Early literacy skills form the foundation for school success

2006-2007
Year III Implementation and Evaluation

Report

Prepared by:
Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida
in collaboration with
Collier County Early Literacy Partnership for Educational Success
THE COLLIER COUNTY EARLY LITERACY PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS
2006-2007: YEAR 3 IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION REPORT

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COLLIER COUNTY EARLY LITERACY PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

Introduction

A changing society, economy, and workplace make improving the achievement of all children a top priority at the local, state, and national levels. Learning to read well is necessary if children are to be successful in school and to later participate in the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century. Despite efforts over the past 50 years, a large achievement gap persists between children from low-income families and their peers from more affluent families. We know this gap forms before children enter formal schooling; therefore, efforts to close the gap must begin before children enter formal schooling.

Furthermore, if we are to ensure that we have a well-educated workforce, we must create and sustain a high-quality education system that begins in preschool. The Florida Institute of Education (FIE) at the University of North Florida (UNF), in collaboration with the UNF College of Education and Human Services, addressed this need by applying academic research to create practical, user-friendly tools designed to improve the quality of early education, with particular emphasis on literacy. The first such tool is the *Early Literacy and Learning Model* (ELLM), a standards-based curriculum and instructional support system that focuses on increasing the literacy instruction and experiences of preschool and kindergarten children. Later, FIE developed a companion piece to ELLM—the *Skills-based Educational Experiences Delivery System* (SEEDS). ELLM/SEEDS provides volunteer tutors with activities and materials that enrich children’s learning, as they become emergent readers. More information on ELLM and ELLM/SEEDS is included on pages 4-8 of this report.

Collier County Early Literacy Partnership for Educational Success

Even the best tools are beneficial only when used consistently and with regularity in all of the environments in which today’s children learn. Successful early education, therefore, demands a coordinated effort among child- and learning-focused agencies and community groups willing to work across organizational boundaries. A 3-year partnership of three anchor organizations committed to the dramatic improvement of
children's literacy was forged to focus on Collier County and its children in greatest need. The partnership, the *Collier County Early Literacy Partnership for Educational Success* (Partnership), is led by Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), FIE, and Fun Time Early Childhood Academy.

*Florida Gulf Coast University*

FGCU is committed to raising the quality of learning and instruction at all levels in Southwest Florida. FGCU has numerous partnerships with the public schools, including the *Public Schools Enrichment Partnership*, which is designed to provide assistance and enrichment opportunities for at-risk minority and multicultural students in grades K-16. FGCU served as the fiscal agent for the Partnership and worked with FIE in implementing ELLM and ELLM/SEEDS in Collier County preschool and Head Start classrooms.

*Florida Institute of Education*

FIE is a statewide research center hosted by UNF. FIE provides statewide leadership to improve education at all levels by working collaboratively with Florida’s universities, community colleges, public schools, school readiness agencies, and communities. FIE developed ELLM and ELLM/SEEDS and provided ongoing assistance.

*Fun Time Early Childhood Academy*

The Fun Time Early Childhood Academy is committed to improving the early learning and school readiness of young children, particularly those living in low-income neighborhoods. Fun Time served as a preschool demonstration site and hosted ELLM and ELLM/SEEDS.

*Community Partners*

Five community organizations worked together to improve the quality of early education for Collier County children living in low-income neighborhoods by supporting
the implementation of ELLM and ELLM/SEEDS. Table 1 lists the community partners that supported the implementation of Partnership activities.

Table 1
*Collier County Community Agency Partners*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Partners</th>
<th>Service to the Partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naples Children and Education Foundation</td>
<td>Provided funding for 57 ELLM classes in Naples and Immokalee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranahan Foundation</td>
<td>Provided funding for SEEDS tutoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Child Society</td>
<td>Provided original SEEDS volunteers who helped recruit other members of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District School Board of Collier County together with the Collier County Public Schools Head Start Program</td>
<td>Hosted ELLM in Head Start preschool classes across Collier County and provided office space and equipment for the ELLM staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, Collier County faith-based, for-profit, and nonprofit early care and learning centers serving children from low-income neighborhoods supported the Partnership by working diligently to implement ELLM and ELLM/SEEDS in their classrooms.

**Partnership Goals**

Three long-term goals guided the work of the Partnership: establish a model infrastructure for a community partnership advocating early literacy and learning; establish a network of high-performing, literacy-focused, and results-driven early care and learning centers to serve children living in low-income neighborhoods; and increase levels of emergent literacy ability and language development of the neighborhood children.

**Partnership Expected Outcomes**

Over the 3-year course of the project, the Partnership expected approximately 3,000 children (1,000 per year) from low-income neighborhoods to participate in high-quality emergent literacy instruction and learning experiences aligned with the Collier County’s *Reading First* initiative. Expected outcomes include:
Improved literacy- and print-rich environments in Partnership classrooms.

Increased use of research-based, literacy-focused instructional practices by Partnership teachers.

Greater use by Partnership teachers of assessment results to guide instruction.

Improved emergent literacy skills of Partnership children.

Improved alphabet letter recognition of Partnership children.

Improved levels of oral language/vocabulary development of Partnership children.

Establishment of a model infrastructure for a community partnership advocating early literacy and learning that other communities can emulate.

The Early Literacy and Learning Model (ELLM)

ELLM Vision

All children enter school with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions they need to become successful readers and learners.

ELLM Overview

ELLM is based on a long and rich history of implementing successful collaborative educational reform efforts linking teacher preparation and urban public school practices. ELLM was developed in 1996 to decrease readiness gaps and improve literacy achievement among children in urban Head Start and subsidized child care, kindergarten, and first-grade programs. Beginning in the fall of 2004, the implementation of ELLM was narrowed to focus on children enrolled in preschool and kindergarten programs.

Undergirded by scientific and evidence-based research, ELLM is a standards-based program that utilizes a professional development delivery system designed to improve the language and emergent literacy skills of at-risk children. Five ELLM components—a research- and standards-based literacy curriculum for the classroom, family involvement, professional development, research and evaluation, and working
partnerships—help focus instruction and increase the learning opportunities of young children.

ELLM incorporates literacy strategies that are known to influence and enhance reading success; provides regular and ongoing coaching/teaching sessions that develop and model effective instructional strategies; provides monthly Literacy Packets and children's books for classroom use; promotes family and community partnerships; and provides ELLM Classroom Lending Libraries, family literacy calendars, and regular family and school activities.

