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Creating a Schoolwide Vocabulary Initiative in an Urban High School

Douglas Fisher
School of Teacher Education
San Diego State University & Hoover High School

In an effort to improve student achievement at an urban high school, teachers and administrators developed a 5-part, schoolwide vocabulary plan. Over 4 years, teachers provided students with increased opportunities to read, read to their students, developed content-specific vocabulary instruction, taught students academic words, and focused on 5 words each week with a common prefix, suffix, or root. Over the 4 years, student achievement in vocabulary and reading comprehension improved in significant ways, both on reading assessments and state achievement tests.

This article focuses on a promising intervention for improving the vocabulary achievement for adolescent students in an urban school. Over the course of 4 years, a schoolwide vocabulary initiative was developed and implemented at Hoover High School in San Diego, CA. Rather than relying on individual teachers to improve their vocabulary instruction, this intervention focused on change at the whole school level. Hoover teachers agreed to a number of instructional routines and procedures which, taken together, they believed would improve students' vocabulary performance. They trusted that improvements in vocabulary would result in improvements in comprehension of content area texts. Based on a literature review, five initiatives were implemented: (a) wide reading, (b) read-alouds and shared readings, (c) content specific vocabulary instruction, (d) academic vocabulary development, and (e) words of the week based on common affixes and roots.

Over 4 years, vocabulary achievement improved and more students read better than ever before. Before exploring the components of the schoolwide vocabulary initiative and its impact on student achievement, it is important to understand the context in which this intervention was implemented.

Correspondences should be sent to Douglas Fisher, School of Teacher Education, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA 92182. E-mail: dfisher@mail.sdsu.edu

HOOVER HIGH SCHOOL—A SCHOOL AT-RISK NOT HELPING STUDENTS AT RISK

Hoover High School educates over 2,300 students, all of whom qualify for free breakfast and lunch, and 76% of whom speak a language in addition to English at home. In 1999, Hoover was the lowest performing high school in the district and one of the lowest performing high schools in the state. In 1999, the average reader across Grades 9–12 read at the 4.3 grade level, according to the Gates-MacGinitie reading assessment. This means that the vast majority of Hoover students could not read the texts they were assigned and that their average reading performance was less than .5 of a year for each year in school. The school held the unfortunate distinction of having the highest crime rate, the highest teen pregnancy rate, the highest poverty rate, and the lowest achievement. Clearly, Hoover was a school in trouble, and the students who attended Hoover were clearly at risk of educational failure.

When the 2001 California Standards Test and Gates-MacGinitie scores were released, Hoover students had made progress compared with data from 1999. For the first time in over a decade, the school made its growth target. The average reader now read at the 5.4 grade level, a bit better than before. However, despite the progress being made, Hoover was still the lowest performing high school in the district.

In analyzing the assessment data, it was clear that vocabulary was a significant concern. For example, Hoover vocabulary scores on the Gates-MacGinitie lagged behind the comprehension scores by .4 of a year. The state standards assessment told the same story: Hoover students did not score well on tests of words. The average number of vocabulary questions scored correct on the state standards assessment was 30% across the Grades 9, 10, and 11. The school's literacy leadership team, which consisted of teachers, parents, and administrators, knew that Hoover would not meet state and federal accountability targets if students' vocabulary knowledge remained at this level. The team also knew that Hoover students would not be prepared to pass the high school exit exam, when it went into effect, if vocabulary knowledge did not increase. Most important, the leadership team understood that content learning and comprehension—and thus student achievement—were being hindered by students' vocabulary knowledge. The leadership team acknowledged that teaching all of the words students needed to know was not only impractical, but also inefficient. The team knew that students needed more opportunities to read and be read to, in combination with vocabulary instruction, if the achievement trajectory was going to change.

The leadership team read research reviews and practical advice about improving the students' word knowledge (e.g., Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003; Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Brassell & Flood, 2004). The team attempted to synthesize the best practices for schoolwide vocabulary initiatives at the high

school level, but had difficulty finding much. However, the review did point to some promising practices. Some of these came from elementary and middle schools, and some were syntheses of research with specific recommendations. As a result, the team developed a five-pronged approach to improve vocabulary knowledge and achievement. Having not been done before at the high school level, the team hoped that this plan would positively impact learning.

