Teaching English Language Learners to Read

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Plain Talk About Reading 2009

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Two Research Projects

Development of English Literacy with Spanish Speakers

(Funded by NICHD)

- David Francis (University of Houston)
- Sharon Vaughn (University of Texas)
- Patricia Mathes (Southern Methodist University)
- Sylvia Linan-Thompson (University of Texas)
- Elsa Cardenas-Hagan (University of Houston)

Project ELLA: English Language and Literacy Acquisition

(Funded by IES)

- Rafael Lara-Alecio (Texas A&M University)
- Beverly J. Irby (Sam Houston State University)
- Patricia G. Mathes (Southern Methodist University)

Intervention: Three Tier Reading Model

If progress is inadequate, move to next level.

Tier 1: Quality Core

Enhanced general education classroom instruction.

Tier 2: Secondary Intervention

Child receives more intense intervention in, presumably in small groups.

Tier 3: Tertiary

Intervention increases in intensity and duration. Support typically needed across years.

DELLS Study

- Examined Tier 2 Intervention in both English and Spanish in First-Grade
- Only included the most struggling readers (i.e. struggling to read in native language and in English)

Hypotheses

- Some Spanish Speaking children will struggle to become readers, regardless of the language of instruction (English or Spanish).
- What we know about teaching reading to native English speaking struggling readers should apply to teaching native Spanish speaking struggling readers.
- Thus, intervention built on what we know about teaching reading should be effective in either Spanish or English.

The Interventions*

- Primary focus on reading.
- Parallel in Spanish and English.
- English version previously validated as effective.
- 50 minutes per day October-May.
- 1:4 Teacher to Student ratio.
- Provided in addition to normal language arts instruction.

*English = Early Intervention's in Reading (SRA/McGraw-Hill).
Spanish = Proactiva (SRA/ McGraw Hill)

Lesson Cycle

- Story Retell (@10 Minutes)
- Reading Lesson (@35Minutes)
- Embedded Language Support (@5 minutes)

Story Retell

- Preview the book and assess prior knowledge.
- Make predictions or build background knowledge.
- Introduce 2-4 vocabulary words.
- Read the book out loud.
- Students retell what was read.
- Teacher writes student responses and summarizes.

Early Interventions in Reading Reading / Lectura Proactiva*

- Explicit instruction in synthetic phonics, with emphasis on fluency.
- Integrates decoding, fluency, and comprehension strategies.
- 100% decodable text
- Carefully constructed scope and sequence designed to prevent possible confusions.
- Every activity taught to 100% mastery everyday.

*Researched under the prepublication name of Proactive Reading

Daily Lessons

- Includes multiple strands.
- Amount of new information is kept to a minimum so that children can assimilate it.
- Most of each lesson is review and generalization.

Intervention Comparison

English

- Focus on phonemic awareness segmenting and blending until children are sensitive to phonemes within blends
- Focus on reading single syllable cvc words before moving into multisyllabic and other syllable types.
- Sounding-out is the primary decoding strategy.
- Children are taught to be "flexible" decoders since English has many irregular words
- Much time allocated to reading connected text fluently through the reading of decodable stories
- Basic comprehension strategies are taught and practiced daily.
- ESL inserts ensure that children have the necessary concepts and vocabulary to fly participate in each lesson.

Intervention Comparison

Spanish

- Significantly less phonemic awareness instruction.
- The cv syllable type is given major emphasis.
- Reading multisyllabic words begin almost immediately.
- The phoneme is focused on within syllables within words, but children don't sound out an entire multisyllabic word phoneme by phoneme.
- Processing words syllable by syllable is the primary decoding strategy.
- Children read much more complex word structures much sooner than they do, in English.
- Spanish text becomes richer much more quickly allowing for the inclusion of more advanced comprehension strategies.

DELLS Outcomes

Significant posttest differences in

- phonological awareness
- listening comprehension
- word attack
- word identification and
- passage comprehension

average *d* = .62 – English

average *d* = .50 – Spanish

Goals for Project ELLA

- To determine which of 2 instructional delivery models (SEI or TBE) is most effective in promoting English language acquisition and literacy.
- To study under what circumstances certain students respond more favorably to a specific model.
- Follow children from kindergarten through grade 3.

	Structured English Immersion (SEI)	Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)
Enhanced	100% English ESL intervention each year	• Kinder: 70/30* • First: 60/40 • Second: 50/50 • Third: 50/50 • ESL intervention each year
Typical	100% English	• Kinder: 80/20 • First: 80/20 • Second: 70/30 • Third: 80/40

*Spanish/ English

A 3 Tier Model

- Tier 1:

  Regular Language Arts (Spanish and/or English)
- Tier 2:

  Structured ESL instruction
- Tier 3:

  Intervention for struggling readers (started mid first-grade)

Kindergarten and First-Grade Structured ESL instruction (75 Minutes)

- 45 minutes--*Santillana Intensive English*
- 10 minutes--Daily Oral Language using *Question of the Day*
- 15 minutes-- *Story Telling for English Language and Literacy Acquisition [STELLA]*

Second Grade
Structured ESL instruction (90 Minutes)

- 45 min: SRA's Early Interventions in Reading -- Level II
- 35 min: Story Telling for English Language and Literacy Acquisition [STELLA]
- 10 min: Daily Oral and Written Language [DOWL]

Early Interventions in Reading – Level 2

- Moves children from beginning 2nd grade skills to end of 4th grade skills in one year.
- Uses Social Studies content for both expository and narrative text.
- Uses both an anthology and novels.
- Build fluency of multisyllabic word recognition.
- Teaches morphology systematically.
- Continues timed Partner Reading for fluency development.

Level 2 -- continued

- Builds background knowledge carefully, Unit to Unit.
- Uses a few Big Ideas repeatedly (Problem-solution-effect)
- Teaches strategies for self-generative vocabulary learning. (Inside/beside strategy).
- Teaches a few powerful comprehension strategies.
  - Inferencing
  - Main idea (paragraph Shrinking)
  - Self-Questioning
  - Plot Structure
  - Content Webbing

Tier 3:

SRA's Early Interventions in Reading Level 1*

- Replaced Level 2
- Taught by highly trained paraprofessionals Small
- Groups of 3-5 students.
- 40 minute sessions.
- 5 days a week.
- In addition to core reading instruction.

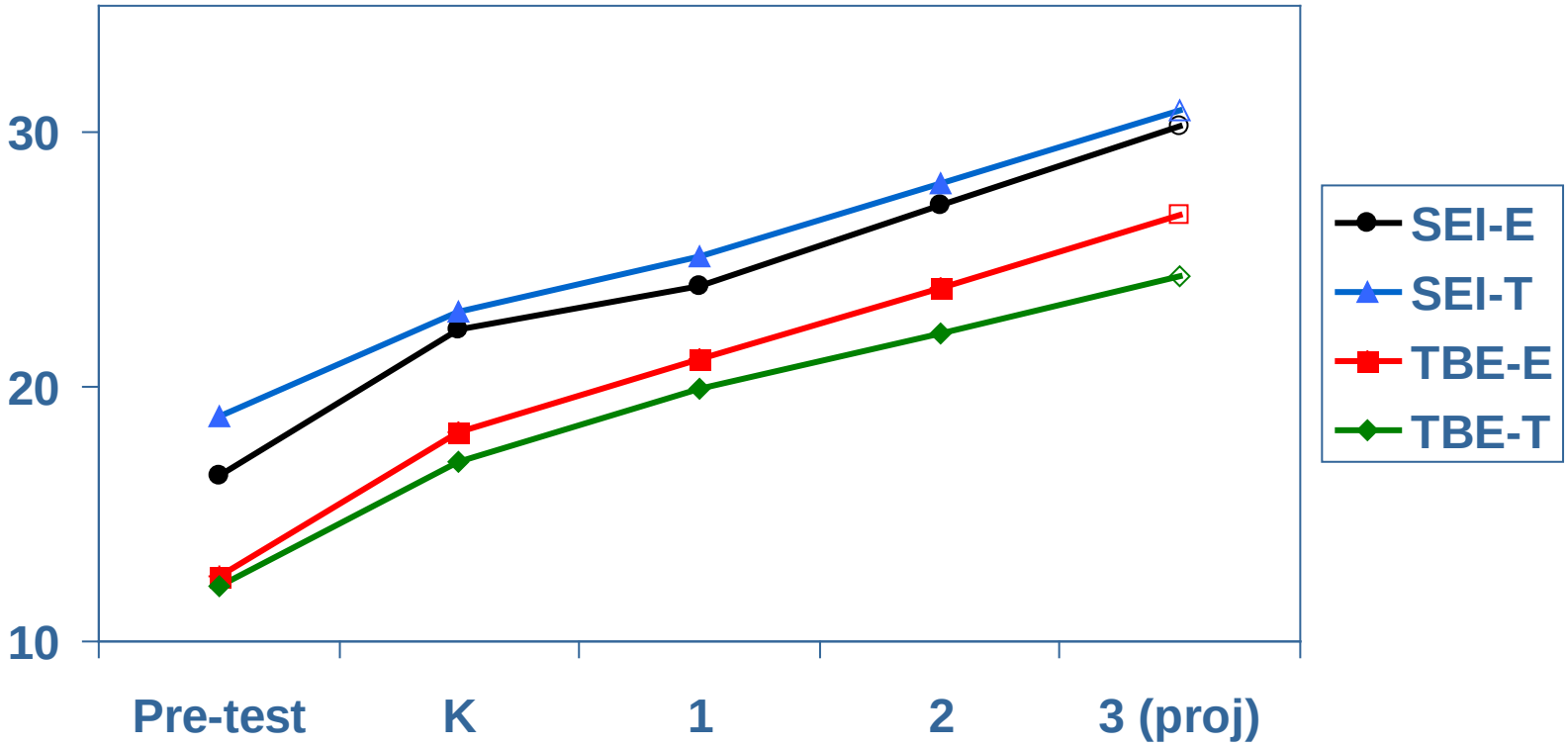
*Mathes & Torgesen (2005). Listed on *What Work Clearing House* for ELLs as Proactive Reading – it's research name

