



# Language and Literacy

## What research tells us about improving outcomes for young children

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**Presentation to the Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and  
Evaluation**

**April 12-13, 2011**

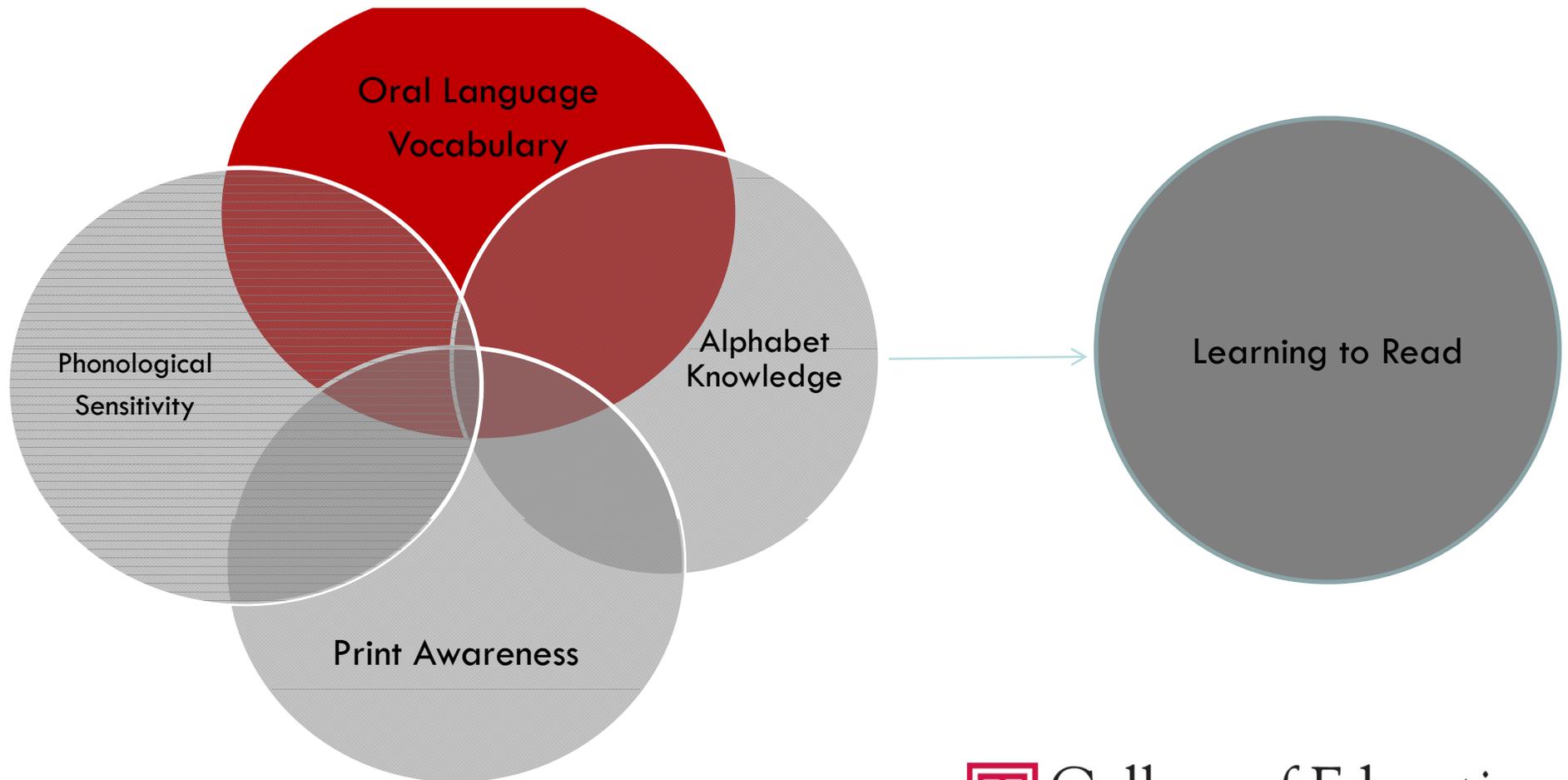
# Thank You

- Early Reading First funding
- Baltimore City Head Start teachers, assistants, Administrators, and children
- Johns Hopkins University Coaches and staff
- Dr. Annemarie Hindman