COMPONENT #1: WIDE READING

The first component in the plan to significantly increase vocabulary knowledge was wide reading. Given the research in this area that suggests that time spent reading is one of the ways that students increase their vocabulary knowledge (e.g., Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Herman, Anderson, Pearson, & Nagy, 1987; Krashen, 1993), the literacy leadership team focused on both silent sustained reading (SSR) and independent reading across content areas. Over the years, the leadership team recommended that the SSR initiative be directed by a new committee, due to the amount of time and professional development needed to ensure that this component was implemented well. The SSR committee consisted of students, faculty, and staff and was charged with determining which books would be purchased for classroom libraries, the types of professional development teachers needed, and the various ways in which book talks could be provided for students at the start of the reading period.

The teachers at Hoover reinvested in a 20-min per day SSR period that the principal noted would provide students with "the opportunity to read" (Fisher, 2004). Every student, teacher, administrator, counselor, health worker, clerical staff—anyone on the campus really—was provided with 20 min every single day of the school year to "just read" (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). This initiative required that the school purchase books that Hoover English Language Learners (ELLs) would and could read. Although this required significant investments in time, professional development, funds for books, and dedication, SSR alone was not sufficient to meet Hoover students' reading needs.

In addition to the daily practice of SSR, students at Hoover were given time for independent reading in their content area classes (Ivey, 2002). Independent reading during content instruction has provided students with access to a wide range of books on the topics they are studying. Table 1 contains a sample of the large number of titles available for student reading during their exploration of World War II and the Japanese internment camps. It is important to note that these independent reading books were in addition to textbooks and that these books represented a wide range of reading difficulty levels and a number of genres, including fiction, graphic novels, and informational texts.

TABLE 1
Independent Reading Books on Japanese Interment Camps

Cooper, M. L. (2000). *Fighting for honor: Japanese Americans and World War II*. New York: Clarion.
Cooper, M. L. (2002). *Remembering Manzanar: Life in a Japanese relocation camp*. New York: Clarion.
Dempster, B. K. (Ed.). (2004). *From out side of the fence: Growing up in America's concentration camps*. San Francisco: Kearny Street Workshop.
Denenberg, B. (1999). *The journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13559 Mirror Lake Internment Camp*. New York: Scholastic.
Otsuka, J. (2002). *When the emperor was divine.* New York: Anchor.
Sakata, Y.(1992). *The view from within: Japanese American art from the interment camps 1942–1945*. Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum.
Tunnell, M. O., & Chilcoat, G. W. (1996). *The children of Topaz: The story of a Japanese–American internment camp based on a classroom diary.* New York: Holiday House
Uchida, Y. (1984). *Desert exile: The uprooting of a Japanese-American family* (Reprint ed.). Seattle: University of Washington Press.
Welch, C. A. (2000). *Children of the relocation camps*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

A science teacher known for his focus on standards and use of the standards-aligned textbook noted that the introduction of SSR and independent reading had positively impacted his students' understanding of the content. As he said,

> I was doing all the work. There I was, telling them to read and then telling them what the book said. I still use the text[book], but now I have students spend part of the period reading from a wide collection of books and magazine articles. They can choose something to read and they all end up with some interesting connections and facts that others don't know. This means we have amazing conversations about my standards. I'm still teaching the standards and always will. Inviting students to read other texts moves the responsibility from me to them.

One of the history teachers discussed the impact that wide reading had on her students and how reading volume impacted their content knowledge. In her words, "It's not really fair. My third period class always does the best. I think it's because they are reading for SSR from books off my shelves that are about what we're studying. That 20 minutes every day adds up and it shows up on their tests and projects."