Third-Grade
Structured ESL instruction

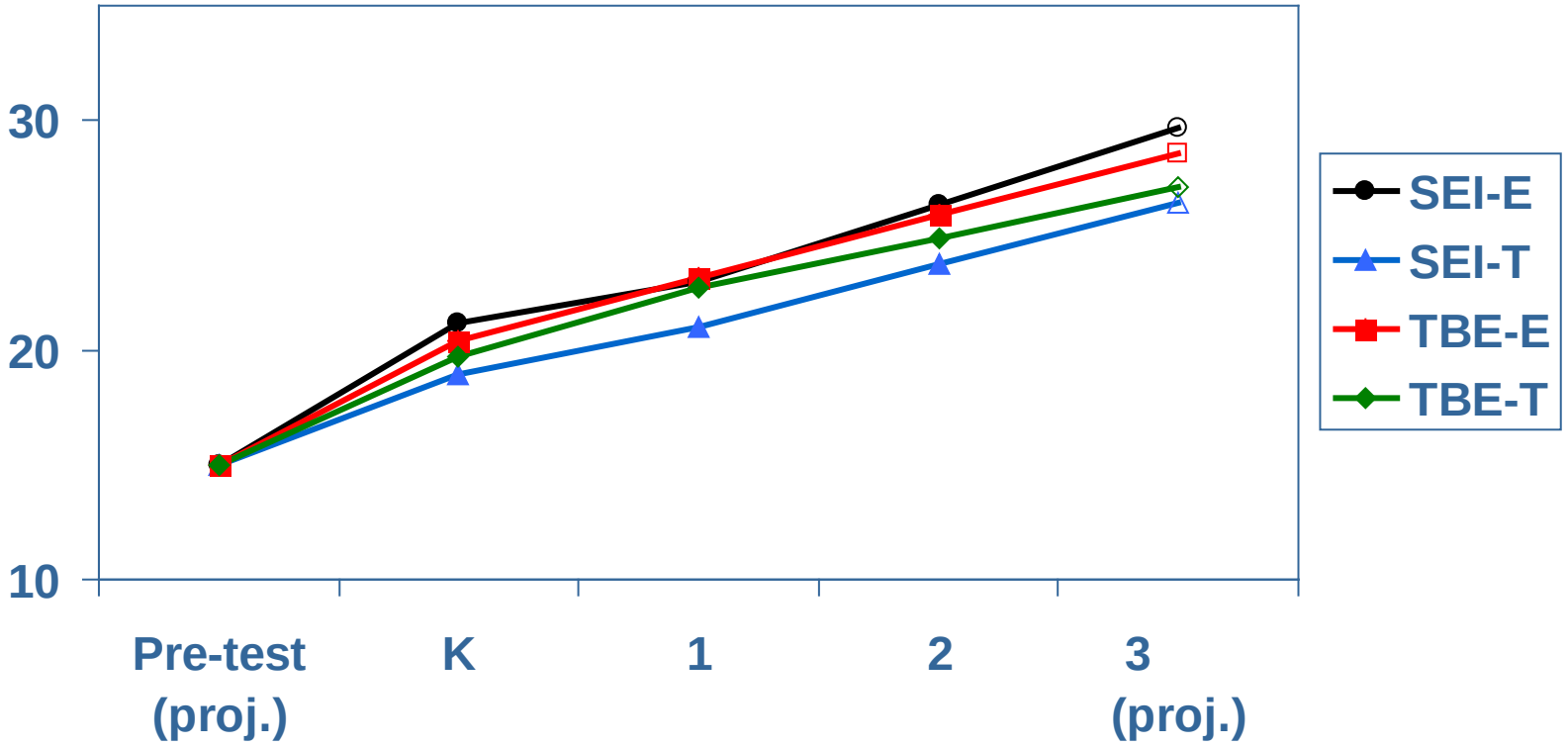
- **55 min: Content Reading Integrating Science for English Language Learners [CRISELLA]**

- **35 min: Story Telling for English Language and Literacy Acquisition [STELLA]**

