An analysis of vocabulary and comprehension knowledge growth of first-grade English-language learners using an instructional package
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Abstract

This study was a multiple probe, single-subject design which investigated changes that occurred in five first-grade English-language learners' vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension. The students participated in small-group sessions with the researcher using the instructional package that included explicit instruction in two areas. The first area was instruction in Tier Two vocabulary words, which are considered high-frequency words found across a variety of written text and spoken language. The second area was explicit instruction in the five elements of a retelling: setting, characters, details and events, sequence, and ending. Instruction took place utilizing fictional books read aloud and conversations initiated before, during, and after the read-aloud done by the researcher. The students involved in the study were English-language learners (ELLS), all with different first languages.

The study was divided into the collection of baseline data and then three phases of instruction. Each of the three phases lasted six weeks and each concentrated on 10 targeted Tier Two words. The students attended sessions for a total of 21 weeks. The three weeks of baseline data gathering prior to the introduction of the intervention consisted of a read-aloud only; no instruction or conversations were included. During the three phases of instruction, the first two sessions of the week were instructional lasting 30 to 40 minutes each. The third session of the week was a third reading of the book, followed by individual vocabulary and listening comprehension assessments.

Vocabulary data were analyzed in four ways: difference in scores from baseline through instruction, from pretest to posttest, from posttest to a maintenance test 12 weeks following the conclusion of the study, and usage of targeted words used during retelling. Listening comprehension data were analyzed in two ways: difference in scores in each element from baseline through instruction and achieving benchmark expectations for a complete retelling. A review of the data indicated all of the students demonstrated positive change in all areas.

The results of this study suggest that the instructional package may be used by grade-level teachers with their diverse population of young English-language learners to positively impact their vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension.