

In This Together

Monolingual and Bilingual Educators Facilitating Vocabulary Learning With English Learners

***Barbara J. Ebren, Linda I. Rosa-Lugo,
and Audrey D. P. Hagan***

English learners (ELs) struggle with vocabulary learning and often evidence serious vocabulary gaps. It is challenging, especially for professionals who do not speak the native language of the students, to teach EL students vocabulary that supports academic learning, is compatible with classroom instruction, and considers their changing language proficiency levels. A compounding factor may be the additional presence of a language disorder. The purpose of this article is to provide a context for professionals and nonprofessionals, monolinguals and bilinguals, to work together in developing strong lexicons in ELs to support academic growth. Toward that end, the authors discuss the nature of the school-age EL population, vocabulary needs of this heterogeneous population, the need for collaboration in the wise use of available resources, a technique called the Vocabulary Scenario Technique designed for collaborative implementation, and guiding principles about vocabulary instruction with ELs that can be of use to researchers and practitioners. **Key words:** *curriculum, English learners, language proficiency, literacy intervention, second language acquisition collaboration, speech-language pathologists, vocabulary instruction, Vocabulary Scenario Technique*

RESearch HAS DEMONSTRATED the crucial role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension among school-age learners (Carlisle et al., 1999; Carlo et al., 2009; García, 1991; Jiménez et al., 1996;

Lesaux et al., 2014; Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011; McKeown et al., 2018; National Reading Panel, 2000; Proctor et al., 2010; Tannenbaum et al., 2006). Vocabulary knowledge accounts for significant variance in reading outcomes, even after controlling for differences in phonological awareness and other phonological skills (Catts et al., 1999; Dong et al., 2020; Share & Leikin, 2004; Torgesen et al., 1997). Given the importance of vocabulary to reading comprehension and in turn content learning, students' vocabulary knowledge is a key factor in academic success and career readiness. It is especially significant that reading is the primary mechanism by which students learn new social studies, math, and science concepts as they get older (Ehren, 2009; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012; Stevens et al., 2018; Swanson et al., 2017).

As students progress through the grades, vocabulary deficits pose a serious problem. Educators have known for some time that

Author Affiliations: *Student Success Initiatives, Inc, Anna Maria, Florida (Dr Ebren); College of Health Professions and Sciences, University of Central Florida, Orlando (Dr Rosa-Lugo); and Great Strides Rehabilitation, Middleburg, Florida (Ms Hagan).*

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Corresponding Author: *Barbara J. Ebren, EdD, Student Success Initiatives, Inc., PO Box 4137, Anna Maria, FL 34216 (barbara.ebren@gmail.com).*

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readers who struggle experience a significant vocabulary gap that widens over time (Carlo et al., 2009; Hung et al., 2020; Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011). By the fourth grade, the reader who struggles is faced with increasing reading comprehension demands that include exposure to thousands of unfamiliar words (Nagy & Anderson, 1984; Nagy & Townsend, 2012). Among students who struggle, an important population to consider is English learners (ELs). They often experience specific challenges with vocabulary learning and serious vocabulary gaps (Carlo et al., 2009; Mancilla-Martinez et al., 2020; McFarland et al., 2019; Restrepo et al., 2021; Saunders & Marcelletti, 2013). It is important to understand this population to make appropriate decisions regarding vocabulary instruction.

UNDERSTANDING THE EL POPULATION

English learners are the fastest growing population of school-age students in the United States. These students currently comprise 9% of the total Pre-K-12 population nationwide (National Clearinghouse for English, 2021). It is projected that by 2050, one in four school-age students will be an EL student (Colby & Ortman, 2021). However, it is inappropriate to think about ELs as a single group; they in fact represent an extremely heterogeneous population of students (Capps, 2015; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017) with differences in cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and educational backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and immigration experiences. This heterogeneity dictates that vocabulary approaches be designed to address myriad needs, especially as related to overall language proficiency.