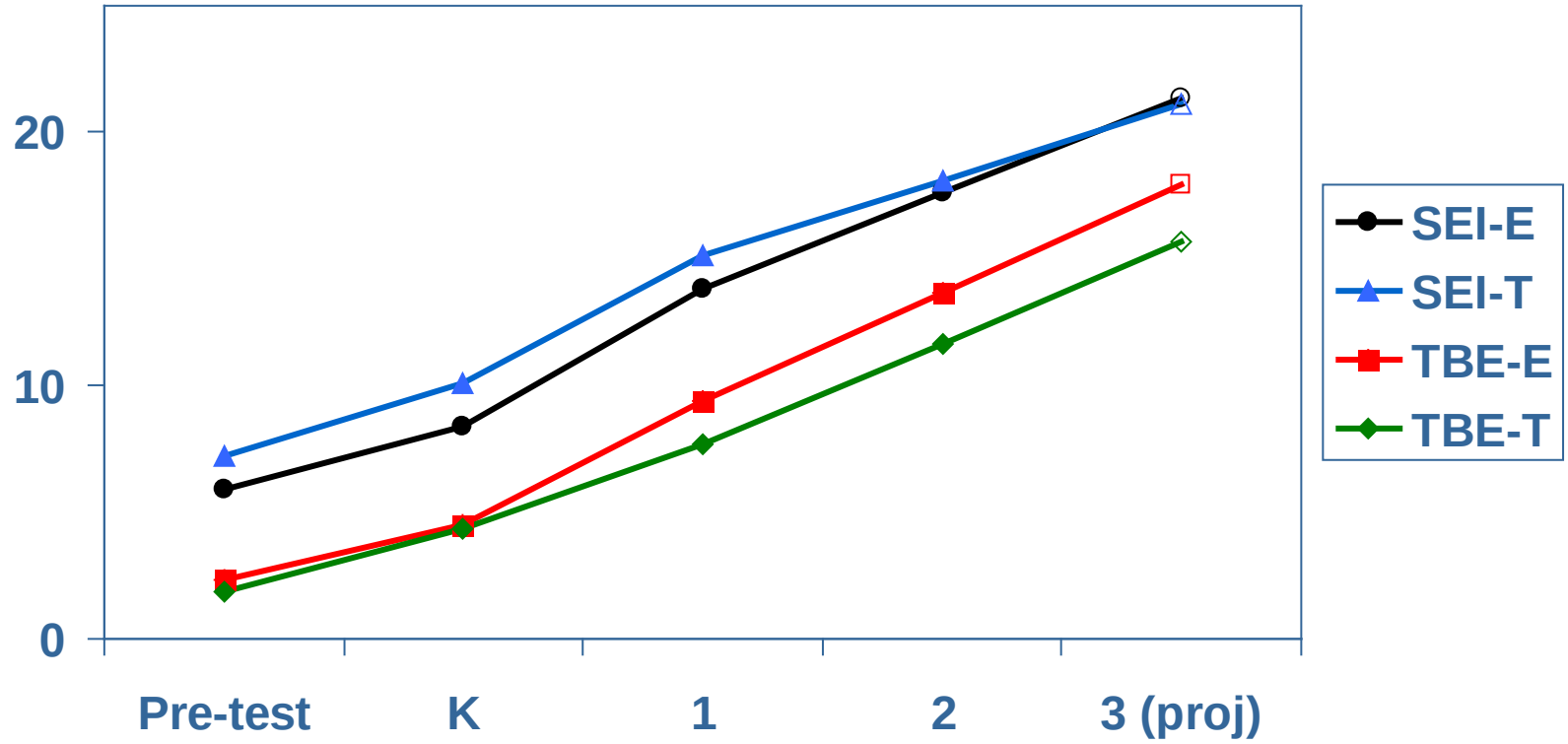
Picture Vocabulary Performance



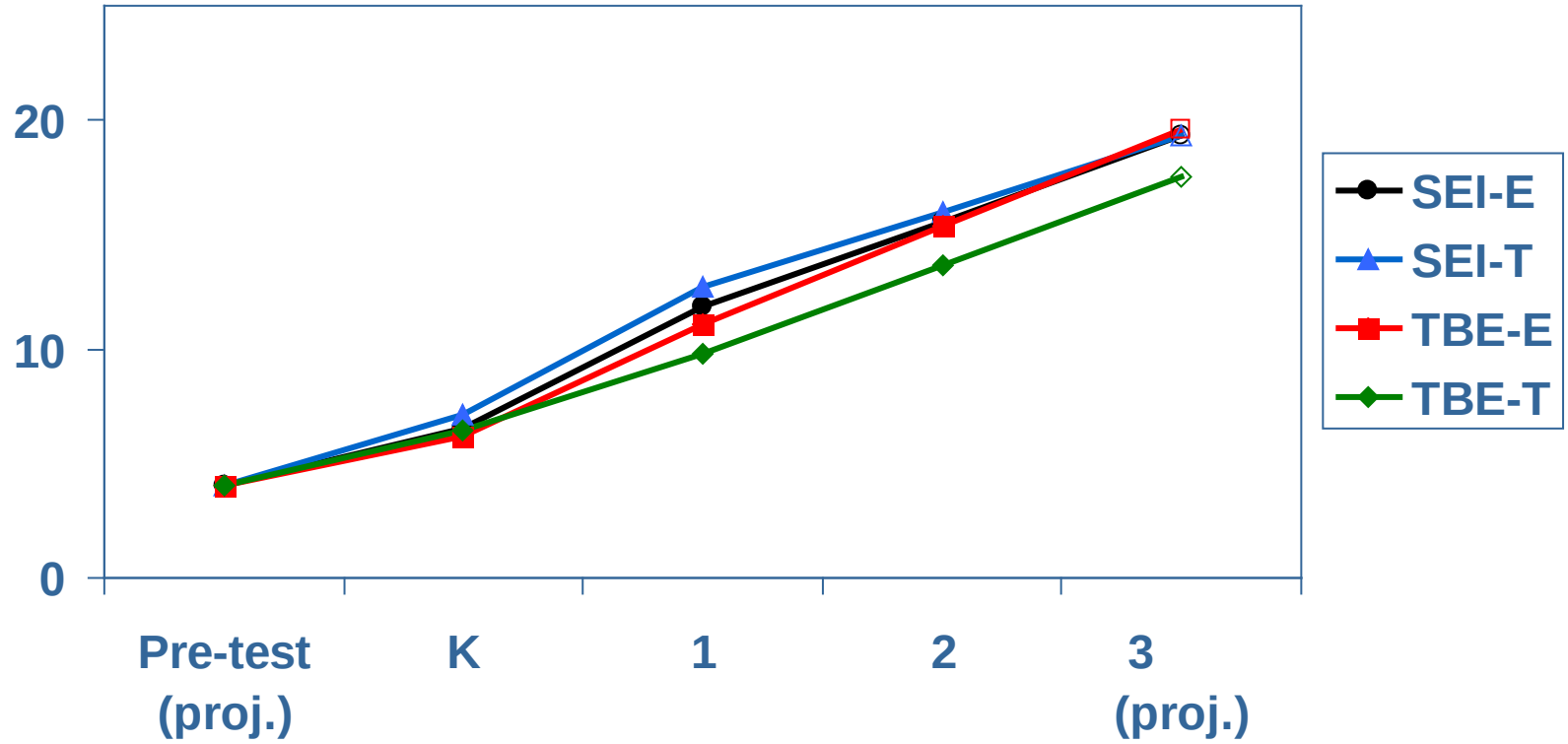
Picture Vocabulary Performance: Growth Controlled by Initial Status