COMPONENT #2: READ ALOUDS

A second component of the schoolwide initiative focused on teachers reading aloud to students. Although the link between teacher read alouds and vocabulary learning is clear (e.g., Elley, 1989; Penno, Wilkinson, & Moore, 2002; Schippert, 2005), motivating high school teachers to read aloud to their students on a daily ba-

sis is difficult. From a student perspective, the read-aloud is very helpful way to learn content and vocabulary. As Ivey (2003) noted, "The teacher makes it more explainable" with read-alouds (p. 812).

The plan, written by the literacy leadership team, was to ensure that every teacher read aloud to every class, every day for 3–5 min of the 90-min period (Hoover operates on a block schedule). The literacy leadership team collected resources for teacher read-alouds, including material from *Read It Aloud! Using Literature in the Secondary Content Classroom* (Richardson, 2000), *Read All About It! Great Read-Aloud Stories, Poems, and Newspaper Pieces for Preteens and Teens* (Trelease, 1993), and a journal article titled, "Not just for the primary grades: A bibliography of picture books for secondary content teachers" (Carr, Buchanan, Wentz, Weiss, & Brant, 2001). The school librarian used some of the site book funds to purchase materials for teachers to read aloud to their classes. For example, a family and consumer sciences teacher wanted books about eating disorders and received *Hunger Point: A Novel* (Medoff, 2001); a physics teacher wanted to talk about relationship violence and was given *Dreamland* (Dessen, 2000); and an English teacher wanted an epic journey with a twist and received the graphic novel *Bone* (Smith, 1994).

As part of the plan, the administrators were expected to observe teachers conducting read-alouds and provide feedback regarding implementation of this component of the initiative. When the read-aloud initiative started, teachers were regularly observed reading their textbooks aloud. Other teachers complained, "Read-alouds should be reserved for the English class." As one of the math teachers confessed, "I voted for this [read-alouds as part of the literacy plan], but I never thought it was for me. I thought we were communicating to the English department."

Over time, and with significant attention to read-alouds during staff development time, teachers expanded their read-alouds to include current events articles from the newspaper, magazines (e.g., *Newsweek*, *Men's Health*, *Money*), professional journals (e.g., *Science*, *Brain*, and *Public Opinion Quarterly*), and trade books. In addition, teachers began to collect read-aloud materials and store them based on their content standards. Teachers created folders labeled with the standards (e.g., states of matter or contributions to democracy), stored them in department offices in file cabinets, and added readings to these folders as they found them.

For example, in a folder labeled "Motion and Forces" for the physics classes, among the collection of newspaper and magazine articles, the following supplemental readings were collected by the teachers who teach the course, as well as members of the literacy leadership team:

- Allan, T. (2001). *Isaac Newton*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Henderson, C., & Smith, A. (2001). *The Usborne internet-linked library of science: Energy, forces, and motion*. London, England: Usborne Publishing Inc.
- Lafferty, P. (1999). *Eyewitness: Force & motion*. NewYork: DK Children.
- Twist, C. (2005). *Force & motion*. New York: Bearport.

- White, M. (1999). *Isaac Newton: Discovering laws that govern the universe*. San Diego: Blackbirch Press.

The first standard in physics requires that students are familiar with Newton's laws that predict the motion of most objects. As students listen to these books, they become familiar with the vocabulary that scientists use to discuss Newton's laws, such as *constant speed* and *average speed*, *acceleration*, *gravity*, *force*, *speed*, *friction*, and *vectors*.

To ensure that teachers felt comfortable with the implementation of read-alouds, the leadership team used the evidence of quality read-alouds identified by Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey (2004), including: (a) the book chosen was appropriate to student's interests and matched to their developmental, emotional, and social levels; (b) the selection had been previewed and practiced by the teacher; (c) a clear purpose for the read aloud was established; (d) teachers modeled fluent oral reading when they read the text; (e) the teacher was animated and used expression; (f) teachers stopped periodically and thoughtfully questioned the students to focus them on specifics of the text; and (g) connections were made to independent reading and writing.

To further the implementation of read-alouds, the leadership team requested permission to use some professional development funds to pay teachers during their prep periods. During these "purchased" prep periods, teachers observed one another reading aloud and then used time during professional development seminars to share their ideas about read-alouds with one another. In addition, staff development sessions and department meetings often start with a read-aloud or sharing of good read-aloud materials.

