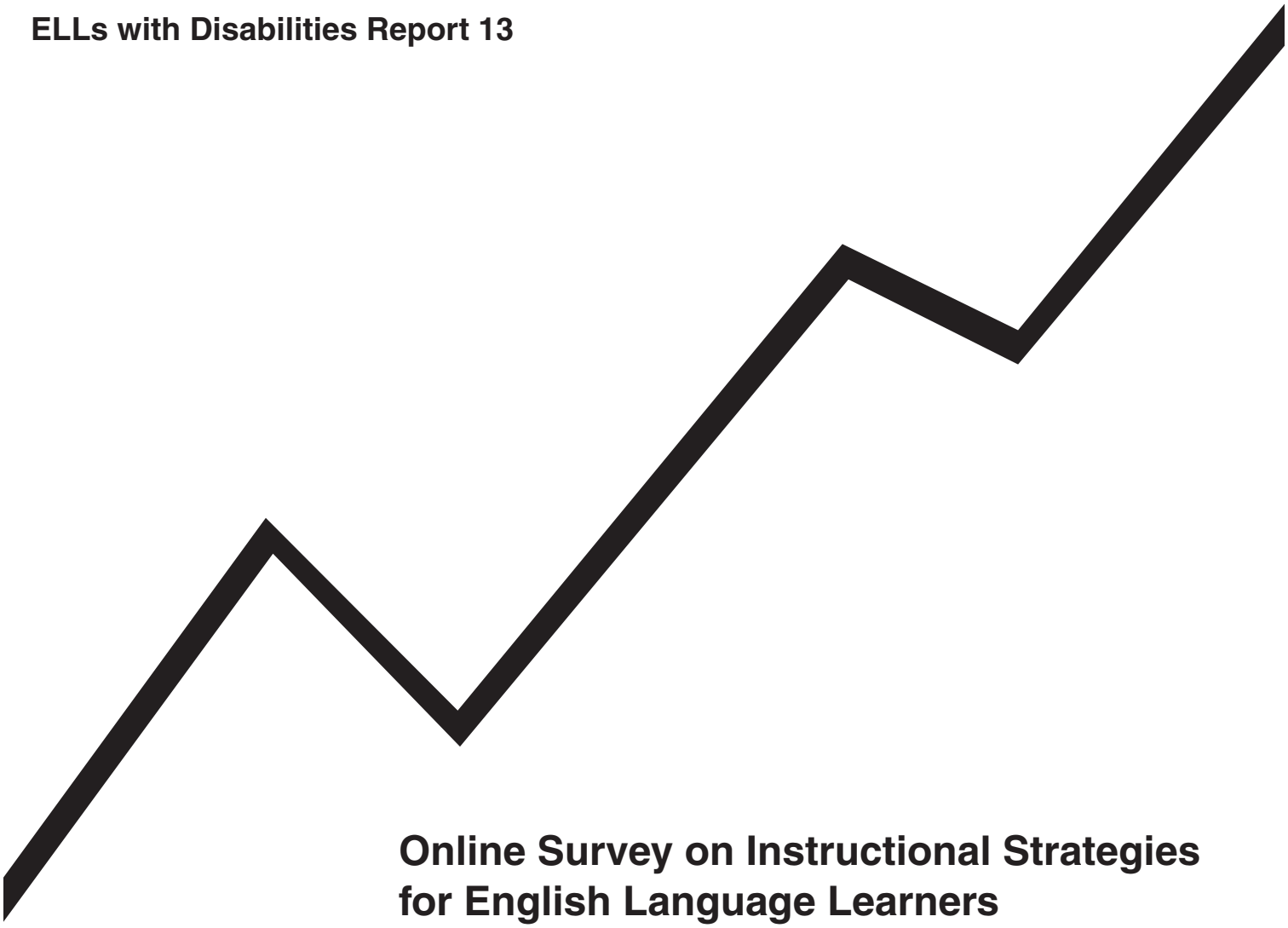
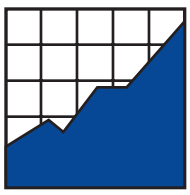
ELLs with Disabilities Report 13

Online Survey on Instructional Strategies for English Language Learners with Disabilities





NATIONAL CENTER ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

In collaboration with:

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

ELLs with Disabilities Report 13

Online Survey on Instructional Strategies for English Language Learners with Disabilities

Deb Albus • Vitaliy Shyyan • Martha L. Thurlow

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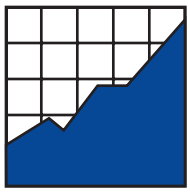

NATIONAL CENTER ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

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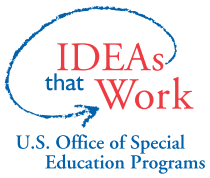

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Introduction

Federal legislation mandating grade-level standards-based reform has focused attention on the educational progress of all students. This has occurred largely through the implementation of accountability systems that rely on the assessment of students, including students with disabilities and students learning English as a second or other language. The emphasis on assessment has generally produced greater attention to instruction for these subgroups as well. Although not mentioned specifically in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, reform has also increased educators' attention on the instruction and assessment of students sharing both characteristics: English language learners (ELLs) who also have disabilities.