**ELLM Goals**

- Increase the literacy achievement of preschool and kindergarten children.
- Establish literacy and learning networks to share evidence-based practices, build teachers’ instructional expertise, and encourage community collaboration to address barriers to improving children’s literacy and learning.
- Increase policy makers’ understanding of and support for the structures and support needed to improve at-risk children’s early literacy skills and readiness for school.

*A Look Inside an ELLM Classroom*

The ELLM classroom is, first and foremost, a language- and print-rich environment. Words are everywhere. Posters and materials are affixed to the walls at the child's eye-level, and even the classroom furniture (tables, chairs, bookcases, etc.) is labeled so that children begin to associate a *word* with its *object*. A Word Wall is always prominently displayed in an ELLM classroom. The Word Wall contains the upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet and underneath each letter is a removable card. Under the letter *Ee*, for example, a card with the word *elephant* and a picture of an elephant may be posted. The names and photographs of the children in the class are also on Word Wall cards, so that children may use the Wall to learn the letters of their names, to associate words with pictures, to learn their classmates' names. ELLM activities are designed to make frequent use of the Word Wall, and teachers are encouraged to incorporate props such as pointers and puppets as they refer to the Wall.

The ELLM classroom is arranged to encourage both small-group and whole-group center work. Writing, Letter, Art, Listening, and Housekeeping Centers, a space
with blocks, and sand/water tables are some of the areas that invite children to engage in creative and educational play. While similar centers may be found in other preschool classrooms, the emphasis in an ELLM class is on offering opportunities for frequent, purposeful early literacy experiences. The Independent Reading Center contains at least 100 books and comfortable places for children to sit and enjoy them. In addition, each ELLM classroom is equipped with a Classroom Lending Library so that children and their families can read together throughout the year. Every center includes props that relate to the books being read in the classroom, so that what the children have heard is continually reinforced.

Well-defined rituals and routines are an important part of the ELLM environment. The class schedule is posted, and an ELLM chart allows the teacher to move a marker to show students the next planned activity. With each transition from one activity to the next, teachers are trained to engage children in conversations, listen to what the children say, and respond. This affords an opportunity for children to practice oral language skills and learn new vocabulary. Reading aloud is not a once-a-day event; teachers read four times during the day, from a variety of book genres. Read-aloud time involves the children in the activity by asking them specific questions and giving them an opportunity to share their own experiences in the context of the story being read. Children are given time to explore books independently, so that they become familiar with the proper care and handling of books, understand that printed words convey meaning, and learn that text is read from left to right, top to bottom.

Songs, poems, and nursery rhymes are also integral to the ELLM classroom routine. The morning often starts with a welcome song. Themed songs and rhymes are written for every ELLM read-aloud book, and teachers use songs and chants to help children transition from one activity to the next.

The result of all of these elements is a transformed classroom in which everything is geared toward increasing children's acquisition of literacy skills, and no opportunity is lost to weave language and learning into the daily routine.

ELLM is referred to as a curriculum and system because it does not merely provide classrooms with instructional materials and planned activities. ELLM goes much farther by supplementing its curriculum with explicit, one-on-one professional development. The
largest part of this professional development—over and above intensive, introductory
group training during the summer—is delivered by credentialed ELLM literacy coaches
who visit the classroom on an ongoing basis.

Coaches spend one hour a week helping each ELLM teacher develop expertise in
the use of research-based instructional strategies. Early in the school year, the coaches
conduct model literacy lessons with children, giving teachers a chance to observe how the
ELLM instructional strategies are used. In turn, coaches later observe as teachers conduct
lessons and then provide feedback on how instruction might be improved or adjusted to
meet the needs of the children. This frequent, interactive training also opens a two-way
communications line from ELLM developers to ELLM practitioners. As coaches hear
from ELLM teachers what works well and what does not, they return to the developers
and suggest ways to modify the ELLM materials and activities. This further breaks down
the wall between researchers and actual users (and recipients) of the fruits of research.

With ELLM, very little happens in a vacuum. Research leads to the development
of tools, teachers receive training and feedback on how to use the tools effectively,
teachers relate how the tools behave under real-life conditions, and the tools are perfected
to better deliver the results we seek—improved literacy outcomes for every child in
Collier County.

The ELLM Skills-based Educational Experiences Delivery System (SEEDS) was
inaugurated in Collier County ELLM classrooms during the 2004-2005 school year. With
this program, trained SEEDS volunteers, referred to as LARKs (*Learning Advocates
Reaching Kids*), work with pairs of children in ELLM classrooms twice a week for 30
minutes. They use self-contained SEEDS Literacy Packets that include activities related
to the ELLM book being read aloud in the classroom and the materials needed to
implement each activity. Another group of volunteers, who call themselves Bag
Assembly Ladies, assist the LARK volunteers by organizing the materials used in
ELLM/SEEDS activities.

The SEEDS extension specifically addresses the development of concepts and
oral language skills the children will need to become successful readers by providing
children with a deeper immersion in literacy activities. This deeper experience supports
and expands the skills they learn in the classroom under the leadership of the teacher. In
addition, interaction with LARKs gives children more face-to-face time with an adult, enabling them to participate in more sophisticated, complex conversations.

2006-2007 Implementation of ELLM in Collier County

The Partnership began ELLM implementation during the 2004-2005 school year, and has been continually guided by a Steering Committee composed of representatives from the three anchor partners, a representative from each community partner agency, and the project director. The Steering Committee was charged with creating a culture of cooperation, supporting mutual and ongoing learning, developing effective communication, connecting with similar initiatives and developing strategies to institutionalize effective practices.

