

## **Leveraging Research-Based Strategies to Enhance Student Talk**

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Submitted in partial completion of the Clear Administrative Services Credential and Masters of Education

### **Abstract**

The increasing numbers of students in our classrooms for whom English is not their primary language and the mandate to prepare them for the rigors of the Common Core State Standards and 21<sup>st</sup> Century careers has created a need for effective professional learning to build teacher capacity for working with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Not only must teachers be equipped with strategies for ensuring access to core content for English language learners, they must also understand how to build English proficiency through structured activities and multiple opportunities to practice the language in meaningful, authentic dialogue with peers. Research shows that many teachers lack an understanding of the “cultural capital” that ELLs and linguistic minority students bring to the classroom and the importance of these student resources in promoting academic success.

This action research sought to address the need for research-based strategies to support facilitation of academic discussion. With a focus on English language development and increasing student talk, a professional learning series was designed to increase teacher knowledge of best practices and to enhance current practice for peer-to-peer dialogue around content. Findings showed changes in teacher perceptions and practices for promoting student talk and increasing awareness of cultural and linguistic resources that can fuel instruction.

## Context and Problem of Practice

Pleasant Grove Elementary is a public school in the Chinatown neighborhood of Bayside, California. Pleasant Grove serves immigrant and native populations in grades TK through 5, with a vision of creating a school where stakeholders collaboratively work to promote academic excellence through a challenging curriculum that emphasizes balanced literacy and social emotional learning. The school's mission is to graduate critical thinkers and caring citizens of a global community. Through bilingual and English immersion programs, Pleasant Grove School strives to provide a rigorous foundation in a nurturing environment that fosters success for all students.

Pleasant Grove serves 745 students with 27 different home languages, the largest group being Cantonese speakers. Consistently high academic performance is noted for the majority of their students. Current Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) data (fall, 2017-18) shows 64% of students are at or above benchmark in reading proficiency. This is compared to 62% for the same period in 2016-17. However, SRI data shows a possible disparity, with 45% of 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students achieving at or above proficiency. This is compared to 51% for the same period in the previous year. F&P data is based upon a more subjective system of evaluation than the online SRI test. It involves teacher rating of performance, which could contribute to the discrepancy in achievement.

SBAC ELA data show 46% of students achieving Standard Exceeded or Standard Met ranges, very similar to the results for SRI. A possible trend over two years indicates increasing numbers of students scoring in the lower ranges, Standards Nearly Met (23.5% in 2015-16 versus 25.8% in 2016-17) and Standards Not Met (21.8% in 2015-16 versus 27.7% in 2016-17 respectively). These data represent an 8% reduction in reading performance over the 2016-17 school year. When the data is disaggregated, students with proficiency rating approaching benchmark or below represent 35% of the students tested, with a majority of these students listed as English learners (ELL), English-only (EO), or previously reclassified English learners (RFEP). The compared proficiency for the same group in 2016-17 is 37%.

A review of SRI scores over a three-year period shows African American (African and native born) students achieved in the Multiple Years Below range at similar levels (41% in 2015-16, 39% in 2016-17, and 54% in 2017-18). Asian students scored within this range in like fashion (29%, 26%, and 29% respectively). The results for Latino students showed 26% in the Multiple Years Below range in 2015-16, 47% in 2016-17, and 38% in 2017-18.

As a whole, Pleasant Grove has high reclassification rates for its ELLs, with most students accomplishing this goal by third grade. Reclassified students are not mandated to receive English language instruction, however their academic performance should be carefully monitored and the regular curriculum must provide rich language experiences to support their continued growth. The presence of ELLs and RFEP students performing below grade level is reason to explore root causes for changes in student outcomes.

Pleasant Grove School is in its first year of refocusing efforts to provide comprehensive English language instruction for ELL students. Of the 29 teachers on the faculty, 38% are veteran teachers, some of whom utilize instructional practices that often include teacher-directed strategies such as drill skills practice, choral reading, and prompted written work. An additional 14% are first-year teachers with some balanced literacy training and the remaining 48% have coursework and/or experience with balanced literacy instruction.

In previous years, teachers have addressed the state mandate to provide English language instruction (ELD) for ELLs by integrating it across content areas. However, the staff did not have experience with the district-authorized curriculum (Systematic ELD and Discussions for Learning) prior to this school year and has had no formal professional development on this topic. To become acquainted with the staff and their professional needs related to ELD instruction, a survey was created to gather data to inform professional development. Teachers were asked about strategies that support ELLs that they regularly feature in their practice. Partner talks was chosen by all participants (100%), with checks for understanding selected by 89% of those surveyed. Sentence frames and graphic organizers were selected as strategies used by 86% and 79% of the teachers respectively. Interestingly, only 57% of teachers chose

academic discussion as a strategy utilized in their classrooms. Student talk was an inquiry focus for the site in previous years. Teachers have indicated that there is a cultural norm of silence in class discussions among Chinese students: the students do not readily talk about content. As one teacher put it,

“I am still struggling with student talk with those students whose home/culture doesn’t necessarily value/practice two-way conversation.”

The difficulty in facilitating peer-to-peer discussions may be related to the frequency of teacher use of this strategy for instruction.

In response to training and experience, 96% expressed facility with interactive read aloud and 65% with shared reading or close reading strategies. Repeated read aloud was a method used by 41% of those surveyed and 54% used interactive writing. However, just 30% had GLAD training and only 8%, respectively, had experience with using complex text or sentence unpacking strategies.

Teachers were then asked to rank their familiarity with the ELD Standards, the statewide measure for development of English language proficiency. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being least familiar, 29% chose Level 2, 46% indicated Level 3, and 25% indicated Level 4. In terms of knowledge of the ELD Continuum, the state rubric that shows the progression of English language development, 82% of teachers rated themselves at Level 3 or below. Teachers were also asked to determine which of the featured ELD topics they would like to explore. GLAD strategies received the highest rating, selected by 67% of the staff. In learning about designated versus integrated ELD, 59% indicated interest. Sentence unpacking received 59% of the votes and using complex text was chosen by 48% of the teachers. These survey data indicate a need for professional learning opportunities to develop strategies that facilitate English language development with ELL students.

The following are teacher survey responses:

“I don’t feel competent at all yet as far as knowing and teaching formal/established strategies and would like to learn more.”

“I would like to have clear expectations of what it looks like to meet ELD standards in the class on a daily basis. Modeling of a specific lesson. Clear expectations around integration of ELD within other subjects.”

“How can I ensure that ELD is effectively integrated into my core content lessons?”

As evidenced in the data, it is important to ensure that teachers have a common understanding of high-impact strategies for English language development and receive professional learning and support to strengthen these skills.

Pleasant Grove teachers have been given autonomy to teach grade level, standards-aligned content as they prefer, using the district-mandated curriculum. However, recent learning walk data revealed that the elements of readers’ and writers’ workshop were not visible in all classrooms. Language objectives for lessons were not consistently identified and posted, and supports for equitable access to content were not evident across the school. During teacher conferencing, patterns of difficulty processing print for decoding surfaced for some second- through fourth-grade students. In discussion with primary teachers it was determined that a variance of teaching methods were used to present these skills, and that there was a lack of commonality in the sequence and emphasis of instruction. Could these issues, representing a lack of coherence in curricular content, be contributing factors in the limited use of academic discussion? Would facility with best practices for generating student-to-student conversation around core content enhance their use of complex academic language and participation in student-led discourse?

When I arrived at Pleasant Grove School, I learned the site plan (SPSA) theory of action focuses on increasing the quality and quantity of student talk, as a means to improve student progress in literacy and mathematics achievement. Key teaching practices listed are the incorporation of integrated and designated ELD, with clear content-language objectives, and appropriate scaffolds to increase accessibility to core curriculum, developing students’ academic language and literacy. Accountable talk in academic discussions became an overarching theme for inquiry work. However, not much attention was given to fostering authentic production of language and meaningful exchanges in discourse necessary for oral language development. Strategies to promote student dialogue that build upon the ideas of others were not stated in the goals. This seemed to indicate a need to ensure that teachers have the skills and tools needed to feature collaborative student interaction around content, providing multiple opportunities for students to hear and practice academic language in a meaningful context.

I was assigned the task of launching the new focus on designated ELD for Pleasant Grove. In looking for common strategies used across the school to support ELLs, it was determined that there were few high impact strategies used by all teachers. With our schoolwide goal of increasing the quality and quantity of student talk, it would be important for teachers to have common understanding of research-based strategies for oral English language development for English learners. The teachers would need professional development opportunities, collaborative planning, and coaching support with effective feedback, to practice and acquire new skills for supporting ELLs. Designing and implementing a series of professional learning experiences that is differentiated for levels of teacher expertise, and provides a safe atmosphere to explore, reflect, and practice new skills, may facilitate the development of best practices for working with our diverse student population. As teachers use research-based strategies to promote collaborative academic discussions, students would engage in meaningful conversations, accelerate English language learning, and deepen comprehension and critical thinking around content. These are the factors that led to my action research project, which will focus on the following problem of practice:

**Teachers of English learners lack effective strategies to support collaborative, authentic, and meaningful discourse for English language development.**

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The following literature review presents a summary of findings on the educational needs of English language learners in American schools and what researchers identify as best practices for preparing teachers and instruction to address those needs. In this way, a research-based intervention can be created that will address teacher training needs to support our efforts to promote English language development and student talk. We begin with a look at who these students are and the challenges that are created in the public school system when we attempt to provide equal access to education for all students. Moving to

what researchers have identified as effective practices, we explore strategies that have brought some success to educating culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Giving place to balanced literacy and the role of oral language development and academic discussion, we find that what works for most students may not fit the needs of language minority learners. Cultural and linguistic resources are explored as missing elements for tapping into the assets that students bring to support and accelerate achievement. We turn, then, to a review of methods for supporting teacher learning for success with ELLs. Research findings on professional development and instructional coaching are explored to determine the design of learning opportunities that will build capacity for teachers in working with diverse populations and support sustained growth.

### **Who Are our English Language Learners?**

Students for whom a language other than English is spoken in the home are entering the nation's classrooms in increasing numbers (Lucas & Villegas, 2007, 2010; de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013). Although some arrive at school already proficient in English, most linguistic minority students are not yet proficient in English when they start school. These students, referred to as English learners (ELL) require additional resources and support in order to acquire English proficiency and to be successful in school (Gándara & Rumberger, 2007). In the 2014-15 school year, ELLs represented 9.4 percent of the public school population, some 4.6 million students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). This is an increase over the 4.3 million (9.1 percent) just ten years earlier (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). For the state of California, which has the highest concentration of ELL students enrolled in the public schools in the nation (Gándara & Rumberger, 2007), English learners represent in excess of 30 percent of the nation's total enrollment (ELPAC Training Video, 2017). In the 2016-17 school year, 1.332 million ELLs attended California public schools and a combined total of 2,656, 242 students, ELLs and former ELLs (RFEP), constituted 42.6 percent of the state's public school enrollment (California Department of Education, 2017).

The influx of immigrant populations into increasingly diffuse locations has made a significant impact on schools (Lucas & Villegas, 2010, 2013; de Jong, Harper, Coady, 2013; Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015). Often called newcomers, these students are categorized based upon specific characteristics related to their entrance into the United States and the nature of their academic preparation in their country of origin. Some examples of the variation among newcomer students would be refugees, persons who have fled their country of origin due to persecution based upon race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a social group (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2015); Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), those in grades four through 12 who have suffered interruptions in formal schooling and/or may be unfamiliar with the culture of school (Calderon, 2008); and English Learner (ELL), an individual aged 3 to 21 who is enrolling in a public school and who either was not born in the United States, or who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant and influences their level of proficiency in English (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

### **Cultural and Linguistic Difference**

The number of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds has markedly increased in the last 25 years, with the percentage of linguistic minorities rising 187 percent, in comparison to 8 percent for English-only students (Gándara & Rumberger, 2007). Schools are receiving newcomer students who not only have varied backgrounds and literacy experiences, but some are also illiterate in their home language or speak a language for which there is no written form (Short & Echevarria, 2004). The implementation of No Child Left Behind has generated requirements that teachers take responsibility for the performance of all students (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). In the face of these realities, many teachers are unprepared to meet the challenges of working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Xu & Drame, 2008). Under such conditions, ELLs are placed in classrooms led by teachers who neither share or know about the culture of these students, or have facility in addressing the challenges of becoming fluent in Standard English (Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

Researchers have found that children from culturally and linguistically diverse groups possess culturally developed practices and bodies of knowledge, skills, and information they need to participate in society successfully (Moll, 1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). These funds of knowledge are a resource to the students to perform tasks as well as a tool to help them learn concepts and skills in the classroom (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Riojas-Cortez, 2001). Teachers who lack awareness of these resources and ability to utilize them in instruction can foster the implementation of a curriculum that fails to acknowledge the ELL student's ways of knowing and using language. This can create a cognitive dissonance that hinders learning (Gutierrez, 2002). Using the student's knowledge as a foundation, teachers can leverage the cultural and linguistic diversity as a tool for learning (Riojas-Cortez, 2001). Rogoff (2003) stated that it was crucial for teachers to have the knowledge and skill necessary to recognize the cultural capital that ELLs bring from multiple perspectives – individual, family, and community, - and to use this knowledge to scaffold or transform these experiences within new learning contexts. There is a need to design effective professional development to equip and support teachers in developing competencies for work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

### **Working with English Learners - Effective Teaching Practices**

Numerous resources exist in literature of effective teaching practices. However, there are relatively few studies on common practices or recommendations for teaching English Learners (Goldenberg, 2013). Genesee et al., stated there was a “dearth of empirical research on instructional strategies or approaches to teaching content” for ELLs (2006). Three principles of teacher practice surfaced in Goldenberg's research:

- Generally effective practices are likely to be effective with ELLs, and what we know about effective instruction in general is the foundation of effective instruction for ELLs

- Teaching English learners requires the addition of instructional supports; and
- The home language can be leveraged to promote English proficiency in ELLs.

There are consistent findings on features of teaching likely to result in improved student learning, such as providing clear goals and objectives, effective modeling of skills, strategies and procedures, fostering active student engagement and participation, and facilitating structured, focused student interactions (Goldenberg, 2013). Goldenberg further cites several studies that illustrate the value of well-known elements of effective instruction to promote learning for ELLs, such as vocabulary development (Graves, August, & Mancilla-Martinez, 2013); early reading interventions (Vaughn, Mathes, Lian-Thompson, Cirino, Carlson, Pollard-Durodola, Cardenas-Hagan, & Francis, 2006); English language development (Tong, Lara-Alecio, Irby, Mathes, & Kwok, 2008); and science education (Lee, Deaktor, Hart, Cuevas, & Enders, 2005). Nesbit and Adesope (2006) found using graphic organizers and displays that clarify and make explicit the relationships among concepts effective for increasing learning for ELLs. According to Cheung and Slavin (2005), programs with the strongest evidence of effectiveness (Success for All, Direct Instruction, and others) are all programs that have also been found to be generally effective with students and that have been modified for ELLs. In general, what is known about effective instruction is the foundation of effective instruction for ELLs. “Generic” effective instruction is not sufficient to promote accelerated learning for ELLs (Goldenberg, 2013).

### **Instructional Supports**

To successfully navigate classroom instruction and develop English proficiency, ELLs require academic supports that are both a pedagogical need and a legal requirement. In the 1974 *Lau vs Nichols* case, a public school was charged with violating the Civil Rights Law of 1964 by failing to provide instruction that was meaningful to students with developing English proficiency (Goldenberg, 2013). He further states, given the focus on academic literacy skills in the Common Core State Standards, teachers have an obligation to provide instruction in ways that support meaning-centered comprehension of more challenging content. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2013) highlighted a growing collection of research

that provides ways that teachers facilitate access to core content for ELLs. Many of these strategies have become common place in professional development opportunities and include such techniques as differentiated instruction, teacher modeling, language supports, vocabulary development, collaborative conversations, and visual representations (Echevarria, Frey, and Fisher, 2015). Many teachers have become skilled in these strategies, however, for English learners, creating access is not enough. National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth (2000) reported results of reading instruction on ELLs' comprehension was inconsistent, even when comprehension was explicitly taught. This was in contrast to studies with English proficient students whose reading comprehension improved with this instruction. Saunders and Goldenberg (2007) found that instructional conversations, that is, interactive, teacher-led discussions to improve understanding of a passage) had no overall effect on story comprehension for ELLs. They further determined a relationship between the level of English proficiency and comprehension. While significant progress noted for students with highest English proficiency and enhancement for middle proficiency level students on instructional conversations, the data showed that students with lower levels of English proficiency actually declined in performance with instructional conversations. This suggests that instruction in comprehension may be more effective when ELLs have higher English skills. This result points to the need to focus on English language development for ELLs (Goldenberg, 2013).

### **Sheltered Instruction - a Scaffold for English Learners**

Sheltered instruction strategies can be used to make academic content comprehensible (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2008). Short highlighted the importance of explicit language instruction with language objectives and content-area objectives for ELLs to provide access to the core curriculum (Short 1994; Echevarria, Vogt, and Short 2008). Coleman and Goldenberg also highlight the need for daily oral English language instruction that targets language acquisition with a focus on receptive and productive language (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009). They further warn that content-based ELD, which is driven

by the ELD standards and has language as the focus, should not replace content instruction driven by the content standards.

According to Goldenberg (2013), sheltered instruction is defined as a set of instructional supports or modifications that facilitate the learning of grade level academic content and skills for students who are instructed in English but have limited proficiency in the language. These include strategies such as building on prior experiences and familiar content, providing background knowledge, using graphic organizers to develop meaning, providing hands-on, interactive learning activities, and creating language and content objectives for each lesson. Sheltered instruction contributes to English language development but targets academic content and skills. Echevarria, Frey, and Fisher (2015) state, “Although access is necessary, access alone is not sufficient. Yet the support English learners receive too often begins and ends with access strategies.” Our goal should be to ensure access for these students and promote English language development as students learn academic content (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010).

There is limited evidence, however, of the effectiveness of sheltered strategies in accelerating language proficiency for ELL students. Goldenberg (2013) found virtually no data that suggested sheltered strategies or modifications and supports help ELLs keep up with non-ELLs, or help close the achievement gap between them. Neither was there published data that such strategies as content and language objectives, sentence frames, or differentiating instruction by English proficiency levels had an effect on ELL student learning. The most popular sheltered model, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) has demonstrated only modest effects on student learning (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006). In another study the authors found stronger results than in previous research, but had to exclude classroom data from the analysis due to low levels of implementation. A subsequent study (Echevarria, Richards-Tutor, Canges, and Francis, 2011) showed modest results that were not statistically significant. In a different model, Quality Teaching for English Learning, there has not been evidence that the model has significant effects on student achievement, teacher attitudes knowledge, or classroom practice (Bos,

Sanchez, Tseng, Rayyes, Ortiz, & Sinicrope, 2012). A study of another model, Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design), yielded no significant impact overall, only marginally positive results for ELLs in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and in the writing traits of “ideas” and “organization” (Deussen, Autio, Roccograndi, & Hanita, 2014).

What are some of the reasons for minimal success in promoting English proficiency through sheltered English strategies? Sheltered instructional strategies have as their goal the facilitation of grade level content and skills (Goldenberg, 2013). These strategies are well known and can be easily acquired and implemented by classroom teachers (Goldenberg, 2013; Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015). While the focus of these strategies incorporates language use, the explicit, structured teaching of English and how it works is not featured. According to Ellis (2005), and Spada and Lightbown (2008), there is consensus that a combination of explicit teaching and plentiful opportunities for meaningful and authentic communication helps promote learning a second language. The provision of scaffolds to support access to curriculum provides content without the explicit teaching and structured practice of English.

