Webinar on the Newest WWC Practice Guide on Teaching English Learners
Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School

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Please use the questions box to send us questions for the presenters

and the chat box to find John's contact information.

Please notice that you have a chat box in which you can send us comments

or comments to the participants.

At this point, I would like to hand the webinar over to Dr. Joy Lesnick,

Acting Associate Commissioner at NCEERA, who will be introducing our presenters.

Hello everyone, and welcome to this webinar, where we're excited to give you an overview

of the newest What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide entitled

"Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School".

Before I turn it over to the panelists, let's talk about the Recommendations in this practice guide,

I want to give you just a brief overview of the What Works Clearinghouse

and some of our other products and resources.

NEXT

In a nutshell, what we do at the WWC is review the research on different programs,

products, practices and policies in education,

and then by focusing on the results from high-quality research,

we try to answer the question: What works in education? and the goal is to provide YOU

with some of the information you'll need to make evidence-based decisions.

The WWC website is where you can find all of our resources,

and this slide shows just a screen shot of the home page.

On the bottom half of the left side of the bottom half of the screen,

is where you can see our main products.

The practice guide, which we're going to talk more about today

intervention reports which summarize all the effectiveness research on a given program,

single study reviews, which provide information about individual studies

that meet What Works Clearinghouse standards,

and quick reviews which are an email news blast of information

about a study that has received significant media attention.

We also have a searchable data base of all of the studies that have been reviewed by

the What Works Clearinghouse which at last count is just over 10,000 studies,

and you can access that all on our website all for free.

You can also browse for products related specifically to English learners

by choosing the topics in Education tab at the top of the screen

just under the Institution of Education Sciences logo,

and selecting English learners or another topic you're interested in.

So after today's presentation I encourage you to visit the website

to become more familiar with the additional resources.

And, these slides will also be posted on this website after this presentation.

NEXT

So practice guides are one of the What Works Clearinghouses most downloaded products

and this slide just gives you a sense of the other practice guides

that are available in a variety of topic areas.

So, for example, we have a guide on turning around low-performing schools,

and reducing behavior problems in elementary school,

response to intervention, both in reading and math, teaching reading comprehension,

mathematical problem solving, teaching fractions, and other topics,

so I encourage you to take a look.

NEXT

But the focus of today's presentation is on our newest practice guide for teaching English learners

and so you may be familiar with our 2007 practice guide on this topic,

and this guide is the first time that the What Works Clearinghouse has updated a practice guide,

so we are very excited to share it with you today.

In the introduction of this guide, there's an extensive explanation about how this guide

is different from the 2007 guide,

as a result of the expanding amount of research evidence available on this topic.

So this practice guide is both a continuation and expansion of that original guide

which still stands alone,

it expands the research base from kindergarten through 5th grade to kindergarten through 8th grade,

and builds on that previous research,

while including new recommendations which the panelists will talk in detail about today.

NEXT

So when the What Works Clearinghouse developed a practice guide,

we put together a panel of both researchers and experts, researchers and expert practitioners,

to contribute to the guide in order to have the recommendations and suggestions be most useful to practitioners.

And so in the next slide,

I give you a list of just the panelists who participated in creating this guide.

So before I turn it over to the presenters to talk about the four recommendations,

I'd like to point out the level of evidence for each of the recommendations listed in the guide.

And there are appendixes and explanations about how all these ratings are determined,

and all the studies that exist that support each rating,

so if you're interested in that information, please see the guide itself.

I'll just take one moment to tell you that the level of evidence

always relates to how much existing research there is in a particular area.

All of the recommendations are supported by the expert panel,

and some have more evidence than others for a variety of reasons

that are described more completely in the guide.

NEXT

So I'd like to thank the three panelists who are going to be talking with us today

about the Recommendations in detail.

Scott Baker, our panelist chair, Nonie Lesaux, and Patrick Proctor.

And at this point, I'll now turn it over to Nonie Lesaux.

Hi, thank you. This is Nonie Lesaux, and I'll be speaking today about Recommendation 1.

NEXT

So the first recommendation that we landed upon for this new guide,

which is driven by a strong level of evidence

is that we need to teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively

and across several days using a variety of instructional activities

and I'll impact that what we mean now.

NEXT

So, what we mean by that is

really focuses on going deep on academic words and like I said,

the level of evidence for this recommendation is strong.

It was based on six studies that met What Works Clearinghouse Standards,

five of which used randomized control trials to examine the effects of the intervention,

and one used quasi-experimental design.

We as a panel consider the application of the findings that go into these studies

for Pre K to 8 settings and therefore,

think about academic vocabulary teaching across the elementary years.

One of the studies was conducted in the primary grades,

the other five were in the upper elementary and middle school years.

What I should add,

is that these studies were conducted in integrated settings involving

both English learners and native English speakers

so as you can imagine in most of those settings

the majority of the classroom students were English learners.

NEXT

When we think about what the evidence means for teaching we think about it in two ways

One, we identify for instructional elements,

but the elements alone don't tell us how to do this in practice

so what we've identified for the purposes of the guide is both the four elements

and how we do this in classrooms.

So, I'm going to spend some time today talking with you about these four elements

and how we think about the "how to's".

The first element is text selection and use

so you can see that our recommendations focuses on choosing a brief

engaging piece of informational text that includes academic vocabulary

and using that as a platform for intensive vocabulary instruction.

The second instructional element relates to which word we choose to teach,

so word selection is a common question, it's a common issue.

It's not a small issue because there are many words we can choose, so here,

we're looking for choosing a small set of academic vocabulary words for indepth instruction.

