

## Building Comprehension Through Explicit and Organic Vocabulary Instruction for English Learners

BY MARISA GONZALEZ AND DR. ROBERT A. GRIFFIN, UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

### Abstract

This article closely examines the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, specifically for English learners. The authors first set out to identify the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension. Research-based instructional strategies are then described with discussion centering on how these strategies specifically benefit English learners. Central to the thesis is that a reader must be able to decode words and assign meaning to those words with little to no effort to fully engage in and comprehend any type of text. Due to the language barrier, some English learners have a particularly difficult time decoding and assigning meaning to words. The research presented here supports the integration of reading strategies that can be used to build English learners' reading comprehension, both explicit vocabulary instruction combined with organic, student-centered language learning. Some of the strategies discussed include daily interactive read aloud, audio recordings of students reading, whole group shared reading experiences, and direct and explicit vocabulary instruction.

Growing diversity throughout recent decades in American education has resulted in large populations

of English learners (ELs) in contemporary classrooms. As a result, educators must ask themselves a critical burning question: *What are the most pressing hurdles my ELs must overcome, and what best practices can be implemented in my classroom to help them comprehend grade-level texts?* This question encapsulates a wide range of teaching and learning possibilities which are relevant to the success of these students, and many of these possibilities begin with the successful acquisition of English vocabulary, not only for speaking purposes, but ultimately for the total comprehension of a wide variety of English-language texts. Thus, the purpose of this article is to explore how vocabulary acquisition relates to reading comprehension for ELs and what best practices teachers can use to enhance the English vocabularies of language-minority students in order to boost their total reading comprehension. Relevant theoretical grounding for this type of instruction is found within the constructs of automaticity and literacy processing, and various instructional practices such as explicit teaching of vocabulary, morphology instruction, and interactive read aloud will be discussed.

The complex process of reading requires multiple processes to occur simultaneously: decoding,

assigning meaning to words, and comprehending the text. Decoding and assigning meaning to words need to be done with little or no effort to enhance comprehension. Assigning meaning to words is certainly part of the comprehension process, but the speed at which one assigns meaning is where comprehension can potentially break down for some English learners. For English learners, this automatic approach to reading is complicated. As students from non-English-speaking cultures, ELs often have personal experiences and background knowledge that differ from native English speakers. Decoding unfamiliar vocabulary is a significant obstacle some English learners must overcome before they can focus on comprehension.

The process of acquiring an additional language and becoming fluent English readers is a complex one for English learners. Providing all students, specifically English learners, with a classroom environment that is print-rich and that fosters reading and vocabulary growth is crucial. Educators should employ a combination of traditional and modern techniques to provide ELs with well-rounded literacy instruction, but explicit vocabulary instruction combined with organic, student-centered instruction remains crucial. Organic vocabulary instruction involves utilizing teachable moments to bring to the class's attention a word or term that, for example, a student asks about while reading or that one overhears on the intercom. Although there has been a push away from authentic, unplanned, organic, or implicit vocabulary instruction in recent years, using both methods to provide maximum exposure to vocabulary should be a best practice for all language teachers. Class time should be devoted to explicitly teaching decoding strategies and morphological derivations, but one should not neglect the unplanned, teachable moments that arise during the school day. Interactive read aloud, partner reading, and audio recordings of books can be used to foster expressive reading and build vocabulary.

### Theoretical Frameworks

Understanding how vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension are linked is crucial because English learners face unique obstacles in these areas (Graves, Juel, Graves, & Dewitz, 2011). Theories of automaticity and literacy processing demonstrate the link between the ability of students to automatically decode and assign meaning to words and their reading comprehension, thus elucidating the critical issues ELs face as they overcome various hurdles toward acquiring vocabulary and improving their reading comprehension.

### Automaticity

LaBerge and Samuel's (1974) theory of automaticity

essentially suggests that comprehension follows from automatically recognizing words as well as assigning meaning to words. This bottom-up theory posits that "learning to read progresses from learning parts of the language [letters] to understanding the whole text [meaning]" (Reutzel & Cooter, 2013, para. 1). Reading involves many processes occurring simultaneously—recalling words, connecting meaning to words, building sentences and paragraphs, and drawing upon prior knowledge to make text connections. Some of these processes must become automatic for readers to manage them all at once (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974), and when students' working memories are consumed with the challenges of basic decoding and other fundamental reading processes, less capacity remains for the purpose of comprehension (Kaufman, 2010). The more often students need to pause, decode, and work to determine meaning while reading a text, the less likely they will be able to fully engage in the reading and comprehend the text.

