructivist paradigm. According to Steffe and Gale (1995), social constructivism holds that reality resides in language, and that linguistic artifacts hold the truths sought in qualitative research. Tools such as surveys, interviews, and observations yield the linguistic artifacts necessary to discover the answers to constructivist research questions.

Researchers working in the constructivist paradigm typically use naturalistic qualitative methods such as case studies and narratives (Hatch, 2002). Therefore, I designed this project study as a case study. Merriam (2002) identified case study as being focused on a single unit of analysis. In this research, the unit of analysis is the instruction of vocabulary for third grade ELLs in the district. The research questions of this study center around this specific unit of analysis:

1. What aspects of the second language vocabulary acquisition process do third grade teachers understand?
2. What aspects of the process do they not understand?
3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
4. What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using each specific vocabulary acquisition strategy with ELLs?

With a specific unit of analysis identified, the study fit the general model of a typical case study, as defined by Merriam (2002). I studied this unit of analysis using a collaborative narrative analysis of the case study data. In a collaborative narrative report, the information is retold in a narrative form, including insight gained from the

participants as well as from the researcher's views (Cresswell, 2009). In this study, I analyzed the third grade teachers' contributions to the study using qualitative triangulation including survey, interview, and observation data.

In surveys and interviews, the participants answered questions that indirectly addressed each of the guiding research questions. In my observations, teachers demonstrated the proven strategies they currently use in the classroom and showed examples of how they teach this specific group of learners. Once collected, I combined the information most commonly occurring among the participants' to create the collaborative narrative. I also identified the most unique answers. In the following methods section, I provide detailed descriptions of the instruments, surveys, interviews, and observations.

The qualitative design for this study was a qualitative case study, in which I asked participants to provide information via interviews, surveys, and classroom observation. Guion, Diehl, and McDonald (n.d.) defined methodological triangulation as the process of using multiple methods to address the research problem. According to them, if three different instruments are used to collect qualitative or verbal data and the analysis of such data from each instrument yields roughly the same themes or answers, then it is clear that the data is reliable. Therefore, the purpose of triangulating methods was to ensure reliability of this qualitative research (see Trochim, 2006). I ensured validity by carefully constructing the research tools from the existing research questions. Table 1 shows the justification for each survey question, demonstrating the validity of each question in answering, in part, the guiding questions is contained in Table 1.

Table 1

Survey Question Justification

Survey question	Research question addressed
Based on what you have seen in your classroom, what makes the process of learning new vocabulary words different for ELLs than it is for native English-speaking third graders?	1. What aspects of the second language vocabulary acquisition process do third grade teachers understand? 2. What aspects do they not understand?
What reading/vocabulary curriculum are you using in your classroom for the 2013-2014 school year?	3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
Does your current curriculum include additional vocabulary activities specifically for ELLs? Yes / No	3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
If so, what are these specific activities and why do you think they are effective?	3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
If you have used the pre-planned activities included in your classroom curriculum, what effect have you found them to have in helping your ELLs learn new vocabulary?	4. What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using vocabulary acquisition strategies with ELLs?
Briefly describe the activities or strategies from your curriculum that have proven to be successful with your ELLs.	3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
In addition to the classroom curriculum, have you presented any other activities or strategies that you found to be successful for your ELLs? If so, please briefly describe the strategy and the effect on student vocabulary learning.	4. What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using vocabulary acquisition strategies with ELLs?
What information source do you primarily turn to in order to find activities and strategies to address the vocabulary needs of your ELLs?	3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?

Table 2 shows a similar matrix that I used to justify each question contained in the interview. Developing the data collection instruments in this way provided validity for the research instruments. In this study, I used a qualitative survey, interview, and observation. I selected these methods to answer the research questions exploring the various instructional strategies currently used by third grade teachers to help ELLs acquire new vocabulary, and to ascertain the effects of each strategy on ELL student learning. The three chosen data collection methods allowed participants to provide the information necessary to answer the research questions. In the the surveys and interviews, I directly asked teachers to give information that related to the research questions.

I asked the 10 participants to complete the survey, complete the interview, and participate in the observation. The survey and interview both contained questions derived from the guiding questions. The observation was designed to address the third research question, which asked what vocabulary acquisition strategies teachers were currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs. I collected the survey, observation, and interview data from each teacher in no particular order, although I did attempt to schedule the data collection with each participant at a time that worked best for him or her and in the order each teacher thought best. Through observation, I noted and recorded the strategies participants used in the classroom. Through survey and interview, I noted and recorded the attitudes and beliefs each teacher held about how to teach ELLs to acquire vocabulary. I also noted the participants' attitudes about the strategies and curriculum used.

The first research question was addressed in the first interview question. It asked participants how they viewed the process of an ELL learning a new word as being different from a native English speaker learning a new word. The third research question was also addressed in the form of three interview questions. These questions asked about group size during the introduction of new vocabulary, and what reasons participants used to choose their group sizes. The fourth research question was addressed in the form of two interview questions that addressed the effectiveness of activities included in their curriculum. Table 2 shows how each question within this instrument directly answered the research questions, at least in part.

Table 2

Interview Script Justification

Interview question	Research question addressed
How do you view the process of learning a new word as different for ELLs and native English speakers?	1. What aspects of the second language vocabulary acquisition process do third grade teachers understand?
How effectively do the strategies presented in your curriculum address vocabulary acquisition?	4. What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using each specific vocabulary acquisition strategy with ELLs?
How effectively do the strategies presented in your curriculum address the specific needs of ELLs?	4. What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using each specific vocabulary acquisition strategy with ELLs?
Do you present vocabulary instruction in whole class activities or small group activities?	3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
What led you to teach to that group size?	3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
Do you feel you need to supplement the curriculum-suggested vocabulary activities for ELLs?	3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
If so, what kind of activities do you add?	3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?

I rejected other methodologies for potential inclusion in this project. For instance, I decided to reject an ethnographic method because my goal was not to study the social, cultural values or organization of a specific group.

Participants

The participants were teachers working in a Northwest Georgia school district that included 12 elementary schools, nine of which granted administrative permission for their third grade teachers to participate. In these nine elementary schools, there were 42 third grade teachers. To ensure depth of inquiry, I kept the participation group size to 10 or fewer. Hatch (2002) stated that when studying small subgroups, homogeneous samples could be useful because the participants share key characteristics or have experience addressing a specific problem. Because this study specifically addressed the vocabulary development of third grade ELLs, I did not consider including other grade level teachers for participation in the project. It was not district policy to place ELL third graders with a specific teacher. Students were assigned using previous teacher recommendation, parent request, kindergarten test scores, and in many cases, random placement. Because any given classroom may contain ELLs, I invited all third grade classroom teachers to participate. The first 10 to accept the invitation became the group of participants.

The problem occurred in third grade within the district. Because third grade presented an area of need, third grade classrooms were chosen for this research. With such a specific area of education, purposeful sampling was the natural choice so that this study could address the needs identified by the school district, which are specifically occurring in third grade classrooms with ELLs. Brown states that purposeful sampling is

advised in order to achieve the desired level of homogeneity of certain characteristics of the research (2001). In this study, the homogeneous shared teaching experience relative to the research questions existed, and this is evidenced in the fact that all participants were third grade teachers of classrooms containing ELLs. Purposeful sampling more naturally fit this study for that reason. The third grade teachers of the district were potential participants. Purposeful sampling was used to obtain this homogeneous group of participants. The district was located in Northwest Georgia and included12 elementary schools, nine of which had granted administrative consent to invite the third grade teachers to participate. Within those nine elementary schools, there were 42 third grade teachers. After obtaining approval from the district superintendent, the principals of each school were asked to approve their teachers' participation.

Upon gaining approval, the 42 third grade teachers were asked to participate in the qualitative case study. If all 42 third grade teachers had participated in the study, the depth of analysis would have been compromised. Therefore, the first 10 to respond were accepted as the official sample of this qualitative case study. The sample size was reliant on the willingness of population members to participate, but a sample size of 10 was acquired. After receiving replies from the first 10 teachers, the sample was established. A sample size of at least ten or less was desired to ensure depth of inquiry. Hatch (2002) stated that smaller sample size allows for a more thorough research of the problem in qualitative research. The sample was entirely made up of third grade teachers in the district.

I kept up the researcher-participant relationships through email, phone conversations, and meetings. I work in two elementary schools in the local district. Participating teachers from the two schools where I currently work may already have established a professional familiarity with me. The teachers from the other schools in the district who accepted the invitation to participate have never worked directly with me. To my knowledge, I have only met and worked with the third grade teachers in the two buildings where I currently work. In this case, initial introductions were in order. After a general familiarity was established, the professional relationships were maintained through email, phone conversations, and meetings. I made an effort to let the participants choose the meeting, interview, and observation times that fit their schedules so that the case study would not cause unnecessary stress. There were two weeks of standardized testing, during which the participants were given time to respond to the invitation to participate. Data collection began the week following completion of standardized testing.

Participant identities were protected in the reporting of the conclusions of the qualitative case study. No names of people or school buildings were included in the findings. Paper copies of data were stored in a locked filing cabinet at the base school. Electronic copies of data were not stored on any shared drives. All electronic files were saved on a jump drive used only for this project.

Data Collection

As the researcher, I first sent an informed consent form through interoffice mail to all ten participants. Once these forms were signed and returned, I began data collection by sending out the surveys through email. Some surveys were completed and returned

right away. Others were not sent back until the following week. One participant completed the other two instruments, but had saved the survey until last. Due to personal issues, she reported that she was unexpectedly short on time and wished to decline the survey portion of the study. The surveys returned via email were printed out, so that a hard copy exists of all returned surveys. I made a copy of each survey to be used for analysis so that the master print out could be saved intact. I collected and analyzed the data according to the data analysis plan in the following section. Once survey responses were collected, I began organizing the data according to the data analysis plan.

The first type of data collected in this research study was data from a qualitative survey (Appendix B). I developed the survey from all of the research questions. The matrix in Table 1 shows that each survey question refers to a core research question, answering it at least in part. In the same way, the interview (Appendix C) was created from the research questions, and each interview question refers to a core research question as shown in the interview script matrix in Table 2.

Observations were completed in classes of language arts, math, reading, and science. Teachers of ELLs teach vocabulary in all academic areas, and the varied classes provided insight into how vocabulary was taught throughout the subject areas. The data from observations were noted on the observation form (Appendix D), which allowed the observer to make notes about strategies used in direct vocabulary instruction as well as observed opportunities for incidental vocabulary acquisition. These notes about observed strategies provided insight for the third research question, which asked what vocabulary acquisition strategies teachers were currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs.

There was also a checklist in the observation form where strategies identified in the literature review could be checked if they were observed during the session. This research study focused on identifying areas of need for teachers who teach ELLs. The matrices above justify the content of the instruments (Appendix B and C). The final form (Appendix D) was for notetaking during observations and contained two sections. One section was for noting strategies used during direct instruction and the other section was for noting opportunities for incidental vocabulary learning. The form also had a list of strategies from the literature review that were checked off as they were observed in the session.

The instruments were created from the following research questions:

1. What aspects of the second language vocabulary acquisition process do third grade teachers understand?
2. What aspects of the second language acquisition process do they not understand?
3. What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?
4. What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using each specific vocabulary acquisition strategy with ELLs?

First, the participating teachers were asked to participate through the survey. Nine participants completed the survey. Survey questions were grounded in constructivist theory. The research questions were used to create the survey. Guided by interview protocol as suggested by Turner (2010), I confirmed that each question referred to a core

research question, answering it at least in part (Table 1). The matrices provide content validity and were used to confirm that the survey questions directly related to the guiding questions.

Next, the teachers participated in an interview using the interview script also derived from the research questions (Table 2). All 10 participants completed the interview. The interview was held in a private setting to maintain the confidentiality of the interview process. The interview was transcribed after the interview using the recording of the session. The recording was saved for documentation. A master copy of the interview form was also saved for documentation. A duplicate was used for analysis.

Finally, the participants were asked to participate in a classroom observation with the purpose of identifying actions within a lesson that demonstrated answers to the research questions through direct instruction and incidental learning opportunities. The observation was completed with all 10 participants. I observed one typical vocabulary acquisition lesson per teacher. The observations were written in general note-taking form on the matrix that separated observations of direct instruction from incidental learning experiences (Appendix D). The form also had a checklist of strategies from the literature review. The master notes were saved for documentation. A copy of the notes were used for analysis and were, as described in the following section, marked for coding by the research question each addressed. This final instrument provided triangulation as it confirmed that the answers to the survey and interview were true indicators of what was happening in the participants' classrooms.

Procedures

The survey, observation, and interview were collected from each teacher in no particular order, although an attempt was made to schedule the data collection with each participant at a time that worked best for him or her and in the order. First, all third grade teachers in the district were invited to participate in the study via email. The first ten teachers who responded affirming that they would volunteer became part of the sample group for this study. Participation was voluntary, so the final sample size was determined after the volunteers returned the email, but the desired size was 10. The sample was given the survey via email with a request to complete it within 7 days. At the end of the week, all returned surveys were printed in duplicate. One copy of the survey was saved for documentation. The other copy was used to code answers according to themes set by the research questions with which they correlated. All electronic documents were saved in a password-protected account, and all printed documents were stored in a locked filing cabinet.

Each interview took less than 30 minutes. The interview script (Appendix C) guided the interviewee to answer questions derived from the three guiding questions of this project. The interview was recorded and transcribed. The forms taken from the interviews were copied. One copy was saved for documentation and the other used for analysis. As the data began to be completed, it was coded according to the data analysis plan detailed in this section. All electronic files were saved in a password-protected account and all forms were locked in a filing cabinet for security.