COMPONENT #3: CONTENT VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

The teachers at Hoover were very accustomed to providing instruction in discipline specific vocabulary. They regularly used a number of evidence-based instructional strategies to engage students in vocabulary learning, including vocabulary journals, vocabulary role play, word sorts, semantic feature analysis charts, list/group/label, semantic mapping, vocabulary cards, barrier games, concept ladders, and word walls (e.g., Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Brassell & Flood, 2004).

For example, a history teacher was observed using vocabulary role play with the key terms of the unit of study, "Crisis and Absolutism in Europe, 1550–1715." The targeted vocabulary included *militant*, *armada*, *inflation*, *witchcraft*, *commonwealth*, *absolutism*, *czar*, and *boyar*. A group of students was performing their understanding of inflation by miming themselves getting wider and bigger, and then handing each other more and more money. In a geometry class, students keep vo-

Rock	Formed by Fire	Changed by Heat and Pressure	Formed by Other Rocks
Coal	-	-	+
Granite	+	-	-
Limestone	-	-	+
Shale	-	-	+
Slate	-	+	-

FIGURE 1 Sample semantic feature analysis chart.

cabulary journals for the key terms of the class, and in an earth science class, students created semantic feature analysis charts (see Figure 1 for an example) based on the types of rocks they were studying.

The leadership team understood that content vocabulary terms were being taught and that teachers were using a number of instructional strategies that would ensure that students did not become bored with vocabulary learning. In other words, the team was not worried about whether or not content vocabulary was being taught. The team identified a different issue of concern, however. They were concerned about the ways in which the terms to be taught were selected. In different sections of biology, for example, different terms were being taught. A teacher who taught 11th-grade English noted that, "I can't guarantee that all of my students will have the same content vocabulary knowledge—they know different words based on who their teacher was—so I teach all of the students the words, even if some of them already know them."

To remedy this situation, create some agreements, and to ensure that students had access to instruction in key terms, each department identified key terms that students should know. To identify these key terms, teachers asked themselves and others specific questions, including:

- Representative: Is the concept represented by the word critical to understanding the text?
- Repeatability: Will the word be used again during the school year?
- Transportability: Will the word be used in other subject areas?
- Contextual analysis: Can students use context clues from their readings to determine the word meaning?

- Structural analysis: Can students use structural analysis to determine the word meaning?
- Cognitive load: How many words can students be expected to learn at one time?

These conversations resulted in the identification of specific terms that students needed to know in each of their classes. These key terms were added to the pacing guides that teaches write for each course. These pacing guides are instructional plans that indicate when specific standards are being taught. As a result, there is an expectation that any student in Biology, U. S. History, 3-D Art, or other classes at Hoover will learn specific key content vocabulary terms. Teachers can always add terms to these minimum expectations and teach the vocabulary terms in a variety of ways. The point is that students will learn the vocabulary of the discipline through evidence-based instructional practices and not be expected to simply absorb these concepts and terms merely by being in the classroom.

COMPONENT #4: ACADEMIC VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

As Lewis Carroll (1865) indicated, there are a significant number of words that mean different things in different contexts. Although it may not be that one can make the word mean anything, certain words certainly do have a lot of different meanings. Understanding the word *run*, for example, is dependent on determining the context in which it is used. Imagine how many times a day a teacher could use *run*—run to the office, run this off, run for office, run the program, run in my hose, runny nose, and so on. These words are especially vexing for ELLs, who may know a few ways that words can be used, but may be overwhelmed with the many definitions for run found in the dictionary.

In terms of schooling, there are a number of words that are used throughout the day. It is easy to imagine that a student might come into contact with the term *prime* and the words associated with prime, such as primary, a number of times during the school day. The student's understanding of the term is further complicated by the way in which the term is specifically used in mathematics.