Lightbown and Spada (2006), found that using sheltered strategies makes academic content comprehensible; that is, students develop receptive language in order to comprehend the lesson. They do not necessarily develop expressive language so they can speak and write in the language. Students need to be taught expressive language to participate in discussions, and successfully show what they know on assessments. Fillmore and Snow (2000) cautioned that without structured opportunities to practice Standard English, student progress learning English may be diminished. Without the intentional focus on direct instruction of English for ELLs, sheltered strategies may be insufficient to support English learners in acquiring proficiency in academic English. Also, teachers may lack training in what Bernard Spolsky (1972) called educational linguistics, a term given to the studies of language education and language learning. Teachers need to understand and be supported in their role of promoting English language development. They must know how to design a language-rich classroom environment that optimizes language and literacy learning and avoids linguistic obstacles in content area learning (Fillmore & Snow,

2000). These concerns may be contributing factors in the reduced effectiveness of sheltered instruction with ELLs.

There is evidence that instructional supports and modifications benefit ELLs. National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth (2009) found that accessing prior knowledge to facilitate literacy development and reading comprehension for ELLs can facilitate literacy development and reading comprehension. Writing development is enhanced by using literacy activities, home culture or materials, and community activities. Also reading comprehension improves when EL students are reading material with familiar content.

### **English Learners and Balanced Literacy Instruction**

Of the many challenges facing English Learners in today's classrooms, developing literacy skills presents a significant dilemma: learning to communicate - that is, listening, speaking, reading, and writing - in a new language while learning content information through that language. To address this need, many school districts in California have adopted the Balanced Literacy approach to instruction. Key components of the approach have been identified as beneficial to English learners (O'Day, 2009). Meaning-making is central to the Balanced Literacy approach, involving the students through academic supports and interactive strategies, to engage with written text and with peers about text. Meaning-making and comprehension in Balanced Literacy is supported in research as effective in cognitive engagement and in developing literacy skills (Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2003), and the ensuing oral language and vocabulary development enhances comprehension (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005). In combination with interactive strategies, this approach offers explicit teaching of literacy skills. For word recognition and comprehension strategies, teachers use techniques such as modeling, and direct training on how and when to use certain skills. According to the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE), interactive and direct approaches have been found to be most effective in working with ELLs (Genesee et al., 2006).

Differentiated instruction is a third component shown to be beneficial to English learners. Teachers use a variety of strategies, including flexible groupings, modeling, coaching, and scaffolds that diminish with growing proficiency, to foster student independence in increasingly complex text (O'Day, 2009).

Accountable talk is a fourth component that increases student engagement with text and fosters oral language skills. This component features academic discourse that incorporates using evidence from the text to support ideas and responding to and elaborating on the ideas of others in classroom discussion (O'Day). The instructional practices found to be most consistently associated with literacy growth were higher-level questioning and classroom discussion about the meaning of text, writing instruction (including composition and discussion about writing), and strategies for accountable talk (Bitter, O'Day, Gubbins, & Socias, 2009).

### **Structured Academic Discussion – Accountable Talk**

Structured academic discussion, also known as accountable talk, is a strategy that provides language tools to language minority students to engage in academic talk about content knowledge. Students use academic vocabulary in complete sentences with appropriate grammar and syntax (Kinsella, 2006) in a scaffolded format that guides the students through the process of language production. (Yoder, 2013). The instructional strategy incorporates assigning responsibility for writing, listening, and speaking to all students in the classroom, thereby creating a mutual accountability.

According to Kinsella (2008) there are four essential features of this approach:

- An appropriate question/task
- Structured thinking or processing time
- Partner rehearsal, prior to unified-class debriefing, and
- Unified-class debriefing and wrap-up.

Structured academic discussion provides a routine, predictable format for examining content knowledge, creating non-threatening opportunities for ELLs to process the content through sharing with peers, and thereby enhance comprehension and foster negotiation of meaning for teacher and students (Ajai, 2005).

Accountable talk is designed to increase student engagement with text, fostering oral language skills and emphasizing the use of textual evidence to support ideas. Students respond to or elaborate on their peers' contributions in classroom discussions. The focus on sustained, meaningful communication through student talk provides opportunities for authentic discourse and practice that supports English proficiency.

In a study of the effects of Balanced Literacy instruction on reading outcomes for ELLs and English-only students (O'Day, 2009), three practices were compared: higher-level questioning or discussion about the meaning of text, writing instruction, and accountable talk variables. Findings showed initially positive results for ELLs that declined and became insignificant over time. The results showed improved reading comprehension for non-ELL students, but little benefit for ELLs. Balanced literacy alone is not adequate to support the language needs of ELLs. Explicit language instruction is essential to oral language development and sustainable growth in English proficiency over time.

### **Using the Home Language as an Instructional Support**

A student's home language can be used to promote academic development (Goldenberg, 2013). Home language is the primary language, other than English, that is spoken in the home and can be used to facilitate learning content and skills in English (Goldenberg). An example of strategic use of the home language is bilingual education. Some models of bilingual education are:

- Early exit (instruction presented exclusively in the primary language from Kindergarten to grade 2, then student enters English-speaking class),
- Dual Language (instruction presented in primary and secondary languages simultaneously to promote bilingual biliteracy, proficiency in both languages),
- Using Home Language as a support (instruction presented in English with supplemental explanations, use of cognates, preview and review of concepts, and other support in the primary language)
- Sufficient language development in the student's primary language aids achieving fluency in a second language (Cummins (1981); Krashen (2000)).

Researchers have found in experimental studies that learning to read in their home language helps ELLs boost reading skills in English (Goldenberg). In five meta-analyses conducted from different perspectives since 1985, all five had the same conclusion, that bilingual education produced superior reading outcomes in English compared with English immersion (that is classroom instruction for ELLs with no scaffolds to support access to content). However, Slavin, Madden, Calderon, Chamberlain and Hennessy (2011) found the quality of instruction and curriculum and school supports may be more important factors in ELL achievement than the language of instruction.

Studies focused on the short-term model of transitional bilingual education showed no evidence that more or less time spent in bilingual education is related to higher or lower achievement (Goldenberg & Coleman 2010). In the two-way or dual language model, bilingualism and biliteracy is the goal and may be a promising model for ELLs. The home language can be used to support learning by working with cognates (words that have the same etymological root); making brief explanation, lesson preview and review; and by teaching strategies in the home language than can be applied to academic content in English. Fung, Wilkinson, & Moore (2003) found that teaching comprehension strategies in the home language and after reading the text in English produced improved reading comprehension. Fillmore and Fillmore (2012) outline an approach to studying complex text that could be promising for ELLs, but they acknowledge a lack of supportive evidence.

## **Language Instruction**

### **Effective Strategies for Oral Language Development and Academic Language Proficiency**

English Learners need early intervention and ample opportunities to develop proficiency in English. This indicates a need to provide multiple opportunities throughout the day for structured practice with English language models and in generating authentic discourse (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Spada & Lightbown, 2008). Common Core State Standards require students to achieve facility with content knowledge and language and literacy skills in greater depth than in the previous state framework

(Goldenberg, 2013). Our mandate is to also provide meaningful instruction in core content areas to not only support English proficiency and reclassification, but to maintain the growth of English language development (Gándara & Rumberger, 2007). English learners must receive explicit English language instruction and teachers need systematic training and support to achieve these goals (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Gandara & Rumberger, 2007; Lucas & Villegas, 2010; 2013). Genesee et al., (2006) reported that English oral language is best taught presenting direct instruction in an interactive learning environment to ensure instruction is meaningful, contextualized, and individualized. Teachers should provide structured academic tasks for ELLs to practice with English speakers in cooperative group work, enabling them to focus on productive verbal exchanges (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009). The structured format of academic discussion presents ELLs with the language tools to engage in “academic talk” about content knowledge using academic vocabulary, “framed in complete sentences with appropriate syntax and grammar” (Yoder, 2013; Kinsella, 2006).

### **English Language Development**

Daily English language development instruction (ELD), as a content-based language lesson essential to developing oral communication and increasing levels of oral language proficiency, is critical to the academic achievement of ELLs (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher 2015). The provision of explicit teaching and opportunities for meaningful and authentic communication helps solidify language learning and yields opportunities to practice the functional use of English. Teachers articulate clear goals and objectives and create well-structured tasks that afford opportunities for students to practice the language through interaction with others. The content and language goals align with state standards and the clearly defined language objective supports the language demand required in the specific task. This segment of instruction targets second language acquisition by teaching how English works. ELD as a systematic, daily practice for ELLs appears to be “somewhat more effective than relying exclusively on “integrating ELD with other parts of the curriculum” (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009). Without direct instruction and structured opportunities to practice the language, students may make little

progress learning English, or they may learn the language from each other (Fillmore, 2000). The result is an interlanguage pidgin – “Learnerese” (Schmida, 1996) that can deviate significantly from Standard English. Students who settle into this very stable variety of English can speak fluently with confidence. They are no longer language learners, “working out the details of English” (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). These students can “fossilize” errors, a practice Scarcella (2003) warns will not lead to advanced proficiency unless supplemented with intensive, specialized instructional intervention and carefully delivered instruction.

### **Academic English Language**

Academic language is more than vocabulary instruction. It also encompasses oral language, grammar, genre knowledge, and other literacy skills (Short & Echevarria, 2015). Academic English language contains a broad range of language proficiency. It is abstract, cognitively demanding, and decontextualized, relying on the knowledge of words and phrases, grammatical structures and conventions for expression, understanding, and interpretation (Cummins, 1981b, 1984).

Kinsella (2006) states to better understand the achievement gap ELLs face, one must define academic language with the purpose of understanding the demands placed upon students. Therefore, academic English language can be categorized as

- Vocabulary -the words students know and use; according to Ajayi (2005), the most challenging aspect for ELLs
- Syntax - the ways students place the words together in phrases and sentences
- Grammar -the rules of language use, such as voice, verb tense, and verb form, and
- Register - the style of language and measure of formality (Fisher, et al., 2008).

Teaching academic language requires designing lessons to ensure students will understand the content presented in English. Academic English language instruction, then, is sheltered content instruction (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010) and is often featured in integrated format in classroom instruction.

Planning instruction of academic English language requires understanding of the content standards and the language demands (vocabulary, syntax, and structures) of the text.

Language minority students usually acquire sufficient informal, conversational language skills (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), (Cummins, 1984), but often lack the academic English language skills (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)) necessary for high achievement in the content areas. ELs may become proficient in spoken English, but will need focused, explicit instruction in academic English to support continued proficiency with increasingly complex academic content (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015). Without explicit English language development, most ELLs get stuck at intermediate level of English proficiency and become Long Term English Learners (LTELs), (Olsen, 2010). Our mandate is to provide the academic structures and instructional supports to enable ELLs to advance in academic performance and English proficiency and avoid the academic and social pitfalls of inadequate language learning.

Gándara (2007) compared proficiency on state testing for English-only and language minority students. For English-only students 51 percent scored proficient at second grade and this number declined to 42 percent by eleventh grade. English learners at second grade on the same test scored 22 percent proficiency, but only 5 percent achieved proficiency by eleventh grade. These data may indicate students achieved a level of English proficiency at a specific moment in time, a proficiency level that was in alignment with the rigors of content at a certain grade level, but failed to increase in proficiency with the challenges of more advanced curriculum. In a 1997 English composition exam for language minority college freshmen, 60 percent of these students failed the test (Scarcella, n.d.). One third of these students, 90 percent of whom were Asian Americans and had attended English-only classes for eight years prior to enrollment and performed extremely well before entering the university, failed because of significant problems with English language skills (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). The use of academic language must be explicitly taught. Utilizing the interdependence of academic language and curriculum content and effective sheltered strategies, teachers can foster opportunities for students to comprehend texts and

navigate teacher talk (receptive language), as well as to develop the skills to express themselves in complete ideas orally and in written form using academic language (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010).

### **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Researchers, in their quest to determine effective practices for teaching diverse populations, have developed an assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are integral to the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2000; Hardin, et al., 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Culturally responsive teaching was developed as a response to the increasing diversity in K-12 student populations and the need to prepare teachers for work with these students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Brown, 2007; Hardin, et al., 2009; Gay, 2002). Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively (2002). She describes the components of the preparation for and practice of culturally responsive teaching as developing a cultural diversity knowledge base, designing culturally relevant curricula, demonstrating cultural caring and building a learning community, cross-cultural communications, and cultural congruity in classroom instruction.

Villegas and Lucas (2007) state that successfully teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds – especially students from historically marginalized groups – involves more than just applying specialized teaching techniques. It demands a new way of looking at teaching that is grounded in an understanding of the role of culture and language in learning. They propose a framework for developing the six salient qualities of a culturally responsive teacher. In further work, in recognition of the need for more specific attention to language needs of ELLs (Lucas & Villegas, 2010), they promote a preservice teacher education proposal highlighting the three orientations and four pedagogical knowledge and skills of linguistically responsive teachers (Lucas & Villegas 2013). The authors state:

“It takes many years to develop expertise in the complex set of knowledge, skills, and orientations needed to teach culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students well. The process begins in preservice preparation and continues into the early years of teaching and throughout a teacher’s career” (Lucas & Villegas, 2013).

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a response to the challenge of equipping teachers for working with language minority students (Brown, 2007) and the need to find ways to ensure that students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds receive a high quality and equitable education (Phuntsog, 1999). Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frame of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them.” She has stated,

“It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly” (Gay, 2000).

The author has identified five essential elements of preparation for the culturally responsive teacher:

- Developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum,
- Demonstrating caring
- Building learning communities
- Communicating with ethnically diverse students, and
- Responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction.

Developing a cultural diversity knowledge base includes understanding the cultural characteristics and contributions of different ethnic groups (Hollins, King, & Hayman, 1994; King, Hollins, & Hayman, 1997; Pai, 1990; Smith, 1998). This knowledge entails developing an understanding of cultural components that have implication for teaching and learning. Designing culturally relevant curricula entails learning how to convert the cultural diversity knowledge base into instructional strategies.

Teachers learn to correct how formal school curricula deals with ethnic diversity, and to

“multiculturalize” content and images to ensure they are reflective of accurate information, values, and actions about ethnic and cultural diversity (Gay, 2002).

Demonstrating cultural caring and building a learning community requires creating a classroom climate that is conducive to learning for ethnically diverse students. It requires an ethical, emotional, and academic partnership with ethnically diverse students, a partnership anchored in respect, honor, integrity, resource sharing, and a deep belief in the possibility of transcendence (Gay, 2000).

Caring is seen as

“...a moral imperative, a social responsibility, and a pedagogical necessity. It requires that teachers use “knowledge and strategic thinking to decide how to act in the best interests of others...[and] binds individuals to their society, to their communities, and to each other” (Webb, Wilson, Corbett, & Mordecai, 1993).

Culturally responsive caring is action oriented, demonstrating high expectations and using imaginative strategies to ensure success for ethnically diverse students. Effective cross-cultural communication is the understanding of how cultural socialization influences conversations, perspectives, and ways of thinking. Culturally responsive teachers must learn to access and participate in the “coded system” to teach ethnically diverse students more effectively (Gay, 2002). Cultural congruity involves bringing the reality of cultural knowledge into the delivery of instruction, utilizing the students’ ways of being, knowing, and learning as a framework for new learning. Cultural characteristics are the criteria for determining how instructional strategies should be modified and curriculum is made more meaningful and relevant for ELs (2002).

Villegas and Lucas (2002) found six salient characteristics that define the culturally responsive teacher.

- Sociocultural consciousness
- Holding affirmative views of students from diverse backgrounds and seeing resources for learning in all students
- Seeing oneself as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students

- Understanding how learners construct knowledge and being capable of promoting learner's knowledge construction
- Knowing about the lives of his or her students; and
- Using his or her knowledge about students' lives to design instruction that builds on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar.

Sociocultural consciousness entails an awareness of the role of schools in the reproduction of inequities and the intricate connection between school and society (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teachers must understand their own sociocultural identities and how the social stratification in the United States masks the true reality for those who are not advantaged by virtue of their social class.

Holding an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds incorporates acknowledging the existence of multiple ways of thinking, talking, behaving, and learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Teachers assume a commitment to become agents of change, and to equip their culturally and linguistically diverse students to navigate the ways of the dominant middle-class as a means of developing facility to effectively function in society as it is now structured (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The constructivist perspective is promoted because all students are depicted as capable learners who strive to make sense of new ideas using ways that are seen as resources for learning. This approach fosters critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and recognition of multiple perspectives. The fifth characteristic involves teachers learning all they can about the lives of their students, in and outside school and utilizing their "funds of knowledge" to make connections to curricular goals. In the final characteristic, the teacher uses the positioning of the previous five elements to design instruction that facilitates student learning (Gay, 2002; Hardin, et al., 2009; Brown, 2007; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Piazza, Rao, and Protacio (2015) stated,

"Equity is relevant to the discussion of responsive literacy instruction because when skills are delivered to students in a proposed context-free environment, diverse learners become marginalized when their home literacy practices are socioculturally different from what is considered normative."

Children from culturally and linguistically diverse groups possess culturally developed practices and bodies of knowledge, skills, and information they need to participate in society successfully (Moll, 1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2004; Riojas-Cortez, 2001). When teachers use this knowledge as a foundation on which to build new content knowledge, they maximize the students' cultural and linguistic diversity as a tool for learning in the classroom (Riojas-Cortez, 2001). Failing to acknowledge the students' ways of knowing and using language can create a cognitive dissonance that hinders learning (Gutierrez, 2002). It is therefore essential that teachers be equipped to recognize and utilize ELL students' cultural capital from multiple perspectives - individual, family, and community (Rogoff, 2003). Culturally responsive teaching seeks to leverage the home language and culture to create a bridge between what they already know about a topic and what they need to learn about it (Villegas and Lucas, 2007).

Vygotsky (1978) posited that literacy is a social practice and that all human interactions are mediated by language and symbols and influenced by social, cultural and historical contexts. Literacy development is then seen as part of various sociocultural contexts and holds promise for more equitable learning for diverse students (Piazza, Rao, Protacio, 2015). To foster an environment in which culturally and linguistically diverse students develop literacy in English and grow in fluency, research shows that effective schools must also focus on climate, expectations and language instruction (Echavarria, Frey, and Fisher, 2015).

### **Climate**

Climate refers to the social environment of the classroom and school in which learning takes place and can be observed at three levels: the individual student, his or her language, and his or her culture. The climate is reflected in teacher-student relationships: how responsive the teacher is to the individual student, whether the teacher knows about the student's background and experiences and demonstrates caring. Students who are connected through a caring and trusting relationship with the teacher were found to be more motivated to learn and to succeed (Nieto 2004). Engaging in meaningful dialogue with the

student, highlighting the language abilities of students and linking this difference to the content lessons are evidence of the linguistic climate. The cultural climate can be observed in the teacher's efforts to maintain respectful interactions, fostering a nonthreatening atmosphere that is inclusive of individual student values, beliefs, and cultural experiences, and makes intentional connections between students' background experiences and culture and core content (Echavarria, Frey, and Fisher, 2015).

### **Expectations**

“To engage students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, we must see them as capable learners” (Villegas and Lucas, 2007). Teachers' attitudes toward students significantly shape the expectations they hold for student learning, their treatment of students, and what students ultimately learn (Irvine, 1990; Pang & Sablan, 1998). Goldenberg and Coleman (2010) found that ELL success is influenced primarily by their level of first-language development and the quality of instruction they receive. To foster high academic achievement for ELLs, teachers can maintain high expectations through articulating learning targets or objectives, modeling and holding students accountable for the use of domain-specific academic language, and encouraging and supporting student aspirations (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015).

### **Language**

In culturally responsive teaching, the teacher includes references to the students' home language in instruction and encourages learners to use their primary language to clarify points or express ideas with a more proficient English speaker who shares their language background before sharing with the class. Content and language objectives are written for each lesson, reviewed, and rehearsed with the students to ensure they understand the purpose for the lesson. The teacher scaffolds academic discussions to support developing English fluency enabling access to rigorous content (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015).

