

Enhancing Social Studies Instruction for Secondary Emergent Bilinguals and their Peers

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of ENGLISH LEARNERS

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Overview

- Situating this work
- World Generation (WorldGen) instructional approach
- Study overview
- Results
- Implications

Situating this work

Guiding Question: How can instruction promote adolescent emergent bilinguals' success in acquiring grade-level content knowledge and developing language and literacy skills?

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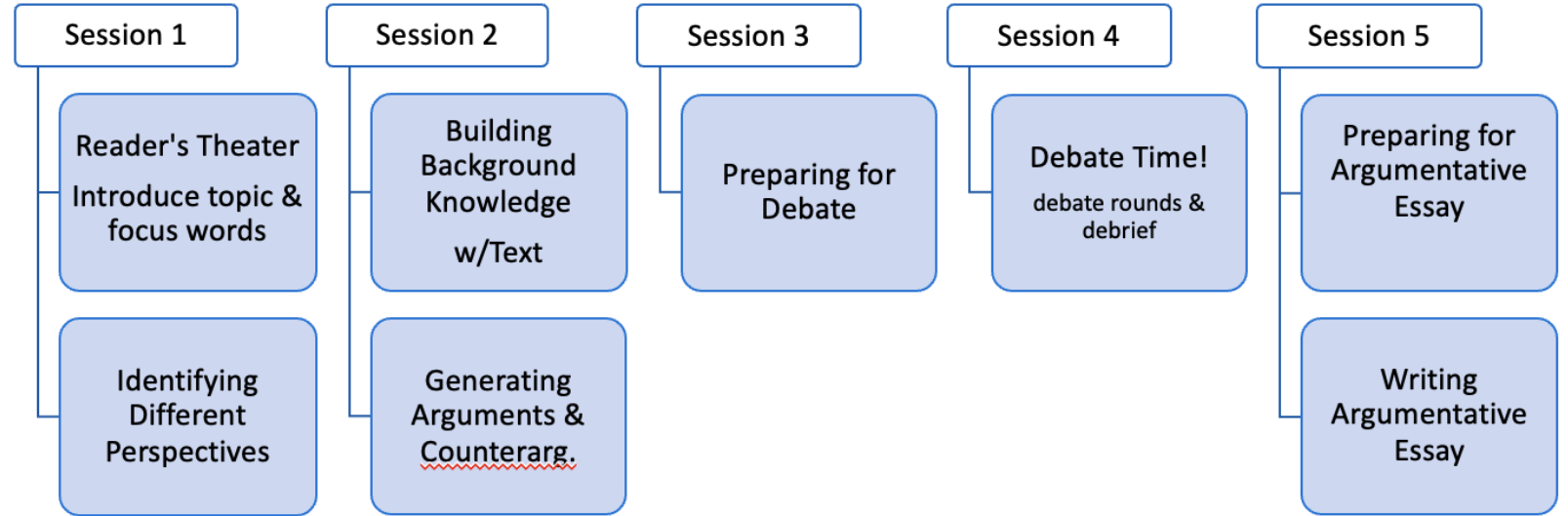
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- Integration of language and literacy practice in content area instruction
- Academic vocabulary instruction
- Exposure to complex text
- Use of linguistic and visual supports
- Opportunities to use language with linguistically heterogeneous peers

(Baker et al., 2014; NASEM, 2017; Vaughn et al., 2009; 2017)

Social Studies Generation (SERP Institute)



**Developed World Generation (WorldGen)
by leveraging extant research to respond
to our guiding question**

Conceptual Framework

Tenets of sociocultural approaches to teaching and language learning

- Content knowledge and language and literacy skills will develop as a consequence of participation and interaction in learning
- Learning can be observed as growth in participation
- Communication about disciplinary ideas support language and literacy development

(van Lier, 2004; Walqui & van Lier, 2010)

Guiding Principles

- Foreground content to build language
- Ensure engagement through use of disciplinary literacy practices that help relate content to students' lives
- Use team-based learning to encourage collaborative academic discussions in heterogeneous groups

Key Practices to Support EBs

1. Provide daily opportunities for purposeful language use.
2. Deliberately link historical content to students' lived experiences.
3. Utilize team-based learning to provide structured interactions.
4. Structure lessons' architecture so principles of teaching and understanding language are embedded throughout the unit.
5. Scaffold to provide access to appropriately challenging texts & tasks.

