

Background. In August and September 2014, 33 middle school teachers in Austin Independent School District (AISD) attended Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) professional development activities. The training consisted of a 2-day research and theory workshop and 4-day classroom demonstration training. Staff in the Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) administered an online survey in November 2014 to teachers who attended the training. The purpose of the survey was to have participants reflect on how well the professional development activities prepared them to implement the Project GLAD curriculum.

Respondents. A total of 24 teachers (response rate of 73%; $N = 33$) participated in the survey. All 24 respondents attended the 2-day research and theory session, and 22 attended the 4-day classroom demonstration training. A majority of the respondents were certified English as a second language (ESL) teachers (83%) and relatively few were new to teaching (13%), the school they served (29%), or AISD (25%). Fifty-eight percent of the attendees were employed at Webb Middle School and 33% taught at Dobie Middle School.

Project GLAD research and theory experiences. Overall, survey respondents gave high ratings on the helpfulness of discussion topics in facilitating attendees' understanding of the Project GLAD curriculum. Seventy-five percent of participants indicated the walk the walls training session was very helpful (Table 1). Other highly rated sessions were planning for GLAD, outcomes, research: language acquisition, and research: culture. The two lowest rated sessions were the history of GLAD and learning agreements.

Table 1. Percentages of Respondents Who Selected "Very Helpful" to Questions Related to Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) Sessions ($n=24$)

To what degree were the following discussion topics from August 4 th and 5 th helpful in your understanding of the Project GLAD curriculum:	%
Walk the Walls	75%
Planning for GLAD	71%
Outcomes	67%
Research: Language acquisition	67%
Research: Culture	63%
Research: Primary language	54%
History of GLAD	50%
Learning agreements	46%

Source. Project GLAD Follow-Up Survey Fall 2014

Project GLAD in AISD The Department of English Language Learners (ELLs) in AISD provides support to schools to ensure that ELLs acquire English proficiency and the cognitive and academic skills required to meet or exceed grade-level standards, while building capacity in their native languages. A new program used to achieve this goal, Project GLAD, was implemented in two middle schools, Dobie and Webb, within AISD during the 2014-2015 school year.

Major Findings

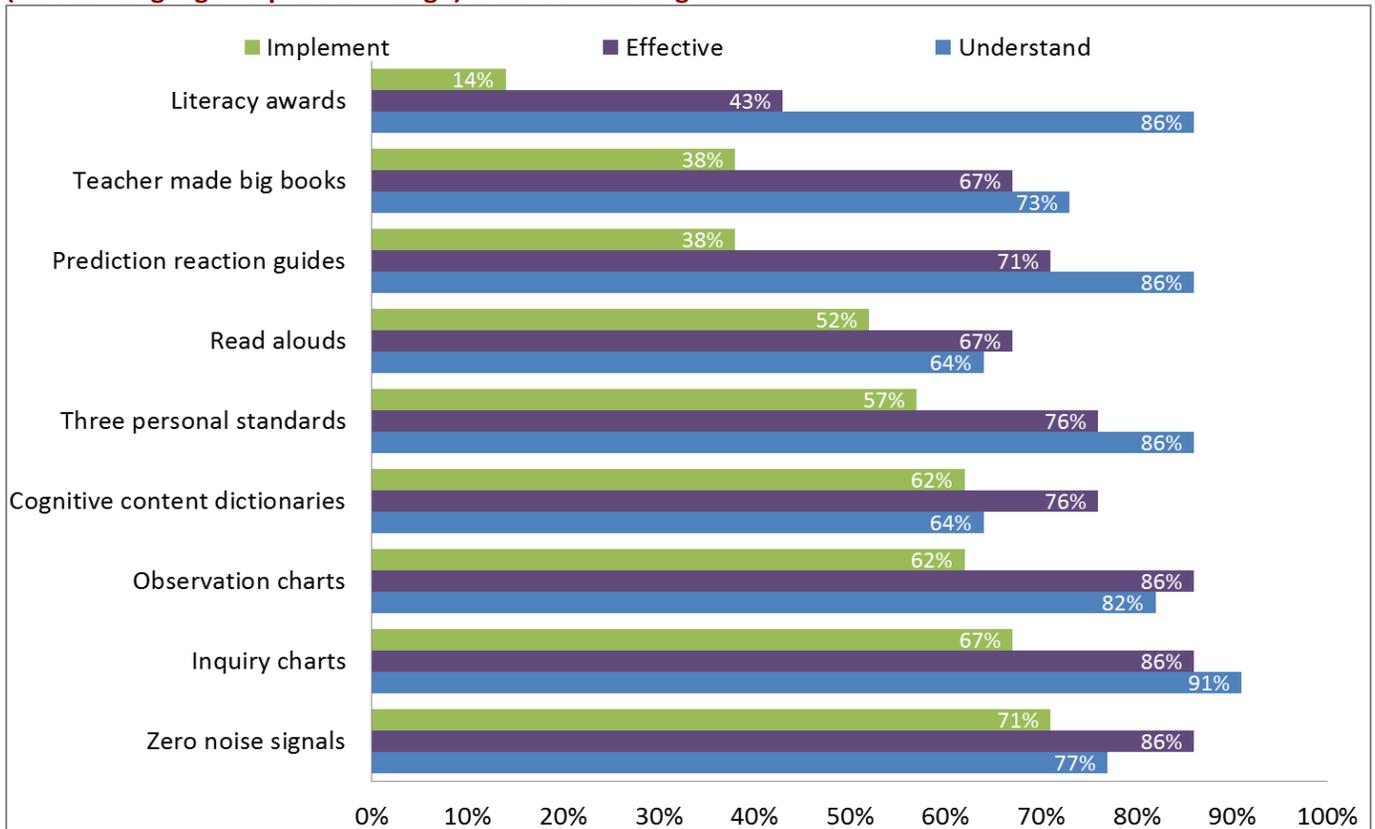
- ✓ A majority of respondents indicated that eight of nine classroom strategies presented at the Project GLAD workshop were effective classroom practices.
- ✓ Six of the nine Project GLAD classroom strategies were implemented by a majority of the teachers who attended the 4-day classroom demonstration workshop.
- ✓ Survey results indicate that teachers had implemented Project GLAD strategies that they believed were most effective classroom practices.
- ✓ Participants responded that the knowledge of presenters and the hands-on demonstrations were the most beneficial takeaways from the training.

Project GLAD classroom demonstration training. Survey participants who attended the 4-day classroom demonstration training ($n = 22$) were asked to answer three specific questions related to the Project GLAD classroom strategies taught during the September 4-day workshop. Participants responded to questions investigating how the training influenced understanding of the Project GLAD classroom strategies, the degree of implementation of each strategy since completing the training, and the teacher’s overall opinion of the effectiveness of each classroom strategy.

Overall, teachers agreed that the Project GLAD training increased their understanding of Project GLAD classroom strategies “quite a bit” (Figure 1). Sessions addressing implementing inquiry charts, literacy awards, prediction reaction guides, and three personal standards had the highest number of “quite a bit” responses indicating teachers’ understanding. Read alouds and cognitive content dictionaries were the sessions that were least understood by teachers, according to survey responses, but 64% ($n = 22$) of teachers indicated that these training sessions helped them understand the strategies “quite a bit.”

Figure 1 illustrates teachers’ survey responses indicating that observation charts, inquiry charts, and zero noise signals were the most effective Project GLAD classroom strategies covered in the 4-day workshop. Only 43% of participants ($n = 21$) chose “quite a bit” when referring to literacy awards as an effective classroom practice. This was the only strategy addressed in the Project GLAD workshop for which “quite a bit” was selected by less than 67% of respondents for effectiveness.

Figure 1. Percentages of Respondents Who Selected “Quite a Bit” to Questions Related to Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) Classroom Strategies



Source. Project GLAD Follow-Up Survey Fall 2014

Teachers indicated that zero noise signals, inquiry charts, observation charts, cognitive content dictionaries, and three personal standards were the strategies most employed within their classrooms when implementing Project GLAD (Figure 1). Each of these strategies received more than 76% of “quite a bit” responses. These results indicated that regardless of the degree to which Project GLAD training assisted them in understanding a classroom strategy, teachers implemented strategies based on perceptions of effectiveness in the classroom. These results also held true for least-effective practices: literacy awards and teacher-made big books were reported by teachers as being both the least-effective and the least-implemented Project GLAD strategies.

Project GLAD training open-ended responses. Survey participants were given a number of opportunities to respond to survey questions through open-ended responses. Participants were asked to share the most beneficial (Table 2) and least beneficial (Table 3) activities related to the Project GLAD training.

Table 2. Open-Ended Responses Most Beneficial.

Most beneficial part of the training (n = 24)	n
Classroom strategies discussed	7
Knowledge of presenters	7
Live demonstration	5
Seeing student work	4

Table 3. Open-Ended Responses Least Beneficial

Least beneficial part of the training (n = 24)	n
Not enough time	4
Overwhelming amount of information	3
Information given was repetitive	2
Timing of training / Schedule	2

When responding to the statement “Please share your overall thoughts about the Project GLAD professional development training,” 50% (n = 24) of survey participants indicated they believed the overall impact of the Project GLAD training was beneficial. Teacher comments included “I use it every day in all my classes because it helps students acquire English step by step” and “I have found project GLAD strategies to be successful with ELL students as well as our special education (SPED) students because it provides differentiated instruction for all types of learners.”

Teachers who had positive things to say about the Project GLAD professional development activities also mentioned areas where the program could be improved. Too much to implement at once (13%), not enough integration of technology (8%), and timing of the training (4%) were areas teachers felt could be improved. Related to the timing of the training, one teacher suggested, “I think it would have been better for us if the 4-day training had been done in summer school to help those students and avoid missing 4 days of instruction and also so we could begin using and planning before school started.”

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