The first year of the project (the 2004-2005 school year) resulted in the implementation of ELLM in 49 classes serving approximately 825 children in Collier County. During the second year, the Partnership implemented ELLM with 22 early care and learning agencies partners in 57 classes serving approximately 940 preschool children. In the third year, the Partnership continued to work with the 57 classes and agencies listed on the following table and served approximately 965 preschool children.
Table 2
Community Early Care and Learning Centers, the Directors, and the Number of Classes Served by the Partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Care and Learning Center Community Partners</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Number of Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avalon Elementary School</td>
<td>Dr. Marilyn Moser</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corkscrew Elementary School</td>
<td>Mrs. Terri Lonneman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estates Elementary School</td>
<td>Mr. Oliver Phipps</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGCU Family Resource</td>
<td>Dr. Beth Elliott</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Time Early Childhood Academy</td>
<td>Ms. Frannie Kain</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Gate Elementary School</td>
<td>Mr. Daryl Mattison</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Terrace Elementary School</td>
<td>Dr. Jan Messer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadalupe Family Center</td>
<td>Mr. Desmond Barrett</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immokalee Child Care Center</td>
<td>Ms. Valarie Bostic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Trafford Elementary School</td>
<td>Mrs. Irma Miller</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lely Elementary School</td>
<td>Ms. Karey Stewart</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatee Elementary School</td>
<td>Ms. Connie Cox</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naples Park Elementary School</td>
<td>Dr. Linda Chapman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osceola Elementary School</td>
<td>Ms. Jody Jordan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat's Tot Care</td>
<td>Ms. Sharon Kirkpatrick</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinecrest Elementary School</td>
<td>Ms. Pamela James</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redlands Christian Migrant Association</td>
<td>Ms. Ana Neuhauser</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowlawn Elementary School</td>
<td>Dr. Natalie Psenicka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Center - Immokalee</td>
<td>Mrs. Geraldine Miller</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Oaks Elementary School</td>
<td>Mrs. Dorcas Howard</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vineyards Elementary School</td>
<td>Mrs. Mary Smith</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA Child Development Center</td>
<td>Ms. Beth Hatch</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers in the 57 classes were coached weekly by three full-time, highly-trained ELLM literacy coaches plus one lead coach (hereafter all are referred to as ELLM literacy coaches). The ELLM literacy coaches specifically took on the goal of increasing the teacher knowledge base and repertoire of classroom skills by providing continuous professional development in regularly scheduled training sessions, Teacher Get-Togethers, and monthly Literacy Team Meetings. A new goal for the 2006-2007 school year was to increase the vocabulary and phonological awareness skills of children whose first language is not English. Over the school year, coaches worked to individualize lessons based on the needs of each teacher and her level of experience with ELLM. The coaches also planned at least four family events each year and four Teacher Get-Togethers in both Naples and Immokalee.
ELLM literacy coaches visited sites and classrooms weekly to achieve these goals. During classroom visits, ELLM literacy coaches either observed teachers or modeled demonstration lessons and conducted teacher-coach feedback conferences. Table 3 summarizes the ELLM literacy coaches’ activities and indicates the number of books Collier County ELLM children checked out from ELLM Classroom Lending Libraries.

Table 3
*Activities of the ELLM Literacy Coaches over the 2006-2007 School Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELLM Literacy Coach Activity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Observations</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration Lessons</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Conferences</td>
<td>1,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Team Meetings</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Lending Library Use</td>
<td>39,991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ELLM/SEEDS was implemented through the work of volunteers recruited from Naples and Collier County. Seventy-one LARKs and 12 Bag Assembly Ladies implemented the SEEDS component of ELLM in 33 classrooms at 16 locations. Table 4 summarizes the activities of the LARKs who volunteered in ELLM/SEEDS classrooms during the 2006-2007 school year.

Table 4
*Activities of the ELLM/SEEDS LARK Volunteers during the 2006-2007 School Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LARK Activity</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of LARKs</td>
<td>36 Returning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71 35 Newly Trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of SEEDS Classes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of SEEDS Sites</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of 2-Hour LARK Visits</td>
<td>944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Bag Assembly Ladies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag Assembly Ladies’ Volunteer Hours</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of SEEDS Volunteer Hours</td>
<td>4,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including Travel, Training, and Preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of working with the ELLM/SEEDS program, the LARK volunteers expanded their interest in local literacy projects, and as they became aware of the need for books in children’s homes, many of them gave books as gifts to the children they
served. It was apparent that more could be done if the effort were organized and permanent. The volunteers decided to partner with a national nonprofit organization called First Book, whose mission is to provide children from low-income families with books that they can own. First Book distributes books primarily through a network of local volunteer advisory boards which raise funds and grant books to qualified programs serving children in their communities. During the 2005-2006 school year, the LARKs spearheaded the founding of First Book - Collier County and chose the Partnership children as the initial recipients of grant books. Every participant—approximately 940 Partnership children—received seven books to take home and keep. During the 2006-2007 school year, First Book - Collier County donations expanded, and former ELLM children now in kindergarten and first grade and their classmates in Title 1 schools also received a book per month. First Book - Collier County distributed almost 40,000 books during the 2006-2007 school year.

2006-2007 Evaluation of ELLM in Collier County

Measurement

Three instruments were used to measure children’s emergent literacy and language development, the Test of Early Reading Ability-Third Edition, Form A (TERA-3), Test of Language Development-Primary: Third Edition (TOLD-P:3), and the Alphabet Letter Recognition Inventory (ALRI). Trained assessors using scannable forms administered the TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3 to children in one-on-one settings. Classroom teachers using scannable forms collected ALRI fall, winter, and spring data from all children. The TERA-3, TOLD-P:3, and the ALRI tests were electronically scored.

TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3

The TERA-3 is a norm-referenced test that assesses components of early developing reading skills, including familiarity with the letters of the alphabet and numerals, discovery of the arbitrary conventions used in reading and writing English, and
the recognition that print conveys information, ideas, and thought. The test is composed of three scales: Alphabet, Conventions of Print, and Meaning, each measuring one of the three components. A composite score, the Reading Quotient, is the unweighted sum of the three standardized scale scores.

- **Alphabet Scale** (ALP) measures whether children can differentiate alphabet letters from numbers or designs; recognize names of letters; and isolate beginning, middle, or ending sounds.

- **Conventions of Print Scale** (CN) measures whether children can differentiate upper- and lowercase letters and can understand book orientation and parts of books.

- **Meaning Scale** (MG)—measures whether children can use labels, figures, or logos as early or proto-reading activities and can identify correct use of relational vocabulary.

- **Reading Quotient** (RQ)—indicates the child’s overall reading ability and is the best single predictor of future reading ability.

The TOLD-P:3 is a norm-referenced test that measures language development predicated on three linguistic features (phonology, syntax, and semantics) which combine to form three linguistic systems (listening, organizing, and speaking). Nine scales assess the three features, and the measures combine in pairs to measure the systems. This evaluation used three of the scales—Picture Vocabulary, Oral Vocabulary, and Grammatic Understanding—and a composite measure of listening.

- **Picture Vocabulary** (PV)—measures the extent to which children understand meanings associated with spoken English words. The items require no verbal response.