Iterative Design of World Generation

Modify SoGen
by integrating
supports for
EBS (SERP, 2015)

Middle School Social Studies

World Generation

<p>Unit 1 The Egyptian Pharaohs: Wise Investors or Wasteful Spenders?</p> 	<p>Unit 2 Was is Better to be an Athenian or a Spartan?</p> 	<p>Unit 3 Ancient Roman Government: Whose Voice Counts?</p> 	<p>Unit 4 Pompeii: An Irresponsible Decision or an Unexpected Disaster?</p> 
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World Generation

Modify
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Lesson
Piloting with
collaborating
teachers

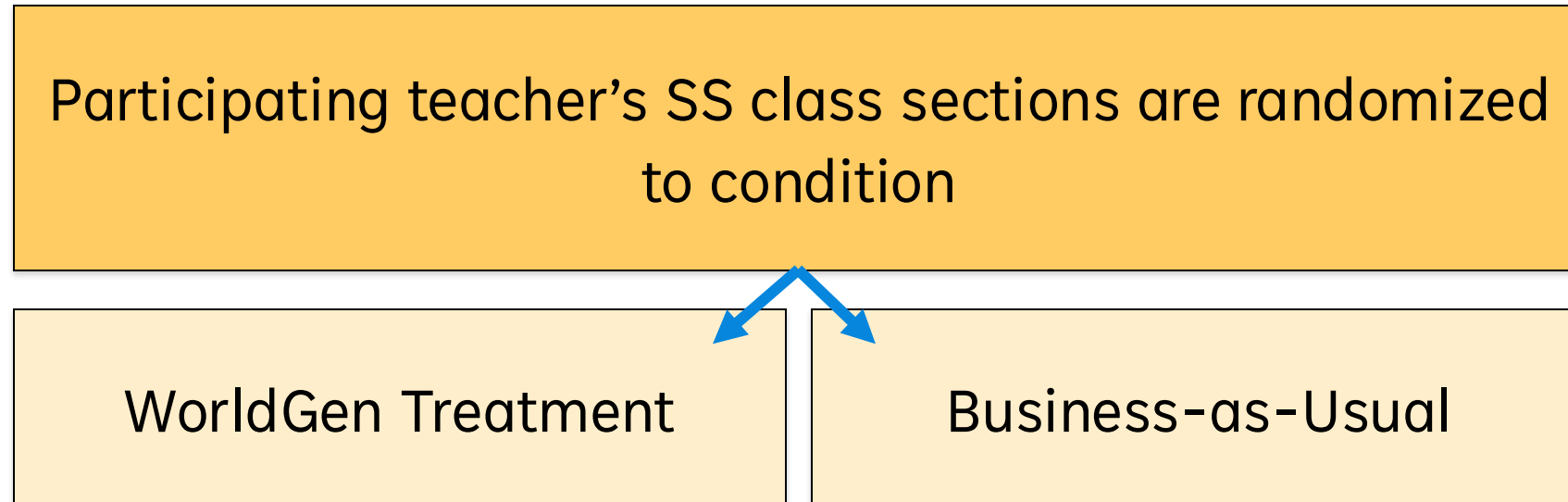


RCT 1
7 teachers
716 students



RCT 2
13 teachers
1019 students

RCT 1 and 2: Design and Procedures



WorldGen Treatment

- Teachers receive one-day PD, content materials, coaching
- Teachers implement WorldGen (3-4 units) daily across ~8-10 weeks in randomly selected classes

WorldGen Components

Comprehension Canopy

- Introduce students to the unit topic and debate question through Springboard & Reader's Theater

Social Studies Knowledge Acquisition

- Develop and extend students' social studies content knowledge through brief, engaging texts

Disciplinary Literacy

- Develop specialized reading, writing, speaking, & listening skills in social studies

Thoughtbook

- Writing tool used to summarize and collect evidence daily in preparation for debate & essay

World Generation Unit Framework

Week 1

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5
Comprehension Canopy	Session Introduction	Session Introduction	Session Introduction	Session Introduction
Disciplinary Literacy	Disciplinary Literacy	Social Studies Knowledge	Social Studies Knowledge	Social Studies Knowledge
Thoughtbook	Thoughtbook	Thoughtbook	Disciplinary Literacy	Disciplinary Literacy
			Thoughtbook	Thoughtbook

Week 2

Session 6	Session 7	Session 8	Session 9
Session Introduction	Session Introduction	Session Introduction	Session Introduction
Disciplinary Literacy	Disciplinary Literacy	Disciplinary Literacy	Disciplinary Literacy
Thoughtbook	Thoughtbook		

Research questions

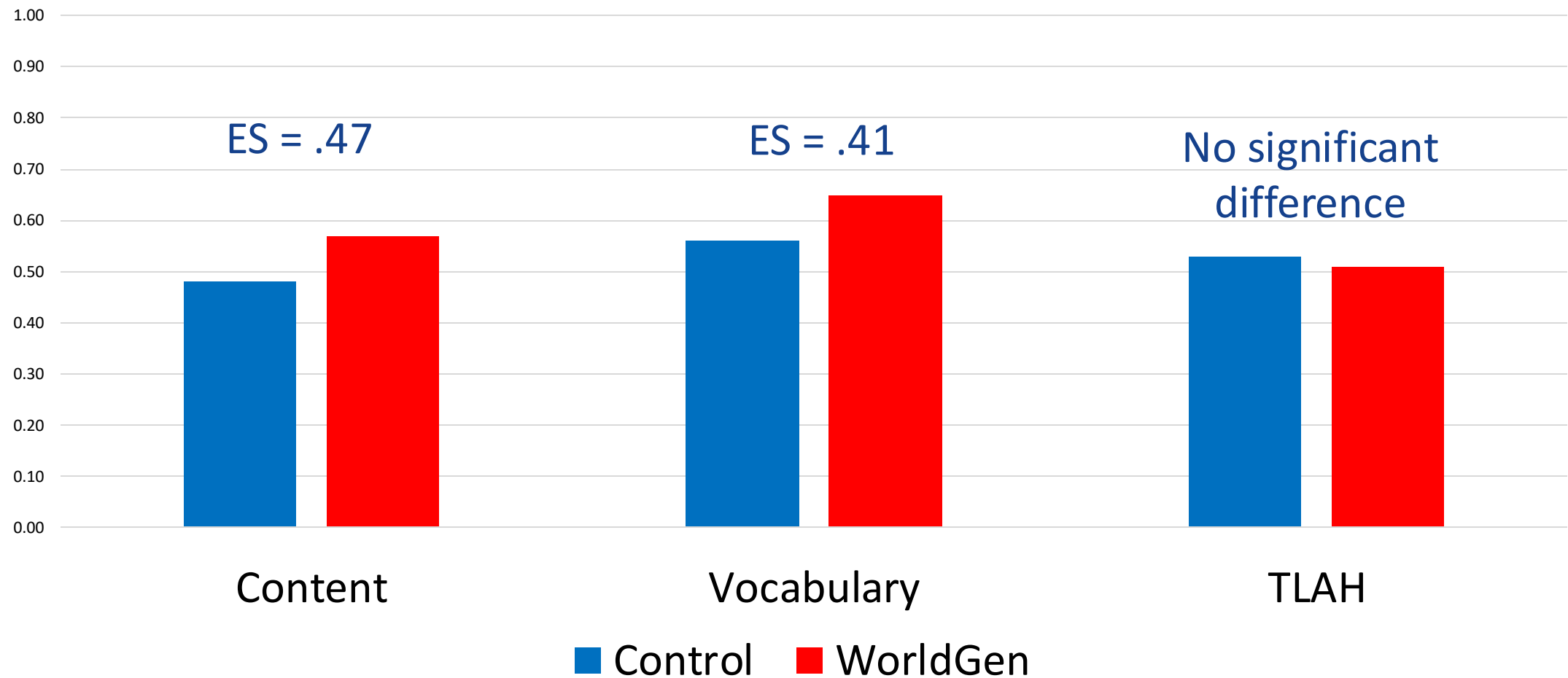
1. What are the effects of WorldGen instruction on the social studies content knowledge, vocabulary, and disciplinary literacy skills of middle school EBs and their monolingual English-speaking peers?
2. To what extent do teachers perceive the instructional practices and materials as usable, feasible, socially valid, and having promise?

