

Social Studies Instruction

Sylvia Linan-Thompson
The University of Texas at Austin
Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and
Language Arts

About CREATE

CREATE is a National Research and Development Center funded through the National Center for Education Research (NCER), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education. It addresses specific challenges in the education of English language learners in the middle grades (Grades 4-8)

CREATE is a partnership of researchers from several institutions:



Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics, University of Houston

David J. Francis, Coleen D. Carlson



California State University at Long Beach

Jana Echevarria, Catherine Richards



Center for Applied Linguistics

Diane August, Deborah Short



Harvard University

Catherine Snow



University of California-Berkeley

Elfrieda Hiebert



Vaughn Gross Center, University of Texas at Austin

Sharon Vaughn, Sylvia Linan-Thompson

Austin Research Team

- Sylvia Linan-Thompson
- Sharon Vaughn
- Leticia Martinez
- Mary Ndande (06-08)
- Radhika Misquitta (07-08)
- Juan Carrillo (07-08)
- Ben Kramer (06-07)
- Jessica Mejia (06-07)

Purpose

- This project was designed to address the learning challenges of English learners by integrating practices that enhance students' understanding of social studies content and of expository text by providing them opportunities to learn and use the language associated with social studies.

Practices

- Research-based practices for vocabulary instruction
- The use of media to build comprehension and develop background knowledge
- Peer mediated learning

Research Questions

- What are the effects of a seventh grade social studies intervention that includes specific instructional and learning strategies, and flexible grouping on students' content knowledge?
- What are the effects of a seventh grade social studies intervention that includes specific instructional and learning strategies, and flexible grouping on students' vocabulary and comprehension skills?

Intervention

- The intervention was designed to enhance delivery of instruction and to increase student opportunities to discuss the content.
- Two overarching activities:
 - Focus on big idea
 - Use of peer mediated learning
- Four intervention components:
 - *use of structured pairs,*
 - *explicit vocabulary instruction,*
 - *the use of video and purposeful discussion to build concepts, and*
 - *the use of graphic organizers to build comprehension and vocabulary.*

Big Ideas

- The over emphasis on objectives has tended to affect the instruction of diverse learners negatively by focusing on **details** (Kameenui & Carnine, 1998). Therefore, the lessons focus on “**big ideas**” of Texas History content
- Big ideas are concepts or principles that facilitate the most efficient and broadest acquisition of knowledge.

Structured Work in Pairs

- The purpose for pairing students to read and work in our study is to provide an interactive and motivating structure for peer-mediated learning, to increase engaged time, to provide additional opportunities to use language.
- The Class-wide Peer Tutoring model that we have adopted was used to include students with varying levels of English language proficiency in instructional interactions that promote academic and linguistic performance.

Greenwood et al., 2001; Maheady, Harper, & Malette, 2001

Structured Pair Work

Paired student work included reading text, working on graphic organizers, and discussing a posed question.

Basic Lesson Format

1. Introduce the big idea
2. Teach pre-selected vocabulary
3. Paired reading or teacher-led reading
4. Discuss reading questions
5. Watch video clip
6. Discuss video questions
7. Wrap-up

Routine for Vocabulary Instruction

1. Pronounce the word, give Spanish cognate, and define it
2. Ask or tell students how the illustration is representative of the word
3. Use word in two sentences
4. Give examples and non-examples
5. Give students opportunities to encounter the word

Sharecroppers (Aparceros)

Key vocabulary term from the text

Translation into Spanish

Farmers who lacked land and necessary supplies, such as mules, plows, and seed; these farmers borrowed the land and supplies from the landowners, then promised the landowner a large part of the harvest in return for these items plus interest.



Age-appropriate definition

Relevant graphic/pictorial image

This system gave landowners a great deal of control over tenant farmers and **sharecroppers**.

If the harvest was bad one year, **sharecroppers** had to promise part of the next year's harvest to pay back the owner; many fell into debt and had a hard time making enough to pay back the owners and take care of their families at the same time.

Yes/No Questions

Did sharecroppers have a difficult life?
Could sharecroppers grow anything they wanted?