## **Linguistically Responsive Teaching**

“By integrating elements of linguistically responsive teaching into classroom instruction, teachers can develop the skills necessary to meet the learning needs of ELLs and better prepare ELs for the critical literacy demands of today’s world.” (de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2017)

To prepare aspiring teachers for working with ELLs, preservice programs have added culturally responsive pedagogy to course work. However, culturally responsive teaching has given inadequate attention to the language needs of English learners (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). In order to make modifications to support the linguistic needs of ELLs, classroom teachers need to understand the connections between language and schooling and the implications of those connections for English learners (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). Language is the medium through which we make meaning (Halliday, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). Language, learning, and knowing are interconnected and pronounced in schooling. Nearly all the activities of importance in school involve some language use (Trumbull & Farr, 2005). Students gain access to the curriculum and are assessed to determine what they have learned through language. This is an important connection for English learners, initially immersed in their primary language and now must learn the English language while learning core content through that language. Their specific language needs are different than their English-only counterparts and warrant instructional supports that go beyond “just good teaching” (de Jong & Harper, 2005, 2008). The teacher accountability measures of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 have shifted the emphasis to English language learning over the development of content knowledge or academic skills (B.A. Evans & Hornberger, 2004), but have remained silent on the use of home languages in learning (Crawford, 2008), and do not require teacher expertise in language or culture for teachers of ELLs (Harper, de Jong, & Platt, 2008); Villegas & Lucas, 2011). There is a need to provide professional learning opportunities to foster the development of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, building teacher capacity for working with English learners (de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2017; Lucas & Villegas, 2010, 2013).

Lucas and Villegas (2010, 2013) outline a framework for linguistically responsive teaching. The elements of the framework are overlapping and interrelated and serve as a guide for curricula for preservice and in-service professional development for teachers of ELLs.

The seven elements are:

- Sociolinguistic consciousness
- Value for linguistic diversity
- Inclination to advocate for ELL students
- A repertoire of strategies for learning about the linguistic and academic backgrounds of ELLs in English and their native languages
- An understanding of and ability to apply key principles of second language learning
- Ability to identify the language demands of classroom tasks, and
- A repertoire of strategies for scaffolding instruction for ELLs

The framework consists of three orientations and four areas of pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Orientations are defined as inclinations or tendencies toward particular ideas and actions, influenced by attitudes and beliefs (Richardson, 1996), and are essential to teachers' ability to embrace and apply the necessary knowledge and skills. These three orientations serve as the foundation for development of knowledge and skills for linguistically responsive teaching.

Sociolinguistic consciousness (Lucas & Villegas, 2010) entails understanding that language and identity are interconnected and that there are sociopolitical dimensions of language use and language education. Language is deeply entwined with a sense of identity and with social and cultural affiliations (Valdes et al., 2005). Given its relationship to cultural values, expectations, and membership, students cannot be expected to leave their ways of expressing themselves, home languages and dialects behind as they develop facility with the language of school (Price & Osborne, 2000; Valdes, 2001). Teachers must recognize the importance of finding ways to consider the linguistic backgrounds of their students in their

teaching. Language is also tied to its sociopolitical context and teachers must understand this dimension. Language is influenced by and closely linked with sociocultural and sociopolitical factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, and identity (de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2017). As Darling-Hammond (2002) and Nieto (2002) stated:

“In the current politically charged climate, diversity is too often seen as damaging to US society; immigrants – and by connection, ELs – are too often seen as the enemy. Now more than ever, we must be prepared to work with diverse students, particularly ELs, and address these difficult concepts as a matter of life, literacy, and social justice.”

Teacher attitudes regarding students’ languages and language proficiencies should be explored. This involves examining and reflecting on personal beliefs and values related to language and linguistic diversity (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). There is a need to value linguistic diversity and build recognition for the linguistic resources of ELLs. The inclination to advocate for ELLs should be evident in actively working to improve one or more aspects of ELLs’ educational experiences (Athanases & de Oliverira, 2010; de Oliveira & Athanases, 2007). This can be promoted in a variety of ways, such as tutoring ELL students, organizing, supporting parent groups, or campaigning for the passage of legislation supportive of ELLs and their families. De Oliveira and Shoffner state:

“We must show our own courage by refusing to push these students to the margins. Instead, we must attend to the linguistic needs of our ELLs while developing the critical literacy skills they need to navigate cultural barriers and tear down societal walls. Linguistically responsive teaching offers English Language Arts teachers pedagogically meaningful ways to support the development of ELLs’ critical literacy skills” (2017).

The fourth element incorporates learning about the background experiences of the students and utilizing these resources to help students make connections between their prior knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and experiences, to new learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). In adapting instruction to meet the needs of the students, teachers need to identify the language demands of oral and written discourse (Cummins, 2000; Fillmore & Snow, 2005). This requires knowledge of language forms and functions and the ability to conduct a basic analysis of oral and written texts for particular disciplines and particular

academic purposes (Schleppegrell, 2004). Identifying key vocabulary, and understanding the semantic and syntactic complexity of the language used in the text and how students will be asked to complete learning tasks, are part of this preparation. In this way, teachers can plan for aspects in the tasks and written texts that could interfere with ELLs' understanding.

### **Second Language Acquisition**

Teachers must know the process of second language acquisition and have the ability to apply this understanding in teaching ELLs (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). They must have the knowledge of key psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural processes involved in learning a second language and of ways to use that knowledge to inform instruction (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). One of the principles, derived from Vygotsky's theory (1978) that has direct correlation to ELL students is the principle that individual learning originates in social interaction. To learn a second language, learners must have direct and frequent opportunities to interact with people who are fluent in that language (Gass, 1997; Fillmore & Snow, 2005). It is through negotiation of meaning that occurs in interaction that ELLs both gain access to comprehensible input and extend their productive capacities (Ellis, 1985; Swain, 1995). Second language learning highlights the difference between conversational and academic language proficiency (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010; Yoder, 2013).

Another principle important for teachers to understand is that a learner's home language plays a critical role in his or her learning of a second language. Strong academic skills in the native language are associated with successful second language learning and academic achievement (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Cummins (2000) found that language skills developed in the first language transfer to a second language. Also, language learning is enhanced when a safe, non-threatening environment is created and language anxiety is reduced. Teachers draw from these principles in planning effective instruction for ELLs.

The final element of the framework for linguistically responsive teaching is instructional scaffolding.

Lucas and Villegas (2010) state:

“Teachers who are socioculturally conscious, value linguistic diversity, see themselves as advocates for ELLs, have a clear sense of their students’ linguistic backgrounds and resources, understand the linguistic demands of classroom tasks, and can apply key principles of second language learning, are well equipped to provide the types of instructional scaffolding essential for ELL learning of academic content and English.”

Scaffolding is widely recognized as fundamental to the teaching and learning of ELLs (Echevarria, Vot, & Short, 2004; Gibbons, 2002; Schleppegrell, 2004; Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2007), and is the instructional response to Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development, that is, the metaphorical space in which a learner can accomplish, with the assistance of a more capable peer, tasks he or she could not accomplish alone. It is a form of temporary support for a learner that encompasses both processes and structures that are grounded in interaction and collaboration to enable ELs to successfully engage in academic and linguistic tasks. Driver and Powell (2017) view culturally and linguistically responsive instruction as complementary approaches that are interrelated. Both approaches support teachers to consider the unique learning characteristics of their students and to value and utilize the cultural and linguistic resources of the students, in tandem with developed understandings of their backgrounds and experiences, applied understandings of second language learning, and personal sociocultural and sociolinguistic consciousness to make content accessible and to promote academic and linguistic proficiency for English learners.

In summary, research shows that English language learners come to the public school setting with varied backgrounds, languages, levels of literacy in their primary language, and cultural and linguistic resources that can be utilized to provide a learning environment that fosters student success. Instructional supports, such as found in components of Balanced Literacy or sheltered English instruction, create access to core content and serve as the foundation for addressing the needs of ELL students. However, the daily explicit instruction in how English works and multiple opportunities to practice the language

with English-fluent peers in authentic, meaningful dialogue is essential to English language development. Utilizing the cultural and linguistic resources of ELL students to inform curricular planning creates avenues to tailor instruction, incorporating elements of the backgrounds and experiences of the students to fuel engagement and build upon prior knowledge. Many teachers have limited exposure to pedagogy that is responsive to the cultural or linguistic backgrounds of students and lack preparation for working with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. A systematic approach to professional development may foster opportunities to build teacher capacity for supporting ELLs and to impact English language outcomes for students (de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2015; Lucas & Villegas, 2010, 2013; Pereira & De Oliveira, 2015).

### **Teacher Professional Development is Essential**

Research suggests that most mainstream teachers lack basic foundational knowledge related to ELL issues, despite the fact that as many as 88 percent of them teach English learners (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). There are many teachers who are not equipped for working with students from diverse backgrounds and experiences, nor do they understand the challenges inherent in learning to speak and read English (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Lucas & Villegas, 2010; Gay, 2002). Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) surveyed educators in California and found only 29 percent of teachers with more than three ELLs in their classrooms reported holding professional certification in either ESL or bilingual education. The changing demographics of public schools and the thrust to better equip the teaching force for work with culturally and linguistically diverse students has prompted many to propose changes to preservice education (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas, 1991; de Jong, Harper, Coady, 2013; Lucas & Villegas, 2010, 2013). According to Bransford et al., teachers will need substantially more knowledge and radically different skills than most now have and most schools of education now develop (Bransford, Brown and Cocking, 2000; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Many of the researchers describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers who are effective with ELLs in standard curriculum settings (Coady et al., 2007; Commins &

Miramontes, 2006; de Jong & Harper, 2005); Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Lucas & Grinberg , 2008; Tellez & Waxman, 2006). From differing perspectives, these frameworks all emphasize the role of language and culture in the education of bilingual learners (de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013). There is therefore a significant need for effective professional development to engage the teachers in research-based strategies for English language development and culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy (CLR) to promote English proficiency for ELLs.

### **Professional Learning**

Smylie (1995) stated that we will fail to improve schooling for children until we recognize the importance of schools as places for teachers to work and learn. A school is more likely to be effective in promoting high levels of student achievement if it also plays a significant role in teacher learning (NEA, 2006). Hawley and Valli observed that teachers serve as gatekeepers, creating access to academic content and resources by which students build knowledge and skills. They can enhance or impede what students learn (1999). If schools are to improve in their capacity to enhance student learning, if change is to take root, colleagues must develop a shared understanding of the purposes, rationale, and processes involved in the innovation and believe their efforts can make a difference for students (Fullan, 1991). Improving schooling is connected to the nature of teacher practice in the instructional core, the relationship between the teacher, the student, and the content (Cohen & Ball, 1999). City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel (2009) found that increases in student learning are achieved in response to improvements in the level of content, teacher's knowledge and skill, and student engagement. To impact student learning, improvement must be made in teacher knowledge and efficacy with content and student interaction with teachers around content (City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel).

According to Collinson (1996), who identified eight aspects of staff development to promote teacher learning, professional development should be a shared, public process; promote sustained interaction; emphasize substantive, school-related issues; and rely on internal expertise, as opposed to external "experts". Further, effective professional development should incorporate an expectation of teachers as

active participants; emphasize the why as well as the how of teaching; articulate a theoretical research base; and anticipate that lasting change will be a slow process. Effective professional development increases teacher efficacy through providing opportunities to observe and practice modeled strategies, engage in peer coaching, acclimate students to new ways of learning, and support for the regular and appropriate use of new teaching and learning strategies (Joyce & Showers, 1995). Professional development must be aligned with individual, collective, and school goals and rooted in the core problems of teaching and learning (NEA, 2006). To have impact on the relationships between students, teacher, and content, research shows teachers need pedagogical content knowledge to know how to transform content to build connections with students' ideas and experiences.

Hawley and Valli, (1999) identified eight characteristics of effective professional development that are likely to lead to improved teacher practice and student learning. Professional development should:

1. Be driven by analyses of the gap between goals and standards for student learning and student performance
2. Involve learners (teachers) in the identification of their learning needs and the development of the learning opportunity and /or process used
3. Be primarily school-based and integral to school operations
4. Provide learning opportunities that relate to individual needs but are organized around collaborative problem solving
5. Be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning, including external sources of support
6. Incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on outcomes for students and processes involved in implementing the lessons learned through professional development
7. Provide opportunities to develop a theoretical understanding of the knowledge and skills learned
8. Be integrated with a comprehensive change process, dealing with the full range of impediments to and facilitators of student learning

These design principles highlight strategies that are essential to improving student learning over time.

Based on these principles, the content of teacher learning opportunities should be learner-centered and take into account the existing knowledge and beliefs of teachers. Opportunities to develop reflective capacities, attention to motivational and developmental issues, and to build on social relations in the school context should be included.

## Professional Learning Communities

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin state that helping teachers rethink practice requires professional development that engages teachers in two roles, that of a teacher and a learner, and creates new concepts of what, when, and how teachers should learn (1995). One way of supporting this paradigm shift is professional learning communities (PLCs). A PLC is defined as a community “with the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals in the school community with the collective purpose of enhancing student learning” (Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, & Wallace, 2005). PLCs are grounded in two assumptions, that first, knowledge is situated in the daily lived experiences of teachers and best understood through critical reflection with others who share the same experience (Buisse, Sparkman, & Wesley, 2003). This organizational shift in professional development is dedicated to meeting the educational needs of students and is supported through collaborative examination of day-to-day practice (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2006). It is also assumed that actively engaging teachers in PLCs will increase their knowledge and enhance student learning. According to Newmann et al., there are five essential characteristics of PLCs.

1. Shared values and norms with respect to the group’s collective views about children, their ability to learn, school priorities, and proper roles of parents, teachers and administrators
2. A clear and consistent focus on student learning
3. Reflective dialogue that facilitates continuous conversations among teachers about curriculum, instruction, and student development
4. Privatizing practice to make teaching public
5. A focus on collaboration

In PLCs that promote higher levels of student achievement, staff members embrace a shared responsibility for student learning and work collaboratively to foster instructional improvement. This fosters the creation of a community in which “continuous learning is a schoolwide norm and learning is embedded in the professional community” (NEA, 2006).

“To create a professional learning community,” DuFour states, “focus on learning, rather than teaching, work collaboratively, and hold yourself accountable for results” (2004). Three “big ideas” represent the core principles of PLCs. Big Idea #1 Ensuring that Students Learn relates to a commitment

to creatively and collaboratively working to promote student learning. This is facilitated by exploration of three crucial questions:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

A school that begins to function as a professional learning community becomes aware of the gap between their commitment to ensure student learning and their lack of a coordinated strategy to respond when some students do not learn (DuFour, 2004). They develop strategies to support struggling students with additional time and resources in a response that is systematic, schoolwide, timely, based on intervention - not remediation, and directive – requiring students to devote extra time and receive extra help to achieve mastery.

Big Idea #2 A Culture of Collaboration relates to teacher commitment to work together to achieve their collective purpose: learning for all students. PLCs are characterized by “powerful collaboration” in a “systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice” (DuFour, 2004). Through team participation in ongoing cycles of inquiry around promoting student learning, deep teacher learning is fostered, which can then lead to increased levels of student achievement.

A Focus on Results is Big Idea #3. Results speak to the effectiveness of the PLC and its ability to work together to improve student achievement. Each teacher participates in the ongoing process of identifying the current level of student performance, establishing a goal to improve that performance, working together to achieve the goal, and providing periodic evidence of progress. Teachers are then able to watch for successful practice to replicate it in their own classrooms, and to identify curricular areas in need of attention (DuFour, 2004).

### **Instructional Coaching**

Taylor highlights instructional coaching, a form of instructional leadership, as support to promote teacher learning and application of instructional expertise that takes place in the instructional setting

(2008). It is non-supervisory and non-evaluative individualized guidance that supports teacher practice through collegial interactions focused on providing constructive feedback and prompting self-reflection. Often situated within the physical classroom or artifacts of instruction (videos, lesson plans, etc), coaches also support teachers through modeling lessons, co-planning and co-teaching, or observing instruction (Taylor 2008). Because coaching takes place in the instructional setting, it addresses the context specific nature of teaching and brings technical expertise into the teacher's classroom, facilitating transfer and application of new learning to teachers' daily instruction (Joyce & Showers, 1980). Coaches build teachers' instructional capacity through the collective processes of monitoring practice (observation), providing constructive feedback, encouraging self-reflection, modeling within the classroom, and providing professional development (Taylor, 2008). Showers and Joyce (1996) found that teachers who were coached implemented new strategies more appropriately than teacher who did not have this experience.

Bloom, Catagna, Moir, and Warren (2005) define coaching as "the practice of providing deliberate support to another individual to help him/her to clarify and /or achieve goals." Research on adult learning and professional development (Speck & Knipe, 2001) speaks to the need for coaching.

- Adults commit to learning when they perceive the objectives are realistic and important to their professional needs and that what they learn is connected to their day-to-day activities and problems
- Adults want to be the origin of their own learning and want control over the what, who, how, why, when, and where of their learning
- Adults need direct, concrete experiences for applying what they have learned to their work
- Adult learners do not automatically transfer learning into daily practice, Coaching and follow-up are needed so that learning is sustained
- Adults need feedback on the results of their efforts
- Adult learners come to the learning process with self-direction and a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, interests, and competencies.

Direct, job-embedded coaching (one-to-one) responds to these characteristics of adult learners (Bloom et al., 2005). In this way, instructional coaching provides a more personalized, intensive approach to professional development. As Taylor states, it "extends, embeds, particularizes, brings expertise to, dedicates time for, deprivatizes, connects, and professionalizes professional development" (2008).

Key elements of effective instructional coaching (Bloom et al., 2005) are:

- Building a coaching relationship based upon trust and permission, ensuring emotional safety and an environment to learn and grow
- The coach as a different observer of the coachee and the context, providing data and feedback on the coachee's behavior and the specific situation to support developing different ways of acting
- The coach is prepared to apply a variety of coaching strategies as appropriate to the context and needs of the coachee
- The coach is fully present for and committed to the coachee
- The coach provides emotional support to the coachee
- The coach maintains a commitment to organizational goals as agreed to by the coachee, and appropriately pushed the coachee to attain them
- The coach practices in an ethical manner

According to Taylor (2008,) "coaching develops trust, instills collective responsibility, imparts an innovative orientation, and provides an example of professionalism around instructional practice."

Successful coaching relationships are based on trust and rapport (Bloom et al., 2005). It is through relational trust, the discernments of intentions embedded in the actions of others (Bryk & Schneider, 2003) that work to build a sense of emotional safety and security in the social exchanges of schooling. Relational trust is grounded in social respect, as seen in actively listening to others, and valuing others' opinions. Another aspect, personal regard, speaks to the willingness of the individual to extend themselves beyond formal requirements toward others, expressing openness and working to create a culture that bridges and connects teachers, students, and families. Relational trust is fostered in the level of competence displayed in core role responsibilities, so that school community members' interactions produce the desired results and mutual dependencies (parents' dependence on teacher professionalism, teachers' dependence on principal's leadership capacity, etc.) are supported. Bryk and Schneider highlight a final element that shapes discernment about trust: personal integrity, the moral-ethical perspective that guides one's work, facilitates keeping one's word, and undergirds the commitment to the education and welfare of children. Relational trust is essential to effective coaching and efforts for school reform.

"Strong relational trust also makes it more likely that reform initiatives will diffuse broadly across the school because trust reduces the sense of risk associated with change. When school professionals trust one another and sense support from parents, they feel safe to experiment with

new practices. Similarly, relational trust fosters the necessary social exchanges among school professionals as they learn from one another. Talking honestly with colleagues about what's working and what's not means exposing your own ignorance and making yourself vulnerable. Without trust, genuine conversations of this sort remain unlikely" (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

In summary, the literature reveals that professional development, professional learning communities (PLCs), and instructional coaching can be utilized to promote teacher learning. The research highlighted the need to provide learner-centered, school-based professional development that incorporates the perceived goals of the participant that engages the teachers over time in interactive and collaborative meaning-making and practice, and involves opportunities to observe, discuss, and practice strategies and techniques in a non-evaluative atmosphere (Hawley, & Valli, 1999; Collinson, 1996; Joyce & Showers, 1995). Teachers reported an increase in knowledge and skills and a change in practice when they received professional development that was coherent, focused on content knowledge, and involved active learning (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). PLCs engage teachers in collaborative efforts to improve teacher practice, addressing the challenge of a school-wide response to student results and difficulties in achievement (Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, & Wallace, 2005; DuFour, 2004).

Instructional coaching was presented in the research as a learning-focused relationship built on trust that supports the teacher as learner to be reflective of their practice and to achieve personal goals (Bloom, Catagna, Moir, and Warren (2005); Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Taylor, 2008). Instructional coaching is situated in the classroom context and therefore provides powerful opportunities for the teacher to receive effective feedback and to be supported in reflections of practice.

### **Conclusion – Implications for Implementation of Setting the Stage for Student Talk**

Based on the review of the literature, English language learners require resources and supports that must be provided to enable their academic success. However, using instructional supports alone to create access to core content, is insufficient to adequately prepare students to develop the academic English

language proficiency necessary to handle the rigors of the Common Core (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015; Goldenberg, 2013). It is through the explicit instruction of English and structured, authentic experiences to practice language use, that we enable students to develop English language fluency (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Yoder, 2013). Research further indicates that best practices in supporting ELL achievement include the incorporation of elements of CLR pedagogy in the curriculum to build upon the resources ELL students bring to the classroom and to promote academic achievement (Lucas & Villegas, 2010; de Oliviera. & Shoffner, 2017; Gay, 2002, 2010). Also clearly indicated in the literature is the need to provide effective professional learning opportunities for teachers and to ensure ongoing support for their learning (NCRTE, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Hawley & Valli, 1999). Additionally, professional learning communities (PLCs) provide a data-driven, collaborative structure in which to practice and explore strategies for improving student outcomes. Instructional coaching gives personalized learning and support (through non-evaluative feedback, co-planning, and reflective conversations) to move teacher practice (Taylor, (2008); Bloom, Catagna, Moir, and Warren (2005).

In the current context, there are three factors that appear to have impact on ELL student performance:

- 1) There is a lack of structured English language development (ELD) instruction at Pleasant Grove.

Despite efforts to present integrated English language instruction to students, in the light of this review, I would argue that insufficient support exists for achieving and maintaining English language proficiency for ELLs. Specific and targeted lessons to develop understanding and facility with language functions and demands is warranted in research and must be explored as a resource for strengthening English fluency outcomes for ELL and RFEP students.

- 2) There is a “culture of silence” in student talk.

Given the prior experience of veteran members of the staff with professional development around academic discussion, there is a need to explore strategies to increase student participation and interaction. The presentation of research-based best practices to foster authentic, meaningful dialogue with ELLs may generate improved outcomes and increase teacher facility with student talk. Cultural norms need to be identified to determine the most effective way to honor home

cultures and modify classroom interactions (Gay 2002), preparing students to code switch with appropriate skills in the proper settings (e.g., the classroom).

- 3) Data shows low and sliding performance for ELL and RFEP students.

Research indicates the provision of instructional supports alone for ELL students is insufficient to accelerate performance to close achievement gaps with E-O peers. I would argue that an untapped resource, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, is available and accessible through the site SEL focus, to support ELL achievement. Combining elements of CLR and SEL (with structured English language instruction) may create avenues for more meaningful learning opportunities and increased student engagement as the curricular content becomes more reflective of ELL student prior knowledge, backgrounds, and experiences.

In my research to determine whether the provision of professional learning, and opportunities to practice research-based strategies for engaging ELL students in collaborative academic discussion, would impact teacher practice and enhance their facilitation of student talk, I come to this conclusion: Through effective professional learning to support English language development and build knowledge of CLR pedagogy, collaborative engagement with PLCs, and instructional coaching to nurture success with new strategies in the classroom, the literature indicates that teachers may gain tools for enhancing the English language development of ELLs and receive support for increasing effectiveness in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

### **Theory of Action**

My Theory of Action is designed in support of the problem of practice that has surfaced in multiple data sources: teachers lack training in high impact strategies for facilitating academic discussions with ELLs. The lack of professional development for the staff in ELL strategies, teacher survey data, and the deficiency in English language instruction across the grade levels were indicators of the problem. This theory of action is driven by the findings in research that indicate teacher practice can be changed by

effective professional development that affords opportunities to explore and practice new strategies in a non-evaluative format with ongoing feedback and support (Hawley & Valli, 1999). It seeks to align instruction with research-based practices that will build teacher capacity for working with ELLs and nurture the development of CLR competencies for designing more culturally and linguistically responsive learning experiences to impact outcomes for ELLs.

I believe, based on findings in my research, that if teachers receive professional development, coaching support, and feedback in implementation of essential strategies to foster oral English language development and collaborative student discourse around content, and if teachers receive training, coaching, and feedback to align practice with culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, then teacher use of academic discussion as a strategy to enhance oral language development will increase, student engagement in collaborative discussion using content language will improve, and teacher facility in fostering ELL student dialogue with peers will be enhanced.

### **Intervention Plan**

The intervention was designed to build teacher capacity for addressing the needs of English learners and facilitating student talk between peers. My research question for this intervention was: Will the provision of professional learning and opportunities to explore and practice pedagogy to align instruction with research-based strategies for engaging ELL students in collaborative discourse around content impact teacher practice and enhance the facilitation of student talk? Given the previous site work on academic discussion and the timing of the professional learning cycle (late February-early March), I hoped to determine whether teachers would embrace a change in strategy for ELL instruction if the change was limited in scope to that which would add to a strategy already in use.

My intervention design included a series of professional learning opportunities to increase familiarity with high impact strategies for supporting ELLs. The rationale was to focus on student learning and

include opportunities for teachers to develop pedagogical skills for teaching specific content, which has been found to have positive impact on teacher practice (Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2007; Wenglinsky, 2000). The original plan incorporated a series of four sessions to build upon prior knowledge of oral language development and highlight research-based best practices for enhancing student talk. In the first session the teachers would review research that featured best practices for supporting and accelerating the English language development of ELLs. A subsequent session would feature two or three high impact strategies for supporting ELLs, with opportunities to practice the techniques and receive coaching and follow-up to ensure the learning is sustained (Speck & Knipe, 2001). Then as a PLC, teachers would select one strategy to augment what they were already doing to foster academic discussion for ELL students. PLCs would begin to experiment with the strategies and receive collaborative feedback in planning to support their learning. Coaching cycles would occur between professional learning sessions with two or three teachers who elected to receive this additional support.

The next session would introduce culturally and linguistically responsive teaching (CLR) as a method of identifying the resources students from diverse backgrounds, languages, and cultures bring to the classroom and leveraging these to tailor instruction. Becoming culturally and linguistically responsive in teaching is a developmental process, therefore we limited our focus to a single element, developing a cultural knowledge base about our students. This had connection to our social-emotional curriculum and seemed the easiest to implement of the identified elements of CLR teaching. The PLCs were then asked to utilize what they already knew about their students as a means of exploring student resources and finding ways for these assets to be utilized in the curriculum, and thereby, in academic discussion.

The final professional learning session would invite the teachers to share their explorations with ELL strategies and resources and then address the issue of layering these strategies to support student talk. From the lens of CLR pedagogy and using one or two identified student resources, the teachers would modify academic discussion strategies to be inclusive of ELL student assets. PLCs would continue to receive collaborative planning and feedback while the small group of teachers would receive instructional

coaching cycles, including co-planning, observation, data gathering, and debriefing, to support the development of teacher practice with ELL strategies. Shortly before the first session, I learned that the original plan conflicted with shifting building priorities. The four sessions were condensed into two and the first session had to be cut to address other site concerns. At this point, the plan was to continue with the series, although it was clear that the initial goal of providing an effective professional learning opportunity would be difficult to achieve.

### **Professional Learning – Session One:**

#### **Setting the Stage for Student Talk: Supporting ELL Access to Academic Discussion**

We began with a pre-session survey and a self-assessment of the evidence of ELL supports in our classrooms. Grade level teams read segments of three research articles on 1) essentials for developing oral English language proficiency, 2) using cultural and linguistic resources to promote ELL student success, and 3) unpacking meaning in complex texts for ELLs and language minority students. The activity was structured so that two different grade level bands read the same article and cross-grade groups shared their perceptions and applications of the reading with the larger group.

Due to time constraints, I elected to delay the presentation of ELL strategies and jump into the resource folder of high impact strategies and tools for working with ELLs. As the teachers explored the materials for strategies that might have application to their current work with student talk, I hoped providing freedom to choose strategies would honor the expertise in the room and facilitate teacher buy-in, creating an augmentation of a currently-used practice. I asked PLCs to collaboratively decide on one strategy to implement and to record the PLC agreements in the notetaking space provided in the agenda. At this point the focus of the meeting shifted to other agenda items. There was no opportunity to meet with the PLCs as planned, so I reminded them of their selected strategies in a follow-up email. It was

three weeks later before I could meet with the whole staff regarding the ELL strategies we had begun to explore.

## **Professional Learning – Session Two**

### **Setting the Stage for Student Talk: Strategies to Fuel Discussion**

For the second professional learning session, I made sure to put notices in the weekly bulletin and on email to staff. I sent out the agenda earlier than usual to rekindle interest in the next step in the series. With a brief review of the highlights from the previous session, we set out with these objectives: to learn how selected high impact strategies might impact English language development; to develop an understanding of the role of culture and language in instruction; and to explore how to support English language development with resources students bring to school.

To familiarize the staff with some Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies, I introduced the Pictorial Input Chart, featuring its linguistic and conceptual benefits for ELL students. I posed this experience as a quick look at a set of strategies that would build vocabulary, comprehension, and increase facility with content vocabulary for ELLs. I had prepared a graphic organizer from a California Gold Rush unit picturing the immigration of people from various nations to San Francisco. I sketched geographic features of the mid-Atlantic passage, ocean voyages, and overland routes, labeling them with key content vocabulary. I distributed prepared vocabulary cards and presented the Word Card Review strategy, using questioning to prompt teachers to identify content vocabulary and match the word cards to the images in the graphic. I attempted to engage the teachers as students to experience the learning, but noticed a reticence among the staff. There were noticeably few responses to my checks for understanding. A number of things could have been in operation here, such as a lack of understanding, unclear presentation techniques, or a general tendency to freeze up and not respond.

I continued the presentation with a demonstration of how key content vocabulary could be used to practice sentence construction (Sentence Patterning). The teachers generated lists of words from the unit. The words were color-coded by category: nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases, and adverbs. A noun, changed to its plural form, was selected, and teachers were asked to create a sentence using the pattern: adjective – noun – verb – prepositional phrase. This activity was repeated several times, singing the generated sentences to the tune of a familiar nursery rhyme, and then adding the adverb to the sentence to create a more grammatically complex sentence. Closing these activities with checks for understanding and questions, the unresponsiveness of the staff continued.

I introduced the video presentation as a more comprehensive look at sentence unpacking and how content vocabulary development was fostered for ELL students. This particular clip featured a local teacher presenting elements of a story about Mexican migrant workers in the Gold Rush, a culturally significant factor for the featured class of primarily Latino students. We watched an 8-minute segment of the lesson. After the video, there was silence. One teacher asked if the students had work on their desks that kept them engaged during the video. I made a few more attempts to engage the teachers in dialogue and then moved on.

Next, was the segment on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching. Framing the discussion from the research standpoint, that the scaffolds we create to support ELL students are helpful but insufficient to support English language proficiency, I noticed a shift in the atmosphere. A coldness joined the unresponsiveness in the room. The teachers seemed to be shutting down. I shifted the discussion to the understanding that becoming a CLR teacher is a process. I wanted to ensure that teachers understood the objective would be to build on what we were already doing with ELL students, looking at ways to increase the effectiveness of those supports. Teachers were asked to reflect on what they know about the backgrounds, cultures, and languages of their students and consider how an element of these student resources might be used to support ELL achievement. Noting the continuing silence among the teachers, I directed their attention to additional materials that had been added to the resource folder with

articles highlighting the characteristics of a CLR teacher. I introduced the Teacher Research Journal asking that they enter reflections or observations from their work with ELLs in this document.

Reminding the teachers of exit tickets and plus/delta feedback, I yielded the floor. After a few unrelated topics were discussed, the teachers were released to PLC work, but not before they were informed that there would be no further professional learning sessions for the remainder of the school year.

As I walked around the room to check in with PLC groups, I noticed that most groups were working on a 2018-19 planning document that ILT members had brought to the session. There was little evidence of response to the professional learning. PLC entries in the notetaking section of the agenda were made for only two of the grade levels represented. The Kindergarten entry indicated adding more multicultural books to the Interactive Read Aloud lessons, building more opportunities for Call and Response, Turn and Talk or deliberate partnering, and considering GLAD pictorial input charts for science units to frontload vocabulary. The third grade entry listed text evidence, sentence frames, process grid with claim, evidence, explanation, and counterclaim. Also listed were two questions: “How can you support/prove it?” and “Can you justify your answer?” Eleven out of twenty-seven teachers completed the exit ticket and just five entries were posted in the Teacher Research Journals. Despite reminder emails over the next few days, no further entries were submitted. Two days after the session, an upper grade teacher confided in passing, “I tried that GLAD strategy you showed us with my students and they loved it!”

### **Instructional Coaching Cycles**

Prior to the first professional learning session I contacted four teachers to request their participation in the coaching component of the action research study. The first two teachers refused, the third teacher asked a few questions and then agreed to participate. The fourth teacher agreed on the spot, but took several days to sign the participation agreement. Both of the participating teachers were part of my teacher evaluation roster for the year; Teacher A, a first grade teacher and a veteran with 5 years of

service, and Teacher B, a Kindergarten teacher in her first-year. I had collected observation data for both teachers prior to the start of the intervention, therefore, current classroom data was available from the scheduled post-observation conferences. Teacher A agreed to meet for a 30-40 minute coaching session on a weekly basis. Her commute schedule would not accommodate a longer meeting. Teacher B agreed to meet weekly for 60 minutes, however some sessions extended to 90 minutes and others happened on drop-in basis and in response to crises that would arise. Much of the data collected related more to her professional goals than the inquiry work, and some are included here as part of the intervention work. I elected to extend the instructional coaching for an additional two weeks for both teachers due to site-based interruptions and conflicts with the SBAC testing schedule. This gave us extra time to try different strategies and look for evidence of the impact of the intervention.

#### Teacher A – Initial Classroom Data

Teacher A and I met in a post-observation conference to discuss collected data to complete her evaluation cycle for the year. Since this was a drop-in observation, she seemed very interested in hearing the captured data and ratings. The only growth areas in the conversation focused on suggestions for questioning strategies, use of equity in initiating responses, and ELL supports, including the content language object for the lesson. This was a fast-paced discussion and she was receptive to the feedback.

#### Coaching Sessions

Over the course of the intervention, I conducted six coaching cycles with Teacher A. With an individual inquiry on promoting active listening and a PLC focus of structured oral language routines, specifically My Turn, Your Turn, and Whip Around, and using open-ended prompts during discussions, we met each week to review data, reflect, revise planning, and to modify strategies to address identified student needs. Professional learning on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching was featured in the fourth cycle to strengthen teacher awareness of student resources as tools for instruction.

We scheduled observations of partner dialogue to gauge student responsiveness to the intervention. Initially I collected data on focal students during a ten-minute partner talk activity featured in the morning circle. We soon discovered that the students were able to say a sentence in response to a prompt, but would stop talking after the one sentence was delivered and the sentence may not have connection to what their partner shared. This turned our attention to finding ways to engage the students in back-and-forth dialogue where partners listened, responded, and built upon each other's ideas. In subsequent coaching sessions we began experimenting with varied and strategic partnerships, modified prompts to tailor to student interests, using personal-sized anchor charts to "restart" stalled conversations, and looking at student motivation. This was the perfect segue to revisit the CLR teaching and to begin to consider the assets the students bring as a tool for better aligning instruction to their developmental needs.

Process data was collected in the form of partner conversation notes, highlighting the ability of students to generate and sustain responses to ideas using conversation scaffolds (e.g. sentence stems, mini anchor charts). We used partner grids to capture the nature and frequency of elements of student conversations to determine whether the partners could sustain the conversation in back-and-forth exchanges, build upon each other's ideas, and generate authentic dialogue. The third mode of data collection came in response to a question of patterns in responses: Did some discussion prompts initiate more effective responses than others? Would changing the presentation of the prompt or supporting the prompt with other types of scaffolds have an impact on student interaction around content? We used a multimedia approach to present content vocabulary and increased the opportunities for partner talks to explore their ability to generate authentic dialogue sustained across several exchanges. Teacher process data was collected to identify changes in facilitating student talk through the teacher-student relationship in instruction. These data monitored changes in teacher moves related to the coaching session and modified student goals.

Impact data were collected in teacher surveys, self-assessments and teacher research journals. They were used to record teacher responses, perceptions, and to surface underlying beliefs, values, and

assumptions that might have influence on teacher practice. Coaching exit tickets captured teacher reflections and a snapshot of teacher thinking in professional learning. These data yielded a view of the teacher's perspective in problem solving, the impact of coaching support, and the influence of the intervention on teacher practice.

### **Teacher B – Initial Classroom Data**

Teacher B met with me to discuss data collected on a scheduled observation. Even though this was the fifth post observation conference in the series for the year, we spent time calibrating on the elements of effective classroom management. The data indicated that the teacher continued to struggle with communicating behavioral expectations to the students and in developing learning experiences that nurtured and challenged the emerging competencies of her students. Teacher B was responsive to feedback to increase rigor and develop visuals to reinforce expectations and consequences. She engaged in next step planning to make revisions in materials and systems to support student success. Three days later I collected follow-up data on a drop-in visit. In the debriefing we identified the PLC focus strategy of interactive read aloud, with Turn and Talk strategy used to practice oral language skills, and frontloading of vocabulary to support ELL students. We designated days and times to observe these lessons. I offered assistance in the form of modeling, observation and feedback, and coaching support for the read aloud sessions. We scheduled a regular coaching session for the following week.

### **Coaching sessions**

Teacher B and I met in six coaching cycles over the course of the intervention. Given this was her first year in a teaching assignment, she experienced many challenges, especially with classroom management. Each coaching session and debriefing had dedicated time for discussing this topic, as well as planning for the intervention. Early coaching sessions involved collaborative planning and support with the structure of interactive read aloud. We reviewed data from observations, co-planned a lesson from a selected text and discussed the use of questioning strategies to elicit deeper thinking and generate discussion. Teacher

B requested that I gather data on students who were not responding to the lesson and which reading techniques were most effective in actively engaging the students. In subsequent observations, students were observed to be having difficulty staying focused. Leading the teacher to reflect on the lesson, I asked what she noticed about the body language of the students. A discussion ensued regarding the non-verbal communication of Kindergarten students and the need to use their signals to guide teacher moves. We discussed splitting a lengthy text into two parts and using a follow-up response activity at the end of each reading.

The next interactive read aloud lesson involved creating a story map, which the teacher attempted to begin by using blank pieces of paper for generating sentences. Revisiting the body language cues and what she knows about teaching writing, she was able to connect student responses to the lack of context clues (sketches) and the need to pre-plan the segments of the story for retelling to guide their thinking. About this time, problems with classroom management escalated in the form of a parent complaint. Teacher B was faced with a student being removed from her classroom. These challenges presented significant obstacles that forced intervention work to the “back burner” of priorities.

