

Making Literacy Instruction Accessible for ELLs

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Abstract

In some districts, ESOL teachers are not able to provide all the modifications necessary for ELLs, so classroom teachers sometimes need to know how to make modifications for ELLs. This capstone looks at how to make literacy instruction accessible for ELL students. Classroom teachers do not always know how to support these students and ESOL teachers may not be available to make the modifications they need. The professional development in this capstone provides classroom teachers with strategies and methods on how to support the literacy development of ELLs. It is expected that after the professional development classroom teachers will be able to make some modifications for ELLs on their own. In the future, it is recommended that pre-service teachers have a student teaching placement in an ELL classroom.

Keywords: Modifications, ELLs, classroom teachers, vocabulary instruction, literacy strategies, translanguaging.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Some districts in Upstate New York have one English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for the whole district. As a result, classroom teachers are left with the task to modify instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) because the ESL teacher cannot modify every assignment for every subject. Teachers are responsible for the success of all students in their class. This success is shown through student academic performance. One group of students that struggle with academic performance is ELLs because they are not as familiar with English as their native peers, and as a result, their academic performance is lower. Classroom teachers need to know how to support ELLs to help them increase their academic performance. This capstone will examine how to make literacy instruction accessible for ELLs. It is important that ELLs are able to complete the same tasks as their peers using scaffolding and strong literacy practices (Goldenberg, 2008). To support ELLs in the classroom, classroom teachers implement translanguaging (Pacheco & Miller, 2015), literacy strategies (Proctor et al., 2007), scaffolding (Wiley & McKernan, 2016), vocabulary instruction (Proctor et al., 2007), and motivation strategies (López, 2010). Many different strategies can be used to promote ELL academic success.

Significance of the Problem

ELLs need classroom teachers that know how to modify assignments so they will be successful in the classroom. Now more than ever, preservice teachers have more knowledge about ELLs and how to support them. