

Vocabulary Instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

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Abstract

This project explores the research on vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in second through eighth grade. Three themes emerged from the literature: the benefit of taking a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction, the challenges CLD students experience with independent word learning, and the importance of supporting CLD students' linguistic needs. The paper then examines the related practices at a western Washington elementary school to identify areas in alignment with the research and discusses implications for teachers, administrators, school districts, and future research.

Keywords: vocabulary instruction, English language learner, culturally and linguistically diverse students

Vocabulary Instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

This project explores the research on vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in grades 2-8. Public schools have growing populations of diverse learners, many of whom speak a language other than English at home. While many CLD students have strong conversational English, they often lack the complex language needed for success on academic standards. This presents new challenges for educators to teach rigorous content, rich with academic language, to students who have a limited English vocabulary.

Context

Every year, teaching in a large Western Washington district, the number of CLD students in my classroom continues to rise. Between 2017 and 2021, my district reported about 18% of our population spoke a language other than English (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017-2021). The language needs for CLD students in my class has varied drastically, from students proficient in conversational English, to newcomer students who don't speak any English. Regardless of their perceived English fluency, my students who are classified as English language learners (ELL) continue to struggle on classroom and state assessments compared to their peers. For example, only 16% of the ELL population in my district met standards on English language arts (ELA) and math in 2023 (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [OSPI], 2023).

This same trend is mirrored at the state and national level. In 2020, approximately 12% of the public-school population in Washington state were ELLs (NCES, 2023). However, in 2023, only 14% of this population met state standards in ELA and math, and an even smaller amount, 8%, met science standards (OSPI, 2023). Arguably more concerning is that a majority of ELL students (60%) scored a level one, indicating they were well below proficiency, in contrast to

only about 23% for non-ELLs. When looking at performance data nationwide, the 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress revealed that only 10% of students identified as ELLs in fourth grade were proficient in reading, compared to 37% for non-ELLs. It is clear that there is an achievement gap when comparing CLD students to their native English-speaking peers.

Across the country, college and career readiness standards, such as Common Core State Standards (CCSS), have increased academic rigors for all students, including CLD learners. For example, the CCSS requires students to comprehend complex texts and learn general academic and domain-specific vocabulary (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2021). Avalos et al. (2021) analyzed fourth grade curricula from pre- and post-CCSS to identify vocabulary and instructional shifts. They found that in pre-CCSS curriculum, targeted vocabulary were words generally familiar to fourth grade students, while post-CCSS included target words typically acquired by sixth grade. Additionally, there was a higher number of general academic vocabulary that offered higher utility across subjects. An analysis of instructional practices revealed an increase in opportunities for building deep word knowledge. These findings illustrate the shift in linguistic complexity after the adoption of the CCSS.

Importance

I have taught in a highly diverse, low-income school for the last seven years. My school has and continues to be low in academic rankings within our district. Three years ago, I became the designated ELL classroom for my grade level. This meant that some years almost half of my class spoke a language other than English at home. I became acutely aware of the struggle my students experienced with academic language when it came time for assessments. My students would become confused and frustrated because they didn't understand what was being asked of them or struggled to comprehend texts with unfamiliar words without support. As their teacher, I

felt disheartened to see them continually score below their true capabilities due to a vocabulary knowledge barrier. I began dedicating more time to vocabulary instruction across all subjects, usually beginning each lesson with direct instruction of targeted vocabulary from the curriculum, and used strategies for supporting ELLs, such as visual images and gestures. Despite my intentionality, students still had challenges with acquiring taught words. In an ELA lesson alone, there are up to 6 new words each day, with each one only appearing once in a text. Students were being exposed to a lot of new words daily yet retaining barely any of them. It was clear my current practices were not effective; however, with little additional time within instructional blocks, opportunities to provide in-depth vocabulary instruction are limited.

Purpose

I am interested in understanding how teachers can increase the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction and if doing so will improve academic outcomes of CLD students. In my experience, vocabulary instruction is commonly overlooked. I noticed that the topic of vocabulary instruction was rarely discussed among my colleagues or during professional development, despite having a large population of students with extensive language needs. The focus of conversation has continuously emphasized reading comprehension strategies, such as main idea, inferencing, and character analysis, and failed to acknowledge the role vocabulary knowledge plays in not only these skills, but in all content areas. I wish to better understand how to support the vocabulary development of CLD students, and as a result transform my instruction to better meet their needs. In doing so, I hope to become an asset for my school by helping teachers who may be struggling with similar challenges.

Focal Questions

My research on vocabulary instruction will be guided by the following questions:

- In the research, what are the conditions and teaching practices that make vocabulary instruction the most effective for CLD students in grades 2-8?
- According to the research, how does vocabulary instruction impact academic outcomes in content areas, such as reading, writing, and science, for CLD students in grades 2-8?
- According to the research, what challenges do educators face when implementing vocabulary instruction with CLD students in grades 2-8?

Literature Review

This literature review examines the research on vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in second through eighth grade. While vocabulary instruction has been widely studied with native English-speaking students, recent research has focused on developing the vocabulary of CLD students as a potential way to close the achievement gap.

CLD refers to students whose primary language is not English, and who come from a variety of cultural, social, and economic backgrounds that differ from the norm of the United States (Gonzalez et al., 2011). In the research, this population of students was referred to using a variety of different terms. The most common term used in studies was English language learner (ELL); however, other terms included multilingual, bilingual, emergent bilingual, limited-English proficient, language minority, and linguistically diverse. While at times there were slight differences in meaning (students identified through language acquisition assessments versus parent surveys), the lack of consistency revealed that researchers have yet to reach a consensus on how to refer to this population. Throughout this literature review I will refer to this population of students as CLD to be inclusive of the wide range of diverse learners in public schools, and to

recognize their linguistic and cultural knowledge as an asset, rather than a deficit. However, when discussing specific studies, I will use the preferred term of the authors.

Vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension have been thoroughly linked in both theory and research. Anderson and Freebody (1979) were the first to extensively theorize the relationship between word knowledge and reading comprehension with three different hypotheses. The instrumental hypothesis stated that simply knowing more words would make you a better reader, the aptitude hypothesis connected one's verbal ability to increased vocabulary and reading comprehension, and the knowledge hypothesis posited that word knowledge was associated with knowledge of concepts, which would lead to better comprehension. Building on the instrumental hypothesis, Stanovich (1986) argued that the relationship between vocabulary development and reading comprehension was more reciprocal. He thought that knowing more words would increase reading comprehension, which would lead to more reading, and as a result, develop a larger vocabulary. In a discussion of these theories, Stahl and Nagy (2006) highlighted the complex relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension by arguing that each hypothesis may hold truth, and likely relates to different components of vocabulary instruction.

To better understand the relationship between vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension, Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) conducted a meta-analysis of vocabulary intervention studies to find its impact on reading comprehension and determine what types of instruction were most effective. They found that vocabulary instruction had a large effect on reading comprehension when measures included taught vocabulary, and smaller, but still significant effects on standardized measures of reading comprehension. In addition, the practices that were found to be most effective were both definitional and contextual information about

words, deep processing of words, and multiple exposures to words. In a more recent study, Lesaux and Kieffer (2010) explored sources of reading comprehension difficulty with language minority students in sixth grade. They categorized students into three different skill profiles of reading difficulty and found low language skills to be the common factor among all three groups.

Although the importance of building students' vocabulary has been established, research has shown very little time is dedicated to vocabulary instruction (Gámez & Lesaux, 2015; Lesaux et al., 2010). For example, Gámez and Lesaux (2015) found that on average only 8% of class time was devoted to vocabulary instruction. This poses the question of how educators can support CLD students in meeting the rigorous language demands required by academic standards.

In the research, four areas of vocabulary instruction are studied: explicit instruction, instruction of word-learning strategies, incidental learning, and developing word consciousness. Explicit instruction referred to the direct teaching of words and their definitions using a variety of activities and supports (Gallagher et al., 2019). Given the large number of words students must acquire, it is unrealistic for educators to teach them all. Therefore, students must be able to independently learn words that they encounter while reading. For this to happen, students must be taught word-learning strategies, such as morphological analysis and context clues, and develop word consciousness. According to Graves (2006), word consciousness is when students have an awareness of words and a curiosity about their meanings. Fostering word consciousness is an important aspect of incidental word learning. Incidental word learning occurs when students are exposed to words multiple times, in varied contexts, and obtain their meaning independently (Gallagher et al., 2019).

Additional variables of vocabulary instruction that were explored in the research are word types and instructional intensity. In alignment with CCSS, general academic and domain-specific vocabulary are the types of words targeted in the research. General academic vocabulary consists of words commonly found in school texts, and are applicable across content areas, although the meaning may vary slightly. Domain-specific words are those associated with a content area of study, such as math, science, and social studies. The instructional intensity was characterized by the amount of time spent on vocabulary instruction, referred to as extended or embedded instruction.

The research on vocabulary instruction for CLD students revealed the following themes: the benefit of a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction, the challenges experienced with independent word learning, and the importance of supporting students' language needs.

A Multifaceted Approach to Vocabulary Instruction

In recent literature, researchers have explored the effects of multifaceted vocabulary instruction for improving the academic outcomes of CLD students. A multifaceted approach includes several different aspects of word learning and word knowledge within instruction (Manyak & Kappus, 2021). The design of multifaceted vocabulary interventions was inspired by Pressley et al. (2007) who argued that to make more substantial differences in schools, vocabulary instruction will need to be long-term and multidimensional.

In the research, multifaceted interventions included several instructional activities targeting different aspects of word learning and knowledge. The studies used a combination of explicit instruction, instruction of word-learning strategies, activities to develop word consciousness, exposure to language-rich texts, and the development of oral or written language. Such interventions contrast current curriculum and classroom practice, in which vocabulary

instruction commonly consists of direct instruction from the list of words provided. While explicit instruction has been showed to be effective for learning targeted vocabulary for CLD students (Gallagher et al., 2019), there has been inconclusive evidence surrounding the transfer of knowledge from vocabulary instruction to impact growth on standardized measures. However, the research on multifaceted vocabulary instruction suggests it may be effective for growth in general vocabulary knowledge.