The third element relates to word-learning activities, which I'll say more,

which is how, what does it actually look like when students are learning words,

what do the tasks look like, and here we're really focused on using multiple modalities

- writing, speaking, and listening.

And finally, the fourth element that I'll talk more about relates to

word-learning strategy instruction, so "the how to" is that students in classrooms

need to be able to independently figure out the meaning of words,

not just be taught words themselves.

So here we focus on the kinds of strategies

that help our students become more independent word learners.

NEXT

So, why don't I spend some time on each of these four elements.

The first, again, step 1 focuses on choosing a brief engaging piece of informational text

that includes academic vocabulary,

and using it as a platform for intensive academic vocabulary instruction.

So you'll see on this slide and in the guide that we provide

an example of a short piece of informational text

in this case it focuses on the ethical treatment of animals as it relates to keeping them in zoos.

You'll see around the edges of the text example we have four elements

that we think about when we think about text selection.

So the first is that the text contains ideas that can be discussed from a variety of perspectives.

So in this particular sample text we talk about zoos today versus zoos of the past,

the different kinds of reconstructed habitats that we might see in zoos depending on the species.

So the first is that there are a number of ideas that can be discussed

from a variety of perspectives in part

because we want to keep returning to this text in order to

support the deep word learning that we're looking for.

If there aren't big ideas in the text, then we can't use it over time.

Not surprisingly, we're looking for text with a variety of target academic words.

In this case words like environment, impact and investigation

are very good solid academic words to teach,

they kind of cross the content areas, and they support comprehension using a number of text.

The other element that we're focused on,

is that it tends to be that we're looking for the text to connect to

a unit study and build knowledge.

So in this case, this text relates very nicely to a unit of

study on the ethical treatment of animals.

So we don't have this text sit independently of a unit of study,

but we connect it to the unit of study, and

Therefore our academic words are part of that unit of study.

And finally, we notice not surprisingly, that the text that we're choosing

provide details and examples to support comprehension.

But again, we're using the text primarily here as a platform

for intensive academic vocabulary instruction.

Which is different from choosing text strictly to teach comprehension.

NEXT

The second step

focuses on choosing a small set of academic vocabulary words for in-depth instruction.

This is in many ways a shift from a lot of traditional practice

around vocabulary where we're looking to get through many more words,

We're worried about how many words our students are learning,

and therefore, we are often starting with list and going, covering that list over time,

maybe Monday to Friday with spelling.

Here, what we're talking about is a fundamentally different approach,

which is that we start with the text,

we identify the small set of academic vocabulary words,

and we study them in depth.

So, when we choose the words,

we notice that they are frequently used in the text right off the bat.

They're central to understanding the text, in this case exhibit, impact, and pursuit.

They appear in other content areas, they have affixes,

which allows us in this case to work on word learning strategies

as well as just study the words themselves.

They often have multiple meanings and uses, that's a key feature of academic words,

and they have cross-language potential for study,

so we're reminding ourselves that we're supporting English learners' language development,

many of whom bring another language obviously to this equation and

then therefore we look to tap their cross-language,

once we've selected those words,

we worry then about ensuring we have many modalities to teach them by.

NEXT

So our third step focuses on the kinds of activities

and the kinds of modalities that we use to do that teaching.

NEXT

You'll see here that we're focused on the way in which we can build up vocabulary,

using reading, speaking, and listening-based activities.

We think about the notion of having oral and

written language development in our classroom.

In that sense, we move past just the spoken activities, or even the reading activities, and

get into the activities that involve writing and listening.

So here we require students to use the target academic words in their writing.

We engage them in activities that will increase their exposure to

and experiences with target words across the day,

across several days, and across different activities.

We explicitly teach words using student-friendly definitions,

examples, and concrete representation.

We facilitate structured discussions in which students use and talk about the words,

and we ensure that they just generally have many opportunities

to practice differences in usage and meaning.

So, with multiple modalities comes multiple opportunities for word learning,

and we remind ourselves that this happens over time.

Next I'll provide some examples of what this might look like,

so you'll see that we call out, in this case,

we call out three different ways to use these modalities.

The first might be to have students generate their own student-friendly definitions,

or to generate that and have them start from there.

So in this case pursuit- trying your best to get something or be somebody. Or, stuff you do.

Much of the good vocabulary, effective vocabulary instruction,

to build up academic vocabulary, has students, as I mentioned,

interacting, so in the case of a role play which we play out in the guide examples in more detail.

In this case, one student might be interviewing another saying,

"In your opinion, what options should be pursued in designing an exhibit for seals?"

And you'll see that the target word "exhibit" and the academic word "opinion" is in this question.

So there we have students in the role of listener and speaker drawing on their content knowledge,

and probably making links back to the anchor text.

Finally, you'll see in the guide that we recommend extended writing projects consolidate

and provide written opportunities for students to develop their academic vocabulary.

So here in an end of unit closing writing project,

we'd have a prompt that might say,

"Decide what kind of zoo you think would be better to visit

 and write a paragraph that explains your choice.

Make sure to compare the new exhibits with the old exhibits."

So in that sense, it's a consolidation, kind of capstone activity

that forces the student to use the academic words, and practice their written language.

Our fourth step and final one,

NEXT

Relates to the word-learning strategies that we want students to gain

in order to independently figure out the meaning of words.

So just as a reminder for all of us who work with English learners

and think a lot about their language-learning needs,

we cannot possibly teach them or their English only peers

All of the words they need to know.

But we could, in fact teach them to be better word learners independently.