I observed one typical vocabulary lesson in each of the classrooms. The observations occurred in Language Arts, Math, Science, and Reading classes. The academic language of each subject has academic vocabulary that must be taught, especially for ELLs. The instruction of all of these subjects requires some amount of vocabulary instruction. The anticipated length of an observation was less than 30 minutes. No observation lasted longer than this anticipated time frame. The observations were recorded as general notes. The forms taken from the interviews and observations were also copied. One copy was saved for documentation and the other used for analysis. As the data began to be completed, it was coded according to the data analysis plan detailed in this section. Thematic coding was used. All answers were coded in a Microsoft Excel document under topic headings, which derive naturally from the data. With the understanding that there were multiple realities possible, the number of themes were not determined until after the data was collected. For instance, if a participant indicated that she uses wide reading in her classroom, I created the spreadsheet label, "Wide Reading."

As with the invitations, surveys, and interviews, all electronic files from the observations were saved under a password-protected account, and all printed documents were locked in a filing cabinet for security. This procedure did not interfere with the school schedule for the teachers participating or for the researcher.

Role of the Researcher and Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

I work in the district as an English teacher. The relationship between the participants and myself was developed and maintained through email, interoffice mail,

phone, and meetings. There were no personal friendships between any participants and myself. With the teachers at my schools, I have a professional relationship. With teachers who participated from other schools within the district, I had no relationship prior to this study. Relationships between the teachers and myself should not have presented any bias.

Data Analysis Results

In qualitative research, data collection and data analysis is simultaneous (Merriam, 2002). This simply means that I did not wait for all of the data to be collected before I began coding the data that had been collected. The notes from the completed surveys and interviews were organized according to the research question they answered. Gough and Scott (2000) recommend that qualitative thematic coding be completed by organizing answers according to topic. In both the survey and interview, I coded and analyzed all responses using an inductive approach. I first identified the areas of meaning derived from the responses of each instrument. I then began an iterative analysis of the coded text into the emergent themes, documenting each emergent theme in a Microsoft Excel document as topic headings and then marking frequency of occurrence. With the understanding that there were multiple realities possible in this inductive strategy, the number of headings were not determined until after the data had been collected. Once all answers were organized according to emerging themes and data coding was complete, I then supplemented the analysis by examining a priori themes from the yes/no portion. In the observation, however, a combination of inductive and deductive coding and analyzing was used. The observation forms were designed to include not only a checklist of strategies from the literature review, but also an area to make notes about additional

strategies observed. The process for coding and analyzing the observation data then involved a priori theme analysis for any checklist items of themes identified before the observation as well as an iterative analysis of the coded text into the emergent themes. With the understanding that there were not only predetermined themes from the checklist possible, but also multiple emerging themes from the additional observation notes possible, in the analysis of the observations, the total number of headings were not determined until after the data had been collected.

The sample of 10 participants successfully completed the observation and interview. However, only nine participants completed the survey. Having left the survey until last, one participant declined completion of the survey due to time constraints with unexpected schedule interruptions in her personal life at the end of the school year. The participant had already completed the other two instruments. For this reason, Participant 10 is discussed throughout data analysis procedures of the interview and observation. However, she is not included in survey details.

Survey

I coded all survey responses using an inductive approach. The areas of meaning were derived from the participant responses. I then began an iterative analysis of the coded text into the emergent themes, by documenting emerging themes and marking the frequency of occurrence of each theme. Participant survey answers were organized by question and coded into naturally occurring themes, such as Lack of Language Experience, Difficulty of English Language, and Connecting Two Languages. A table is

presented for each research question showing the participant answers and the thematic coding for each answer.

Survey question 1. For the first survey question, "Based on what you have seen in your classroom, what makes the process of learning new vocabulary words different for ELLs than it is for native English-speaking third graders?" participants reported a wide variety of answers, which were coded into 5 naturally occurring themes: Lack of Language Experiences, Difficulty of English Language, Connecting Two Languages, Teaching Strategies/Style, Individual Needs. If an answer was left blank, that is indicated by an assignment of N/A, meaning Not Answered.

As shown in Table 3, participants 1, 2, 5, 6, and 9 all answered this question in similar ways, landing them in the most popular category, Lack of Language Experience. These participants stated that it was more difficult for students to acquire new vocabulary because they had not been exposed to those words as often as native English speakers had. The children who speak English at home in all situations would have had a greater context in which to learn language. This category contained five of the nine responses. Four additional responses were given, each warranting its own category. Participant 3 stated that she believed the numerous multi-meaning words and difficulty of English made learning English as a second language more difficult. This response was coded as Difficulty of English Language. Participant 4 stated that students needed to make connections to their native language in order to fully comprehend the new words. This response was coded as Connecting Two Languages.

Participant 7 stated that she believed the key was instructional approach or presentation. This response was coded Teaching Strategies/Styles. Participant 8 stated that every child was different and had specific individual needs. This response was coded as Individual Needs. Participant 10 does not have a response in this instrument.

This survey question served to answer in part two of the guiding questions. One guiding question addressed by this survey question was question 1, "What aspects of the second language vocabulary acquisition process do third grade teachers understand?" and question 2, "What aspects do they not understand?" With five of nine participants responding within the thematic coding of, Lack of Language Experience, the most commonly occurring response to this research question was that these third grade teachers understand that lack of language experiences can have an impact on second language acquisition. One issue identified in the literature review as having an influence on second language acquisition but not included in any survey responses is home environment issues (Marzano, 2003). Immigrant status, gender, and ethnicity are also factors influencing second language learning (Jamil & Mehmood Khan, 2013). Immigrant status can influence student achievement. Migrant families who are seasonally transient may move so frequently that students never have the opportunity to complete an entire year in one country. Cultural factors often influence the educational priorities for each gender, based on gender role expectations. This can often influence the academic stamina of students. These unmentioned issues help to answer the second guiding question: "What aspects do they not understand?"

Table 3

Survey Data Analysis Question 1

Question 1 survey answers	Thematic coding
1. It's harder for them to make connections to the words because of their limited vocabulary (especially with words that have multiple meanings).	Lack of language experience
2. It is different for ELL students because sometimes it is their first time hearing that word. Whereas, English-speaking students are more familiar with the word and have heard it used before. ELL students sometimes do not have as much exposer.	Lack of language experience
3. Numerous multi-meaning words, homophones, and homonyms make it more difficult the grasp the English language for many ELL students.	Difficulty of English language
4. To help learn new vocabulary words, I try to make connections to what the student already knows. Most of the students I have in third grade have a basic knowledge of vocabulary so I build on what they already know.	Connecting Two Languages
5. Their lack of background English vocabulary--sometimes they don't understand all of the words used in a definition, so they don't get the full meaning of the new word. Layers and layers of vocabulary need to be taught. Never assume they know what something means--watch for the blank looks!	Lack of language experience
6. In my opinion, learning new vocabulary fora native English speaking child seems easier than it does for an ELL. The child who has always spoken English can usually use context clues to help them understand new vocabulary. They generally have more background knowledge of the English language as well to refer to in order to help them understand what the word means; for example, you could give them a synonym for the new vocabulary word that they already know. The child who is the ELL can't always use context clues to help them understand new vocabulary because they might not know what some of the other words in the sentence, or paragraph, mean. They also might not have a big enough English vocabulary to try to use synonyms to help them.	Lack of language experience
7. I feel it's all based on the approach and how it is presented.	Teaching strategies/style
8. I don't think that there is a big difference because the younger kids are all at the stage of acquiring new vocabulary/language. Every year is different and every kid is different. The kids come to us with all different vocabulary knowledge so it really depends on their needs as to what I do.	Individual Needs
9. The process is different because they don't have a knowledge or item to connect the word with.	Lack of language experience
10. Survey declined due to scheduling conflict	N/A

Survey Question 2. In the second survey question, I asked, "What reading/vocabulary curriculum are you using in your classroom for the 2013-2014 school year?" The most common curriculum reported on this question was "Imagine It!" Participants 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 reported using this program as a part of their routine. Participant 10 did not complete the survey as explained above. As shown in Table 4, participants generally used the same curriculum with a few exceptions.

Table 4

Survey Data Analysis Question 2

Survey Question 2 answers	Thematic coding
1. I only teach math, science/ss. I am not using a particular reading curriculum in my classroom. However, our third grade team uses the Imagine It Series.	None
2. We use Imagine It!	Imagine It!
3. Early Interventions to Reading, Corrective Reading, 6 Minute Solution, and RAVE-O.	Corrective Reading, 6-Minute Solution, RAVE-O
4. We use the Imagine It series along with the Common Core Curriculum	Imagine It!, Common Core Curriculum
5. Imagine It! (SRA) and Corrective Reading (SRA) (as needed.)	Imagine It! Corrective Reading
6. We are currently using the reading program Imagine It!	Imagine It!
7. Imagine It!	Imagine It!
8. Our Imagine It series has lots of ideas. I get ideas from all over. Really it comes down to good teaching practices.	Imagine It!
9. Imagine It and I also use class sets of novels sometimes	Imagine It! Novels
10. N/A	N/A

Participant 1 reported that she taught from math, science, and social studies curriculum. While she did teach the vocabulary of those subject areas, she did not use a curriculum that was specifically designed to teach vocabulary. Participant 3 reported that she uses "6-Minute Solution," "RAVE-O," and Corrective Reading. Another teacher also listed Corrective Reading as part of her lesson planning. Being identified by two different participants, Corrective Reading was the second most common curriculum used by the third grade teachers. Other programs were identified as well. Participant 4 listed Common Core Curriculum as the curriculum she used along with "Imagine It!" Participant 9 listed novel studies along with "Imagine It!" The guiding question that could be answered in part by this survey item was question 3, "What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?" The most common response that was given to this item was "Imagine It!" which offers a partial answer to the guiding question. The activities listed in the "Imagine It!" program were used by teachers to address the needs of ELLs. This guiding question will be answered in greater detail as the other survey items are answered.

Survey Questions 3 and 4. The next questions are really a two-part question, broken into Questions 3 and 4. In the first part of the next 2 survey questions, question 3, "Does your current curriculum include additional vocabulary activities specifically for ELLs? Yes/No," I asked for a one-word response. Most participants answered simply, "Yes." Participant 1 responded with "Yes," but clarified that even though she used the Science curriculum, that curriculum had vocabulary activities. Participant 3 clarified her answer of "Yes" by noting that although the curriculum had vocabulary activities

included, those are not the ones she used with her ELLs. She chose instead to use "RAVE-O" with those students who were learning English as a second language. She reported that the way the "RAVE-O" program targets specific words seemed to have an optimal effect with her students.

Table 5

Survey Data Analysis Question 3

Survey Question 3 answers	Thematic coding
1. Yes (Even the science curriculum that I use has additional activities for ELL).	Y
2. Yes	Y
3. The basal included activities, but we are not using that in the class that contains my ELL children. RAVE-O is great for addressing vocabulary and language needs. It is not specific for ELL, but very useful.	Y
4. Yes	Y
5. Yes	Y
6. Yes	Y
7. Yes	Y
8. Yes	Y
9. Yes	Y
10. N/A	N/A

In the follow-up for question 3, question 4, I asked, "If so, what are these specific activities and why do you think they are effective?" There were no common answers among the participants. The themes which naturally emerged from the research are Peer Tutoring, Small Group Activities, Computer Programs, and Narrow Reading. However, there was only one response identified in each theme. Participant 1 stated that she paired ELLs with English speakers and asked them to make a list of adjectives used to describe

minerals in the text. She asked the pair to add other words that may be useful. She believed this strategy to be effective, because the ELL had the opportunity to learn from peers, enhance experience with vocabulary, and to be more engaged in the activity. This strategy was categorized as Peer Tutoring.

Participant 2 stated that the curriculum had a whole separate book of strategies for teaching the curriculum to ELLs. These activities provide examples of vocabulary use and reinforcement to the whole group activities recommended in the main curriculum. This activity and response was categorized as Small Group Activities. Participant 4 stated that she uses computer programs so that the students can match the words to their definition and use the words in sentences. This response was categorized as Computer Programs. Participant 6 stated that the curriculum had leveled readers and decodable books for ELLs, which present the vocabulary terms from the lesson in a story. This helps students be able to experience the vocabulary terms more frequently and in additional formats. Participant 6 stated that she believed this helps ELLs gain deeper understanding of meaning from the new words. This response was categorized as Narrow Reading.

Participants 5, 7, and 9 stated that there are resources that can be used for ELLs, but they had not used them and could not provide specific details about them. These answers, along with the blank answers from Participants 3 and 8, were categorized as Not Answered (N/A). The guiding question that was partially answered by survey questions 3b and 4 is the third research question, “What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?” Survey answers for

questions 3b and 4 indicate that the teachers' curricula include additional vocabulary activities that can be used. Therefore, in answer to this research question, the strategies teachers were using included peer tutoring, small group activities, computer programs, and narrow reading.