Of the seven studies that implemented multifaceted vocabulary interventions with CLD populations, six showed growth on standardized measures of general vocabulary knowledge (August et al., 2018, 2020; Manyak et al., 2021; Manyak & Kappus, 2021; Proctor et al., 2020; Silverman & Hines, 2009). Positive gains on standardized measures are significant because it indicates that students improved their knowledge of words beyond those included in instruction. For instance, Manyak et al. (2021) had positive results in a three-year formative experiment with 585 fourth and fifth graders, 205 of whom spoke a language other than English. This extensive intervention included direct instruction of domain-specific words, wide exposure to academic vocabulary, exploration of semantic relationships and language features, morphological analysis and context clues instruction, and the development of word consciousness by creating personal dictionaries. In the final year of the experiment, students made more than one year of growth on a standardized measure of general vocabulary, which was considered accelerated growth compared to the norming sample. In addition, no significant differences were found between language groups, meaning students grew comparable regardless of their native language.

In a second study on multifaceted vocabulary instruction, Manyak and Kappus (2021) found similar accelerated growth on a standardized measure of vocabulary with 93 second graders at a Spanish-English dual immersion school. More noteworthy, emergent bilinguals in

this study had higher growth than their native English-speaking peers on the standardized measure. Both of these studies were unique because the intervention took place throughout the entire school, and lasted more than one year, allowing researchers and teachers to make improvements and adjustments in the following years.

Short-term interventions of multifaceted vocabulary instruction also produced positive gains on a standardized measure of vocabulary knowledge. For example, a 10-week, within-subjects study, compared the effectiveness of extended and embedded instruction in learning academic vocabulary with second-grade ELLs (August et al., 2018). The extended condition took on a multifaceted approach and provided about twice as much time on vocabulary instruction than the embedded instruction, which only focused on defining words in context. It is important to note that all 187 students were exposed to both instructional conditions, because of the study design. Additionally, outside of the one-hour English block, in which the intervention took place, students were instructed solely in Spanish. Researchers found that on a standardized measure of English word knowledge, students made comparable growth to native English populations over a similar period. Given the length of the intervention, and how little time students received instruction in English, these findings show promise for multifaceted vocabulary instruction to improve general vocabulary.

August et al. (2020) designed another multifaceted vocabulary intervention in a cluster randomized control trial study, to find its effects on academic vocabulary growth with 424 second grade emergent bilinguals. The 18-week program included shared reading, direct instruction, cognate instruction, activities promoting word consciousness, and reinforcement of taught vocabulary. They found that on a standardized measure of oral vocabulary, the treatment condition grew more than the control condition.

Silverman and Hines (2009) explored the effects of a multimedia enhanced, multifaceted vocabulary intervention with 85 mixed language proficiency students in grades pre-kindergarten through second. The 12-week intervention, which focused on science content, included shared interactive reading, explicit vocabulary instruction, reinforcement, and explored words in different contexts. Students in the treatment condition also received multimedia enhancement in the form of short video clips that connected to taught vocabulary. The findings showed that ELLs in the treatment condition significantly improved on the standardized measure of general vocabulary, with large effects.

The final positive study on multifaceted vocabulary to impact growth on a standardized measure of vocabulary for CLD students was conducted by Proctor et al. (2020). In a quasi-experimental field trial, a literacy intervention was implemented through small group instruction with 239 bilingual fourth and fifth graders. The intervention included explicit academic vocabulary instruction, shared interactive reading, activities to explore morphology and syntax, and writing application. The impact of the intervention on a standardized measure of academic language revealed moderate effect sizes. These studies shed light on the impact of multifaceted vocabulary instruction for CLD students, even when implemented over shorter periods.

While the previous findings suggest that multifaceted vocabulary instruction effectively increases students' general vocabulary knowledge, Lesaux et al. (2010) found conflicting results in a quasi-experimental, mixed methods study with 476 sixth-grade students. Researchers designed a multifaceted, text-based academic vocabulary program taught during English language arts class. The program focused on promoting a deep understanding of words through repeated encounters and interactions with words across the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The findings revealed that the treatment effects on a standardized

measure of reading vocabulary were nonsignificant. The authors hypothesized that this result may be because the types of words sampled for the assessment came from a different domain than academic vocabulary, which was the focus of instruction. Another possible explanation found in the research is that the transfer effects of vocabulary instruction are not immediate, and the benefits will emerge in future grades if students increase their word knowledge over time. More studies implementing multifaceted vocabulary instruction, over longer periods are needed to confirm this.

Notably the only negative finding by Lesaux et al. (2010) was the only study conducted in a middle school, where the intervention occurred during one of several class periods, each with a different teacher. It seems possible that at the elementary level, the teachers may have included strategies or activities from the intervention in different subjects. For example, Manyak et al. (2021) noted in the discussion that vocabulary instruction was highly integrated into multiple content areas at different times of the day. Students in elementary may have benefitted more by having the same teacher throughout the day compared to students in middle school. Nonetheless, the research shows promising results in taking a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction for CLD students, particularly at the elementary level.

Struggles with Independent Word-Learning

In this section, I will discuss the research on struggles CLD students experience with independent word-learning. Independent word-learning is considered an essential part of vocabulary development as there is not enough time for students to learn all necessary words through instruction alone (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). In the research, independent word-learning is explored through incidental instruction, sometimes referred to as exposure-only, and the instruction of word-learning strategies.

Incidental Instruction

The first sub-theme to independent word-learning explored incidental instruction, which referred to students having repeated exposures to words, and learning their meaning independently through context. Incidental word-learning through wide and varied reading is the most common way that native English-speaking students grow their vocabularies (Stahl and Nagy, 2006). However, in a meta-analysis of incidental word-learning, Swanborn and de Glopper (1999) noted that struggling readers often lack the strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words. This poses an issue for CLD students who continually have challenges with reading. Current research supports that incidental instruction may be a challenging method for CLD students to grow their vocabularies (August et al., 2018; Gallagher et al., 2019; Van Orman et al., 2021; Zhang & Shulley, 2017).

Gallagher et al. (2019) conducted a mixed-methods study to compare explicit and incidental instruction on learning academic and domain-specific (social studies) vocabulary with 139 sixth graders, 63% of whom were identified as emergent bilinguals. Explicitly taught words were instructed using a graphic organizer, and incidentally taught words were chosen from whole class trade books. On average, students were exposed to each incidental word 4 times, and the books contained supports, such as glossaries. While all students improved on explicitly taught vocabulary, only native English-speaking students made significant growth on incidentally taught words.

In a similar study, Van Orman et al. (2021) studied the impact of extended instruction to learn science and academic vocabulary with 106 students in seventh grade. In this quasi-experimental study, the control group served as the exposure-only group, in which students encountered vocabulary words through the texts and tasks apart of the science curriculum. The

results indicated that in the control condition, in which words were incidentally instructed, only proficient English-speaking students made significant gains in science content vocabulary, and no growth was found for emerging bilingual students.

One study investigated the differences between poor comprehenders and typical readers in fourth and fifth grade (Zhang & Shulley, 2017). The sample of 81 students, both ELLs and native English-speaking students, were classified as poor comprehenders or typical readers, and given a series of assessments. On a measure of incidental word-learning, they found that regardless of reader type, ELLs scored lower than native English-speaking students. This meant that ELLs were less able to infer the meanings of unknown words in a text.

These findings indicated that CLD students do not benefit from incidental instruction in the way that more proficient or native English-speaking peers might. This highlighted an increased need for instruction in word-learning strategies and word consciousness.

Word-Learning Strategies

The second sub-theme associated with independent word learning is instruction of word-learning strategies. Instruction in word-learning strategies refers to explicitly teaching students how to derive the meaning of unknown words when they encounter them in texts. As highlighted by the previous findings on incidental word learning, instruction of word-learning strategies and developing a student's word consciousness may be necessary for CLD students to be able to learn new words independently. Without an awareness of words and their meanings, students may skip over unknown words (Gallagher et al., 2019). Once students become conscious of identifying unknown words, they need to be equipped with strategies to derive their meaning. Because it is challenging to measure one's word consciousness, there was not any empirical data in the research I found, to back its impact. For this reason, I will be focusing on the instruction of

word-learning strategies found in the research. The two types of strategies explored were morphological analysis and context clues. While most studies included aspects of these strategies within their interventions, their impact remains unclear.

Morphological Analysis. Instruction on morphology, or the study of word parts, was the most common strategy found in the research. Morphological analysis (MA) is the process in which a person combines the meaning of word parts, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes, to understand the meaning of a new word (Davidson & O'Connor, 2019).

Two studies suggested that morphology may be an area of focus for improving CLD students' vocabulary and reading comprehension. In a study with 138 sixth graders, Kieffer (2014) found that morphological awareness differentiated struggling readers from skilled readers, and that language minority learners experienced more difficulties with morphological awareness than native English-speaking students with similar reading abilities. In comparison, Silverman et al. (2013) observed 33 classrooms with CLD populations, in grades 3-5 to find relationships between types of instruction and students' growth in vocabulary and reading comprehension over the year. Out of five different types of vocabulary instruction, morphology was observed second to least. Even with little time and attention devoted to MA, it was positively related to students' vocabulary growth. These findings have led to an increased focus on MA within vocabulary instruction for CLD students in the research. However, there are currently mixed findings supporting meaningful improvements in MA for CLD students and its impact on vocabulary growth and reading comprehension.

Studies that had small sample sizes tended to have more favorable results than those with large samples. For example, Davidson and O'Connor (2019) studied the impact of a MA intervention to increase vocabulary on both taught and untaught morphologically complex

words. In this multiple baselines, single-case design study, nine fourth and fifth-grade ELLs, who were identified as struggling readers, were selected to participate. The intervention was implemented by the authors over 10 sessions, each lasting 15 minutes. Students were assessed at the end of each session on taught vocabulary and then assessed on untaught words containing taught word parts after the intervention had ended. The treatment was found to be effective for eight out of nine students, with large effect sizes. Additionally, all students improved on the transfer measure of untaught words. Deng and Trainin (2023) had a very similar study focused on self-regulated learning skills with six ELLs in third through fifth grade. Their intervention, which taught both MA and context clues, found that students made significant gains on taught vocabulary; however, they had smaller effects on a transfer measure to untaught words. While these findings show promise for the potential impact of MA on vocabulary growth, they must be interpreted with caution. Both studies contained only a small number of students, and the intervention was taught by the authors, in a small group outside of the classroom. Since this differs drastically from typical classroom conditions, its implications are limited.

Two studies with larger samples of students found smaller effects on MA skills and their impacts on reading comprehension (Crosson et al., 2021; Lesaux et al., 2014). In a randomized block design study, Crosson et al. (2021) focused solely on the impacts of MA to improve vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. The sample consisted of 169 multilingual students in seventh and eighth grade in 10 classes, half of whom were assigned to the treatment condition. In treatment classes, students received daily 15-minute lessons on academic vocabulary with bound Latin roots, over a school year. While the treatment condition performed better than the control group on definitional knowledge, multidimensional word knowledge, and MA skills, the effects were only moderate. For example, treatment students only scored about 1.5

adjusted points higher than the control group on MA. Additionally, there were no significant differences between groups on reading comprehension.

Lesaux et al. (2014) had similar findings in a randomized field trial with sixth grade CLD students. A much larger sample of students (2,082) received 45-minute lessons for 20 weeks on academic vocabulary in the context of informational texts. The intervention focused on deep analysis of words in different contexts, MA, and the use of words in writing. They found moderate treatment effects for academic word mastery, and small effects for morphological derivation and reading comprehension. Similar to Crosson et al. (2021), students in the treatment condition only increased on average, about two points on a measure of their ability to use MA to derive word meaning. When comparing the results of studies with small sample sizes, to those with large sample sizes, it becomes clear that MA is still an area of challenge for CLD students.

While large impacts can be found in small, highly controlled settings (Davidson & O'Connor, 2019; Deng & Trainin, 2023), it has been more difficult to replicate those effects with a large number of students, in a typical classroom setting (Crosson et al., 2021; Lesaux et al., 2014). It is worth noting that in both Crosson et al. (2021) and Lesaux et al. (2014) studies, the interventions provided more instructional time, over longer periods of time, with older students, and still struggled to have large improvements in MA or transfer effects.

Zhang et al. (2023a, 2023b) explored morphology in a different context. In their first study (2023a), the researchers were interested in understanding how different word characteristics impact the use of morphology to learn novel word meanings with native English-speaking and bilingual students in fourth and fifth grade. They found that morphological relatedness of words aided in learning of new words; however, only for students proficient in English. In a second study by Zhang et al. (2023b), they looked at the effect of including spelling

and drawing attention to morphology to learn new morphologically complex words. The sample included 36 Spanish and English-speaking students in fourth and fifth grade. While exposure to spelling positively impacted word meaning recall, drawing students' attention to morphology had no significant impact. The findings of these two studies suggest that CLD students may need explicit instruction with additional support to learn how to use MA to learn new words.

Context Clues. Using context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words is another strategy students can use to increase independent word-learning. This process involves looking at the words or phrases surrounding an unknown word for semantic cues. The five types of context clues are definitions, synonyms, antonyms, contrast, and general (Manyak et al., 2021). Unlike MA, the use of context clues in the research was less likely to be the focus of a study, but rather included as a portion of the intervention. This made it difficult to understand the effects of context clues alone on vocabulary growth. In Silverman et al.'s (2013) exploratory study on the relationship between types of instruction and vocabulary growth, they found no relationship between context clues and growth in vocabulary. The authors explained this lack of relationship may be due to the fact that context clues were the least observed type of vocabulary instruction. This lack of context clues included in vocabulary instruction is mirrored in the research. Only three studies explicitly taught context clues (Deng & Trainin, 2023; Lesaux et al., 2010; Manyak et al., 2021), and each revealed it to be challenging for CLD students.

Manyak et al. (2021) included context clues as a part of their multifaceted vocabulary intervention with fourth and fifth grade CLD students. Each of the five different types of context clues were explicitly taught with examples and reinforced with application activities. This was the only study of the three that included a specific, researcher-developed assessment to measure students' ability to infer word meaning from context clues. The measure revealed that native

English-speaking students significantly outperformed limited-English proficient students in all three years of the project. It is possible that CLD students with low vocabulary may be unfamiliar with the surrounding words, and therefore have more difficulty using context clues.

Instruction of context clues was also included in Lesaux's et al. (2010) multifaceted vocabulary intervention with 476 sixth graders. In the text-based academic vocabulary intervention, context clues were used to understand word meanings from the assigned readings. To measure the effectiveness, students read a short passage and answered multiple choice questions on word meanings within the context of the text, and general comprehension. In contrast to Manyak et al. (2021), CLD and native English students performed similarly in this study; however, the effects were small (about one point increase compared to control group).

Deng and Trainin (2023) included the use of context clues in their study of self-regulated learning skills with English language learners. They were the only study to produce large positive effects for vocabulary growth; however, as mentioned above with MA, their results must be interpreted with caution. Their small sample size and highly controlled setting make it difficult to generalize their findings. Additionally, students with higher English proficiency and baseline vocabulary had higher performance and more consistent growth than students with lower proficiency. Taken together, these findings indicate that CLD students, especially those with lower vocabularies, may need additional time and support with using context clues.

Supporting Language Needs

Throughout the research there was a common theme of supporting the language needs of CLD students. This happened through a focus on oral language development and capitalizing on students' native language knowledge.

Oral Language Development

In the research, oral language is emphasized as an important aspect of vocabulary development for CLD students. For example, Gámez and Lesaux (2012) studied the impact of teacher talk on vocabulary development of 782 sixth graders, the majority of which were language minority students. They found that teachers use of sophisticated vocabulary during class significantly impacted students' vocabulary knowledge, while the total amount of teacher talk had no impact. This suggested that vocabulary learning is promoted by exposing students to academic oral language, and then providing them with opportunities to replicate such speech. This practice was found throughout studies that focused on supporting the oral language development of CLD students during vocabulary instruction, and involved active processing of word meanings, discussions, and verbal production of new words. While several interventions mentioned the use of discussions, studies that emphasized oral language use showed positive outcomes for vocabulary and content area growth (August et al., 2009, 2018; Jozwik & Douglas, 2017; Lara-Alecio et al., 2012; Lesaux et al., 2010; O'Connor et al., 2019; Vaughn et al., 2009; Xin & Affrunti, 2019).

In two cases, a focus on oral language resulted in CLD students benefitting equally from the intervention as their native English-speaking peers (Lesaux et al., 2010; O'Connor et al., 2019). In an urban school district, O'Connor et al. (2019) studied the impact of an academic vocabulary intervention with 52 sixth graders in special education, 60% of which were also qualified as ELLs. The intervention, which was taught in the special education ELA classroom, focused on explicit instruction with an emphasis on oral and written practice. Even though students identified as ELL performed significantly lower at pretest, they grew similarly to native English-speaking students on the measure of taught vocabulary, with large effects. Similarly, in Lesaux's et al. (2010) study that focused on the four language domains (listening, speaking,

reading, and writing), CLD students grew similarly to native English-speaking peers on all six performance outcomes.

In one unique study by Snow et al. (2009), students who were identified as language minority made greater gains in academic vocabulary than native English-speaking students. The intervention, Word Generation, was implemented with 697 students in grades 6-8. Target academic words were introduced through engaging texts during English language arts, and then reinforced through 15-minute activities focused on oral discussion during math, science, and social studies. Even though all students in treatment schools improved more than those in comparison schools, the measure of academic vocabulary revealed that language minority benefitted the most from the intervention.

All three of these studies attributed their positive outcomes for CLD students to using accessible and engaging texts that promoted discussions. Snow et al. (2009) pointed out that the best learned words from the intervention came from the most relevant texts to CLD students, topics such as undocumented immigrants. Since many CLD students are struggling readers, Lesaux et al. (2010) stressed the importance of selecting appropriate texts so that linguistic features and background knowledge are not barriers to engagement in discussions.

Two studies implemented structured pairing techniques to facilitate and support oral language development of CLD students (August et al., 2009; Vaughn et al., 2009). CLD students were assigned a partner with higher English proficiency to engage with during partner talks and collaborate in completing tasks. For example, in August et al. (2009), 890 sixth-grade students received the intervention, Project QuEST, during their science class for 12 weeks. The intervention focused on inquiry-based learning, with specific scaffolding to support ELL students, such as explicit vocabulary instruction, visuals, and structured pairing. Both ELLs and

native English-speaking students in the treatment group improved on measures of vocabulary and science knowledge. Vaughn et al. (2009) conducted a similar study with 888 seventh-grade students during their social studies class. The experiment was repeated over two school years, and involved explicit vocabulary instruction, structured pairing, and the use of videos and graphic organizers. During both years of the experiment, students in the treatment condition outperformed students in the control group on a measure of social studies vocabulary and content. These findings suggest that providing scaffolds for developing oral language may contribute to improving vocabulary and content knowledge of CLD students.

