

2019-2020
Student Engagement
& Academic
Vocabulary Executive
Summary Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an abbreviated analysis of the results collected throughout the Student Engagement and Academic Vocabulary professional development series during the 2019-2020 school year.

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Executive Summary

The Student Engagement professional learning series & Academic Vocabulary professional learning series represent two 3-session learning experiences for elementary and secondary educators seeking information and skills related to the teaching of and engagement of students in literacy. Participants in both the Student Engagement series and the Academic Vocabulary series received two full-day sessions of professional development in addition to a 2-hour eWalk throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. One cohort of each series was offered, with 37 educators from 6 schools in 4 districts attending the Student Engagement series, and 16 educators from 10 schools in 6 school districts attending the Academic Vocabulary series.

The goal behind the Student Engagement & Academic Vocabulary series was to familiarize teachers with and increase educators’ capacity to implement effective research-based literacy and engagement strategies during instruction. Participants in the training learned about 9 student engagement strategies and 4 academic vocabulary strategies with opportunities to observe and receive feedback on implementation in practice. It was expected that through participation in these series that the following outcomes would occur:

1. Increase teachers’ knowledge surrounding effective student engagement strategies.
2. Increase teachers’ use of effective student engagement instructional strategies.
3. Increase teachers’ knowledge surrounding effective academic vocabulary strategies
4. Increase teachers’ use of effective academic vocabulary strategies

1. Increase teachers’ knowledge surrounding effective student engagement strategies.

Educators participating in the Student Engagement Series were taught about 9 different student engagement strategies throughout the three sessions facilitated. Prior to Session 1, just 1 out of the 9 strategies had at least 70% of educators indicating being either “completely” or “mostly” knowledgeable (Figure 1). At Session 3, this number increased to 8 of 9 strategies, with all 9 at 50% or more. It appears that the Student Engagement Series was very successful at increasing teachers’ knowledge regarding effective student engagement practices.

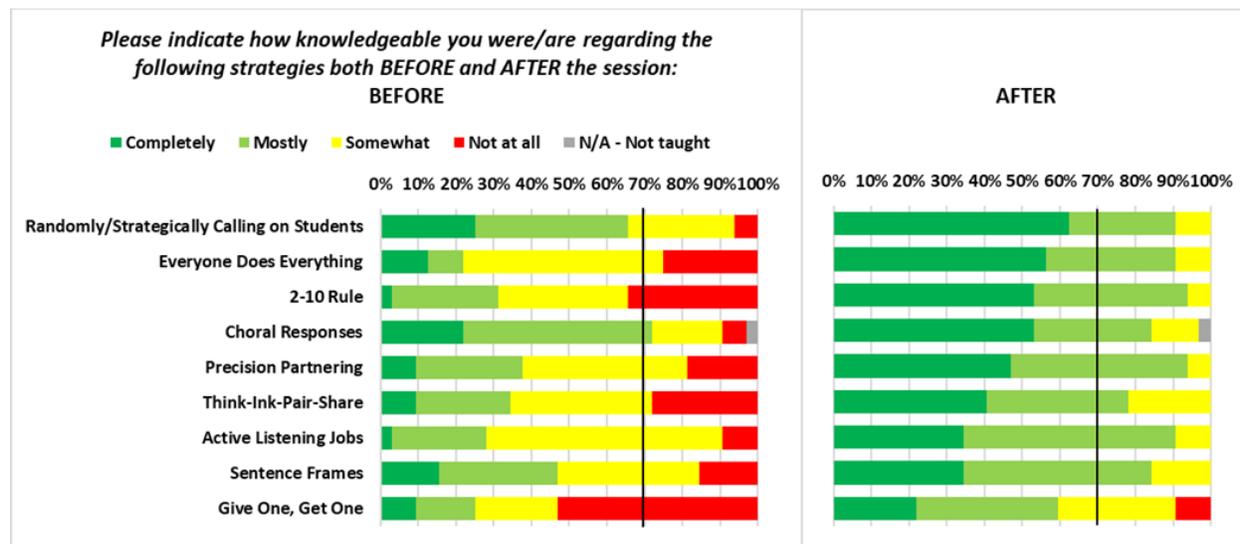


Figure 1. Change in Educators’ Perceived Understanding of Student Engagement Strategies Taught. *N* = 31.

2. Increase teachers' use of effective student engagement instructional strategies.

The intention of the Student Engagement series is more than just teaching educators about new instructional practices, it is about ensuring that teachers are using them within their practice. During Sessions 1-3 participants were asked to identify the frequency in which they have been using each of the strategies that they learned about during previous sessions. Although, this project hopes to provide teachers with new strategies that they have never used before, the scope of this evaluation focused on the number of strategies that teachers began to use regularly during instruction (either “almost always” or “usually”). During Session 1 participants reported utilizing an average of 3.27 out of 9 strategies regularly, whereas at Session 3 this number increased significantly to 5.28 out of 9 strategies. Overall, at Session 1 nearly two-thirds of participants identified using 2 or fewer student engagement strategies regularly (Figure 2). By Session 3, nearly half of the participants reported using 6 or more student engagement strategies regularly, with only 3.4% of participants using 2 or fewer regularly.