### Literacy Processing

While observing students interacting authentically with texts over the course of a school year, Marie Clay (1982) found that learning to read is a continuous process of change and will likely look different from child to child. She confirmed that students' reading growth and learning as well as their ability to utilize more advanced literacy processes stemmed from ongoing exposure to increasingly complex texts over the course of their school careers (Doyle, 2013).

Over time and through guided interactions with texts, children leave the emergent reading phase and enter the conventional reading phase. Clay (1982) carefully considered the foundational processing and the cyclical process of reading to determine that "what on the surface looks like simple word-by-word reading . . . involves children in linking many things they know from different sources . . . to read a precise message" (Doyle, 2013, p. 644). Thus, to be a proficient reader, one must draw on a variety of strategies and knowledge to determine a text's meaning.

### Convergence of Theories

Theories of automaticity and literacy processing converge to provide a relevant foundation for exploring the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and comprehension in ELs. Consider an individual of any age who is learning English: performing all of the aforementioned mental processes are an overwhelming task until at least one or many become automatic. ELs are often less capable during the language acquisition period than native speakers of automatically recognizing and decoding unfamiliar vocabulary (Lesaux, Kieffer, Kelley, & Harris, 2014). Thus, they are at a disadvantage in learning when

compared to their native-speaking peers because “they have yet to develop the rich and varied knowledge that many children internalize from growing up in a literate culture” (Graves et al., 2011, p. 412).

For students who have a strong literacy foundation in their native language, learning another language, typically English, is a much easier task. However, few ELs have an established literate culture in their own native language, so they essentially must begin anew when working toward English language acquisition. Because many ELs are distanced from their native cultures and language at an early age, neither their native language nor the English language is well developed (Bowman-Perrott, Herrera, & Murry, 2010).

Native English speakers acquire large English vocabularies from conversations, books, television, and cultural experiences. When native speakers encounter words in a text, they often can automatically recognize and assign meaning to those words. Due to the myriad of cognitive processes that must be mastered within second-language acquisition, ELs often cannot process information in their second languages at the same speed as in their native languages, thus slowing comprehension (Burns & Helman, 2009).

### Selected Review of Literature

A review of relevant literature details the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and comprehension, with specific focus given to how English learners best acquire vocabulary. Factors inhibiting comprehension and research-based instructional techniques that can be utilized to build vocabulary acquisition and improve reading comprehension are also discussed. Central to this discussion are the importance of vocabulary knowledge, morphology instruction, and repeated reading to improve reading comprehension.

### Vocabulary and Reading Linked

As founded extensively within relevant theoretical frameworks, learning to read is a complex endeavor. Students spend much of their time in the primary grades learning basic phonics skills and strategies to decode words (Graves et al., 2011). This work lays the foundation for text comprehension and paves the route for the comprehension of texts of increased complexity in the middle and upper grades (Lewis, Walpole, & McKenna, 2014). Because vocabulary acquisition and background knowledge help provide meaning and depth to texts, students’ comprehension improves as they acquire new vocabulary and learn new concepts (Graves et al., 2011; Hastings, 2016; Lewis et al., 2014). Simply put, the more words readers understand when reading a text, the easier it will be for them to comprehend the text (Lewis et al.,

2014; Nagy, 2005). As such, “vocabulary occupies an important middle ground in learning to read” (National Reading Panel, 2008, para. 5).

### Limited Vocabularies of English Learners

While it is well-established that reading achievement is built on vocabulary acquisition, often, English learners know far fewer English words than their monolingual peers. Beck and McKeown (1991), for example, highlight the gap in vocabulary mastery, citing that native English speakers master approximately 5,000 words by the end of first grade and 50,000 words when they graduate from high school. On average, the English vocabularies of language-minority students are but a fraction of the working vocabularies of native English speakers (Duncan & Paradis, 2016; Filippini, Gerber, & Leafstedt, 2012; Lesaux et al., 2014). These gaps are particularly problematic when Matthew effects in literacy—ideally, the notion of continually-widening knowledge gaps—are considered (Stanovich, 1986). Such are the bases for improved teaching and learning endeavors targeted specifically at improving the vocabularies of ELs.