Focusing on oral language development was also effective for improving academic vocabulary knowledge and reading for ELLs with learning difficulties. Jozwik and Douglas (2017) studied the impact of explicit instruction, self-regulation, and cooperative learning strategies with six fifth-grade ELLs, who qualified for special education or intensive reading interventions. The intervention emphasized discussions and oral language production through cooperative learning structures. On a measure of accurately reading and orally defining target vocabulary, all students increased between 49-66% from pretest, and maintained up to 88% of learned vocabulary six months later. Taken together, the research suggests that focusing on oral language development is beneficial for improving vocabulary knowledge of CLD students.

Native Language Knowledge

A common pattern throughout the research was Native language support and inclusion. Interventions included bilingual definitions, instruction of cognates, or encouraged translanguaging. Translanguaging is an approach to bilingualism that promotes the flow between languages, and supports students in comprehending (Avalos et al., 2021). These strategies

allowed students to capitalize on their native language knowledge to make growth in English vocabulary.

Specifically, studies by August et al. (2016, 2018, 2020) were characterized by extensive linguistic support and scaffolding. All three studies included words that were Spanish cognates and instructed students on how to use them to understand new words. For example, in a within-subjects study with 187 second grade ELLs, August et al. (2018) explored the relationship between instructional intensity and word type, on vocabulary growth. Words were characterized by cognate status (cognate or non-cognate) and abstractness (concrete or abstract). Students in both the extended and embedded instruction conditions made significant gains on words that were concrete cognates, while students in the control condition did not. This finding suggests that even a small amount of instruction on the use of cognates allows students to capitalize on their native language knowledge, even at a young age.

In addition to cognates, August et al. (2016, 2018, 2020) provided bilingual definitions of target words as a linguistic scaffold. For instance, August et al. (2016) compared extended and embedded vocabulary instruction to learn general academic and science content vocabulary with 509 third and fourth-grade ELLs during a summer school program. In the extended condition, students received additional linguistic supports, including Spanish definitions of words. While students made gains on a measure of taught vocabulary in both conditions, the gains for extended instruction were significantly greater than embedded. When examined together, findings by August et al. (2016, 2018, 2020) suggested that using a combination of native language supports and scaffolds was beneficial to vocabulary growth for CLD students.

Another strategy to support students' native languages was the promotion of translanguaging during discussions of target words. For example, in a quasi-experimental study,

Van Orman et al. (2021) explored the effects of a science and academic vocabulary intervention on vocabulary growth and reading comprehension with 106 mixed language proficiency seventh graders. After the introduction of a new word, students were provided time to discuss it with their peers using their strongest language. Students in the treatment condition improved on a vocabulary measure by 28%, while those in the control condition improved by 5%. Students who were classified as ELL made comparable gains to proficient English speakers in the treatment group, while only proficient English speakers made significant gains in the control group. The difference between ELLs in the two conditions sheds light onto the importance of supporting students' native language as an asset in vocabulary development.

Rather than encouraging translanguaging, which flows between two languages, one study examined the effects of vocabulary instruction delivered fully in Spanish. In a single subject, alternating treatment study, Rivera et al. (2012) compared the effects of vocabulary instruction delivered in Spanish and English, on English vocabulary growth with three ELLs who had moderate intellectual disabilities. Over the course of 10 weeks, students previewed of all vocabulary words in Spanish, and then received instructional sessions that alternated between English and Spanish by a bilingual teacher. Two students showed higher acquisition of words taught in Spanish, while the third grew similarly in both languages. While it is difficult to generalize these findings due to the small sample and specific demographic, the findings suggest that native language inclusion during instructional delivery may be beneficial for some CLD students.

It is likely that the extent of which native language inclusion is effective depends on students' native language proficiency. For example, qualitative findings from a study by Taboada and Rutherford (2011) noted that newcomer students specifically benefitted from native language

knowledge to learn domain-specific vocabulary. In a formative experiment that compared contextualized and intensified vocabulary instruction with ELLs in fourth grade, each treatment group included one newcomer student. Both students had low English proficiency (level 1) but had third grade reading levels in Spanish. Observations and teacher interviews highlighted how the newcomer students learned science content words using cognate knowledge and by discussing word meanings in both English and Spanish. One teacher explained that their student's knowledge and understanding of science concepts in Spanish aided in their learning of English science words. These findings indicate that native language support may be more effective for students with higher language and literacy proficiency in their native language.

Proctor et al. (2011) recognized the challenge of supporting students' native language when many teachers only speak English. To combat this barrier, they designed an online reading intervention to support Spanish-English bilingual and monolingual English students. In a quasi-experimental study with 240 fifth-graders, students participated in two 50-minute sessions of Improving Comprehension Online (ICON) weekly. ICON included eight short texts with vocabulary activities and comprehension strategies embedded throughout. Translations were available for all texts, bilingual and monolingual coaches were available to assist students throughout, and there were opportunities for students to make cross-linguistic connections. Students who received the ICON intervention had significant and large effects on a standardized measure of vocabulary and researcher-developed measures of word knowledge depth. In addition, there were no differences found between language groups, which suggests the program was equally effective for both bilingual and monolingual students.

Summary

In the sections above, I have discussed the research on vocabulary instruction for CLD students in grades 2-8. The research revealed that taking a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction may be effective for increasing CLD students' general vocabulary knowledge. That is, vocabulary instruction that incorporated multiple different aspects of word meanings and word-learning was effective for growing students' vocabularies beyond those taught in the intervention. The research also highlighted that CLD students struggled with learning words independently. CLD students were less likely to learn words incidentally, and also had challenges with word-learning strategies such as MA and using context clues. Supporting CLD students' language needs during vocabulary instruction was emphasized throughout the literature. Studies that focused on oral language development and included students' native language during instruction found positive results for improving the vocabulary of CLD students. In the next section, I will examine the current practices related to these findings at my research site and make recommendations for improving vocabulary instruction.

Action Tables

In the literature review, I discussed the research on vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in grades 2-8. The research on vocabulary highlighted both effective practices and challenges experienced with increasing the vocabulary of CLD students. CLD students continually score below their native English-speaking peers on standardized assessments, which has presented new challenges for educators to accelerate their growth to close the achievement gap. Since CLD students often lack the complex language needed for success on academic standards, increasing the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction may be one way to improve academic outcomes.

To better understand how to bridge the gap between research and current school practices, I will make recommendations based on the practices of the school where I currently teach. I work at a Title 1 elementary school in a large western Washington district.

Approximately 70% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch (OSPI, 2023). We have a highly diverse student population, made up of about 40% White, 30% Hispanic, 20% two or more races, 10% Black, and less than 5% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Asian, or American Indian/Alaska Native. While 14% of students qualify as English language learners (ELL), there are several more students for whom English is not their first language.

In my action tables below, I will discuss the research findings on vocabulary instruction for CLD students, the current practices at my school related to those findings, and my recommendations moving forward. The action tables are organized into the following themes: a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction, struggles with independent word-learning, and supporting language needs.

A Multifaceted Approach to Vocabulary Instruction

The research revealed that a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction may be effective for increasing CLD students' general vocabulary knowledge beyond taught words. A multifaceted approach refers to the inclusion of several different aspects of word knowledge and learning within instruction. While numerous activities and types of instruction were included in multifaceted vocabulary interventions in the research, some characteristics were consistent throughout. Table 1 describes the common characteristics of effective multifaceted vocabulary instruction, current practices at my school, and my recommendations based on the research.

Table 1

Multifaceted Vocabulary Instructional

What the research says:	What my school does:	What I recommend:
<p>Activities to develop students' word consciousness are an essential component of effective multifaceted vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Word consciousness refers to students' awareness and curiosity about words (August et al., 2020; Manyak et al., 2021).</p>	<p>Most teachers at my school do not know what word consciousness is. To raise awareness of target words within the text, some teachers have students raise their hands during whole group reading when they hear a vocabulary word. Most teachers use word walls to display vocabulary words selected by the teacher or curriculum.</p>	<p>I recommend that district administrators provide professional learning on word consciousness for teachers. Teachers should encourage students to identify unknown words during reading and include student-identified words on word walls, so students become invested in learning new words.</p>
<p>Using multiple modalities to teach and analyze word meanings deeply is an essential component of effective multifaceted vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students (August et al., 2018, 2020; Lesaux et al., 2010; Manyak et al., 2021; Manyak & Kappus, 2021).</p>	<p>At my school, teachers use multiple modalities to teach word meanings. They provide student-friendly definitions, use pictures and gestures, and provide target words in sentences. Occasionally, teachers will have students use graphic organizers to analyze words.</p>	<p>I recommend that teachers continue to teach word meanings using multiple modalities and increase the frequency with which they have students analyze words using visual or oral methods.</p>
<p>Explicitly teaching word-learning strategies is an essential component of effective multifaceted vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students (August et al., 2018, 2020; Lesaux et al., 2010; Manyak et al., 2021; Manyak & Kappus, 2021).</p>	<p>Word-learning strategies, such as morphological analysis and context clues, are taught occasionally. However, it is not explicitly clear to students when and how to use these strategies to learn new words.</p>	<p>I recommend that teachers increase the frequency with which they teach word-learning strategies. Teachers should explicitly teach when to use the strategies and have a clear procedure for each strategy.</p>
<p>Instruction centered around short, accessible, and engaging texts that promote discussions is an essential characteristic of effective multifaceted vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Lesaux et al., 2010; Manyak et al., 2021; Manyak &</p>	<p>Vocabulary instruction at my school is centered around complex trade books from our curriculum. The text is not accessible to many students. Some texts peak student engagement, and some do not. Most discussions focus on comprehension, with only some students participating.</p>	<p>I recommend that teachers at my school supplement the curriculum texts with short, accessible, and engaging reading passages. They should also focus discussions on word meanings and text comprehension and implement strategies that promote full participation in</p>

Kappus, 2021).

Providing students with **repeated exposures** to target vocabulary and several opportunities for **reinforcement and review** is an essential characteristic of effective multifaceted vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students (August et al., 2018, 2020; Lesaux et al., 2010; Manyak et al., 2021; Manyak & Kappus, 2021).