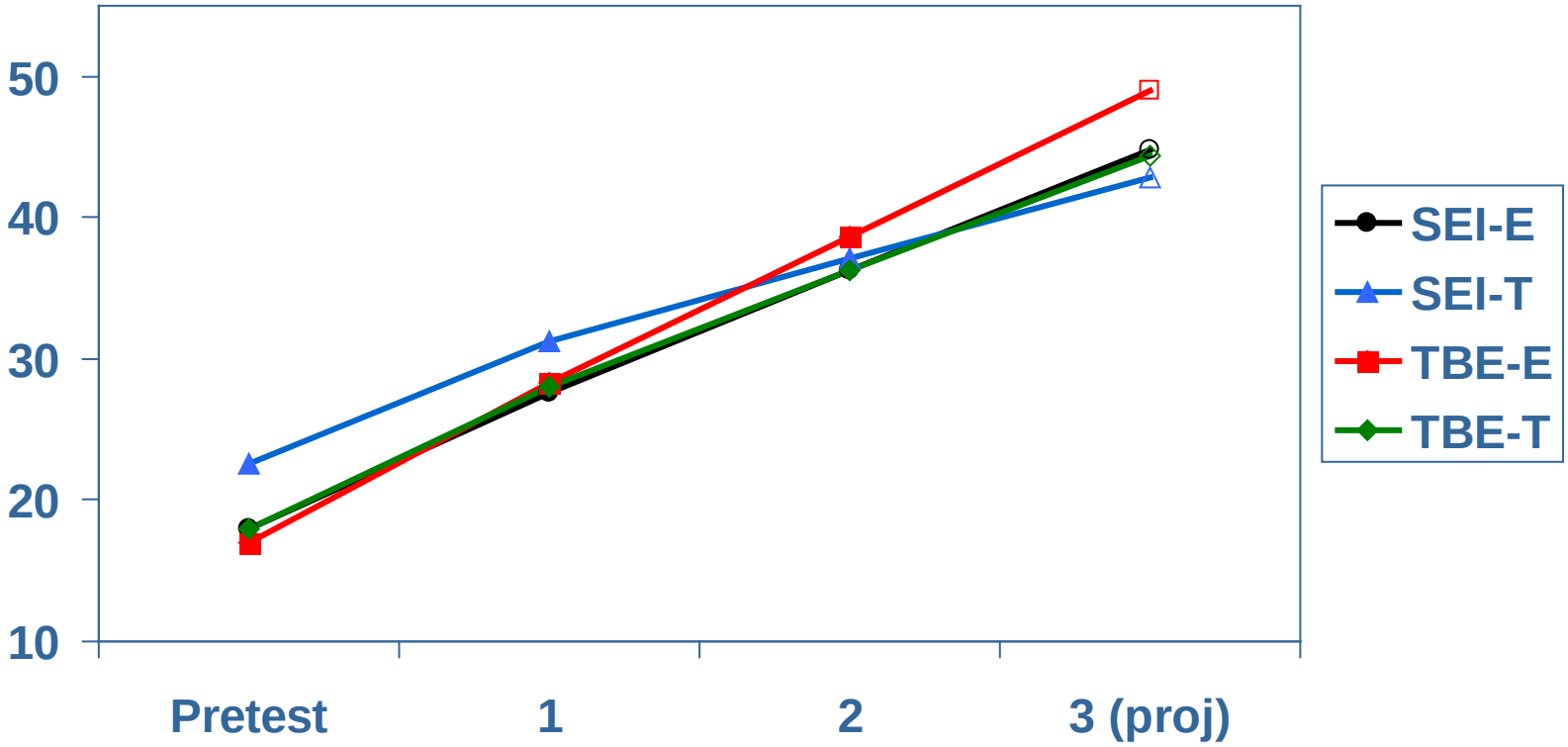
Listening Comprehension Performance



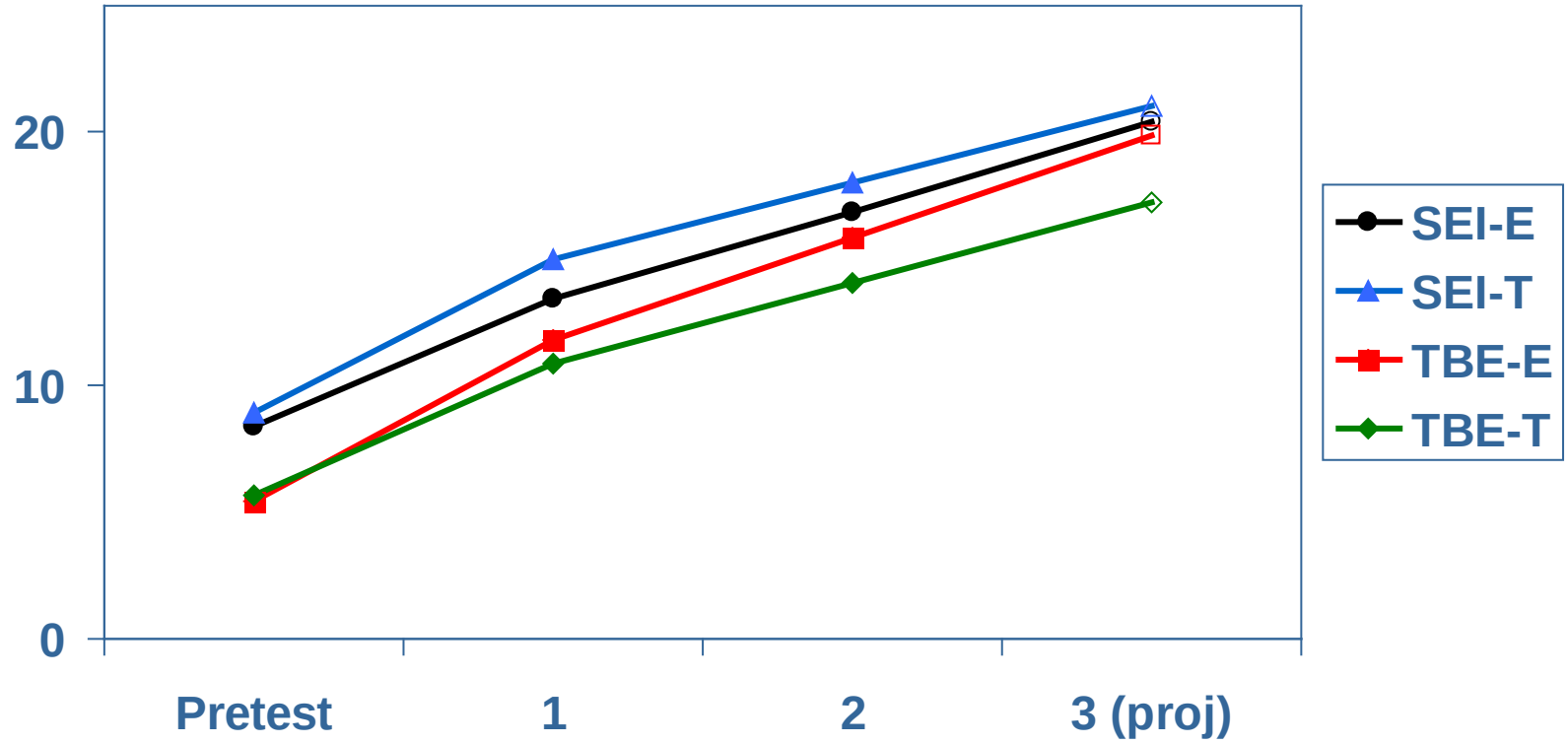
Listening Comprehension Performance: Growth Controlled by Initial Status