Language proficiency

Students who speak a language other than English at home often have their level of English language proficiency (ELP) assessed when they first enter school (National Research Council, 2011). Due to the variety of tools used to identify and classify these students, the designations for ELs can

differ by states and districts (Abedi, 2008; Linquanti & Cook, 2015; Ragan & Lesaux, 2006; Umansky, 2016). Descriptors are used to situate them across levels or stages of language proficiency, as they move toward meeting English language use and comprehension expectations. One schema divides the progression from beginning to exited EL into six levels: 1—Entering; 2—Emerging; 3—Developing; 4—Expanding; 5—Bridging; and 6—Reaching (Linquanti et al., 2016; WIDA, 2020). The characteristics of each ELP level are key to informing professionals how to communicate effectively with these students and how to select and use appropriate teaching approaches (Nutta et al., 2012, 2018; Rosa-Lugo & Ehren, 2018; Rosa-Lugo et al., 2020).

It is important to note that a student's designated ELP level represents a performance level at a particular point in time and is not a fixed status. An ELP level provides a cursory view of what a student knows and can do at a particular stage of language development in English. The language status of students often changes as they progress toward ELP. This change depends on a variety of factors (age at which the student entered the program, initial ELP level, native language literacy, communicative competence, and other factors). Although these measures provide one source of valuable information for promoting equitable learning opportunities for ELs, changes in language status after administration of proficiency measures pose challenges in both research and practice. With respect to vocabulary teaching, it requires techniques that are responsive to changing English proficiency levels, as well as consideration of the students' proficiency in their native language (L1).

MEETING THE VOCABULARY NEEDS OF ELS

During the process of acquiring ELP, ELs often encounter difficulties with understanding and using academic vocabulary to read and comprehend content-area texts (August & Shanahan, 2006). They are challenged

with acquiring proficiency in an additional language (L2) and mastering the academic language needed to access the curriculum in different content areas (Goldman et al., 2016; Snow, 2010). This achievement requires that students understand the language that appears in academic texts, because it differs from conversational language (Cummins, 1981; Scarcella, 2003; Schleppegrell, 2004). Even when ELs have learned to communicate sufficiently in English for conversational purposes, they often continue to struggle with the academic language and domain-specific vocabulary knowledge required to comprehend content area and literary texts (August & Shanahan, 2006; Rivera et al., 2008). Therefore, an important challenge for educators is to find effective ways to teach EL students vocabulary that are compatible with classroom instruction and with opportunities to scaffold vocabulary learning for students at different and changing ELP levels. A special challenge is addressing the needs of EL students who struggle for a variety of reasons beyond learning a new language (e.g., language disorders in addition to language differences).

Bilingual and monolingual educators

These challenges are shaped in part by the availability of professionals who are competent in addressing the language and literacy needs of ELs (Rosa-Lugo et al., 2017). Although there is a strong and growing body of evidence supporting bilingual services delivered by bilingual interventionists, this approach often is complicated by several factors, including the critical shortage of bilingual service providers in the number of languages spoken in schools (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017; Garcia & Weiss, 2019).

Among ELs, Spanish is the most reported language spoken followed by Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese (Hussar et al., 2020; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). When there are educators who are bilingual with one language being that of the language majority in a given school, this is less of a challenge; for example, a professional who is bilingual in Spanish/English

serving ELs where L1 is Spanish. However, this often is not the situation that prevails in many schools; for example, a school might have a Spanish/English bilingual professional working with students whose L1 is Hmong. Further, it is most often the case that educators teaching students are monolingual (Bacon, 2020; Cross, 2016; Sleeter, 2008; Zhang-Wu, 2021).

The role of speech–language pathologists

Included in the mix of professionals in schools who encounter ELs are speech–language pathologists (SLPs). These practitioners assume a variety of roles and responsibilities in facilitating language and literacy for school-age EL children and adolescents. Clearly, they may serve ELs with speech and language disorders on their caseloads. However, they also may encounter ELs who struggle with learning for a variety of reasons, especially in schools implementing Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (RTI/MTSS) frameworks (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [ASHA], 2010; Sylvan, 2021).