So, one of the steps that we recommend,

the fourth and final step in the guide for teaching academic words

involves examples of the kinds of learning tasks

that helps students understand and analyze words

that they come across that they are unfamiliar with.

So here, as examples we push on context clues,

we provide examples of teaching that involve morphology,

so analyzing the parts of words, and we also, of course,

go to cognates that both support our English learners and help them recognize

differences and similarities across language.

NEXT

We wrap-up this recommendation with two roadblocks and some potential solutions,

and I of course will be happy to take some questions at the end of this webinar.

The first roadblock we call out is this notion of selecting text

that might not be an option outside of the district mandated curriculum.

So when districts have, you know, very strict guidelines around text,

here we remind our audience that certainly the existing text are the ones

that we should and can use to do this,

so we're happy to put existing resources to use to word-building academic vocabulary knowledge.

So there may be a passage in a science textbook

that we haven't historically used for academic vocabulary teaching,

but that may be a very good fit,

and then also be a nice fit with other instruction that we're doing this content date.

At the same time we always recommend,

some of the complex text that are publically available,

and even thinking about short pieces like newspaper articles

and op eds that may not be central to the scope and sequence in today's lesson,

but may also be platforms for studying words that connect to the content under study.

The second roadblock call out gets back to this pervasive issue of time,

and so if we're going to make the shift to teaching words deeply

there's an issue of planning time to do this, to plan this kind of instruction.

The solution that we're suggesting is really around professional collaboration,

there's a lot of room to do this work really well in

educator teams with common planning time who

may in fact be cross-content areas.

Some of the most powerful vocabulary teaching

actually shares the words under study across classrooms and content areas.

So if we harken back here to our academic words

that were being taught as part of our sample lesson:

exhibit, environment, impact,

those are words that cross content areas and could be studied in that way across classrooms.

NEXT

I'm gonna introduce and turn it over to my colleague Patrick Proctor from Boston College

Whose gonna talk about Recommendation #2.

Ok. Thank you Nonie, um I'm gonna talk about Recommendation 2 and 3

as you'll see I'll spend more time talking about recommendation 2

given its level of evidence, and spend less time on recommendation 3.

So recommendation 2 is to integrate oral

and written English language instruction into content-area teaching.

You will see a strong level of evidence.

NEXT

Supporting that that strength are 5 randomized controlled trials

all showing positive impact on content-area acquisition across a range of grade levels

spanning through Pre-K all the way through the intermediate and middle school level.

And as Nonie mentioned with the vocabulary work

These classrooms contain both English learners and native English speakers

which speaks to some degree of generalized ability

for the heterogeneous classrooms that many teachers find themselves teaching.

NEXT

So the instructional elements here in the associated "how to," again there are four.

The first is to work with English learners to make sense of content,

and in doing so strategically use instructional tools:

videos, visuals, and graphic organizers that anchor instruction

and help make the students make sense of content

in a way that minimizes the linguistic demands,

but maximizes the conceptual development.

Academic vocabulary, something that Nonie has just finished speaking well to,

explicitly teaching content-specific academic vocabulary,

Importantly, particularly for, for my talk today is the use of pairs or small group discussions,

either having students talk to each other or independently, or with teacher facilitation,

we see often in classrooms a whole lot of teacher talk

and not so much student talk and

but what we really want to push on with this Recommendation

is the needs for kids to use expressive language

as a means by which to develop their own English.

If receptive language is important,

expressive language is also important

and we want to push on instruction

that really leverages expressive language opportunities for kids,

and along those lines writing -

providing writing opportunities for students to expand student learning,

something I'll talk about in more detail when we get to Recommendation 3.

NEXT

So I'm gonna focus on steps 1 an 2 that I've already introduced

in the following instructional example.

NEXT

So I'd like to introduce you to Ms. Concha

she is a 6th grade Sheltered English Science Teacher

and she wants her students who are a group of English learners

from beginning to intermediate level English proficiency,

wants her students to be able to identify and articulate relevant evidence

about a specific claim of rather sympatically complex claim that

antibiotics cure infection by killing all types of bacteria in the body,

including the harmful bacteria that causes infections.

So that's quite a mouthful for kids who are beginning to learn English or

who are at a moderate level of English proficiency.

So the teacher wants to make this claim accessible to the students and

to provide them with cognitive resources to develop an understanding of that claim.

She's using this claim in conjunction with a short text

much like the one Nonie described um with respect to the zoo example.

And she's gonna teach just three words to do this activity.

The first word is relevant which doesn't relate to the text,

it relates to the activity and then antibiotic and bacteria.

And so what she does in having taught these two words,

she then works with the students to reduce the claim

to a linguistically more a simple claim: Antibiotics kill bacteria.

If students know what kill means

they've worked with antibiotics and bacteria,

so now they've got an understanding, a basic understanding of the concept here.

NEXT

So here's what Ms. Concha does with her students.

She provides them with a series of cards labeled A - G,

so seven cards, containing information that either supports or

does not support the claim that antibiotics kill bacteria.

That is, she asks them if the information on these cards is relevant to the claim or not?

Yes or no? And asks the kids to go about the task of sorting cards

into relevant or irrelevant information, and I'm gonna show you these cards

and try a little poll, to sort of mimic what Ms. Concha is trying to do.

So here are the four cards, here are the first four cards,

and the students are working together to sort through what's relevant and what's not relevant.

So what I'd like you to do is take just a couple of minutes,

or a few seconds is more accurate,

and read through these four claims and determine on your own,

or with colleagues if you're with them,

which of these- which single card provides information that is

relevant to supporting the claim that antibiotics kill bacteria.