Table 6

Survey Data Analysis Question 4

Survey Question 4 answers	Thematic coding
1. One activity is to pair an English learner with native speakers. Have pairs make a list of adjectives used to describe minerals in the text. Have them add other words that may be useful. I think this is effective because they have the opportunity to learn from their peers which makes them more engaged in the activity. The ELL has the opportunity to enhance their vocabulary and make connections by using the adjectives to describe minerals.	Small Group Activities
2. Peer Tutoring: There is a whole separate book of strategies for ELL students. The activities provide reinforcement to the whole group activities. They provide the ELL students with more examples of how the vocabulary should be used.	N/A
3.N/A	N/A
4. We use computer programs which allow students to match vocabulary words to their definitions as well as using vocabulary words in sentences.	Computer Programs
5. I have not needed to use it. The vocabulary instruction we do has proven effective for all of my students to this point.	N/A
6. Imagine It has some suggested strategies and activities for ELLs. For example, there are leveled readers for ELLs that incorporate the new vocabulary used in the story that week so the students can read and hear the words use in multiple different contexts to help them get a deeper understanding of what the word means and how to properly use it in context. It also has decodable books that serve a similar purpose to the leveled readers.	Narrow Reading
7. It's more or less a resource to pull ideas from and allows me to extend on which in turn makes the lesson more meaningful.	N/A
8. N/A	N/A
9. I haven't used them this year	N/A
10. N/A	N/A

Survey question 5. The fifth survey question was, "If you have used the pre-planned activities included in your classroom curriculum, what effect did you find them to have in helping your ELLs learn new vocabulary?" The themes that occurred naturally from the data are Build Vocabulary, Boost Confidence, Make Connections, and N/A. These themes are presented in Table 7. The most commonly occurring theme was Build Vocabulary, and it occurred with Participants 4 and 7. Participant 4 stated that the activities are enjoyable for the students and help them learn the words. Participant 7 said that the activities help students better internalize the meaning and retain knowledge. Other themes were identified. Participant 1 stated that she feels that the activities help ELLs develop the confidence to participate in activities, because they address the student's specific needs. This response was categorized as Boost Confidence. Participant 3 stated that word webs help students make meaningful connections with the new vocabulary. This response was coded as Make Connections. Participants 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 had not used the pre-planned activities. The category for this group was listed as NA.

The coordinating research question that can be partially answered by this survey question is, "What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using vocabulary acquisition strategies with ELLs?" Given that the most common answer from this survey question supported the belief that these activities will build vocabulary, this can also lend a partial answer to the coordinating guiding question. Teachers believe that using the vocabulary acquisition strategies reported in this survey can have positive outcomes, such as building vocabulary, boosting confidence, and helping students make connections that will yield increased vocabularies.

Table 7

Survey Data Analysis Question 5

Survey Question 5 answers	Thematic coding
1. The teacher's edition of the textbook or the vocabulary linking resources.	Curriculum
2. I research activities and strategies on reliable internet sites, and use fellow educators as resources!	Internet Collaboration with Fellow Teachers
3. Since I have been teaching inclusion many of the activities we do are designed to provide support and remediation to address the vocabulary needs of students who are deficient in this area.	N/A
4. I ask the ESOL teacher, other teachers, and research the internet for activities.	Internet Collaboration with Fellow Teachers
5. The teachers' editions of the basal and the language textbook have good ideas which work well for all students. My ELL kids have been average learners, though, and haven't needed their instruction to be different from what is delivered to the rest of the class.	Curriculum
6. N/A	N/A
7. Curriculum and my imagination	Curriculum Self
8. N/A	N/A
9. Usually I just use things I have relied on in the past, sometimes I find activities on the internet, colleagues with experience.	Internet Collaboration with Fellow Teachers
10. N/A	N/A

Survey question 6. With the sixth survey question, I asked participants to briefly describe the activities or strategies from their curriculum that had proven to be successful with their ELLs. The naturally occurring themes derived from the answers are Vocabulary Activity/Game, Visual Aids, Identify Part of Speech, Word Walls, Direct Instruction, and Mapping Words. These themes are presented in Table 8. Participant 1 stated that visual aids and identifying whether the word was a noun or verb are two activities she uses from the curriculum. This response was coded as Visual Aids and

Identify Parts of Speech. Participant 8 wrote, Good teaching practices. This response was general and not in need of a more general category. Participant 6 did not respond to this question; and, therefore did not require a category. Participant 5 stated that she leads class discussion about word meaning, establishing prior knowledge. She also utilizes Thinking Maps. This response was categorized as Mapping Words and Direct Instruction. There was one other response that was categorized as Direct Instruction.

Participant 9 stated that she previews words before reading stories. These two responses established a common category, but not the most frequently occurring category. The most frequently occurring theme was Vocabulary Activity/Game, and it appeared with the answers for four participants. Participant 2 stated that she provides different opportunities for ELLs to use the vocabulary, such as activities, hearing her use the vocabulary, and having word walls, or displays of words organized in alphabetical order that allow students to quickly reference learned vocabulary. This entry also provided the category of Word Wall, which is a display of words organized in alphabetical order that allows students to quickly reference learned vocabulary. Participant 3 stated that she uses Word Webs, and Participant 4 stated that she uses hands-on games. Both of these responses fall in the Vocabulary Activity/Game. Participant 7 also fell into this category with a report that she uses interactive games and role playing. The guiding question that correlates to this survey question is question 3, "What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?" Based on the most frequently occurring theme, the partial

answer that can be derived from this survey question was that teachers are currently using vocabulary activities and games to address these specific needs.

Table 8

Survey Data Analysis Question 6

Survey Question 6 answers	Thematic coding
1. Having them use visual aids has been very beneficial as well as having them tell whether certain words are being used as nouns or verbs.	Visual Aids Identify Part of Speech
2. I provide may different opportunities for my students to see how to correctly use the vocabulary. I provide activities, use the words in my vocabulary, and have word walls.	Vocabulary Activity/Game Word Walls
3. Word Webs	Vocabulary Activity/Game
4. Hands on/ game type activities do the best for my students.	Vocabulary Activity/Game
5. We discuss what we read and talk about the meanings of unfamiliar words. I let the children talk about what they already know or what they think they know about words, and then we build from there. We also do a great deal with Thinking Maps and Frayer vocabulary models--anything to get them thinking about the words on a higher level. We practice using context clues as well.	Direct Instruction Mapping Words
6. N/A	N/A
7. Visualizing, interactive games, and role playing.	Visual Aids Vocabulary Activity/Game
8. Good teaching practices	N/A
9. Previewing words before reading stories	Direct Instruction
10. N/A	N/A

Survey question 7. The seventh survey question was, "In addition to the classroom curriculum, have you presented any other activities or strategies that you found to be successful for your ELLs? If so, please briefly describe the strategy and the effect on student vocabulary learning." The themes that were derived naturally from the responses to this question were, Word Mapping, Conversation, Read Aloud, Role Play,

and Vocabulary Activity/Game. Some responses were given a code of NA. Participant 4 responded, "No." Participants 6 and 8 did not respond. These three responses were coded NA. These responses are presented in Table 9. Participant 1 responded that she asked students to illustrate words and use them in their own sentences in order to make connections to the word. This response was coded as Word Mapping. Participant 2 responded that she encourages her students to use the new vocabulary in daily conversations. This was coded Conversation. Participant 7 gave a response that was coded Role Play, as she reported that asking students to role play helps them use the vocabulary. Participant 9 stated that finding pictures to connect with words and previewing any vocabulary before the lesson helps support vocabulary acquisition. This response was coded Vocabulary Activity/Game.

The most frequently occurring theme with two common responses was Read Aloud. Participant 3 responded that reading aloud was important, because new vocabulary was embedded in the text and often was accompanied by illustrations that support meaning. Participant 5 stated that she uses many novels and reads aloud often to encourage fluency. The guiding question correlating to this survey question is, "What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using vocabulary acquisition strategies with ELLs?" With the most frequently occurring theme from this survey question being Read Aloud, this can partially answer the guiding question. The answers that matched the most commonly occurring theme were highlighted in Table 9.

Table 9

Survey Data Analysis Question 7

Survey Question 7 answers	Thematic coding
1. I find the vocabulary linking strategy to be very effective. Students are required to illustrate words and use them in sentences of their own. This helps them make connections to the word.	Word Mapping
2. I encourage my students to use the new vocabulary in their everyday conversations.	Conversation
3. To me, read-alouds seem very important because new vocabulary is embedded in the text and often supported by illustrations.	Read Aloud
4. No	N/A
5. Read-alouds are very effective. I have read many, many novels to the children, and I think that hearing fluent reading is very important.	Read Aloud
6. N/A	N/A
7. The role playing really helps them retain the meaning and how to use the words	Role Play
8. N/A	N/A
9. Finding pictures to connect with words for them, previewing any vocabulary, associating it with their language	Vocabulary Activity/Game
10. N/A	N/A

Survey question 8. With the final survey question, I asked participants what information source they primarily turn to in order to find activities and strategies to address vocabulary needs of ELLs. Three responses were coded as NA, because either they did not respond or their response did not answer the question. There were two themes that naturally derived from the responses, and each occurred three times. These responses are presented in Table 10. Three teachers included the curriculum as at least part of their answer. Participants 1, 5, and 7 stated that they look to their curriculum for ideas. These responses were coded as Curriculum. Participants 2, 4, and 9 listed both internet and collaboration with fellow teachers. Participant 2 stated that she uses fellow teachers as resources and she turns to the internet as well. Participant 4 reported that collaboration with the ESOL teacher and classroom teachers were important. She also used the internet. Participant 9 stated that while she often just relied on strategies she has used in the past, she did find activities on the internet and through colleagues who had experience. These responses were coded, Internet/Collaboration with Fellow Teachers. The correlating guiding question for this survey question was the third research question. It asked what vocabulary acquisition strategies teachers are currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs. The information gained from this survey question's responses can lead to a partial answer. Teachers are currently using activities from the curriculum, the internet, and from collaborating with other teachers.

The answers from the surveys and interviews were sorted by question. When more than one teacher listed the same answer, that answer was documented with the frequency of occurrence noted. The information was then retold in a collaborative

narrative, including insight gained from the participants as well as the researcher's views (Cresswell, 2009). Therefore, once all data from the surveys and interviews was sorted, it was included along with key elements from the literature review in narrative form and can be found in Appendix A.

Table 10

Survey Data Analysis Question 8

Survey Question 8 answers	Thematic coding
1. The teacher's edition of the textbook or the vocabulary linking resources.	Curriculum
2. I research activities and strategies on reliable internet sites, and use fellow educators as resources!	Internet Collaboration with Fellow Teachers
3. Since I have been teaching inclusion many of the activities we do are designed to provide support and remediation to address the vocabulary needs of students who are deficient in this area.	N/A
4. I ask the ESOL teacher, other teachers, and research the internet for activities.	Internet Collaboration with Fellow Teachers
5. The teachers' editions of the basal and the language textbook have good ideas which work well for all students. My ELL kids have been average learners, though, and haven't needed their instruction to be different from what is delivered to the rest of the class.	Curriculum
6. N/A	N/A
7. Curriculum and my imagination	Curriculum Self
8. N/A	N/A
9. Usually I just use things I have relied on in the past, sometimes I find activities on the internet, colleagues with experience.	Internet Collaboration with Fellow Teachers
10. N/A	N/A

In conclusion, the nine surveys were analyzed, and the results of the survey yielded some common themes. The majority of participants felt that the process of learning new vocabulary words was different for ELLs than it was for native English-speaking third graders primarily because of the lack of language experiences for the English learner. Other participants, not in the majority, did identify the reasons they believed this process was different as either the difficulty of the English language or the need for students to make connections between the languages. The "Imagine It!" curriculum was the reading/vocabulary curriculum reported most frequently as being used in the classrooms. One other program mentioned by two participants was the Corrective Reading program. One participant also listed "6-Minute Solution" and "RAVE-O." There were two participants who reported feeling that the pre-planned vocabulary activities provided with their curriculum often build vocabulary. One participant found that the activities boost confidence in using language, and another participant found that the activities could help the student make connections. When asked which of the activities provided in the curriculum have been most successful, vocabulary activities/games were identified most often. Direct instruction and the use of visual aids were next. Some other types of activities identified once in the survey were identifying parts of speech, word walls, which are displays of words organized in alphabetical order that allow students to quickly reference learned vocabulary, and mapping words. When the activities in the curriculum were supplemented with other activities, the most common activity reported was reading aloud to the students. Other activities reported include role play, vocabulary games, word mapping, and encouraging students to use the

vocabulary words in their own conversation. When most teachers needed to find additional strategies or activities, they reported using the internet, another curriculum, or collaborating with fellow teachers in order to get ideas. One participant stated that she also relied on her own creativity.

Interview

In the same way the survey results were coded through an inductive approach, the interview responses were coded and analyzed through inductive strategies. The areas of meaning were derived from the participant responses. I then began an iterative analysis of the coded text into the emergent themes, by documenting emerging themes and marking the frequency of occurrence of each theme. Analyzing the data from the interviews included recording responses and transcribing them later. Once all interviews were complete, responses were organized by question. For each interview question, each participant's answer was given and then coded under naturally occurring themes as reported in the following narrative and in the associated Tables 11-17. Any interview questions that were not answered were identified as Not Answered (N/A).

Interview question 1. Using the first interview question, I asked participants how they viewed the process of learning a new word as different for ELLs and native English speakers. There were five themes that emerged naturally during coding. The themes were No Difference, Learning Style, Connecting Two Languages, Difficulty of English Language, and Lack of Language Experience, as shown in Table 11. There is one answer that does not address the interview question. Under the column for thematic coding, this was indicated with does not answer question. Because this response does not answer the

interview question, it therefore does not contribute to answering the corresponding research question. It was not included in the narrative analysis for this question.

Table 11

Interview Data Analysis Question 1

Interview Question 1 summarized responses	Thematic coding
1. I'm not sure, but I don't think the process is different.	No Difference
2.ELs learn words easier with pictures	Learning Style
3.ELs need to make connections between their first language experiences and the new language.	Connecting Two Languages
4.ELs may not have the language experience needed to learn concepts at the same rate.	Lack of language experience
5. By 3rd grade, many ELs have high enough social language that it's difficult to understand their academic language needs.	Does not answer question
6.ELs may not have vocab necessary to just learn new words by defining only.	Lack of language experience
7. English speakers will be able to use synonyms to learn the definition or context clues, while ELs may not have enough language to make those connections.	Lack of language experience
8.ELs may need more repetition and more strategies to understand words, especially multiple meaning words.	Difficulty of English Language
9.ELs may not have been exposed to as much conversational language.	Lack of language experience
10.ELs may not have experiences to relate to when hearing about a new word	Lack of language experience

Participant 1 stated that the process of first language learning was the same as the process of second language learning. This response was coded, No Difference. Participant 2 responded that ELLs learn using pictures. This was coded as Learning Style. Participant 3 stated that ELLs need to make connections to their first language. This response was coded as Connecting Two Languages. Participant 5 responded that it was often difficult to assess the students' academic needs. This response was given a category of N/A, as it does not answer the question. Participant 8 stated that ELLs might need more repetition to fully comprehend word meaning, especially in cases where the word can have multiple meanings. This was coded as Difficulty of English Language. Participants 4, 6, 7, 9, and 10 all gave answers that fit into the category Lack of Language Experience. Participants 4, 6, and 10 stated that ELLs have not had enough experience in English to have prior knowledge about vocabulary when it was introduced. Participant 7 stated that native English speakers might be able to use context clues or synonyms to determine meaning, where ELLs may not be able to do that. Participant 9 responded that the students might not have been exposed specifically to conversational English. These 5 responses make up the category that occurred most frequently. This was actually the only category that occurred more than one time.