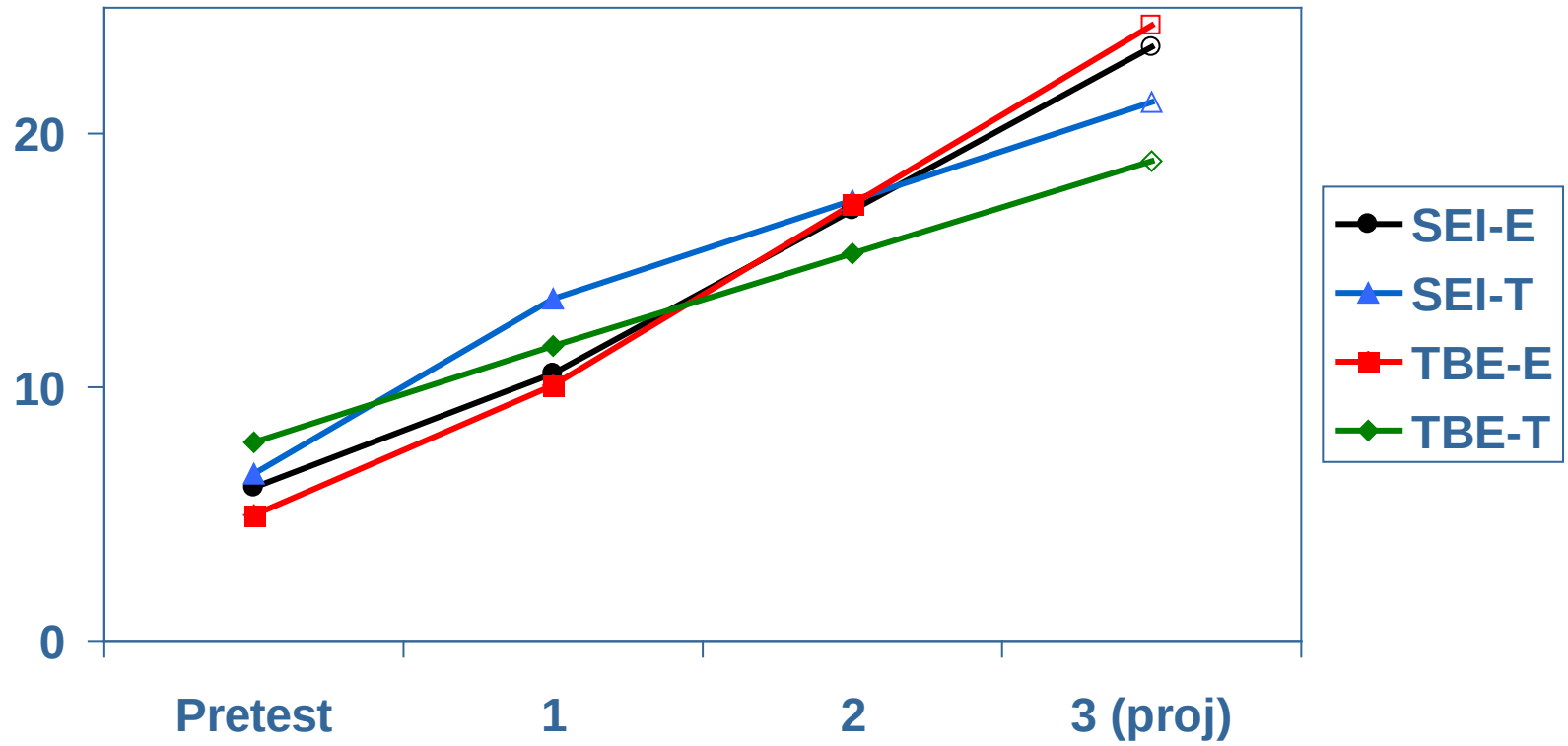
Letter Word Identification (English) Performance



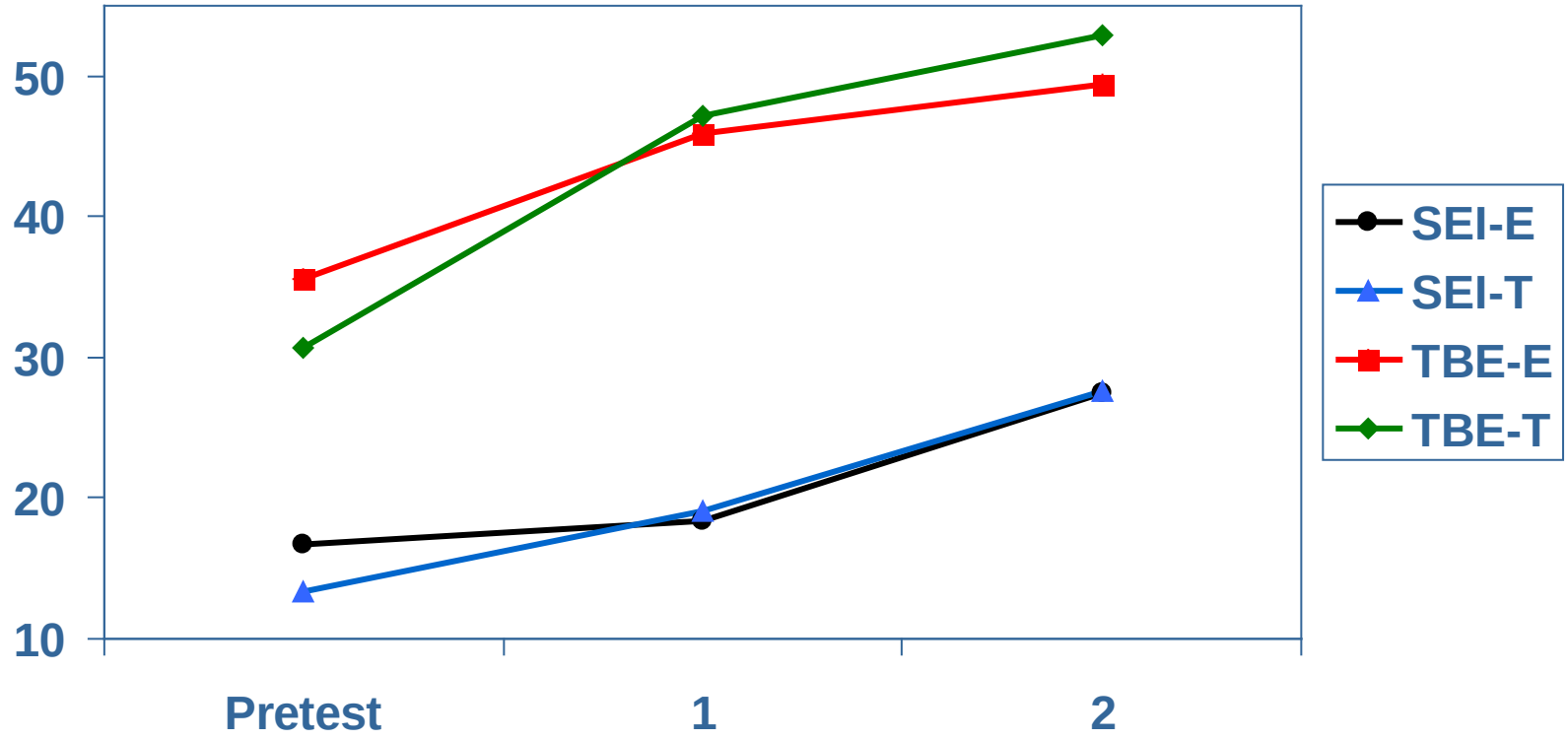
Passage Comprehension (English) Performance



