

I Love the Pictures!

Using Interesting, Well-illustrated Literature to
Promote English Language Development

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Abstract

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Title: I Love the Pictures! Using Interesting, Well-illustrated Picture Books to Promote English Language Development

Research Questions: How will repeated exposure to interesting, detailed, well-illustrated literature (picture books by Chris Van Allsburg) affect my EL students' ability and willingness to respond to the text with increasingly complex oral language? Will these students then demonstrate progress in the California ELD standards for listening, speaking and reading comprehension?

Research Activities:

Context: This study took place in a Sixth Grade Structured English Immersion Classroom. The three students detailed in the study are identified as Level One English language learners by the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). **Methods and Data:** The

intervention occurred over the course of six weeks. Students read picture books written and illustrated by Chris Van Allsburg. They were then orally assessed for proficiency in oral language production, willingness to participate in the discussion and reading comprehension. Data was collected in discussion notes and transcripts, and then applied to a rubric measuring oral language production. **Results:** Within the oral discussions, all three students showed improvement between the preliminary and outcome data. Improvements were seen in vocabulary usage, sentence structure, willingness to participate, interest in discussions, and comprehension of text. Degrees of improvement varied among students, with two students demonstrating significant progress, and the third student making slightly smaller gains.

Conclusions: An EL curriculum that includes interesting, detailed and well-illustrated text can be very effective in increasing oral language production. Interesting literature gives language learners something to talk about, repeated exposure to vocabulary gives students the words they need to talk about it, and small group discussions give students a comfortable, safe environment to demonstrate understanding and share opinions about the text.

Grade Level: Sixth Grade ELD

Data Collection Methods: Discussion notes, oral summaries and assessments

Project Descriptors: Elementary, English Language Development, oral language (ELD), reading comprehension, student engagement

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Introduction

I began my first year of teaching feeling both confident and terrified. Confident, because I knew I was ready to be in the classroom and that whatever I lacked in experience, I was sure I made up for in enthusiasm. Terrified, because I had been hired as an English Language (EL) specialist, a job in which I had no experience and far more questions than I knew what to do with. How are EL students designated? What does the curriculum look like? Do I have to create my own? How will I assess my students? Or know if I am meeting their needs? What do I do if my students speak no English at all? I had no idea where to begin, or even what an effective EL classroom was supposed to look like.

I quickly learned that one key assessment drives English Language instruction in California, the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). The first two weeks of school are consumed with testing each EL student's competency in English across four categories: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Their scores determine the EL services they receive, meaning that students are grouped for EL instruction based on their performance in each area. So that answered my first question – I now knew that I would be working with students from all grade levels with scores 1 or 2 on the CELDT test. I was also relieved to find that my district had recently adopted an EL curriculum, *Avenues*, by Hampton Brown. As I began to find more and more answers to the many questions, my confidence began to return.

With my groups in place and my curriculum more clear, I settled into my new teaching role. Many of my questions, however, still remained unanswered. I remained uncertain about how to accurately assess my students beyond their CEDLT scores, and how to meet their needs across the English Language Development areas. Of particular concern was a small group of 6th grade students with CELDT scores of one (beginning). A student at this grade level with such a

low CELDT score is certain to face significant challenges in the classroom. Academic language becomes more and more important, and long over are the days when school is about learning to read; in 6th grade, students read to learn. I knew that these three students needed help and support in almost all aspects of their English Language Development; their scores were low across the board; speaking, listening, reading and writing. In addition, I found that the *Avenues* curriculum only applied to grades K-5. An alternate, much more advanced, curriculum called *High Point* had been adopted for the 6th grade EL students. Not only was it too difficult, it was also very reading and writing centered. My students needed significant support in listening and speaking. Without improvement in these areas, it seemed unreasonable to expect progress in the more complex areas of reading and writing, and even more unreasonable to expect these students to meet their grade level standards.

My challenge became to create a curriculum that would provide these students with listening and speaking practice, while also exposing them to level appropriate literature and writing. Through a series of preliminary assessments, including observations, interviews, and test scores, I developed a six week intervention program designed to improve my students' oral language abilities, and provide them with an opportunity to interact and respond to interesting, meaningful, well-illustrated text.

Background and Context

The community, district and school

Maple School District¹ is a small elementary school district located in the northeastern part of a large city in Northern California. The area the district serves is quite rural, increasingly so to the north. The city's center is located approximately 10 miles south. This combination of urban and rural influences creates an unusual atmosphere. The roads and neighborhoods have a distinctly rural feel. There are no sidewalks, an abundance of large empty lots, and many large fields that contain various types of livestock. However, because the district is located close to the city's center, many of the social challenges the community faces are urban in nature. These challenges include crime, drug use, and a high drop-out rate in junior high and high school. The schools in the district are very close together, all located within 2 miles of each other. There are several small shopping centers in the area, as well as gas stations, churches, and several car parts and repair shops. Many of the families in the community are first or second generation immigrants from a wide range of countries including: Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, the Fijian Islands, Russia, the Ukraine and Mexico. (See Appendix A for racial/ethnic demographics of district and school.)

Maple School District includes five K-6 elementary schools and one preschool. There are no middle schools or high schools in the district. Students attend school in neighboring districts when they reach the junior high and high school level. Recently, Maple School District's board of directors voted against a reorganization that would have merged the elementary and high school districts in the area. Many of the families and teachers in Maple School District believe that maintaining the small, intimate feel of the district is essential to its

¹ All names are pseudonyms

success. The district identifies the family-school connection as critical, and strong partnerships are developed among families, school, businesses and the community in large part because of the district's small size. Currently, approximately 2,000 students are enrolled in Maple School District. 84% of these students are receiving free or reduced lunch. The EL population in the district is 38% of the total school enrollment, with Hmong and Spanish being the most represented languages, making Maple School District a diverse place to be. The district's API score for 2005-06 was 721, a 21 point increase from the previous school year. (See Appendix B for API/AYP information for state, district and school.) Approximately 140 teachers and specialists are employed by Maple School District.

Maple School serves 450 students in grades K-6. The district's only preschool, which serves nearly 300 students, is also on campus. The demographics of Maple School are similar to those of the district as a whole (Appendix A). 146 of the 450 students are English Language Learners, with Hmong being the most represented language, closely followed by Spanish. The California English Language Development Test (CELDT) is administered annually to all students who identify a language other than English as the primary language spoken at home. Students then receive EL support based on these scores.

Maple School was created in 1947 as a K-8 school with about 550 students. A new design was created in the 1950's that added a cafeteria and auditorium. In 1957 it changed to a K-6 school. The school now houses a library, computer lab, and a large cafeteria/multi-purpose room. 18 grade level teachers teach at Maple School, as well as 13 specialists in reading, speech, EL, library, computers and physical education. Many of these specialists pull students out of the classroom, and some provide support within the classroom itself.

The district and school curriculum is California Standards-based. The language arts

program is Open Court, which students are exposed to starting in kindergarten. The math program is Scott Foresman. The district is in its second full year of the *Avenues* English Language Development program, used in grades K-5, which is published by Hampton Brown. Sixth grade EL students use High Point, also published by Hampton Brown. The district is also in its second full year of the Harcourt Science curriculum, used in grades 3-5. Primary classrooms use a variety of science materials, including the hands-on FOSS program. This is the first year that the district has used a new Social Studies curriculum, published by Scott Foresman.

My Classroom

As an EL specialist, I share my classroom with my EL teaching partner. She is also the school's physical education teacher, which means that we have an unusually wide array of supplies in our room. One complete wall by the door is dedicated to PE equipment (balls, cones, mats, jump ropes, etc) as well as a bookshelf filled with PE books and guides. She also uses the room on rainy days for PE instruction, so we try to keep as much open space available as possible. The three long tables in the center of the room, each with eight chairs, are easily moved if needed. The majority of instruction takes place at these tables. Three of my groups are small enough to keep at one table; the other classes use all tables. Instruction takes place at either the large white board in front of the classroom, or the smaller, rolling white board at the table. If I am reading a book with my students, I often ask them to sit on the carpet at the front of the room. Bulletin boards are mostly PE themed (healthy eating, active living, etc), with some wall space dedicated to work from the EL groups. My teaching partner and I share desk space in the back of the room. We have one computer (none available for students). EL text books are kept on one of 3 bookshelves. The other bookshelves hold picture books and novels for the

students to read during free reading time.

Three Cases

I see nine groups of students every day, each for 30-60 minutes of Structured English Language Immersion instruction. The students are placed in groups based on their performance on the CELDT test (beginning through advanced). I have chosen to focus my research on a small group of Sixth Grade CELDT Level One (beginning) students. One of the students is Fijian and two are Hmong. While all three students in the group earned an overall CELDT score of one (L1), each is quite unique in their written, oral and literacy proficiency. It is this diversity of needs that prompted me to choose these students for observation and research.

Case #1

My first focus student is Sara. She is a 12-year old Hmong speaking student that was born in the United States. Sara has attended school in the United States since kindergarten, yet still remains a CELDT level one language learner. This may be, in part, because no one else in her family speaks English, which means that she spoke only Hmong until she started school, and continues to speak only Hmong at home. Sara is a very conscientious, hard-working student. She is soft spoken and a bit timid. Her vocabulary is quite good, and she seems to enjoy writing when it is about a topic to which she can relate. While she is a good reader and decoder, she struggles to comprehend what she is reading, especially in the difficult sixth grade texts. Sara struggles most visibly in her oral language confidence. She does not always trust her word choices, and even though she may actually know the vocabulary, she often resorts to safe, basic language when speaking in class. It is my hope that Sara will become more confident as she is given more opportunities to practice her oral language in a smaller, less intimidating environment than her regular classroom.

Case #2

David is my second focus student. He is a 12-year old Hindi speaking student from the Fijian Islands. He moved to the United States 1 _ years ago, when he was in fourth grade. Because English is taught as a second language in Fijian schools, David has had significant exposure to the language. He enjoys the social component of school, but has very little interest in academics. The challenge for David is remaining focused in class, especially while working on a difficult, language-rich assignment. Clock-watching is one of David's favorite pastimes. His second favorite is asking "what we are doing next." The more difficult a task is, the less likely he is to fully engage; he simply becomes overwhelmed and gives up. While David is a very capable conversational playground talker, he seems to possess a very limited academic vocabulary. He does not enjoy reading and rarely chooses to read for fun. My goals for David include increasing his academic vocabulary, making reading more enjoyable and providing him with interesting literature to relate to and talk about.

Case #3

Johnny is my third and final focus student. He is an 11-year old Hmong speaking student that moved to the United States from Thailand 1 _ years ago, during his fourth grade year. Johnny has seven brothers and sisters, most of whom are younger. He is a very hard working student, but because he began school in the United States only recently, he struggles in almost every academic area. Johnny has a dry, witty sense of humor, and is very perceptive to sarcasm from others, a characteristic I don't see in many of my EL students. He is very good at "pretending" to understand a concept or idea, so much so that a casual observation would probably lead you to believe that he knows much more English than he actually does. While he is proficient in "playground" talk, he struggles with more difficult vocabulary and academic

language. He is a very hard worker, but is often disinterested in worksheets and basal readers, stating that he “doesn’t know why we need to know that stuff.” It is my hope that Johnny will find the literature in this program interesting and worth discussing. I am looking for increased vocabulary and oral participation.