In response to student interest, Teacher B chose a Chinese fable for the read aloud lesson. This book had cultural significance for some of the students. The teacher used questioning strategies to engage the students in dialogue with peers. A professional learning segment on CLR teaching was included in a coaching session as an intentional shift to highlight the student resources that could be utilized to inform instruction. We reviewed the definitions of CLR teaching with excerpts from Ladsen-Billing’s work (1995), Gay (2000), and Hollie (2012) to revisit its meaning and purpose. Looking for connections to the work with students in her class, I used an example from the SEL lesson I taught earlier in the day. A Somali student chimed in a translation for a word in his home language. Modeling for the teacher, I asked the student to repeat the word to teach us and then joined the other children in saying the word, emphasizing that the boy’s home language was helping us learn about feelings. Teacher B and I discussed how this affirmation of his language and heritage aligned with developing a responsive learning

environment. A subsequent read aloud engaged the students in examining differences in friends. The students were instructed to look closely at their neighbor's face. This activity had potential for incorporating elements of responsive teaching, however the teacher had not made that connection. In the debriefing we discussed how it could be used to connect and celebrate differences and commonalities, incorporating elements of student backgrounds and experiences in learning.

Teacher B brought in the idea of previewing a book to prepare for the read aloud. This would give the children a summary of the story and “draw them in”. She would follow up the reading with an exit ticket to assess which students understood the problem in the story. I offered a GLAD strategy, 10 and 2, which for Kindergarten is more aptly termed 5 and 1: five minutes of instruction with one minute to talk with a partner. To provide a clear structure for interactive read aloud and to increase comprehension, we created a cycle of reading, a prompt to Turn and Talk with a partner, and a return to reading. When the story came to a stopping point, we would add a Whip Around to share partner responses. The sharing activity would be followed with a written response activity, affording more opportunities for partners to talk about the story and hear other ideas before being asked to generate their own ideas independently. We discussed the expectations for Turn and Talk, which Teacher B indicated was simply to follow a 3-second command. The selected text was about a grandmother’s preparations for a birthday party. The text included Spanish words, however, no visible frontloading of words was apparent during the lesson. Sentence frames for the prompt were given orally with no visual reinforcement. When the prompt was given and students were asked to turn, just six students turned and four began speaking on the topic.

Process data were collected in this intervention through observation notes and partner grid charts. In this way, we were able to track student participation in partner talks and watch for changes in responsiveness to prompts. Due to the nature of the class itself and problems with routines and management, the amount of data collected was significantly reduced. The children had difficulty successfully participating in the partner talk section of the interactive read aloud lesson. Teacher process data was captured in observations, especially as they related to co-planning and coaching support.

Impact data were harvested from the self-assessment, teacher surveys, and teacher research journals. These data gave information on changes in teacher perceptions, shifts in thinking, especially related to practice, and could also give indication of underlying assumptions, values, and beliefs that might influence teacher practice. The coaching exit tickets helped to track teacher reflections over time and to align coaching with teacher goals.

### **Data Collection Plan**

The data collection plan reflects the intervention as it was conducted, with condensed professional learning sessions that limited the scope and effectiveness of the training. Teachers had inadequate time to explore and practice strategies and to understand the theory behind the essentials for English language development. PLCs were not afforded planning support and, subsequently, PLC involvement did not continue. Much of the potential data from the professional learning was lost due to the lack of participation of the staff. However, the intervention was conducted with the teacher volunteers, utilizing the PLC focus for their grade level. Professional learning continued in the classroom, in coaching sessions, and in collaborative work with these teachers to support developing skills and to reinforce efforts to improve student talk. The coaching cycles were organized around the professional learning sessions and oriented to collaborative planning, such that, changes in the intervention led to changes in the coaching cycle. Impact and process data were collected, but the type of data and mode of collection varied as the intervention evolved. By using familiar strategies with adjustments that aligned with best practices, I hoped to build upon what they already knew about fostering student talk and encourage them to seek answers to the inevitable questions that arise with inquiry work.

Topic/ Content	Strategies & Practices	Sub Questions to be Answered	Data Collection	Type of Data
<p><b>Professional Learning Session One</b>                      -Essentials for English oral language development in ELD                      -Teaching how English language works                      -Research-based strategies for promoting ELL student engagement and increasing oral output</p>	<p>-Self-assessment                      – Reflecting on practice                      -Research-based best practices                      Jigsaw readings                        Exploring Resources -                      Student Talk Resource Toolkit</p>	<p>-With enhanced knowledge about essential components of English language development, how will teacher practice be affected?</p>	<p>--Baseline Survey, equity/SEL/CRT/LRT focus                      -ELLMA self-assessment Indicators                      -PLC notes                      -Exit Slip                      -Research journal                      -pre- and post-session survey</p>	<p>Impact Data                        Impact Data                        Impact Data &amp; Process Data</p>
<p><b>PLC Planning</b></p>	<p>-PLCs choose 1 strategy to implement                      -meet with PLCs to support planning efforts</p>	<p>-Will teachers incorporate strategies in their planning?                        Will teachers’ use of specific high impact strategies to foster oral language development support student engagement in academic discussion?</p>	<p>-Teacher Research Journals - to capture wonderings, gleanings from inquiry, questions about practice; changes over time</p>	<p>Impact Data &amp; Process Data                            Impact Data</p>
<p><b>Instructional Coaching Support:</b>                                      Cycle 1</p>	<p>-One-on-one coaching for volunteers to support teacher learning                        PLC-selected strategy to</p>	<p>-Will the level of relational trust support critical (courageous) feedback?                        -Will <i>non-evaluative</i> support increase risk taking, promote teacher engagement?</p>	<p>-Collaborative lesson planning                      -Reflective conversations                      - Reflection journals to capture perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, ideas</p>	<p>Process Data                        Impact Data                      Impact Data</p>

<p><b>Cycle 2</b></p>	<p>enhance student talk with ELLs</p> <p>-Timely, courageous feedback                      Transparency and student outcomes as the third point</p> <p>-Facilitate teacher reflection</p>	<p>-Will professional learning impact teacher-student interaction around content?</p>	<p>Non-evaluative Feedback: scripting, videos, observation tool                      – Observation data (scripted or anecdotal)</p> <p>-Coaching log                      -Teacher Research Journals- to capture wonderings, gleanings from inquiry, questions about practice; changes over time</p> <p>-Coaching Exit Tickets</p> <p>-Observations of student responses to intervention</p>	<p>Process Data</p> <p>Impact Data &amp; Process Data</p> <p>Impact Data</p> <p>Impact Data</p> <p>Process Data</p>
<p><b>Professional Learning Session Two</b>                      High Impact Strategies to Support ELL Achievement &amp; Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching</p>	<p>Introduce Strategies:                      -Sentence Unpacking</p> <p>-Pictorial Input Chart (GLAD)                      -Word Card Review (GLAD)                      -Sentence Patterning (GLAD)</p> <p>--Understand the role of culture and language in learning</p> <p>-Examine how language acquisition relates to ELL access to content</p> <p>-Overview of the characteristics of culturally and linguistically</p>	<p>-With enhanced knowledge the essentials for English language development, and the use of specific high impact strategies, how will teacher practice be affected?</p> <p>-How might beliefs and assumptions related to the task of teaching ELLs surface?</p> <p>-How will these courageous conversations be handled to support teacher learning and relational trust?</p> <p>-In what ways might discussions of race and equity surface?</p>	<p>-Pre- and post-survey of awareness of cultural responsiveness</p> <p>-Observations of student responses to strategies</p> <p>-Teacher Research Journals introduced as a means of reflecting on the inquiry work</p> <p>-Exit Tickets</p> <p>-Research Journal</p> <p>-Reflection Journals</p>	<p>Impact Data</p> <p>Process Data</p> <p>Impact Data</p> <p>Process Data &amp; Impact Data</p> <p>Impact Data</p> <p>Process Data</p>

	responsive teachers	- How will culturally responsive pedagogy support efforts to enhance student engagement in collaborative academic discussion?	Observations and Debriefing  Reflection journals	Impact Data
<b>PLC Planning</b>	-PLCs choose 1 strategy: consider how to augment building a cultural and linguistic knowledge base -meet with PLCs to support planning efforts	-Will teachers incorporate strategies in their planning?  Will teachers' use of student assets and resources impact student engagement in academic discussion?	Teacher Research Journals - to capture wonderings, gleanings from inquiry, questions about practice; changes over time	Impact Data & Process Data  Impact Data
<b>Instructional Coaching</b>  <b>Cycle 3</b>	One-on-one coaching for volunteers to support teacher learning  2 strategies to enhance student talk with ELLs  -Timely, courageous feedback with transparency and student outcomes as the third point  -Facilitate teacher reflection	Will the level of relational trust support critical (courageous) feedback?  -Will <i>non-evaluative</i> support increase risk taking, promote teacher engagement?  -Will professional learning impact teacher-student interaction around content?	-Collaborative lesson planning -Reflective conversations - Reflection journals to capture perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, ideas  Non-evaluative Feedback: scripting, videos, observation tool - Observation data (scripted, partner grid, anecdotal)  -Coaching log	Process Data Impact Data Impact Data  Process Data & Impact Data Impact Data  Impact Data
<b>Cycle 4</b> -Understand the role of culture and	<b>Part II: Professional Learning – CLR Teaching</b>	How might beliefs and assumptions related to the task of teaching ELLs surface?	-Teacher Response Journals- to capture wonderings, gleanings from inquiry, questions about	Process Data & Impact Data

<p>language in learning</p> <p>-Examine how language acquisition relates to ELL access to content</p> <p>-Overview of the characteristics of culturally and linguistically responsive teachers</p>	<p>-Readings: Ladsen-Billings, Gay, Hollie</p> <p>-Leveraging student resources for meaningful content instruction</p> <p>-Newsela CRT article - Key Concept #3 Motivation and Culture as connector for creating CL responsive teaching</p>	<p>-How will these courageous conversations be handled to support teacher learning and relational trust?</p> <p>-In what ways might discussions of race and equity surface?</p>	<p>practice; changes over time</p> <p>-Coaching Exit Tickets</p> <p>-Observations of student responses to intervention</p>	<p>Process Data &amp; Impact Data</p> <p>Process Data</p>
<p><b>Two-Week Extension of Instructional Coaching</b></p> <p><b>Cycle 5</b></p>	<p>-Introduce GLAD 10/2 Strategy &amp; 5/1 Strategy to support content vocabulary and increase opportunities for authentic peer-to-peer dialogue</p>	<p>-In what ways will student responses to prompts change when discussion scaffolds are introduced?</p> <p>-How will increasing the frequency of student talk affect the use of academic vocabulary</p> <p>-In what ways will the use of multimedia resources support ELL student access to content and increase oral output?</p>	<p>-Partner grid data collection with discussion prompts</p> <p>-Teacher Research Journals- to capture wonderings, gleanings from inquiry, questions about practice; changes over time</p> <p>-Filming partnerships during video clip with discussion prompts</p>	<p>Process Data &amp; Impact Data</p> <p>Process Data &amp; Impact Data</p>
<p><b>Instructional Coaching Closing Sessions</b></p> <p><b>Cycle 6</b></p>	<p>- Reflections on the invention work</p> <p>-Next steps, based on the successes of inquiry</p> <p>-Next Steps - Planning for 2018-19</p> <p>-Closure and post-coaching exit ticket</p>	<p>-In what way has coaching support impacted your practice?</p> <p>-What are some ways that student participation has changed in student talk?</p>	<p>Reflections</p> <p>-Post-assessment ELLMA tool</p> <p>-Post survey document</p> <p>-Teacher Research Journal</p> <p>-Planning-copies made of generated plans</p>	<p>Impact Data</p> <p>Process Data &amp; Impact Data</p>

## **Research Methods**

To respond to the research question and determine the efficacy of the intervention, I collected data from multiple sources using five general methods. These methods included: teacher perception data, teacher practice data, teacher impact data, teacher-student impact data, and process data. Due to the shortened professional learning series, and the disengagement of the majority of staff in the study, data sets were rendered incomplete and not useable for baseline data. Therefore, the data collected is limited to the professional learning outcomes, inquiry work, and instructional coaching support with the two teacher volunteers.

First, I examined the teacher perception data to look for changes in the ways teachers rated their planning and instruction for ELLs. As a pre- and post-self –assessment, the Site ELL Review Master Indicators data collection tool was used to rate the evidence of indicators of essential practices for promoting ELL student success. This document, coupled with the Focal Indicators observation tool, provided a rubric as well as the model of effective ELL teaching, to compare to current levels of performance. Pre- and post-surveys monitored changes in the ratings of their use of the students’ backgrounds, cultures, interests, and home languages in their practice. These data highlighted teacher growth in terms of developing CLR teaching competencies for working with diverse populations. Teacher Research Journals were used to capture teacher reflections about student work, CLR teaching, and personal practice. These data were used to examine attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs that could have impact on teacher practice and correlation to student outcomes (Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015).

Next, I looked at teacher practice data. Using observation data as a baseline, I was able to compare snapshots of instruction and teacher-student interaction for changes in strategies to foster oral language development. I also looked for indicators of change in practice that might have basis in shifting perceptions of student resources. These data were used to screen for pedagogy that aligned with CLR teaching, whether intentional or accidental.

Teacher impact data took the form of a coaching log and coaching exit tickets. The coaching log gathered data for post observation conferences, reflective conversations, co-planning sessions, and next steps agreements. These data provided monitoring for the efficacy of non-evaluative feedback and ensuring the level of relational trust supported teacher learning. Exit tickets were used to capture changes in teacher thinking and understanding as a result of the coaching relationship, professional learning, and collaborative inquiry.

Finally, process data was collected in two methods, teacher-student interaction data and the research journal. Teacher-student data were gathered to monitor elements of instruction in student dialogue with peers, student interactions with the teacher, and student response to the intervention. This data took the form of notes, diagrams, and video clips of student talk lessons. I looked for changes in student participation and student agency as an indicator of increasing motivation, interest, or skill. The research journal was used to track anecdotal notes and the changes in the intervention over time.

## **Analysis and Findings**

### **Analysis Process**

In this action research, I hoped to answer this research question: Will the provision of professional learning and opportunities to practice pedagogy that aligns instruction with research-based strategies for engaging ELL students in collaborative discourse around content, impact teacher practice and enhance the facilitation of student talk? The initial findings suggest that teacher practice can be affected by professional learning supported by personalized instructional coaching. I organized my intervention around several sub-questions to guide my thinking during the inquiry work. For the purposes of this analysis, I will utilize three questions related to the overarching segments of the research, assessing impact on teacher practice in professional learning, in application of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, and in instructional coaching.

The process for data analysis included comparing the pre- and post-intervention practice of teachers with observations of newly acquired and developing pedagogy for working with ELLs. The professional learning surveys and exit tickets yielded snapshots of changes in teacher perceptions of practice. Notes from reflective conversations and research journaling were used to capture changes in teacher thinking across the intervention. An advantage of this process is that it provides the researcher a glimpse of the viewpoint of the teacher and an opportunity to watch for ways to strengthen or support teacher growth. Unfortunately, it can also become a liability if the teacher chooses not to follow through with the responsibility. Such was the case with Teacher B, who produced a summative response document, rather than a series of ongoing reflections. Student responses to changes in the inquiry were examined to determine the impact of the intervention on their performance in partner talks, as well as teacher-student interactions to facilitate the change.

I began by sorting impact data in a category labeled teacher perception data. I coded entries that corresponded to teacher responses to intervention, shifts in teacher thinking or perspective, and self-assessment. In the pre- and post-surveys associated with the professional learning sessions, I looked for movement in ratings of perceived familiarity with the backgrounds, languages, and experiences of their students, and whether teacher assessment of ability to utilize the cultural and linguistic resources of their students in instruction had changed. The self-assessment tool data collected was limited to two essential practices: 1) Access and Rigor – maintaining high expectations and providing sufficient support; and 2) Language Development Embedded in Content – Designated and Integrated ELD. These data addressed teacher perceptions of competency in supporting ELL student learning. The original design for this action research sought to compare the impact of the intervention on PLCs to that of a small cohort of teachers who received additional coaching support to solidify learning. The elimination of the PLC data created a focus on the two teachers. As a first-year teacher, Teacher B's perceptions of personal and student performance would most likely be very different than those of Teacher A. Therefore, this analysis

explores the effects of the intervention on teacher practice for two teachers at very different stages of career development and expertise.

Next, I used coaching exit tickets and the coaching log to code teacher impact data. I grouped them by reflections of teacher knowledge of the students, teacher practice, and co-planning. This afforded opportunity to monitor shifts in teacher thinking around practice, to watch for surfacing assumptions, especially as they related to the work with ELL students, and to look for emerging understandings of CLR teaching and thinking related to utilizing these resources in instruction. A drawback to using this system was again the possible lack of follow-through on the part of the teachers. Another factor might have been related to my identity as a coach. Despite my efforts to create a non-evaluative, teacher-as-learner-centered zone for collaboration and reflection, the teachers may have been hesitant to post any deficit entries due to my position of authority. I do not have a way of controlling for this possibility. The assumption is that the data is taken at face value and that the level of relational trust will serve as a barometer for the depth and sincerity of the entries.

The final grouping, process data, was divided into three categories, teacher practice data, teacher-student response data, and the research journal. I added data for teacher knowledge of ELD strategies to the teacher practice group as a means of monitoring surfacing expertise over the course of the intervention. Through these data, I hoped to find adjustment of teacher practice in response to the inquiry work, coupled with changes in teacher-student interaction as a result of modified strategies for peer-to-peer dialogue. The research journal housed anecdotal records, partner grids, and notes of student talk observations that informed co-planning and revision of the intervention. I found these to be particularly helpful tools for keeping track of the intervention, but it also proved to be quite challenging to ensure that all the data was kept up to date.

### **Intervention Impact Data**

The focus of this intervention was to provide professional learning for teachers to equip them with high impact strategies for working with ELL students in the area of student talk. The design included providing ample time to explore new strategies, to develop a shared understanding of the importance of explicit English language instruction in promoting English proficiency, and to receive feedback and support in acquiring these skills. Research suggests that culturally and linguistically responsive teaching incorporates ELL students' resources, utilizing them to "make learning encounters more relevant to, and effective for, them" (Gay, 2000). Therefore, CLR was included in the design to examine its impact on peer-to-peer dialogue and teacher-student interactions, with a goal of helping teachers see the resources ELL students bring to the classroom setting. Due to schedule changes, actual teacher learning on essential elements of ELD was limited to a review of the District Master Indicators tool, readings from research, and explorations in the resource folder. Teacher volunteers received additional support as it pertained to the PLC focus strategy and inquiry work. To look at the impact of the intervention on teacher perceptions, I used data from the professional learning and coaching exit tickets, teacher research journals, the self-assessment tool and the research journal.

### **Professional Learning Series**

I believe a number of factors contributed to the abbreviated outcome of the professional learning series. There is a preference for individualized learning in the adult culture. The teachers are hesitant to share their work with others, thus the staff has not yet engaged in collaborative, student-focused, data-driven problem solving, in what DuFour (2004) called a focus on results. The series was designed to support teacher learning over time, to include opportunities to unpack the theory behind high impact strategies (Fullan, 1991), to practice new pedagogy in a non-evaluative environment, and to receive feedback and support to sustain learning (Hawley & Valli, 1999). They need to have concrete experiences in which they apply what they have learned to their work (Speck & Knipe, 2001). Given the sensitivity of the staff to the public sharing of practice, the sessions featured collaborative problem

solving, designed to increase teacher knowledge and enhance student learning (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2006).

An important factor impacting the outcomes of this professional learning is the level of priority assigned to English language learners at the school site. Because of high reclassification rates, an assumption seems to exist that all ELL students will reclassify as Fluent English Proficient in second grade. The progress of English learners, other than Newcomer students, may not be seen as a high priority and English instruction may seem to be sufficient if presented through integration in the core curriculum. Research bears witness to the contrary, indicating that English oral language is best taught through explicit, direct instruction and interactive approaches (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; O'Day, 2009; Yoder, 2013; Fillmore & Snow, 2000). This intervention highlighted the needs of students who had not been prioritized by the site in recent professional learning opportunities. Could this be a factor in the silence during the sessions? Perhaps teachers were exposed to disconfirming data (Schein, 2004) - a less-than-comfortable truth: current practices are not enough to address the needs of English language learners (Goldenberg, 2013; Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015).