Because their vocabularies may be limited, the process of learning to read in English proves to be quite challenging for ELs. Many factors influence the vocabulary acquisition of English learners, including the prior knowledge they have gathered from personal experiences (Richgels, 1982; Sheridan, 1981), their access to English books at home, and the frequency of their exposure to written and oral English (Graves et al., 2011; Griffin, 2016). Educators, therefore, should consider how best to deliver academic content to English learners to make vocabulary acquisition and reading more enjoyable (Lesaux et al., 2014). Focusing on designing curriculum and strategies to enhance the vocabulary development of English learners in an effort to bridge existing achievement gaps between English learners and native speakers is an excellent place to start (Gibson, 2016).

Furthermore, developing the vocabularies of English learners in the primary grades to prepare them for the higher conceptual loads of the upper grades is crucial (Hendrix & Griffin, 2017; Nagy, 2005; Nagy, Berninger, & Abbott, 2006). Rich and varied learning strategies—e.g., explicitly teaching word-learning techniques or building word consciousness—are necessary to effectively foster and enhance the vocabularies of English learners (Hendrix & Griffin, 2017; Lesaux et al., 2014; Pacheco & Goodwin, 2013). Rich, extensive vocabularies assist students in becoming successful long-term readers and writers by allowing them to determine meanings of words and phrases with ease and in using precise language in their own writing and reading. English learners, by nature of the language-

learning process, need additional targeted support in vocabulary acquisition (Graves et al., 2011). Teachers of English learners, therefore, should rely on a variety of researched-based strategies to develop the vocabularies of their language-minority students (Gibson, 2016).

When explicit teaching of vocabulary and vocabulary strategies are implemented in the instruction of ELs, it is critical to ensure that these explicitly-taught fundamentals of language usage be translated into authentic transfer through student support and guidance (Hendrix & Griffin, 2017). Many websites and teacher manuals provide resources for traditional skill-and-drill practices with the hope that if words are heard and seen enough times, students will eventually commit them to memory. However, this type of explicit instruction does not lead to application in broader contexts; it must be ongoing and integrated with other literacy initiatives within the classroom (Nagy, 2005). When explicit vocabulary instruction is combined with student-centered instruction, which has been shown to have a positive effect on many children's learning (Davis, 2010; Roskos & Neuman, 2014), students tend to be more engaged in the learning process as a whole (Davis, 2010). Combining student-centered approaches, such as interactive read aloud, with explicit instruction in vocabulary acquisition proves to be particularly useful for ELs (Roskos & Neuman, 2014).

### Factors Inhibiting Text Comprehension

For ELs, multiple factors contribute to difficulty with text comprehension. Some of these factors include, but are not limited to, lack of English vocabulary and gaps in fluency and prosody. The following sections will examine these inhibiting factors more closely.

Some ELs, especially those from home environments with little or no literacy in their first languages, sometimes struggle to comprehend text because of their limited vocabularies. Automaticity is limited because they can only adequately attend to one task at a time (Graves et al., 2011). Word attack skills must be explicitly taught to make up for this deficiency (Hendrix & Griffin, 2017). Graves et al. (2011) maintain that "having a small vocabulary is a very serious detriment to success in reading" (p. 254). Lower vocabulary acquisition is a major hurdle to overcome for students whose native language is not English.

Recent research highlights how vocabulary acquisition influences comprehension and also points to inadequate morphology instruction as a contributing factor of poorer comprehension. Kieffer and Lesaux (2007) focused on upper elementary students' morphological awareness. One of their key findings

was that "morphological awareness predicts reading comprehension" in English learners (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007, p. 783). Students' morphological awareness contributed to both their knowledge of individual words and their overall reading comprehension.

Not only do many English learners have limited vocabularies, but they also receive limited morphology instruction, making it difficult for them to determine word meanings on their own based on roots, prefixes, or suffixes. Therefore, educators should recognize that teaching basic vocabulary should be in conjunction with providing consistent morphology instruction. Kieffer and Lesaux's (2007) study should be extended to determine what conditions maximize this type of explicit vocabulary teaching and provide concrete evidence to determine specific morphological instructional techniques that yield positive results. Morphological awareness is emphasized in the upper elementary grades, but it is a skill that should be gradually reinforced throughout students' school years (Hendrix & Griffin, 2017; Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007).

### Instructional Techniques to Build Vocabulary

Vocabulary acquisition is critical in improving text comprehension (Lesaux et al., 2014). Research-based instructional strategies to implement in the classroom are also important to consider when designing curriculum. Some studies encourage explicit and systematic vocabulary instruction (Filippini et al., 2012; Lesaux et al., 2014), while others imply that enriching daily instruction with student-centered activities, such as poetry readings, repeated readings, and Readers Theater, helps foster vocabulary growth (Tsou, 2011; Young & Nageldinger, 2014).

Providing students with only phonological awareness instruction in the primary grades is not sufficient. ELs make greater strides in reading when they are taught vocabulary in an explicit manner, consistently and with fidelity (Hendrix & Griffin, 2017; Lesaux et al., 2014). Filippini et al. (2012), in an empirical study employing repeated measures of literacy intervention treatment among several experimental groups composed of elementary students (including 66 students with limited English proficiency), concluded that direct, targeted interventions added to vocabulary instruction provided substantial literacy growth among the lowest-performing students. Interventions included direct phonics instruction, semantic feature analysis among synonymous vocabulary, and direct morpheme instruction (Filippini et al., 2012). Additionally, as a result, 70% of students receiving interventions in the study showed larger gains in reading comprehension than their peers who did not receive explicit instruction (Filippini et al., 2012). These interventions addressed the notion that ELs sometimes lack the same cultural

experiences as native English speakers, making the contextualization of vocabulary words challenging (Filippini et al., 2012). Explicit instruction of this sort in school is especially important for students who lack rich language experiences in English at home (Griffin, 2016).

While targeted vocabulary instruction results in growth for ELs, this growth neither negates nor replaces the growth that organic language experiences with native speakers provide. As previously stated, vocabulary interventions are powerful, but they must supplement authentic uses of language along the road to mastery. ELs make greater gains when they are exposed to organic language-learning experiences (Lesaux et al., 2014), but these experiences may be scaffolded and created for ELs within the classroom setting. Language-minority students learn a great deal about language through interactions with native-speaking peers. As student-centered instructional approaches, Readers Theater and poetry readings have been shown to improve reading and writing skills (Tsou, 2011; Young & Nageldinger, 2014). Tsou (2011) found that the vocabulary and writing skills of Taiwanese fifth graders who received instruction through Readers Theater as opposed to traditional skill-and-drill exercises improved significantly. Giving students opportunities to reread accessible texts multiple times and to kinesthetically interact with texts increases their ability to assign meaning to words through context clues. Thus, interactions with language in authentic contexts leads ELs to greater synthesis of language as a whole.

Using a similar approach to instruction, a third-grade teacher used poetry to target automatic word recognition skills and comprehension with her English learners (Wilfong, 2015). She found that giving English learners multiple opportunities to read poetry aloud to their peers, teachers, and family members helped strengthen their fluency and word recognition skills. Once per week for 12 consecutive weeks, students worked with a trained professional from The Poetry Academy. The teacher modeled reading poems with fluency before the students independently conducted repeated readings among themselves and then read the poems to their family members at home. Finally, they performed the poetry recitations for the class after a week of practice.

Similar to Tsou (2011), Wilfong (2015) found that students almost doubled their scores from pre- to post-tests regarding fluency and automatic word decoding. The short stanzas in poetry made reading manageable and achievable. LaBerge and Samuels (1974) indicated that the first step to comprehension is being able to attack words. Once readers master

that skill, then they can focus on assigning meaning to those words (Wilfong, 2015). The research on Readers Theater and poetry reveals that vocabulary growth naturally follows one's growth in decoding and automatic word recognition (Tsou, 2011; Wilfong, 2015).

While considering the best instructional approaches for English learners, teachers must first determine the factors that are contributing to their struggle to comprehend texts. From there, educators must rely on research-based practices to implement strategies in the classroom in order to support the diverse needs of English learners. The research discussed here posits that limited vocabulary is one of the predominant reasons English learners have difficulty comprehending texts.

### Instructional Implications

The correlation between vocabulary knowledge, morphological instruction, and reading comprehension for English learners is clear. Isolating concrete instructional strategies that yield academic growth is imperative. When addressing vocabulary and morphology instruction with young English learners, various methods can be employed in the classroom. Simple read alouds to bolster English learners' vocabulary and demonstrate fluent reading are appropriate, or technological tools can be utilized to build vocabulary and morphology awareness, such as using voice recordings and student support websites (Griffin, Martinez, & Martin, 2014).