# Importance of Developing Oral Language and Vocabulary

- Predictor of success in learning to read
- Predictor in overall success in school
- Poorly developed language skills are highly related to poverty

# Literacy Readiness Skills



# Research Suggests

- Low quality linguistic exchanges persist  
(Dickinson, Justice)
- Considerable amount of teacher language is directive and consists of comments, not questions (Gest)
- Opportunities to engage in dialogue that scaffolds children's language is limited  
(Dickinson, Wasik)

# Closing the Achievement Gap

- Focus on improving the quality of classrooms
- Focus on increasing the quality of teacher – child language interactions, specifically scaffolding language through conversations and book reading experiences
- Focus on increasing children’s vocabulary development

# Professional Development Models

- Well-researched, intensive PD interventions focused on developing language and pre-literacy (Dickinson, Justice, Landry, Pianta, Powell, Wasik)
- Outcomes show improvements in pre-literacy skills such as phonological sensitivity & alphabet knowledge but **vocabulary and oral language** skills are difficult to change

# Oral Language & Vocabulary

- Children provided with multiple exposures to words in meaningful contexts learn words (Biemieller & Boote, 2006 ; Beck and colleagues, 2007 )
- Exposure to vocabulary through book reading and followed-up with activities that include opportunities to use words increases vocabulary development (Wasik & colleagues; Coyne & colleagues; and Silverman & colleagues)

# Teachers' Use of Language

- Train teachers to change the way they talk & interact with young children
  - Ask “open-ended” questions
    - Model rich language
    - Provide meaningful feedback
    - Recast what is said in a more rich, elaborated way
- Increasing the instructional quality

*ExCELL:*  
*Exceptional Coaching for*  
*Early Language and Literacy*

- One example of an effective PD intervention
- Focused on scaffolding teachers' language interactions to provide more opportunities for children to talk and use language
- Book reading plays a critical part language development

# ExCELL

- Intensive, comprehensive language and literacy coaching professional development (PD) intervention
- Monthly group trainings
- Books, materials, and lesson plans that support the development of children's language and literacy, and
- Progress monitoring

# *ExCELL*

- Head Start Teachers and Children
- In urban Baltimore City
- 100% free lunch
- 99% African American