The Chinese influence on the adult culture at this site seems to carry a message of being above reproach and without error. Confronting the group with an area of growth is seen as a personal failure and creating space for 'saving face' would be important to restore relational trust and maintain collegiality. Given, in my first year at the site, this was my first attempt to run data-driven inquiry work of this nature with the staff, I did not recognize the hidden impact of the training: evidence of not meeting a self-imposed standard, and therefore causing discomfort, embarrassment, or shame. My personal hesitancy to proceed with the training on CLR teaching was a judgment call, made in the moment in response to the shift in the atmosphere of the meeting. I regret not providing a fuller presentation of the elements of CLR teaching, although I am uncertain that continuing the discussion would have generated different results. Becoming familiar with the elements of CLR and research-based strategies for identifying student resources to enhance English proficiency could be essential to teachers

as a way of supplementing current measures for meeting the needs of ELL students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Driver & Powell, 2017). Therefore, it may be helpful to revisit this professional learning series with the staff at a later date.

### **Professional Learning Impact Data**

In what ways will professional learning on high impact, research-based strategies for increasing English oral language development in ELLs affect teacher planning and practice?

Both Teachers A and B indicated shifts in perception of their competency to support and foster English language development with ELLs. In post-intervention assessment, Teacher A was able to identify additional tools and strategies that she now incorporates in instruction. For this teacher, the training afforded confirmation of the importance of strategies routinely found in her practice and new understandings of how to maximize the oral language experience for ELL students through research-based strategies. Teacher B lowered her ratings in post-assessment. Her relatively high, pre-intervention practice ratings shifted significantly in the areas of explicitly teaching academic language and affording opportunities to teach students how language works. For Teacher B the professional learning helped her understand the need to provide supports to create access to content for ELL students. It also helped her see her students differently and to understand the need to support their diverse linguistic needs. The findings indicate that both teachers found ways to enhance what they were already doing to build English proficiency through structured oral language protocols encountered in the resource materials from the sessions. The professional learning series heightened their awareness of the need to be explicit in instruction to facilitate ELL participation in student talk and intentional in planning the scaffolds necessary for ELL student success.

I believe the design of the professional learning series enhanced its effectiveness, as indicated in the impact data. This intervention attempted to create an adult learning space (Smylie, 2005) that engaged

teachers as professionals and as learners (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). The teacher volunteers were involved in training to acknowledge and build upon their capabilities for working with ELLs. The sessions included opportunities to develop an understanding of the theoretical basis for the strategies presented and the knowledge and skills needed for implementation. The professional learning was organized around a site-based issue that afforded the advantages of teachers working collaboratively in problem solving, while privately identifying their own learning needs (Hawley & Valli, 1999).

This professional learning also put teachers in the driver's seat in terms of designing and implementing instructional strategies to impact school-wide goals and support the work in their own classrooms with their own students. This may ultimately have evolved differently for the two teachers with vastly different backgrounds and experiences in education. However, the learner-centered design sent a clear message to teacher-professionals of the value of their active involvement in their own learning (Collinson, 1996). The professional learning series sought to impact teacher content knowledge and efficacy with pedagogy to study the effects on teacher-student interaction (City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel, 2009).

In summary, this professional learning series affected teacher planning and by extension, classroom instruction for work with ELL students. Teacher reflections indicated shifts in perspective in how they see their students and their needs as English learners. Teacher A used different labels to describe focal students, as seen in pre- and post-intervention journal entries. Teacher B stated that she was "seeing things with her students" that had not been previously noted. Both Teachers A and B learned ways to enhance the oral language development of their students, but from very different vantage points. Teacher A reflected on how she interacted with the students and the steps needed to initiate the desired peer-to-peer collaborative conversations.

"I'm working on using structured oral language protocols in the classroom. "My Turn, Your Turn" will allow student to know that there are separate times to be a speaker and a listener. As a listener, they should show the active listening behaviors we learned in class (eye contact, nodding, no interrupting, ask questions, make comments, respond with "I agree" or "I disagree"). "Whip Around" will allow me to hear each of my students' voices during whole-class sharing. I hope that this will help my quiet students to feel more comfortable sharing at least one word/sentence in front of the group."

“Something I have noticed in my practice is that I should be more explicit and step-by-step in my teaching. There used to be a lot of things that I assumed my students knew how to do, but it wasn’t until I broke partner-talk down into steps and providing tools that they showed the most improvement.”

Teacher B looked at the impact on student engagement of “simply reading a book”, on the oral language development of her students.

“Other [interactive read aloud] books, such as Big Al, enhanced student skills and built knowledge, but not in the ways that I might have expected. I recalled the class’ discussion of the book. We noticed that the students had missed the teaching point. However, their engagement throughout the book was high, and during a class circle in which each student shared their opinion about the end of the book, each person spoke using a sentence frame. While the group had not accomplished the teaching point that I had hoped for, they nevertheless exercised independence in coming up with their own idea, practiced their speaking and retelling skills through the sentence frames, and engaged actively in the activity.”

Both teachers gained tools to strengthen their abilities to foster oral English proficiency for ELL students; Teacher A from a pedagogical standpoint and Teacher B in understanding the social-emotional, cultural and linguistic, and developmental needs of her students.

Teacher A states:

“In my practice, I have noticed that I’ve become more clear and specific in how I teach active listening.”

Teacher B states:

“I am thinking about teacher and student moves to create more intentional lessons.”

The data clearly shows impact on teacher thinking, knowledge, and planning teacher-student interactions for improved outcomes for students (City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel, 2009).

## Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching Impact Data

How will professional learning on essential components of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching with ELLs impact teacher attitudes and/or teacher-student interaction around content?

In pre-session response to questions related to knowledge and use of backgrounds, experiences, languages, and cultural heritage of students in instruction, both teachers claimed to frequently make use of these student resources in planning. Teacher A chose high ratings for facilitating student talk and using multiple modalities in teaching and her ratings remained consistent over the intervention period, although in the post-intervention survey she could specifically and correctly list strategies used and their purpose in fostering ELL achievement. A shift in teacher perception and knowledge of her students was observed in the research journal. Pre-intervention commentary labeled students as “quiet”, “shy”, “below-benchmark students”, whose ability to share would seem acceptable if it was “at least one word/sentence in front of the group”. Teacher A’s post-intervention entries indicated significant changes.

“After this week’s meeting, I’ve started thinking about how to incorporate more culturally responsive teaching in our classroom discussion and partner talks.”

“Knowing my students helps know what kinds of prompts to facilitate the best conversations, what interests them, what helps them feel engaged and invested in the conversation.”

“ELs are capable of academic student talk when given ample opportunities for discussions and resources/tools that they can use to support them in the process. Strategic partnering is also important in drawing the most out of EL students.”

“...My very shy focal student used to say one sentence that responded to the prompt, and rarely volunteered to share her ideas with the whole class. Now, she’s able to carry a back-and-forth conversation with questions and comments, and even raises her hand to share out to the whole group.”

Teacher B’s post-intervention rating of her ability to draw on student resources and to connect curricular content and cultural heritage shifted from the frequently evident range to somewhat evident.

She expressed interest in thinking about “various entry points to include and account for different types of learners with varied backgrounds, experiences, and interests.” Teacher B noted that knowing about her students’ resources helped direct her lesson planning to include special topics and personal stories in the curriculum.

Teacher B noticed that

“Creating conversations about language can engage students, especially if connections between English and other home languages are discussed. Student are excited to share their own languages and excited to teach others. Many students are very aware of differences and similarities in the languages spoken in the classroom, so it is important to name that and create conversations around the language diversity that is present.”

“As I move forward in teaching, I hope to gain a more clear understanding of what specific questions will spark student engagement, and more about how to leverage students’ skills, knowledges and personal backgrounds to enhance lesson. Cultural responsiveness in teaching has become more clear to me through dialogue, literature, and noticings about my particular group of students.”

“...Each student has a skill to bring to the table, and figuring out how to bring those out and incorporate them into teaching will not only enhance their learning, but will prepare them to be more independent students as they move through their education.”

Both teachers showed evidence of awareness of student interests, backgrounds, languages, and experiences that could support participation in student talk. The most profound evidence is in the shifting perspectives about student resources and abilities. Teacher A noted marked improvement for both focal students and makes a strong statement about the capabilities of ELL students in collaborative conversations. Given a correlation between teacher attitudes, beliefs, and expectations and student performance (Echevarria, Frey & Fisher, 2015), this could be an important addition to their pedagogical toolkit. Teacher B did not intentionally present a lesson with student assets and resources in mind, however she mentioned that student resources had influence in lesson planning. Both voiced interest in thinking more about incorporating the elements of CLR teaching in their work.

My goal for the presentation of CLR teaching was that teachers would develop an awareness of the student resources ELLs and language minority students bring to learning. The focus, for the purpose of this intervention, was to explore one element of CLR, to use what was already known about ELL students as a resource for enhancing the curriculum with elements of the backgrounds, cultures, languages, and experiences, of the students. Teacher A indicated that she “didn’t have time” to try looking at student resources in planning, but is considering incorporating these elements in her teaching. However, we encountered an element of a focal student’s background experience that impacted his participation in partner talk. Teacher B and I encountered an incident where a student’s home language became an avenue for more meaningful discussion and was incorporated into instruction. The data clearly shows teachers embracing an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds, developing an awareness of ELL students’ multiple ways of thinking, talking, behaving, and learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2007) that may be utilized to fuel instruction.

In summary, CLR teaching was presented as a different lens to view the capabilities of ELL and language minority students and the process of more effectively teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teacher B found connections with the diverse home languages in her classroom and indicated that she saw new ways of fostering student talk utilizing home language comparisons. Teacher A seemed to have shifts in perspective related to focal students, who originally were deemed less capable than other students. Both teachers expressed interest in exploring ELL student resources to support instruction. These impact data clearly show development of the fourth element of CLR, learning about the background experiences of the students and utilizing these resources to help students make connections between their prior knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and experiences, to new learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a).

## Instructional Coaching Impact Data

How will coaching on research-based methods to support implementation of essential strategies for working with ELLs impact teacher practice?

As a result of coaching, Teacher B found that she had a new understanding of her responsibility to provide opportunities for each of her students to access academic content. Coaching supported her practice through helping her become more intentional in lesson planning, to help her think about the purposes for lessons and how to include herself and her students in the work. Teacher B noticed similarities and differences among her students and that these could be used as catalysts for productive conversations with peers. She also noted their diverse learning styles required different kinds of support for student success.

“This (reflecting on practice) has helped me to think about teacher and student moves to create more intentional lessons for my group.”

“Action coaching this spring has helped me to be more intentional about my practice, specifically in terms of the bi-weekly interactive read alouds that I do. I noticed that at the beginning of coaching, I had a specific ideas about how read alouds should go. Since completing the coaching sessions, I create structures to maximize student success, but also create more opportunities for student talk and am more open to the reality that student input might lead lessons in directions that I might not expect.”

The coaching sessions for Teacher B, as a first-year teacher, were focused on strengthening classroom management, as well as conducting inquiry work. A focus was to help her reflect on her teaching and on the responses of students to instruction to inform her planning. Teacher B described a learning from the intervention work as learning to “consider the many access points to consider when doing something that I once thought was much more one-dimensional, such as reading a book.” According to Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000), new teachers face the challenge of transferring their learning (college course work) to practice in the classroom. This does not happen immediately. Hawley and Valli (1999) indicated the content of teacher learning opportunities should be learner-centered and take into account the existing knowledge and beliefs of teachers. It could be possible that inquiry work was too big of a leap

during the first teaching year. However, the data indicates that Teacher B learned to think about her students and how they learn and to consider how their needs and interests might be addressed by the lessons she creates. As the teacher who demonstrated the strongest interest in CLR teaching, these new insights may be an asset to planning for the next school year.

Teacher A felt that coaching helped her think about how her students learn. She found the support of having a second perspective helpful, stating:

“Having a second perspective from someone who brings their own knowledge about student learning was extremely helpful. I felt like I wasn’t alone in the process and it allowed me to provide more to my students than I could have on my own.”

“Something I have noticed with my students in this inquiry is while they may have ended up at different points toward the final goal, they have all shown progress in some way.”

Regarding the impact on her practice, Teacher A felt

“It was very helpful to have a second pair of eyes observing my students during student talk activities. I was able to use the observation notes and videos to track students’ progress and to inform my teaching practice for next time. The coaching sessions forced me to continue thinking about my teaching and helped me come up with new strategies to implement in order to best support my class.”

Teacher A stated that being more clear and specific in how she taught active listening was an important takeaway from the intervention. She further stated:

“Simply having the time to sit and talk about my lessons and how my students responded to the lessons pushed my thinking. I was able to not only reflect on the lessons but also bounce ideas with my coach on how to adjust my teaching to improve student performance.”

“Coaching has helped me come up with new ideas and explore strategies that I wouldn’t have come up with on my own. It’s been helpful to have another set of eyes focused on my classroom and to be able to talk through different ways to make improvements.”

I believe coaching support was an effective method for enhancing Teacher A’s practice for a number of reasons. Our sessions provided “deliberate support” to help her clarify and/or achieve goals (Bloom et al, 2005). Teacher A brought a well-established routine for academic discussion to the inquiry process,

which allowed us to calibrate around what was currently in place and look for ways to increase student output. Frequent classroom observations to capture data produced a steady flow of data analysis, reflection, and collaborative planning that piqued our curiosity to try new things. Coaching sessions were brief, but productive, with newly planned strategies implemented in the next visit and opportunity to brainstorm solutions to problems that arose as a result of the intervention. Instructional coaching was effective because it began with acknowledging the adult learner and what she already did well and coaching into these strengths to build more effective strategies for engaging ELLs in student talk (Speck & Knipe, 2001). These impact data clearly show that instructional coaching cycles affected teacher practice.

In summary, instructional coaching impacted the practice of both teachers, but in very different ways. Teacher B benefitted from reflective conversations and opportunities to discuss intentionality in lesson structure, pacing, strategic student partnerships, and understanding student learning needs. The PLC focus became an opportunity to observe and understand the role of teacher moves and facilitation in instruction and how to support student participation in student talk. Teacher B enjoyed a more personalized and extensive coaching season that was fluid enough to address immediate needs. She indicates takeaways from coaching that will support her planning and set-up of routines for student talk next year. Teacher A indicated that coaching pushed her to find solutions to situations occurring in her classroom that she would not have been able to resolve independently. She found data collection and analysis and the ensuing discussions a vital part in helping her see the possibilities for improving student outcomes. Teacher A related that the coaching relationship helped her feel supported and pushed her to aim higher for her students' benefit. The data indicates that the coaching cycles met each teachers' needs at their particular level of proficiency and accomplished two important goals: honoring them as professionals who have expertise and knowledge about their students and what they need; and supporting them as learners to embrace where they are in those abilities and to look for ways to enhance their practice for their students. These data clearly show that through coaching we were able to impact teacher

practice in a more personalized, intensive approach that extends, embeds, brings expertise to, dedicates time for, deprivatizes, connects, and professionalizes professional learning (Taylor, 2008).

#### Intervention Process Data

#### Professional Learning Sessions Process Data

In what ways will professional learning on high impact, research-based strategies for increasing English oral language development in ELLs affect teacher practice?

Perhaps one of the strongest components of the professional learning sessions were the resources made available to participants. Each session provided important resources for teachers to support their work with ELL students. In Session One, the materials were provided 1) to inform and fuel discussion about research on supporting oral English proficiency; 2) to develop understanding of the relationship between ELD and academic language development; and 3) to learn about various strategies that teach how English works with ELLs. Teachers were given soft and hard copies to ensure resources were available for use. They were given time to explore the materials independently before meeting in PLCs to discuss their application in grade level inquiry work. PLCs were asked to look for strategies to promote student talk that would build upon current practice. Teacher A's first grade PLC selected structured oral language routines focusing on My Turn, Your Turn and Whip Around, and using open-ended prompts during student talk. Teacher B's Kindergarten PLC chose interactive read alouds with Turn and Talk strategies and frontloading vocabulary. Figure 1.1 shows resources made available to the participants during the professional learning.

Figure 1.1 Session One: Supporting ELLs’ Access to Academic Discussion –Resources

Content Tool/Topic	Purpose	Learning Objective
District Site ELL Review Focal Indicators 2017-18	Classroom observation tool; collects evidence of Essential Practices 1-5	-Walkthrough data collection -Aligns with District Exemplar for Effective Teaching
District Site ELL Review Master Indicators	Teacher/Site observation or Self-Assessment tool	-Rubric of Effective ELL teaching, Essential Practices
Research Articles -oral English language proficiency -CLR teaching, student resources -unpacking meaning in complex text	-Research-based strategies for teaching ELLs -Best practices for oral language development -Sentence unpacking, developing meaning with ELLs	-Importance of English language instruction -Incorporating students’ backgrounds, languages, cultures to support achievement -Supporting English proficiency through complex text
GLAD Photos	Exemplars - Charts, graphic organizers, sentence patterning	-Strategies for Integrated ELD
Student Talk Resource Folder	Exemplars, ELL toolkit, research articles, high impact strategies collection; tools to support instruction with ELLs (e.g.,	-Bank of strategies and resources to support ELL performance, build English proficiency -Resource for PLC focus strategy selection

In Session Two, I conducted interactive demonstrations to provide an overview of selected Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies for utilizing content to support oral language development and English proficiency with ELLs. Teacher were engaged as learners in the mock lessons. A more comprehensive presentation of sentence unpacking was facilitated using video clips and discussion. We then launched into a discussion of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, relating one element to the site SEL curriculum. In the second session of CLR training the goal was to

support teachers in identifying ELL student resources from previously collected SEL data, thus building connections for the CLR lens in student talk. The articles and excerpts fueled discussions and collaborative planning for teacher-student interactions and student engagement. Figure 1.2 indicates the materials and resources utilized in the professional learning session.

Figure 1.2 Session Two: Strategies to Fuel Discussion - Resources

<b>Content Tool/Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
GLAD: CA Gold Rush Unit strategies and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pictorial Input Chart – world map</li> <li>-Word Card Review – content vocabulary cards</li> <li>-Sentence patterning - brainstormed lists of key vocabulary; using nouns, verbs, prepositional phrases, adverbs to build content-aligned sentence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Meaningful input of key vocabulary</li> <li>-Reinforce content vocabulary, using vocabulary in sentences</li> <li>-Reinforce key concepts</li> <li>-Reinforce content</li> <li>-Sentence construction</li> <li>-Grammatical structures</li> <li>-Teaching how English works</li> <li>-Reviewing content vocabulary</li> <li>-Collaborative writing</li> </ul>
Sentence Unpacking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Analyze a sentence unpacking activity</li> <li>-Review teacher lesson plan</li> <li>-Note-taking on video</li> <li>-Follow up discussion , debriefing on application to site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Exemplar for extracting meaning from complex text</li> <li>-Method to reinforce content vocabulary</li> <li>-Creating opportunities for authentic student dialogue around content</li> </ul>
Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Teaching -Whole staff session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Articles on CLR teaching were added to the resource folder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide overview of the elements of CLR pedagogy</li> <li>-Connect Building on Cultural Diversity Knowledge Base to learning about students in SEL</li> </ul>

<p>Culturally &amp; Linguistically Responsive Teaching                  -Professional Learning and coaching session</p>	<p>Excerpts from Hollie’s book:                  --defining CLR                  -understanding ELL and language minority student resources                  -Newsela article to explore motivation and culture in relation to facilitating ELL student participation</p>	<p>-Reinforce understandings about CLR teaching                  -Assets-based perspective on cultural and linguistic diversity                  -Student resources as a catalyst for increased engagement                  -Examine student resources in personal classroom that might be leveraged to enhance learning</p>
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In summary, professional learning process data clearly shows the involvement of teachers as learners in the identification of their learning needs and the development of the learning opportunity or process used (Hawley & Valli, 1999). The use of multi-media resource materials afforded additional follow-up and support for further learning.