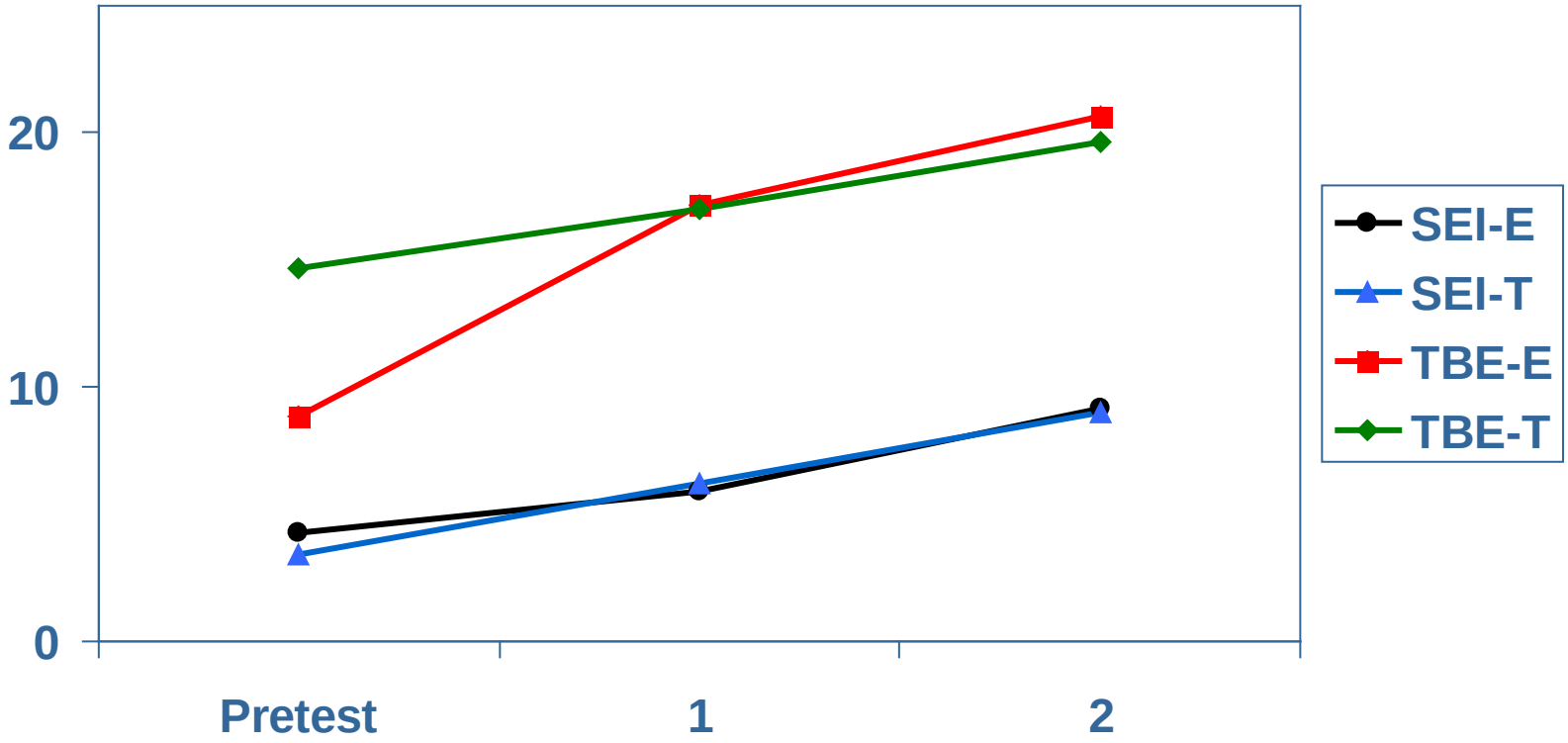
Word Attack (English) Performance



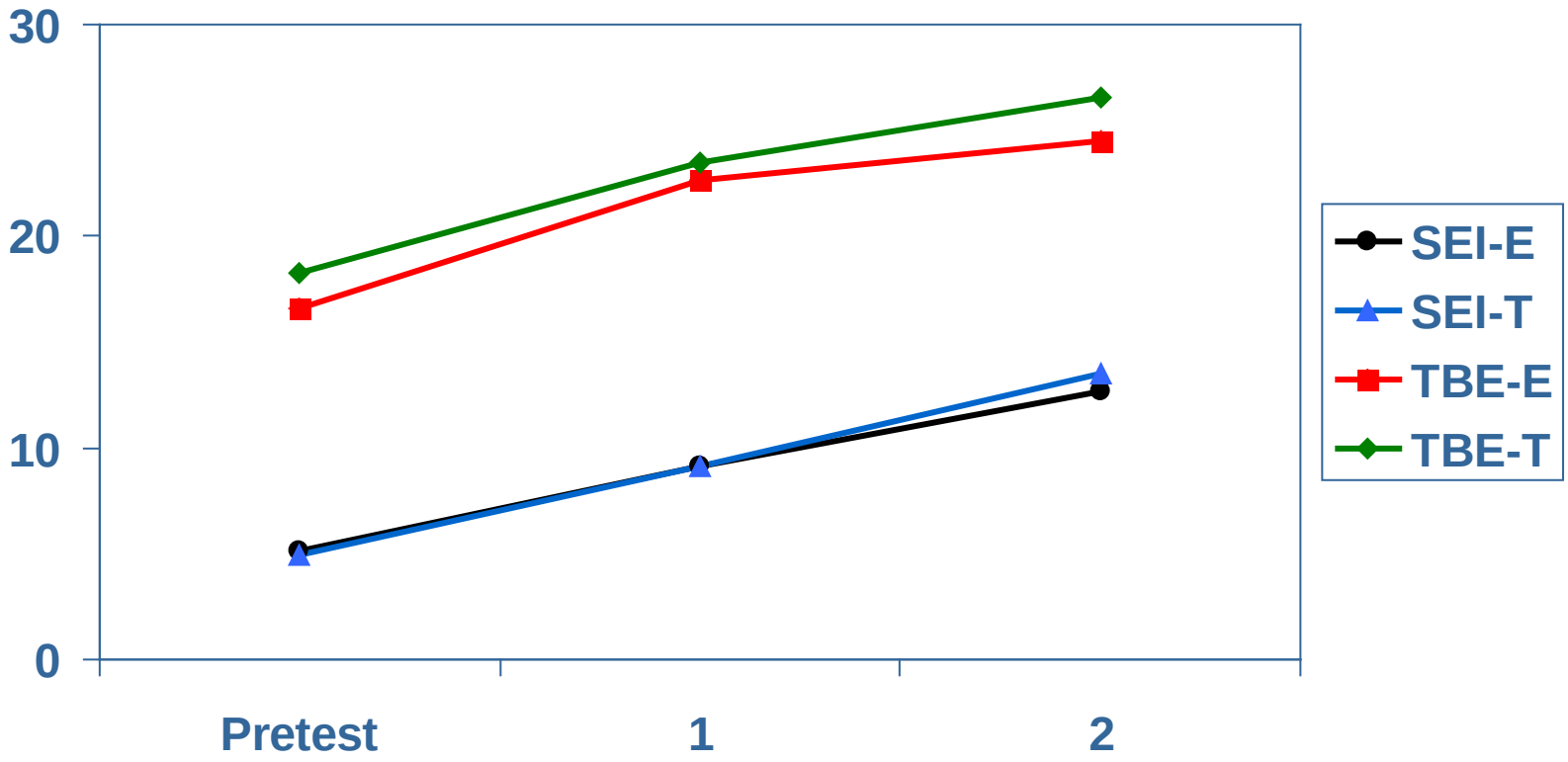
Letter Word Identification (Spanish) Performance



Passage Comprehension (Spanish) Performance



Work Attack (Spanish) Performance



So what have we learned

- There is substantial applicability about what we know from experimental studies on teaching beginning reading to native English speakers at-risk for reading failure to teaching native Spanish speakers at-risk for reading failure.

Instructional Content

Same categories of early reading content shown are effective for promoting reading competence with ELLS

- phonemic awareness
- letter-knowledge
- word recognition
- vocabulary
- comprehension

Instructional Design

- Strands of instruction are integrated together.
- Prerequisite skills taught before they are needed.
- There logical progression of skills from easiest to hardest
- Easily confused content is separated for a while.
- Skills from various strands become cumulatively more complex in a logical manner
- There is built in cumulative practice

Language of Instruction Determines Sequence of Instruction

- While content categories are the same the way in which instruction is sequenced, and the elements emphasized are different based on differences in each language.
- We are in no way advocating that effective English curricular materials simply be translated into Spanish, or any other language.

In Bilingual Programs -- Teach with an Eye toward Transition

Students being taught in Spanish benefit from:

- some phonemic awareness work
- being taught to read words grapheme by grapheme

In Transitional Bilingual Programs

- Start teaching English sooner than has been typical.