After initial research was conducted on instructional strategies for ELLs with learning difficulties (Gersten, Baker, & Marks, 1998), there have been limited additions to the field's knowledge base. A study conducted by Development Associates estimated that 9% of all ELLs and 8.2% of all students with disabilities are ELLs with disabilities (Zehler, Fleischman, Hopstock, Pendzick, & Stephenson, 2003). Further, in their survey findings, they found that about half of those surveyed thought these students' instruction was aligned well or very well to state standards. With an estimated 729,603 teachers in U.S. public schools working with at least one ELL with a disability in 2001–2002 (Zehler et al., 2003), the need to focus on the educators of this diverse population is clear. The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) has conducted several projects that look specifically at the instruction and assessment of ELLs with disabilities. In one project, we studied educators' perceptions of effective instructional strategies (Thurlow, Albus, Shyyan, Liu, & Barrera, 2004), and analyzed the performance of ELLs with disabilities overall and by disability characteristics (Albus & Thurlow, 2005; Albus, Barrera, Thurlow, Guven, & Shyyan, 2004; Liu, Thurlow, Barrera, Guven, & Shyyan, 2004). In other studies, we reviewed state policies (Thurlow, Minnema, & Treat, 2004) and interviewed states about their challenges and changes in policies (Anderson, Minnema, Thurlow, & Hall-Lande, 2004). These efforts have been completed in an attempt to understand and improve the academic experiences of ELLs with disabilities within our nations' school systems.

The current study, an online survey about instructional strategies for ELLs with disabilities, was designed to build on the findings of the previous study about educator perceptions of instructional strategies. Although the current study did not use consensus building methods, it was similarly designed to obtain educators' perspectives about instructional strategies for reading, mathematics, and science. This survey, in contrast to the previous study, included a broader range than only middle school level educators. Because of the study design, we opened participation to any educator of ELLs with disabilities in reading, mathematics, and science across special education, ESL/bilingual education, and general education settings. It is one study of a project designed to identify and test effective instructional strategies for ELLs with disabilities.

The survey drew on some key findings from a previous study (Thurlow, Albus, et al., 2004) on teachers' perceptions of instructional strategies:

- Educators did not have a uniform or consistent understanding of what an instructional strategy was. They often identified principles or approaches as instructional strategies.
- A broad range of factors contributed to whether an educator chose to use a specific strategy with an ELL who had a disability. These included content area, setting, individual student strengths and weaknesses, age, proficiency level, and other factors.

For this survey, our goal was to use an online environment to learn more about the influences shaping educators' use of certain strategies in the classroom (e.g., state or district mandates, professional development training, etc.). Among the influences we explored were student and setting characteristics.

Research Questions

The primary research question that we wanted to address was:

- What instructional practices do teachers recommend for delivering grade-level, standards-based instruction to English language learners with disabilities?

We wanted to examine this as a function of the teacher's status (e.g., whether the teacher was a special education, ESL/Bilingual, or general education teacher). In addition, there were two other research questions:

- How do educators who report working with ELLs with disabilities rate the importance and use of strategies?
- What do educators report as being the most influential factor in their choice of strategies overall?

Finally, we gathered other supporting interpretive information about the respondents' familiarity with standards, educator demographics, and reported student characteristics.

Method

The survey covered three content areas: reading, mathematics, and science. The first area presented to respondents was reading, with mathematics and science being optional sections. In the first part of the survey, we asked questions about the characteristics of the student population taught, the educator's familiarity with state standards, and a question asking respondents to weight the importance of the strategies from the list developed from the Thurlow, Albus, et al. (2004) study.

The second part of each content survey focused on use of strategies. Respondents were asked first whether they had taught ELLs with disabilities. This was a filtering question before asking respondents about their use of the strategies. Questions about use included frequency of use, whether they taught a strategy for the student to use on his or her own, and factors that influenced their strategy use (e.g., embedded in standards, setting factors, professional development, etc.) The third part of the survey focused on respondent demographics. Information on gender, location, job title, and grade served was included in this section.

Survey Pilot

Prior to national implementation, the survey was piloted with educators in the graduate programs of the Curriculum and Instruction department at the University of Minnesota. These educators had backgrounds in English as a second language (ESL), special education, and general education. The pilot process lasted for two weeks. A total of 12 educators completed the survey during this period. The survey was revised based on the feedback received.

National Survey Administration

Although the importance of random sampling was recognized by the research team, because of limited numbers of educators who work with ELLs with disabilities and the difficulty in locating them, a broad invitation to educators was used. This was done rather than restricting the potential sample of respondents by a random selection process.

In the first stage of national recruitment for the survey, we contacted all state affiliates from five national education organizations to track interest and willingness to invite their affiliate membership for participation. These five organizations included the American Federation of Teachers, the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Association for Bilingual Education, the National Education Association, and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Of 155 state affiliates with publicly posted e-mail addresses for their state directors, 31 affiliates allowed survey invitations to be posted either as a Web site link or to be disseminated through membership listservs or other internal communications for approximately one month between

January and February of 2005. This amount of time was later increased to allow more respondents from later-posting affiliates to participate.