- **Oral Vocabulary** (OV)—measures children’s ability to give oral definition of common English words spoken by the examiner. The items provide no visual cues.

- **Grammatic Understanding** (GU)—measures children’s ability to comprehend meaning of sentences. The items require no verbal response.

- **Listening Quotient** (LiQ)—represents children’s ability to understand speech, sometimes called receptive language, and is a composite of the GU and PV scales.
The TERA-3 RQ and TOLD-P:3 LiQ scores are reported as norm-referenced, standardized scores with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. The TERA-3 ALP, CN, and MG scores and the TOLD-P:3 PV, OV, and GU scores are reported as norm-referenced, standardized scores with a mean of 10 and a standard deviation of 3. However, standardized scale scores do not represent an absolute gain in knowledge. Because standardized scores represent the ranking of scores relative to a national normative population, a change in scores represents a change in ranking relative to a normative population. The TERA-3 can be administered to children as young as 3 years, 6 months and as old as 8 years, 6 months, and the TOLD-P:3 to children as young as 4 years, 0 months and as old as 8 years, 11 months. Because children undergo rapid development over the age spans of the assessments, there are 14 normative populations that cover the age span of the TERA-3 and 10 that cover the age span of the TOLD-P:3. Depending upon the time between the pretest and posttest assessments and the age of the child at pretest, a posttest score may be ranked relative to a normative population that is between one and four age increments older than the pretest normative population. This process adjusts the standardized scores for the maturation of the children between the pretest and posttest assessments and allows gains resulting from the normal maturation to be separated from gains resulting from program effectiveness.

The implementation of ELLM and ELLM/SEEDS served both 3- and 4-year-old preschool and Head Start classrooms in Collier County. TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3 assessments were not collected from all of the children because of their availability at the time of the fall assessments; they were not 4 years old on or before September 1, 2006, making them ineligible for public kindergarten in fall 2007; and because of their special education status.

Table 5 provides categories delimiting the lower, middle two, and upper quartiles of the TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3 scores of the normative populations. These categories are used in this report to indicate the range of early literacy ability and language development of the Collier County ELLM children.
Table 5
TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3 Scale Scores by Ability Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Superior</th>
<th>Very Superior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading and Listening Quotient Score Intervals</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Very Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale Score Intervals</td>
<td>Below 70</td>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>90-110</td>
<td>111-120</td>
<td>121-130</td>
<td>Above 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentiles</td>
<td>Below 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>13-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Scores</td>
<td>2nd or lower</td>
<td>2nd to 9th</td>
<td>9th to 25th</td>
<td>25th to 75th</td>
<td>75th to 91st</td>
<td>91st to 98th</td>
<td>98th or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Scores</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ALRI**

The ALRI is a locally developed test measuring children’s ability to recognize the upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet when arranged in non-alphabetic order. The children’s classroom teachers used alphabet letter flashcards to administer the test one-on-one to the children. The uppercase letters were presented first, followed by the lowercase letters.

ALRI scores are reported in four recognition categories, 0 to 13 letters, 14 to 26 letters, 27 to 39 letters, and 40 to 52 letters. The *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten* (ECLS-K) provided national benchmarks for alphabet letter recognition. Using a random sample of upper- and lowercase letters, scores were categorized as proficient if children recognized at least 75% of the sampled letters.1 Reports from the ECLS-K state that 66% of the children entering kindergarten for the first time were proficient at letter recognition.2 In this report, ALRI posttest scores are compared to these national benchmarks.

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The set of instruments was administered one-on-one to the children with parental consent in fall 2006 from late August to late September; in winter 2007 from mid-January to mid-February; and in spring 2007 from late April to late May. Teachers collected ALRI data in the fall, winter, and spring. Table 6 shows the number of fall and spring assessments that were made in Collier County.

Table 6
*The Number of Pretest and Posttest Assessments in Collier County ELLM Classes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Number Tested</th>
<th>Scores Not Used*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TERA-3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOLD-P:3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALRI</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: * Indicates scores removed from the evaluation because the children began the year in non-Redlands Christian Migrant Association classes and during the year transferred into Redlands Christian Migrant Association classes whose children were assessed only in the winter and spring. Scores from two classes from the Redlands Christian Migrant Association are included in these numbers because the children began school in the fall at the same time as the other Collier County children.

**Attrition of Children**

The attrition rate of the Collier County ELLM children is based on TERA-3 scores as it was administered first in the testing sequence. In the fall and spring, 656 and 579 children were assessed, respectively. These numbers represent approximately 11.7% attrition. There is no evidence suggesting that the attrition of the children did not occur at random. The 579 children with complete TERA-3 scores attended 46 preschool classes supported by 25 community child care and learning locations. Additionally, one Redlands Christian Migrant Association class closed during the school year, and the enrolled children transferred to another Redlands Christian Migrant Association class.
**Special Implementations**

During the first 2 years of ELLM implementation by the Collier County Partnership, two targeted programs, ELLM Phonological Awareness (ELLM PA) and ELLM/SEEDS, worked with small groups of children to improve their phonological awareness skills and oral vocabulary, respectively. Selection of the children to participate in ELLM PA was based on the children’s fall TERA-3 scores, and teachers selected children to participate in the ELLM/SEEDS program.

During the third year of ELLM implementation, the two programs became totally integrated with the implementation of ELLM. The children were selected by their teachers, and the selection was made based on the teachers’ perception of the children’s needs in the areas of phonological awareness and oral vocabulary. Additionally children’s needs change over time and their teachers’ perceptions of their needs also change. The total integration of the two targeted programs allows for the fluid and dynamic selection of participating children, but it does not permit a separate evaluation of the two programs. Thus, this report also totally integrates the evaluation of ELLM PA and ELLM/SEEDS within the evaluation of ELLM.

The Redlands Migrant Association (RCMA) implemented ELLM in nine preschool classes serving the children of migrant workers. The children in some of these classes arrive in early November and are not part of the fall assessments. Beginning in the second year of the ELLM implementation, the letter recognition ability of 4-year-old children in the late-arriving RCMA classes was assessed in the winter and spring, and their emergent literacy ability was assessed in the spring. In the third year of ELLM implementation, the 4-year-old children in the late-arriving RCMA classes were assessed in the winter and spring to measure both their ability to recognize the letters of the alphabet and emergent literacy.