Students typically have two exposures to target words: once during direct instruction and once in the text. Since the texts are long, there are no opportunities for rereading to provide additional exposure. There are currently no routines or built-in time for reviewing vocabulary. Teachers display vocabulary words around the classroom to reinforce learning.

discussions (talk moves or think-pair-share).

I recommend that teachers provide multiple exposures to words through reinforcement and review activities, such as word sorts, playful games, and exploring semantic relationships or target words in different contexts.

Struggles with Independent Word-Learning

The research highlighted that a major component of vocabulary development, independent word learning, was a challenge for CLD students. Studies showed that CLD students did not learn new words incidentally, through exposure only, compared to their native English-speaking peers (August et al., 2018; Gallagher et al., 2019; Van Orman et al., 2021). This led to an increased focus on instruction of word-learning strategies to equip students with the skills to learn new words independently. The two types of word-learning strategies explored in the research were morphological analysis (MA) and context clues. MA referred to breaking apart words into morphemes, or word parts, identifying the meaning of each part, and combining them to derive the meaning of the whole word, and using context clues involved looking for words or phrases in the text that were semantically related to the unknown word. Table 2 describes the findings related to independent word-learning and word-learning strategies, the current related practices at my school, and my recommendations based on the research.

Table 2

Independent Word Learning

What the research says:	What my school does:	What I recommend:
Culturally and linguistically diverse students may need explicit instruction on word-learning strategies , with several opportunities to practice using them to learn unknown words independently (August et al., 2018; Gallagher et al., 2019; Van Orman et al., 2021).	Word-learning strategies are taught sparingly when lessons arise in the curriculum. Students only use these strategies when prompted by teachers rather than independently.	I recommend that teachers increase the frequency of instruction on word-learning strategies and provide students with opportunities to use the strategies to understand unknown words they encounter during independent reading.
Instruction on morphology and morphological analysis may be beneficial for improving the vocabulary and reading comprehension of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Davidson & O'Connor, 2019; Kieffer, 2014; Silverman et al., 2013).	Morphology instruction consists of teaching the meanings of common prefixes, suffixes, and base words, and how to combine word parts to create new words.	I recommend that teachers continue their current practices in teaching morphology and incorporate morphological analysis into vocabulary and reading comprehension instruction when applicable.
Culturally and linguistically diverse students may need additional time and support using context clues to derive the meaning of unknown words independently (Lesaux et al., 2010; Manyak et al., 2021).	Instruction on context clues occurs occasionally. During whole group reading, teachers draw attention to context clues in the text when they arise. Students have a few opportunities to practice using context clues throughout the year using graphic organizers.	I recommend that teachers continue their current practices and increase opportunities for students to practice identifying context clues to understand unknown words. Teachers should provide additional support by explicitly teaching the types of context clues (definition, synonym, antonym, contrast, general) and provide students with opportunities to identify each one.

Supporting Language Needs

Research on vocabulary instruction emphasized the importance of supporting the language needs of CLD students. Support for CLD student's language needs was characterized

by focusing on oral language development and the inclusion of students’ native languages. A focus on oral language development involved an emphasis on discussions and production of language. The inclusion of students’ native languages happened in a variety of ways such as cognates, bilingual definitions, translations, and translanguaging. Translanguaging is when students flow between languages to make sense of content. Table 3 discusses findings related to supporting students’ language needs, the current practices at my school, and my recommendations aligned with the research.

Table 3

Supporting Language Needs

What the research says:	What my school does:	What I recommend:
Effective vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students should support oral language development by providing plenty of opportunities for discussion and language production (August et al., 2018; Lesaux et al., 2010; O’Connor et al., 2019; Vaughn et al., 2009).	To develop students’ oral language, teachers have students repeat vocabulary words aloud, ask students to share connections to or examples of target words, and write sentences using the new vocabulary to share aloud to the class.	I recommend teachers continue their current practices with strategies to ensure all students participate in discussions, such as think-pair-share. Teachers should also use sentence stems to assist students in discussing and producing oral language related to the targeted vocabulary.
Instruction on how to identify cognates and use them to derive word meanings helps increase the vocabulary of culturally and linguistically diverse students by allowing them to draw on their native language knowledge (August et al., 2020; August et al., 2018; August et al., 2016).	There are currently no teachers who teach the use of cognates. The curriculum includes a list of cognates in each text. However, most teachers do not include them in instruction regularly due to a lack of understanding of how and when they should be included.	I recommend that my school administration and the district multilingual services collaborate to provide professional learning opportunities for teachers to learn about the instruction of cognates and how to utilize the provided curriculum resources related to cognates.
Providing bilingual definitions and translations of texts supports the vocabulary growth of	Some teachers include Spanish translations of vocabulary words but not the definitions. There are	I recommend that teachers include bilingual definitions during vocabulary instruction. In addition, I recommend that

culturally and linguistic diverse students (August et al., 2020; August et al., 2018; August et al., 2016; Proctor et al., 2011)

currently no resources available for translating texts. For students with very limited English, teachers will encourage the use of google translate when needed during instruction.

district administration and multilingual services work to provide translated audio recordings of curriculum trade books being read.

Adopting a **translanguaging pedagogy** by encouraging students to flow between languages during discussions promotes deep learning of vocabulary words and encourages equitable participation in discussions (August et al., 2020; Avalos et al., 2021; Van Orman et al., 2021).

Most teachers have never heard of the term translanguaging. Newcomer students with limited English are frequently paired during discussions with students who share the same native language to help with translating.

I recommend that my school administration and the district multilingual services collaborate to provide professional learning opportunities about translanguaging pedagogy, its benefits, and how to implement it in the classroom. I recommend that teachers encourage all students to use whatever language they feel most confident in when discussing new vocabulary words.

Summary

In the section, I tried to summarize the research-based practices within the context of the three themes outlined in my literature review. Using this information, I analyzed the related practices at the school site in which I currently work, and made recommendations to teachers, administration, and district services to better align with the research, and improve vocabulary instruction for CLD students. In the following section, I will return to the focal questions I identified in the rationale, and answer them using findings from the research, as well as my school site.

Discussion

This project explored the research on vocabulary instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in grades 2-8. I wanted to better understand what

instructional practices and characteristics of vocabulary instruction are most effective for CLD students and what their potential impacts are on academic outcomes. After six years of teaching a diverse population of students, the challenges they experienced with academic vocabulary became apparent. The need to improve the academic outcomes of CLD students is urgent in public schools across the country. Given CLD students' increased language needs, it was unsurprising that current research explored vocabulary instruction.

After examining the research, it became clear that developing students' vocabularies is a much more complex process than what most educators would assume. Vocabulary instruction often consists of the direct instruction of words and their meanings; however, I soon learned that this is only one of many components that work together to create deep and meaningful word knowledge. My analysis of my school site revealed that while many of the current practices can be easily built upon to align with the research, there are some knowledge gaps that need to be addressed to make a meaningful impact. This led me to identify several actionable steps teachers, schools, and districts can take to improve vocabulary instruction for CLD students. In the following sections, I will discuss the findings related to my research questions, the implications for teachers, schools, and districts, the implications for future research, and the limitations of this study.

Discussion of Findings

To guide my research for the literature review, I determined three focal questions. The questions were [1] What are the conditions and teaching practices that make vocabulary instruction the most effective for CLD students? [2] How does vocabulary instruction impact academic outcomes in content areas, such as reading, writing, and science, for CLD students? And [3] What challenges do educators face when implementing vocabulary instruction with CLD

students? In the following sections, I will discuss each of these questions using the research from the literature review and findings from my school site. In addition, I will speculate on future trends in vocabulary instruction for CLD students in schools.

Effective Conditions and Teaching Practices

For my first question, I wanted to understand what conditions and teaching practices made vocabulary instruction the most effective for CLD students. To find this answer, I took a deep dive into the research with positive findings, specifically examining the characteristics of the intervention's design and implementation. However, compiling a list of effective, research-based practices was more challenging than I anticipated. Each intervention had several different types of instruction, strategies, scaffolds, and content. Therefore, it is difficult to isolate a specific practice and say with certainty it is effective. This led me to understand that no single practice or strategy was the most effective alone, but rather, a combination of them is necessary to impact vocabulary growth and build deep word knowledge. Evidence supported this idea through multifaceted vocabulary instruction. The research showed that taking a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction may be effective for increasing students' general vocabulary knowledge, as measured by standardized assessments (August et al., 2018, 2020; Manyak et al., 2021; Manyak & Kappus, 2021; Proctor et al., 2020; Silverman & Hines, 2009). That is, vocabulary instruction should include several different aspects of word learning and word knowledge.

In the following sections I will discuss what was shown to be effective for improving the vocabulary of CLD students in the categories of instructional methods and scaffolds that supported vocabulary learning. In addition, I will analyze the related practices of my school site to identify areas of alignment or differences.

Instructional Methods. Instructional methods refer to the different ways in which vocabulary was taught or the instructional practices that supported vocabulary learning. While each intervention varied significantly from one another, some characteristics remained consistent, allowing me to draw conclusions on effective practices. The effective practices included developing students word consciousness, explicit instruction of word meanings, teaching word-learning strategies, shared interactive reading, and reinforcement of taught words.

While none of the studies in my literature review included data on word consciousness, due to it being difficult to measure, they stressed the important role it plays in growing students' vocabularies and included activities to develop it (August et al., 2020; Gallagher et al., 2019; Manyak et al., 2021; Taboada & Rutherford, 2011). For instance, Manyak et al. (2021) implemented an activity called Personal Vocabulary Collection, in which students collected unknown words throughout the week and recorded their meanings to share with the class. The purpose was to promote an awareness of unknown words and motivate students to understand their meaning. When I reflected on my school site, I realized there was a knowledge gap. Most teachers had never heard of word consciousness, which is not surprising given I had only learned about it in my graduate courses. Regardless of having an understanding, some of the teachers' current practices work to develop students' word consciousness, such as using word walls. If teachers learned about what word consciousness is and its importance, they would be able to make small tweaks to their practices that would better support CLD students in this area. For these changes to happen, district or department administration needs to address the knowledge gap on word consciousness by providing professional learning opportunities.