Teachers would be wise to incorporate daily read aloud, shared reading and writing, and word walls to maximize the rate at which students can recall words and their meanings. Additionally, English learners would benefit from having a reading partner who is a native English speaker. This will give them additional opportunities to hear how books should be read fluently and with expression in the English language (Graves et al., 2011).

### Vocabulary Flashcards

Preserving small group time for direct and explicit vocabulary instruction is a research proven method to reinforce language skills with ELs (Filippini et al., 2012; Lesaux et al., 2014). Utilizing illustrated flashcards, providing synonyms and antonyms, and generating examples are necessary components of effective vocabulary instruction. As previously mentioned, strategies related to direct phonics instruction can be used in conjunction with read alouds and explicit modeling of decoding skills and phonological awareness to promote gains in reading comprehension. Since many English learners have difficulty interpreting, visualizing, and making meaning,

it is helpful for them to be able to see and create concrete examples in a systematic manner, and in lessons that are implemented consistently (Filippini et al., 2012).

### Read Alouds

While a multitude of strategies exist to support English learners' vocabulary growth, traditional teacher-led read alouds are an effective way to teach vocabulary. While many English learners lack the experience and background knowledge necessary to fully engage in reading, providing them with an opportunity to hear fluent reading while developing vital listening comprehension and vocabulary development skills is beneficial (Graves et al., 2011).

An ever-widening gap between middle-class students' vocabularies and the vocabularies of students in poverty exists. Students who come from families where vocabulary-rich conversations are part of their everyday lives tend to perform better in reading (Hart & Risley, 1995). Teachers can, to some extent, make up for the lack of language-rich home environments by facilitating meaningful discussions in the classroom. These discussions can be done through interactive oral reading. Teachers select a text to read aloud to the whole class, demonstrating fluency and expression. The book is read once without any pauses or interruptions. Then, the teacher reads the book again, this time stopping to direct students' attention to seven or eight vocabulary words, providing a brief definition and adding to a vocabulary chart for students to reference. Rereading the text a third and fourth time, after teaching vocabulary, helps students to absorb more information without being bogged down by unfamiliar text (Graves et al., 2011; Wilfong, 2015).

The goal behind interactive read alouds and vocabulary development is that it will transfer into students' ability to "build knowledge networks—connections between concepts that are meaningful and enduring in their longer-term memory and are primary in comprehension development" (Roskos & Neuman, 2014, p. 508). Over time, automaticity will be fostered through repeated readings and exposure to new vocabulary words, thus building a solid foundation for comprehension.

### Recorded Readings

All students, especially English learners, strongly benefit from the integration of audio recorders in the classroom. Teachers can provide pre-recorded readings of books for students to listen to and follow along, allowing them exposure to fluent and expressive reading. English learners often spend such a significant amount of time decoding that they have

limited mental energy left to find meaning in a text. Modeling reading for them not only boosts vocabulary but also allows for the meaning-making process to occur more automatically. Additionally, a teacher can have an audio recorder available at literacy stations for students to record themselves reading a book of their choice. When students are able to listen to themselves read, they can often catch their mistakes and self-correct, ideally reading more fluently and expressively during repeated readings (Graves et al., 2011). Recorded readings also offer students who may be more timid and less confident readers a chance to engage and participate in a more private and risk-free setting. With recorded readings, ELs do not have the added stress of reading in front of peers and the fear of making mistakes.

### Image Galleries

An additional way to support English learners with vocabulary acquisition is to accompany new vocabulary words with images from the Internet. Having an iPad or computer handy in small groups, or a Smart Board for whole groups, provides students with an extra layer of support for unfamiliar words. Google Images, for example, is an excellent tool for showcasing various illustrations for a given vocabulary word (Figure 1). When students can envision those new words, they can more fully engage in the reading process, and comprehending the text becomes more automatic without having to waste mental stamina on assigning meaning to unfamiliar words (Graves et al., 2011). This is particularly useful—and, truly, imperative—for ELs in the middle and upper grades who are not only faced with automaticity and mastery of common vocabulary, but also the content-specific vocabulary that permeates most of their course loads and advanced nonfiction texts (Lewis et al., 2014).