The guiding questions that correlated with this interview question asked what aspects of second language learning did teachers understand and which did they not understand. With half of the teachers responding that they believed ELLs had limited English experiences, this can yield a partial answer to the guiding questions. From these responses, it was reported that teachers understand that ELLs do have limited experiences

with English. The remaining five themes could lend clarity to the second guiding question that asked what teachers did not understand about processing a second language. With one participant stating that there was no difference and one participant not able to address the question, it was clear that there exists some gaps in comprehension of key aspects of second language learning. Only one participant articulated the importance of helping students make connections between their first and second languages. Only one participant attributed the difficulty with learning English as a second language to the confusing rules of the English language. The varied answers showed a wide variety of professional knowledge levels in the area of second language acquisition. This potential problem is something that will be addressed in the development of a potential culminating project. This lack of knowledge levels indicates a need for a professional development procedure to be established. This led to the concept for building a blog for such a purpose.

Interview question 2. Using the second interview question, I asked participants how effectively the strategies from their curriculum addressed vocabulary acquisition. There were two emerging themes from these responses (Table 12). The answers were either coded Sufficient or Insufficient. Participant answers that indicated that the curriculum activities were effective on their own were coded Sufficient, and responses that indicated additional resources were necessary were coded Insufficient.

Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 10 felt that the curriculum activities were not enough on their own, and additional resources are necessary in order to teach the vocabulary. With 6 participants stating that the curriculum was insufficient; therefore, Insufficient

was the most frequently occurring category. These participants reported that the activities were not terrible, but were repetitive and seemed surface-level. They agreed that the curriculum needed supplementing. The other four participants' responses fell into the Sufficient category. Participant 4 stated that the activities were effective for all students. Participant 5 reported that the online games and using a word in a sentence seemed effective. Participant 6 simply said, "Fairly well." Participant 9 responded that the vocabulary lists provided seemed appropriate. The guiding question that this interview question sought to answer at least in part was the fourth question, "What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using each specific vocabulary acquisition strategy with ELLs?" With the majority of this group providing answers that were coded as Meaning-Insufficient, the effect most teachers perceived of the vocabulary activities from the curriculum was that they were insufficient for meeting ELL vocabulary needs.

Table 12

Interview Data Analysis Question 2

Interview question 2 summarized response	Thematic coding
1. They are dry and repetitive and geared toward native English speakers.	Insufficient
2. The county wrote the Math curriculum, and the curriculum assumes the students already know the vocabulary. No activities are suggested for learning vocabulary, but lists of vocab are provided and new words are often included in associated children's books.	Insufficient
3. They are good ideas, but more is often needed.	Insufficient
4. They are effective for all students.	Sufficient
5. Imagine It! Offers games online and using words in a sentence. It is effective.	Sufficient
6. Fairly Well.	Sufficient
7. Pretty good, but you can't strictly follow that.	Insufficient
8. Pretty good, but often it needs supplementing	Insufficient
9. Curriculum provides appropriate vocabulary lists.	Sufficient
10. Okay. I supplement it, because the activities from Imagine It! Seem to simple and surface-level. The activities I add just extend the thinking process.	Insufficient

Interview question 3. I asked participants the third interview question about how effectively the strategies presented in the curriculum addressed the specific needs of ELLs. There were again two emerging themes. Participant responses were either coded as Sufficient or Insufficient (Table 13). Three of the participants reported that they had not used these specific activities. These responses were coded NA.

Table 13

Interview Data Analysis Question 3

Interview Question 3 summarized response	Thematic coding
1. The strategies offered often embarrass the students and seem too childish.	Insufficient
2. There are suggestions for differentiation of activities, but not necessarily for Math vocabulary. The students love the YouTube links.	Insufficient
3. They are good ideas, but more is often needed.	Insufficient
4. They use Word Webs, which make learning fun.	Sufficient
5. While those special strategies are provided, I've never had to use them.	N/A
6. While activities are provided, I've never had to use them.	N/A
7. Leveled readers are provided. The strategies are thorough for all levels of differentiation.	Sufficient
8. EL activities are often small group activities, and peer tutoring is effective.	Sufficient
9. Although I've only used it a couple of times, it seemed effective.	Sufficient
10. I haven't needed to use it.	N/A

Participants 4, 7, 8, and 9 were coded as Sufficient. Participant 4 stated that the word webs made learning vocabulary fun for the students. Participant 7 stated that leveled readers were provided, which allowed for differentiation. Participant 8 responded that the activities are often small group activities. Participant 9 stated that although she had only used the curriculum strategies a few times, she had found them to be effective. The remaining three participants' responses were coded as Insufficient. Participant 1

reported that those activities are typically of a lower level and can embarrass the child in front of his peers. Participant 2 stated that while some of the links to websites have been beneficial, the vocabulary does not cover every content area. Participant 3 said that while the activities are good ideas, more was often needed. The guiding question that can be partially answered by this question in the interview asked, "What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using each specific vocabulary acquisition strategy with ELLs?" From these answers, it could be assumed that teachers who had used the activities for ELLs felt the activities were generally sufficient.

Interview questions 4a and 4b. The fourth question has two parts. Using question 4a, I asked whether the participants presented vocabulary in whole class activities or in-group activities. Then using question 4b, I asked why the participants chose that group size. The emerging themes were Small Group, Whole Class or Both (Tables 14 and 15).

For the follow-up question, the emerging themes were "Whole Class: Word Study/Small Group: Practice, Small Group: All, Depends on Activity, and Whole Class: All/One-on-One: Intervention.

Participants 5, 6, and 10 reported providing instruction whole class, and they all reported that they preferred to provide vocabulary instruction to the entire class in a large group. Their responses were coded Whole Class and Whole Class: All/One-on-One: Intervention. They all reported using one-on-one time as needed for student academic or language support. Participant 2 used a small group. Her responses to the questions were coded Small Group and Small Group: All. She said that with a small class size and two

Table 14

Interview Data Analysis Question 4a

Interview Question 4a summarized response	Thematic coding
1. Whole Class for intro; Small group for practice	Both
2. One-on-one/small group	Small Group
3. Both	Both
4. Both	Both
5. Whole class…just one-on-one as needed	Whole Class
6. Whole class, with small group intervention as needed	Whole Class
7. both	Both
8. Both	Both
9. Both	Both
10. Whole class unless there are special needs	Whole Class

other support teachers in the classroom, they were able to introduce the vocabulary in small groups or centers. There were six participants who responded indicating that they used both. Participants 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 used a combination of small group and whole class activities. Their responses were coded Both. Depending on how they assigned small group and large group activities, their responses were placed in a category for either Whole Class: Word Study/Small Group: Practice or Depends on Activity. Participants 3 and 4 responded that the type of activity determined the group size, and those responses were coded accordingly. Participants 1, 7, 8, and 9 gave responses that were coded Whole Class: Word Study/Small Group: Practice. They reported that they preferred to deliver opening instructions and discussions whole class and then transition to small group for practice work. The guiding question that was partially answered by this interview question was the third question. It asked what strategies teachers were currently using to

address the specific needs of ELLs. Using the themes that occurred most frequently from both questions, I can state that teachers were using whole class and small group instruction to introduce vocabulary and to provide meaningful practice opportunities.

Table 15

Interview Data Analysis Question 4b

Interview Question 4b summarized response	Thematic coding
1. Whole Group Intro: I like experiencing the students breaking down parts of words to try to determine what the definition is. Small group practice: they have more dialogue about the words.	Whole Class: Word Study Small Group: Practice
2. Because of a small class size and 3 teachers in the classroom, we were able to introduce concepts and vocabulary in small groups.	Small Group: All
3. The type of activity determines group size.	Depends on Activity
4. Small group activities are preferable, but it depends on the specific activity.	Depends on Activity
5. If a student is struggling, one-on-one. Otherwise Whole Class	Whole Class: All One-on-One: Intervention
6. Whole class, with small group intervention as needed when students struggle.	Whole Class: All One-on-One: Intervention
7. Whole groups to introduce, and small groups for practice	Whole Class: Word Study Small Group: Practice
8. Whole groups to introduce, and small groups for practice	Whole Class: Word Study Small Group: Practice
9. Word discussions Whole Group; with more difficult vocabulary, words are introduced through small group discussions.	Whole Class: Word Study Small Group: Practice
10. If a student has special needs in addition to language learning, he or she may receive one-on-one attention.	Whole Class: All One-on-One: Intervention

Interview questions 5a and 5b. In the next interview question, 5a, I asked if the participants felt they needed to supplement the existing curriculum with additional activities for ELLs (Table 16). The coding for this question was either "Y" or "N" as this was a yes/no question.

Table 16

Interview Data Analysis Question 5a

Interview Question 5a summarized response	Thematic coding
1. Yes. The curriculum will offer an activity, and I make modifications.	Y
2. Yes.	Y
3. Yes.	Y
4. No.	N
5. Yes.	Y
6. Yes	Y
7. Yes.	Y
8. Yes.	Y
9. Yes	Y
10. Yes	Y

All participants except Participant 4 stated that they used additional activities to meet the needs of ELLs. These responses were coded "Y." Participant 4's response was coded "N." The guiding question that was partially answered through this interview question asked what strategies were currently being used to meet the needs of ELLs. With nine of the ten participants reporting that they provided outside resources and activities to meet the needs of ELLs, providing supplemental activities was a strategy teachers were using to meet the students' language needs.

The final interview question was a follow-up to the previous question. It asked participants who answered affirmatively in question 5a, indicating that they provided supplemental activities, what kind of activities they used.

Table 17

Interview Data Analysis Question 5b

Interview Question 5b summarized response	Thematic coding
1. Find ways to categorize the new words. Charades help students to visualize the words.	Categorize Words Role Play
2. Thinking Maps. Games.	Word Mapping Vocabulary Activity/Game
3. English-Spanish flash cards. Continuing to look out for vocab words beyond the week or lesson: Game. Immersion: They need language all day, visual and auditory.	Bilingual Flash Cards Vocabulary Search Vocabulary Activity/Game Language-Rich Environment
4. N/A	N/A
5. Match word to vocab games.	Vocabulary Activity/Game
6. Discussions over word meaning. Mapping words and word meanings. Writing words in sentences. Game: Find the words in the story. Context clues.	Direct Instruction Word Mapping Use in a Sentence Vocabulary Activity/Game Context Clues
7. Cloze Sentences. Small group practice/game every day. Using strategies from the old curriculum. Quick Reads. Fluency practice.	Cloze Sentences Small Group Activities Vocabulary Activity/Game Other Curriculum Fluency Practice
8. Mapping words. Allowing time to make connections for previous experiences with the words and to make connections between words. Break words into parts for analysis.	Word Mapping Activate Prior Knowledge Word Study
9. The curriculum activities are so repetitive. To break the monotony, I have them draw meanings or create sentences.	Use in a Sentence Draw to Show Meaning
10. Games/Activities. Draw Pictures, Relate the words to things we are talking about. Create Cloze sentences for a peer to answer. Create questions. Create their own puzzle or game to exchange with a fellow classmate for practice.	Vocabulary Activity/Game Activate Prior Knowledge Cloze Sentences Student Created Game/Puzzle

Because Participant 4 answered the previous question with a response of no, she was not asked the follow-up question. The other nine participants gave answers that were grouped into seventeen themes, which emerged naturally from the responses. These responses are reported and coded in the following table. One of the commonly occurring themes was Word Mapping, in which students use graphic organizers to define each word. Other frequently occurring themes were Vocabulary Activity/Game and Cloze Sentences (Table 17).

Participant 1 responded that she helped the students categorize words and used charades to act out and help them visualize words. Participant 2 said she used thinking maps and games. Participant 3 stated that bilingual flash cards, searching for words in text, and playing games helped her to fill the day with language learning. Participant 5 stated that a match word vocabulary game helped her students. Participant 6 responded that discussions about word meaning, mapping words, writing words in sentences, playing games, and finding the words in text were activities used in her classroom. Participant 7 stated that cloze sentences, small group practice/games, using strategies from the previously used curriculum, and fluency practice supported the ELLs in her room. Participant 8 also mapped words. She allowed time to make connections from previous experiences with the words. They also broke the words apart for word study. Participant 9 responded that she asked the students to draw a picture to show comprehension of word meaning. She also had them use the words in a sentence. Participant 10 stated that games worked well in her classroom. She used class

discussions, pictures, cloze sentences, and creating puzzles and questions to enhance the study of new vocabulary.

The themes were Categorize Words, Role Play, Bilingual Flash Cards, Vocabulary Search, Language-Rich Environment, Direct Instruction, Context Clues, Small Group Activities, Other Curriculum, Fluency Practice, Word Study, Draw to Show Meaning, Student Created Game/Puzzle, Word Mapping, Vocabulary Activity/Game, Use in a Sentence, Cloze Sentences, and Activate Prior Knowledge. The themes that appeared more than once included Word Mapping, Vocabulary Activity/Game, Use in a Sentence, Activate Prior Knowledge, and Cloze Sentences. The most frequently occurring theme with six occurrences was Vocabulary Activity/Game. Word Mapping was the second most common with three occurrences. The guiding question that can be partially answered by this interview question is the third question, in which I asked what strategies teachers were currently using to meet the specific needs of ELLs. Vocabulary activities and games were currently being used in many of the classrooms. Teachers were also leading students in mapping the word meaning. All of these strategies were being used to meet the specific needs of ELLs.