Data collected during the study were processed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS software.

Participants

A total of 48 participants answered questions on the survey. Of these, only 31 participants answered the critical questions about the importance of certain strategies. Information about these 31 respondents is included here. The majority of these respondents (N=26) taught English language learners with disabilities. Following these figures, we provide descriptive information about the students that the 31 respondents reported teaching.

Of those who taught ELLs with disabilities, 3 were males, 15 were females, and 8 did not indicate their gender. Among those not teaching ELLs with disabilities, 1 did not indicate gender and the rest were all female (N=4).

Of the 31 state affiliates that agreed to invite members to take the survey, teachers from 6 states responded, from the south and eastern coast. Among those indicating teaching ELLs with disabilities, most who had indicated a state came from New Jersey and Maine. Almost all of the educators who indicated not teaching ELLs with disabilities also came from Maine (see Table 1).

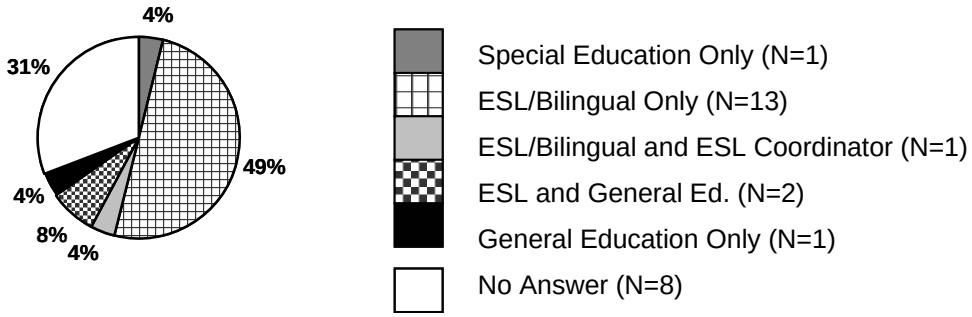
Table 1. State Representation of Respondents Who Do or Do Not Teach ELLs with Disabilities

What state do you teach in?	Teach ELLs with Disabilities		Do Not Teach ELLs with Disabilities	
	Response Total	Response Percent	Response Total	Response Percent
Georgia	1	4%		
Kentucky	2	7%		
Maine	3	12%	4	80%
New Jersey	9	35%		
New York	1	4%		
Washington	2	7%		
No Answer	8	31%	1	20%
Total Respondents	26		5	

Self reported job titles for the 26 respondents who reported teaching ELLs with disabilities are presented in Figure 1. Half indicated being ESL/Bilingual educators only, but 31% did not answer the question.

Of the five educators who reported that they did not teach ELLs with disabilities, four were special education teachers and one did not answer.

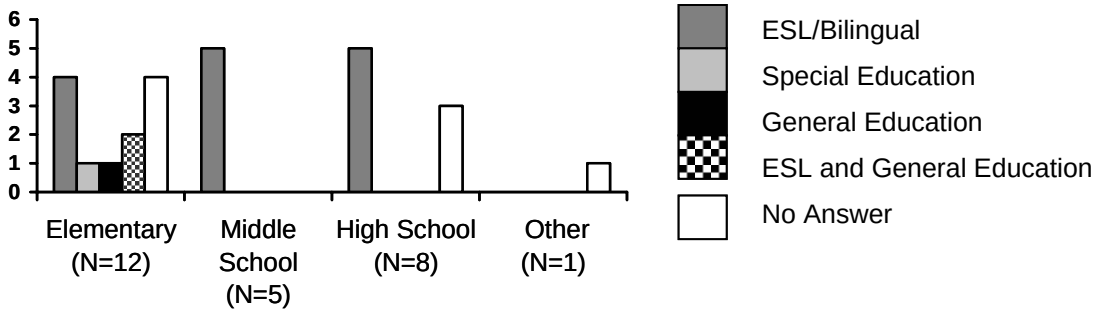
Figure 1. Respondents Who Indicated Educating ELLs with Disabilities (N=26)



Grade level served by those teachers who indicated teaching ELLs with disabilities is in Figure 2. There was broader representation of different types of teachers serving in the elementary grades. In middle and high school grades, most were ESL/Bilingual teachers.

Of those who did not indicate teaching ELLs with disabilities, there were two elementary school teachers, one middle school teacher, and three high school teachers.

Figure 2. Respondents Who Indicated Teaching ELLs with Disabilities by Grade Range



Educators who indicated that they taught ELLs with disabilities were predominantly female (N=15), with only a few males (N=3). Twelve of these had at least reading licensure, five did not have reading licensure but had indicated "other" licensure or a combination of "other" and "social studies," one did not provide instruction, and eight had no answer. Also, six indicated being in their position for 1–4 years, four indicated 5–10 years, and eight had 10 or more years. Eight did not answer.