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**Evaluation Questions**

*All ELLM Children*

- **Question 1**: Who were the 2006-2007 Collier County ELLM children?

- **Question 2**: Was ELLM effective in improving the emergent literacy ability and language development of the children based on improved TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3 scores?

- **Question 3**: How did Collier County ELLM children’s ALRI scores compare to existing national benchmarks in the recognition of the upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet at the end of the school year?

*ELLM Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) Classes*

- **Question 4**: Was ELLM effective in improving the emergent literacy ability and alphabet letter recognition of the Collier County Redlands Christian Migrant Association children in classes that began later in the school year?

The answers to these research questions come from data obtained in the fall, winter, and spring on the TERA-3, TOLD-P:3, and ALRI assessments. Both summary statistics and statistical analyses of pretest and posttest mean differences provide the answers. Data from all scales were analyzed as repeated measures ANOVA models. To determine the importance of all statistically significant differences, effect sizes are reported. Cohen classified effect sizes of 20% to 49% of a standard deviation as small, between 50% and 79% of a standard deviation as medium, and 80% or more of a standard deviation as large.\(^4\) Small, medium, and large effect sizes represent meaningful differences.

Moreover, Whitehurst and Massetti, in a critique of Head Start, noted when evaluation designs lack control or comparison groups, small effect sizes of 20% to 25% of a standard deviation should not be attributed to programs. Small effects could easily be associated with regression toward the mean, increased familiarity with tests and

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assessment procedures in general or ordinary maturation and experiences. Because this evaluation of ELLM does not involve a comparison or control group other than the TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3 normative populations, only effects larger than 33% of a standard deviation are attributed to the children’s participation in ELLM.

**Evaluation Results**

**Question 1: Who were the 2006-2007 Collier County ELLM children?**

The answer to this evaluation question involves a description of the children by gender, ethnicity, classification as *English for Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL), and age.

**Gender**

There were 293 boys and 286 girls with complete TERA-3 scores.

**Ethnicity**

Ethnicity of the children was reported in five categories: *Black*, *White*, *Hispanic*, *Native American*, and *Other*. Of the children with complete TERA-3 scores, 5.9% were *Black*, 9.9% were *White*, 62.3% were *Hispanic*, 0.2% were *Native American*, and 21.8% were *Other*.

**ESOL**

Of the children with complete TERA-3 scores, 65.6% were classified as ESOL.

**Age**

The age of the typical Collier County ELLM child was 55 months on September 1, the most common age was 58 months, and the median age was 55 months. The categorization of the children as 4-year-olds does not indicate the distribution of the ages of the children. Because of the September 1 birthday cut-off for children attending public kindergarten in Florida, the typical 4-year-old child is between 48 and 60 months old on

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September 1 of the school year. Figure 1 displays the ages in months on September 1, 2006, of the Collier County ELLM children with complete TERA-3 scores.

![Bar chart showing ages in months on September 1, 2006 for Collier County ELLM children](chart.png)

**Figure 1.** Ages of the Collier County ELLM children on September 1, 2006 (n = 579).

As can be seen, there are more children older than the median age of the typical population than younger than the median age.

**Question 2:** Was ELLM effective in improving the emergent literacy ability and language development of the children based on improved TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3 scores?

**Outlying TOLD-P:3 Oral Vocabulary Scale Data**

Children need not be conversant in English to respond to TERA-3 items, because most provide picture cues and only require that children point to a response. The same is true for the TOLD-P:3 Picture Vocabulary and Grammatic Understanding scales. However, on the TOLD-P:3 Oral Vocabulary scale (OV), which measures expressive vocabulary, items do require children to verbally respond to the assessor, and there are no visual clues provided. For this scale, the assessor and the child have a dialogue. There are no OV scale practice items that enable the assessor to determine the extent to which the
children can express themselves in English prior to the administration of the OV scale. Because the assessed Collier County ELLM population includes a large number of children classified as ESOL, the children’s responses to items on the OV scale are important. The responses of children who responded correctly to no more than one item on the TOLD-P:3 OV scale at year’s end were investigated to determine whether or not the children’s ability to express themselves in English was sufficient to use the TOLD-P:3 OV scale scores. The inclusion of invalid test scores undermines the evaluation process; therefore, after thoughtful consideration of the data, decisions were made concerning the removal of data that threaten the interpretation of results of the program evaluation. These decisions were based on population mean gains made in raw and standardized scores over the school year. Slightly more than 13% of the children had all of their TOLD-P:3 scale scores removed from analyses, 28% of the children had their TOLD-P:3 OV scale scores removed, and slightly more than 72% of the children’s scores were unaffected.

Results of Analyses

Table 7 presents summary statistics and results from the analyses of the TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3 pretest and posttest scale scores of the Collier County ELLM children.

Table 7
Summary Statistics and ANOVA Results: Collier County ELLM Children’s TERA-3 and TOLD-P:3 Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>St.Dev.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>St.Dev.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>531.1 &lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>578.7 &lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>142.3 &lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MG</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>81.4 &lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LiQ</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>136.5 &lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>53.6 &lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OV</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>214.4 &lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GU</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>122.3 &lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Denotes the difference in the pretest and posttest mean scores represents a small, but meaningful effect.
** Denotes the difference in the pretest and posttest mean scores represents a medium effect.
*** Denotes the difference in the pretest and posttest mean scores represents a large effect.

All gains in the measured abilities were statistically significant, and all but the TERA-3 Meaning scale effect sizes were large enough to attribute the children’s gains to their participation in ELLM classes. The gain on the Alphabet scale (ALP) was larger than one full standard deviation, and the mean ALP posttest score, 10.4, ranked at the mean of the TERA-3 normative population, 10.0. The small and medium gains on the TOLD-P:3 scales indicate gains made by the children whose language development could be measured with validity.

**TERA-3 Summary**

One way to look at the Collier County ELLM children’s year-end achievement in emergent literacy ability is to look at the differences in the percentage of scores ranked in the top and bottom quartiles from the beginning to the end of the school year. Figure 2 shows the rankings of the TERA-3 pretest and posttest scores.