Explicit instruction of word meanings and word-learning strategies are the two major components of effective vocabulary instruction for CLD students. In the research, CLD students

did not benefit in the same way as their native English-speaking peers when definitions or strategies to derive them were not explicitly taught (August et al., 2018; Gallagher et al., 2019; Van Orman et al., 2021). Instruction of word meanings should be done using multiple modalities such as providing a student-friendly definition, showing pictures, using the word in different contexts, verbal or written production of the word, or the use of graphic organizers (August et al., 2018, 2020; Lesaux et al., 2010; Manyak et al., 2021; Manyak & Kappus, 2021). My school site and I would speculate most schools are aligned with the research in this aspect, as these strategies are typical of what you would find in curriculum manuals. The issue, then, is when vocabulary instruction only consists of explicit instruction of words. While these strategies are a vital part of vocabulary development, they are not enough to build deep word knowledge or help CLD students to make meaningful growth.

Explicit instruction of word meanings must be accompanied by instruction of word-learning strategies. Word-learning strategies are important for students to be able to learn new words they encounter during independent readings. The research showed that CLD students do not learn words incidentally through exposure, as well as their native English-speaking peers do (August et al., 2018; Gallagher et al., 2019; Van Orman et al., 2021; Zhang & Shulley, 2017). This finding suggested an increased need for strategies, such as morphological analysis (MA) and context clues, to be able to learn unknown words independently. Some studies suggested that morphological awareness and instruction on morphology may increase vocabulary and reading ability for CLD students (Kieffer, 2014; Silverman et al., 2013). Effective instruction included teaching the meanings of common prefixes, suffixes, and root words, as well as a MA word part strategy. This involved identifying each word part, determining the meaning of those parts, and combining the meanings to understand the whole word. The research suggested that CLD

struggled with using context clues (Lesaux et al., 2010; Manyak et al., 2021). In some cases, this was due to the low frequency in which it was instructed. Other researchers speculated that CLD students may be unfamiliar with the surrounding words in the text, making it difficult to use clues in the text.

Although word-learning strategies are taught at my school site, teachers have little success with CLD students using them accurately or independently on their own. Similar to the speculations of the research, I believe this is due to the low frequency of instruction and practice with these strategies. For one, lessons on context clues or morphology are sparse in the curriculum. Curriculums tend to be geared toward the dominant, native English-speaking population. These students may not need as much practice using word-learning strategies as CLD students, which would explain why they are not included more often. However, I have also noticed a shift in ideology following the pandemic. With pressure to catch students up academically, standards have been prioritized, meaning that teachers spend significantly more time teaching what is viewed as essential content. In my district, comprehension standards are prioritized over language standards. This could be detrimental to CLD students, who will continue to struggle with reading comprehension if they have low vocabulary knowledge.

Regardless of content, it was common for vocabulary instruction to include shared interactive reading. By reading texts that included target vocabulary, students had repeated exposure to words in which their meaning is grounded in different contexts (Manyak et al., 2021). Exploring words in different contexts is important for building deep word knowledge (Lesaux et al., 2010). This helps students to recognize multiple-meaning words and analyze shades of meaning for semantically related words. Interactive reading was characterized by

discussing the meanings of words in the text or answering text-related questions by using the vocabulary words either in oral or written format.

Shared interactive meaning is a common practice at my school site. Following direct instruction of vocabulary words, teachers engage students in reading a text containing those words. The contrast to practices in the research, though, revolves around questioning and discussion. Rather than integrating vocabulary into questions or answers, the focus is on reading comprehension. I don't think that teachers deliberately exclude vocabulary from the conversation, more so that they rely on curriculum-generated questions and materials. Workload is a major concern in education. Rarely do teachers have adequate time for planning and preparation, so it is unrealistic for them to consistently recreate materials. This relates back to my previous point: curriculums are often not designed to meet the needs of CLD students. Support for CLD students in curriculum materials is usually limited to a small sidebar containing a recommended scaffold for the lesson. However, the population of CLD students continues to grow, and educators need materials that support their language needs without adding to their increasing workload.

The final instructional practice that contributed to increasing CLD students' vocabularies was consistent reinforcement and review of newly learned words. The research emphasized that students need multiple exposures to words in order to develop a deep understanding. Four studies included review units, in which an entire week or lesson cycle was dedicated to revisiting previously learned words (August et al., 2018; August et al., 2020; Lesaux et al., 2010; Lesaux et al., 2014). This provided teachers with the opportunity to reteach challenging words and guide students to make connections between words in different units. Eight additional studies integrated reinforcement activities weekly (August et al., 2016; Manyak & Kappus, 2021;

Manyak et al., 2021; O'Connor et al., 2019; Proctor et al., 2011; Silverman & Hines, 2009; Van Orman et al., 2021; Vaughn et al., 2009). Vocabulary was reinforced using word walls, glossaries, games, songs, videos, graphic organizers, and role-playing. In some cases, vocabulary words were repeated in more than one unit. The consistent review of newly learned words provided students with several exposures to each word and multiple opportunities to actively process their meanings.

Reinforcement and review of vocabulary words occur occasionally at my school site. The most common practice is the use of word walls or displaying anchor charts with words and their meaning. Some teachers reinforce target words by having students complete a word map, in which students define the word, list synonyms, use the word in a sentence, and draw a sketch. However, most teachers struggle to find time to review words. In our reading curriculum alone, 15-20 words are introduced weekly (3-4 per day), with each word only appearing once in the text. In contrast, vocabulary interventions in the research focused on 4-10 words per week, allowing more opportunities to revisit each word. Without built in-days or weeks dedicated to review and reinforcement, teachers face falling behind in pacing and feel pressure to continue moving forward.

Scaffolding Vocabulary Instruction. To support CLD students to learn new vocabulary, a variety of scaffolds were layered onto the different instructional methods employed in the research. The scaffolds shown to be effective for CLD students were characterized as visual supports and linguistic supports.

The most common type of visual support was providing pictures or graphics during explicit instruction of word meanings (August et al., 2016, 2018, 2020; Manyak & Kappus, 2021; Manyak et al., 2021; O'Connor et al., 2019; Proctor et al., 2011; Van Orman et al., 2021;

Vaughn et al., 2009; Xin & Affrunti, 2019). In lieu of providing pictures, some studies had students draw their own pictures (Gallagher et al., 2019; Lesaux et al., 2010) or showed video clips that illustrated words or concepts (August et al., 2016; Silverman & Hines, 2009; Vaughn et al., 2009). Images were used to reinforce vocabulary learning through activities such as picture sorts, picture prompts for writing or discussing, and picture walks. Other forms of visual support in the research included the use of word maps to visually represent relationships between words, gestures to explain word meanings, acting out words, and showing realia.

The use of visual support to teach and reinforce vocabulary is a common practice at my school site. Pictures are shown to introduce new words, typically followed by having students draw their own pictures. Although less frequent, teachers also use gestures, realia, videos, and word maps to further understand newly learned words when time or resources are available. When it comes to supporting CLD students' learning, using visuals is a widely known scaffold teachers are aware of. For example, many teachers in my district, including our building ELL teacher, are trained in Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD). GLAD strategies rely heavily on visual scaffolding in instruction, and our building ELL teacher supports classroom teachers in implementing these strategies. Even with additional support, it can be challenging for teachers to use visual scaffolds as often as they would like to. While many teachers believe visual scaffolding supports all students in learning and makes lessons more engaging, preparing visual materials can be time-consuming since curriculum materials do not include them.

Aside from visual scaffolding, vocabulary instruction in the research included a wide range of linguistic scaffolds for CLD students. Linguistic scaffolds included oral language support and native language support. Vocabulary interventions that emphasized oral language development through discussion techniques found positive results in improving CLD students'

vocabularies (August et al., 2016; August et al., 2018; August et al., 2020; Gallagher et al., 2019; Lesaux et al., 2010; Manyak et al., 2021; O'Connor et al., 2019; Van Orman et al., 2021; Vaughn et al., 2009). To ensure equitable participation and engagement in discussion, the researchers encouraged translanguaging, used structured pairings based on language proficiency, and included strategies such as think-pair-share. If needed, discussions were further scaffolded using sentence stems and modeling partner talk.

Several studies provided linguistic support for CLD students in the form of native language inclusion. Students' native language, in most cases Spanish, was used to teach new words by providing bilingual definitions, having students translate definitions and make cross-linguistic connections, or clarifying word meanings when teachers were bilingual (August et al., 2016, 2018, 2020; Manyak & Kappus, 2021; Proctor et al., 2011; Van Orman et al., 2021; Vaughn et al., 2009). Six studies also included cognates within target vocabulary or instructed students on how to use cognates to understand new words (August et al., 2016, 2018, 2020; Gallagher et al., 2019; Proctor et al., 2011; Vaughn et al., 2009). Including cognates in vocabulary instruction allowed CLD students to capitalize on their native language knowledge to understand new vocabulary.

Linguistic scaffolding during vocabulary instruction only happens occasionally at my school site. Teachers use discussion techniques like think-pair-share, or sentence stems to support students' oral language. However, they usually occur in the context of content instruction rather than vocabulary learning. The limited amount of time dedicated to vocabulary instruction does not provide many opportunities for discussion or deep word processing. Native language inclusion is limited, as we do not have any bilingual teachers at my school. Translanguaging or structured pairings are only used in classes with newcomer students. When a student has little to

no English, they will be paired with a student who shares their native language so they can translate or discuss new learning together. However, most teachers do not have the knowledge or confidence in their own capabilities to provide more native language support.