Of the five teachers not teaching ELLs with disabilities, four were female and one did not answer. Of these, three were licensed in reading, one was licensed in "other" subjects, and one did not answer. One had 1–4 years in his or her current position and three had more than 10 years. One did not answer.

Among those educators who indicated teaching ELLs with disabilities, most (N=16) reported that these students made up little of their total work load (1–10% of load). Four reported that they made up some of their workload (11–50% of load), and four others reported they made up much of their load (over 50% of load). Two did not respond to this question.

Of those who served ELLs with disabilities, 10 reported using content designed for ELLs. Seven reported that they served ELLs with disabilities as a support person to regular instruction. Five others indicated they served ELLs with disabilities in mainstream/regular education settings. Four others said they implemented content designed for ELLs with IEPs.

The majority of educators teaching ELLs with disabilities reported being familiar with their state standards (N=20). Three reported being somewhat familiar with their standards and two others indicated they were not familiar with them. One individual reported that standards in the state were changing.

Characteristics of ELLs with Disabilities Taught by Participants

Most educators who indicated teaching ELLs with disabilities served students with specific learning disabilities. These were followed by those who served ELLs with multiple disabilities (11%). The other types of disabilities indicated were mental retardation, emotional behavioral disabilities, and speech/language disabilities (see Figure 3). The majority of students were described as having beginning or intermediate levels of English proficiency (see Figure 4), and over half indicated working with Spanish speaking students (see Figure 5).

Figure 3. Disability Groups Taught by Respondents Who Indicated Teaching ELLs with Disabilities

Figure 4. Language Proficiency Level of Students Taught by Respondents Who Indicated Teaching ELLs with Disabilities

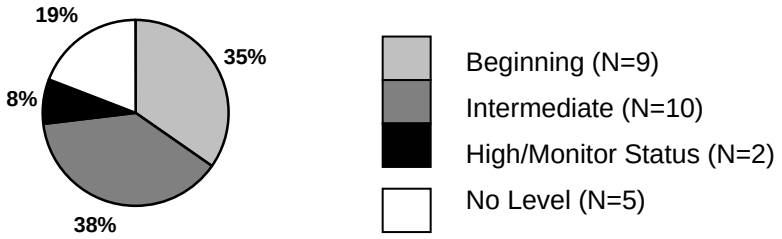
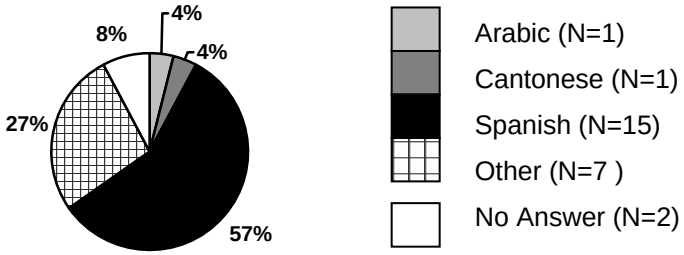


Figure 5. Predominant Languages of Students Taught by Respondents Who Indicated Teaching ELLs with Disabilities



For those teaching ELLs with disabilities, 16 reported teaching all in English (less than 2% native language), 6 reported teaching with some native language use (2–24% of the time), 1 reported teaching with significant native language use (at least 25%), and 1 indicated no language service. Two did not answer. The choices for percentage of service and types of services provided were patterned after similar descriptions from a study on ELLs with disabilities conducted by Zehler et al. (2003).

Results

Results are presented for both the educators' ratings of instructional strategies and the actual use of strategies. The actual use data were collected only from those educators who indicated that they taught ELLs with disabilities. In addition, more fine grained analyses based on characteristics of students and respondents are presented. Caution should be used in interpreting the data because there are small numbers overall. This is especially the case when data are compared between those indicating teaching ELLs with disabilities and those not, and in comparisons among teachers of different grade levels. Finally, we included a comparison of results to the original report (Thurlow, Albus, et al., 2004).

Strategy Importance

Respondents were asked to rate a list of teacher recommended "strategies" on a scale of 1 to 6 from lowest to highest importance (see Appendix A for complete list of strategies). We present the top and bottom rated strategies in Table 2 based on all teachers who answered the question on instructional strategies regardless of whether they reported teaching ELLs with disabilities (N=31).

Table 2. Top and Bottom Five Rated Reading Strategies by All Educators

Top Strategies	Mean	Standard Deviation
Relate reading to student experiences	5.62	0.62
Teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies	5.55	0.81
Prediction	5.40	0.89
Visualization of story	5.32	0.79
Graphic organizer	5.32	0.87
Bottom Strategies	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Journal of the senses	3.84	1.07
Literature circle/Book club	3.87	1.23
Curriculum based probe	3.94	1.31
Recurrent, Random vocabulary assessment	4.10	1.38
Tactile vocabulary development steps	4.13	1.30

Top and Bottom Strategies for Educators Who Indicated Working with ELLs with Disabilities by Grade Level

Because we wanted to see whether there were differences among educators' top and bottom rated strategies by grade level, we present these in Table 3 and Table 4. Although we note that there are some differences across grade levels in these tables, we also caution the reader that the underlying total number and type of educator populations within each grade are very different (see notes for tables). For example, among teachers serving ELLs with disabilities, the elementary grade level has a larger number and broader representation of different types of teachers than the other two grade levels.