The interview questions yielded similar themes to those found in the survey analysis. In the survey, the majority of participants felt that the process of learning new vocabulary words was different for ELLs than it was for native English-speaking third graders primarily because of the lack of language experiences with the English learner. That idea was true in the interview as well. One participant did state that she really did not believe the process was different in second language acquisition, and another

participant stated that learning styles might be the reason for the difference. The majority in both the survey and interview remained consistent. There were two participants who reported in the survey feeling that the pre-planned vocabulary activities provided with their curriculum were often aimed at building vocabulary. When asked in the interview if those vocabulary exercises were effective, most participants responded that they felt the activities alone were insufficient. Only four participants felt the curriculum activities were sufficiently effective. When then asked whether the activities in the curriculum specifically for ELLs were effective, again only four participants felt those activities were sufficiently effective.

Three participants reported that while they were aware of the special activities provided, they had not used them. Two who had used them found them insufficient. All but one participant felt that they needed to supplement the curriculum with additional activities. While the most popular activity listed in the survey most often used to supplement the curriculum was reading aloud to students, the interview yielded different results. In the survey, participants listed only a few, and in some cases one or less ideas. The participants were more likely to list several activities in the interview. Of the activities listed, the most common was supplementing with vocabulary activities/games. Word mapping, using the words to create sentences, and completing cloze sentences were also listed by more than one participant. Ideas that were listed by a participant but only mentioned once were direct instruction, context clues, small group activities, other curriculum, fluency practice, word study, drawing for meaning, and creating puzzles.

The majority of participants reported in the interview that they used a combination of whole class vocabulary activities and small group activities. Of these, most of them utilized word study activities in a whole class setting and had word practice activities in small groups. Some preferred to stay in whole class grouping except for small group interventions. Two participants stated that their decision to make an activity whole class or small group depended on the specific activity. One participant preferred small group vocabulary instruction.

Observation

The notes gathered during the observation were taken under one of two columns in the matrix on the observation form: Direct Instruction (D) or Incidental Learning Opportunities (I). The primary coding for this instrument is based on an a priori theme, but in order to address all of the themes, a combination of inductive and deductive coding and analyzing was used. The observation form included a checklist of strategies from the literature review as well as an area to make notes about additional strategies observed. The process for coding and analyzing the observation data then involved a priori theme analysis for any checklist items of themes identified before the observation as well as an iterative analysis of the coded text into the emergent themes. There existed both predetermined themes from the checklist possible and multiple emerging themes from the additional observation notes. In the analysis of the observations, the total number of headings were not determined until after the data had been collected. In the end, there were 13 themes identified. The primary a priori themes included eight themes from the literature review. The additional five themes were emergent from the observation notes.

The a priory themes include reference information to indicate the source from the literature review. The emergent themes are identified at the bottom of Table 18, and they include Other theme derived from observation in their title.

Any activity observed which supported the strategies found in the above literature review was noted; then, the corresponding strategy was checked in the first column of the matrix on the observation form. In analysis, data noted which aligned with a strategy from the literature review was sorted by the strategy heading, and it was noted whether it occurred during direct instruction or incidental learning. Data that did not align with a strategy from the literature review was organized according to the topic as evident in Table 18.

The themes that were included on the observation form in the form of a checklist were Wide Reading, Narrow Reading, Activating Prior Knowledge, Etymology Instruction, Tiered Instruction, Leveled Questions, Word Games, and Cloze Sentences. Of these, the only strategies that were not observed during the observations were Wide Reading and Cloze Sentences. The strategy most observed was Activating Prior Knowledge. Etymology Study and Word Games were observed frequently as well. Tiered Instruction and Leveled Questions were observed more than once. The additional themes that emerged naturally from the observations were Peer Tutor, Word Wall, Writing Sentences, Role Play, and Word Mapping. Of these, Role Play and Word Wall occurred more than once. Word Wall was the only strategy noted as an incidental learning strategy. The other activities were observed as part of direct instruction.

Table 18

Observation Data Analysis

Themes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals
Wide reading (Marzano, 2003)											0
Narrow reading (Hadaway, 2009)					D						1
Activate prior knowledge (Farley, Ramonda, and Liu, 2012)	D			D		D	D		D	D	6
Etymology study (Akbari, 2012)			D		D		D	D			4
Tiered instruction (Fien, Smith, Baker, Chaparro, Baker, & Preciado, 2010)		D		D							2
Leveled questions (Herrell & Jordan, 2008)								D		D	2
Word games (Beck and McKeown, 2007)	D		D				D		D		4
Cloze vocabulary sentences rather than students writing sentences (Beck and McKeown, 2007)											0
Other theme derived from Observation: Peer Tutor	D										1
Other theme derived from Observation: Word Wall	I							I			2
Other theme derived from Observation: Writing sentences	D										1
Other theme derived from Observation: Role Play				D		D					2
Other theme derived from Observation: Word Mapping						D					1

Notes: D = Direct instruction; I = Incidental learning

The observation themes were a combination of the checklist of strategies in the form, which were taken from the literature review in Section 2 and themes that naturally emerged from the observation. The themes that were included on the observation form in the form of a checklist included Wide Reading, Narrow Reading, Activating Prior Knowledge, Etymology Instruction, Tiered Instruction, Leveled Questions, Word Games, and Cloze Sentences.

Participant 1 was observed during a typical literature vocabulary lesson. She was introducing the vocabulary for their new story. Four themes were identified during the direct instruction of her lesson, and one indirect instructional theme was identified. The indirect instructional theme was observed as a word wall was posted in the classroom. There was one alphabetized word wall and then four smaller word walls with vocabulary organized by content area. At the beginning of the lesson, she did activate prior knowledge about the words and the word parts. The students then formed groups of two so that they could play the vocabulary game. Once the game was over, they were to write sentences with their vocabulary words. The themes identified were Activate Prior Knowledge and Word Games. In addition to these themes, three other themes were derived from the participant's answers: Peer Tutor, Word Wall, and Writing Sentences.

Participant 2 was observed during the vocabulary portion of a Math lesson. The vocabulary part of the lesson was approached as a review of terms previously learned. She gave the lesson to the whole class initially and then broke into groups. The students were grouped by ability, and work was differentiated. Higher achieving groups were given the task of using the terms to complete word problems. There were two other

groups. One group was asked to complete simple problems, following the directions using the terms from the lesson. The final group was asked to match memory cards, completing matched sets of terms with their pictorial representation. The theme, "Tiered Instruction" was observed.

Participant 3 was observed during a reading class. The vocabulary had already been introduced. This was a day of review. The class had a discussion about the etymology of the words. They also broke into groups to play a match game with their classmates. The themes Etymology Study and Word Games were observed.

Participant 4 was observed during a reading class. She began the class by asking students where they had heard the new words before. They then discussed the meaning, and they played charades. One student had to act out one of the vocabulary words, and the rest of the class guessed what word the student was acting. The themes observed in this lesson were Activate Prior Knowledge and Tiered Instruction, An additional category was added from her observation: Role Play.

Participant 5 was observed during a reading class. The teacher called the students to gather around for a read aloud story about trees to lead into their new vocabulary. As the students encountered new words, they broke the words into parts and discussed meaning. The students then were able to choose a book from a group of books on trees for silent reading time. The themes observed in this lesson were Narrow Reading and Etymology Study.

Participant 6 was observed during a science vocabulary lesson. After a short review, the students were asked to act out vocabulary words on pollution. Then they drew

a word map of one science word with sidewalk chalk on the pavement in the courtyard. The themes observed included Activate Prior Knowledge. Themes that were derived from this lesson were Role Play and Word Mapping.

Participant 7 was observed during a reading class. She began the class by reviewing information from the previous day. They then studied the word parts and identified suffixes. The students worked in pairs to complete a match game. The themes observed were Activate Prior Knowledge, Etymology Study, and Word Games.

Participant 8 was observed during a reading class on the first day of a unit. The classroom had an alphabetized word wall. The teacher introduced vocabulary by leading a class discussion, activating prior knowledge of words and their word parts. They played a word game in small groups before reading their new story. The themes observed were Etymology Study and Leveled Questions. Another theme that emerged from the observation was Word Wall.

Participant 9 was observed during a science vocabulary lesson. The teacher read aloud a book about worms and dirt, and they had a discussion about the vocabulary from the story. The students were then asked to label a picture with the vocabulary words discussed. The themes observed were Activate Prior Knowledge and Word Games.

Participant 10 was observed during a reading class. The class reviewed the terms discussed earlier in the unit. During the review, the teacher asked students questions about the vocabulary and the plot of the story. The themes observed were Activate Prior Knowledge and Leveled Questions.

Turner (2010) recommended confirming that the questions on instruments to be used refer to the core research questions. Therefore, survey answers were grounded in theory as the questions for the survey were created from the research questions. I confirmed that each survey question referred to a core research question, answering it at least in part (Table 1) and that each interview question referred to a core research question (Table 2). In this way, trustworthiness was addressed. This research study focused on identifying areas of need for teachers who teach ELLs. Content validity was determined in the tables, justifying each question of the survey and interview script.

By collecting data using three instruments, triangulation of methods provided credibility and addressed validity. Glesne (1999) stated that using multiple sources of qualitative data increases validity. A colleague also provided a peer review of the process of data collection and analysis, increasing the validity of the process. Results from each of the three qualitative instruments were compared. Since the conclusions were the same from the interviews, surveys, and observations, validity was established (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, n.d.).

Participant identities were protected in the reporting of the conclusions of the qualitative case study. No names of people or school buildings were included in the findings. Paper copies of data were stored in a locked filing cabinet at the base school. Electronic copies of data were not stored on any shared drives. All electronic files were saved on a jump drive used only for this project.

In the potential case of discrepant findings, both findings would have been presented. For example, if one participant had stated that wide reading had provided her

ELL with the optimal setting in which to learn vocabulary, but another teacher had reported that wide reading was detrimental to the vocabulary acquisition of her student, the strategy would have been reported as being successful in one situation, but not in the other. With this constructivist case study, there were many possible answers and many solutions. All were reported, regardless of whether every participant agreed. Any dissenting opinions were stated in the report.

Conclusion

Through survey, interview, and observation, the ten volunteering participants from the 42 third grade teachers in the district were the sample group in this qualitative case study. They provided their philosophies and experiences through language, responding in this study in a social constructivist manner. The participants described what they understood of the second language acquisition process and identified the strategies they had found to be successful with teaching new vocabulary to their ELLs.

Each guiding question was addressed through the triangulation of this qualitative study. The first question and follow-up question asked, "What aspects of the second language vocabulary acquisition process do third grade teachers understand?" and "What aspects of the process do they not understand?" I had one theme emerge as the most frequent in two of the three research instruments. In both the survey and the interview, the theme Lack of Language Experience was the most commonly occurring theme. There were two themes that occurred across both instruments for one occurrence; Difficulty of English Language and Connecting Two Languages were included in the themes recognized in multiple instruments. The follow-up research question, "What aspects of

the process do they not understand?" was best answered in the answers that were not commonly occurring. The answers of learning style, teaching style, and the belief that there is no difference in first language and second language acquisition indicated that there are aspects of second language learning that the classroom teachers did not all understand to the same degree.

The next question was, "What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?" One strategy that had a high occurrence during the observation but never appeared in either the survey or the interview was Activating Prior Knowledge. More than half of the observed teachers used this strategy during the lesson, but none of the teachers reported it as a strategy in the interview or the survey. In both the survey and interview, when asked whether the participants supplemented the curriculum with outside activities for vocabulary instruction, the majority of teachers said that they did. The interview had 9 of 10 teachers reporting that they used other resources, and the survey showed 6 of 9. The theme Word Mapping occurred in all three instruments. Role Play also occurred in each research instrument. The theme Vocabulary Activity/Game occurred in each of the three instruments as well.

In the final research question, "What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using each specific vocabulary acquisition strategy with ELLs?" the survey and interview asked teachers what outcome the vocabulary strategies included in their curriculum had on student learning. In the interview, only four of the ten reported that these strategies were beneficial. The other participants found these strategies insufficient.

In the survey, only four teachers reported specific benefits to these strategies. The theme of building vocabulary was the most frequently occurring other than NA. The number of teachers who believed that the strategies in the curriculum helped build vocabulary was consistent across both instruments.

A final project will address the themes derived from the data. The project will take the form of a collaborative peer professional development blog coupled with a Three-Day Professional Development training to teach the third grade teachers how to use the blog and to establish relationships with the other participants. The Three-Day Professional Development training and the blog will provide teachers with vocabulary strategies from the collaborative narrative, which is found in Appendix A and which will be available to all participants at the training. The blog, accessed by invitation only, will then provide a place where classroom teachers and ESOL teachers can continue to share strategies and ideas for addressing the vocabulary needs of third grade ELLs in the school District.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

My peer-oriented professional development project will include a 3-day professional development workshop, an online educational peer professional development blog, and a collaborative narrative accessible online by teachers in the district through the general information page of the blog. The 3-day professional development workshop will introduce participants to each other and give them an opportunity to work together on the strategies presented in the collaborative narrative. The last day of this workshop will provide training in using the blog, accessible only by third grade teachers in the district, to continue collaboration through social media after the workshop is completed. The peer professional development blog will provide a place where classroom teachers and ESOL teachers can share strategies and ideas for addressing the vocabulary needs of third grade ELLs in the school district. Further, it will allow teachers across the district to communicate with other teachers of similar grade levels who also have ELLs in their classrooms.