Impact on Academic Outcomes

The second question that guided my research was how vocabulary instruction impacts academic outcomes in content areas, such as reading, writing, and science, for CLD students. Vocabulary instruction is unique in that it plays a vital role in all subjects. The research and my own experiences have emphasized the importance of developing CLD students' vocabulary. However, the goal of increasing CLD students' vocabulary is to improve their reading comprehension and content knowledge. Therefore, I wanted to understand the potential impact, if any, of effective vocabulary instruction on growth across different content areas. Most of the research included in the literature review taught vocabulary in the context of reading instruction. However, I also included articles that focused on writing, science, and social studies content. To answer this question, I could only draw conclusions from the limited studies that measured these areas. I will discuss the findings related to content area growth in the research and my school site and analyze the congruences and differences between the two.

The research currently suggests little to no support for vocabulary instruction to impact the reading comprehension growth of CLD students. Of the thirty articles in my literature review, only five studies included measures of reading comprehension (Crosson et al., 2021; Lesaux et al., 2010; Lesaux et al., 2014; Proctor et al., 2011; Silverman et al., 2013). Aside from the two studies by Lesaux et al. (2010, 2014), each study varied in terms of research design and instructional style. Regardless of their similarities, Lesaux's et al. (2010, 2014) positive effects conflicted with each other. For example, their 2010 study found small treatment effects of their

academic vocabulary intervention on a standardized measure of reading comprehension; however, their later study (2014) only had positive effects with reading passages containing taught vocabulary and nonsignificant effects on the standardized measure. All other studies that measured reading comprehension also resulted in nonsignificant treatment effects (Crosson et al., 2021 & Proctor et al., 2011). Silverman et al. (2013) observed classrooms during English language arts to identify relationships between different types of instruction and student outcomes and found that vocabulary instruction was not related to growth in reading comprehension. These findings, taken together, reflect the challenge researchers and educators face in improving the reading comprehension of CLD students.

When analyzing my school site, it is difficult to know if vocabulary instruction has impacted students' reading comprehension. Typically, students at our school score highest on the vocabulary sections of curriculum and standardized reading assessments, yet their comprehension scores remain low. In this way, we are aligned with the findings of the research. However, this does not necessarily mean that vocabulary instruction is ineffective for improving reading comprehension. One reason teachers and researchers may be struggling to positively impact reading comprehension is that deeper word knowledge is required to understand texts. In the research, treatment effects usually decreased as measures required an increased depth of word knowledge. This is similar to the struggle teachers at my school experience in trying to go beyond definitional knowledge to understand shades of meaning or words in different contexts. This type of knowledge is built gradually over time, and it could be that its impact on reading comprehension is not immediate; rather, it may arise in future grades. It is also to be noted that a majority of studies did not include measures of reading comprehension. In fact, most studies stated this as a limitation to their study. Even though there is inconclusive evidence to show the

impact of vocabulary instruction on improving the reading comprehension of CLD students, it cannot be ruled out without further research.

Of the three science-based articles in my literature review, two included measures of science content (Silverman & Hines, 2009; Van Orman et al., 2021). It is challenging to draw conclusions from only two articles; however, both showed promising findings for increasing the science content knowledge of CLD students through vocabulary instruction. In a study by Van Orman et al. (2021), students in the treatment condition significantly outperformed the control group on a measure of science comprehension, with large effects. Silverman and Hines (2009) also found that students in both multimedia-enhanced and non-multimedia-enhanced vocabulary interventions made significant gains in knowledge of science content. These findings shed light on the important role vocabulary knowledge plays in understanding science content.

To increase students' knowledge of science content, my school focuses on hands-on investigations that allow students to discover concepts or understand phenomena. With very limited built-in instructional time, science tends to get neglected. Teachers must find time to squeeze a lesson in, so district curriculum directors have suggested prioritizing investigations. However, this is in stark contrast to the intensive vocabulary focus with science content in the research. Vocabulary instruction of science content tends to be brief at my school, with only a few target words directly taught before starting a lesson. I speculate that if teachers had more time to teach science, they would build knowledge of science content through vocabulary instruction. Unfortunately, the pressures of standardized testing greatly affect the amount of time dedicated to science at the elementary level, specifically at low-performing schools like mine. Even though the findings of the research show promise for vocabulary instruction to positively

impact science content knowledge, it will be challenging for teachers to prioritize it within the current legal bounds of their daily schedules.

Based on the research, vocabulary instruction may have positive impacts on social studies content knowledge growth for CLD students. Two studies included in my literature review focused on vocabulary in the context of social studies content. One of the studies included a measure of content knowledge and found large effects of the intervention to positively impact CLD students' social studies knowledge (Vaughn et al., 2009). While it is difficult to draw conclusions from a single study, the fact that CLD students grew comparably to their native English-speaking peers suggests that a focus on vocabulary and language development helped to support CLD students in learning complex content.

Like science, instruction of social studies content at my school site is limited. Typically, social studies content is integrated into reading instruction, which usually focuses on comprehension strategies rather than building knowledge of the content. This is comparable to the instruction described for the control group of Vaughn et al. (2009), which had lower growth. In their study, the control group received business-as-usual instruction consisting of reading passages and exploring key ideas. That does not mean social studies should not be integrated into reading instruction; however, it does suggest that focusing on vocabulary and language production may be more beneficial for improving CLD students' content learning.

The final content area explored in the research of my literature was writing. Two studies by Lesaux et al. (2010; 2014) suggested that integrating target vocabulary into writing instruction may increase students' writing competencies. In their 2014 study, they found the intervention positively impacted growth on a standardized measure of writing, although the effects were small. While the 2010 study did not include a measure for writing growth, qualitative findings

from teacher interviews revealed the large impact the intervention had on students' writing. Three of the teachers pointed out the growth students made in their writing, and the fourth teacher described the writing component as valuable. The findings of these studies show that explicit and routine writing practice using the newly learned words may improve CLD students' writing outcomes.

The integration of vocabulary and writing instruction at my school site usually occurs at the sentence level. Following direct instruction, students will practice using the newly learned words in a written sentence. Although this practice is common in many vocabulary interventions in the research, it differs from the two studies mentioned above that focused on paragraph and essay writing. CLD students at my school typically require a lot of support with paragraph and essay writing and rarely include vocabulary words unless prompted to do so. Improving writing performance has been a challenge because many teachers believe the curriculum is ineffective. The result of this is a lack of explicit and routine writing practice as teachers commonly self-created lessons. However, bridging the gap between vocabulary and writing instruction may provide a path to increasing CLD students' writing outcomes.

To answer my question on the impact of vocabulary instruction, the research suggested it may positively impact the academic outcomes of CLD students in the areas of science, social studies, and writing. It is important to note that this conclusion was drawn from a small number of studies, and more research is needed to be certain. The research also reinforced the challenge educators face in improving the reading comprehension of CLD students. There is currently very little evidence to reflect the impact of vocabulary instruction on growth in reading comprehension.

Challenges with Improving Vocabulary

The third question that guided my research was: What challenges do educators face when implementing vocabulary instruction with CLD students? To make realistic improvements to vocabulary instruction for CLD students, areas of struggle that teachers experience must be analyzed. This sheds light on possible ways to tackle these challenges in future research and practice. The challenges teachers in the research faced were time constraints, meeting the instructional needs of CLD students, promoting equitable participation and engagement, and increasing the depth of word knowledge.

Unsurprisingly, finding enough time within the school day or instructional block to provide adequate vocabulary instruction and practice was challenging. Teachers experienced conflicting feelings about taking time away from other standards that students would need for standardized tests (Lesaux et al., 2010). Activities that promoted deep processing of words, such as word maps and paragraph writing, were reported as being time-consuming, and in some cases, got skipped (Gallagher et al., 2019). Teachers also found it difficult to implement ongoing review of previously learned words due to their schedules or simply running out of time (August et al., 2016; Manyak & Kappus, 2021).

The challenges with time constraints in the research mirror the experiences of teachers at my school site. Most teachers only dedicate 10-15 minutes to vocabulary instruction, which doesn't allow for much time to discuss, process, and practice using new vocabulary. Review and reinforcement of words are often skipped so that teachers can stay up with the pacing of the curriculum. Standardized testing puts immense pressure on teachers to focus on comprehension and test-taking strategies, even though it conflicts with their values and beliefs about education. Unfortunately, when time is spent building knowledge, teachers feel guilty for not preparing students enough for test-taking skills. Solving this issue is far from an easy fix. I believe it would

take an ideological shift in education; one that deemphasizes test scores, to impact the way teachers utilize the time they have in their schedules.

Another challenge teachers experienced in the research was meeting the instructional needs of CLD students and promoting equitable participation and engagement during lessons. For example, many CLD students did not have prior experience learning academic language, and teachers struggled to help them understand complex words and use them accurately (Lesaux et al., 2010). When CLD students were confused, observations revealed that the teachers often just repeated the question or called on another student (Vaughn et al., 2009). This indicated that educators may need more guidance in scaffolding and modifying instruction to meet the needs of CLD students. Although discussions were a large part of supporting CLD students' language development, teachers had to adjust their strategies to ensure all students were participating. It was common for more proficient English speakers to dominate conversations, resulting in CLD students making less vocabulary growth than native English-speaking students (Manyak et al., 2021).

It is a constant challenge to meet the instructional needs of CLD students at my school. Often, CLD students are not familiar with the context in which the words are taught. I think a common misconception is that students just need more repetition. Teachers will continue to repeat the same explanation, definition, or word, thinking that the more students hear it, the more they will remember it. However, repetition is ineffective if students are still confused about the meaning. I find teachers at my school are always plagued by the question, what do I do when my students still do not understand what I have taught? Our experiences as teachers can differ drastically from those of our CLD students, which makes it challenging to frame new learning in a context they understand. Unfortunately, it is easier to continue to cater to the students who are

positively reinforcing our teaching through their learning than to find new ways meet the instructional needs of CLD students. I do not believe this is intentional. Moreover, it is a result of unconscious bias and the unmanageable workloads teachers experience.