Preliminary Data

CELDT Scores

As mentioned above, all EL students are pulled from their classrooms during the first two weeks of school to take the CELDT test. The entire test takes approximately two hours, but is broken down into smaller sections. Scores determine placement within the English Language Development Program at the school. Scores are also used to measure student progress from year to year and to possibly reclassify students as English Proficient. CELDT scores are applicable to my intervention because they give me an idea of the level to which I should tailor my instruction, as well as an appropriate level of growth to aim towards.

I decided to break down the CELDT scores and simplify the data by focus area (listening, speaking, reading and writing and overall). I found that Johnny and David scored at the beginning (B) level overall, the lowest possible CELDT level, and Sara scored at the second, or early intermediate (EI) level. However, Sara was at the very bottom of that range, not much above a beginning level. Within the sub-areas, all students scored at a beginning level in reading and writing. Speaking and listening scores were a bit higher for each student, with Sara and David in the EI range in both and Johnny scoring in the beginning range in listening and intermediate (I) in speaking. Based on these scores, I can see that reading and writing scores tend to be connected, while the connection between listening and speaking is a bit weaker. See Table 1 for the complete set of scores and Figures 1, 2 and 3 for graphs of each student's scores. See Appendix C for the CELDT scoring rubric used to determine proficiency levels.

Table 1. Student CELDT scores and proficiency levels across all tested areas

Scores	Sara	David	Johnny
Overall	447 (EI)	425 (B)	422 (B)
Listening	451 (EI)	408 (B)	483 (EI)
Speaking	456 (EI)	471 (I)	426 (EI)
Reading	433 (B)	368 (B)	411 (B)
Writing	449 (B)	456 (B)	370 (B)

Figure 1. CELDT scores for Sara

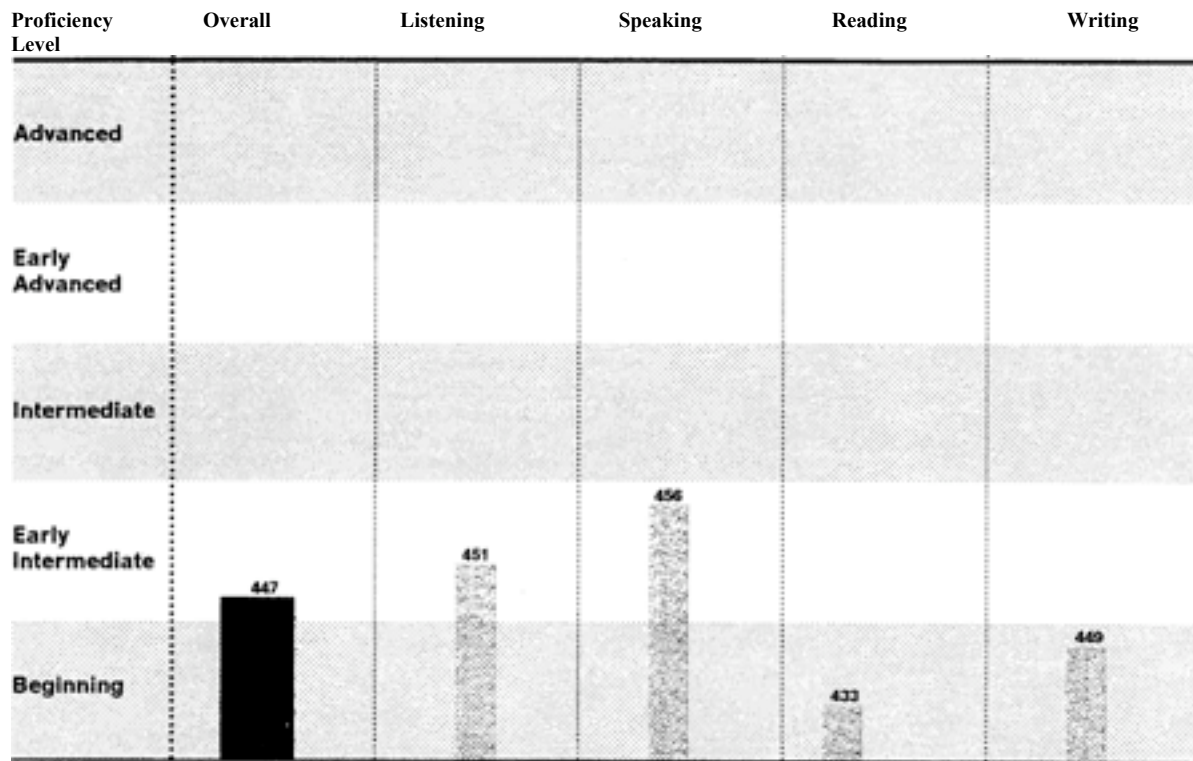


Figure 2. CELDT scores for David

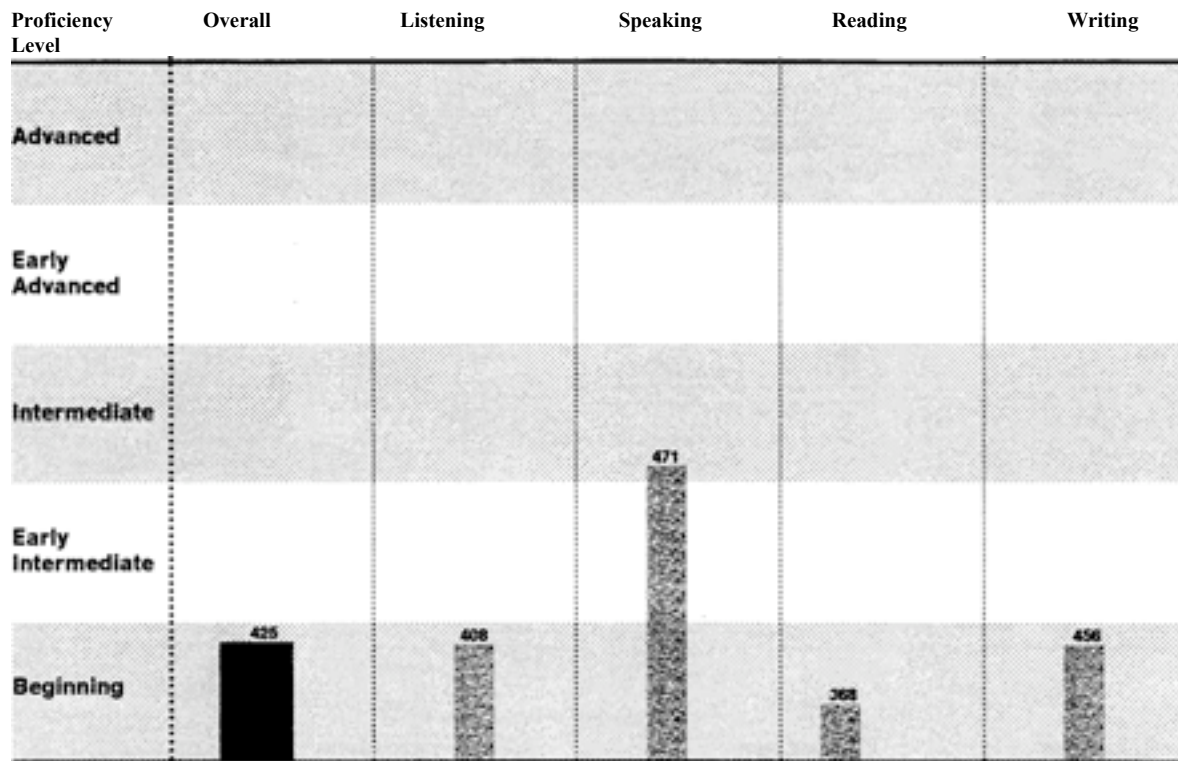
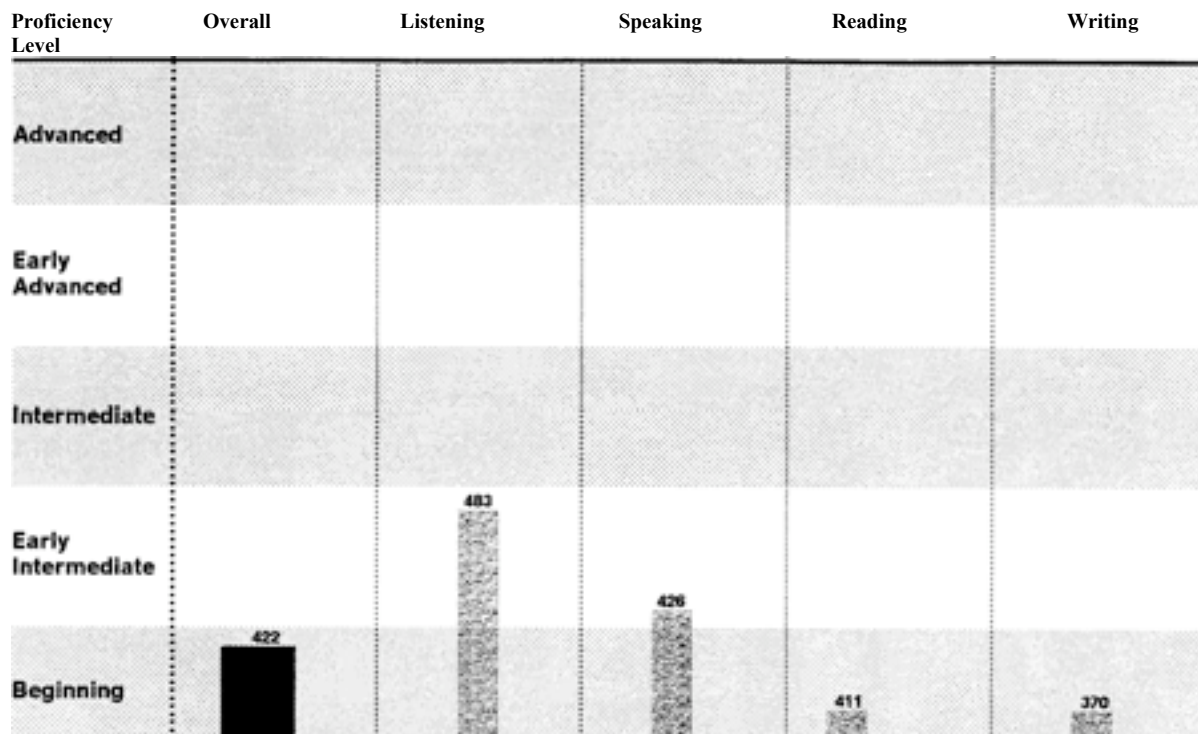


Figure 3. CELDT scores for Johnny



While reading and writing scores are relatively low compared to speaking and listening, the low speaking and listening scores are more of a concern, because the students are in sixth grade where the ability to understand and produce academic language in a classroom setting becomes increasingly important. Success in school depends on these skills, and reading and writing scores are unlikely to improve until listening and speaking is addressed. My analysis helped me to note that, while the three students' scores differ slightly across the sections and they are not all at exactly the same level, their speaking scores quite similar, which gives me a very good idea of how to focus instruction and set attainable goals.

These scores validate my decision to focus on oral language for this intervention. My hope is to bring each student "up a level." This means that if a student is speaking at a beginning level, I would like to see that student demonstrate speaking capabilities at an early intermediate level by the end of these four weeks. It is important to note that I do not expect students to begin performing a whole "level up" in all oral discussions from now on, but I feel that this is a reasonable goal to set within the boundaries of this intervention. I am hoping that students will feel comfortable within the small group setting, and familiar with each story after interacting with the texts for more than a week.

Interviews

Students were pulled aside during EL time for individual interviews. I sat with each student for approximately 10 minutes, asking questions and talking about their answers. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a better understanding of my students' lives outside of school, their personal likes and dislikes, their attitudes about school and their thoughts about particular learning styles. My goal was to obtain this information in a comfortable,

conversational setting. Table 2 shows some of the answers given by each student. Answers are paraphrased, not exact quotes.

Table 2. Answers to student Interviews

Question	Sara	David	Johnny
How old were you when you moved Here?	Born in U.S.	9 years old	9 years old
What language(s) do you speak at home?	Hmong only -- no one in the home speaks English	Fijian and English	Mostly Hmong - little English
Do you like school?	Yes	Yes	Yes
What is your favorite subject?	Math and reading	Math	Math
What is your least favorite subject?	Science	Writing	Reading
Do you like to read?	Yes, sometimes	Not really	No, too hard

These answers tell me a lot about my students as individuals, as well as trends they show as a group. Sara was the only one of the three born in the U.S. This explains why she is a better reader and writer and why her oral sentence structure is more developed. She has been exposed to English in school since kindergarten. Johnny and David arrived in this country less than two years ago, which explains their limited vocabulary and very low reading and writing scores. They are still getting used to being in school in the United States. I found it interesting that all three students listed math as their favorite subject. I believe that this is because math is slightly more accessible to them than reading or writing, with a bit less emphasis on language (although sixth grade math can be quite language rich). I was also struck by all three students' attitudes toward reading and writing – none of them showed much enthusiasm.

This information helps me plan instruction and find ways to make the group more comfortable. My goal is to provide these students with a space where they feel free to speak with less hesitation and less fear or making mistakes – not an easy task considering that all three

students come from homes where little or no English is spoken. I also want to show them that reading can be fun, interesting and purposeful. So often, EL students are only exposed to reading anthologies and short paragraphs with comprehension questions at the end. Reading becomes a chore. I am afraid that is what has happened with these students. It is my hope that after these five weeks the students will have a greater interest in reading and maybe even show a bit of excitement toward other books they could read. I also hope that they will have more confidence to talk about the books they read with expanded vocabulary and a reduced fear of risk.

Research Question and Intervention

How will repeated exposure to interesting, detailed, well-illustrated literature (picture books by Chris Van Allsburg) affect my EL students' ability and willingness to respond to the text with increasingly complex oral language? Will these students then demonstrate progress in the California ELD standards for listening, speaking and reading comprehension?

Purpose, Rationale and Review of Relevant Literature

As stated above, the students in my focus group demonstrate varying degrees of need in all areas of EL acquisition. Johnny and David read at extremely low reading levels. They all, however, seem to demonstrate the greatest difficulty with oral language and seem unwilling to take risks when they speak. They are all able to produce enough English to cope socially (on the playground) and even in a classroom setting, but they struggle with academic language (school language) and often rely on simple, comfortable words and phrases when communicating. All three students demonstrate oral language, reading comprehension, and written convention abilities consistent with the expectations for a beginning to early intermediate language proficient student, as outlined by the California English Language Development (ELD) Standards.

The California ELD Standards are organized by proficiency level (beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced and advanced), and were developed to parallel the state standards for English Language Arts (ELA). ELD standards are designed as pathways toward proficiency in ELA standards, and as EL students progress through the levels, the expectations begin to more closely resemble ELA standards. It is, therefore, important that students progress as rapidly as possible through the ELD standards to increase their chances of meeting their grade level standards.

My research will focus on several of the ELD standards, in hopes that my three students will progress from a beginning level to an early intermediate or intermediate level of proficiency. My main focus will be in two areas: listening and speaking and reading comprehension, with a secondary focus on fluency and systematic vocabulary development. Students at a beginning ELD level are expected to demonstrate several oral language capabilities: they should be able to ask and answer questions using simple sentences or phrases, begin to produce understandable English words and phrases (with inconsistent use of Standard English grammatical forms). As they progress to the early intermediate and intermediate levels, students are expected to prepare and deliver increasingly complex and detailed short oral presentations and demonstrate more consistent use of Standard English grammatical forms and sounds. Beginning students are also expected to demonstrate several reading comprehension capabilities: they must read and orally respond to simple text using key words or phrases, orally identify main ideas and details of familiar texts and point out features such as title, table of contents and chapter headings. As they advance to the early intermediate and intermediate levels, students must begin using increasingly complex sentences to orally respond to a text's content and main ideas.

A student's ability to meet these standards is in large part based on their exposure to *language level appropriate* literature, meaning literature at, or just slightly above their language capabilities. If they are expected to produce oral language, English learners must be given something to talk about. Rivers and Temperly (1978) agree that students need opportunities to talk in natural interactional contexts and for a variety of purposes: to establish and maintain social relationships, express reactions, give and seek information, solve problems, discuss ideas, teach and learn a skill, entertain or display achievement.

Often the topics discussed and the literature read in their classrooms are complex and covered too quickly to give these students the time and opportunity to think and respond. The students are struggling to simply comprehend the information, not even thinking about their own thoughts, feelings or ideas about the subject. The topics may also be things that are unfamiliar to EL students because they are not found in their culture. Additionally, when EL students do receive level appropriate language support, it is often in the form of worksheets or exercises that isolate vocabulary or grammar structures and lack meaningful connections to literature or experiences. Guadalupe Valdes (2001) points out this tendency for newly arrived students to be exposed to bits and pieces of artificial sounding language used in drills in ELD classes instead of the meaningful, interactive language used by their English speaking peers. Students benefit from interaction with native English speakers and as well as classroom participation; however, when students are asked to perform orally in the classroom, it often leads to high anxiety, leading them to participate less.

Pinnell (1997) describes ways that teachers can tailor their instructional strategies to meet the needs of English learners. Small group discussions on a variety of subject areas are important. Students must be given the chance to discuss a subject thoroughly. Students will also benefit from exposure to books that feed the imagination and lead to the creation of art, drama and discussion. If the teacher expects the students to produce language, they must be allowed to speak about topics and experiences that stimulate their curiosity and imagination.

EL students are also often reluctant to speak during whole class discussions because they are unsure of their word choice or sentence structure. So much emphasis is placed on speaking correctly (how often do we hear teachers correct a student's oral grammar?) that these students are uncomfortable sharing their ideas. This means that many EL students remain quiet, passive

classroom learners, unable or unwilling to participate in oral language discussions. Their lack of participation can lead teachers and other students to assume that the EL student is not comprehending the information, when in reality, they may simply be too nervous to speak up and demonstrate their knowledge orally. Therefore, it is essential that EL students be given the tools and the confidence to produce more oral language in order to fully assess their mastery of curriculum content. This means that a classroom must be comfortable and accepting, and the teacher must resist the urge to correct each mistake an EL student makes. Instead, the teacher can repeat back to the student what they have said, modeling correct oral language. Dudley-Marling and Searle (1991) agree that classroom environments must challenge and encourage students to use language to meet social and cognitive demands in their lives. The emotional setting must be considered: climate of trust and respect where students are free from ridicule and constant correction. A physical setting for talk must be created: classrooms must be arranged so that students have flexibility in working and interacting. Students must be grouped for instruction: they need frequent opportunities to talk with partners and in small groups. Diaz-Rico & Weed (2005) suggest literature response groups to help develop a community of readers and help students understand the richness of the literacy experience. They feel that each student should be given the opportunity to express ideas or thoughts about literature after it is read individually, as a group or by the teacher. The literature should be chosen and the instruction based around meaningful concepts, themes and areas of student interest.

For all of these reasons, I hope to show that an EL curriculum based on repeated exposure to interesting, detailed, well-illustrated literature (picture books by Chris Van Allsburg, which I chose based on the stunning illustrations and descriptive, unique storylines) will positively affect my EL students' ability and willingness to respond to the text with increasingly

complex oral language and lead them to demonstrate increased proficiency in the California ELD standards for listening, speaking and reading comprehension.

Intervention Plan

If I expect students to want to talk about a book, I am going to need to ensure that I give them the language to do so. Therefore, along with reading each of the four books to my students, my intervention will also include several days of vocabulary development, group and individual reading of the book, and targeted grammar instruction. Listed below are the strategies I plan to use to help my students become better readers and speakers.

1. Vocabulary exposure and pre-reading strategies

Dunlap and Weisman (2006) stress the importance of vocabulary development when learning another language. They suggest that teachers embed vocabulary into understandable contexts. Students will be taught to make connections to literature using background knowledge and prior experience. I will frontload the new vocabulary words (using realia, pictures, and gestures) to make literature more comprehensible. Students will be given the opportunity to make predictions about the text. Students will also be asked to identify types of literature (genre), as well as features of text (title, author, and illustrator).

2. Teacher Read-Aloud

I will model reading fluency, pacing, and tone with a first read-aloud, allowing students to listen and enjoy literature instead of worrying about decoding text or understanding vocabulary. Students must realize that it is okay to read for enjoyment instead of only for an assignment.

3. Choral reading and oral reading by students

After hearing the story read by the teacher, the students will have an opportunity to read aloud as a group and as individuals. This is an opportunity for repeated reading of the literature.

4. Interaction with text

Students will identify vocabulary words, favorite sentences, interesting language, etc. in text using a highlighter or underlining. Students will also use examples in the literature to practice grammar functions: verb tenses, adjectives, etc.

5. Oral language practice/response to literature

Students will be given the opportunity to form and share opinions about the book. Students will be asked to orally re-tell the story using only the pictures. They will then be asked to share thoughts, opinions and answers to open-ended comprehension questions. The focus is on oral, not written language. Minimal attention is given to error correction. Instead, the teacher repeats student responses, modeling correct language.

6. Home/School Connection

Parents were informed at conference time that their students would be participating in this intervention. Students will be given a photo-copied book of their own to take home and share with their parents and other family members. Students will be asked to read the book to their parents, or tell about their favorite part or picture. They will be allowed to do so in English or in their home language. According to Dunlap and Weisman, parents should not be discouraged from using the dominant language at home with their children because solid development in any language is far preferable to impoverished language development in English. This use of language helps with concept and vocabulary development that can then be transferred to the second language. Students must return their copy of the book signed by a parent by the end

of each week. The purpose of this is for parents to know what their children are reading, as well as for the students to have more interaction with the text. Progress made during this intervention will be discussed during end of the year conferences.