RCT 1 Sample

- 7 Teachers from Texas or Massachusetts
- 33 social studies class sections (17 World Gen; 16 Comparison)
- 716 students (373 World Gen; 343 Comparison)
- Student sample characteristics
 - 45% female
 - 81% Hispanic
 - 42% currently identified by schools as EB
 - No differences between conditions in pretest scores or demographic variables

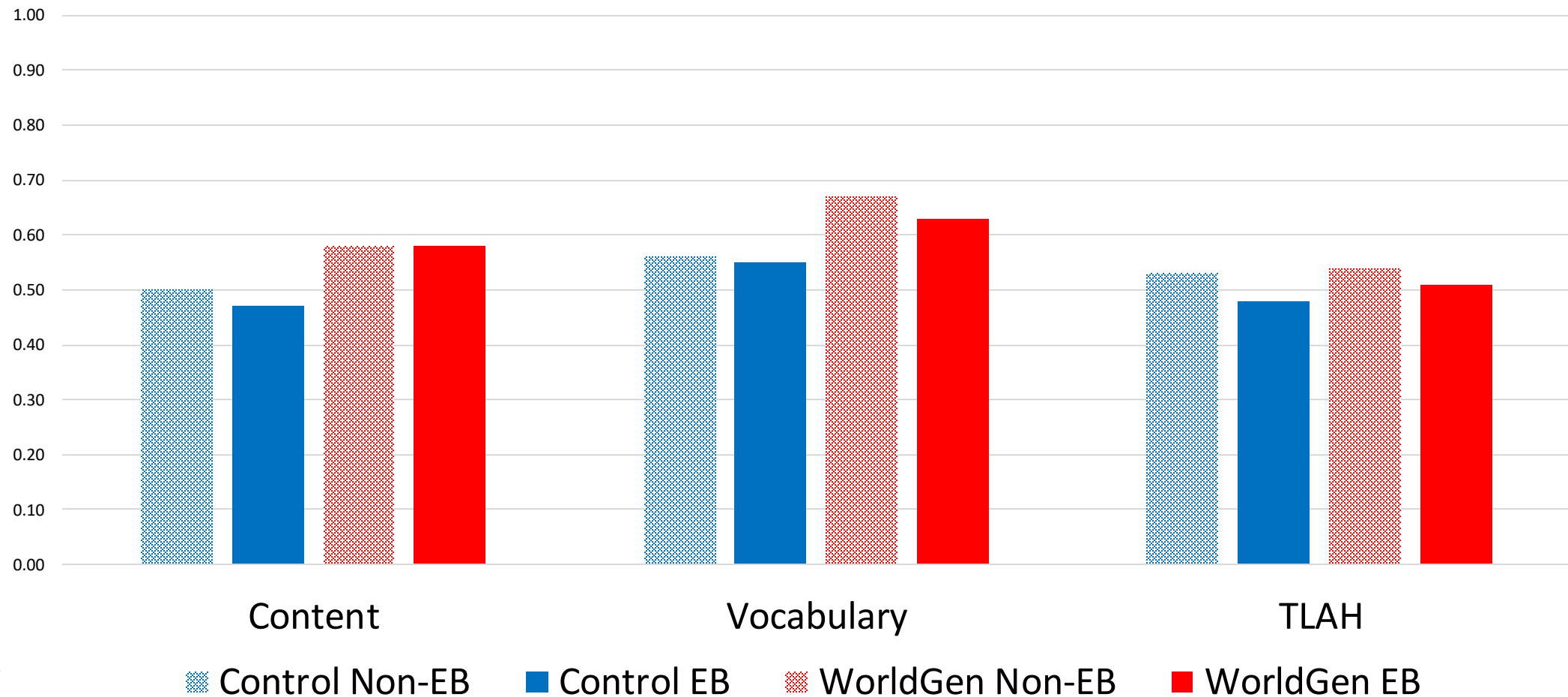
RCT 1: Effects of World Generation

Treatment Effects for All Students on Key Outcomes