*Figure 2.* The percentage of TERA-3 scale scores ranked in the bottom, average, and top quartiles at the beginning and end of the school year.
Across all measures, the largest change in the percentage of scores in the quartiles resulted from scores ranked in the bottom quartile (green portion) at pretest moving to higher quartiles at posttest. The percentage of scores ranked in the bottom quartile was less at the end than at the beginning of the school year for all TERA-3 scales; moreover, the percentage of Alphabet scale posttest scores ranked in the bottom quartile, 28 %, is close to the expected 25 %. The percentage of scores ranked in the top quartile (lavender) was basically unchanged from the beginning to the end of the school year for the Meaning scale, indicating all of the change in the distribution of scores was between the bottom and average quartiles. In the spring, a larger percentage of scores ranked in the top quartile for the Reading Quotient, Alphabet, and Conventions of Print scales than in the fall. The percentage of Alphabet scale posttest scores ranked in the top quartile, 37 %, was larger than the 25 % expected.

To enable a closer look at the improvement on the TERA-3 Alphabet scale, scores are displayed in Figure 3 in seven ability categories: three categories representing the lowest 25 percentiles, one category representing the middle 50 percentiles, and three categories representing the highest 25 percentiles. (See Table 5 on page 14 of this report.)

![Figure 3](image)

*Figure 3.* The percentage of TERA-3 Alphabet scale pretest, posttest, and national normative population scores in the seven categories of the ability scale (n = 579).
The percentage of posttest scores (blue bars) ranked in the bottom quartile was only slightly higher than in the national normative population (light green bars), and a positive difference of 44% exists between the percentage of Collier County ELLM children’s posttest and pretest (dark green bars) scores ranked in the bottom quartile. Additionally, 11% of the posttest scores ranked below the 9th percentile (the *Very Poor* and *Poor* categories combined). This nearly matches the 9% in the national normative population. Also, a positive difference of 30% exists between the percentage of posttest and pretest scores ranked in the top quartile. Furthermore, a positive difference of 12% exists between the percentage of posttest and normative population scores ranked in the top quartile. Additionally, 16% of the Collier County ELLM children’s posttest scores ranked above the 90th percentile (the *Superior* and *Very Superior* categories combined). As can be seen, the distribution of posttest scores shifted further toward the top quartile than the distribution of the national normative population.

A second way to look at emergent literacy achievement is through the percentile rankings of the mean scores in the fall and spring of the school year. Figure 4 shows the percentile rankings of the mean TERA-3 scores.

*Figure 4.* The percentile ranking of the mean TERA-3 scale scores in the fall and spring of the school year.
As can be seen, the greater increases in percentile rankings from fall to spring occurred in the achievement measured by the Reading Quotient and the Alphabet scale. However, at year’s end the mean percentile ranking of all TERA-3 scales, with the exception of the Meaning scale, was above the bottom quartile (25th percentile), and the mean Alphabet scale score ranked above the national average.

**TOLD-P:3 Summary**

One way to look at the Collier County ELLM children’s year-end achievement in language development is to look at the differences in the percentage of scores ranked in the top and bottom quartiles from pretest to posttest. Figure 5 shows the rankings of the TOLD-P:3 pretest and posttest scores.

![Figure 5. TOLD-P:3 scale scores ranked in the bottom, average, and top quartiles at the beginning and end of the school year.](image)

Across all measures, the largest change in the percentage of scores in the quartiles resulted from scores ranked in the bottom quartile at pretest moving to higher quartiles at posttest. The percentage of scores ranked in the bottom quartile (green portion) was less at the end than at the beginning of the school year for all TOLD-P:3 scales. The increases...
in the percentage of mean posttest scale scores ranked in the top quartile (lavender) ranged from 3 to 10 percentage points across the TOLD-P:3 scales.

A second way to look at the language development achievement is through the percentile rankings of the mean scores at fall and spring of the school. Figure 6 shows the percentile rankings of the TOLD-P:3 mean pretest and posttest scores.

As can be seen, the greatest increases in percentile rankings from fall to spring occurred in the achievement measured by the Oral Vocabulary scale. Moreover, at year’s end, the mean rankings of all TOLD-P:3 scales was at or above the 30th percentile, above the bottom quartile. However, gains on the TOLD-P:3 scales indicate gains made by the children whose language development could be measured with validity.
**Question 3:** How did Collier County ELLM children’s ALRI scores compare to existing national benchmarks in the recognition of the upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet at the end of the school year?

In 2006-2007, 571 Collier County ELLM children had Alphabet Letter Recognition Inventory (ALRI) and TERA-3 fall and spring scores. The ALRI mean fall score indicates the typical ELLM child recognized 16% of the letters (8 letters). The ALRI mean spring score indicates the typical child recognized 77% of the letters (40 letters). The *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten* (ECLS-K) described recognizing 75% of the sampled letters as *proficient*; therefore, the typical Collier County ELLM child was *proficient* in letter recognition at the end of the school year.

Additionally, in the broader data, 603 Collier County ELLM children had fall, winter, and spring ALRI scores irrespective of TERA-3 scores. To determine the range of the alphabet letter recognition ability of the children, these ALRI scores are displayed in Figure 7 using four recognition categories: 0-13 letters, 14-26 letters, 27-39 letters, and 40-52 letters.

*Figure 7.* The Alphabet Letter Recognition Inventory scores of the 603 Collier County ELLM children.

Inspection of Figure 7 indicates the children made steady progress in letter recognition throughout the school year with the percentage of *proficient* children...
increasing from 7% at the beginning of the school year, to 41% at mid-year, and to 66% at the end of the school year. Therefore, at year’s end 66% of the 603 children were proficient, recognizing at least 75% of the letters. The end of the 4-year-old preschool year is somewhat similar to entering kindergarten for the first time, and ECLS-K researchers reported 66% of all children entering kindergarten for the first time were proficient. Collier County ELLM children’s letter recognition ability matches the national ECLS-K sample of all children entering kindergarten for the first time. Additionally, at the end of the school year, 4% of the children recognized eight or fewer letters, 45% of the children recognized 50 or more letters, and 32% of the children recognized all 52 letters.

**Question 4**: Was ELLM effective in improving the emergent literacy ability and alphabet letter recognition of the Collier County Redlands Christian Migrant Association children in classes that began later in the school year?

Seventeen boys and 16 girls had TERA-3 winter and spring scores and participated in the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) ELLM classes. All children with complete ethnicity information were Hispanic, and 55% of the children were classified as ESOL.

The children were assessed in the winter and spring using the ALRI and the TERA-3. Table 8 shows the number of assessments made in the five classes at four RCMA locations.