Baseline Data

My baseline data was taken during a weeklong period in November. I observed my three focus students during their daily _ hour structured English immersion program. My observation included notes taken during small group instruction and tape-recorded oral conversations. Because such a large part of my intervention is based on oral language progress, much of my measurement of this progress is based on observational data, so a baseline understanding of where my students are in their oral production is essential. This includes their vocabulary, sentence structure (grammar) and willingness to speak. I was also looking for trends in their ability to comprehend literature and demonstrate this comprehension orally. I asked my students to respond to a series of pictures drawn by Chris Van Allsburg (in hopes that my students would begin to be excited about the books they were to read over the next several weeks). One of the drawings depicted two children tossing a pebble into a lake. Written below were the words, “They could not believe their eyes when the stone came skipping back to them.” Summarized in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 are a selection of quotes and observations from this exercise.

Table 3. Selected quotes from November 17, 2006 discussion

Quotes	Sara	David	Johnny
Quote #1	“Um, I’m not sure how to say...”	“I am bored.”	“What is the word for...”
Quote #2	“Is that right?”	“I don’t know.”	“He have the...uh...thing”
Quote #3	“It is a magic pebble.”	“I don’t know the story.”	“He throw the rock in the, the....”

Table 4. Observations from November 17, 2006 discussion

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Vocabulary	Uncertain in her vocabulary choices	Gaps in vocabulary.	Large gaps in vocabulary knowledge.
Vocabulary	Knows more than she realizes she knows, but is hesitant to speak.	Gives up if words or concepts are too difficult to understand.	He takes few risks in his oral language. If he does not know a word, then he usually avoids talking about it.

Table 5. Observations from November 17, 2006 discussion

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Sentence Structure	Some verb tense and singular/plural problems, but overall very good grasp of sentence structure.	Mediocre sentence structure.	Mostly produces phrases.
Sentence Structure	Learns and applies grammar rules well.	Uses verb tenses correctly, but often struggles with singular and plural.	Not many complete sentences.

Table 6. Observations from November 17, 2006 discussion

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Confidence	This is her main challenge area.	He masks his lack of confidence behind not caring.	He is hesitant to take risks, but is quite chatty with the words he does know.
Confidence	She is uncertain of her words and very hesitant to speak for fear of making a mistake.	When things get difficult, he stops trying.	Moderately good at conversational English.

To accurately assess my students' oral language and reading comprehension competency, I will apply the following rubric to their oral conversations. This rubric has been created from a mixture of CELDT descriptors, California ELD standards and WIDA classroom frameworks for speaking and listening. Using the baseline data above, I would place all three students at a beginning proficiency level for listening, speaking and reading comprehension. I am hopeful

that the three students will progress from a beginning level to the early intermediate/intermediate levels in one or more categories.

Table 7. Oral Language Rubric (WIDA, 2006)

Proficiency	Listening	Speaking	Reading
Intermediate	Understand complex vocabulary and syntax with occasional gaps in comprehension.	Broader range of vocabulary used. Can tell a coherent story based on pictures using incomplete sentences. Understands English with grammatical errors.	Identify the meaning of words based on context. Determine the main idea of simple text.
Early Intermediate	Respond to and interact during reading. Understand and follow simple prompts and directions.	Can tell a story on picture sequence using phrases. Understands English with inconsistent standard grammatical forms. Prepare and deliver short presentations.	Begin to use context appropriate answers to literal comprehension questions from simple story.
Beginning	Understand vocabulary, to reading by pointing, no	Describe both single words. Basic use of vocabulary and description of characters in story. Ask and answer questions using simple sentence phrases.	Recall minor details from using key words and phrases. Compare self to characters in story. Follow repetitive language patterns.

Original Timeline

Table 8 details the six week (24 day) intervention plan. It is important to note that the fourth and final book, *Just a Dream*, will be read and discussed following a two week Winter Break during which the students will most likely speak primarily in their home languages.

Table 8. Intervention timeline

Plan for the intervention: Sessions 1-5 will all follow the same pattern. Using different books each week.	<i>Tasks & Resources</i>	<i>Timeline: 4 weeks total</i>
<p>Each book will take 6 days to cover and will follow the same process, below.</p> <p>Day One: Vocabulary Frontloading and Pre-reading strategies.</p> <p>Day Two: Teacher Read Aloud with some discussion</p> <p>Day Three: Group Reading</p> <p>Day Four: Interaction with text</p> <p>Day Five: Grammar Focus</p> <p>Day Six: Response to literature</p>	<p>Jumanji The Sweetest Fig The Polar Express Just Dream *All books by Chris Van Allsburg</p> <p>Students will be exposed to new vocabulary words and asked to begin making connections to literature using background knowledge and prior experiences.</p> <p>Teacher reads book to students. Some discussion of topics and ideas occur during before, during and after reading.</p> <p>Students will choral read and individually read book aloud.</p> <p>Highlight vocabulary word, favorite part</p> <p>Grammar Day: students will focus on a grammar/sentence structure from the book.</p> <p>Students will be given the opportunity to organize their thoughts about the text and then orally respond to questions and prompts from teacher.</p>	<p>Book: Jumanji (or 1 of other 3) Vocabulary list: to be determined Realia/drawings</p> <p>Book</p> <p>Book (4 copies made for students)</p> <p>Book copies, highlighter pens</p> <p>Copies of text Pens and highlighters</p> <p>Book Paper for writing and drawing Comfortable, safe environment to promote oral language.</p>

Account of Intervention and In-the-Midst Notes



Book One: *Jumanji*

I began with *Jumanji* (in my opinion the most exciting of all of the books) with the hope that it would immediately grab my group's interest and attention. *Jumanji* is the story of two children left home alone one afternoon. Bored with their usual puzzles and games, they go to the park, where they find an abandoned board game, *Jumanji: A Jungle Adventure*. A note on the game warns to **Read Instructions Carefully**. One roll of the dice proves that the game is not going to be boring, and the children watch in amazement and horror as the game comes to life square by square. As they play, they are faced with a lion chasing them up the stairs, monkeys destroying their kitchen, a python curled up on the mantle, a monsoon soaking the living room and a volcano spreading hot lava throughout the house. The instructions tell them that the game will not end until one player reaches the end of the game and shouts *Jumanji!* The children are able to finally end the game and they rush back to the park to put it back where they found it. Van Allsburg's black and white pencil drawings depict each of the adventures as they unfold with glorious detail.

Before reading the book, I introduced 20 new vocabulary words (see Appendix D for a complete list of words). The words ranged from somewhat easy (they might recognize the word) to very difficult (needed to define in order to make the story understandable). I wrote the list in two columns on a large white board then I asked the students if any of them looked familiar. I

was impressed with the students' ability to define almost half of the words and I checked them off as we went along. Some they knew quickly:

“Oh, I know what **silence** is, it mean no talk,” said Sarah.

“**Thunder** come out of the sky, like storm,” Johnny offered.

“**Bored** is like, um, I am bored,” was David's contribution.

Other words, they talked through together:

“Um, Rhino....Rhin....Rhinoc...” starts Johnny.

“**Rhinoceros**,” finished Sara, “it like a big animal. Like elephant. And **horror** mean um, nervous, I think.

“**Horror** is like scary movies,” said David, “I like those.”

When the students finished defining all the words that they could, I went through the remaining definitions using pictures, real-life examples and physical representations when necessary. The students seemed excited to start reading the book the next day after previewing some of the vocabulary. David said that he knew it was going to be an adventure book because of the words.

The following day, I read the book aloud. I admit I was expecting a captivated audience. After all, the reason why I had chosen this book for the intervention was because of its can't-wait-to-turn-the-page quality. My audience was not captivated. More like captive. David actually got up out of his seat as I began to read the last three (and most climatic) pages of the story.

“It's time to go,” he announced.







“Sit down....NOW,” was my response. “I know it is 10:30, but you need to wait until I am finished before you leave.”

I was disappointed. I had hoped that the students would be excited about the book and enjoy having it read aloud to them. I began to worry that my plan to entice them into practicing and applying their oral language skills through literature was not going to work. But things got better....

After three more days of interaction with the book that included a choral re-read, a vocabulary search and highlight, and a grammar lesson where the students searched for and acted out action verbs (stampeded, hissed, charged, slammed, etc), we reached our last *Jumanji* day. That day began with David running into my room yelling that *Jumanji* was his very favorite book ever.

“I read it to my dad,” he boasted. (I had given each student a photocopy of the book to take home and share with their parents and siblings.) David proceeded to tell everyone all about the book. He even mentioned that he was going to rent the movie over the weekend. I started to feel a little better, but I still wasn’t sure what to expect from the discussion I had planned for that day. We started with a re-tell of the book using only the pictures, followed by a teacher-led discussion. Tables 10, 11 and 12 summarize what each student contributed to the discussion.

Table 10. Group picture re-tell of *Jumanji*

Sara		David		Johnny	
					
<p data-bbox="240 800 537 831">It a lot foggy in this picture.</p>		<p data-bbox="634 800 984 863">In this picture Peter and Judy are playing and making a mess.</p>		<p data-bbox="1105 800 1349 831">He ran to his bedroom.</p>	
					
<p data-bbox="207 1409 570 1440">Then here they finished the game.</p>		<p data-bbox="643 1409 976 1472">They roll the dice² and start the game.</p>		<p data-bbox="1049 1409 1414 1440">The lion chase him and he run fast.</p>	

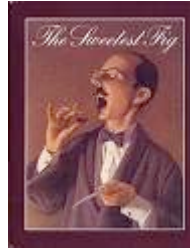
² All bolded words are from weekly vocabulary lists

Table 11. Observations of student discussion of *Jumanji*

Observation	Sara	David	Johnny
Vocabulary Usage	Remembers vocabulary definitions but hesitates to use them in the discussion.	Excellent use of vocabulary during discussion. Used without prompting – correctly!	Used one vocabulary word and could not remember definitions to any others.
Words referenced	Guide, horror	Guests, dice, boring, horror, slouched, jungle.	Dice.
Overall Sentence Structure	Good sentence structure. Word order is correct. Trouble with verb tense and plurals.	Complete sentences. Used all action verbs correctly: ran, chased, hissed. Correct verb tense. Correct use of singular and plural nouns.	Used mostly phrases. Coherent, but limited. Not as much oral production as during re-tell.
Reading Comprehension	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.

Table 12. Observations of student discussion of *Jumanji*

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Interest level	Gave some opinions, but only when prompted.	Super excited about the story, said that he had read it several times.	Not as enthusiastic as the others.
Engagement	Mentioned that she enjoys chapter books better than picture books (maybe she feels that this is too easy for her?)	Wrote a short story about the story (not an assignment – he did this on his own!)	Actually less participation in this activity than in more structured worksheet drills.



Book Two: *The Sweetest Fig*

This book is set in Paris and is about a very cranky, unlikable man named Monsieur Bibot. He is a dentist and, after treating an elderly woman with a toothache, is appalled to discover that she is unable to afford payment for his services. Instead she gives him two ripe figs and tells him that they will “make all his dreams come true.” He thinks she is crazy and waves her away. He soon finds out, however, that she is not as crazy as he thinks. The morning after eating the first fig he awakens to find that his dream from the night before is, in fact, coming true (a dream in which he finds himself in front of a restaurant wearing only his underwear!). He is determined to use the second fig to his fullest advantage and practices dreaming that he is the richest man in the world. The night that he decides to eat the fig, he catches his dog (who he has treated horribly throughout the story) eating the fig off his plate as he turns his back. The story ends with the dog’s dream of trading lives with his master coming true.