One of the most important roles of SLPs with ELs is to distinguish language differences from language disorders (Paradis et al., 2021; Pieretti & Roseberry-McKibben, 2016). In this capacity, SLPs are required to conduct assessments in the native language (L1) and English (L2) and determine, with other appropriate school professionals, whether a student has a language disorder. If found to have a language disorder, then the SLP must provide appropriate services. However, SLPs encounter the same problems as other educators in terms of their abilities to address the needs of ELs.

Of the 8% of ASHA members who identified themselves as bilingual SLPs, the majority were Spanish language service providers (ASHA, 2021). Unfortunately, the numbers of SLPs are not commensurate with the numbers of EL students who might require language support or services (ASHA, n.d.a, n.d.b). Ideally, bilingual SLPs should be matched to the same language as their EL students; however, this is not always possible.

SLPs with proficiency in other languages are often not available or prepared to meet the needs of ELs. Whatever the case, monolingual and bilingual SLPs are obligated to provide culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate services to all students (ASHA, 2016; Kadyamusuma, 2016; Levey et al., 2020; Santhanam & Parveen, 2018). Given these challenges, how can professionals, including SLPs working in schools, collaborate to provide vocabulary instruction for ELs, especially when they do not have proficiency in the L1 of students?

Collaboration among educators

The need for SLP-teacher collaboration has been recognized by ASHA (2010), which describes collaboration with educators as a critical role and responsibility of SLPs, who are integral contributors to facilitating the success of EL students with communication disorders to achieve learning standards (Power-deFur, 2015). In collaborative service delivery, a cadre of professionals (e.g., special education, bilingual, and/or EL teachers, related service providers) and non-professionals (e.g., bilingual paraeducators, speech-language assistants, interpreters) are expected to contribute and coordinate efforts to facilitate academic achievement and language development simultaneously (Kangas, 2017; Langdon & Saenz, 2016; Rosa-Lugo & Fradd, 2000). Researchers have proposed interprofessional collaborative models for ELs that require participants to use their specific expertise and knowledge when carrying out interventions (Bell & Baecher, 2012; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019; Nutta et al., 2012; Rosa-Lugo et al., 2017, 2020). However, there has been less clarity regarding how this assemblage of school personnel can effectively facilitate learning with ELs, including in vocabulary (Archibald, 2017; McLeod, 2014; Pham et al., 2011). Therefore, it is critical to identify specific tools and procedures that collaborators can use to meet the myriad and changing language needs of this heterogeneous and growing population.

THE VOCABULARY SCENARIO TECHNIQUE

A tool that holds promise as an approach around which professionals and support personnel can collaborate in addressing vocabulary needs of ELs is the Vocabulary Scenario Technique (VST; Ehren, 2008). The VST is an instructional approach that incorporates features that have been identified in vocabulary research as effective. As described in Spielvogel and Ehren (2021), the key features of the VST are that it is a direct and explicit approach (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Blachowicz et al., 2006; McKeown, 2019), includes multiple encounters with words in varied contexts (Beck et al., 2013; Kamil et al., 2008; Moody et al., 2018), utilizes student-friendly explanations (Beck et al., 2013), engages students while connecting targeted words to prior knowledge (Wilcox & Morrison, 2013), promotes word consciousness (Baumann et al., 2007; Graves, 2006), and provides opportunities for scaffolding (Marulis & Neuman, 2013; Neuman & Dwyer, 2009). The basic teaching procedure was designed for 90 min of instruction per week; however, various configurations of vocabulary work are possible with the basic 90 min of instruction as a springboard. For example, a classroom teacher may do the initial 90 min of instruction and an SLP can provide additional scaffolding for students who are struggling with word acquisition. Therefore, this technique facilitates collaboration among professionals and support personnel who may assume a variety of roles in implementing it.

The VST targets “Tier Two” words defined by Beck et al. (2013) as “wide-ranging words of high utility for literate language users” (p. 20). These are words found in texts and instruction across academic areas; therefore, learning them can assist students’ comprehension of more than one academic subject. For example, the word “expand” can be found in science, social studies, math, and literature. A list of Tier Two words to be taught

is formulated from words encountered in the specific curriculum for a grade in collaboration with the teacher who identifies linchpin words in their teaching.