Teacher A: “I recently invested more time into the 10 and 2 strategy with Scholastic News. At first the difficulty level of my questions were very surface level (e.g., “What does pod mean?”). Students were able to talk with their partner by recalling the content from the passage. The second time I did this lesson, I focused more on asking different levels of questions (DOK 1, 2, and 3). Instead of simply asking students to repeat information, I was now asking them to make predictions, discuss potential problems, and share the author’s message. Teyu asked questions and built on each other’s ideas. These types of questions allowed students to have a more genuine back-and-forth conversation, which was the skill that I was looking to build in the first place.”

Teacher B: “Something I have noticed in my practice is I have established some routines, and can both add more into existing routines and deviate from routines to increase curiosity/engagement/excitement.”

The sessions were designed to improve the level of content and teacher knowledge and skill (City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel (2009) to promote student engagement and increasing outcomes for ELLs.

**Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Process Data**

How will professional learning on essential components of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching with ELLs impact teacher-student interaction around content? How will student talk be affected by CLR pedagogy?

For Teacher A the impact of CLR training was seen in an adjusted prompt that was given to the students. To increase engagement and avoid boredom, she asked the students to talk with a partner about one thing they had done on their recent vacation. Focal student D turned and began to vigorously recount his adventures and continued in like fashion until the stop signal was given. Teacher A noted the response and connected this to student behaviors when writing on a beloved topic. When Focal Student D writes about something he likes, his participation soars. According to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, (1995), this is an indication of an intrinsic motivation, which stems from cultural conditioning. Although this response was not intentionally triggered, it offered resource data to Teacher A about her focal student that she had not previously realized. In an earlier statement Teacher A related that Focal Student D “would not write about topics I ask him to write about.” This event helped Teacher A understand the role of personal relevance and choice for her students, in developing a positive attitude toward the learning experience, another element of intrinsic motivation (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg), and helped her see the possible impact of CLR teaching.

Teacher B also found increased interest and focus with her students when “connections between English and other home languages are discussed”. While neither Teachers A nor B planned to engage their students from the lens of CLR teaching, evidence of cultural and linguistic resources surfaced in their classrooms with their own students. Teacher B hopes to build in opportunities for sharing languages and exploring similarities and differences with her students.

In summary, Teacher A and Teacher B both found examples of student resources that could be leveraged to increase student learning. Their expressed interest in exploring CLR teaching with their students is evidence of the potential impact on teacher-student interaction around content. Both teachers found the responsiveness of their students increased when they tapped into meaningful topics or areas of experience, and evidence of the intrinsic motivation that is supported by CLR teaching.

Teacher A states:

“My students have been working on active listening and ways to have a continuous back-and-forth conversation with their partner. I’ve created individual mini-anchor charts, which students use as sentence-starters. When they are stuck during their partner talk and don’t know what else to say, they can reference this tool to help them continue the conversation. It also includes ways to ask your partner a question. With daily practice, this has been helpful in keeping discussions going between partners. After this week’s meeting, I’ve started thinking about how to incorporate more culturally responsive teaching in our classroom discussions and partner talks.”

Teacher B states:

“I would like to create more explicit routines for student talk, as well as more intentional student pairings for student talk. I would also like to create more opportunities for student to share aspects of their home languages and make connections, perhaps through anchor charts for students to reference.”

These data clearly show teacher development for learning about the background experiences of the students and using these resources to help students make connections between prior knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and experiences, to new learning (Villegas, & Lucas, 2002a).

### **Instructional Coaching Process Data**

**How will coaching on research-based methods to support implementation of essential strategies for working with ELLs impact teacher practice and teacher-student interaction around content?**

Instructional coaching process data looks very different for Teacher B. The focus of our coaching sessions increasingly contained more classroom management content than intervention work. The teacher’s perspective of her role in initiating and facilitating student talk through interactive read aloud was changing throughout the course of the intervention. Therefore, much time was devoted to analyzing data, reflecting, and revising plans for instruction. Figure 2.1 shows the intervention process data collected for Teacher B.

Figure 2.1 Teacher B Process Data

Content Tool	Purpose	Coaching Objective
Wows & Wonders	Observation Tool – Feedback on teacher moves -Gathers information on student response to instruction -Poses reflective question from the data to fuel discussion	-Inform reflection -Revision and planning -Use student results to guide planning
Partner Grid	Observation Tool -Collects student responses to prompts in student talk -Coded responses: -Stops (silence) -Off topic conversation	-Informs effectiveness of prompts during interactive read aloud -Highlights impact of student partnerships for planning
Seating Grid	-Assigns student seats for maximum time on task -Informs strategic partnerships for student talk	-Teacher reflection on student participation, responses in teaching -Promotes teacher awareness of learning needs of students
Brainstorming Lists, Charts	GLAD 5 and 1 strategy in IRA Cycle - Creates a cycle of reading, segments with Turn & Talks, and Whip Around debriefing circle at the end of the reading to support student talk and comprehension skills  Kinder Launch Fall 2018-19 Thinking through management systems, next steps	-Increase opportunities for student talk -Structure read aloud in smaller chunks to fuel engagement -Build comprehension through increasing opportunities to talk with peers around content Teacher planning -classroom management -cognitive routines

Teacher A’s process data records the changes that occurred during the intervention. We began by collecting notes on partner conversations for two focal students, with an interest in discovering whether they could respond to a prompt in complete sentences and listen and respond to their partner’s ideas. We noted they had facility with answering the prompt, but had difficulty building on their partner’s thoughts

to continue the conversation. The focal students were able to use the provided sentence stems to respond, but then sat in silence. Through collaborative planning, we created tools to support student conversation and then additional tools to support data collection. Figure 2.2 shows these tools.

Figure 2.2 Teacher A - Intervention Process Data Tools

Content Tool	Purpose	Coaching Objective
Wows & Wonders	Observation tool -notes on student responses to prompts- focal students	-Feedback to inform planning
Mini Active Listening anchor chart	Student copy of the class anchor chart to support conversation -Active listening body language reminders -Sentence stems -Questions to ask your partner	Data point: student use of mini anchor chart in partner talk -Restart conversations -Conversation focus
Partner Grid	Grid for locating participating partners, monitor focal students Codes for: -Stops (silence) -Use of mini chart -Off topic conversation -Back-and-forth exchanges -Authentic dialogue (generated sentences)	Informed intervention: -Student responses to prompt -Informed planning and instruction -Focal student progress tracked -Discovery of “silent” students (not interacting)
GLAD 10 and 2 strategy with content vocabulary	GLAD technique to present segments of text with frequent Turn and Talks, supported by digital image, on the SmartBoard, highlighted sentences, and audio recording of text – to assess whether use of content vocabulary would increase  -data collected on video	Adding rigor: -Increase language demand to include content vocabulary -Use DOK questioning strategies to support student thinking and student dialogue  Monitor response patterns -frequency of exchanges -Focal student data

With growing proficiency in using the sentence stems, we modified the investigation using GLAD 10 and 2 strategy to see if it would affect their use of content vocabulary in student talk. Using a digital

student magazine article afforded multiple opportunities for students to hear the key vocabulary, on audio or from partners, and provided visual tracking of the text to support student reading. The teacher stopped the audio at selected points and gave a discussion prompt. Figure 2.2 shows the student response data collected on video in two sessions.

Figure 2.2 Comparison of Digital Image Student Talk Sessions

DI Session #1 Teacher Moves	Student Outcomes	DI Session #2 Teacher Moves	Student Outcomes
DOK level 1	One sentence responses	DOK level mixed Each prompt represented a different level (1-3)	Student-generated responses Some use of sentence stems
Talk structures	Not monitored, some reminders – student turning, noise level impacted; “bored”, “tired”	Talk structures	Teacher monitored: students physically turning to partner Focused partner discussions
Frontloading vocabulary	Not evident	Frontloading vocabulary	Not evident
Equity selection	No – random	Equity selection	No - random
Student responses	Parroting of audio – “in-the-text” responses	Student responses	Back-and-forth exchanges, authentic dialogue
ELL participation	Some silent	ELL participation	Some silent

Coaching had significant impact on Teacher A’s planning for the intervention. Data analysis of the partner grids and video clips provided the results of instruction and supported her design of more effective tools, including when to remove the scaffold due to student growth. The first video featured low-level responses to less demanding prompts, but using higher DOK level questioning produced the desired “back-and-forth” exchanges in discussion and more authentic, content-focused conversations with peers.

In summary, instructional coaching was instrumental in supporting teacher efficacy. Serving as a different observer of the teacher and the context, providing data and feedback on teacher moves and student responses, supports developing different ways of acting (Bloom et al., 2005). These data clearly show that coaching supported teacher practice and informed teacher-student interactions in instruction. For Teacher B, feedback on student responses to instruction helped her be more intentional in lesson planning and creating opportunities to facilitate student talk. Teacher A utilized data to make

modifications to student talk routines, resulting in increased facility with supporting oral English language development for ELLs and enhanced professional learning. Coaching centered in the context specific nature of teaching is effective in facilitating transfer and application of new learning to daily instruction (Joyce & Showers, 1980). Therefore, process data for the intervention indicate positive impact on teacher practice and teacher-student relationships around content.

## **Conclusion**

This action research project was designed to address the teachers' lack of effective strategies for supporting collaborative, authentic, and meaningful student dialogue for ELLs. An intervention was designed to provide professional learning, culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, and coaching support to build teacher capacity for supporting academic discussion with culturally and linguistically diverse students. The findings of the analysis of this intervention are as follows.

### Professional Learning

**Professional Learning Sessions Findings: The professional learning sessions helped teachers identify essential practices for their work with ELLs and to understand how to support developing English proficiency.**

My problem of practice indicated a need to augment current practices with what has been found to be effective in supporting English proficiency with ELL students. This research demonstrated that providing professional learning opportunities to explore high impact strategies and review research-based practices led to shifting teacher perspectives and data-driven experimentation in instruction. Teachers utilized classroom data to create tools and resources to better support the language needs of their students.

## **Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching**

**CLR Teaching Findings: Teacher attitudes and/or teacher –student interactions related to the abilities and resources ELL students bring to the classroom can be affected by training in CLR pedagogy.**

The incorporation of CLR pedagogy as a means of enhancing student motivation and curricular relevance provided an additional layer of support for effective student talk. This addressed the problem of practice in fostering opportunities for more authentic student dialogue through content that was inclusive of the interests, cultures, languages, and backgrounds of the students. This research shows teacher attitudes and perceptions changed in relation to the resources ELL and language minority students bring to learning, and teachers demonstrated interest in exploring CLR pedagogy as a tool for improving English proficiency.

## **Instructional Coaching**

**Instructional Coaching Findings: Both teachers benefitted from instructional coaching and indicated shifts in thinking and planning to inform teacher practice.**

My problem of practice indicated a need for more effective strategies that support student talk. This research shows that teacher learning is enhanced by having effective feedback and personalized support to solidify new skills. Teachers benefitted from observations, data analysis, collaborative planning and reflective conversations to push their thinking about their work with ELLs, generating opportunities for meaningful, authentic student talk.

In conclusion, these findings show that I met my expected outcomes for this project. These outcomes are: 1) teachers will explore different ways to structure student talk, using the selected add-on strategy to

enhance instruction; 2) teachers thinking about and regarding student assets and perhaps changing a discussion prompt or including a particular topic or artifact because of information they have learned about their students (this was seen in both classrooms, although accidentally discovered as a student resource; 3) changes in ELL participation in peer-to-peer dialogue due to new prompts, ideas, or strategies was also found in this intervention ; and 4) teacher reflections indicating changes in perspective or ideas was evident in research journals and exit tickets. Through this intervention, teachers were afforded training, resources, and coaching support to enhance facilitation of collaborative, authentic, and meaningful student dialogue. The cultural and linguistic lens afforded by CLR teaching further addresses the context at this site and offers possibilities for exploring ways to make student talk increasingly more meaningful and relevant for ELLs.

### **Implications and Conclusions**

This action research project was designed to address my problem of practice, to provide teachers working with ELLs effective strategies to support collaborative, authentic, and meaningful student discourse for English language development. The goal was to build upon teacher knowledge and current practice with research-based strategies to support oral language development and increase student engagement in student talk. Based on the analysis of impact and process data, I was successful in meeting my expected outcomes for this intervention. I found that the study impacted: 1) teacher perceptions of their practice and the need to intentionally plan for work with ELLs and explicitly teach, breaking down a process such as partner sharing into a step-by-step process, to ensure students learn how English works; 2) teacher awareness of ELL student resources to harness for more effective teaching of culturally and linguistically diverse students; and 3) teacher learning through personalized, data-driven instructional coaching that, through analysis and reflection, fuels inquiry. The findings of my analysis of data also point to: 1) the need for effective, continuous, professional learning to support teacher learning; 2) the power of instructional coaching and collaborative planning to push teacher thinking and impact practice;

and 3) the importance of learner-centered, non-evaluative coaching to build teacher capacity and solidify learning.

## **Implications**

Findings from this action research align with current literature and give implications for teacher practice and instruction with ELL students. The analyses of impact and process data for the professional learning sessions indicate shifts in teacher thinking and movement in teacher efficacy with skills and strategies, resulting in changed outcomes for students. This is indicative of improvements in the level of content, teacher knowledge and skill, and student engagement necessary for changing teacher-student-content relationships in the instructional core (City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel, 2009). These findings also indicate as a result of learning about CLR pedagogy, teachers began developing an awareness of ELL student resources that are related to cultural values, traditions, communication, learning styles, and relational patterns that have implications for teaching and learning (Gay, 2002). The findings of impact and process data show alignment in providing non-evaluative, ongoing support to shape the teacher's thinking about instruction (Taylor, 2008). Implications from these findings, to further the work, include the importance of 1) intentionally planning for the language demand of activities to support developing English proficiency; 2) developing an understanding of students' cultures, backgrounds, languages, experiences, and heritages, for leveraging elements to more effectively teach ELLs; and 3) the use of instructional coaching to support teacher learning.

One theme that surfaced in the intervention was the need to plan for the language demand of a task or activity. Teachers often assume that ELL students who seem to communicate well with peers have sufficient language skill to interpret and engage in "teacher talk", the language of school. The reality is that basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) develops through meaningful interaction with fluent speakers of the language, however cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP, Cummins, 1984) must be taught. During the intervention, situations arose where this assumption left students unprepared

to engage in dialogue with peers due to a lack of pre-screening of content vocabulary and the grammatical structures necessary to successfully participate. Teachers must explicitly teach the use of academic language (Kinsella, 2006) and provide structured practice to support English language development. These will be important skills to develop as we continue the work of strengthening our capacity to foster and reinforce English proficiency with ELL and RFEP students.

Another implication is the need to know the resources ELL and language minority students bring to learning. Often the encounter of teaching an English learner or a student who speaks a form of English that is not the accepted standard, engenders labels such as “low-achiever” and “below benchmark”. In my analysis and findings, this surfaced as a way that we possibly misread the potential of a student through lack of knowledge of the multiple ways of knowing, thinking, speaking, and behaving of diverse populations (Villegas & Lucas 2002). Teachers must know that developing an understanding of cultural and linguistic factors, of tapping into prior knowledge, experiences, and other student resources can be useful for making connections and building new knowledge for ELLs.

Finally, instructional coaching proved to be a powerful method for supporting teacher learning. Non-evaluative, learner-centered coaching that serves to enhance teacher practice through observation, data analysis and planning helped teachers reflect on their practice and make revisions to improve student outcomes. Knight (2002) describes Seven Partnership Principles: 1) equality, instructional coaches and teachers as equals partners; 2) choice, teachers having choice regarding what and how they learn; 3) voice, professional learning should empower and respect the voices of teachers; 4) dialogue, professional learning should enable authentic dialogue; 5) reflection, reflection is an integral part of professional learning; 6) praxis, teachers should apply their learning to their real-life practice as they are learning; and 7) reciprocity, instructional coaches should expect to get as much as they give. Based on the analysis of the data, the teachers felt they had access to elements of the seven principles, and that, like being equal partners, they felt they “were not alone” in the work. I, too, found reciprocity to be a benefit of

instructional coaching, because there were so many opportunities to learn how students learn from the vantage point of participating in the inquiry work.

The implications here relate to the role of instructional coaching in impacting teacher practice, and by extension, improving student outcomes. I believe this kind of support is essential for building teacher capacity and for finding “what works” for the learning styles and language needs of the diverse populations we serve. As an administrator and evaluator, I found this collaborative work a significant opportunity to coach into teacher strengths and to foster teacher reflection in support of attaining their professional learning goals. It helped build a clear bridge between teacher as professional and coach as educator, joining expertise to affect improved outcomes and continuous professional learning. I hope to find ways to weave meaningful instructional coaching cycles into the year, so that the experience of teacher evaluation simply becomes an expression of acknowledging true teacher reflection and growth.

### **Limitations of Studies**

In reflection on my action research, I recognize that there were limitations in this study. The original intervention was designed to address the entire staff in professional learning and a small cohort of teacher volunteers in cycles of instructional coaching. This series was designed to be a shift in culture, addressing assets-based instruction for ELLs. Due to site scheduling conflicts and problems in the adult culture, the professional learning series was reduced to two incomplete sessions. At this point, the participation of most of the staff was eliminated and my intervention became a small group of two teacher volunteers. These changes in variables had impact on the significance of the study and findings. One of the two teachers was in her first teaching assignment and, due to the myriad of systems that need to be mastered that first year, she experienced difficulty focusing on intervention work. The intervention was conducted successfully, but with limited scope and with application to the work of these two teachers only.

## Conclusions

This action research project sought to increase teachers' pedagogical knowledge of research-based strategies for fostering oral English proficiency and facilitating meaningful peer-to-peer discussion around content. The intervention design also hoped to increase awareness of the personal resources ELL and language minority students bring to school that can be infused in the curriculum to impact learning. New strategies and heightened awareness can serve as a platform from which site goals and priorities can be focused in support of English proficiency for ELL and RFEP students. As we move forward in professional learning to improve our work with culturally and linguistically diverse students, the impact of this action research project may be that of a catalyst for changing how we see and support our students.

The analysis and findings of this study indicate that personalized, non-evaluative instructional coaching was an essential component to supporting inquiry work and enhancing teacher learning. Perhaps the most significant result of the study was participation in the process as a teacher and a learner. This has implications for increasing collaboration at the site. The findings suggest the need to cultivate opportunities for learning in the adult culture that are teacher-directed, non-judgmental, ongoing, fully supported, and that collaboratively seek solutions to the everyday struggles of providing excellent outcomes for all students. Engaging teachers in individual cycles of instructional coaching may stimulate increasing interest in improving teaching in support of classroom and site goals. Instructional coaching with PLCs may generate a more authentic collaborative relationship, leading to lesson study and other "safe" forms of public sharing of practice. In this way, instructional coaching could serve as a model for the desired collaboration within PLCs and between colleagues.