Again, the students were exposed to 20 new vocabulary words before reading the story. (See Appendix D for complete list of words). As before, students were given the opportunity to identify words they were familiar with before I defined the remaining words. Days 2-5 were spent repeating the read-aloud, choral read, vocabulary search and highlight, and grammar practice (this time finding adjectives). The sixth day was our re-tell and discussion. Quotes and observations are summarized in Tables 12, 14 and 15.

Table 13. Selected quotes from picture re-tell of *The Sweetest Fig*


Sara	David	Johnny
 <p data-bbox="131 583 516 615">He helping people to take tooth out.</p>	 <p data-bbox="597 583 1003 680">He went home and ate the fig and said it was delicious and the dog was watching him.</p>	 <p data-bbox="1084 583 1490 646">This man help the old woman and the old woman give him a fik...um...fig</p>
 <p data-bbox="110 974 516 1071">He have a dream and it come true that he go to a store with underwear and a tank top.</p>	 <p data-bbox="597 974 1003 1071">In his dream the Awful [Eiffel] Tower fell down. No one noticed him in his underwear because they were watching the tower.</p>	 <p data-bbox="1084 974 1490 1037">The old man think the old woman crazy. She have no money and he mad.</p>
 <p data-bbox="142 1388 516 1451">He see himself in the reflection in window and he embarrassed.</p>	 <p data-bbox="613 1388 1003 1451">The dog eat the fig. The man hear the something fell –the dish.</p>	 <p data-bbox="1084 1388 1490 1484">The old man, he take a walk with his dog in the hallway....um, alley. Then they saw the tall [Eiffel Tower] fell down.</p>
 <p data-bbox="110 1808 516 1871">He was dreaming about that he was rich and had lots of money...luxury?</p>	 <p data-bbox="613 1808 1003 1896">The dog slept and dreamed that the dog will be the man and the man will be the dog.</p>	 <p data-bbox="1084 1808 1490 1839">He try to open the fig and try to eat a fig.</p>

Table 14. Observations from discussion of *The Sweetest Fig*

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Vocabulary Usage	Remembers and uses vocabulary during both the re-tell and the discussion.	Good recollection of events in story and use of vocabulary.	Good vocabulary usage.
Words referenced	Reflection, luxury, fussy, fig.	Reflection, fig, Eiffel Tower.	Fig, alley
Sentence Structure	Sentence structure is okay. Some misuse of verb tense, plurals.	Very good sentence structure. Some jumping between tenses (the man hear, the tower fell).	Mostly phrases, although several attempts at complete sentences.
Reading Comprehension	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.

Table 15. Observations from discussion of *The Sweetest Fig*

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Confidence and willingness to participate	Continues to make progress in willingness to share opinions about the story. Example: "I think the man mean. Good ending."	Willing to participate, but did not enjoy this book as much as <i>Jumanji</i> , so less enthusiasm during discussion.	Interested in book, especially liked the ending where the dog becomes the man and the man becomes the dog. "Mean man, good dog eat fig."
Interest level	Comments that she liked the pictures in this book better than <i>Jumanji</i> because they are in color.	Favorite part was when the man was by the Eiffel Tower in his underwear. Gave great descriptive detail about this part.	More participation than last week. Maybe he is gaining confidence within this discussion format.



Book Three: *The Polar Express*

This is possibly Allsburg's most well-known book. It is about a young boy whose friends are beginning to tell him that Santa Claus does not exist. As he waits in his bed one Christmas Eve to hear proof of Santa's existence in the form of reindeer hooves, he instead hears another sound: a train whistle. Looking out of his bedroom window, he sees a large steam-engine train waiting in front of his house. After reluctantly climbing aboard at the urging of the conductor he learns that the train is headed to the North Pole, where they will see Santa and someone will receive the first gift of Christmas. The boy ends up being the lucky one, and he chooses a bell from Santa's sleigh. When he returns to the train, the boy realizes that he has lost the bell through a hole in his robe pocket, and he is devastated. The next morning, while opening presents with his family, the boy notices a small wrapped present under the tree. Inside is the bell, with a note from Santa. When he shakes the bell, his parents comment that it is broken. Only the boy and his sister are able to hear it, because they still believe that Santa truly exists.

Again, the students were exposed to 20 new vocabulary words before reading the story. (See Appendix D for complete list of words.) As before, students were given the opportunity to identify words they were familiar with before I defined the remaining words. Days 2-5 were spent repeating the read-aloud, choral read, vocabulary search and highlight, and grammar practice. The sixth day was our re-tell and discussion. Quotes and observations are summarized in Tables 16, 17, and 18.

Table 16. Quotes from picture re-tell of *The Polar Express*.

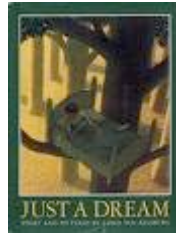
Sara	David	Johnny
 <p>All the kids go on the train and they wearing their pajamas.</p>	 <p>In this picture is looking outside the window and he thinks that Santa Claus is outside, but it is a train.</p>	 <p>Train go North Pole and come pick up little boy and he go see Santa Claus and he....</p>
 <p>Looking for Santa.</p>	 <p>They went up the mountain to the North Pole.</p>	 <p>At North Pole. Ocean Liner. Looks like an Ocean Liner.</p>
 <p>When Santa go to drive his sleigh to take presents to each family.</p>	 <p>This picture they put toys inside the bag and put them inside the sled and bye-bye.</p>	 <p>Santa Claus ask the boy what he wants. He said he want bell off the reindeer because he will tell his friends that Santa Claus is real.</p>
 <p>Because there is magic and only person who believe can hear it.</p>	 <p>Boy comes to house and say bye and close door.</p>	 <p>He open his present and he saw little box under the tree and he pick it up and open it and it a bell. He and his sister can hear it.</p>

Table 17. Observations from discussion of *The Polar Express*

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Vocabulary Usage	Remembers and uses vocabulary during both the re-tell and the discussion.	Good recollection of events in story and use of vocabulary.	Very good vocabulary usage.
Words referenced	Sleigh, believe	North Pole	North Pole, ocean liner
Sentence Structure	Some phrases. Missing articles.	Some phrases and missing words.	Best sentence structure yet. Possibly because he found this story the most interesting and had a lot to share because he could relate to his own life.
Reading Comprehension	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.

Table 15. Observations from discussion of *The Polar Express*

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Interest level	Mentioned that she loved the pictures in this book.	Kept talking about how much better the movie is than the book. I thought this would give him more to talk about, but not really.	By far his favorite of all the books, and it shows in his speaking.
Willingness to participate	Related several of the pictures to her own experiences (Christmas, presents, etc.)	Did talk a little about not believing in Santa because he is too fat to fit down the chimney.	Lots of talk about the magic of Christmas, presents, Santa Claus and what he would do if this happened to him.



Book Four: *Just a Dream*

The fourth and final book, *Just a Dream*, is about a boy named Walter. Despite his fascination with the future, he does not seem to think it is important to take care of the environment. He does not recycle, throws trash on the ground, and scoffs as his next door neighbor plants a tree in her yard. One night when he falls asleep his bed travels to the future, but it is not the way he had it pictured. Giant smokestacks pour smog into the air, trees are almost nonexistent, cars sit in gridlock for hours, the Grand Canyon is unrecognizable and fish no longer swim in the ocean. When he wakes up, he realizes how important it is to respect and protect the environment, and he is determined to change the future. He begins to recycle and plants a tree. The next dream he has is of a clean, peaceful earth.

Again, the students were exposed to 20 new vocabulary words before reading the story. (See Appendix D for complete list of words.) As before, students were given the opportunity to identify words they were familiar with before I defined the remaining words. Days 2-5 were spent repeating the read-aloud, choral read, vocabulary search and highlight, and grammar practice. The sixth day was our re-tell and discussion. Tables 19, 20, and 21 summarize the data from the picture re-tell and group discussion.

Table 19. Selected quotes from group picture re-tell of *Just a Dream*

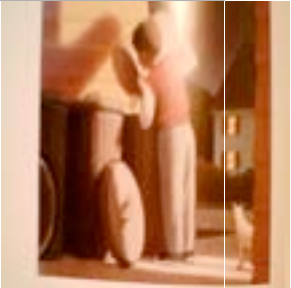

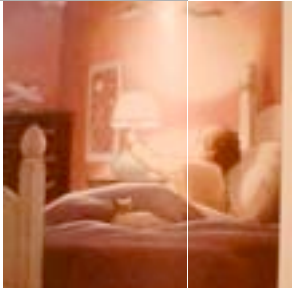






Sara	David	Johnny
 <p>Walter dump the trash out...he don't care about separating. He eager to watch future show with robots.</p>	 <p>He is sleeping in a trash can. The guy with the bulldozer is pushing the trash in the dump.</p>	 <p>He go to sleep and he dream about the robot but he dream about trash.</p>
 <p>He dream the smokestack. They making medicine for coughing.</p>	 <p>He is watching some people celebrating in the boat because they never caught fish and now they do.</p>	 <p>Hotel Everest. He saw a lot of guys came to the Hotel Everest on top of the mountain.</p>
 <p>They are in the Grand Canyon in the desert and Walter met a cowgirl. They can't see because of the haze and foggy.</p>	 <p>He is sitting in his bedroom. He had a bad dream. He puts the trash in the trash can.</p>	 <p>He went to the sky. He saw lots of birds. They cannot see because it too foggy.</p>

Table 20. Selected quotes from group discussion of *Just a Dream*

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Vocabulary Usage	Correct and somewhat frequent use of vocabulary	Correct, infrequent use of vocabulary	No vocabulary usage.
Words Referenced	Future, smokestack, Grand Canyon, haze	Celebrating	N/A
Sentence Structure	Very good sentence structure. Complete, detailed sentences with minor errors.	Very good sentence structure. Very few errors.	Mostly phrases, but with descriptive words.
Reading Comprehension	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.	Demonstrates solid understanding of story.

Table 21. Observations of group discussion of *Just a Dream*

Observations	Sara	David	Johnny
Confidence	Seems comfortable with re-telling story – confident.	Loses interest quickly – demonstrates boredom by laying his head down on the desk.	Moderate participation during re-tell.
Interest level	Thinks for a second before speaking.	More attentive during re-tell than discussion question time.	Very hesitant to give opinion about story.
Willingness to participate	During discussion question time, she only speaks when asked specifically to so.	Many non-verbal gestures: shrugging, nodding.	Almost zero participation during discussion question portion.
Engagement	Seems unsure of her opinions. Maybe searching for safe words when speaking?	Some parts of the story are more interesting to him than others.	Looking in all directions except for the correct one. Checks clock often.

Data Analysis

Analyzing and Coding the Data using the WIDA Rubric

To analyze my data, I first isolated the notes I had collected for each student, for each book. After reading through the notes and transcripts of the discussions, I looked for obvious patterns in each student's oral language production. The questions that guided my thinking were: Are the students attempting to use the vocabulary words we learned during the week in their speech? Are the students attempting to use complete sentences as they re-tell the story? Are they using complete sentences as they give opinions about the story? Is there a difference in their willingness to re-tell the story vs. their willingness to give original thoughts or opinions about what they read? Are the students able to make and vocalize personal connections to the story in order to further demonstrate comprehension? Are the students more comfortable with this discussion format during and after the five week period? Do the students seem engaged, or are they disinterested or bored?