RCT 1: Effects of World Generation by EB Status

Treatment Effects by EB Group

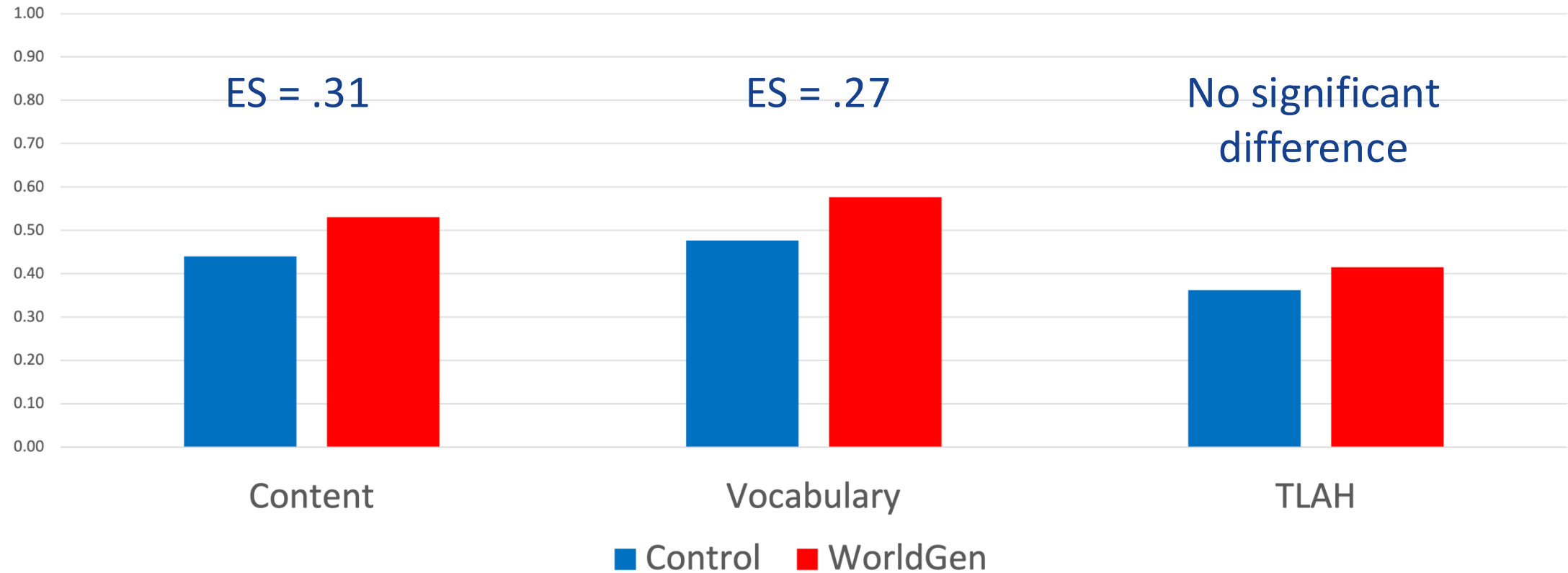


RCT 2 Sample

- 13 Teachers from Texas or Massachusetts
- 61 social studies class sections (31 World Gen; 30 Comparison)
- 1,019 students (499 World Gen; 520 Comparison)
- Student sample characteristics
 - 47% female
 - 82% Hispanic
 - 33% currently identified by schools as EB
 - 69% receive free or reduced lunch
 - No differences between conditions in pretest scores or demographic variables