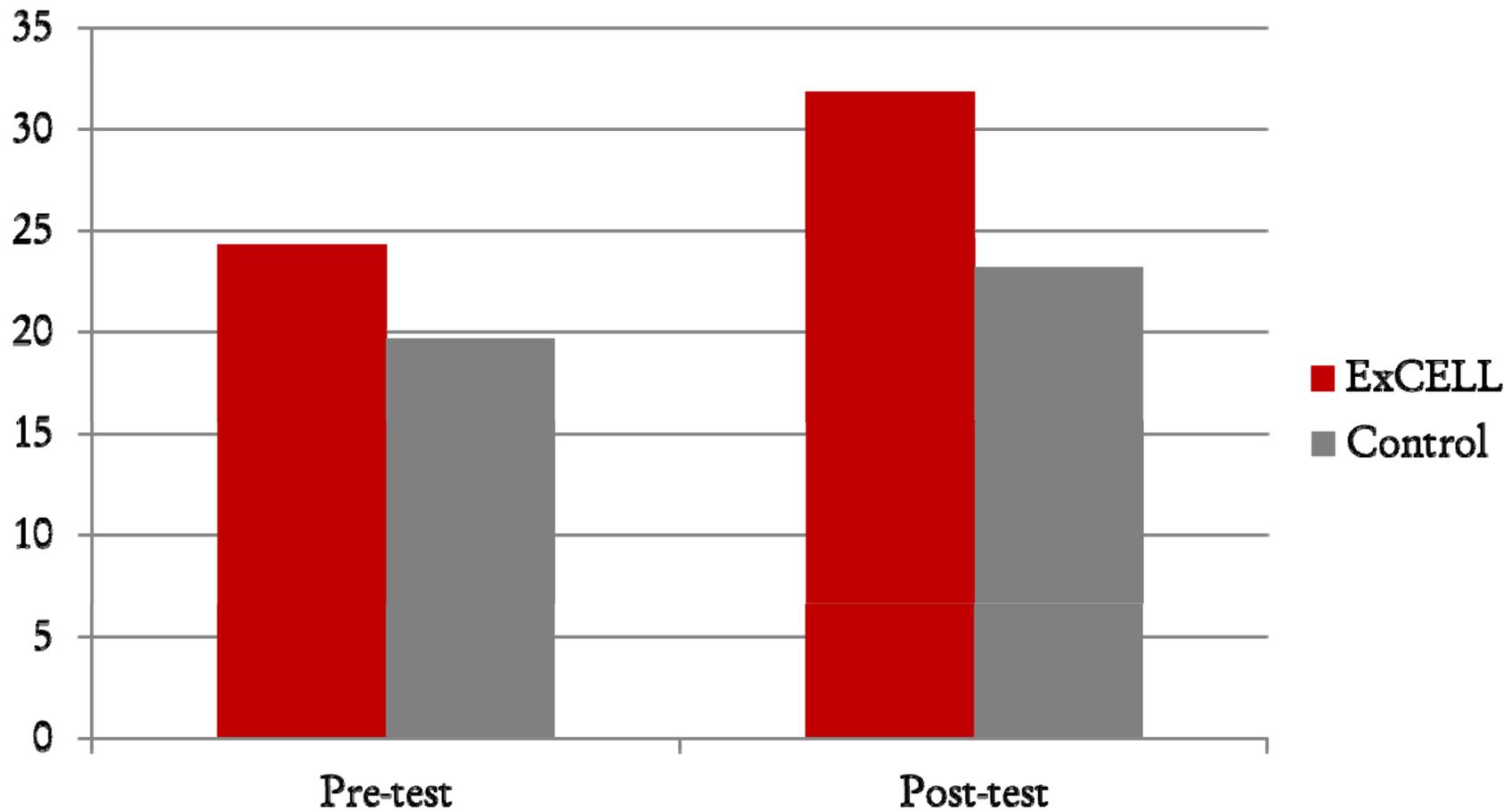
# Teacher Measures

- All teachers were administered:
  - CLASS
  - ELLCO
  - Teacher belief measure
  - Teacher<sub>k</sub> knowledge measure
  - Fidelity measures