Educators Serving ELLs with Disabilities

Teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies was in the top five choices ranked by mean rating across all grade levels. Elementary and high school teachers shared *relate reading to stu-*

dent experience in common, and the middle and high school teachers shared KWL and graphic organizers in common. Other top strategies that were not in common across grade levels are shown in Table 3.

In the bottom five strategies, there were two strategies in common across grade levels: *curriculum based probe* and *journal of the senses*. Elementary and high school teachers had *recurrent, random vocabulary assessment* in common, and middle and high school teachers had *tactile vocabulary development steps* and *literature circle/book club* in common. See Table 3 for more strategies receiving the lowest ratings of importance by those who indicated teaching ELLs with disabilities by grade level.

Table 3. Top and Bottom Strategies by Respondents Teaching ELLs with Disabilities by Grade Level

Top Reading Strategies Elementary School[1]	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Relate reading to student experience	5.82	0.40
Teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies	5.42	1.00
Chunking and questioning aloud		1.00
Fluency building (high frequency words)	5.33	0.89
Prediction	5.17	0.83
Visualization of story		0.83
Middle School[2]		
Directly teach vocabulary through listening, seeing, reading, and writing in short time segments	5.80	0.45
KWL or other pre-assessment strategy	5.60	0.55
Teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies		
Graphic organizer	5.40	0.55
Teach and use mnemonics		0.89
Combine kinesthetic and phonemic awareness		0.89
High School[3]		
Graphic organizer	5.75	0.46
Individual conferencing with teacher	5.63	0.52
KWL or other pre-assessment strategy	5.50	0.76
Relate reading to student experience		0.53
Teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies		0.93
Bottom Reading Strategies Elementary[1] School	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Curriculum Based Probe or similar assessment	3.67	1.30
Literature circle/book club		1.15
Journal of the senses	3.75	0.97
Recurrent, random vocabulary assessment	4.00	1.28
Teach and use mnemonics	4.08	1.62

Table 3. Top and Bottom Strategies by Respondents Teaching ELLs with Disabilities by Grade Level (continued)

Middle School[2]		
Journal of the senses	4.00	1.58
Acting out story	4.20	1.10
Curriculum based probe or similar assessment	4.40	1.52
Tactile vocabulary development steps		1.52
Literature circle/book club		1.34
Partner reading		0.89
Repeated reading		0.89
Picture word replacement using visuals for words		1.52
High School[3]		
Literature circle/book club	3.63	1.60
Journal of the senses	3.75	0.89
Recurrent, random vocabulary assessment	4.00	1.77
Tactile vocabulary development steps		1.60
Curriculum based probe or similar assessment	4.13	1.46

[1]N=12 educators with 5 ESL, 1 Special Education, 2 General Education, and 4 no title indicated.
[2]N= 5 educators all ESL.
[3]N= 8 educators with 5 ESL and 3 no title indicated.
Note: One educator indicated "other" grade level and is not represented here.

Educators Not Serving ELLs with Disabilities

Two of the top five rated strategies for educators who indicated that they did not teach ELLs with disabilities were in common with educators who indicated they taught ELLs with disabilities. These were *relate reading to student experiences* and *teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies*. Two of the other strategies in their top five were shared by the elementary grade teachers who taught ELLs with disabilities (see Table 4).

The bottom strategies for teachers not serving ELLs with disabilities included many of the strategies indicated by those teaching ELLs with disabilities across grades: *acting out story*, *curriculum based probe*, *journal of the senses*, *picture word replacement*, and *recurrent random vocabulary assessment*.

Strategy Use

Only the educators who indicated teaching ELLs with disabilities were directed to rate their use of the strategies with these students. Means are based on educator ratings from 1–3 (never used = 1, used in one unit = 2, and used across units = 3). Those most used by educators working with ELLS with disabilities are presented in Table 5 by grade level.

Table 4. Top and Bottom Strategies by Respondents not Teaching ELLs with Disabilities[1]

Top Strategies:	Mean	Standard Deviation
Relate reading to student experiences	6.00	0.00
Teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies		0.00
Think aloud used with reading	5.80	0.45
Prediction		0.45
Visualization of story (draw scene, plot, etc.)		0.45
Bottom Strategies:	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Picture word replacement (using visuals for words)	3.20	1.64
Curriculum based probe or similar assessment	3.60	1.14
Recurrent random vocabulary assessment	3.80	1.30
Acting out story		
Journal of the senses	4.20	1.30
Use of decodable text		

[1]There were no ESL or General Education teachers. Four presented here are Special Education educators. Two are elementary teachers, one is high school and one indicated "other." One other educator did not indicate a title nor grade and is not represented here.