In the VST, a specific minimum number of instructor-led encounters with a word is set in the teaching procedure; an encounter refers to any exposure to the target word through listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Various iterations of the VST have employed a different number of encounters, ranging from 15 to 24. It is important to note that while the number of encounters has been tightly controlled in research studies of VST iterations, in routine instructional use, the designated encounters should be considered a minimum, with more encounters possible and perhaps desired.

The VST is rooted in a two- to five-sentence story or “scenario” that explicates the meaning of the word. The scenario does not merely use the target word in context; rather, it tells the meaning. Although the target words are identified from classroom textbooks, the scenarios are constructed to resonate with the culture and experiences of students. This is an example of a fourth-grade scenario for the word “expand”: *I packed a small bag for our family trip. It’s a good thing it will expand. I want to buy things in the cities we visit. The bag will need to get bigger.* Morphological variations of target words are taught with the initial form of the word; for example, *expands, expanding, expanded, and expansion* with *expand*. The inclusion of different parts of speech in instruction is important because it promotes practice with different syntactic patterns.

The scenarios serve as a basis for a variety of activities to provide the specific minimum number of instructor-led encounters with the words. The scenario is read initially by the instructor, followed by a discussion to predict the target word meaning using the scenario. Student-friendly explanations are given, and students engage in saying the word, reading the scenario, and “playing” with the morphological variations of the word. They write the new word and its morphological varia-

tions on the front of a 3 × 5 card along with the student-friendly explanation. They try out different uses of the word in dyads or small groups and write the word in a sentence or construct a new scenario, on the back of the card, depending on grade. When joined by a metal ring, these cards become a “portable word wall” for students that can be used in other activities with the word in the classroom or other supportive instruction, including with an SLP. A major feature of VST instruction is a focus on word consciousness, that is, helping students approach words metalinguistically to appreciate and “own” the process of word learning. It includes addressing how words are used, how they are formed, how they relate to other words, and how words make meaning.

Evidence of effectiveness

Various iterations of the VST have been designed and researched over several years. The initial research was conducted in connection with a 2-year study of STRUCTURE Your Reading (Ehren, 2008) in which the VST was embedded within a strategic reading intervention with sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students. In subsequent studies (e.g., Ehren et al., 2010; Spielvogel & Ehren, 2021), the VST was used successfully as a stand-alone vocabulary teaching technique with students at various grade levels. Two iterations tested in fourth-grade classrooms were named *Vocabulary Scenario Technique-General Education 24 Encounters (VST-GE24)* and *Vocabulary Scenario Technique-General Education 16 Encounters (VST-GE16)*. As indicated by their names, these iterations were designed for use in inclusive general education classrooms. Regarding the iteration with 24 instructor-led encounters, two fourth-grade classrooms of approximately 25 students each participated in a study, one as treatment, the other as comparison. The results on a researcher-developed synonym test indicated significant gains for the treatment group over the comparison group ($F_{1,41} = 27.68, p < .001$), with a large effect size ($\eta_p^2 = .40$)

(Ehren et al., 2010). For the VST-GE16 protocol with 16 instructor-led encounters, the study by Spielvogel and Ehren (2021) found that the treatment group ($n = 20$) scored significantly higher than the comparison group ($n = 21$) of fourth graders with large effect sizes on the researcher-developed synonym measure ($F_{1,35} = 14.76$, $p < .001$; $g = 1.04$) and the researcher-developed words-in-context measure ($F_{1,34} = 43.66$, $p < .001$; $g = 1.59$). (See Spielvogel and Ehren, 2021, for details of these studies and a more detailed description of the VST-GE16 protocol).

EL adaptation of the VST

Given the promising data on the effectiveness of the VST described earlier and the challenge of creating and implementing evidence-based vocabulary approaches for ELs, the authors created and piloted an EL adaptation of the VST. The adaptation was informed by the literature on effective vocabulary practices with ELs (August et al., 2014; Richards-Tutor et al., 2016), while retaining the key features of other VST protocols supported by research, as described earlier.