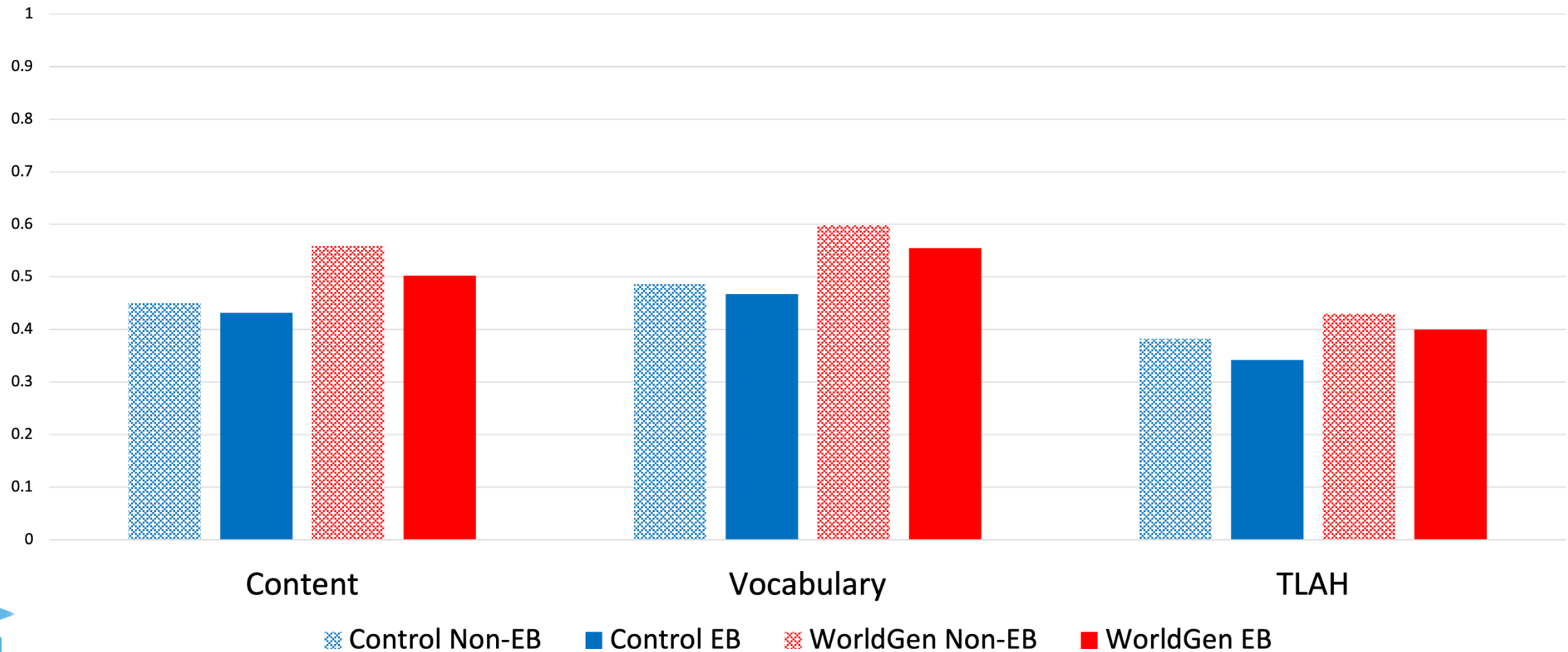
RCT 2: Effects of World Generation

Treatment Effect for All Students



RCT 2: Effects of World Generation by EB Status

Treatment Effect by EB Group



Teachers' Perceptions of World Generation

- 83% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the WorldGen approach was beneficial, and that all students would show increased discipline-specific academic vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing, and communicating
- 67% felt all students would show increased content knowledge and general academic vocabulary skills