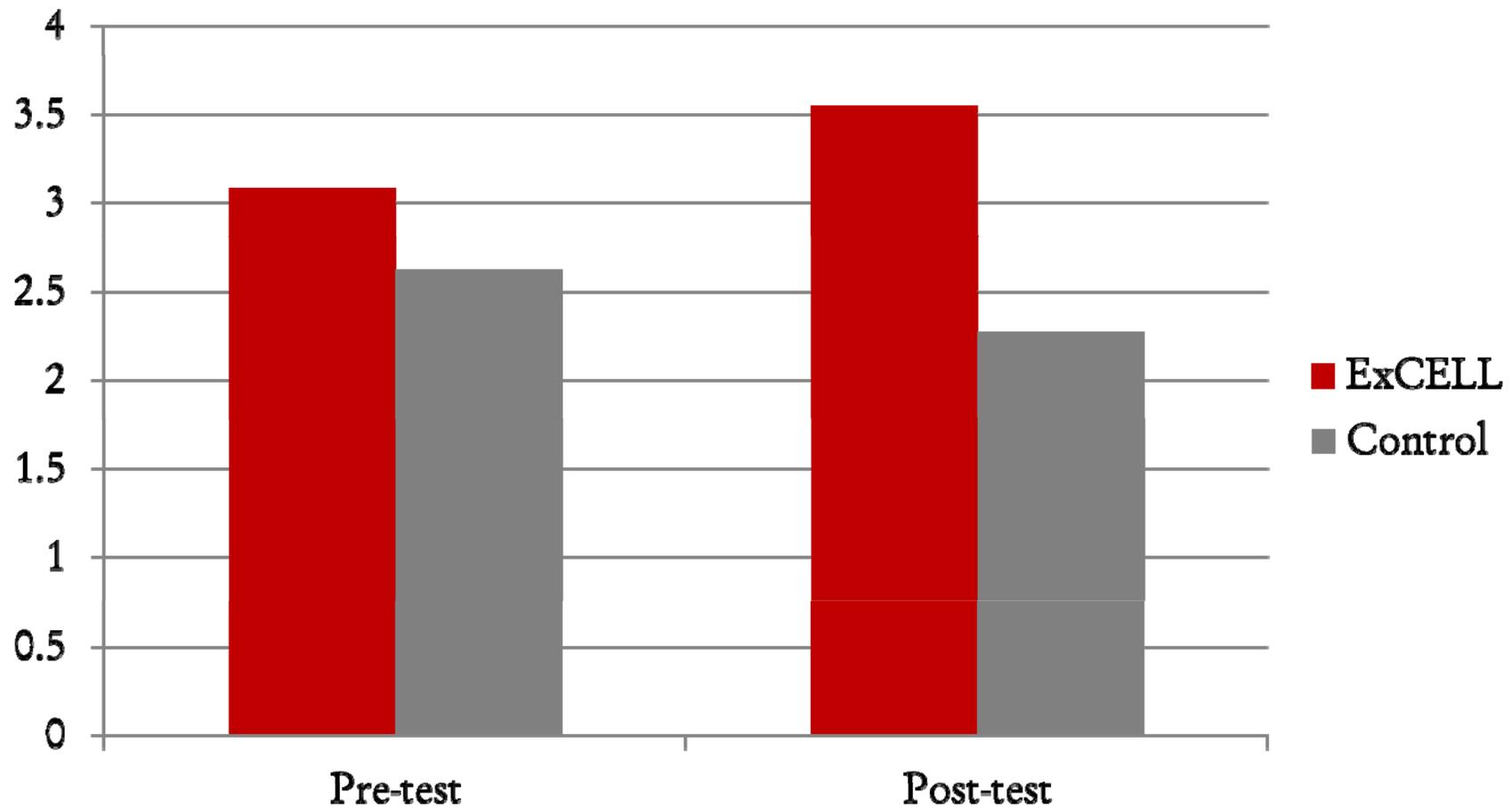
# Child Measures

- PPVT-III (Receptive language)
- Alphabet
- Phonemic awareness
- All are predictors of success in reading