So we'll take just 10 seconds just to read through these.

And now we're gonna start a poll. Start the poll.

Okay so what you should do is select which single card

provides information relevant to supporting the claim and them click submit.

OK let's close the poll.

I see that 88% of people selected A - ok good .

NEXT

And the correct answer according to a Ms. Concha was in fact A.

NEXT

The argument being here that in Card A, as you can very clearly see,

the claim represented in the sentence, that is Antibiotics are medicine that kill bacteria.

So this first treatment is rather simple,

it's just asking kids to go back and really find the claim embedded with a larger segment of text.

But she doesn't stop there.

NEXT

Now she wants to build, built the conceptual understanding around this

and so she presents the kids with three more cards and asks them again,

which of these cards, in this case there are two,

provide information that's relevant to support the claim that antibiotics kill bacteria.

So we're going to do the same thing.

Take about ten or fifteen seconds, take a look at these three cards,

and try to come to a conclusion as to which two you think support that claim.

OK let's start the poll.

Select one of those sets of two and click submit.

And let's close the poll.

And 90% say F and G. Very good.

NEXT

The answer is F and G.

NEXT

So in this one you see it's moving away from text and getting much more into concept,

so you can see in card F you have the key vocabulary in the form of labels,

and then the student has to work to understand that

it's likely that the reason those bacteria are not around

the antibiotic disc is because the antibiotic disc is perhaps killing them.

And then in card G, again you have a similar kind of phenomena,

a pie chart, chart two that speaks to bacteria

and then a pie chart in chart three that speaks to reduced bacteria after antibiotics.

So with a relatively simple or reduced linguistic framework students can use these visual images

to really dig into the conceptual understanding that undergerred the claim.

 NEXT

So that leads to step 3, how did Ms. Concha carry this out in her class?

She obviously wasn't polling her students on the internet.

NEXT

So she had her students - she paired her students

and had them work with all seven cards actively

sorting them into piles of relevance and irrelevance.

And I'm going to focus on one example of two students

who were working together, Sofia and Eva.

Both are native Spanish speakers.

Eva possesses higher English language proficiency relative to Sophia,

who is a relatively recently arrived immigrant,

and here's a brief excerpt of their conversation as they worked through this activity.

NEXT

So here's a brief conversation:

Sofia the less English proficient one starts speaking in Spanish.

Ira esta aca? (Does this one go here?) and she places the card in the pile

and then Eva steps in and straight forwardly reads the claim,

or reads the information on the card,

and at the very end of having her re-reading it,

and we know that re-reading through the research on comprehension supports understanding.

Sophia chimes in, finishes reading with her and says in turn 3,

I think this here, pointing to the irrelevant pile,

because doesn't support the claim, so you see Sophia,

making use of the academic vocabulary that is claim in discussing the activity.

But Eva pushes her, she says, "Why?"

Sophia says, "Because dice (it says)," and she reads again and

then she can see she is breaking down,

she says, "I think, you no puedo hacer bien la cosa esta. (I can't do this thing)."

She is expressing frustration but through Spanish,

and then Eva steps in the final point of support.

"Okay, I think here is...information because they are like no connecting in the claim,"

"because they don't have any antibiotics and kills and bacteria, like B right?"

And here they have to read and see if they are antibiotics killing bacteria.

And here they say antibiotics kill bacteria. That's why it's here.

So you can see Eva understanding very clearly the language demands of the task

and how to attack the information that's being presented in the cards.

But also supporting her partner who is less certain about the activity and

linking through the common understanding of Spanish through their discussion.

NEXT

So a summary of this approach, How-to 1: Approaches that help make sense of context

Card sort activity is grounded in text

provides linguistic and visual information for students to consider in relation to the task.

Also allows the students to physically engage with words, sentences, visuals and ideas.

Explicit vocabulary instruction

Ms Concha has targeted key vocabulary, she's reduced linguistic complexity,

but allowed for the cognitively complex exploration of content here.

And finally, she's given her students opportunities to talk with each other,

and she's doing this by being very strategic in her groupings,

she's grouping heterogeneously by language for English language proficiency,

but homogenously by native language,

and that paired work allows for the language of discussion to vary,

and that's important that when students are working in groups,

if they're paired along dimensions of the common native language, the discussion,

the way they make sense of content, ought to be able to vary,

that is the language of the discussion ought to be able to vary.

The expression of understanding that might take the form of writing,

or whole-group presentation ought to take place in English,

but the cognitive organization, and the coming of understanding, that in those contexts,

the language must certainly be allowed to vary so that kids have the most access to that content.

NEXT

So some roadblocks and solutions to this recommendation,

we hear this a lot, that teachers who specialize in the content area,

often say they lack the language and literacy expertise

that will allow them to provide these kinds of supports.

A response that the panel has to that kind of a concern, which is a valid concern,

but in the case of this particular recommendation,

what the real struggle with is in getting kids to talk and

have their voices be more a part of instruction,

that is not so much a specialized language and literacy

rather that's an instructional issue that all of us as teachers struggle with,

that is how do we let go of control of the floor and seed some of its students

so that they have the opportunities to practice,

and that's something that stands across the content area,

and those opportunities for language use are what's at the core of this recommendation.

And finally, teachers think that the additional focus,

may think that the additional focus on language won't be so useful for native English speakers,

but part of the strength of this recommendation,

is that it's coming from studies in which both native English and

English learners were grouped together in the same classroom.

So, the findings suggest that these are beneficial approaches for both groups of students,

and also align quite cleanly with several dimensions of the common core.

NEXT

So now I'm going to move on to Recommendation 3,

and you'll see here provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills.