The results of the data collection I completed for this research project indicated that 90% of the teachers participating in the study felt that the existing curriculum needed to be supplemented with other activities in order to effectively teach vocabulary for ELLs. With vocabulary development among third grade ELLs being a problem in the district, and with the majority of teachers reporting that they felt the existing curriculum was insufficient alone for vocabulary instruction, the need for communication among teachers of vocabulary was evident. While most teachers do supplement the curriculum

with additional vocabulary activities, the types of activities varied, as did the sources where the teachers went to find appropriate activities. The peer professional development blog will provide a place where teachers can find ideas and strategies that have proven successful in other classrooms throughout the district. In this way, teachers can share successful strategies. The peer professional development blog will also provide a place to communicate about the specific needs of ELLs. For teachers who may be the only third grade teacher at their schools whose classrooms have ELLs, this can provide unique, supportive collaboration opportunities that do not presently exist.

My goal in carrying out this project will be to create a community where it will be easy to communicate with other teachers of similar grade levels who also have ELLs. By establishing connections and building relationships during the 3-day professional development training and then continuing communication through specifically designed social media opportunities, a community of professionals will have the opportunity to collaborate. The peer professional development blog will serve to support the third grade teachers in the school district as they work to teach new vocabulary to ELLs. One conclusion I derived from the data analysis in this research was that teachers in the district supplemented the curriculum with additional vocabulary strategies and activities, but the sources they used to find additional support were varied. By establishing connections in a three-day introductory training and then continuing communication through the peer professional development blog, the teachers will have a common place to turn to for accessing strategies and activities to supplement the curriculum for ELLs. My intention is that the peer professional development blog will be made accessible to

the third grade teachers in the district. We will begin posts in the blog together during the 3-day face-to-face training, and then continue those conversations and begin new ones online once the training is finished. The intended outcome is to provide a unique opportunity for teachers to learn from teachers of all 12 schools around the county in a peer-oriented professional development project.

Rationale

This project will help teachers join a community of professionals with similar challenges in the field, and will give teachers a forum in which to communicate about strategies that will help ELLs in the school district increase the rate of academic vocabulary acquisition. The increase in acquisition rate should support the students in meeting the state's academic standards in English/Language Arts. These classroom-proven strategies should help provide classroom teachers with the tools necessary to support ELL students in developing awareness of sight words and skills to decode unfamiliar words.

Review of the Literature

The opportunity now exists for educators to engage in professional development through the social media platform. Historically, more formal types of professional development such as conferences and lectures have been used to provide ongoing training (Moorley & Chinn, 2015). This formal type of training, however, often involves difficulty with scheduling meetings and finding a central meeting place. Moorley and Chinn (2015) found that a more informal types of training through social media are gaining popularity, and with good reason. In this literature review, I identify important

aspects involved in using this new platform for collaboration and training. The future of professional development is online collaboration and training (Burns, 2013), and social media allows teachers to collaborate over a great distance for extended periods and at times that are convenient for them.

Collaborating with Peers

Because the participants in this research are from different schools across the large district, there are often no other third grade teachers in their schools who have ELLs in their classrooms. This makes collaboration with teachers from other schools necessary. As Robinson (2014) has noted, "New teachers often quit early in their careers because they struggle alone with many problems ranging from inadequate administrative support to lack of mentoring from a teacher in their field" (p. 3). Ongoing collaboration with teachers in similar circumstances can increase confidence and encourage reflection. Social media can support teachers in making connections with teachers outside their school buildings for purposes of networking or improving practice (Robinson, 2014).

Schaub-de Jong, Cohen-Schotanus, Dekker, and Verkerk (2009) found that peer-oriented trainings fostered an interactive atmosphere and an environment in which practitioners reflected on their own skills and shared reflections on their personal growth. Online forums now allow people to collaborate with one another, regardless of location. Some online collaboration is also peer-oriented. The Institute of Education Sciences (2015) stated that online communication now allows people to interact for professional purposes via methods such as chat. The teachers in this particular Georgia district reported that they find instructional strategies through various sources including online,

old curriculum, and supplemental curriculum. For instance, they reported many different ideas that they could share with each other, given the proper forum to do so. Because of this, peer-oriented professional development seems like a natural fit for this project.

One thing I learned in the data collection process was that not all third grade teachers teach ELLs in any given year. This means that collaborating on teaching ELLs with other third grade teachers in their buildings may not be possible. The Three-Day Professional Development training would provide an opportunity for collaboration, and the blog would provide an opportunity for ongoing collaboration. While peer-oriented professional development seems to be the most appropriate type of project to address the need of simplifying the process for searching for supplemental activities, geographical distance is a barrier to current types of inter-school communication within the large district. Professional development through social media such as blogs can make it easier for people to meet from a variety of locations at once (The Institute of Education Sciences, 2015). In this case, the professional development blog would be available to a closed group of third grade teachers who teach ELLs in the district.

Social Media for Educational Purposes

Educators who do not have colleagues in the same building or community require a method of collaborating and engaging in meaningful, ongoing professional development. Veletsianos, Kimmons, and French (2013) completed a study on the use of social media for educational purposes. Their participants were able to conduct online conversations during this study. One of their participants noted that the conversations were saved over time and listed chronologically. Because of this, users of this social

media were able to refer back to previously made comments, as well as post comments of their own. Because professional development through social media does not have to occur in real time, participants can engage at their convenience through asynchronous participation (Cahn, Benjamin, & Shanahan, 2013). Scheduling meeting times between teachers at different schools is no longer a problem with this form of collaboration.

Using social media to collaborate professionally can allow people to communicate and share ideas over great distances ("Academia Adopts Social Media to Blaze New Paths for Peer Collaboration," 2008). Sharing ideas through social media allows the participants to engage from their own computer in their workspaces or homes. No meetings have to be set up in a venue convenient to all attending, and no time has to be taken from their regular jobs. Participants in the social media professional development study done by Sie et al. (2013) reported that having a place to share ideas had a positive impact on their motivation. The nature of the peer-directed social-media-based professional development allowed the participants to have ongoing training that catered to their busy schedules. They could refer to the social media project as often as they needed, and as their schedules allowed (Sie et al., 2013).

Professional development should occur regularly in an ongoing fashion in order to keep everyone informed of the latest trends (Moorley & Chinn, 2015). Armed with the knowledge that using social media as a platform for professional development can make training asynchronous and accessible from any locations with internet access, once can make the argument that social media can support ongoing training. Participants who are engaged in asynchronous training can attend at their own convenience, which will

eliminate schedule conflicts. If more participants are able to attend a training, the training is beneficial to a wider audience. Having the ability to attend from the participants' workspaces rather than travel to a central location also makes it less likely that participants will have to cancel. Making training more convenient is important for staff attendance and participation (Moorley & Chinn, 2015).

Social media can be an important way to share ideas, because many users can be engaged in the conversation at the same time ("Intelligent Social Network Linking Innovation and Education," 2014). Most social media also has data storage embedded, and allows entries to be deleted at the discretion of the writer. Veletsianos, Kimmons, and French (2013) stated that it was important to keep the communication appropriate and focused in social networking for educational or professional purposes. They reported that it seemed natural for some of the participants in their study to approach social media in a relaxed manner, and a facilitator sometimes needed to re-focus the discussion.

The Institute of Education Sciences (2015) identified an online learning tool as a type of technology that can allow people to connect. This can include chat, message boards, blogs, and webinars. Choosing the right online learning tool for each situation is important. It is important to look at the length of time it will take to complete the collaboration. If it is only a one-time meeting, a chat would be appropriate. For more ongoing collaboration, a message board or blog might be more appropriate. It is also important to keep in mind the specific needs of each organization (Institute of Education Sciences, 2015). The Institute of Education Sciences concluded that there are factors that are important when considering learning through social networks. Participants in the

study with The Institute of Education Sciences reported that they learned best when the online conversation was two-way. The moderator of the peer professional development blog interacting with the participants was key to the development of the conversation (Sie et al., 2013). Professional development through social media such as blogs is an increasingly popular way for teachers to collaborate and keep abreast of the ever-changing trends in education (McLean, 2014).

Social Media Collaboration a Relatively New Concept

Sie et al. (2013) stated that professional development through online forums has been researched, but professional development through social media such as blogs is still a relatively new concept. For this reason, the literature sources on using social media for professional collaboration are limited. I found this to be true in my searches. I conducted searches in the Walden University Library as well as through a separate citation program. Over several months' time post-research, I searched for the following terms in all possible combinations: "professional development," "training," "social media," "online learning," "blogs," "Facebook," "pinterest," "online," "collaboration." I also searched through the ESOL library under the professional development section in my district. New searches would lead me to a few more each time, but the overall number of sources remained low. While this has made it difficult to find a large quantity of sources, reaching saturation with such a low number indicates that published work in this relatively new area will be needed. In this way, this project could contribute to the body of existing literature on using social media for professional collaboration.

Peer oriented professional development conducted through social media such as a peer professional development blog provides a way for the third grade teachers in this Georgia district to engage in ongoing training. Providing a peer driven forum will allow teachers to share with each other, reflect on their own instructional practices, and collaborate as they grow as language instructors together. By planning the professional development online through social media, the participating teachers will be able to share with teachers outside of their own buildings.

Project Description

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

A free website, www.weebly.com, will be used so that access will be free for all participants. Weebly.com is a secure website with a clearly detailed privacy policy. According to the privacy policy, the site will require users to give an email address and username (Weebly Privacy, n.d.). While information posted on the public blogs is made public as it is shared, the email address and username are stored securely. The password is stored using a salted, variable work factor (Weebly Privacy, n.d.). This peer professional development blog will be created, and an email invitation will be sent to all participating teachers, informing them of the peer professional development blog, its purpose, and how to join. The only resources needed to complete this project are a computer with internet capability, internet access, email addresses of the participants, and the findings from this research project. School email accounts will be used to communicate with participating teachers, but I will contact the participants from my

Walden University account so that participants do not feel any pressure to participate as a fellow coworker.

Potential Barriers

A potential barrier to this project's success is firewall protection on the school computers. Should the peer professional development blog be on a site that is flagged by the school firewall, I will seek permission for the site www.weebly.com to be opened up to teachers within the district.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

Design of the peer professional development blog should take no more than one week. Therefore, week one of the project will be spent creating the blog and preparing it for use. Once the blog has been created, scheduling approval will be obtained from the district to hold a 3-day professional development event at the district learning center for the third grade teachers who will be using the blog. This Three-Day Professional Development Workshop will introduce the participants to the data collected, engage them in activities to sort through the strategies and apply them to scenarios in which they are useful for their individual students' language levels, and familiarize them with the peer professional development blog.

Day one. As detailed in the Professional Development Plan in Appendix A, Day One will be designed to share information about the research, the data collection process, and the data analysis. Activity 1 is an icebreaker called Describe Your Partner. The purpose of this activity is to provide an opportunity for the teachers from different schools around the district to get to know each other. The teachers will be asked to work

in pairs and to take three minutes to share information about themselves with their partner. At the end of the three minutes, participants will share two things they learned about their partner with the whole group. After this icebreaker, I will share the problem in the district and a brief summary of how the research was designed.

I will then present the data analysis charts from Tables 3 through 18, projected with a document camera. We will identify the most commonly occurring strategies offered. I will then ask participants to work at their tables to complete the next activity. Each table will be given a Post-It Easel Pad and Markers. Each table will discuss the strategies presented that seem useful in their classroom settings. Participants will mark these strategies on their easel paper so that they can share with the whole group later. We will break for lunch. Following lunch, the small groups will present their strategies to the whole group.

The next activity is to introduce the Vocabulary Strategy Log (see Appendix A). Participants will be asked to note any strategies they are interested in trying or that they found useful in the boxes provided. Each box has a section marked "Level:___," but since leveling strategies will not be discussed until Day Two, that box will be left blank for the time being. After ample time is given to complete the Vocabulary Strategies Log, The closing activity will be introduced. Each table of participants will be given seven index cards with strategies collected in data analysis written on them. Each participant will be given one sticky hand toy. I will describe a strategy, and the participants will try to be the first one at their table to extend their sticky hand and slap the correct card. Following this game, I will explain that an easel paper labeled "Parking Lot" will be

posted in the classroom for the rest of our training. Any ideas, questions, or comments that arise during training can be written on this paper. We will address them as we proceed and at the end of the training as well.

Day two. The second day of the professional development workshop will provide opportunities for sharing in small groups and then in the whole group about the strategies presented and their effectiveness at each English proficiency level. The Can-Do Descriptors (WIDA, n.d.) define the language functions that can be expected at each level of English proficiency. A copy of the Can-Do Descriptors will be distributed to all participants. The descriptors will be briefly explained, using sample student scores. The strategies on easel paper from the previous day will be used in the discussion, so that participants can see where some of the strategies fall on the matrix of language proficiency levels. Narrow reading, for example, would not be an appropriate strategy for a student at Level 1.0 English proficiency level. That strategy would be appropriate for levels 3 and up, because students at level 1-2 are still at the single word/short phrase level.

After a few examples with the whole group, each table will be given cards with the strategies on them. Each table will be asked to sort their strategies by English proficiency ability level, using the Can-Do Descriptors. Following this activity, we will discuss with the whole group whether any of the strategies were difficult to sort and, also, to share any valuable conversation in their groups sparked by this activity. Next, teachers will be given a card with a language level and a word list. The participants will be asked to plan an activity that can be used to teach the word list to the fictitious student, given

his/her proficiency level. As they come to a stopping point, the participants will be released for lunch. After lunch, participants will be invited to share their planned activities with the whole group.