VST-English Learner Bridging (ELB) is an adaptation of VST-GE16 with 15 instructor-led encounters across listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As with VST-GE16, eight English vocabulary words were taught each week over the course of 3 days for a total of 90 min per week. On Day 1, four new vocabulary words were taught for 30 min and four additional vocabulary words were taught for 30 min on Day 2. On Day 3, the eight vocabulary words taught the previous 2 days were reviewed for 30 min. The flow of instruction was as follows: Days 1 and 2: Present scenario in L1, then in L2 orally and in writing; ask students for meaning predictions and clarify meaning with student-friendly explanations; elicit and write synonym(s) for the target word; re-present the scenario with a synonym; have students read the original scenario (choral reading); elicit sentences with the target word; and have the student(s) make a 3×5 index card with the word and its

variations on the front (portable word wall). Day 3: Work with morphological variations of words; student pairs generate sentences using words; and students write a sentence on the back of the 3×5 card.

This iteration has several features that are responsive to the needs of the EL population. It leverages the use of L1 (Cummins, 1981; Lugo-Neris et al., 2010) by presenting the scenario in L1 with the targeted word in English. This approach draws on the work of Krashen (1982), who advocated for the use of comprehensible input with context. Comprehensible input is language input that can be understood by learners despite not understanding all the words and structures in the new language. A technique to provide comprehensible input described in the literature is *bridging*. Bridging incorporates the ELs' knowledge of L1 to teach L2 (English) vocabulary (Fitton et al., 2016; Krashen, 1982; Leacox & Jackson, 2014; Lugo-Neris et al., 2010). Hence, VST-ELB employed a bridging technique from students' L1 to English within the scenarios. For the initial version of this protocol, the target L1 was Spanish. This is a bridging scenario for the target word "expand": *Empaqué un pequeño bulto para un viaje familiar. Es una buena cosa que expand. Yo quiero comprar cosas en las ciudades que visitemos. El bulto necesitaría ser más grande.*

An associated feature of this protocol that addresses the current challenge of monolingual educators, or bilingual educators with competencies in languages other than those of students, is that VST-ELB can be used by instructors who do not speak the language of students by collaborating with L1 speakers. Because the scenario is read to students initially, anyone who can pronounce the words in the L1 correctly can be employed to read the scenario; for example, teaching assistants, community members, and L1 speaking students. It also could be prerecorded by an L1 speaker and archived to be used by other educators and with other students. The rest of the instruction in this protocol is done in English.

Importantly, VST-ELB has the flexibility to accommodate varying and changing ELPs in a number of ways: More or fewer words can be targeted in a week by the classroom teacher with students divided into small groups to differentiate instruction; English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers can customize lists for individual students based on ELP; more bridging instruction can be done in L1 if needed and available; and SLPs can work to provide more scaffolding for word learning with students on their caseloads or those for whom they are providing intervention in RTI/MTSS non-special education tiers.

A pilot study with this protocol was conducted with 78 fourth- and fifth-grade EL students whose L1 was Spanish and who were enrolled in sheltered English instruction in two comparable elementary schools (K-5) in an urban/suburban school district in the Southeast United States. With the treatment group ($n = 38$), instruction was provided by an SLP whose L1 was English with conversational skills in Spanish. Instruction for the comparison group classrooms was provided by two different professionals: a fourth-grade, bachelor-level teacher who was in the process of obtaining her ESOL endorsement (L1 English and native speaker of Spanish) and a fifth-grade, master's level teacher/reading specialist who was ESOL-endorsed (L1 English). The treatment group was taught eight vocabulary words a week using the VST-ELB protocol as part of language arts instruction for 90 min a week across four consecutive weeks (32 words). The two comparison classroom teachers were instructed to teach the same 32 vocabulary words as in the treatment group, but as they typically would using the same frequency and duration parameters.