Here we have a minimal level of evidence.

NEXT

So as some background, when the first meeting of the panel,

we went around and discussed the 2007 guide, what we liked,

what we thought was there, what we thought wasn't there,

and one thing that came up universally amongst the group

was a lack of a focus on writing in the first guide,

and the very appropriate response to that was

that there was simply no research to report on at the time that

that guide was produced on writing and English learners, and since then,

only two studies have met What Works Clearinghouse standards,

and they weren't focused directly on writing interventions,

one was a professional development with teachers and student

writing as a distal outcome of that professional development,

and the other was a complex vocabulary intervention conducted by Dr. Lesaux,

where writing was one outcome, but it was not an intervention designed

directly to affect writing outcomes, so there's not a lot of evidence,

but we know that kids need to write.

We know that that's a huge demand of schooling, it's a major form of expressive language,

and there's a broad research consensus

that said before that students get lots of chances to hear language,

but far fewer opportunities to use it productively,

and in this sense we've found writing instruction and writing as expressive language,

productive language for students acquiring English.

NEXT

So again we have four elements here

one is to be writing assignments across the content area

that are anchored in content and focus on developing academic language and writing skills.

Providing language-based supports for writing that facilitates

students' entry into and development of writing,

harkening back to Recommendation 2,

working in pairs and small groups around writing to discuss,

to pre-write to edit together, and to work on varied aspects of writing,

and finally to use writing as an assessment tool, not just as a summative assessment,

that is as a final product for example in a writer's workshop model,

but also small bits of writing that can be used formatively and assess formatively,

along dimensions of language, content knowledge, and things of that nature.

NEXT

So, because this is such a wide-open recommendation,

I think this recommendation falls into the hands of teachers

and is open to a great deal of exploration.

The panel is recommending that writing take place regularly in classrooms.

But I'd ask you to think back to the Ms Concha example,

and providing writing assignments that are anchored in content

what might a writing assignment following-up that activity look like.

One might be that Sophia and Eva

have to write a reasoned response as to why they sorted cards into the relevant act pile.

But another might be that this is taking place in a larger unit of study

that's culminating with a more extended essay on the development of the use of antibiotics

in the medical profession, and this is sort of an introductory activity.

So this bit of knowledge might be used in a larger writing project down the line.

Step 2 for writing assignments language-based supports,

this is something that we do see quite a bit of, or

at least I do see in my work with teachers in general

in classrooms that have lots of English language learners,

that is the use of graphic organizers, sentence starters,

common across many elementary and middle school classrooms,

teaching directly to vocabulary and syntactic demands which often varies

as a function of the content that's under study

and those language-based supports can be considered as approaches that help leverage the next step.

NEXT

Which is using pairs and small groups to provide

opportunities for students to work and talk together,

which Ms. Concha's activity does exactly that if we move that example forward,

those students, Sophia and Eva would be able to write more

based on the discussions that they've had together.

And finally, that writing could be used by the teacher

depending upon how she wanted to formatively assess

the degree of comprehension that they have,

she could assess the degree of understanding of what relevant means,

she could look at it from any number of the linguistic dimensions that Nonie mentioned,

whether they be morphological,

 or symantic understanding of words and their use in the content area.

NEXT

And finally Roadblocks and Solutions.

Teachers may be concerned with the limited amount of writing that

many English learners produce when given an extended

writing project and that can be true,

but ironically that is what often causes many of us to stop

using writing in the classroom because it seems

like we're getting so little in return on the investment.

But, it's time on task that will yield increasing return on the investment,

but it does take time, though interestingly for emergent English learners,

writing cannot be the first entre into literacy,

even before reading comprehension comes along,

if you think about it, you have control over what you write,

so you're not as constrained by language in the same way.

If you can think it and say it you can write it down.

But if someone else has thought it and written it down in a very specific way,

that you're not able to understand,

then reading becomes a far more demanding emergent literacy opportunity than writing does.

And finally, designing and implementing

effective peer collaborative activities can be difficult,

and this is true if we think back on what Ms. Concha did.

She experiments a lot with different grouping strategies to see what works and what does not.

Grouping homogeneously by language, heterogeneous by language proficiency,

is one approach, she might reverse that approach,

but being flexible and using those peer collaboration is important

even if you abandon them for some students who don't like to do that,

but work better independently,

but the important point with writing instruction

is understanding what serves students best.

NEXT

And at this point I think we're ready to take questions.

Thank you Nonie and Patrick.

At this time, we will be asking Nonie and Patrick the questions you send in.

To send us a question,

please go to the control panel in the upper right hand corner of your screen.

If the control panel is minimized you will see a small red rectangle

in which there is an arrow pointing left.

Press that arrow to open the control panel

and then locate and press the arrow or plus sign next to the word question.

Type in the box under the word Questions and then send the question.

Nonie, we already have a couple of questions for you.

How many words are included in a small set

and over what time period should they be teaching them?

Thanks that's a great question.

Let me say that the studies that we've look at

the one that provides the most concrete details

suggests that we're looking at between 8 and 10 words

over the course of a let's say 8 or 9 day unit

giving say 30 to 40 minutes a day for vocabulary work each day of that unit.

So, you know, the time piece sort of depends on the amount of time,

but what we don't want to do is go deep just in one or two days

potentially for the same amount of minutes

let's say than do this over the course of several days

to ensure that there are different modes and that there is some time

between exposures and encounters to really sort of cross that and consolidate

So that I can say that, you know, at a minimum it would be

probably one school week, but many of the current effective approaches

straddle two school weeks

and have probably somewhere in the ballpark of about 10 words.