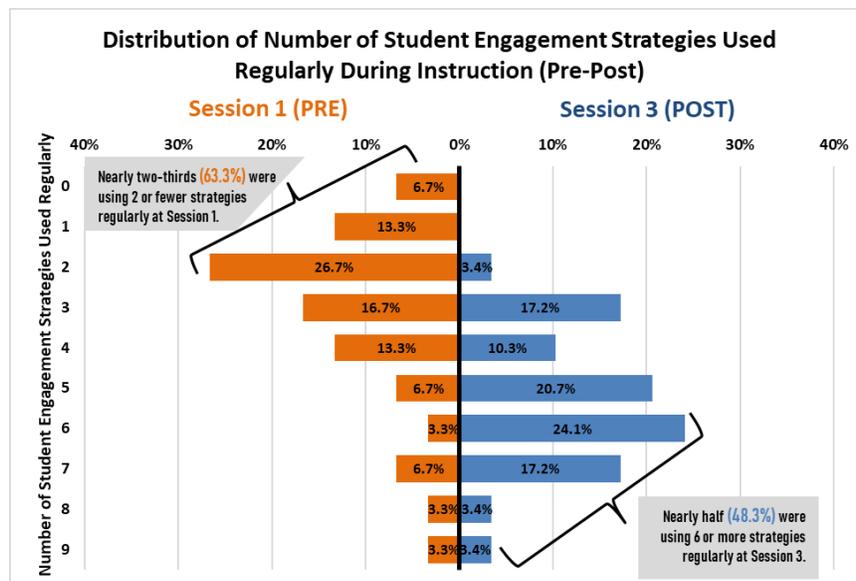


Figure 2. Distribution of Number of Student Engagement Strategies Used Regularly by Session (Pre-Post). $N_{PRE}=30$; $N_{POST}=29$.

3. Increase teachers' knowledge surrounding effective academic vocabulary strategies.

Educators participating in the Academic Vocabulary series were taught about 4 different academic vocabulary strategies throughout the three sessions facilitated. Prior to the training, just 0 out of the 2 strategies assessed had at least 50% of educators indicating being either “completely” or “mostly” knowledgeable (Figure 3). After the training, this number increased to all 2 strategies assessed with each being above 75%.

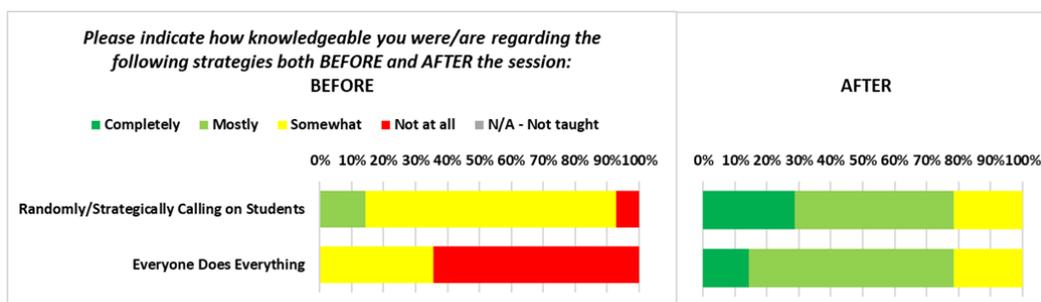


Figure 3. Change in Understanding of Academic Vocabulary Strategies Taught. $N = 14$.

4. Increase teachers' use of effective academic vocabulary instructional strategies.

The intention of the Academic Vocabulary series is more than just teaching educators about new instructional practices, it is about ensuring that teachers are using them within their practice. During Sessions 1-3 participants were asked to identify the frequency in which they have been using each of the strategies that they learned about during previous sessions. During Session 1 participants reported utilizing an average of 1.00 out of 4 strategies regularly, whereas at Session 3 this number increased nearly significantly to 2.44 out of 4 strategies. Overall, at the end of the school year 84.6% of participants in the Academic Vocabulary series reported increasing their frequency of use for at least 1 academic vocabulary strategy, with nearly a third (30.8%) of participants reporting increasing their frequency for all 4 strategies.