Although most teachers at Hoover were skilled at providing vocabulary instruction in content-specific words, attention to multiple meanings, and specialized or academic vocabulary was limited. In an effort to identify academic words that the students at Hoover might need to know, the literacy leadership team consulted the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000). This list[1] was compiled by an-

[1]See http://language.massey.ac.nz/staff/awl/index.shtml.

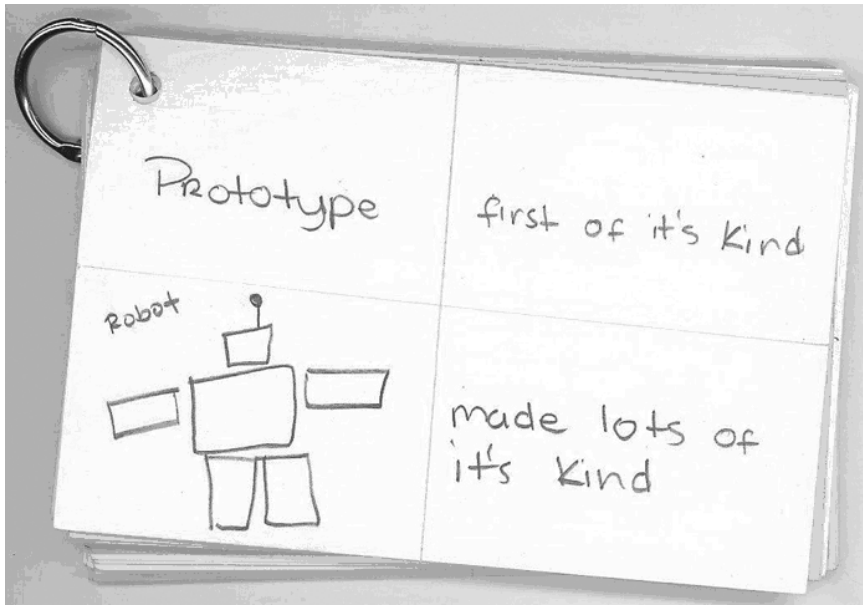

FIGURE 2 An example of Frayer-model vocabulary word cards.

alyzing 3.5 million running words of written academic text. The resulting list of 570 word families accounts for a significant portion of specialized words found in content-area texts. Another academic word list, provided by Marzano and Pickering (2005), has helped Hoover teachers clarify the academic vocabulary they need to teach.

The teachers at Hoover were provided access to the Academic Word List and identified ways to engage students in multiple meaning word studies of these words. For example, some teachers used Frayer-model vocabulary word cards (see Figure 2 for an example), while others asked students to find the words in the texts they are reading and compare and contrast the various uses of academic vocabulary. Still other teachers added the academic vocabulary terms to the note-taking guides and helped students think through the various uses of the term, deciding which use works best for the content at hand.

The goal of the academic word study was to develop students' understanding of the multiple ways that words can be used. As a member of the literacy leadership team commented,

> It doesn't do much good to know photosynthesis if you do not know how to use acquire, create, expand, and such. In fact, I'm not sure that they really can get photosynthesis if they don't know the other words that go along with it. Photosynthesis

> requires that students understand things like acquiring carbon dioxide and water, how the environment impacts plants, how plants create oxygen, and leaves expand in the process gaining mass, and so on. I guess I've learned that knowing a content word requires knowing a lot of academic language.

COMPONENT #5: WORDS OF THE WEEK

The final component of the vocabulary learning initiative centers on students learning transportable word parts. The students at Hoover often have a difficult time making an educated guess about an unknown word because they do not understand the parts of the word. The evidence for studying one word per day was reviewed (e.g., Graves & Watts-Taffe, 2002; Stahl, 1998), as was the evidence on students' learning of common affixes (e.g., Carnine & Carnine, 2004; White, Power, & White, 1989). As a result, the literacy leadership team adopted a *Words of the Week* (WOW) program. For each week of the school year, a specific prefix, suffix, or root was identified. Five words containing the identified prefix, suffix, or root were then selected. Every teacher in the school was expected to use, teach, and reinforce the WOW words. Teachers were provided preprinted and cut card stock of the words each week to create word walls. The expectation was that, at minimum, the five words for the week would be posted in every classroom on campus. The hope was that teachers would accumulate the words and create a word wall.