Thank you. Patrick we have a question for you.

When pairing students heterogeneously,

should teachers provide guidance on how to have productive discussion

so that one student does not simply correct the other student's mistakes,

or just give the answer?

Yes, that's a good question.

Guidance is crucial, so what we're finding

when we look at students' discussions is that they don't,

kids don't just come to school and

they're able to have academic discussions around big topics.

There's two dimensions, one is the importance of the discussion,

but the other is exactly that, that there has to be,

they need opportunities to practice, so it's not just talking,

it's the structure in which talk is occurring.

So, we always hear the tenants of accountable talk and

listening to what students' say is one of those...

listening to the idea rather than to the student

or to the person is one key component of accountable talk,

as are what you might call sentence starters for reason discourse amongst people,

that is, I agree with what you're saying, but things of that nature,

those don't come naturally, and so implicit in this notion

that teachers ought to be using discussion-based approaches

is also direct instruction around how to have a good discussion.

And we see this developing over time with students,

that they don't start there,

but they are able to develop it with facilitation from their teachers.

Thank you Patrick, we have another question for Nonie,

How would you align recommendation 1 with present strategies such as SIOP?

I think that Recommendation 1, thinking about the SIOP model in particular,

I think you could certainly work as part of the language objective be focusing on academic words,

and choose an academic word as part of the content objective also.

So I see it as sort of able intergrated where I think we want to be really clear about the

difference is that the target academic words under study don't live just within a lesson,

so where the SIOP tends to focus on a lesson and its characteristics,

we want to remind ourselves we're looking to study these words over time.

OK thank you. Patrick should teachers be setting aside specialized time in the day

for writing or should writing be infused over the course of the school day?

Yeah, I think inherant in the recommendation is that writing should become a regular part

of the school day, and in fact separating out explicit time just for writing,

that is something that teachers can and in some cases should do, leave time for writing.

But that should not be the only format in which writing instruction is occurring

because what we want is for kids to understand that writing is a part of the content-learning

process, and so infusing that across the school day at multiple time points

at multiple instructional leverage points is really the thrust of that recommendation.

Thank you Nonie and Patrick. We have reached the end of our questionand answer period.

I would now like to introduce Scott Baker who will present on Recommendation 4.

Thank you very much, next slide.

So, our fourth recommendation is to provide small-group instructional interventions

for English learners, these who are struggling in particularly in the areas of literacy and

English language development. This Recommendation is targeting a specific group of English learners.

NEXT

The level of evidence here is moderate, there's a sizeable number of studies,

there are six randomized controlled trials that meet standards.

Most of them, five of the six focus on the primary grades, so kindergarten through grade 2.

There was one study that focused on grades 6 - 8. The panel reviewed the studies and

concluded that the information from them can be applied to kids throughout grades K through 8,

and like the other recommendations with corresonding studies,

the results in these studies were either for English learners specifically, or for

a sample that included non-English learners, but the predominant population was English learners.

The impact of the interventions was assessed on a range of language and reading measures

and the primary reason for the moderate rating has to do with the fact that there were

a number of positive findings across these studies, but also some findings where the

impact was not discernable. There were no negative findings, but there were some that were

in the fairly close to zero range in terms of an effect size,

so the panel concluded that the level of evidence was moderate.

 NEXT

So in terms of the meaning of this for teachers and our elements and "how to's",

we've got five for this recommendation, and I'm gonna focus on the fourth and fifth steps

in particular, but the first three kind of go together as a unit

so the main thing about this recommendation, is we're targeting a sub-sample of English learners,

those that have been determined to be struggling in the areas of literacy and language.

So our first step is really to figure out who those kids are,

and here we're able to do this pretty well in areas of literacy

where we have a number of screening instruments that can be used to identify

kids that are struggling in what we term in the practice guide as foundational skills,

so those are things like phonological awareness, decoding, reading fluency.

We don't have these kinds of screeners for more complex skills like vocabulary knowledge

or comprehension, but we do have them and there's lots of information in the first practice guide

for literacy skills. And that's an important thing, because the content, the second How-to

is to design the content around what kids need. So instead of focusing just on foundational skills

which I think could be a tendency for this recommendation,

for kids who are struggling in literacy in particular,

the panel really wanted to emphasize that even if kids have a decoding problem,

all of the kids who are in this group, who are identified to be struggling in literacy

or language areas, should get vocabulary instruction and comprehension instruction

as part of the small-group experience. So the content really should be designed to meet their needs

and if they need instruction in foundational areas,

and not all English language learners are going to need this, they should get it,

but all English learners in this particular grouping structure should have time to work with words

and the meaning of words and comprehension.

We recommend small groups consist of three to five kids, so pretty small group sizes that

mirrors the studies that are in this set of studies,

so fairly small groups and for the most part if possible,

teachers facilitating and directing those groups.

The fourth step is to make sure that foundational skills are addressed if that's

what the English learners need, but also to make sure that vocabulary development

and reading and listening comprehension strategies are addressed.

And then the last step, or how to in this series,

is to provide support, for teachers to provide support and scaffolded instruction that really

provides a lot of practice and review for kids.

So, in contrast to introducing a lot of new material in this particular recommendation,

the emphasis is really on solidifying what kids have been exposed to

perhaps in an earlier part of the lesson, giving them a chance to really

practice it and review it and apply it in multiple context across a number of different lessons.