Following the presentations, participants will be asked to open their vocabulary strategy log from the previous day. They will be invited to add any new strategies they have encountered in Day Two. Then I will ask the participants to go back to the strategies listed and, armed with the knowledge of proficiency level readiness, to note the levels that could benefit from each of their chosen strategies. To close the day, participants will be asked to choose one proficiency level from the Can-Do Descriptor chart and find three people in the room they can tell about the strategies that would be appropriate at their chosen level.

Day three. The participants will then be introduced to the blog, which will allow the teachers to continue collaborating with each other after the training days are finished. Day Three will be used to explore the blog, learn how to log in and add posts, and to begin adding to the blog. The introduction to Day Three will be to briefly establish the benefits from the project literature review for using a blog for professional development. The actual peer professional development blog will be introduced on the projector screen. Participants will work individually signing up for an account through www.weebly.com. They will navigate the site at their tables and discuss in small groups.

Next, each participant will be asked to choose one activity we have been working with in the workshop to post about in the blog. This will give our blog a start and provide a place where participants can come to be reminded of some of the strategies once the

workshop is completed. After successfully posting to the peer professional development blog, participants will leave for lunch. The afternoon session will begin by asking participants to return to the blog and comment on another person's post. Time will be given to complete this. Then I will give each participant a copy of the blog evaluation (see Appendix A). I will explain that this evaluation will be sent to participants regularly, and they can use this evaluation to note problems with the blog or suggestions for improvement. To close our final session, the parking lot easel paper will be reviewed. Comments, suggestions, and noted strategy ideas will be discussed.

Following the workshop, this community of learners will continue collaboration through the peer professional development blog. Teachers can use it as a place to get ideas for supplementing their vocabulary instruction throughout the year. Participants will be able to add posts and comment on other teachers' posts in an ongoing fashion and will be asked regularly to complete evaluations on the blog as a resource.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

I teach ESOL in a county elementary school. I will be responsible for obtaining approval to carry out the project in the district. I will also be responsible for creating the peer professional development blog and making sure the proper people are able to access it. The responsibility of the participants will be to attend to the peer professional development blog and comment as often as they deem necessary, strictly on a voluntary basis. There will be a key moderator in the blog, giving prompts and guiding discussions. I will act as the key moderator to begin the blog, but participants who volunteer to post as administration will be given administrative access. The role of moderator will be shared

among the participants who step up as leaders in the professional development blog across time.

Project Evaluation

Goals for this project will be reviewed in order to establish criteria for the evaluation. This project is designed to create a professional community of classroom teachers who teach ELLs. These classroom teachers will establish connections during the three-day professional development training and continue building relationships through a purposefully designed social media outlet in the form of a peer professional development blog, accessible only by invitation. This project should support teachers in gaining access to vocabulary instructional strategies.

This project was set in motion with the goal of providing participants with a forum to engage in ongoing peer-led professional development for teachers of ELLs. Because of this distinct goal, this model fits a goal-oriented evaluation method. To evaluate the project, a goal-based anonymous survey will be distributed once per semester to all participants of the peer professional development blog. The survey, which can be found in Appendix A, will ask how effective the peer professional development blog has been at providing such a forum for collaboration. Participants will be asked to rate the usefulness of the blog as well as the design and effectiveness of the site and overall project. The survey also asks for comments and suggestions for improving the blog or making it more useful. The blog moderator will be responsible for collecting the data, reporting it to administration, and collaborating with teachers to make changes as evidently needed according to the evaluation data. I will begin moderating the blog, but

participants may be given administrative access as well on a voluntary basis. A description of the project and survey will also be sent to the principals and superintendent.

Project Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

The overall goal of the study and the resulting project was to improve the vocabulary of ELLs in the community. The intention of the project is to support teachers as they provide language instruction to ELLs and to increase the effective strategies used by the teachers. In addition, if the rate of student vocabulary acquisition increases to be near that of their native English-speaking peers, the ELLs will be equipped with similar vocabularies as their peers. In this way, the students will be able to perform class requirements at grade level comparable to that of their native English-speaking peers (Marzano, 2003). The intended impact in the local community will be improving communication among teachers of ELLs in an effort to enhance collaboration experiences.

Far-Reaching

This work could contribute to the body of knowledge of vocabulary development and ELLs. It could also be a resource for teaching English as a second language. This model could be repeated for multiple grade levels within the district. It could also be recreated in other school districts where ELLs are struggling academically. The project is also a potential project for similar districts whose schools are far-separated across the county. It can, as it is hoped to do in this district, provide an opportunity for collaboration

among teachers who are housed in different schools. In order to make this project far-reaching, the blog could be opened up to teachers outside the district so that teachers from different states can communicate and collaborate on vocabulary instructional strategies.

Conclusion

This culminating project takes the issues highlighted by the data collected in the research and addresses them with the intention of bringing about social change. The circumstance brought to light by the data collected is that 90% of the participating third grade teachers in the district are having to supplement the existing curriculum with additional vocabulary strategies. The teachers reported trying to find activities and strategies from various sources. The project addresses this by giving teachers a place to share successful strategies and learn from each other. By designing the professional development in a peer-led environment, the teachers will be able to teach, learn, and reflect on their own skills and practices. By designing this professional development opportunity through an online blog, teachers will be able to collaborate with other teachers in the district, regardless of proximity. In this way, a peer-led professional development opportunity through an online social network seems a natural response to the problem that arose through the data collection process.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

This project's 3-Day professional development workshop, designed to introduce teachers to the peer professional development blog, creates a blended method of face-to-face training and online collaboration. The aspects of this project, therefore, include several strengths and limitations. In this section, I identified these strengths and limitations, and offer potential methods for resolving issues associated with the limitations. In this section, I also reflect on how the process of creating the project has helped me to understand the value of collaboration and strengthened me as a scholar, practitioner, and leader. Finally, I address implications for social change through encouraging ongoing collaboration in the district.

Project Strengths

This professional development project provides the opportunity for teachers who may not have other teachers of ELLs on their grade level team to participate in ongoing collaboration with others from around the district through social media. Agosto, Copeland, and Zach (2013) completed a study in which blogs were used as part of a course's requirements. The researchers found that blogs were successful in encouraging collaboration and were well suited to sharing course-specific communication. Their study also showed that the ease of use of blogs created little opportunity for technological misunderstanding (Agosto, Copeland, & Zach, 2013). Ease of use is an important strength for this particular project. With participation in the blog occurring at the participants' convenience, using an online platform that is user-friendly will help

participants feel confident in using the peer professional development blog. Creating opportunities for asynchronous participation through a blog eliminates difficulties with scheduling convenient meeting times (Robinson, 2014). This is particularly important with this group of participants whose school buildings are spread across a broad area in the district. Scheduling meetings regularly would be difficult. Asynchronous participation allows participants the benefit of collaborating without the hassle of having to set aside time to drive to a face-to-face meeting set at a specific time.

Recommendations for Remediating Limitations

One potential limitation to this project is that learning online rather than face-to-face can increase procrastination, and learners often feel disconnected from their fellow online learners (Johnson & Palmer, 2015). With the blog being asynchronous in participation expectations, participants are only expected to participate as they need to. Therefore, procrastination is not a concern in this non-academic social media project. It is certainly a concern that participants might feel disconnected from other participants in this project, based on the online platform. However, since our participants will have the 3-day professional development training to establish connections face-to-face, this should increase the level of engagement in the online forum.

Another potential limitation to this project plan is that students will not have regular, face-to face interaction with the other participants. Cavanaugh and Jacquemin (2015) completed a study of online learning versus face-to-face instruction. They used student GPA to measure understanding and success in the courses. The researchers found that learners who typically have higher GPAs in conventional learning will continue to

have high GPAs in online learning experiences. However, learners who struggle in a conventional face-to-face classroom will experience more difficulties in online learning (Cavanaugh & Jacquemin, 2015). For this project, I have no prior knowledge of how well these participants perform in the classroom. I therefore have no way to predict how many of the participants will have difficulty learning in this way.

I will address these limitations through the introductory 3-day face-to-face professional development workshop. Blending online learning with face-to-face experiences allows students to excel relative to students who are only offered one method of instruction (Powell et al., 2015). Therefore, providing an opportunity for participants to work together in a face-to-face environment and begin to build a strong community of learners at the beginning of the project can lessen the disconnected feeling many students may have in online learning environments. Blogs are a form of social media that encourage collaboration and community building (Agosto et al., 2013). Therefore, this platform in social media will also lessen the effect of these limitations. Using online learning exclusively often does not meet the needs of all learners; blending face-to-face and online platforms is the optimal situation (Berns, Gonzalez-Pardo, Camacho, & European Association for Computer-Assisted Language, 2012). Beginning with the face-to-face professional development workshop and then transitioning into online collaboration through the peer professional development blog should give participants a blended education experience.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The results of the data collection indicated that 90% of the participants felt that the existing curriculum needed to be supplemented with other activities in order to effectively teach vocabulary. With vocabulary development among third grade ELLs being a problem in the district and the majority of teachers reporting that they felt the existing curriculum was insufficient alone for vocabulary instruction, the need for communication among teachers of vocabulary was evident. With the schools in the district being located far apart, regular face-to-face meeting is not practical. For this reason, I have designed this 3-day professional development workshop and ongoing professional development blog. However, there is an alternative way of defining this problem. Because 90% of the participants supplement the existing curriculum with additional vocabulary activities, but they are currently searching for these activities from various sources, the problem could be seen as a need for a curriculum that is stronger in activities for ELLs. This definition of the problem assumes that a curriculum exists that would provide a wide range of activities for ELLs and would no longer require the search for additional activities.

Alternate approaches to the three-day professional development portion of the project could include a group online teleconference in which participants could engage in activities that connect them with each other to address the types of activities they will be using and sharing. This approach would be an option for teachers who did not have a central meeting location or could not practically meet face-to-face for the initial professional development workshop. In situations where time does not allow for either

meetings in person or online video conferencing, emails containing the information that would have been presented can be distributed. A video lecture could also be sent out. However, sending emails or videos would not allow the participants to build relationships with each other.

One alternative approach to creating an online professional development blog is to plan monthly face-to-face meetings. The problem is that with the schools being located so far apart, attendance at regular meetings from all participants would be difficult. Another alternative approach to the peer professional development blog is to send out regular newsletters to participating teachers with suggestions for activities that enhance vocabulary development. The drawback of this is that the creator of the newsletter is the only voice heard in the process. The participants do not have an opportunity to immediately reply or comment.

Scholarship

Developing this project from the findings in data analysis has helped me to understand the importance of collaboration and being a part of a strong learning community in the learning process. Learning that 9 of 10 classroom teachers admitted that they felt they needed to seek resources outside of the adopted curriculum to help ELLs was not surprising to me, but to learn that they were going to different sources and trying to find things on their own highlighted for me that these teachers were having to find their own ways to find resources. Creating a project that will allow them to collaborate and learn from each other follows the lessons I have learned through this process.

Project Development and Evaluation

Developing this project's timeline, evaluation, sample blog, and handouts forced me to reflect on professional development I have been involved in as a learner in the past. In my experiences as a learner in face-to-face training, I always respond to instruction that allows me to work hands-on with the materials and enables me to actively participate rather than simply listen to a lecture for the entire session. I designed my Three-Day Professional Development Workshop with this in mind. Setting up the sample blog and evaluation required reflection on my experiences with online collaboration as well. I tried to view the blog as one of the participants in order to create questions that would allow me to provide meaningful input for this project.

Leadership and Change

This experience of potentially bringing about change by making communication among teachers of ELLs more convenient has been enriching. Making plans for the Three-Day Professional Development Workshop and the peer professional development blog has involved my reflecting on what the teachers would find most helpful. As I considered this, it became ever more clear to me that considering the needs of others as I develop a project is important in becoming a leader.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

As a learner who has found success in online learning, designing a project that also uses online learning has been exciting. However, the trend of using social media for professional development is relatively new; therefore, finding a large number of resources on this topic has been difficult. This led me to realize that I am persistent and

determined to learn about even this obscure topic because it will bring about a relevant solution to the problem.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

This process has also illuminated my passion for collaborative learning as a practitioner. As an educator, I surround myself with teachers I can contact with questions or situations for which I need advice. Developing this project, which will provide an opportunity for the participating teachers to collaborate in the same way with other classroom teachers of ELLs, has intensified my own passionate belief that professional learning can be improved by adding ongoing discourse among colleagues.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As I developed the sample blog, I tried to imagine what the participants might hope to have set up in the blog. In creating the evaluation, I looked at the blog through the eyes of a participant so that I could predict questions that would help them express their opinions about the functionality and ease of use. I planned the Three-Day Professional Development Workshop with activities that would allow the participants to have hands-on experience with the information presented, because that is what I would expect as a learner. As a project developer, I regularly imagined myself as the participant in an effort to make the project useful and exciting.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

This project will potentially provide a platform for communication among teachers across the district who teach ELLs in their classrooms. What the data analysis revealed is that 90% of the participants are regularly trying to find resources to meet the

needs of their ELLs. Because there are often no other teachers of ELLs in the same grade level within their schools, the teachers were turning to different resources. Providing a platform for ongoing collaboration on instructional strategies for ELLs will bring a connectedness among those teachers around the district that does not now exist. Improving communication in professional development at the local level will potentially influence the success of ELLs in those teachers' classrooms. This blog could be made public so that teachers from other districts could access it. A blog with public access could create more far-reaching benefits.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

In building this project, I have begun to feel increasingly confident that creating a platform for collaboration and continued learning is worthwhile. In the future, this project could inspire future research on the effectiveness of social media as a method of professional development in the field of teaching English as a Second Language. Although Spanish is the first language of most ELLs in the United States, English as a Second Language courses address many different languages (Ruiz, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). Chinese and Vietnamese are the second and third most frequently found languages. It could also lead to future research on using social media for collaboration among any colleagues who are separated by distance.