Table 5. Top Strategies Used by Respondents Teaching ELLs with Disabilities by Grade Level

Elementary School[1]	Mean	Standard Deviation
Relate reading to student experiences	2.89	0.33
Teach pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies		0.33
Fluency building (high frequency words)	2.78	0.44
Graphic organizer		0.44
Cooperative learning		0.44
Practicing paraphrasing and retelling strategies		0.44
Middle School[2]		
KWL	3.00	0.00
Cooperative learning		0.00
Directly teach vocabulary through listening, seeing, reading, and writing in short time segments		0.00
Practicing paraphrasing and retelling strategies		0.00
Relate reading to student experiences		0.00
Think aloud used with reading		0.00
Prediction		0.00
Teach pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies		0.00
Fluency building (high frequency words)		0.00
High School[3]		
Graphic organizer	3.00	0.00
Directly teach vocabulary through listening, seeing, reading, and writing in short time segments		0.00
Recurrent random vocabulary assessment		0.00
Teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies		0.00
Fluency building (high frequency words)		0.00

[1] N=9 educators with 5 ESL, 1 Special Education, 2 General Education, and 1 no title indicated.
[2] N=4 educators all ESL.
[3] N=5 educators all ESL.

Table 6. Bottom Strategies Used by Respondents Teaching ELLs with Disabilities by Grade Level

Elementary[1] School	Mean	Standard Deviation
Journal of the senses	1.44	0.73
Literature circle/book club	1.56	0.73
Teach and use mnemonics Picture word replacement using visuals for words	1.89	0.78 0.78
Middle School[2]		
Literature circle/book club	1.75	0.50
Tactile vocabulary development steps Journal of the senses Picture word replacement using visuals for words	2.00	0.82 0.82 0.82
High School[3]		
Literature circle /book club	1.40	0.89
Journal of the senses	1.60	0.89
Acting out story	1.80	0.84
Using book on tape as support Use of decodable text	2.00	0.82 0.82

[1] N=9 educators with 5 ESL, 1 Special Education, 2 General Education, and 1 no title indicated.
[2] N=4 educators all ESL.
[3] N=5 educators all ESL.

Importance and Use Ratings Compared to Previous Study

Although means for top and bottom five strategies were derived in different ways for this study and the previous one, there were similarities in the strategies that were chosen as the most important among the groups of teachers in each report. In the first study, means were derived from those that had the most 5 and 6 ratings across respondents, whereas this study used a simple mean across all ratings.

Table 7 shows a comparison of the top five strategies for the current and previous study by educators overall and middle school teachers specifically. The results show that only one strategy grouping was in the top five for all groups. This was *teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies*. Other top five strategies varied with some overlap across the lists (e.g., graphic organizer).

Regardless of differences in rated importance, most of the top five strategies for middle school teachers were rated as often used in our survey sample. Also, many of the strategies in the survey study averaged between somewhat important (3) and very important (6), comparable to the generally high ratings of strategies in the previous study (Thurlow, Albus, et al., 2004).

Table 7. Top Five Strategies Across Studies by Selected Populations of Educators

Current Survey Study All Teachers Overall[1]	**Current Survey Study Teachers of ELLs with Disabilities Only[2]**
1. Relate reading to student experiences 2. Teaching pre, during and post reading strategies 3. Prediction 4. Visualization of story 5. Graphic organizer	1. Directly teach vocabulary through listening, seeing, reading and writing in short time segments 2. KWL or other pre-assessment strategy and Teaching pre, during and post reading strategies[3] 3. Graphic organizer 4. Teach and use mnemonics 5. Combine kinesthetic and phonemic awareness
Previous Study All Teachers Overall[4]	
1. Teaching pre, during, and post reading strategies 2. Fluency building (high frequency words) 3. Direct teaching vocabulary through listening, seeing, reading, and writing in short time segments 4. Chunking and questioning aloud (reading mastery) 5. Relating reading to student experiences	

[1] Includes teachers who taught ELLs only, students with disabilities only, and teachers of ELLs with disabilities, across grade levels.
[2] Includes teachers who taught ELLs with disabilities at the middle school level.
[3] The two strategies, KWL and Teaching pre-, during-, and post-reading strategies, are both listed because they had the same mean.
[4] Includes teachers who taught ELLs only, students with disabilities only, and teachers of ELLs with disabilities at middle school level.

Strategies for Students to Learn to Use on Their Own

We also asked respondents whether they taught students to use any of the strategies listed in the survey on their own. Two respondents indicated that they try to teach students to use all the strategies they can on their own but did not specify those on the survey list. One indicated using a "language experience approach," which was not listed in our survey. Others indicated the following strategies from the survey list:

N=9 Graphic organizer
N=8 Prediction
N=5 Practicing paraphrasing and retelling strategies
N=5 Repeated reading

N=5 Relate reading to student experiences
N=5 Think aloud used with reading
N=5 Visualization of story (draw scene, plot, etc.)
N=5 Chunking and questioning aloud (reading mastery)
(see Appendix B for complete list)

When asked if there were other strategies that they thought should have been included in the list, these were the additions suggested by respondents. Each was suggested by one respondent:

- Use of realia (use of real-world artifacts in classroom)
- Audio cues
- Students create questions and pre-tests, also puzzles to study for vocabulary, content tests, etc.
- TPR (total physical response)
- QAR (Question Answer Relationships)

Educator Ranking of Top Influences in Choice of Strategies

Educators who indicated they taught ELLs with disabilities were also asked to rank the factors influencing strategy use (see Table 8) from highest to lowest, with one being highest and six lowest. The top three factors for these educators were: embedded in standards, required, and setting factors. The lowest factor was professional development/teacher preparation. Personal preferences and resources were second and third lowest in influence.