NEXT

So for the first three steps, those are fairly straight forward identifying kids,

designing intervention content, and grouping kids, in some cases homogeneously,

if the focus is on foundational skills it seems to make more sense perhaps to group kids in a

homogeneous way where language and comprehension are really the focus,

 it can be very beneficial to group kids heterogeneously so that

kids who are less proficient in English for example, have a chance to hear really good models

of English being used, and where more proficient kids have an opportunity to explain

and expand what they're learning about with language and vocabulary.

But in all cases, our recommendationis that the small group experiences for kids should really

target vocabulary develoment and comprehension strategies, both listening and reading comprehension.

NEXT

So as you're probably getting a sense of today, in listening to Nonie and Patrick and now

me in the fourth recommendation, one of the major themes in the practice guide is

vocabulary acquisition, and deep vocabulary instruction, and so in our

fourth step here, we're introducing another type of vocabulary approach, one that can be

inbedded in the small-group experience instructional formats for kids who are struggling

that's a little briefer, but still addresses many of the principles that we've been talking about

today. There are lots of activities actually and there's a fairly strong focus on this

in the practice guide, but in this particular case we have Mr. Parker who has grouped

a small group of kids three to five, who are struggling to some degree with new vocabulary.

And he provides this instruction in a fairly concentrated period of time, ten to fifteen minutes,

and then during that time includes a number of different vocabulary activities that can be helpful.

NEXT

So in this particular example, the target word we're focusing on is instruction,

and Mr. Parker introduces the word, he gives kids a chance to say the words themselves,

and in a small-group format with just a few kids,

each kid could in turn have a chance to say the word so that they can pronounce it,

he provides a student-friendly definition, which is another common theme,

a definition that kids can really understand.

And then he provides some examples using sentences to show kids kind of the range of use

of this particular word, and then perhaps most importantly, kids have an opportunity to

use the word and apply it and this particular example kids are going to use the target word in

writing their own sentences in a journal that's one activity. And then the second activity,

perhaps a bit more complex, is to use the word in a graphic organizer activity where they

complete an organizer that the teacher and the kids have worked out together

to situate this particular target word.

NEXT

And the fifth step is to provide scaffolded instruction so that kids get lots of opportunities

to practice and review what they've learned previously, or maybe have not learned completely

in various context over several lessons. When they do this with the teacher,

the teacher in this case then can provide lots of feedback to kids which can extend conversation,

provide clarification about things that are correct or incorrect about answers to questions

so that the interaction between teachers and kids in the small-group format can be pretty advanced,

and if kids are practicing things that they know pretty well,

kids will have lots of opportunities to talk and to explain their

approaches and solutions to problems.

NEXT

One of the most powerful tools that teachers can use in this kind of context is to

provide really vivid demonstrations of what they're talking about when they are

asking kids about vocabulary meanings or comprehension,

and this particular case we're talking about a comprehension activity

that's an inferential comprehension activity, where the teacher has read

the students a very short excerpt about Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

In this particular example,

Rosa Parks has been asked to give up her seat to a white person on the bus, and she refuses

and is fined, so the kids and the teacher read this text together,

and the teacher introduces then, an inferential question about the text.

So how would you describe Rosa Parks, is a fairly simple question,

we kind of like that actually, that it's understandable, pretty straight forward,

and in this context because of the particular event,

Rosa Parks not giving up her seat on the bus, and the actual text that the teacher and kids read,

it actually lends itself to a nice activity. And so in this particular case,

the teacher is using a think-aloud approach to demonstrate how she would come up with an answer

of how you would describe Rosa Parks using the text,

and so another kind of major theme that runs throughout the practice guide,

is this notion on situating activities and tasks and discussions around text.

So again and again we come back to the idea that text as an anchor for

skill acquisition and discussion is really a good idea, and in this particular case the teacher is

providing a fairly vivid demonstration of how she would describe Rosa Parks by using the text itself

and there are lots of examples in here where the teacher is reminding kids and reinforcing for kids

that the text itself says this the author says that a particular thing that goes on,

that happens two or three times, and uses linking words to help

make the connection between this is what the text says, and from that, I can conclude that

Rosa Parks is this type of person. So in going through that, the teacher vividly demonstrates that

in her opinion Rosa Parks was really brave, showed bravery and courage, by staying in her seat

and knowing that there would be some kind of punishment or fine associated with that.

She was also very calm, the text was pretty clear about that, there wasn't any fighting going on,

or struggles and she had to pay a fine, and that as many of you know was the sort of impetus

for a larger movement around the bus boycott.

After that the kids then can also pair up, if the group is small enough,

they can practice this activity with the teacher, or they can do it in partners,

they can take excerpts and use other scaffolding like sentence starters or

sentence frames to help get the conversation started,

and that the teacher has provided a comprehensive sort of example of how you would

take the text and answer a question about Rosa Parks from it.

NEXT

So we have a couple of essential roadblocks

that we thought might be an issue for folks.

The first one is the notion of using kind of a

one size fits all approach for kids who are struggling.

For English learners and non-English learners in particularly in the early grades

who are having difficulty with literacy and/or language,

there can be a tendency to focus a lot on the foundational skills,

and for many kids are going to need that for sure,

but not all kids necessarily need foundational skills.

It may be that they need more comprehension instruction

or they may not know the meanings of words, and have difficulty with

comprehension because of that,

so the instructional decisions and the content that's made for kids

needs to be really based on what they need.

There's actually pretty good evidence that with good foundational skill instruction,

English learners can do as well as non English learners,

they can really "master the code," as they say,

pretty easily with the same kind of instruction that native English speakers get.

Where there's difficulty and this makes sense given that they are English learners,

is because their language skills are emerging,

they are going to have difficulty with vocabulary,

and in some senses comprehension.

