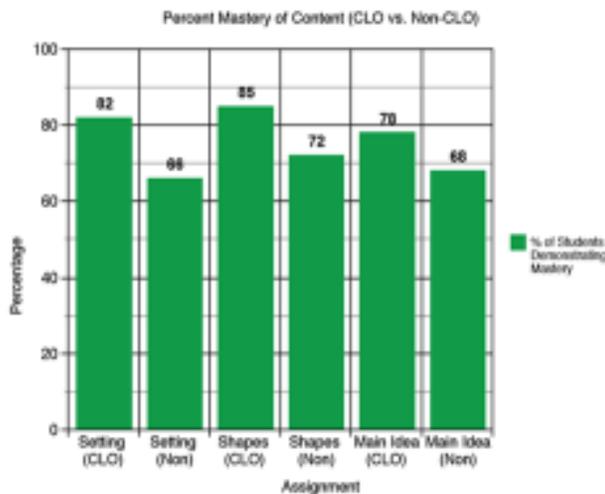


Findings

The data I collected throughout both phases of my action research study helped me identify some of the possible effects of Content Language Objectives. As I navigated through my research study, five common themes were illuminated.

- 1. Student agency**—emerged through the implementation of CLOs—students are empowered to bring their perspective and schema to a scenario, which seems to benefit students' confidence in school, their ability to express their thinking in writing, and their willingness to contribute their ideas to class discussion. By engaging with both the content and oral language objective, students authentically built their roles in the classroom.
- 2. Academic achievement**—students demonstrated higher mastery with the use of Content Language Objectives than when not using them in lessons.
- 3. Richer dialogue on academic topics**—students' demonstrated improvement on engaging in relevant and rigorous conversations. Both third and first grade teams felt that students were more focused and able to bring "strong writing and speaking" traits from lessons to lesson.



Implications

A primary limitation in my study was my inability to determine whether student growth was directly the result of CLOs, or if it was from the outcome of collaboration and teamwork alongside CLOs. It is clear that there were other factors beyond just the incorporation of CLOs that may be responsible for the growth my teachers and I saw in our students, and I wasn't able to tease that apart in my study. An additional limitation to my data collection was that it was difficult to set up times to observe teachers for CLO lessons. Being a classroom teacher limited my ability to go in a classroom during a time that they are doing a lesson—from start to finish. It was difficult to sync up schedules with other classroom teachers. If in the interventionist or coaching position, my schedule would be more flexible and permit for more collaboration with teachers. Finally, the amount of time I spent on observing others in this process during Phase II did not occur as often as I planned. It would have been beneficial to track students' and teachers' progress with CLOs over time; however, it was difficult to find the time as a classroom teacher and graduate student. Additionally, my intention was to collaborate more with my district on my findings and find more times for talking spaces—focus groups, debrief sessions, etc.; however, I was not able to fit it in my schedule.

Through this action research study, I investigated a small piece of my own pedagogical practice along with that of a few classroom teachers in a school with high percentages of ELLs. My data indicates a need for additional research on cultivating a classroom that centers on student agency. Since language is an access point for any content, I plan on developing a new tool to help define and evaluate student agency within classrooms—one that can be used in a multitude of settings and align to CEL 5D. In thinking about my future role next year as math interventionist in my district, I want to investigate the ways in which CLOs can be implemented in multi-curricular settings—specifically, math.

Content Language Objectives: Pathway to Student Agency for English Language Learners

Natalee Daniels



Abstract

Content Language Objectives (CLOs) are a critical component of providing equity and access to students so they begin to master the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. I chose CLOs as my focus for my action research due to the high levels of English Language Learners (ELLs) in my school. My research occurred in two phases. Through both phases of my action research, I investigated the effects of Content Language Objectives on student agency, academic achievement, and language development. This data will help me in my future as I work collaboratively with teachers toward a common purpose of enhancing academic rigor for all students.

Research Questions

1. *How does the incorporation of Content Language Objectives into lesson plans constrain or afford student learning and agency?*
 - a. *How will explicit language development through the use of CLO's accelerate and/or affect the oral and written language development of ELLs?*
 - b. *How does the implementation of CLOs better prepare students for reaching high levels of academic achievement?*
2. *How do teachers perceive the effects of incorporation of Content Language Objectives into lesson plans?*

Methods: Procedures

Over the last two years, I had the opportunity to work with my district through a grant that has helped focus my instruction on teaching English Language Learners (ELLs), specifically through the use of CLOs. This started out as a micro-level project that only focused on my classroom, but expanded into implementing and analyzing CLOs at more of a macro level for my school, involving three grade levels: first, second, and third grade (my grade). For the purpose of this action research, I will be referring to my initial work with Content Language Objectives in the 2014-2015 school year as Phase I, and my work around CLOs in the 2015-2016 school year as Phase II (see timeline on back).

During Phase I, data was primarily collected through exit tickets given to students after a lesson. Also, a 4-3-2-1 success check was used formatively by students for self-assessment of success criteria and by teachers to gauge students' in-the-moment understanding. During Phase II, I continued to use the above methods, but additionally interviewed my third grade team members, a second grade team at my school, and a group of first grade teachers that were utilizing CLOs in their classroom. I also did observations as an "inactive participant" in my colleagues' classroom while CLOs were being implemented (Mills, 2011). In order to track teacher's impressions of the effects of implementing CLOs I conducted a baseline, midway, and final survey.

Methods: Instruments

- **Student rubrics.** I gathered information through the use of Jeff Zwiers' Academic Conversation Rubric (see below). Then, I calculated and compared how many students met or exceeded standard, were approaching standard, or were below standard. I examined students' results on their exit slips and organized data in a matrix to demonstrate and compare academic achievement during lessons incorporating CLOs versus those without.
- **Surveys.** I analyzed teachers' baseline, midway, and final survey responses to look for growth and changes over time in their perceptions of use of CLOs.
- **Interviews and observations.** I organized and coded all additional information gathered through interviews and observations, looking for emergent themes.

Rubric for Academic Conversation Skills

Skills	Meet or exceed standard 3	Approach standard 2	Below standard 1
Thinking and Talking like Experts (T)	Interprets themes & applies to life; Connects to characters & other texts; Critiques texts and author's technique; Uses literature terms & academic expressions	Provides some interpretations and applications to life; Use some literature terms & academic expressions; Shows some deep thinking	Remains at next level; Gives few or no interpretations; Fails to extend conversation; Avoids literature terms & academic expressions
Stay Focused (F)	Generates logical theme(s); Stays on topic; Builds on one another's comments	Mainly stays on topic with a few tangents; Demonstrates some building of an idea	Rarely connects or builds on ideas; Uses disconnected, random ideas; Goes off on many tangents
Support (S)	Supports ideas and opinions with examples from text, life, and previous discussions; Clearly explains and elaborates on ideas	Provides some support of ideas with examples and clarifications; Uses some prompts to encourage support	Provides little or no support of ideas and themes; Fails to use appropriate prompting
Paraphrase (P)	Paraphrases partner ideas to clarify, deepen, and stay focused; Synthesizes key points	Offers some paraphrasing and synthesizing of key ideas	Offers little or no paraphrasing and synthesizing
Communicating Behaviors (C)	Actively listens, asks questions, and respects partner comments	Uses some appropriate listening and turn-taking behaviors	Fails to focus on partner; interrupts; Dominates conversation or does not contribute at all

Based on Zwiers, Jeff and Marie Crawford. Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk that Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understanding. Portland: Stenhouse, 2011. Print.