Table 8. Top Ranked Influences for Educators Teaching ELLs with Disabilities

Factors	Ranking[1]
Embedded in standards	2.94
Required	3.29
Setting factors (e.g., individual vs. group, etc.)	3.47
Personal preference/Experience with strategy	3.58
Resources (e.g., human, financial)	3.71
Professional development/Teacher preparation	4.00
No Answer = 9	

[1]Factors were ranked from 1=highest to 6=lowest.

When asked if there were any other factors that influenced their use of strategies in reading, five respondents offered at least one additional different factor each. Two of these offered factors that could have been included in our survey options ("school wide required reading program" fit our "required" category and "they understand better through these strategies" fits our "personal preference/experience with strategy" category.

The three other factors were centered either on local events or specific student characteristics:

- "Current events, issues that affect my students (prejudice, interpersonal conflicts and resolution, extracurricular activities, etc.), and passages/readings that contain vocabulary terms my students have had difficulty with."
- "Yes, students' learning styles and how they learn."
- "Student responses to activities, how much understanding they can attain on their own, how well the students interact amongst themselves."

Other Observations on Importance and Use

In this section we focus on interesting respondent ratings such as rating a strategy high in importance but never using it and rating a strategy as unimportant but using it across units of instruction. Because only educators who had indicated serving ELLs with disabilities were directed to rate their use of the strategies, only these educators are presented here.

There were 19 instances where educators rated a strategy as important or very important and also indicated they never used the strategy. In only two of these instances the strategy was rated as very important (10%), and in both of these instances they were ratings for *picture word replacement*.

There were 80 instances of a strategy being rated as important or very important (5 or 6) and rated as being used in only one unit. Of these, 19 were rated very important (24%).

Table 9 shows the strategies rated important (5) or very important (6) that were most frequently indicated as never used or only used in one unit.

Table 9. Strategies Ranked Important or Above with Most Frequent Rankings of Never Being Used and Used in One Unit

Strategy Ranked Important or Very Important	Never Used	Used in One Unit
Explicit teaching of text structure	3	9
Picture word replacement using visuals for words	3	6
Partner reading	2	6
Book on tape as support	2	4
Acting out story	2	1
Combine kinesthetic and phonemic awareness	0	6
Tactile vocabulary development steps	0	5

We also looked at the ranked strategy influences of the educators who rated strategies as important or above but never used them. These are presented in Table 10. There were some similar factors across the top three respondents in the table (e.g., embedded in standards and required by school or district), but the numbers are too small to generalize and there is not enough information to link ranked strategy influences to an educator's importance rating in this study.

Table 10. Strategy Influence Ranking for Educators Who Rated Strategies High in Importance But Never Used

Study ID	Strategies Never Used	Rated Important	Ranking of Strategy Influence
7	Picture word replacement	5	Embedded in standards, required, setting
13	Book on tape as support	5	Personal, embedded in standards, resources
25	Book on tape as support	5	Embedded in standards, professional development, required
23	Partner Reading	5	No answer
23	Picture word replacement	5	No answer
23	Use Decodable text	5	No answer

We also looked at strategies that educators had ranked as unimportant but indicated they used across units of instruction. This only happened for two strategies, and the same two respondents had rated both strategies similarly (see Table 11). There is, again, too little information to draw any inferences from the ranking of influences on perceived strategy importance and use.

Table 11. Strategies Rated Unimportant but Used Across Units

Study ID	Strategies Used Across Units	Strategies Never Used	Ranking of Influences
4	Curriculum based measure	2	Setting, personal preferences, resources
	Recurrent random vocabulary assessment	2	
5	Curriculum based measure	2	No answer
	Recurrent random vocabulary assessment	2	

Discussion

The nature of the population studied with this survey made it necessary to include as many educators who serve ELLs with disabilities as possible and to find them wherever possible. As a result, we were not able to obtain a random sample of respondents simply because these educators are not easily identified. These factors, by themselves, limit the ability to generalize from the findings of the study. Building on this limitation was the small response to the survey. Even though we contacted all state affiliates with a Web presence for the five largest educator organizations in the United States, we had a much lower than anticipated response. Also, although approximately 50 educators responded to at least one question in the survey, not all of them responded to the core questions focused on the strategies, resulting in non-usable data. Further, during the time of the survey, there were technical problems involving the security of the server that may have compromised full accessibility to the survey for a short span of time. Therefore, additional caution should be taken in interpreting the findings of this survey.