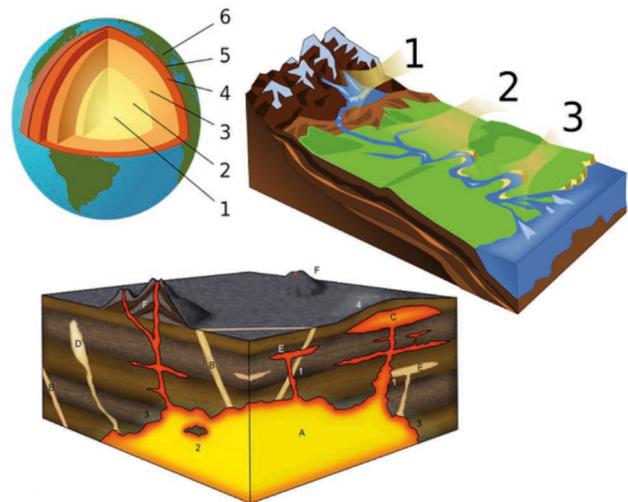


Figure 1. Sample Google images when conducting search for "geology." In public domain.

## Document Cameras

Finally, a handy technological tool teachers should take advantage of in their classrooms is a document camera. During interactive read-alouds, students do not necessarily need to see any text in order to participate. However, during a shared reading or writing lesson, a document camera can be used to display text on a larger screen for students to follow along.

## Conclusion

The central issue for English learners is evident: automaticity and reading comprehension cannot be achieved with a limited vocabulary. Language-minority students will benefit if vocabulary development is targeted systematically in the primary grades in order to advance them before school content becomes much more intense and complex. A sense of urgency is appropriate for teachers to support their English learners in literacy instruction in order to promote vocabulary growth, thus leading to successful comprehension. In short, the development of a wide vocabulary and morphological knowledge promotes automaticity and thus comprehension and is essential for reading achievement in the upper grades.

## References

- Beck, I. L., & McKeown, M. G. (1991). Social studies texts are hard to understand: Mediating some of the difficulties. *Language Arts*, 68(8), 482–490.
- Bowman-Perrott, L. J., Herrera, S., & Murry, K. (2010). Reading difficulties and grade retention: What's the connection for English language learners? *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties*, 26(1), 91–107. doi:10.1080/10573560903397064
- Burns, M. K., & Helman, L. A. (2009). Relationship between language skills and acquisition rate of sight words among English language learners. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48(3), 221–232. doi:10.1080/19388070802291547
- Clay, M. M. (1982). *Observing young readers: Selected papers*. Exeter, NH: Heinemann.
- Crosson, A. C., & Lesaux, N. K. (2009). Revisiting assumptions about the relationship of fluent reading to comprehension: Spanish-speakers' text-reading fluency in English. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 23(5), 475–494. doi:10.1007/s11145-009-9168
- Davis, L. (2010). Toward a lifetime of literacy: The effect of student-centered and skills-based reading instruction on the experiences of children. *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, 15(1/2), 53–79.
- Doyle, M. A. (2013). Marie M. Clay's theoretical perspective: A literacy processing theory. In D. Alvermann, N. J. Unrau, & R. B. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (pp. 636–655). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. doi:10.1598/0710.26
- Duncan, T. S., & Paradis, J. (2016). English language learners' nonword repetition performance: The influence of age, L2 vocabulary size, length of L2 exposure, and L1 phonology. *Journal of Speech, Language & Hearing Research*, 59(1), 39–48. doi:10.1044/2015\_JSLHR-L-14-0020
- Filippini, A. L., Gerber, M. M., & Leafstedt, J. M. (2012). A vocabulary-added reading intervention for English learners at-risk of reading difficulties. *International Journal of Special Education*, 27(3), 14–25.
- Gibson, C. (2016). Bridging English language learner achievement gaps through effective vocabulary development strategies. *English Language Teaching*, 9(9), 134–138. doi:10.5539/elt.v9n9p134
- Graves, M., Juel, C., Graves, B., & Dewitz, P. (2011). *Teaching reading in the 21st century: Motivating all learners* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Griffin, R. A. (2016). *Motivating high school Latina/o English learners to engage in reading: An exploratory study* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Database. (Accession No. 10109231)
- Griffin, R. A., Martinez, J., & Martin, E. P. (2014). Rosetta Stone and language proficiency of international secondary school English language learners. *Engaging Cultures & Voices*, 6(2), 36–73.
- Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Hastings, K. (2016). Leveled reading and engagement with complex texts. *Reading Improvement*, 53(2), 65–71.
- Hendrix, R. A., & Griffin, R. A. (2017). Developing enhanced morphological awareness in adolescent learners. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. doi:10.1002/jaal.642
- Kaufman, C. (2010). *Executive function in the classroom: Practical strategies for improving performance and enhancing skills for all students*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