- Provide Structured English Instruction starting in Kindergartner.
- Provide careful instruction on how the two languages are alike and different.
  - Sound-symbol relationship
  - Variant spellings
  - Syllable patterns
  - Cognates

Transitioning to English

- English is more obtuse.
- English requires the need to teach more complex strategies for word recognition.
- English has many orthography to phonology inconsistencies
  - silent e-rule
  - 6 Syllable types
  - 18 vowels
  - digraphs representing 1 phoneme,
  - variant spellings for 1 phoneme
  - the need to be flexible with slightly irregular words

Transitioning to English

- Leverage Latin!
  - Show children the connections between English and Spanish directly (i.e., cognates)
  - Spanish is Modern Latin, English is 60% Latin.
  - Leveraging this can greatly facilitate vocabulary learning.
- Morphographs
  - Most prefixes and suffixes are the same or very close between English and Spanish.
  - Using morphographic information also facilitates vocabulary learning.

Instructional Delivery

- Same instructional principals are true for small group and large group instruction.
- Fast paced instruction
- High levels of academic engagement.

Overarching Teaching Routine

- Modeling new content,
- Providing guided practice for students,
- Implementing independent practice.
- consistently monitoring students' responses,
- Providing positive recognition for correct responses and
- Providing feedback if an error occurred.

Large Group Modifications

- Everybody questions for basic facts.
- Every student paired with a partner for the entire period.
- All question asked to the pair first, then “pair share.”
- Text read chorally and/or as a timed “Beat the Clock Partner Reading” activity.