After asking and answering these questions about each student, I attempted to apply my oral language rubric to further assess and analyze where each student falls in the oral language spectrum. I kept in mind that each student started the intervention at a beginning level, so I was looking for progress based on that initial group discussion. My comparison of these discussions can be found later in my analysis. The same rubric was used to assess each week's discussion, so I was able to track progress over the six weeks, instead of simply a beginning and end. In applying the rubric I was able to isolate specific aspects of oral language production and assign a "level" for each one.

For each student’s oral performance during the re-tell and discussion, I applied the following rubric in Table 22.

Table 22. Oral Language Rubric

Proficiency Level	Listening	Speaking	Reading
Intermediate (I)	Understands some complex vocabulary and syntax with occasional gaps on comprehension.	Broader range of vocabulary used. Can tell a coherent story based on pictures using incomplete sentences. Understandable English with some grammatical errors.	Identifies the meaning of words based on context. Determines the main idea of a simple text.
Early Intermediate (EI)	Responds to and interact during shared reading. Understands and follow simple prompts and directions.	Can tell a story based on picture sequence using phrases. Understandable English with inconsistent use of standard grammatical forms. Prepares and delivers short oral presentations.	Begins to use words in context appropriately, answers literal comprehension questions from a simple story.
Beginning (B)	Understands basic vocabulary, responds to reading by pointing, nodding.	Describes book with single words, phrases. Basic use of vocabulary and description of characters in story. Asks and answers questions using simple sentences or phrases.	Recalls minimal details from story using key words and phrases. Compares self to characters in story. Follows repetitive language patterns.

Tables 23, 24 and 25 apply the rubric and summarize my thoughts for the each student’s oral language production during the picture re-tell and group discussions. I have chosen what I consider to be each student’s best quote from each book to track their progress. The shaded row represents the week when I feel each student produced their best oral language.

Table 23. Quotes with rubric application for Sara

Book	Quote	WIDA Rubric Analysis (Speaking)	WIDA Rubric Analysis (Reading Comprehension)	My Analysis
<i>Jumanji</i>	It a lot foggy in this picture.	(B) Describes book with single words, phrases. Basic use of vocabulary and description of characters in story. Asks and answers questions using simple sentences or phrases.	(B) Recalls minimal details from story using key words and phrases. Compares self to characters in story. Follows repetitive language patterns.	Short description of picture, using incomplete sentence. No elaboration on what is happening, which demonstrates minimal comprehension of text.
<i>The Sweetest Fig</i>	He have a dream and it come true that he go to a store with underwear and a tank top.	(E1) Can tell a story based on picture sequence using phrases. Understandable English with inconsistent use of standard grammatical forms. Prepares and delivers short oral presentations.	(E1) Begins to use words in context appropriately, answers literal comprehension questions from a simple story.	Complete sentence with errors. Very understandable, but missing some words. Adequate detail in description, indicating increasing reading comprehension.
<i>The Polar Express</i>	Because there is magic and only person who believe can hear it.	(E1) Can tell a story based on picture sequence using phrases. Understandable English with inconsistent use of standard grammatical forms. Prepares and delivers short oral presentations.	(I) Identifies the meaning of words based on context. Determines the main idea of a simple text.	Complete sentence with one error. Infers author's meaning (only people who believe can hear bell ringing) which demonstrates a much higher level of reading comprehension.
<i>Just a Dream</i>	They are in the <u>Grand Canyon</u> in the desert and Walter met a cowgirl. They can't see because of the <u>haze</u> and foggy.	(I) Broader range of vocabulary used. Can tell a coherent story based on pictures using incomplete sentences. Understandable English with some grammatical errors.	(I) Identifies the meaning of words based on context. Determines the main idea of a simple text.	Longer, complete sentences with few errors. Very understandable. Gives details and reasons, demonstrating understanding of text.

Table 24. Quotes with rubric application for David

<i>Book</i>	Quote	WIDA Rubric Analysis (Speaking)	WIDA Rubric Analysis (Reading Comprehension)	My Analysis
<i>Jumanji</i>	In this picture Peter and Judy are playing and making a mess.	(I) Broader range of vocabulary used. Can tell a coherent story based on pictures using incomplete sentences. Understandable English with some grammatical errors.	(I) Identifies the meaning of words based on context. Determines the main idea of a simple text.	Excellent sentence structure uses verbs consistently and correctly. Demonstrates comprehension of text.
<i>The Sweetest Fig</i>	He went home and ate the fig and said it was delicious and the dog was watching him.	(I) Broader range of vocabulary used. Can tell a coherent story based on pictures using incomplete sentences. Understandable English with some grammatical errors.	(I) Identifies the meaning of words based on context. Determines the main idea of a simple text.	Excellent sentence structure, uses verbs consistently and correctly. Demonstrates comprehension of text.
<i>The Polar Express</i>	In this picture is looking outside the window and he thinks that Santa Claus is outside, but it is a train.	(I) Broader range of vocabulary used. Can tell a coherent story based on pictures using incomplete sentences. Understandable English with some grammatical errors.	(I) Identifies the meaning of words based on context. Determines the main idea of a simple text.	Excellent sentence structure uses verbs consistently and correctly. Demonstrates comprehension of text.
<i>Just a Dream</i>	He is sleeping in a trash can. The guy with the bulldozer is pushing the trash in the dump.	(I) Broader range of vocabulary used. Can tell a coherent story based on pictures using incomplete sentences. Understandable English with some grammatical errors.	(EI) Begins to use words in context appropriately, answers literal comprehension questions from a simple story.	Sentence structure is good. Demonstrates adequate comprehension of text, but without many details.

Table 25. Quotes with rubric application for Johnny

<i>Book</i>	Quote	WIDA Rubric Analysis (Speaking)	WIDA Rubric Analysis (Reading Comprehension)	My Analysis
<i>Jumanji</i>	He ran to his bedroom.	(E1) Can tell a story based on picture sequence using phrases. Understandable English with inconsistent use of standard grammatical forms. Prepares and delivers short oral presentations.	(B) Recalls minimal details from story using key words and phrases. Compares self to characters in story. Follows repetitive language patterns.	Complete sentence. No detail. Understands text, but no elaboration to demonstrate deeper comprehension.
<i>The Sweetest Fig</i>	The old man, he take a walk with his dog in the hallway.....um, alley . Then they saw the tall [Eiffel Tower] fell down.	(B) Describes book with single words, phrases. Basic use of vocabulary and description of characters in story. Asks and answers questions using simple sentences or phrases.	(B) Recalls minimal details from story using key words and phrases. Compares self to characters in story. Follows repetitive language patterns.	Words and phrases. Some vocabulary used. Basic understanding of story, but mixes up details and sequence of events.
<i>The Polar Express</i>	Santa Claus ask the boy what he wants. He said he want bell off the reindeer because he will tell his friends that Santa Claus is real.	(I) Broader range of vocabulary used. Can tell a coherent story based on pictures using incomplete sentences. Understandable English with some grammatical errors.	(I) Identifies the meaning of words based on context. Determines the main idea of a simple text.	Excellent sentence structure. Excellent account of events with detail. Demonstrates complete comprehension of text, inferring the author's meaning (wants bell to prove Santa is real).
<i>Just a Dream</i>	He go to sleep and he dream about the robot but he dream about trash.	(E1) Can tell a story based on picture sequence using phrases. Understandable English with inconsistent use of standard grammatical forms. Prepare and deliver short oral presentations.	(E1) Begins to use words in context appropriately, answers literal comprehension questions from a simple story.	Complete sentence with some errors. No detail. Understands text, but no elaboration to demonstrate deeper comprehension.

Comparing Data Case by Case: Outcome vs. Baseline

Tables 26, 27 and 28 show quotes from my baseline data set on November 17, 2006 and quotes from the January 12, 2007 picture re-tell of *Just a Dream*. Placing these quotes side by side allows me to make a before and after comparison. Again, the questions that guided my thinking were: Are the students attempting to use the vocabulary words we learned during the week in their speech? Are the students attempting to use complete sentences as they re-tell the story? Are they using complete sentences as they give opinions about the story? Is there a difference in their willingness to re-tell the story using the pictures vs. their willingness to give original thoughts or opinions about what they read? Are the students able to make and vocalize personal connections to the story in order to further demonstrate comprehension? Are the students more comfortable with this discussion format during and after the five week period? Do the students seem engaged, or are they disinterested or bored?

Table 26. Comparison of November 17, 2006 and January 12, 2007 discussions for Sara

Sara	
11/17/06	1/12/07
<p>_ Um, I'm not sure how to say, he pebble.</p> <p>_ Is that right?</p> <p>_ Yes...I think, no?</p> <p>_ It is a magic pebble.</p>	<p>_ Walter dump the trash out...he don't about separating. He eager to watch show with robots.</p> <p>_ He dream the smokestack. They m medicine for coughing.</p> <p>_ They are in the Grand Canyon in t and Walter met a cowgirl. They can't because of the haze and foggy.</p>

Sara’s vocabulary usage has improved tremendously over the six weeks and her responses show an extreme boost in oral language confidence. Her sentences are mostly complete, with few errors that affect meaning. Her sentence structure tended to be better during the picture re-tell, probably because the language was more familiar and she had to take fewer risks. Sara’s descriptions became much richer and much, much more detailed, and she consistently used several of the vocabulary words. These improvements are obviously a result of increased vocabulary practice during the week, as well as familiarity with each story. This is great, and exactly the outcome I was hoping for, although I am unsure of how this progress will translate to her oral language production in general. It is my hope that her increased confidence will lead her to take more risks with language and apply her new skill to other conversations and class discussions.

Table 27. Comparison of November 17, 2006 and January 12, 2007 discussions for David

David	
11/17/06	1/12/07
_ I am bored.	_ He is sleeping in a trash can. The guy with the bulldozer is pushing the trash in the dump .
_ I don’t know.	
_ Are we done?	_ He is watching some people celebrating in the boat because they never caught fish and now they do.
_ What are we doing next?	
_ I don’t know the story.	_ He is sitting in his bedroom. He had a bad dream. He puts the trash in the trash can.

David has made great improvement. He is much more engaged in discussion (although I am not sure if he could have been any less engaged than before). His sentence structure is fantastic; his use of verb tenses, singular and plural noun, and subject verb agreement are all quite consistent. The greatest improvement has been in David’s attitude. He asked “what are we doing next?” much less frequently during these six weeks. I am excited that these books seemed

to have piqued his interest and given him a reason to speak, and that the language he is producing is at a much higher level than at the start of the intervention. I am unsure how this progress will translate to other activities. I am concerned that if a project, assignment or book does not catch David’s interest, he will not find the motivation to produce the kind of language he did during this intervention. I feel that interest in the literature was a huge contributor to David’s success during this intervention, perhaps more so than for Sara or Johnny.