Conclusion

Creating the project of the Three-Day Professional Development Workshop and peer professional development blog has inspired reflection on the importance of collaborating in an ongoing method. Although finding resources on using social media in

professional development has been difficult, the sources I have located have increased my confidence that social media can be a great tool in this area. As I worked on creating this project, I tried to imagine how the participants would react to the training and tried to consider what activities and supports the participants would need. Reflecting on the process of trying to bring positive social change to the district by increasing collaborative opportunities makes me realize how much I have grown as a leader throughout this process.

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Appendix A: The Project

The Project

Project Collaborative Narrative

Through survey, interview, and observation, the participants provided their philosophies and experiences, responding in this study in a social constructivist manner. The participants described their knowledge and experience with the second language acquisition process and identified strategies they deemed most successful with teaching vocabulary to ELLs.

Each guiding question was addressed through the triangulation of this qualitative study. The research questions were key identifying themes. The first question and follow-up were: "What aspects of the second language vocabulary acquisition process do third grade teachers understand?" and "What aspects of the process do they not understand?" One primary theme emerged as the most frequent in two of the three research instruments. In both the survey and the interview, the theme Lack of Language Experience was the most commonly occurring theme. There were two themes that occurred across both instruments for one occurrence; Difficulty of English Language and Connecting Two Languages were included in the themes recognized in multiple instruments. For the follow-up research question, "What aspects of the process do they not understand?" the answers of learning style, teaching style, and the belief that there is no difference in first language and second language acquisition indicated that there are aspects of second language learning that the classroom teachers do not all understand to the same degree.

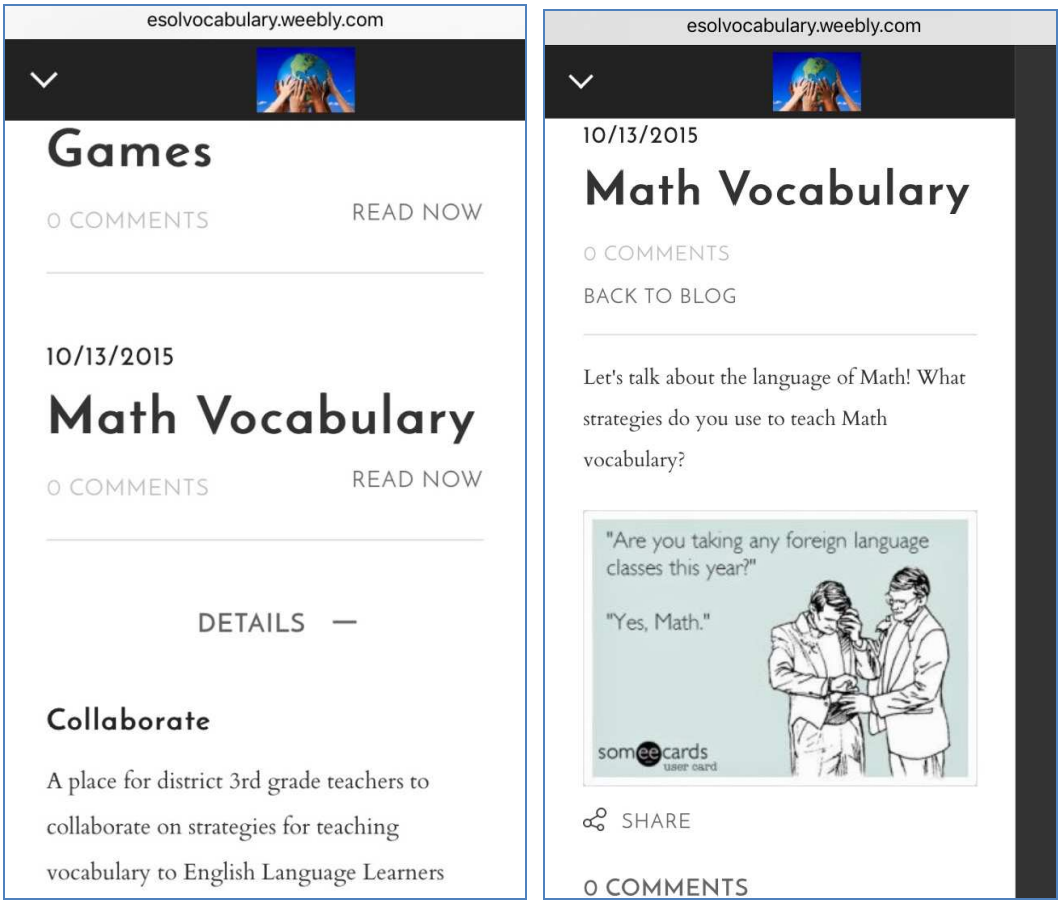
The next question was, “What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?” One strategy that was observed often is Activating Prior Knowledge. More than half of the observed teachers did this during the lesson. In both the survey and interview, when asked whether the participants supplement the curriculum with outside activities for vocabulary instruction, the majority of teachers said that they do. The interview had 9 of 10 teachers reporting that they use other resources, and the survey showed 6 of 9. The theme Word Mapping was frequently occurring. Role Play also occurred in each research instrument. The theme Vocabulary Activity/Game occurred in each of the three instruments.

In the final research question, “What outcomes on student learning do teachers observe from using each specific vocabulary acquisition strategy with ELLs?” I used the survey and interview to ask teachers what outcomes the vocabulary strategies included in their curriculum had on student learning. Only four of the ten reported that these strategies are beneficial. The other participants found these strategies insufficient. In the survey, only four teachers reported specific benefits to these strategies. The theme of Building Vocabulary was the most frequently occurring other than NA. The number of teachers who believed that the strategies in the curriculum help build vocabulary was consistent across both instruments.

A final project addresses the themes derived from the data. The project takes the form of a three-day professional development workshop, where participants will complete the Vocabulary Strategies Log using information from this collaborative narrative, followed by a collaborative peer professional development blog, which will be

ongoing. The Blog provides a place where classroom teachers and ESOL teachers can share strategies and ideas for addressing the vocabulary needs of third grade ELLs across the school District. The goal driving this project is to create a community where it will be easy to communicate with other teachers of the similar grade levels who also have ELLs. The three-day professional development training will allow participants to establish connections and build relationships. The peer professional development blog will then provide continuing communication through specifically designed social media opportunities. A community of professionals will be given a forum for on-going communication. The intended outcome is to provide the audience, third grade teachers in the district, with the unique opportunity to learn from teachers of all 12 schools around the county in a peer oriented professional development project.

Sample Professional Development Blog



3-Day Professional Development Plan

Purpose: To create a community of professionals who can continue to collaborate on vocabulary instruction through social media

Target Audience: Third grade teachers

Dates: TBD

Prepared By: Jennifer D. Pendergrass

		Day 1: The Research	Day2	Day 3
9:00-9:30	Activity	**"Describe Your Partner" Ice Breaker**	**Intro: Using Strategies at Proficiency Level**	**Intro: Using Blog for Collaboration**
	Objective	To introduce the participants	To support participants in leveling questions and strategies	To establish benefits of blog for PD
	Materials	3-Minute Timer	WIDA Can-Do Descriptors by grade level (See References)	Weebly Blog
9:30-10:30	Activity	**Data Collection/Analysis Presentation**	**Strategy Sort: Small Group**	**Sign Up!**
	Objective	To explain the research results (applicability to problem/setting)	To encourage teachers to view strategies by appropriate level	To help participants create a weebly account
	Materials	Charts from final paper Appendices, document camera	WIDA Can-Do Descriptors, Index cards with Strategies	Computers
10:30-12:00	Activity	**Strategy Brainstorm: Small Group**	**Build-A-Strategy: Small Group**	**Post It**
	Objective	To allow participants to add new ideas to strategies presented	To support teachers in building leveled strategies	To enable each participant to post a strategy
	Materials	Large Post-It pads, chart markers	Sample student profiles with vocabulary list, pens	Computers, Strategy logs
12:00-1:30		**Lunch on your own: Nearby restaurants available**		
1:30-2:30	Activity	**Brainstorm Share: Whole Group**	**Build-A-Strategy Share: Whole Group**	**Comment**
	Objective	To share new ideas gathered and discuss	To share ideas gathered and discuss	To enable each teacher to comment on other posts
	Materials	Post-It pads from previous activity	Profiles from previous activity, document camera	Computers, Strategy logs
2:30-3:30	Activity	**Individual Strategy Log**	**Individual Strategy Log**	**Evaluation**
	Objective	To encourage participants to keep track of useful strategies	To encourage participants to keep track of strategies learned	To introduce participants to the blog evaluation
	Materials	Vocabulary Strategy Logs, pens	Vocabulary Strategy Logs, pens	Evaluation Plan: Paper copy
3:30-4:00	Activity	**Review Slap Game: Small Group**	**"Tell 3 People": Whole Group**	**Parking Lot Review**
	Objective	To review strategies presented	To review scaffolding rules presented	To answer any remaining questions
	Materials	Sticky "slap" hands, Index cards with strategies from data	Cards with one level from Can-Do Descriptors	Parking lot Post-It

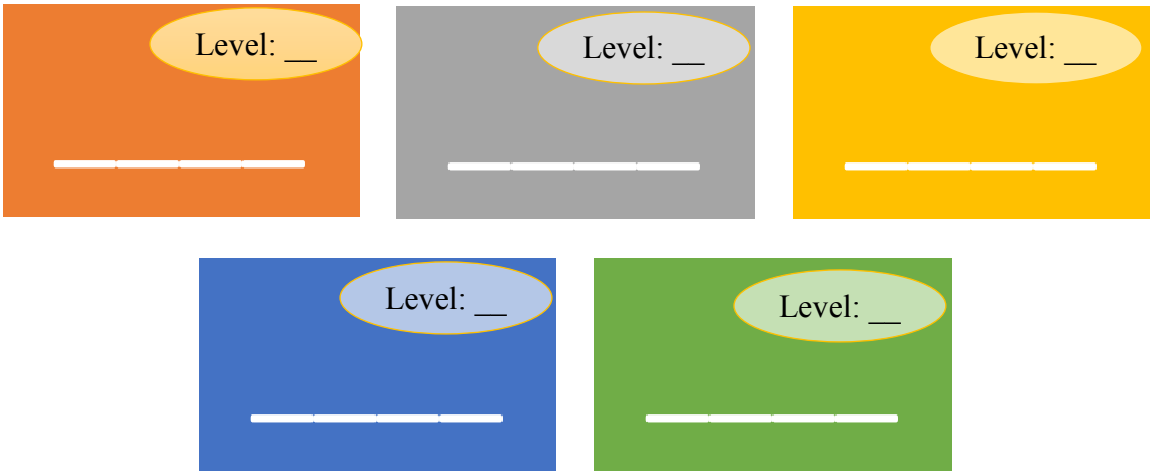
Vocabulary Strategies Log Handout

Vocabulary Strategies Log

Three-Day Professional Development Workshop

Use this form to document strategies gained during training and appropriate levels for each.

Presenter: Jennifer D. Pendergrass



Notes:

Project Evaluation Survey

Evaluation of Blog: esolvocabulary.weebly.com

This evaluation will be distributed among contributors once per semester via interoffice mail. Please take a minute to respond to the following questions:

1. Please rate the effectiveness of this blog at providing a forum for collaboration among teachers of ELLs?

   1 2 3 4 5

   Least effective Most effective

2. Please rate the usefulness of the blog.

   1 2 3 4 5

   Least useful Most useful

3. Please rate the design of the blog.

   1 2 3 4 5

   Least functional Most functional

   Comments and suggestions for improving the this blog or making it more useful:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Thank you! Results will be collected and shared with administrators and collaborating teachers for future planning of the blog.

Appendix B: Survey

This survey is part of a doctoral dissertation study on vocabulary development for third grade ELLs in the district. The strategies and information you share here may potentially be shared with other third grade teachers in the district. Please answer the following questions based on your classroom experience with ELLs (students who are learning English as their second language).

1. Based on what you have seen in your classroom, what makes the process of learning new vocabulary words different for ELLs than it is for native English-speaking third graders?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. What reading/vocabulary curriculum are you using in your classroom for the 2013-2014 school year? _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Does your current curriculum include additional vocabulary activities specifically for ELLs? Yes / No

4. If so, what are these specific activities and why do you think they are effective?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. If you have used the pre-planned activities included in your classroom curriculum, what effect have you found them to have in helping your ELLs learn new vocabulary?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Briefly describe the activities or strategies from your curriculum that have proven to be successful with your ELLs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. In addition to the classroom curriculum, have you presented any other activities or strategies that you found to be successful for your ELLs? If so, please briefly describe the

strategy and the effect on student vocabulary learning.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. What information source do you primarily turn to in order to find activities and strategies to address the vocabulary needs of your ELLs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C: Interview Script

Interview Script

How do you view the process of learning a new word as different for ELLs and native English speakers?

How effectively do the strategies presented in your curriculum address vocabulary acquisition?

How effectively do the strategies presented in your curriculum address the specific needs of ELLs?

Do you present vocabulary instruction in whole class activities or small group activities?

What led you to teach to that group size?

Do you feel you need to supplement the curriculum-suggested vocabulary activities for ELLs?

If so, what kind of activities do you add?

Appendix D: Observation Form

Observation Form

Research Question 3: What vocabulary acquisition strategies are teachers currently using to address the specific needs of ELLs?

X	Strategies from Literature Review	Direct Instruction	Incidental Learning Opportunities
☐	wide reading (Marzano, 2003)		
☐	narrow reading (Hadaway, 2009)		
☐	activate prior knowledge (Farley, Ramonda, and Liu, 2012)		
☐	etymology study (Akbari, 2012)		
☐	tiered instruction (Fien, Smith, Baker, Chaparro, Baker, & Preciado, 2010)		
☐	leveled questions (Herrell & Jordan, 2008)		
☐	word games (Beck and McKeown, 2007)		
☐	Cloze vocabulary sentences rather than students writing sentences (Beck and McKeown, 2007)		