Students in both the treatment and comparison groups were given two researcher-constructed, group-administered, paper/pencil vocabulary learning measures as pretest/posttest: multiple-choice synonym identification and a sentence cloze test. Fidelity measures were taken for both treatment and comparison instruction. A

repeated-measures analysis of covariance was used to analyze both measures while controlling for language proficiency using the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) results. The results of the synonym test indicated that both comparison and treatment groups improved over time, $F_{(1,26)} = 6.99$, $p = .01$. There also was a notable degree of practical significance in terms of effect size, $\eta^2 = .21$. This finding is not surprising because both groups were being taught vocabulary in some fashion. However, it was initially surprising that the comparison group did significantly better than the treatment group with a medium effect size on the synonym task. But, upon further analysis, the fidelity data indicated that the number of encounters and amount of time spent in instruction was greater in the comparison group, while the treatment group instructor adhered to encounter and time limits of the research protocol. Because we know from research that the number of encounters with a word affects the learning of meaning (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Nagy & Townsend, 2012; Watts-Taffe et al., 2019), this finding suggests that the VST-ELB protocol may need to include more than 15 encounters with a word to perform better than typical practice in teaching ELs vocabulary. It is important to note, however, that it was the reading teacher's comparison class where encounters and time exceeded the VST-ELB protocol. A reading teacher's approach may not conform to typical practice by classroom teachers who are not also reading specialists. In any event, the VST-ELB did result in students learning the targeted vocabulary, but its performance over typical, direct, and explicit vocabulary instruction by teachers with ELs needs to be explored further.

Regarding sentence test results, both comparison and treatment groups had modest improvements over time that again, as with synonyms, was not surprising because both groups were being taught vocabulary. However, neither group made significant gains with only a small effect size, $F_{(1,26)} = 0.32$,

$p = .57$; $\eta^2 = .01$. We suspect that it may take longer to see an impact in the use of vocabulary in sentences because knowledge of syntax affects learning to use vocabulary and manipulating syntax in L2 is more complex than identifying single-word meaning. It may be that applying word knowledge in the context of sentences requires more encounters over more time, a hypothesis that should be further explored.

Another important point regarding the pilot is that, although we used the CELLA as a measure of ELP, interaction with students during instruction called into question the accuracy of those scores in capturing the current ELP of students during the study. This observation reinforces the importance of employing vocabulary practices to accommodate various ELP levels, which may or may not conform to assessment data on file for students.

MOVING FORWARD WITH VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

Indeed, there are many challenges in meeting the vocabulary needs of the heterogeneous and growing population known as ELs. Given the extant research on effective vocabulary practices with this population and others, and our experience with designing and piloting VST-ELB, we offer guiding principles to practitioners and researchers. Key points include the use of monolingual and bilingual teachers and SLPs in schools, a focus on academic vocabulary, the inclusion of various parts of speech, attention to intensity of instruction, the importance of scaffolding, and collaboration around specific techniques.

Use of monolingual and bilingual teachers and SLPs in schools

Schools must construct vocabulary teaching protocols based on available human resources, which, as we have discussed, may include monolingual and bilingual professionals and nonprofessionals. Given the many L1 languages found in schools and the scarcity of bilingual educators in all those languages,

it is especially helpful to have an instructional procedure that can be used by monolingual educators, while still providing comprehensible input. Recall that the scenarios of VST-ELB are initially read in L1. They can be constructed in any L1 using triangulation among native speakers who do not need to be professional educators. Triangulation in VST-ELB involves translating an English scenario into another language by a native speaker, then having another native speaker of the language translate the scenario back into English to ensure that meaning is maintained. Scenarios can be audio or video captured in advance so that the L1 speaker does not have to be physically present in a classroom or therapy session. This practice also would allow for use in multiple settings over time.

Focus on academic vocabulary

In the literature, pictures are often recommended to accompany new vocabulary (Nutta et al., 2018; Roberts & Neal, 2004). However, this approach primarily works for concrete words. Restricting the corpus of words taught to concrete words does not sufficiently assist students with academic learning, because they will encounter many words in texts that are not easily depicted visually. An approach like VST, which targets Beck et al.'s (2013) Tier Two words and presents them in a meaningful context, as in the L1 scenarios, facilitates the teaching of academic vocabulary to ELs. For students to succeed in school, vocabulary instruction must dovetail with the curriculum of specific grade levels and subjects in targeting this vocabulary.