Table 8
*The Number of Assessments in Collier County RCMA ELLM Classes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number Fall Tests</th>
<th>Number Winter Tests</th>
<th>Number Spring Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TERA-3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALRI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERA-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALRI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Thirty-one children had all three scores. The one fall ALRI score is from a child assessed in a non-RCMA class in the fall.
Table 9 presents summary statistics for the TERA-3 scores of the Collier County RCMA children.

Table 9
Summary Statistics Collier: County ELLM RCMA Children’s TERA-3 and ALRI Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Winter Mean</th>
<th>Spring Mean</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TERA-3</td>
<td>RQ</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>71.48</td>
<td>78.94</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>.50*</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>.72**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>CN</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>.0181</td>
<td>.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MG</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>.0976</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALRI</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>28.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes the difference in the pretest and posttest mean scores represents a small, but meaningful effect.
** Denotes the difference in the pretest and posttest mean scores represents a medium effect.

The RCMA children’s mean TERA-3 Reading Quotient (RQ) spring score ranked at the 8th percentile; however, the children’s mean Alphabet scale (ALP) spring score ranked at the 26th percentile, above the bottom quartile of national scores. The low scores on the Conventions of Print and Meaning scales (CN and MG) reflect the children’s lack of previous experience with print and the English language. To look more closely at the improvement on the TERA-3 Alphabet scale, the scores are displayed in Figure 8 in seven ability categories: three categories representing the lowest 25 percentiles, one category representing the middle 50 percentiles, and three categories representing the highest 25 percentiles. (See Table 5 on page 14 of this report.)
Figure 8. The spring Alphabet scale scores of the 33 Collier County RCMA children.

Fifty-two percent of the children’s Alphabet scale spring scores (dark green bars) ranked in the bottom quartile, and this represents a positive difference of 30% between the percentage of spring and winter scores ranked in the bottom quartile.

Thirty-one of the Collier County RCMA ELLM children had both winter and spring ALRI assessments. The ALRI mean winter score indicates the typical RCMA child recognized about 13% of the letters (7 letters). The ALRI mean spring score indicates the typical child recognized 56% of the letters (29 letters). The *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten* (ECLS-K) described recognizing 75% of the sampled letters as *proficient*; therefore, the typical Collier County ELLM RCMA child was working toward *proficiency* in letter recognition at the end of the school year.

To determine the range of alphabet letter recognition ability of the children, ALRI scores are displayed in Figure 9 using four recognition categories: 0-13 letters, 14-26 letters, 27-39 letters, and 40-52 letters.
Inspection of Figure 9 indicates that by year’s end, 29% of the scores were in the 40-to-52 letters recognized category (recognizing at least 75% of the letters); therefore proficient in letter recognition, and that 61% of the children recognized at least 50% of the upper- and lowercase letters. Furthermore, four children recognized eight or fewer letters and four children recognized at least 49 letters.

Conclusions

The Partnership successfully implemented ELLM in 57 preschool and Head Start classes in Collier County during the 2006-2007 school year. The ELLM/SEEDS program was implemented by 71 volunteer LARKs and 12 Bag Assembly Ladies from Naples and Collier County. In RCMA classes that served the children of migrant works, ELLM implementation began when those children arrived in November.

The effectiveness of ELLM was evaluated in a pretest/posttest design using three measures of emergent literacy and language development. The achievement of the Collier
County ELLM children was compared to the national normative populations of the two standardized measures, and the alphabet recognition ability of the Collier County ELLM children was compared to national benchmarks established by the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten (ECLS-K).

**Emergent Literacy**

The children’s achievement in emergent literacy was assessed using the four scales of the TERA-3 and the ALRI. The Collier County ELLM children made gains over the school year of 79%, 113%, 43%, and 30% of a standard deviation on the TERA-3 Reading Quotient, Alphabet, Conventions of Print, and Meaning scales, respectively. Furthermore, at the end of the school year 37% of the children’s Alphabet scale scores ranked above the 75th percentile, and 16% ranked above the 90th percentile. The ALRI spring scores indicate 66% of the children recognized at least 75% of the letters (ECLS-K described this as proficient), and 32% recognized all upper- and lowercase letters.

**Language Development**

The children’s language development was assessed using four scales of the TOLD-P:3. However, some scores on the Oral Vocabulary scale were removed because the children could not express themselves in English at the end of the school year. The children with valid TOLD-P:3 scale scores made gains over the school year of 48%, 37%, 53%, and 43% of a standard deviation on the Listening Quotient, Picture Vocabulary, Oral Vocabulary, and Grammatic Understanding scales, respectively. Language development measured on all TOLD-P:3 scales at the end of the year ranked at or above the 30th percentile.

**Redlands Christian Migrant (RCMA) Classes**

Some RCMA children experienced ELLM in Partnership classes from early November to the end of the school year, which is less than the optimal full school year implementation. The typical RCMA child recognized an additional 22 letters from the winter to spring assessment, and at the end of the school year 29% of the children were
proficient. At the end of the school year, the TERA-3 Alphabet scale mean score ranked at the 26th percentile.

Collier County Early Literacy Partnership for Educational Success: Expected Outcomes

Over the 3-year course of the project, the Partnership expected approximately 3,000 children (1,000 per year) from low-income neighborhoods to participate in high-quality emergent literacy instruction and learning experiences that align with the Collier County Reading First initiative. The Partnership served approximately 2,730 children during the 3 years of implementation. This is a substantial number but is short of the expected 3,000 children. The expected Partnership outcomes include

Classroom Practice:

- Improved literacy- and print-rich environments in Partnership classrooms.
- Increased use of research-based, literacy-focused instructional practices by Partnership teachers.
- Greater use by Partnership teachers of assessment results to guide instruction.

These first three expected outcomes are assessed to some degree by the intensity of the ELLM implementation as measured by frequency of the ELLM literacy coaching activities. Table 10 summarizes the work of the ELLM literacy coaches and teachers over the 3 years.

Table 10
Summary of Coaching Activities for 3 School Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Observations</td>
<td>10.7 per teacher</td>
<td>11.4 per teacher</td>
<td>12.2 per teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration Lessons</td>
<td>13.1 per teacher</td>
<td>13.8 per teacher</td>
<td>12.4 per teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Conferences</td>
<td>25.8 per teacher</td>
<td>28.1 per teacher</td>
<td>26.8 per teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Team Meetings</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Lending Library Use</td>
<td>40.0 per child</td>
<td>47.3 per child</td>
<td>41.4 per child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of children served increased across all 3 years with the largest increase occurring in the second year of the implementation when the number of classes served also increased. The ELLM implementation as measured by the activities presented in Table 10 was most intense during the second year of implementation.