Implications for Practice

- Teacher preparation
- Professional development
- Instructional capacity
- Structure and design of instruction
- Curriculum as educative function for teachers

Let's Take A Closer Look at the Instructional Materials

Key WorldGen Practices

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3. Utilize team-based learning to provide structured interactions.
4. Structure lessons' architecture so principles of teaching and understanding language are embedded throughout the unit.
5. Scaffold to provide access to appropriately challenging texts & tasks.

Activity Steps

1. Gain access to materials

<https://www.serp.link/worldgen-1>

Middle School Social Studies

World Generation

	Title	Google Doc	PDF
1	The Context & The Question	launch copy	download
2	Perspectives and Arguments	launch copy	download
3	Key Ideas and Evidence	launch copy	download
4	One Event, Many Perspectives	launch copy	download
5	Evaluating Uses of Surpluses	launch copy	download
6	Preparing for the Debate	launch copy	download
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Updated November, 2022.



Activity Steps

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2. Find a partner

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Unit 1
The Egyptian Pharaohs: Wise Investors or Wasteful Spenders?



Activity Steps

1. Gain access to materials
2. Find a partner
- 3. Read through materials and document notices, wonders, and connections**

World Generation Activity: Key Practices in Ancient Egypt Unit

Instructional Practice	I notice...	I wonder...	This is relevant to my practice...
1. Provide daily opportunities for purposeful language use			
2. Deliberately link academic content to students' lived experiences			
3. Use team-based learning to provide structured interactions			
4. Systematically develop knowledge and language over course of a unit			
5. Offer scaffolds to ensure access to challenging texts & tasks			

Activity Steps

1. Gain access to materials
2. Find a partner
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4. Prepare to share out

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Let's Get Started

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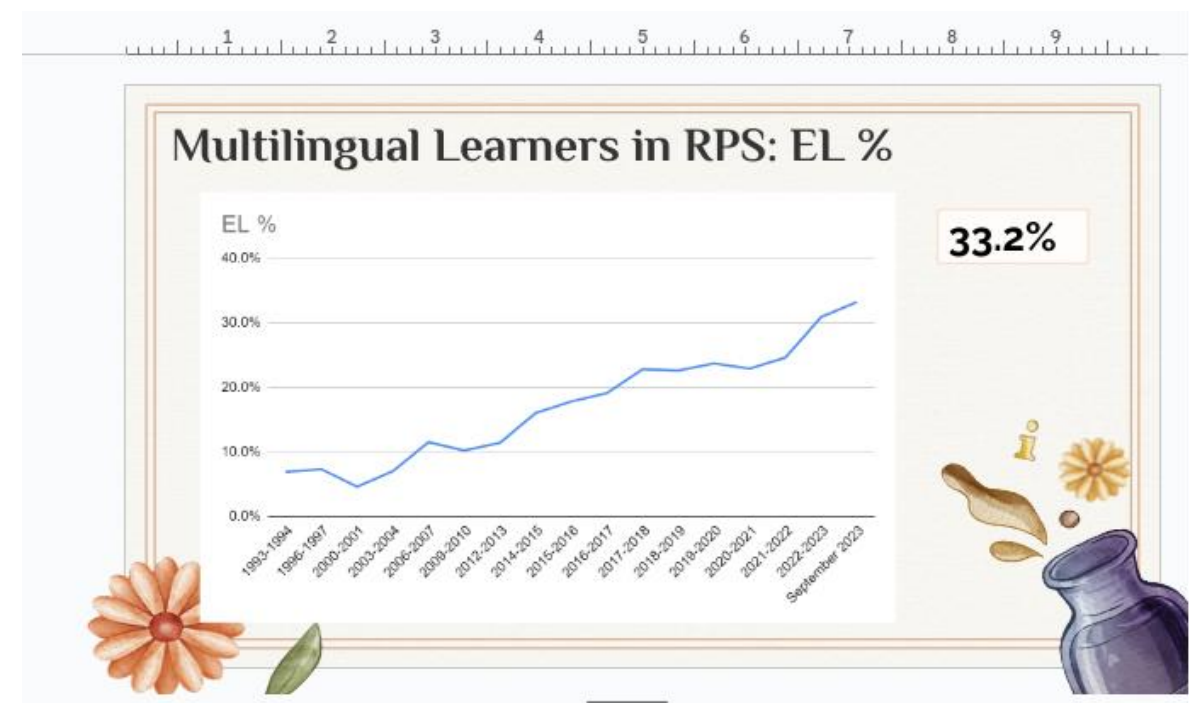