Inclusion of various parts of speech

A related issue regarding target vocabulary is that individual word knowledge, as measured by synonym tasks, is likely more easily achieved than the use of words in sentence contexts (Carlo et al., 2009). As we have discussed, we recognize that EL students need syntactic knowledge to understand and use words in context. Therefore, incorporating different parts of speech in vocabulary

instruction and manipulating various syntactic forms is an important component for ELs in their academic learning (Folse, 2009; Kiefer & Lesaux, 2012). An instructional approach, like the VST that incorporates morphological variations of target vocabulary, appropriate to grade level should be considered.

Attention to intensity of instruction

Our work with the VST and ELs has reinforced the notion that intensity of instruction makes a difference. However, as a practical matter, it is not clear how many encounters are necessary. We do know from research that it is not just the number of encounters, but the kind of encounters with words that facilitate learning (Beck et al., 2013; Blachowicz et al., 2006; Rupley & Nichols, 2005; Scott et al., 2012). A key feature of the VST is that students are taught word consciousness, not just individual words. Taken together, the kinds of language-rich activities associated with VST instruction (contextual introduction of words, student-friendly explanations, practice using words in other meaningful contexts, and word consciousness activities) promote word learning. Given our pilot study findings, we would recommend more than the 15 encounters that we used in our research protocol. Outside a controlled research study, instructors are free to expand encounters. This flexibility is critical to accommodate varying ELP and language difficulties. The effectiveness of a different number and type of encounters is a matter for future investigation.

Importance of scaffolding

Regarding intensity of instruction, an important consideration is that one size does not fit all, especially when addressing the needs of students with different ELP levels. A significant issue discussed previously is the difficulty of having accurate ELP information on students at any given point in instruction. Therefore, vocabulary approaches must provide different levels of scaffolding to accommodate language status. Note that VST-ELB has different scaffolding opportunities. For

example, initial teaching of new vocabulary words by classroom teachers is accomplished with the L1 scenarios presented either by them or by a live or prerecorded L1 speaker. More bridging activities can be provided in L1 when those bilingual resources are available. Further, in differentiated instruction, classroom teachers and their collaborators can provide as many encounters in English as necessary for students at varying ELP levels. For EL students with language disorders, the SLP can provide additional scaffolding. The portable word walls (i.e., the index card lexicon) is a specific tool that can be used by SLPs as a basis for constructing scaffolding activities for students with language disorders. Further, SLPs can teach additional words based on the ELP of students when those words are not targeted by classroom teachers.

Collaboration around specific techniques

Importantly, we recognize, as discussed earlier, that collaboration among educators (and others) is required to meet the vocabulary needs of ELs. However, it is often difficult for well-meaning professionals, motivated to collaborate, to know exactly what to do. Therefore, a direct, explicit technique to teach vocabulary that incorporates key features of effective practice can offer educators a specific way to work in tandem on behalf of ELs. It is more practical to say to collaborators, "Here is a specific tool around which to collaborate," than to exhort them to act in partnership in vocabulary teaching without offering specifics of how to do that. The VST offers educators such a tool. For a detailed protocol on how to use the VST collaboratively, see Mitchell, 2017.

CONCLUSION

We have made the case for the importance of vocabulary instruction for EL students, while acknowledging the challenges of doing so in today's schools. The limited availability of bilingual educators in all the languages found in schools and the concomitant roles

of monolingual teachers and SLPs necessitate collaboration among professionals and non-professionals to meet the vocabulary needs of ELs at varying ELP levels that are in constant flux. We argue that schools need specific instructional protocols around which professionals and nonprofessionals can collaborate to leverage L1. A procedure like VST-ELB is

an example of a language-rich approach that incorporates features of effective vocabulary instruction with special consideration of EL needs. Although further research is needed with VST-ELB, protocols with its features hold promise as a collaboration tool for both bilingual and monolingual educators, including SLPs.

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