This study used a generated list of strategies and instructional practices developed from a previous study (Thurlow, Albus, et al., 2004) where educators were very broad in their interpretation of what a strategy is. Because of this, similar kinds of information would be expected from the ranking of the teaching practices/strategies in this study. Although we provided a glossary to respondents that had been developed in the previous study, many of the practices described in that strategy list were more akin to general principles and practices, which may look very different when employed by individual teachers across different settings and students. However, even among established strategies with defined steps (e.g., KWL), there may exist variations which better lend themselves to specific student needs depending on the tailoring effects introduced by an educator (e.g., representing generated ideas by text and pictures versus text alone). Therefore, although it was beyond the scope of this study to capture such rich variation, we underscore the importance of studies on instructional strategies to document these potential variations with different types of students and settings.

It is interesting that strategies rated the least used were not necessarily rated the least important and vice versa. For example, *teach and use mnemonics* was among the least used by elementary teachers, but rated as one of the most important among middle school teachers who taught ELLs with disabilities. Further, although high school teachers rated *recurrent random vocabulary assessment* as one of their most used strategies, it was among the lowest rated strategies across most teachers in terms of importance, including high school teachers. It would be interesting to know the reasons why educators often use a strategy they do not think is important, or do not

use a strategy they think is important. For the three educators in this latter group (see Table 10 study participants 7, 10, and 25) for whom ranking of influences on strategy use showed "embedded in standards" and "required by school or district" to be common primary and secondary influences, it would logically follow to do a search for embedded instructional practices in their state standards and supporting documents (i.e., Kentucky, New Jersey, and Washington). However, even if that information were readily available, we would not know if the ranked strategy influence applied to the specific strategies in question (e.g., those that were not used but perceived to be important).

Although survey respondents appeared to be in consensus across teacher groups that certain strategies or strategy types are more important, and other strategies are less important for teaching ELLs with disabilities, we do not know whether these opinions would differ any from educators working with other groups of students such as English fluent general education students, or English fluent special education students. The educator perceptions of the effectiveness of the strategies for ELLs with disabilities may be an effect of the strategy list itself and not really be an indication that these strategies were better for these students or would be less effective for other students. To understand a wider base of educators' perceptions better, a potentially helpful line of future inquiry may be to include questions to general educators about what instructional strategies they recommend for general students for a specific content skill, with follow-up questions about how they may or may not adjust the strategy to benefit an ELL with a specific disability or multiple disabilities.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to see whether there was a general consensus, positive or negative, on the importance and use of certain strategies and practices when instructing ELLs with disabilities across grade levels. Although the study had limitations in number and breadth of representation of educators, we did see a general pattern of higher rated and lower rated strategies in common across educators and grade levels served.

The study findings may have implications for delivering grade-level standards-based instruction for ELLs with disabilities in general education settings. The study considered a broad range of factors that influence the instructional process, including teaching setting, educators' experience and background, students' age and proficiency levels. The online implementation of the survey based on the findings of our previous studies allowed us to generate educators' perspectives on instructional strategies from around the country. These data have the potential to inform the field of reading instruction about effective instructional techniques.

Overall, the findings suggested that educators tend to agree on the levels of importance and use of the teaching strategies included in the study list. Further research in the field is needed not only to refine the selection of instructional strategies for ELLs with disabilities, but also to investigate the implementation and effects of strategies for this group of students.

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Appendix A

List of Reading Strategies

KWL (know, want to know, learn) or other pre-assessment strategy
Graphic organizer
Cooperative learning
Directly teach vocabulary through listening, seeing, reading and writing in short time segments
Curriculum based probe or similar assessment
Recurrent, random vocabulary assessment
Tactile vocabulary development steps
Practicing paraphrasing and retelling strategies
Relate reading to student experiences
Teach and use mnemonics
Combine kinesthetic and phonemic awareness
Think aloud used with reading
Prediction
Visualization of story (draw scene, plot, etc.)
Teaching pre-, during-, and post- reading strategies
Fluency building (high frequency words)
Acting out story
Journal of the senses
Literature circle/Book club
Individual conferencing with teacher
Oral sharing on related topic
Partner reading
Using book on tape as support
Use of decodable text
Explicit teaching of text structure
Repeated reading
Picture word replacement using visuals for words
Chunking and questioning aloud (reading mastery)

Appendix B

Strategies Most Frequently Taught for Students to Use on Their Own

N=9 Graphic organizer
N=8 Prediction
N=5 Practicing paraphrasing and retelling strategies
N=5 Repeated reading
N=5 Relate reading to student experiences
N=5 Think aloud used with reading
N=5 Visualization of story (draw scene, plot, etc.)
N=5 Chunking and questioning aloud (reading mastery)
N=4 KWL or other pre-assessment strategy
N=4 Teaching pre-, during-, and post- reading strategies
N=4 Using book on tape as support
N=3 Picture word replacement using visuals for words
N=2 Directly teach vocabulary through listening, seeing, reading, and writing in short time segments
N=2 Oral sharing on related topic
N=2 Partner reading
N=2 Recurrent, random vocabulary assessment
N=1 Cooperative learning
N=1 Fluency building (high frequency words)
N=1 Acting out story
N=1 Journal of the senses