# Teacher ELLCO



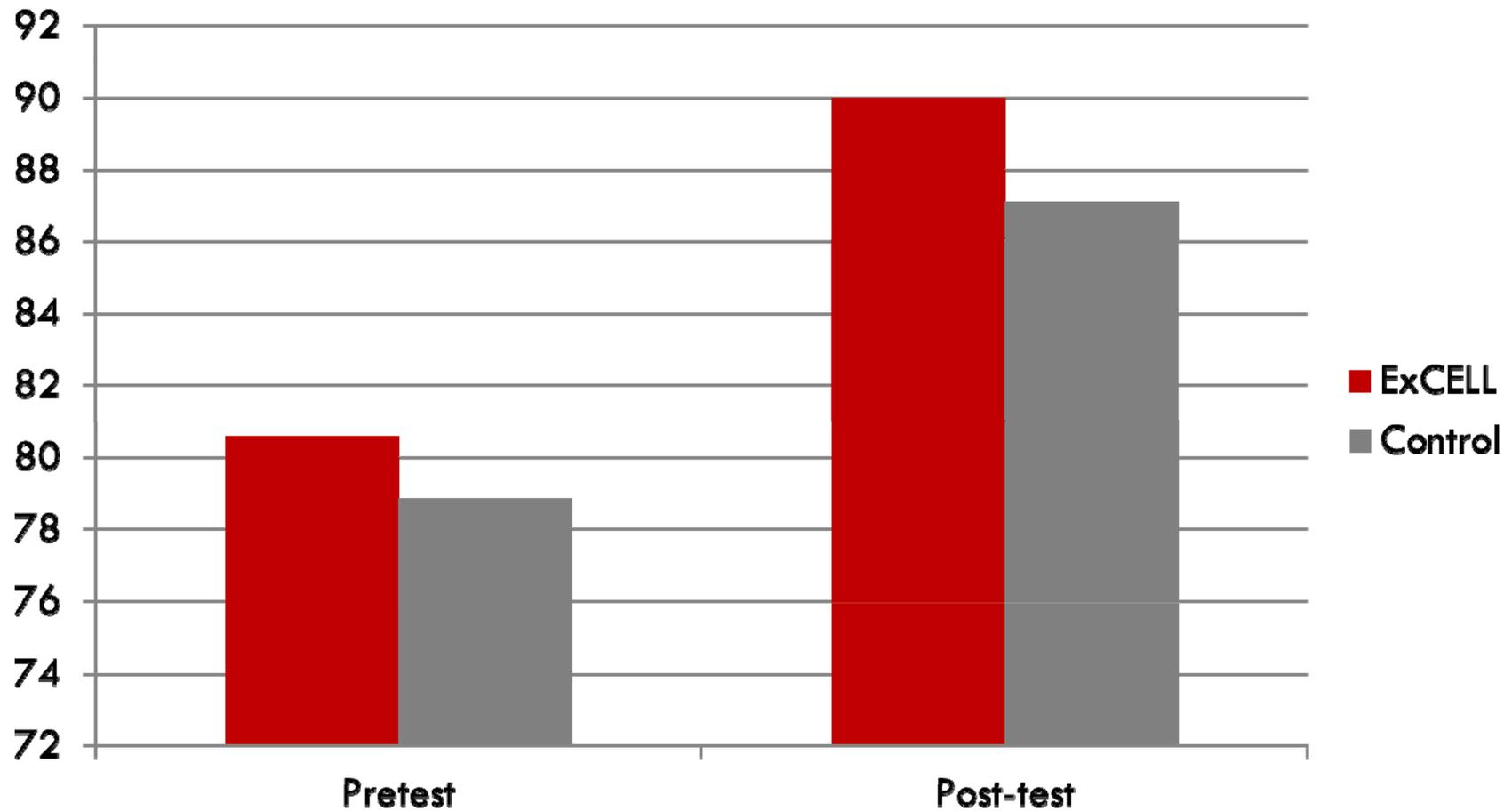
# Teacher CLASS



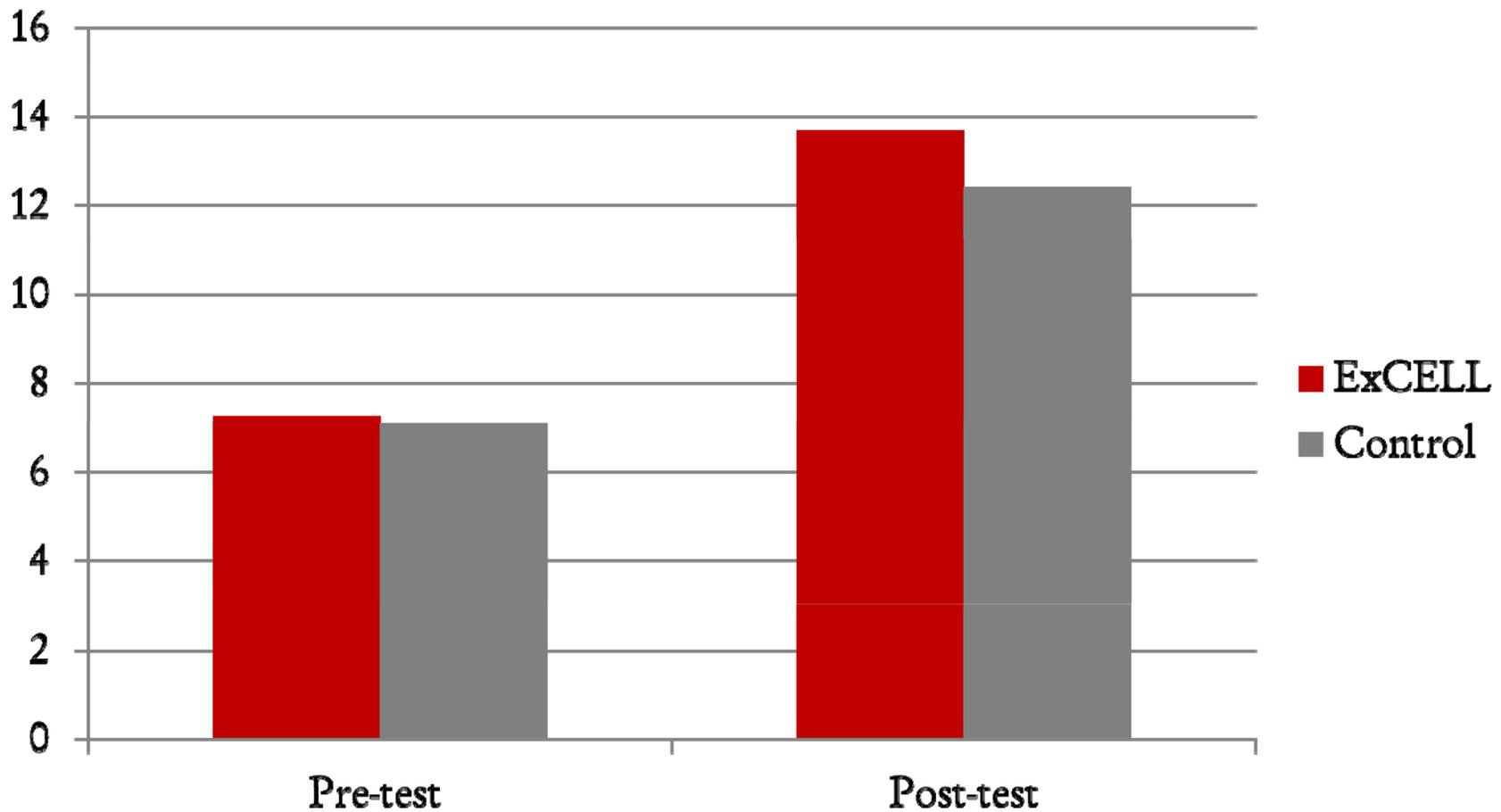
# Teacher Background

- Varying degrees of education
- Education did not impact performance
- Years of experience did not impact performance
- All teachers can learn these strategies

# Child PPVT-III



# Phonological Sensitivity



# Understanding the Findings in Terms of

- Effectiveness
- Fidelity
- Feasibility
- Sustainability

# Teacher Behaviors Related to Increases in Child Vocabulary

- Not the **number** of open-ended questions teachers asked but,
- The amount of opportunities given to children to talk and use language
- The more children used language in a meaningful context → increases in vocabulary

# What Do These Findings Suggest?

- Teachers' use of language is critical in developing children's language
- Teachers can change the way they interact with targeted coaching & training
- Language development is relevant for all domains, including math and science.

# Unpacking the Intervention: What are the active ingredients

- **Book reading** (including reading the book and follow-up activities that reinforce the language and vocabulary in the books) **is critical to language development.**
- **Opportunities for children to use language**

# Lessons Learned

- Difficult to scaffold teachers' language
- Videotaping is a powerful tool in impacting change
- Teachers need both conceptual and procedural knowledge to change their behaviors



Thank you!

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