Table 28. Comparison of November 17, 2006 and January 12, 2007 discussions for Johnny

Johnny	
11/17/06	1/12/07
<p>_What is the word for....</p> <p>_He have the...uh...thing .</p> <p>_He throw the rock in the, the....</p>	<p>_He go to sleep and he dream about the robot but he dream about trash.</p> <p>_Hotel Everest. He saw a lot of guys came to the Hotel Everest on top of the mountain.</p> <p>_He went to the sky. He saw lots of birds. They cannot see because it too foggy.</p>

Johnny started the intervention as the student who struggles the most and ended the intervention as the student who struggles the most. At times, Johnny seems to have decided that he does not want to take risks with language – even (and sometimes especially) with prodding. He did, however show some improvement during many of the picture re-tells. His descriptions became a bit more detailed toward the end of the intervention and he began to demonstrate increased comprehension of the story. Johnny was the least likely to use the vocabulary we covered each week. He mostly produced phrases, although his description of *The Polar Express* included several complete, complex sentences. Johnny was much more comfortable with the picture re-tell format than he was with the discussion.

**A little more data:
Observation of Attitude**

Tables 29, 30 and 31 summarize my observations of the students' interest level and confidence level during the November and January discussions.

Table 29. Comparison of November 17, 2006 and January 12, 2007 discussions for Sara

Sara	
11/17/06	1/12/07
<p>_Confidence is her main challenge area.</p> <p>_She is uncertain of her words and very hesitant to speak for fear of making a mistake.</p> <p>_I worry that if this is how she is in such a small group, then she is likely to be very quiet in a whole class setting.</p>	<p>_ Seems comfortable with re-telling story – confident.</p> <p>_Thinks for a second before speaking.</p> <p>_During discussion question time, she only speaks when asked specifically to so.</p> <p>_ Seems unsure of her opinions. Maybe searching for safe words when speaking?</p>

Table 30. Comparison of November 17, 2006 and January 12, 2007 discussions for David

David	
11/17/06	1/12/07
<p>_He masks his lack of confidence behind not caring.</p> <p>_When things get difficult, he stops trying.</p> <p>_With more confidence, he would have more incentive and drive to succeed.</p>	<p>_Loses interest quickly – demonstrates boredom by laying his head down on the desk.</p> <p>_More attentive during re-tell than discussion question time.</p> <p>_Many non-verbal gestures: shrugging, nodding.</p> <p>_Some parts of the story are more interesting to him than others.</p>

Table 31. Comparison of November 17, 2006 and January 12, 2007 discussions for Johnny

Johnny		
11/17/06		1/12/07
<p>_ He is hesitant to take risks, but is quite chatty with the words he does know.</p> <p>_ Especially good at conversational English.</p> <p>_ His confidence diminishes in a more academic setting.</p>		<p>_ Moderate participation during re-tell.</p> <p>_ Very hesitant to give opinion about story.</p> <p>_ Almost zero participation during discussion question portion.</p> <p>_ Looking in all directions except for the correct one. Checks clock often.</p>

Conclusions

I will draw conclusions by attempting to answer my original research questions. I will then pose and attempt to answer a series of related sub-questions about my students' progress and overall performance and the implications this intervention will have on my future teaching.

How will repeated exposure to interesting, detailed, well-illustrated literature (picture books by Chris Van Allsburg) affect my EL students' ability and willingness to respond to the text with increasingly complex oral language? Will these students then demonstrate progress in the California ELD standards for listening, speaking and reading comprehension?

It is clear that all three students improved their oral language production, although the level of improvement was different for each student. The vocabulary focus gave the students the words they needed to talk about the book and demonstrate their comprehension. The six days spent reading and re-reading each book gave them the practice and confidence they needed to orally demonstrate their comprehension of the text. Each student made progress across all ELD standards. They demonstrated improvements in oral language production and reading comprehension to the desired early intermediate/intermediate levels.

How confident are my students now as English speakers?

The entire group is still fairly quiet and hesitates to participate in the discussion. I had hoped that by introducing these books, with their beautiful, interesting illustrations and thought provoking plot lines, perhaps the students would be jumping at the chance to talk about them, but they were not always as enthusiastic as I had hoped. I believe this is due to lack of practice. Most of what they read during the school day is far above their reading level, so they are struggling to decode and comprehend, leaving them little time to relate to, or interact with the

text. I believe that if they had more practice and opportunities to do this with books at their level, they would be less hesitant to speak up and share their thoughts about those books. The improvements they made in such a short time indicate that continued progress and growth should be expected.

Were they more likely to take risks in their language and share opinions?

All three students were much more likely to participate in the picture re-tell than the book club discussion. I believe that much of this is because that after hearing the story several times over the week, and using the vocabulary words from the story in class exercises, they are very comfortable with the plot of the story. Much of their re-tell is close to exact regurgitation of what I have read or said about the story during the week. When it comes time to talk about their thoughts on the story, they are in less familiar territory. They are less likely to take risks with their language or give their opinions because they are not sure if it will be “right.” While it would have been ideal if my students had suddenly taken major risks in their speaking, I do not consider my hope for increased oral participation to be completely dashed. It is important to keep in mind that many English-Only (EO) students do not jump at the chance to think critically about a book.

Were they interested and did their interest lead to increased oral language production?

I noticed that each student’s interest in the book determined how likely they were to participate in the discussion. Interest also played a part in the quality of the language each student produced in their picture re-tell as well as their answers to discussion questions. This is exactly what I expected, which is why I chose the books. I was surprised, however, how hard it was to find books that interested everyone. Sara seemed to enjoy *Just a Dream*, which led to her producing detailed, grammatically correct language when talking about it. David loved reading

Jumanji, and not surprisingly, his re-tell of the story was fantastic. Johnny's favorite book was *The Polar Express*, and he produced *by far* his best language during this discussion. His ability to demonstrate comprehension of this book was amazing, especially when compared to his oral language production with the other books.

Are there limitations to this intervention and its outcome?

This study has several limitations. Spending six days on a book is not always possible, so the language level that the students have produced at the end of six weeks of repetitive, scaffolded reading will not necessarily transfer to all future discussions. This is especially true if the discussion is about a complex academic subject that the students are less confident about. It does, however, give me and my students a glimpse into the language they are capable of producing. They have the ability, they just need the practice and confidence to speak up and demonstrate that ability.

What are my implications for teaching?

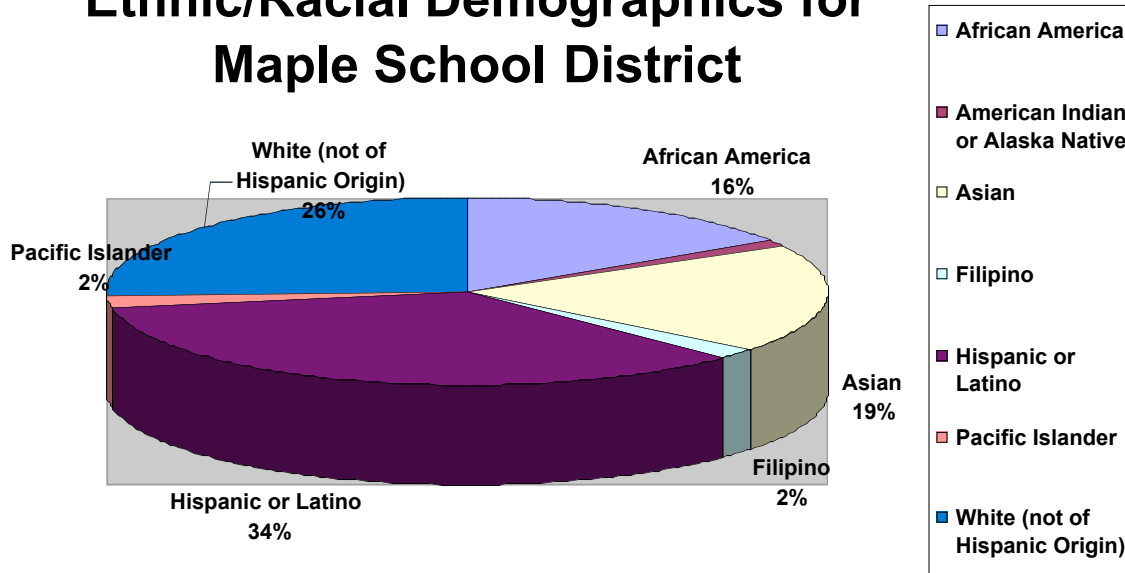
With more time, we could continue to read increasingly difficult books, keeping the same format of vocabulary exposure, repeated reading, interaction with text and group discussion. I believe that continuing with this type of language application could lead to significant gains in English language development. This intervention supports the belief that EL students need sheltered instruction that includes, but is not limited to, vocabulary support and repeated interaction with text. This idea must be carried over to regular classroom. And finally, the classroom must be a safe and comfortable environment for students to feel secure and confident and to speak and share thoughts. If given the tools (vocabulary), the time (repeated interaction with text), and the support (safe, comfortable classrooms), English language learners will succeed.

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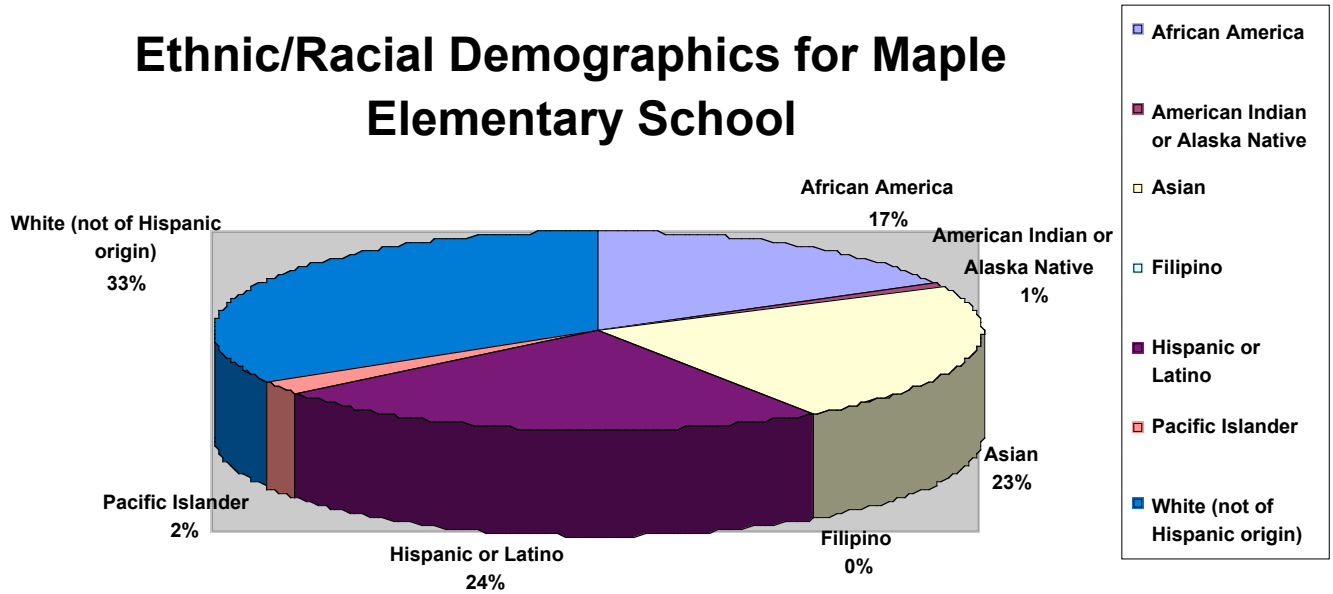
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Appendix A