The final challenge teachers in the research experienced with implementing vocabulary instruction with CLD students was increasing the depth of word knowledge. Although vocabulary interventions included a multitude of activities to deeply teach words, the effect sizes of the intervention decreased as measures increased in the depth of knowledge (Crosson et al., 2021; Lesaux et al., 2010; Lesaux et al., 2014; O'Connor et al., 2019; Proctor et al., 2011). In other words, CLD students made the greatest gains in understanding definitional knowledge but struggled when it came to multidimensional word knowledge, such as understanding words in context and making semantic or syntactic associations between words. This is significant because multidimensional word knowledge is essential for comprehension and may explain why vocabulary interventions have struggled to show impactful growth on reading comprehension measures.

Increasing CLD students' depth of word knowledge is also a challenge at my school site. However, unlike research, teachers do not currently implement strategies intended to build knowledge and understanding of words over time. As I mentioned earlier, after initial instruction of vocabulary, students at my school do not have many opportunities for repeated exposure to words in different contexts or practice using them. Therefore, it is unsurprising that teachers struggle to increase the depth of word knowledge of CLD students. It is interesting, however, that vocabulary interventions in the research, which focused on building multidimensional word knowledge, also had challenges with this. There are several possibilities as to why this occurred. It may be that fewer words should be selected, interventions might need to be over longer

periods of time, or instruction may need to be more culturally relevant for CLD students to gain a deep understanding of words. It is clear more research is needed. However, this challenge of building multidimensional word knowledge in CLD students sheds light on the complexity of language development.

Future Trends in Vocabulary Instruction

Based on the research from my literature review and the current practices of my school site, I speculate that future trends of vocabulary instruction for CLD students will include integration of technology, an increased focus on academic vocabulary, and specialized instruction by word types.

Given the increased use of technology across education, I foresee integrating technology into vocabulary instruction for CLD students as a natural progression that may present unique benefits. In the research, applications, and online programs designed to provide reinforcement and practice interacting with newly learned words positively impacted CLD students' vocabulary growth (Proctor et al., 2011; Xin & Affrunti, 2019). A major barrier to the implementation of similar applications was access to technology. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, many districts have invested in 1:1 tablets or laptops for students, making this a feasible approach. The use of technology in vocabulary instruction has the potential to address some of the challenges teachers at my school site experience, such as limited planning and instructional time, engagement, and providing linguistic support for CLD students.

Another trend I see in the future of vocabulary instruction for CLD students is an increased focus on general academic vocabulary, specifically at the elementary level. While targeting academic vocabulary is a current trend in the research, I have not seen it widely integrated into current practices at my school site. Vocabulary instruction at my school site

focuses on domain-specific or unfamiliar text-specific words. Even though curriculum materials use complex academic words, they are not included as vocabulary to be instructed on. In the research, learning academic vocabulary was particularly challenging for middle school CLD students in comparison to content vocabulary (Van Orman et al., 2021). This signaled a need for CLD students to begin learning general academic vocabulary in early elementary to allow for the gradual development of a deep understanding of these words over time. I believe educators have begun to recognize this need and, as a result, have started to supplement vocabulary instruction to include academic vocabulary. However, there is a need for teacher support, materials, and curriculums that emphasize general academic vocabulary to support the academic needs of CLD students at the elementary level.

Finally, I speculate that vocabulary instruction for CLD students in the future will include specialized types of instruction for different types of words. The research has recently begun to analyze how different word types and characteristics impact vocabulary learning for CLD students (August et al., 2018, 2020; Van Orman et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023a). For example, researchers have compared domain-specific and general academic words, cognates and non-cognates, and concrete and abstract words. The implication of this trend in the research is that teachers would be able to utilize different styles of instruction depending on what is effective. A major issue impacting vocabulary instruction is having enough time to deeply teach words. Findings from this research will open up possibilities to make the most of instructional time by embedding word meanings for easy-to-learn words and providing extended learning opportunities for more challenging words. While research in this area is only in the beginning stages and might take some time to integrate into practice, it could be extremely impactful for growing the vocabulary of CLD students and narrowing the achievement gap.

Implications for School Districts, Administrators, and Teachers

Increasing the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction is vital to supporting CLD students' current and future academic success. There is an urgent need for educators to act to close the achievement gap. The findings of the research have practical implications that school districts, administrators, and teachers can do to better support the vocabulary growth of CLD students.

First, school districts should invest in instructional materials that support the needs of CLD students. Since teachers rely heavily on curriculum to guide their instruction, the materials should provide support for learning academic vocabulary and developing oral language without requiring teachers to heavily supplement on their own. It is important that curriculums also have short, accessible, and engaging texts for CLD students. Using appropriate text during vocabulary instruction removes barriers that can prevent CLD students from engaging in meaningful discussions about vocabulary (Lesaux et al., 2010). In addition, school districts should support teachers in continuing their education on how to support CLD students. For many veteran teachers, education has drastically changed since they entered the field. Classrooms have growing numbers of CLD students, and standards have increased the demands for language. Districts should provide professional development centered around improving vocabulary instruction and scaffolding instruction for CLD students or provide funding for teachers to get their ELL endorsement. It is essential that teachers are constantly evolving and staying up to date with best practices, and school districts have an obligation to support teachers in doing so.

School administrators have considerable control over building initiatives, school culture, and hiring of staff. To support CLD students, administrators should prioritize improving vocabulary instruction in school-wide goals. When administrators only emphasize improving content outcomes, vocabulary instruction tends to be an afterthought rather than a means to do

so. Creating school goals and plans of action that focus on improving the vocabulary of CLD students will ensure that teachers understand its importance. It is also essential that administrators create a school culture that values knowledge-building over standardized test scores. While it is likely that most administrators receive pressure to improve test scores, transferring that pressure to teachers only limits opportunities for CLD students to engage in meaningful learning. When instructional time is wasted teaching a test, there is little time left for the deep processing, analyzing, and reinforcement that effective vocabulary instruction requires. Finally, when hiring staff, school administrators should consider qualifications that would support CLD students, such as bilingualism, ELL or literacy endorsements, and experience working with diverse populations. Having diversely qualified staff is essential for effective collaboration and would support teachers as they tackle the challenges that come with improving the vocabulary of CLD students.

While school districts and administrators play an important role in providing support, teachers have the greatest impact on improving vocabulary instruction for CLD students. Teachers must first recognize the complexity of language, word learning, and the depth of word knowledge students need to improve content learning. To facilitate such learning, teachers should take a multifaceted approach to vocabulary instruction, focusing on general academic and domain-specific vocabulary. Teachers need to build a deep understanding of words by providing CLD students with multiple exposures to words in different contexts, using visual and linguistic scaffolds, and implementing consistent review. For teachers to narrow the gap in vocabulary between CLD students and native English-speaking students, instruction must move beyond direct instruction of word meanings to also include strategies to learn new words and activities that develop students' word consciousness. By equipping them with strategies and fostering their

interest in word learning, CLD students will be able to independently expand their vocabulary knowledge.

Implications for Future Research

Although the research has shown promise for improving the vocabulary of CLD students, there are still areas that need to be further studied. There has yet to be conclusive evidence to support vocabulary instruction's impact on reading comprehension growth for CLD students. A common theory is that its impact is not immediate. However, more long-term vocabulary studies are needed to confirm this. While there were a couple of studies implemented over a school year, no studies followed the same sample of students over multiple years. Multiyear vocabulary interventions would provide valuable insights into their potential impact on reading comprehension.

The majority of studies on vocabulary instruction for CLD students included a variety of instructional methods and strategies within its treatment. The downside to this design is that it makes it challenging to isolate which practices were effective. In future studies, researchers should include multiple treatment conditions to determine the efficacy of individual strategies and methods.

Lastly, there is a need for more mixed methods or qualitative studies of vocabulary instruction for CLD students. Qualitative findings would reveal important information about teachers' perceptions and students' growth in areas that are difficult to measure, such as word consciousness. These findings are important for continuing to improve interventions and make them feasible for teachers to apply to their practice.

Limitations

For this project, I included articles published between the years 2009-2023. I began my search for studies using the terms vocabulary instruction, English language learner, and elementary. I originally intended to focus exclusively on research conducted with elementary-level students. However, I was interested in vocabulary instruction across different content areas, which was more common with secondary students in the research. For this reason, I extended my grade band through eighth grade and decided to exclude articles with samples of kindergarten or first grade, except for one article that also included second grade in their sample (Silverman & Hines, 2009). From my experience teaching upper elementary, I have found that second grade is when instruction begins to shift from foundational learning to comprehension of content. I also chose to exclude studies in which vocabulary was only a small portion of the intervention in favor of articles that emphasized vocabulary instruction. Only studies conducted in the United States were used for this project, as there was plenty of research from different areas across the country. Educational settings included public schools, dual-immersion schools, and summer school programs.

Changes in my career during this project's completion may have limited the depth of analysis within my literature review and ability to comprehensively answer my focal questions. After six years of teaching fourth grade, I decided to switch to third grade. Making this change increased my workload more than I had anticipated, which impacted both my mental health and available time outside of work to work on this project.

Conclusion

Schools across the country are experiencing a detrimental achievement gap between CLD students and their native English-speaking peers. With diverse classrooms becoming the norm, teachers are being challenged to support students with varying language needs and help them

meet rigorous academic standards. The research showed that vocabulary instruction may improve CLD students' academic outcomes in content areas. It is imperative that school districts, administrators, and teachers work toward closing the achievement gap by increasing the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction and seeking out learning opportunities to better understand how to support CLD students' instructional needs.

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