To increase the contexts in which students might find the words, several routes were identified. First, the student government class was asked to incorporate the five WOW words on the electronic marquis that announces all of the events on the campus. Second, Lulu Gallegos, a front office clerical staff member, volunteered to write a humorous sentence each week containing the five words and place it in the school bulletin (see Table 2 for examples). Third, students were invited to perform raps with the WOW words in the back quad area every Thursday. The first rap ever performed using WOW was written and performed by a student named Sashay. It reads:

> I'm *fluent* on the mic because I flow with confidence. When I spit, I'm *fluorescent*, homie, don't get me twisted. Inside and out, I *fluctuate* on the stage just to hype the crowd. I know you love the way I bling when I move about. My good *influence* keeps me *affluent*, so the money neva run out. As long as I'm doing what I'm doing, I'll be famous in a big white house.

Fourth, on Thursdays during passing periods and lunch, the administrative team walks through the school, pausing to ask students the meanings of the WOW words. When a student answers correctly, he or she is given a student store credit worth 10 cents.

TABLE 2
Words of the Week Sentences

Week 2—audience, audition, auditor, auditory, inaudible—If you are granted an audience with the tax auditor, speak as though you are at an audition for he has an auditory problem and your voice may be inaudible.
Week 3—affluent, fluctuate, fluent, fluorescent, influence—Under the harsh glare of fluorescent lighting, the affluent woman's facial features looked strangely fluent as she watched the value of her stock fluctuate under the influence of the economy.
Week 4—primarily, primate, primer, primitive, primeval—In the forest primeval once sat a primate in his primitive hut made primarily of tree bark, applying mud to the walls as though it were primer.
Week 5—assimilate, facsimile, simultaneously, simile, simulate—Send my brother and me a facsimile and though we will read it simultaneously we will each assimilate the information at a different pace.
Week 6—construct, destructive, infrastructure, instrumental, obstruction—In order to construct a destructive infrastructure, it is instrumental to eliminate all obstructions.
Week 7—intuition, tutelage, tutor, tutorial, tuition—Although Larry paid a very small tuition for Moe's tutelage, his intuition told him using a computer tutorial would be less painful than the blows to the head which his current tutor used to emphasize each point.
Week 8—imagery, metaphor, rhythm, passage, point of view—From my point of view the imagery in my mind has become richer with the passage of time.

The goal of WOW is not for students to memorize a list of specific words, but rather to develop skills to make educated guesses about unfamiliar words when they are reading. In doing so, they are more likely to be able to use context clues, their background knowledge, and motivation to read for understanding—the goal of vocabulary learning.

Having said that, it is interesting to note how many times students incorporate the words of the week into their writing. For example, Fernando wrote the following note to his Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor using words that had been the focus the previous school year:

> Hello Colonel,
>
> Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Stay out of trouble during the holidays. Don't go around fracturing people's fragile hearts with your fractious behavior.
>
> Fernando

THE OUTCOMES OF A FIVE-PRONGED, SCHOOLWIDE APPROACH TO VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

Given the investment of time, attention, and money to this five-pronged, schoolwide approach to vocabulary instruction, it seems reasonable to ask whether or not

it made a difference in student achievement. Recall that in 1999, the average reader scored at the 4.3 grade level according to the Gates-MacGinitie reading assessment. By 2001, that had increased to an average at the 5.4 grade level. On the spring 2005 Gates-MacGinitie reading assessment, the average reader read at the 7.6 grade level. It is important to note that these changes in achievement were seen while student demographics remained constant.

Another data point is the change in achievement using the state standards assessment. Recall that in 2001, Hoover students answered 30% of the vocabulary questions correctly across Grades 9, 10, and 11. By 2005, that had increased to 50% correct in 9th grade, 62% correct in 10th grade, and 75% correct in 11th grade. As noted in Table 3, reading comprehension scores increased as well. The percentage of students who scored "far below basic" decreased from 30% in 2001 to 22% in 2005, and the percentage of students who scored "proficient" or "advanced" increased from 8% in 2001 to 18% in 2005.

To examine the impact of the 4-year vocabulary initiative, we randomly selected a group of 200 ninth graders and tracked their progress over the 4 years they attended Hoover. At the end of the senior year, 143 of the original 200 students still attended Hoover. The others had moved to other schools, moved back to their home countries, transferred to night school, or dropped out. The vocabulary scores of the 143 students during their ninth grade year averaged at the 6.01 grade level. This means that they averaged .67 years growth in vocabulary for each year they attended school in Grades K–8. These same students averaged 8.79 in 10th Grade, 9.77 in 11th Grade, and 9.94 in 12th Grade. The difference between their 12th grade scores and their 9th grade scores—3.93 years or an average of .98 years growth per year of attendance—suggests that the initiative significantly increased their word knowledge compared with their historical achievement. This data is confounded by the fact that the Gates-MacGinitie tops out at the post-high school level (12+) and their data is recorded simply as 12th Grade level. Of the 143 seniors, 56 (39%) scored at the post-high school level, which did not allow for the average to be accurately calculated. Interestingly, none of the seniors in 1999 scored at the posthigh school level. When this is fac-

TABLE 3
Student Achievement Changes

Grade	*2001 Vocabulary Score (% correct)*	*2005 Vocabulary Score (% correct)*	*Change in Vocabulary Achievement (% correct)*	*2001 Reading Comprehension Score (% correct)*	*2005 Reading Comprehension Score (% correct)*	*Change in Reading Comprehension (% correct)*
9th	30	50	25	29	46	17
10th	30	62	32	33	51	18
11th	30	75	45	38	55	17

tored into the equation, it is reasonable to suggest that the initiative was a powerful intervention for improving vocabulary.

The next reasonable question to ask is whether or not the focus on vocabulary improved or harmed student achievement in other areas, such as English/language arts, science, math, or social studies. In 1999, Hoover was scored as the lowest achieving school in the district and among the lowest in the state. In California, schools receive an Academic Performance Index (API) score that summaries student achievement across the four tested subjects—math, science, social studies, and English. In 1999, Hoover scored 444 points on the API (the state goal is 800 and the maximum is 1000). By 2005, Hoover had earned 580 API points, an increase of 136 points, which represented the greatest change of achievement of all of the high schools in the district. To achieve this increase, math, science, social studies, and English scores had to be steadily increasing, which they were.

LESSONS LEARNED

After 4 years of focused attention to vocabulary learning at the schoolwide level, there are a number of lessons learned that can be applied to other secondary schools in which vocabulary achievement or reading achievement is of concern.

1. Students need significant opportunities to read and be read to if their vocabulary learning is to be significantly impacted.
2. Focusing on vocabulary does not detract from improvement in reading or other content-area learning. In fact, as vocabulary scores increased, so did scores in other content standards tests and on the overall reading comprehension of our students.
3. Schoolwide approaches to vocabulary improvement work. Vocabulary learning cannot be left to the discretion of individual teachers. When members of the school develop and implement an instructional plan, student achievement increases.
4. There is no quick fix for vocabulary achievement. Although it is not clear that all five of the components used at Hoover contributed equally, taken together they made a difference. Schools might want to vary their schoolwide approaches so that the profession can determine which interventions are most powerful.
5. Teacher buy-in and access to professional development makes the difference. At Hoover, teachers were involved in the design, development, and implementation of the schoolwide vocabulary initiative as well as the professional development necessary to create change in instruction.
6. Students get bored when their teachers use the same vocabulary instructional approaches day after day. While many of the students at Hoover reported that learning words was fun, they also grew tired of specific types of vocabulary in-

struction. Each teacher at Hoover needed an extensive repertoire of instructional approaches to continue to engage students in word learning.

7. The leadership of the school has to be intimately involved in schoolwide initiatives. From the design phase through implementation through accountability, the site administrators have to understand the goals of the project, support it, and help every teacher participate.

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