Ethnic/Racial Demographics for Maple School District

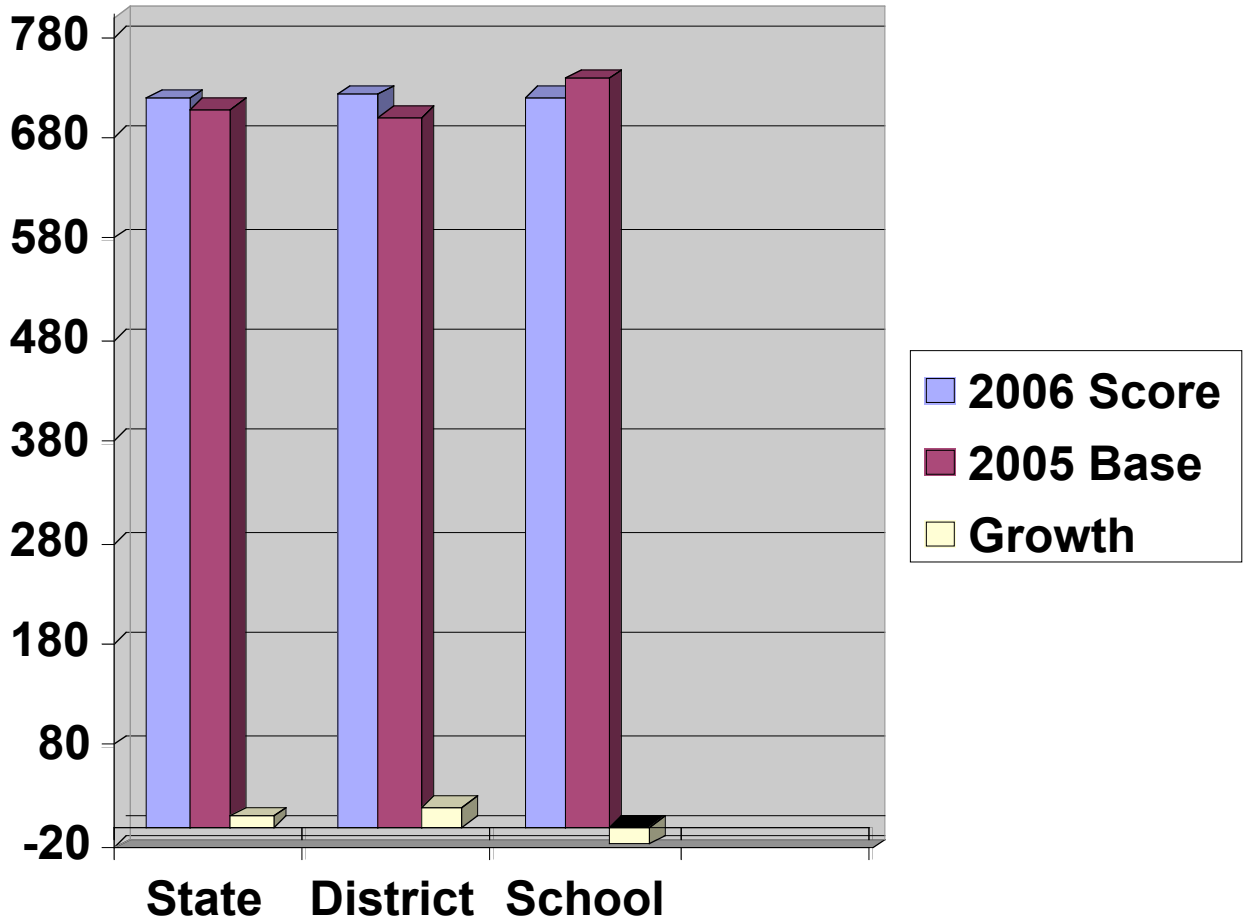


Ethnic/Racial Demographics for Maple Elementary School



Appendix B

Academic Performance Index (API)



Grades 6-8 California English Language Development Test Proficiency Descriptors

Overall Proficiency Levels	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
<p>Advanced Students performing at this level of English language proficiency communicate effectively on a wide range of topics. They can identify and summarize concrete details and abstract concepts during unmodified instruction and can produce oral and written discourse in all content areas. Errors do not reduce communication. Further linguistic refinement is still needed to be comparable to native English-speaking peers.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically understand extensive vocabulary and complex syntax, without significant problems in comprehension; they understand and follow all oral directions.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically use extensive vocabulary and complex syntax appropriate to setting and purpose; they tell a coherent and detailed story, based on a picture sequence, using complete and complex sentences.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically understand complex structures, such as root words, word parts, and grammatical features; infer meaning by synthesizing information; and identify various categories of informational materials.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically use difficult transitions, conjunctions, and prepositions correctly; write a complete sentence that is appropriate to the topic in response to a picture prompt (contains few or no mechanical errors); and write a composition that is well organized and contains a clear sequence of events or ideas, precise vocabulary, and accurate transitional words (may contain minimal errors).</p>
<p>Early Advanced Students performing at this level of English language proficiency begin to use English in cognitively demanding situations and for learning in content areas. They can identify and summarize most concrete details and abstract concepts during unmodified instruction in most content areas. Oral and written production contains fully-developed paragraphs and compositions. Errors rarely complicate communication.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically understand extensive vocabulary and complex syntax, with occasional minor problems in comprehension; they understand and follow most complex, multistep oral directions.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically use fairly extensive vocabulary and fairly complex syntax appropriate to setting and purpose, with occasional minor errors; they tell a coherent story, based on a picture sequence, that clearly expresses the major events, using complete sentences with minor errors.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically recognize character traits and features of a variety of texts; make inferences and draw conclusions from more challenging reading passages; recognize more complex synonyms and antonyms; demonstrate understanding of idiomatic expressions; and demonstrate decoding and word-attack skills, such as sound pairs and prefixes.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically demonstrate familiarity with idioms and expressions; begin to use difficult transitions, conjunctions, and prepositions; write a sentence in response to a picture prompt (may contain minor errors in grammar and mechanics); and write a composition that contains relevant details and a logical sequence of events or ideas (may contain few errors in grammar and mechanics).</p>
<p>Intermediate Students performing at this level of English language proficiency begin to use English to communicate and learn. They can identify and understand more concrete details and some abstract concepts during unmodified instruction. They respond to learning demands with fewer errors. Oral and written production includes sentences, paragraphs, and original statements and questions. Errors complicate communication.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically understand some complex vocabulary and syntax, with occasional gaps in comprehension; they understand and follow some complex, multistep oral directions.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically use a broader range of vocabulary and syntax appropriate to setting and purpose, with gaps in communication; they tell a coherent story, based on a picture sequence, that may not clearly express the major events, using phrases and incomplete sentences.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically demonstrate knowledge of simple synonyms, antonyms, and simple root words; identify the correct meaning of a word in a given context; recognize the sequence of events in a reading passage; determine the main idea of a simple text; recognize the parts of a book; begin to demonstrate decoding and word-attack skills, such as sound pairs and prefixes; and make inferences and draw conclusions from reading passages.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically use verb tenses correctly; use idiomatic qualifiers; use mechanics and basic grammar correctly; write a complete sentence appropriate to a picture prompt (may contain errors in grammar, vocabulary, and/or syntax); and write a composition about a topic, but the composition may consist of a disorganized list of events, containing some details and repetitive transitions.</p>
<p>Early Intermediate Students performing at this level of English language proficiency continue to develop English skills. They can identify and understand more concrete details during unmodified instruction. They may be able to respond to more varied communication and learning demands with fewer errors. Oral and written production may be limited to phrases and memorized statements and questions. Frequent errors reduce communication.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically understand basic vocabulary and syntax, with frequent errors and limited comprehension; they understand and follow simple multistep oral directions.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically use a limited range of vocabulary and syntax appropriate to setting and purpose but make frequent errors that impede communication; they tell a story, based on a picture sequence, using phrases and simple vocabulary that contain numerous errors and may not be coherent.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically identify sound/symbol correspondences in words; begin to use words in context appropriately; answer literal comprehension questions from a simple story; and demonstrate some knowledge of common English morphemes and simple synonyms, antonyms, and root words.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT typically identify articles and pronouns correctly; use capitalization and punctuation correctly; and write at least one complete sentence in response to a prompt (may contain correct word order, but may include errors that obscure meaning).</p>
<p>Beginning Students performing at this level of English language proficiency demonstrate little or no English skills. They are beginning to understand a few concrete details during unmodified instruction. They may be able to respond to some communication and learning demands, with many errors. Oral and written production is limited to isolated words and memorized statements and questions. Frequent errors make communication difficult.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT may demonstrate no receptive skills, or may understand basic vocabulary, with limited comprehension, and understand and follow a few simple oral directions.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT may demonstrate no productive skills, or may begin to use basic vocabulary and respond with simple words or phrases appropriate to setting and purpose and attempt to tell part of a story, using simple words and phrases.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT may demonstrate no receptive skills, or may recognize some sound/symbol correspondences, match commonly used nouns to pictures, and recall minimal details from a simple story.</p>	<p>Students who perform at this level on the CELDT may demonstrate no productive skills, or may use correct capitalization and punctuation and attempt to write about a topic, but the response is minimal and contains some isolated English words or phrases.</p>



Note: For more complete skill area proficiency level descriptors, please reference the Scoring Guide for this grade.

2008-07 Form F

Appendix D

Vocabulary List – *Jumanji*

- 1. knelt**
- 2. slouched**
- 3. delight**
- 4. instructions**
- 5. messages**
- 6. bored**
- 7. horror**
- 8. gasping**
- 9. monsoon**
- 10. thunder**
- 11. guide**
- 12. rhinoceros**
- 13. path**
- 14. mantle**
- 15. exhaustion**
- 16. silence**
- 17. guests**
- 18. carefully**
- 19.jungle**
- 20.reached**

Vocabulary List – *The Sweetest Fig*

1. fussy
2. furniture
3. moaned
4. perhaps
5. grateful
6. fig
7. pocket
8. reminded
9. customer
10. dentist
11. steep
12. admiring
13. reflection
14. alley
15. waste
16. luxury
17. paw
18. furious
19. confused
20. beneath

Vocabulary List – *The Polar Express*

1. rustle
2. sleigh
3. hissing
4. still
5. conductor
6. aboard
7. outstretched
8. carols
9. flickered
10. wilderness
11. scrape
12. barren
13. ocean liner
14. factories
15. crawl
16. reindeer
17. harness
18. charged
19. lurch
20. believe

1. **crumpled**
2. **eager**
3. **future**
4. **dump**
5. **heap**
6. **bulging**
7. **revved**
8. **slid**
9. **smokestack**
10. **buried**
11. **celebration**
12. **shrieking**
13. **creeping**
14. **continued**
15. **haze**
16. **Grand Canyon**
17. **distance**
18. **inflatable**
19. **shade**
20. **motorless**