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Language Learners

**Appendix**

**Pleasant Grove Elementary  
 Professional Learning - Setting the Stage for Student Talk: Supporting ELLs’  
 Access to Academic Discussion  
 February 28, 2018**

<p><b>Meeting Agenda</b>                  Date: February 28, 2018                  Time: 1:30 - 3:15                  Location: Room 211  <u>Resources:</u>  <a href="#">SPSA academic and SEL goals</a></p>		<p><b><u>Pleasant Grove Agreements:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start on Time</li> <li>● Attentive Listening/Stay Present</li> <li>● Be open to and respect other points of view</li> <li>● Be willing to compromise and accept group discussions</li> <li>● Use a variety of decision making tools</li> </ul>	
<p>Topic:  <i>Supporting English Learners in Student Talk</i></p>		<p>Attendees: All Teachers, Assistant Principal, Principal                  Facilitators: Sharon                  Note taker: TBD                  Timekeeper: TBD</p>	
<p>Today’s Outcomes: Teacher learners will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discuss what research says about supporting academic language development for ELs</li> <li>● Understand how ELD supports academic language development</li> <li>● Learn strategies to teach how the English language works</li> <li>● Collaboratively select and plan a language instruction strategy</li> </ul>			
<p>To Prepare for this Meeting, Please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read this agenda</li> <li>● Complete the pre-session survey <a href="#">HERE</a></li> <li>● Bring a charged laptop and other planning materials</li> <li>● Please sit with your grade level circuit</li> </ul>			
<b>Schedule</b>			
Time	Minutes	Facilitator	Activity/Purpose
1:30-1:35	5	Sharon	Welcome and Warm-Up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hot Potato!</li> </ul>
1:35- 1:50	15	Sharon	ELL Site Review Focal Indicators -Self assessment (remember your number)  Research segments: Teams read popcorn highlights, share with group -Oral Language Proficiency pgs 12-14, skip table 1 -What it Takes for English Learners to Succeed -What Does Text Complexity Mean for English Learners and Language Minority Students? Pgs 64-68

1:50 - 2:10	5	Sharon	Overview of selected strategies for English language development -Sentence Unpacking -Content Language Objectives - <a href="#">GLAD photos</a> of content vocabulary development activities
2:10-2:15	5	Sharon	<a href="#">Resource Folder</a> Closing and next steps -
2:15-2:45	30		PLT planning time - strategy to support language instruction  Plus/Delta - Please take a moment to provide feedback for today's meeting. Thank you!
			+
			□
			Low pressure and opportunity for reflection
2:45-3:15	30		Collaboration Time

2/28/18 Notes

<p>TK/K ELL structured practice routines extended list</p> <p>Interactive read alouds- turn and talk</p> <p>Front loading vocabulary</p>	<p>Third Grade Constructive Conversation Skills: Support</p>
<p>First Grade - 1) Structured oral language routines focusing on “My Turn, Your Turn” and “Whip Around.” 2) Open-ended prompts during discussions</p>	<p>Fourth Grade Take a position on an issue and justify it (speaking, listening, and writing). Provide language functions and forms to students.</p>
<p>Second Grade: Elaboration with Justification (cite evidence to support claims)</p> <p>I believe this because ...</p> <p>My primary reason for thinking so is ...</p> <p>Based on the evidence presented so far, I believe that...</p>	<p>Fifth Grade: Constructing simple to complex sentence starters based on proficiency levels</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>science/math sentence starters:</b></p> <p>Low: My claim is ____.</p> <p>Middle: I claim that ____ is ____ . My evidence is ____.</p> <p>High: According to _____, _____ states that ____ because ____ . This indicates_____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ELA sentence starters:</b></p> <p>Low: My claim is ____.</p> <p>Middle: I claim that ____ is ____ because ____.</p> <p>High: According to _____, _____ states that ____ because ____ . This indicates_____.</p>

## Setting the Stage for Student Talk: Creating Access to Academic Discussion for English Learners

Please complete this survey to reflect on the level of EL support in your classroom. Use the ratings to indicate your agreement with the statements below. Thank you!

### Pre-Session Survey February 28, 2018

---

1. I know about the background experiences, prior knowledge, home languages, interests, and goals of my students and their families.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure  
 Somewhat  
 Frequently  
 Always

2. I draw from the backgrounds, prior knowledge, languages, and interests of a range of students along lines of gender, race and ethnicity, class, and language in my teaching.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure  
 Somewhat  
 Frequently  
 Always

3. I design lessons to help students make connections between curricular content and their cultural heritage, especially if it has traditionally been omitted or negatively portrayed.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure  
 Somewhat  
 Frequently  
 Always

**4. I use strategies for presenting concepts that students can access through multiple ways of learning and knowing.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure
- Somewhat
- Frequently
- Always

**5. I create and support student talk opportunities in my teaching that are student lead and feature their questions.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure
- Somewhat
- Frequently
- Always

**6. What questions do you have about supporting English language learners in student talk?**

---

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER  
AND MULTILINGUAL ACHIEVEMENT**

SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Site ELL Review Master Indicators**

School:

Collection Tool:

Date:

Additional Info and Context (i.e. Teacher name, Grade, CLO, student grouping, teacher role, # of stakeholders):

Indicators	1 No Evidence Observed	2 Limited Evidence	3 Some Evidence	4 Clear & Consistent Evidence	Notes
<b>Essential Practice #1: Access and Rigor (High Expectations and Sufficient Support)</b>					
1.1 Students engage with texts or tasks that are aligned to grade-level standards and require critical thinking and/or application. (3B.1)					
1.2 Students effectively access language resources and other scaffolds to support their understanding (pictorial charts, sentence frames, peer support, etc.).  Teacher makes grade-level and complex material / content comprehensible by amplifying, not simplifying. (3B.2)					
1.3 Students receive consistent messaging that academic and post-secondary success is attainable for all.					
1.4 Classes and master schedule are configured to minimize isolation of ELLs and maximize inclusion in mixed fluency settings and grade-level core content.					
<b>Essential Practice #2: Language Development Embedded in Content (Designated &amp; Integrated ELD)</b>					
2.1 Classroom environment is language rich and is structured to facilitate student-student interaction and collaboration.					
2.2 Academic language related to the CLO / task is explicitly taught, rehearsed, and reinforced.					
2.3 Students develop and use language to explain ideas, express understanding and negotiate meaning. Teacher engages students in activities to fortify complex output and to foster academic discussion to support content and language development.					
2.4 Students have opportunities to learn how language works to make meaning.					
2.5 Site has clear structures, expectations, and support for daily Designated ELD.					
2.6 Site-based structures support ongoing professional development and inquiry to support all teachers to include language practices and embedded supports for ELLs in planning, instruction, and assessment.					

\*GREY BOXES = MUST ANSWER FOR CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER  
 AND MULTILINGUAL ACHIEVEMENT**

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Indicators	1	2	3	4	Evidence
<b>Essential Practice #3: Checking for Understanding and Formative Assessment (Data-Driven Decisions)</b>					
3.1 Teacher checks for understanding throughout the lesson to gather evidence of content and language learning and to adjust instruction during the lesson.					
3.2 Teacher uses multiple data sources refine practice.					
3.3 Site uses multiple data sets on an ongoing basis to place and effectively monitor progress as well as to inform program design.					
<b>Essential Practice #4: Asset-Based Approach</b>					
4.1 Welcoming environment reflects students' home languages and cultures.					
4.2 Students' prior knowledge is activated and built upon using culturally and linguistically responsive practices					
4.3 Teacher supports transfer of skills across languages through contrastive analysis and explicit instruction on biliteracy transfer.					
4.4 School provides programming, structures, or opportunities for students to develop bilingualism/ biliteracy.					
<b>Essential Practice #5: Addressing the Whole Child</b>					
5.1 Teacher creates a safe space for learning, and actively encourages risk-taking.					
5.2 Staff use SEL, trauma-informed practice, and restorative practices to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment.					
5.3 Families are informed and engaged to be active participants and contributors to their child's education and the broader school community.					

\*GREY BOXES = MUST ANSWER FOR CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

**Wows & Wonders**

Wow! \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I wonder... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_ - Pleasant Grove Action Research Journal 2018

Please enter your reflections about your work here. Be sure to include the date for each entry. Thank you!

March ____

## P. G. Action Research - Coaching Exit Ticket

This form will be used to capture feedback from our coaching sessions and to inform the action research project. Please complete the Exit Ticket after each session. Thank you! April 23, 2018

**1. The coaching session helped me think about how my students learn.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Coaching helps me think about my practice.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Something I have noticed about my students in this intervention**

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Ways the session could be improved**

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Comments**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Mark only one oval.**

- Option 1

## Action Research Coaching Exit Ticket 2

Please respond to the following prompts. Thank you! 4/23/2018

1. **Something I have noticed in intervention work**

---

2. **Knowing about my students' background and experiences...**

---

3. **Something I have noticed about my students is...**

---

4. **Something I have noticed in my practice is...**

*Mark only one oval.*

Option 1

5. **Comments:**

---

Partner Grid      Key:      \_\_\_\_\_ = Stops      \_\_\_\_\_ = Charts      \_\_\_\_\_ = Off-Topic  
\_\_\_\_\_ = Building on Ideas

Prompt:


Whip Around Notes:

**Pleasant Grove Elementary**  
**Professional Learning - Setting the Stage for Student Talk Part 2:**  
**Strategies to Fuel Discussion**  
**March 21, 2018**

<p><b>Meeting Agenda</b>                  Date: March 21, 2018                  Time: 1:30 - 3:15                  Location: Room 211                  Resources:  <a href="#">SPSA academic and SEL goals</a>  <a href="#">Resource Folder</a></p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Lincoln Agreements:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start on Time</li> <li>● Attentive Listening/Stay Present</li> <li>● Be open to and respect other points of view</li> <li>● Be willing to compromise and accept group discussions</li> <li>● Use a variety of decision making tools</li> </ul>	
<p>Topic:  <i>Research-Based Strategies that Build Skills for Student Talk</i></p>		<p>Attendees: All Teachers, Assistant Principal, Principal                  Facilitators: Sharon                  Note taker: TBD                  Timekeeper: TBD</p>	
<p>Today's Outcomes: Teacher learners will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explore strategies to support academic discussion</li> <li>● Learn what research says about Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching</li> <li>● Discuss the role of CLR in student talk</li> <li>● Collaboratively plan language instruction strategies in support of student talk</li> </ul>			
<p>To Prepare for this Meeting, Please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read this agenda</li> <li>● Bring a charged laptop and other planning materials</li> <li>● Please sit with your grade level circuit</li> </ul>			
<b>Schedule</b>			
Time	Minutes	Facilitator	Activity/Purpose
1:30-1:35	5	Sharon	Welcome Purpose: Understanding the role of culture and language in instruction; exploring how to support English language development with student resources
1:35- 1:55	20	Sharon	GLAD Gr 4 CA Gold Rush Unit - Immigration and Discrimination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pictorial Input Chart</li> <li>● Word Card Review</li> <li>● Sentence Patterning</li> </ul> Video clip: <a href="#">Sentence Unpacking</a>  Glad Strategies Websites: <a href="http://www.norcalglad.com/strategy-of-the-month-may-2014.html">http://www.norcalglad.com/strategy-of-the-month-may-2014.html</a>

			<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eodpvnMRMao">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eodpvnMRMao</a>
1:55 - 2:10	15	Sharon	<p>Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraging student resources</li> <li>• Focus area: Cultural Diversity Knowledge Base</li> <li>• <a href="#">Response Journals</a></li> </ul>
2:10-2:15	5	Sharon	Questions, <a href="#">Exit Ticket</a> , and Next Steps (journals)
2:15-2:45	30		<p>PLT planning time - Adding CLR to your strategy - Cultural/Linguistic knowledge lenses to instruction</p> <p>Plus/Delta - Please take a moment to provide feedback for today's meeting. Thank you!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p style="text-align: right;">□</p> <p>A good reminder that we need to make learning come alive through connecting students' personal lives to content.</p> <p>Thank you for showing us a few ELD strategies with the pictorial, the chant, and etc.</p>
2:45-3:15	30		Collaboration Time

3/21/18 Focus Strategies and Notes

<p>2/28:TK/K ELMA structured practice routines extended list                  Interactive read alouds- turn and talk                  Front loading vocabulary</p> <p>3/21: IRA--add more multicultural books, building more opportunities for call and response, turn and talk or deliberate partnering                  Thinking about GLAD pictorial input chart for our science units (frontloading vocabulary)                  QUESTIONS about Diff eld levels... (see email)</p>	<p>2/28:Third Grade Constructive Conversation Skills: Support with Evidence</p> <p>3/21: Text evidence sentence frames                  Process Grid: Claim, Evidence, Explanation, Counterclaim                  Questions:                  How can you support/prove it?                  Can you justify your answer?</p>
<p>2/28: First Grade - 1) Structured oral language routines focusing on “My Turn, Your Turn” and “Whip Around.”                  2) Open-ended prompts during discussions</p> <p>3/21:</p>	<p>2/28: Fourth Grade - Take a position on an issue and justify it (speaking, listening, and writing). Provide language functions and forms to students.</p> <p>3/21:</p>
<p>2/28: Second Grade: Elaboration with Justification (cite evidence to support claims)</p> <p>I believe this because ...                  My primary reason for thinking so is ...                  Based on the evidence presented so far, I believe that...</p> <p>3/21:</p>	<p>2/28: Fifth Grade: Constructing simple to complex sentence starters based on proficiency levels</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>science/math sentence starters:</b></p> <p>Low: My claim is ____.</p> <p>Middle: I claim that ____ is ____ . My evidence is ____.</p> <p>High: According to ____, ____ states that ____ because ____ . This indicates_____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ELA sentence starters:</b></p> <p>Low: My claim is ____.</p> <p>Middle: I claim that ____ is ____ because ____.</p> <p>High: According to ____, ____ states that ____ because ____ . This indicates_____.</p> <p>3/21:</p>

\_\_\_\_\_Pleasant Grove Action Research Response Journal

March 21, 2018

Teachers: Please use this journal to record any thoughts or observations you have related to our study of ELD strategies and student talk. These entries can include any of the things you try with your students to increase their capacity to engage in student talk with their peers. You may also include any important changes you notice, or your own personal reflections. The purpose is to see what happens with students and teachers as we learn ways to increase oral English language development. For anonymity, *change your name to your number*. Thank you!

Date	Reflections

## ELD & CLR Exit Ticket - March 21, 2018

Teachers, please complete this exit ticket at the end of today's session. Thank you!

**1. GLAD Strategies: This experience helped me think about how I can feature language instruction in my classroom.**

*Check all that apply.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**2. Sentence Unpacking: This experience helped me think about how I can feature language instruction in my classroom.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**3. Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching: This experience helped me think about how I can feature language instruction in my classroom.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**4. Something I have noticed with my students since we began looking at ELD strategies is...**

---

Video Clip Analysis Sheet

Teacher/Date
Scholastic News Article/Topic
Observed strategies (What is the teacher doing?)
Discussion Prompt 1:
Partner talk – student engagement Focal student? Y N
Discussion Prompt 2:
Partner talk – student engagement Focal student? Y N
Discussion Prompt 3:

Partner talk – student engagement Focal student? Y N
Discussion Prompt 4:
Partner talk – student engagement Focal student? Y N
Whip Around Notes: Focal student? Y N
Whip Around Notes: Focal student? Y N

## Action Research Coaching Exit Ticket 3

This form will be used to capture feedback from our coaching sessions and to inform the action research project. Please complete the Exit Ticket after each session. Thank you! May 10, 2018

1. **Something I noticed in this intervention...**

---

2. **Knowing about my students...**

---

3. **Something I have noticed in my practice is...**

---

4. **A question I would like to explore is...**

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Powered by



5. I'd like to know more about...

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6. Comments:

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Powered by



## Action Research Coaching Exit Ticket 4

May 15, 2018 Please indicate your responses from today's session. Please remember to add any reflections to your journal as well. Thank you for your participation!

1. Something I have noticed with my students in this inquiry is...

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2. Now I am thinking that my students...

---

3. In my practice, I have noticed...

---

---

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---

---

4. Now I am wondering...

---

5. Coaching has helped me...

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6. One way to improve the experience would be...

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7. Additional comments

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## Post-Intervention Coaching Feedback Form

Please complete this short form to give feedback about the coaching experience. Thank you!  
May 31, 2018

**1. In what ways has coaching helped you think about how students learn?**

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**2. How has coaching helped you reflect on your practice?**

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**3. An aspect of instructional coaching is designed to push our thinking to deeper understanding about our work. How has deeper thinking emerged for you this year?**

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**4. Thank you for your participation in this Action Research Project!**

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5. What are ways to improve on the support you received in coaching? (Feel free to be candid.)

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## Setting the Stage for Student Talk: Creating Access to Academic Discussion for English Learners

Post-intervention survey, May 31, 2018. Please complete this survey to reflect on the level of EL support in your classroom. Use the ratings to indicate your agreement with the statement below. Thank you for your participation!

- 1. I know about the background experiences, prior knowledge, home languages, interests, and goals of my students and their families.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure  
 Somewhat  
 Frequently  
 Always

- 2. I draw from the backgrounds, prior knowledge, languages, and interests of a range of students along lines of gender, race and ethnicity, class, and language in my teaching.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure  
 Somewhat  
 Frequently  
 Always

- 3. I design lessons to help students make connections between curricular content and their cultural heritage, especially if it has traditionally been omitted or negatively portrayed.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure  
 Soimewhat  
 Frequently  
 Always

**4. I use strategies for presenting concepts that students can access through multiple ways of learning and knowing**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure
- Somewhat
- Frequently
- Always

**5. I create and support student talk opportunities in my teaching that are student-led and feature their questions.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Not sure
- Somewhat
- Frequently
- Always

**6. What are your understandings about supporting English language learners in student talk?**

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**7. Reflecting on your intervention work, what changes might you make next year in supporting English language learners in student talk in your classroom?**

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Teacher \_\_ - Pleasant Grove Action Research Journal 2018

Please enter your reflections about your work here. Be sure to include the date for each entry. Thank you!

March ____

Action Research Coaching Notes

Date	Entry
28 Feb 2018	Cohort Invitations
5 Mar 2018	_____ Post Observation Conference:
8 Mar 2018	_____ Coaching Session
12 Mar 2018	_____ Coaching Session #1 PLC Focus
19 Mar 2018	_____ Coaching Session #2: Discussed
20 Mar 2018	_____ Check-in:
21 Mar 2018	_____ - Observation feedback:
26 Mar 2018	_____ Coaching Session #3:
9 & 12 April 2018	_____ Coaching Session #4 – Mini Lesson on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning
13 April 2018	_____ Observation #5
16 April 2018	Post Observation Conference and Coaching #5;
23 April 2018	_____ Coaching Session #6
30 April 2018	_____ Coaching Session #7
2 May 2018	_____ Observation #7
10 May 2018	_____ Observation #8 – Wows & Wonders
14 May 2018	_____ Coaching Session #9
21 May 2018	_____ Coaching Session #10

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Date	Entries/Teacher
28 Feb2018	Preparations: Meeting 1:30-2:15 w/PLC time 2:15-2:45
28 Feb2018	PD #1: Setting the Stage for Student Talk: Creating Access to Academic Discussion for English Learner
28 Feb2018	Cohort Invitations:
5 Mar2018	Teacher _____ Post Observation Conference:
7 Mar 2018	Teacher ____ Post Short Observation Conference:
8 Mar 2018	Teacher ____ Coaching Session
12Mar 2018	Teacher ____ Coaching Session #1 PLC Focus –
13Mar 2018	Teacher ____ Coaching Session #1:
15 Mar 2018	Teacher ____ Observation #1: Notes in Wows and Wonders
19Mar 2018	Teacher ____ Coaching Session #2:
20Mar 2018	Teacher _____ Coaching Session #2:
20Mar 2018	Teacher ____ Check-in:
21Mar 2018	Teacher _____ - Observation feedback:
21 Mar 2018	PD #2 Setting the Stage for Student Talk Part 2: Strategies to Fuel Discussion:
22 Mar 2018	Teacher _____ Observation #2:
26 Mar 2018	Teacher _____ Coaching Session #3:
27 Mar 2018	Teacher ____ Coaching Session #3 –
9 April 2018	Teacher _____ Coaching Session #4 – Mini Lesson on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning
9 April 2018	Teacher ____ Observation #3-
12 April 2018	Teacher ____ Coaching Session #3 – Mini lesson on CLT
13 April 2018	Teacher _____ Observation #5 – Notes taken on Wows and Wonders form
16 April 2018	Teacher ____ Post Observation Conference and Coaching #5;
17 April 2018	Teacher _____ Coaching Session #4
23 April 2018	Teacher _____ Coaching Session #6
24 April 2018	Scheduled meeting with Teacher _____
26 April 2018	Teacher _____ Coaching Session#5:
29 April 2018	Teacher _____ Observation
2 May 2018	Scholastic News Filming #1 – Dolphins

8 May 2018	Teacher _____ Coaching Session
10 May 2018	Teacher _____ Scholastic News Filming #2-Legos
17 May 2018	Teacher _____ Reflections, next steps
21 May 2018	Teacher _____ Reflections, next steps