Child Outcomes:

- Improved emergent literacy skills of Partnership children.
- Improved alphabet letter recognition of Partnership children.
- Improved levels of oral language/vocabulary development of Partnership children.

These three expected outcomes are assessed by measures of emergent literacy, alphabet letter recognition, and oral language. These outcomes will be summarized in the following paragraphs and charts.

Emergent Literacy

The growth in the children’s emergent literacy ability is best seen by looking at the TERA-3 Reading Quotient which is the best single indicator of the children’s ability relative to early reading. Consequently, Figure 10 presents the percentage of the TERA-3 Reading Quotient scores ranked in the top and bottom quartiles from the beginning to the end of the school year for each year of ELLM implementation.
During the second year of ELLM implementation, a larger percentage of fall and spring TERA-3 Reading Quotient scores ranked in the bottom quartile than the first year, which indicates the increase in the number of classes served in the second year included more children with low initial status. The children served in the third year of implementation were very similar to the children served in the second year. A comparison of the second- and third-year outcomes shows that slightly fewer fall scores ranked in the bottom quartile in the third year and that the difference between the third- and second-year percentage of spring year scores ranked in the bottom quartile is even greater than the fall difference.

The Partnership’s impact on the Collier County children’s early reading ability is seen across all 3 years. After the expansion in the second year, the results improved in the third year as measured by the percentage of spring scores ranked in the bottom quartile. The children made gains on the TERA-3 Reading Quotient scale of 73%, 86%, and 80% of a standard deviation across years 1, 2, and 3. These large gains are attributed to the work of the Partnership and the children’s participation in ELLM classrooms.
Alphabet Letter Recognition

Most of the children’s TERA-3 Reading Quotient gains are primarily the result of the children’s increased alphabet knowledge. Part of the increased knowledge is in the area of alphabet letter recognition. The growth of the Collier County ELLM children’s ability to recognize the upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet is shown in Figure 11 which shows the percentage of proficient ALRI scores at the beginning and end of each of the 3 years of implementation.

Figure 11. The percentage of ELLM children’s proficient ALRI scores in the fall and spring of each of the 3 years of ELLM implementation.

Across the 3 years, the percentage of children proficient in letter recognition in the fall decreased slightly from 8.0% in the 2004-2005 school year to 6.8% in the 2006-2007 school year. At the same time, the percentage of proficient scores increased from 61.4% in 2004-2005 school year to 66.2% in the 2006-2007 school year. The combined results of the TERA-3 Reading Quotient score which was primarily accounted for by the Alphabet scale and the ALRI growth indicates that ELLM implementation positively impacted the growth of the children’s alphabet knowledge.
Oral Language/Vocabulary

The growth in oral language and vocabulary development of the Collier County ELLM children is shown relative to the TOLD-P:3 Listening Quotient score, which represents children’s ability to understand speech, receptive language, and is a composite of the Grammatic Understanding and Picture Vocabulary scales. Across the 3 years, 14%, 12%, and 13% of the possible scores on this scale were removed because of the children’s inability to express themselves in English in the 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007 school years, respectively. Figure 12 shows the percentage of the TOLD-P:3 Listening Quotient scores ranked in the top and bottom quartiles from the beginning to the end of the school year for each year of implementation.

![Figure 12. The distribution of the TOLD-P:3 Listening Quotient scores in the bottom and top quartiles across the 3 years of ELLM implementation.](image)

Mirroring the findings for the TERA-3 Reading Quotient score, during the second year of ELLM implementation, a larger percentage of fall and spring Listening Quotient scores ranked in the bottom quartile than during the first year, which indicates that the increase in the number of classes served in the second year included more children with low initial status. However, the children served in the third year of ELLM
implementation had higher initial status as shown by a 6% difference between the percentage of scores ranked in the bottom quartile in the third and second years of implementation with the larger percentage occurring in the second year. Conversely, the spring results show a 3% difference between third- and second-year percentages of scores ranked in the bottom quartile with the larger percentage occurring in the third year.

The Partnership’s impact on the Collier County children’s language and vocabulary development is seen across all 3 years. When measured by the percentage of spring scores ranked in the bottom quartile, the results indicate the impact of the ELLM implementation peaked in the second year. The children made gains on the TOLD-P:3 Listening Quotient scale of 47%, 65%, and 48% of a standard deviation across years 1, 2, and 3. These gains are attributed to the work of the Partnership and the children’s participation in ELLM classrooms.

Sustainability

- Establishment of a model infrastructure for a community partnership advocating early literacy and learning that other communities can emulate.

The success of the Collier County Early Literacy Partnership is evidenced by the positive impact on children’s early reading, language, and vocabulary development across all 3 years and the recognition of that success within the Collier community. The initiative effectively established a researcher/community advocate/practitioner partnership committed to achieving a shared goal of ensuring that children come to school ready to read, ready to learn, and ready to succeed.

Led by a Steering Committee chaired by Florida Gulf Coast University, the Partnership working in collaboration with child advocates raised sufficient funding to implement ELLM in Head Start and community-based preschool classes located in child care centers serving children from low-income families. The Steering Committee developed partner roles and responsibilities and was committed to carrying out its work using four guiding principles: unity of purpose, commitment to ongoing inquiry, data-based decision making, and commitment to change and risk-taking. Participating site directors and teachers also committed to achieving Partnership goals. Florida Gulf Coast University served as the fiscal agent for the project.
Central to the Partnership success was a core of well-trained and dedicated ELLM literacy coaches who made weekly visits to each Partnership classroom to help teachers effectively implement ELLM. ELLM literacy coaches were supported by the Florida Institute of Education, which provided initial and ongoing training and support.

The work of the Partnership will continue in 2007-2008. The Collier County School Board will assume half the costs for two ELLM literacy coaches. Florida Gulf Coast University will continue its leadership role by convening the Steering Committee, providing for the ELLM lead coach and a project facilitator, and working with the Collier County School Board and community-based child advocates to secure sustained funding to permanently integrate ELLM into all early childhood learning and care efforts.

Indeed, what began as an elusive vision for improved educational success for Collier County’s most vulnerable young children has become a reality in Collier County thanks to the hard work and dedication of many people coming together and having the determination to make that dream a reality.