Abstract

This study is focused on ways to increase retention of vocabulary through maintaining a student-created glossary and also by modifying instructional strategies to increase student engagement. My hypothesis was that students would show growth by means of specific vocabulary instruction supported by active and/or hands-on lessons. The questions I posed were: “How will keeping a focused, student created concept/vocabulary glossary impact students’ retention of definitions?” and “How can engaging instructional strategies be used to reinforce vocabulary as well as the procedures and skills associated with those vocabulary words?” Active lessons focused on movement and interaction with other students. Hands-on lessons included activites using manipulatives of various kinds as well as performance assessments like science experiments involving authentic data collection. Lessons were assessed by a vocabulary pre and post test as well as district benchmark testing, state testing, and regular in-class worksheets. Two groups of 30 6th graders were included in the study, with 2 students being ELL. Overall, these groups of students showed an increase in recall of the definitions and could provide examples of the words in question. Additionally, 70% or better of the students studied successfully achieved on all the assessments given.