A clarifying sentence establishing relevancy to student lives and

Yes/No questions to engage class

Inflected forms: sharecropper, sharecropping.

Other forms of the word

Turn and Talk: What happens when one person is in debt to another? Who has more control of the situation, the person owed or the person who owes?

Discussion prompt: connects the word to the larger themes of the chapter/unity of study.

Routine for Using Video

1. Introduce the video clip either before or after students have read the textbook passage
2. Tell students what to listen for when they watch the video
3. Students watch the video clip
4. In pairs, students discuss question/s they were listening for while watching the video
5. Students contribute their answers in a whole class discussion.

Routine for Paired Reading

1. Partners sit together, each with their own textbook
2. Partner A reads aloud for 4 minutes while Partner B follows along and provides corrective feedback
3. Pairs work together to answer 1-2 questions displayed on transparency
4. Partner B reads the same passage for 4 minutes while Partner A follows along and provides corrective feedback
5. Pairs work together to answer 1-2 new questions displayed on transparency
6. Whole class discusses answers.

Use of Graphic Organizers

1. Introduce the graphic organizer students will use and have students locate it in their notebooks.
2. Explain how they will use it that day or throughout the week.
3. Remind students that graphic organizers are used to write the most important information (main ideas) in their lessons.
4. Review students' responses.

Methods

- Four teachers were trained by the researchers to implement the instructional strategies.
- Teachers' sessions were randomly assigned to intervention or control.
- Students in the intervention classes received the intervention during their regularly scheduled seventh grade social studies class between February and April.
- The intervention was implemented for 50 minutes a day, 5 days a week for approximately 9 weeks.
- Students in the control sections received typical instruction.

Teacher Participants

- Four social studies teachers
- 15 class sections were randomly assigned to either a control (N= 208 students) or intervention (N= 176 students) condition.

Student Participants

Group	N	Non-EL	EL	EL monitored
Control	208	160	33	15
Intervention	176	130	24	22
Total	384	290	57	37

Measures

- GRADE pre and post
 - Vocabulary
 - Comprehension
- Curriculum-based measures pre and post
 - Content vocabulary
 - Content comprehension
- Weekly CBM
- Student interviews

Data Collection

- Researcher-developed content specific pre- and post-tests and the GRADE reading assessment were administered to all students in control and intervention sections.
- Weekly curriculum-based vocabulary and comprehension measures were collected in intervention classes.
- Fidelity of implemented data was collected 3 times during the intervention.
- Thirty-minute interviews were administered to a subgroup of ELL students in intervention sections to inquire about lesson components they found helpful.

Vocabulary CBM

Sentence with target word:

- Mexican officials disputed the claims, as did most of the people living in New Mexico.
- When the Civil War began, many Texans responded to the Confederate call to arms.
- Definitions:
- 9. To disagree about something that someone says
- 11. Ask people to volunteer to fight in a war

Results: CBM vocabulary

	Intervention		Control	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Non-ELL	9.30 (4.73)	13.24 (4.69)	8.9 (4.88)	10.83 (5.02)
ELL	6.97 (3.66)	10.6 (5.06)	6.44 (4.33)	7.26 (5.28)

Comprehension CBM

- What was life like for Tejanos who were already living in the Republic?
- What was the name for the power the United States had, supposedly given by God, to expand the lands and peoples under its control?
- Explain why Texas seceded from the United States?

Results: CBM comprehension

	Intervention		Control	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Non-ELL	1.52 (1.30)	3.80 (2.09)	1.61 (1.16)	2.52 (1.78)
ELL	1.24 (1.20)	3.41 (2.12)	1.13 (1.13)	1.93 (1.72)

Summary

- Students in the intervention condition appear to have a better grasp of the vocabulary associated with the content.
- ELLs in the intervention condition did as well as non-ELLs in the control condition on vocabulary.
- All students still had difficulty with the comprehension questions.

Lessons learned

- Teachers need more help in how to scaffold the new interaction patterns.
- Students needed more time to learn to work in pairs.
 - The discussion activities were particularly difficult.
- For the second year we will:
 - Include a larger number of open-ended questions.
 - Use a wider range of interaction patterns.
 - Increase the number of outside sources.

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