So our recommendation again is that when kids are struggling

with literacy and language skills,

that there should be a strong focus in addition to foundational skills

they may need on vocabulary and comprehension.

The second roadblock has to do in some ways the location where this might occur.

There's a kind of natural tendancy to think that this might be

the kind of instructional intervention that would go on in a Tier 2 context

if you're using some sort of multi-tiered system,

and we purposely in the guide don't suggest that this is a Tier 2 intervention,

in fact we think that a lot of these components,

although how to use them in small-group settings

is going to be a lot more challenging,

but we think a lot of these components really need to be integrated really well within Tier 1.

And so one idea is to think about the differentiated instructional

as component of Tier 1 during that last part of the day

where you do try to provide some small-group instruction for kids

during that differentiated part,

to think about some of that time may not be the 30-minute block

that you might typically use for Tier 2, might be shorter than that,

but to use that time for some of the small-group instructional experiences

that are part of Recommendation 4.

That's not to say that Tier 2 might also be a venue for this kind of instruction for kids,

but it doesn't have to be situated just in a Tier 2 kind of context,

and the degree to which Tier 1

incorporates these instructional strategies and principles

in a kind of solely integrated way including differentiated instruction,

it will have the tendency of reducing the number of kids

who may need the kind of Tier 2 support that

many kids are going to need, especially in the early grades.

NEXT

Now we can take your questions.

Thank you Scott.

At this time we will be asking Scott, Nonie and Patrick the questions you send in.

Again, if you have any questions,

please type them in the box under the word QUESTIONS and hit SEND.

Scott, the first question we have is for you.

Approximately how long the class or grouping lasts in terms of time or length?

We give some recommendations in the practice guide

but we don't have hard and fast rules.

Typically, as I was just talking about in Tier 1,

there's a differentiated instruction part,

sometimes it's 15 minues, sometimes 10, sometimes 20.

That part of Tier 1 could be used for the small-group instruction

that is part of Recommendation 4.

In general, the more time kids can get in small-group instruction, the better.

It's part of other recommendations, as well as part of Recommendations 1, 2 and 3

if kids can work in small groups and to the greatest degree possisble.

Also with teacher supervision instruction guidance facilitation it tends to be very helpful.

We know that it's more costly to do that

because the grouping size for Recommendation 4 is pretty small,

three to five kids, so we know that time is of a premium,

but we think during that differentiated instruction part

some of that time can be used, and then for Tier 2,

the typical recommendations are 30 - 40 minutes of a Tier 2

experience for kids who are needing a Tier 2 intervention.

Thank you Scott. Nonie the next question is for you.

What are the best ways to assess students' deep understanding of the vocabulary,

and how will we know that they get multiple meanings of each word?

So that's a great question.

Of course we can all think of formative assessments that might you know,

we could even imagine sort of straight forward in our case,

in some of our own developmental,

excuse me intervention research we've developed you know,

multiple choice kinds of assessments,

but that wouldn't of course be the gold standard.

What we really might want to do is really look at their word usage in context,

so we can all imagine a written assignment with a prompt,

and the request to use some of the academic words.

We can all imagine looking at that word usage in the written context,

we can also imagine, of course,

observing it in the oral context in a discussion or debate and that kind of thing,

so you know on the one hand there are reasons

maybe to develop short assessments for the whole class

to kind of capture some of that information across students,

but a lot of this is going to be about good formative assessment

that really looks and observes deeply closely rather at students' word usage.

We've had the best luck with our written assignments,

giving us a real window into students production, writing production,

giving us a real window into their vocabulary knowledge.

Thank you Nonie.

Scott the next question we have is for you.

Should ELL students be separated for Tier 2 support and

if so, what should they miss from the general classroom?

We have about two minutes left, Scott, for you to answer that question.

Yes, actually that's a great question.

And another concept that gets at this a little bit is the idea

of using small-group time to have English learners and non English learners,

and so one of the, maybe a guiding principle is that

if you're dealing with foundational skills,

where you may have English learners and non-English learners on par,

there may be kids who are dealing with difficulty with the code for example,

the coding, or maybe with reading fluency.

Homogeneously grouping those kids but mixing English learners and non-English learners

is totally is a good thing to do.

And then in terms of language development,

as kids start using language to explain content of that they're reading,

to answer comprehension questions.

Also, finding ways to integrate English learners and non English learners

into those small-group experiences as Patrick was mentioning before

providing small-group discussion or writing instruction

throughout the day is sort a theme here as well.

Breaking kids up regularly so that they have the opportunity to use language

is a good idea and in language use and production

doing that in ways where heterogeneous groups can be used is also a good guiding principle.

Thank you Scott.

We have reached the end of our question and answer period.

I would now like to introduce Russell Gersten,

who was the Project Dirctor for this updated guide.

HI. As I'm sure you heard and can discern, this was a wonderful panel to work with.

I think one element of the panel,

as you heard these are three individuals

actively engaged in research in classrooms and schools,

and it showed in the range of examples

all they could do is skim the surface in the hour we have today,

but I want to encourage you to download this practice guide,

browse through some of the others,

and possibly use them for professional learning community activities

they have at your school or district, or any related study-group kind of thing.

One thing that was implicit that I'm sure many of you sensed,

that these suggestions are very linked to the Common Core,

and too some of these issues about academic language and vocabulary that are stressed there.

I want to thank you for attending, and thank the presenters.

Thank you for attending the Webinar on the newest

WWC Practice Guide on Teaching English Learners.

The webinar has now ended.

A recording of this presentation will be available on the IES website.