- Kieffer, M. J., & Lesaux, N. K. (2007). The role of derivational morphology in the reading comprehension of Spanish-speaking *English language learners*. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 21(2), 783–804. doi:10.1007/s11145-007-9092-8
- Kim, Y. G. (2015). Developmental, component-based model of reading fluency: An investigation of predictors of word-reading fluency, text-reading fluency, and reading comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 50(4), 459–481. doi:10.1002/rq.20107
- LaBerge, D., & Samuels, S. J. (1974). Toward a theory of automatic information processing in reading. *Cognitive Psychology*, 6(2), 293–323. doi:10.1016/0010-0285(74)90015-2
- Lesaux, N. K., Kieffer, M. J., Kelley, J. G., & Harris, J. R. (2014). Effects of academic vocabulary instruction for linguistically diverse adolescents: Evidence from a randomized field trial. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51(6), 1159–1194. doi:10.3102/0002831214532165
- Leslie, L., & Caldwell, J. S. (2017). *Qualitative reading inventory* (6th ed.). New York: Pearson.
- Lewis, W. E., Walpole, S., and McKenna, M. C. (2014). *Cracking the Common Core: Choosing and using texts in grades 6–12*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- National Center for Educational Statistics. (2013). *Vocabulary results from the 2013 Reading Assessment Report Card: Summary data tables for performance results* [Data file]. Retrieved from [https://nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_2013/vocabulary/files/2013\\_Reading\\_Vocabulary\\_Appendix\\_Tables.pdf](https://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2013/vocabulary/files/2013_Reading_Vocabulary_Appendix_Tables.pdf)
- National Reading Panel. (NRP). (2008). Chapter 4 – Comprehension [Scholarly project]. Retrieved from <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/nrp/Documents/ch4-II.pdf>
- Pacheco, M. B., & Goodwin, A. P. (2013). Putting two and two together: Middle school students' morphological problem-solving strategies for unknown words. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(7), 541–553. doi:10.1002/JAAL.181
- Reutzel, D. R., & Cooter, R. B. (2013). *Bottom-up theories of the reading process*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/bottom-up-theories-reading-process/>
- Richgels, D. J. (1982). Schema theory, linguistic theory, and representations of reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Research*, 76(1), 54–62. doi:10.1080/00220671.1982.10885424
- Roskos, K., & Neuman, S. B. (2014). Best practices in reading: A 21st century skill update. *The Reading Teacher*, 67(7), 507–511. doi:10.1002/trtr.1248
- Sheridan, E. M. (1981). Theories of reading and implications for teachers. *Reading Horizons*, 22(1), 66–71. Retrieved from [http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading\\_horizons/](http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/)
- Tsou, W. (2011). The application of Readers Theater to FLES reading and writing. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(4), 727–748. doi:10.1111/j.1944-9720.2011.01147.x
- Veenendaal, N. J., Groen, M. A., Verhoeven, L. (2015). What oral text reading fluency can reveal about reading comprehension. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 38(3), 213–225. doi:10.1111/1267-9817.12024
- Wilfong, L. G. (2015). ¡Puedo hacerlo!–“I can do it!” Using poetry to improve fluency, comprehension, word recognition and attitude toward reading in struggling English language learners. *The NERA Journal*, 51(1), 41–49.
- Young, C., & Nageldinger, J. (2014). Considering the context and texts for fluency: Performance, Readers Theater, and poetry. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 7(1), 47–56.

## Georgia Reading Association



# GOALS

- Empower members of the GRA and local councils to become effective leaders in the field of literacy.
- Provide quality reading education services to all Georgia educators.
- Recognize exemplary individuals, local, and state literacy efforts.
- Achieve maximum involvement of members at the local, state, and international levels to receive maximum benefits.
- Promote the goals and objectives of the International Reading Association of Georgia.