Bridging Research to Practice Gap for Emergent Bilinguals

Perspectives From an Instructional Coach

■ Why WorldGen in Reverse?

- Population of EL students has increased significantly in the last 10 years
 - Revere: 12.3% to 33.5%
 - State: 7.6% to 12.6%



Responding to Challenges, Building on Assets

- Needs as a result of demographic change has required an identity shift for social studies teachers: content experts to teachers of literacy
 - This is where social studies teachers feel least confident
- District equity goal: common learning experiences across schools and classrooms and increased rigor for all
 - A shift from individually created teacher resources
- Partnership offered our district embedded professional development, a fully developed, inquiry driven curriculum, and coaching for teachers

A Broad Challenge for Social Studies

- There are infinite approaches to any topic in history; the decisions we make about who and what we emphasize (and what we present as “fact”) are inherently political
- Because social studies is the study of the world and its people, and teachers have different worldviews and interests, it can be challenging for teachers of social studies to come to consensus on how to approach a topic
- The danger of a lack of consensus on the “what” is never moving on to discuss the “how” - the instructional moves that support literacy in the context of the content.
- Clear guidance, teacher buy in, trust, and skilled facilitation is necessary in order to move the conversation forward

Teacher Observations – WorldGen Curriculum

- Teachers, especially those in their first 1-3 years, felt positively about being provided a fully developed unit that included both the “what” and the “how”
- Teachers were able to collaborate across schools to discuss strengths and limitations of common materials and experiences, leading to positive relationships among staff
- Teachers, especially veteran teachers, began comparing their own materials with what was in the World Gen curriculum from a standpoint of student access
- In classrooms, I observed more instances of reading, discussion, and direct vocabulary instruction during World Gen units as compared to traditional units
- There were moments of frustration - change is loss

Student Observations – World Gen Curriculum

- Across schools, students of all language abilities completed an anonymous survey in social studies class
- Students reported higher rates of experiencing challenging classroom materials
 - 57% WorldGen
 - 47% teacher created materials
- Compared to their typical instruction, students in World Gen curriculum reported higher instances of:
 - Being asked to make evidence-based arguments
 - Having opportunities to discuss ideas with peers
 - Positive feelings (ie; pride in work, excitement for learning, interest in activities)

Developing a Unit with WorldGen: Hopes

- Capitalize on the organic teacher comparisons of World Gen to their own materials
- Build capacity for curriculum development among a staff with varied skillsets and mindsets
- Continue to build collaboration between schools in service of equitable experiences for all students
- With clear guidance and support, move from discussions about the curricular “what” to the instructional “how” that supports EL students and their peers
- Continue elevate higher instances of reading, speaking, and writing
- Continue using a debatable, relevant inquiry to frame the content

How Can This Research Inform or Support the Problems of Practice You are Facing?

- In role-alike groups (district, school, classroom, policy), discuss
 - A **problem of practice**: How do your curricula and instruction need to change to provide EBs equitable opportunities to learn grade level content while developing their academic language?
 - In your role, how could you work towards **solutions** to this problem of practice?
 - What **needs** from other stakeholders would help reach a solution?

Thank you!

- Questions? Comments? Collaborations?