Participant Satisfaction/Perceived Impact of Program

Overall, participants were largely satisfied with the professional development they received from the Student Engagement & Academic Vocabulary series. Overall, 91.7% of participants in the Student Engagement series sessions and 97.1% in the Academic Vocabulary series sessions indicated that the presenter was either “very effective” or “effective.” Additionally, 96.0% of participants responding to the end of year Implementation Survey indicated that their practice changed at least slightly as a result of participating in either series, with 56.0% indicating it changed at least “moderately.” In fact, 91.7% of participants indicating at least one change in their practice noted that they increased their use of engagement strategies. Another educator also went on to comment that *“I am using vocabulary strategies daily, when it used to be once or twice a week.”*

Participants also provided input on how the changes they have made in their practice have impacted their students' level of engagement and learning in the classroom. Nearly all (95.8%) participants indicated that student engagement had changed at least slightly in their classroom as a result of the changes they have made in their classroom, with 16.7% indicating it had changed “substantially.” In fact, 56.5% of participants indicating at least one change related to student engagement noted that a larger percentage of students were engaged in their classroom by the end of the year (Figure 4). One participant remarked at the end of the year that *“The students who did not ask questions or speak in class at least speak to a peer when I use precision partnering now.”*

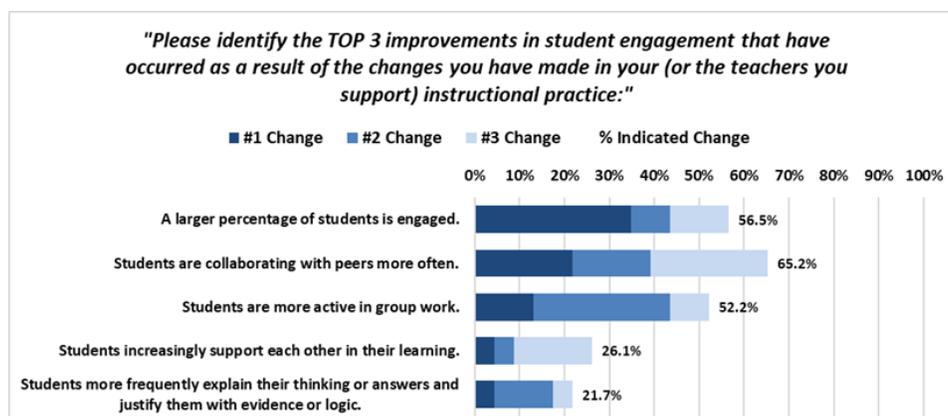


Figure 4. Participants' Perceived Changes in Student Engagement. N = 23.

When it comes to the impact on student learning, 22 out of 24 participants (91.7%) who had made changes to their instructional indicated that there was at least a slight impact on student learning due to the changes they have made, with 70.9% indicating at least a “moderate” impact on student learning. Looking at specific changes in student learning, 59.1% of participants indicated that students are thinking more broadly about the content in class, and 54.5% indicated students were more proficiently using academic language when speaking and writing (Figure 5). When asked to provide any testimonials on how student learning has changed, a handful of responses were provided. One participant in the Student Engagement series mentioned that *“Students are more engaged with the lesson, especially with peer collaboration strategies, allowing the material and content to be better retained.”* An educator from the Academic Vocabulary series remarked that their students were showing *“better performance on vocabulary assessments.”*

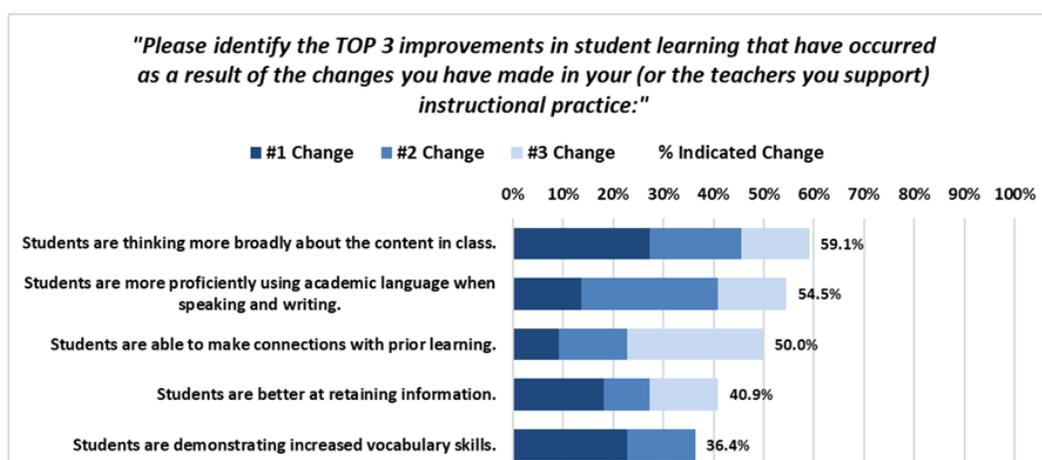


Figure 5. Participants’ Perceived Changes in Student Learning. *N* = 22.

Conclusion

In general, participants were very pleased with their participation in the Student Engagement and/or Academic Vocabulary series. In regard to meeting its intended objectives, it appears that for both series a vast majority of participants became much more knowledgeable about the strategies taught and were able to implement more effective strategies on a regular basis. In the end, one participant of the Student Engagement series was very pleased commenting *“I cannot imagine my school site without it, it is that important.”*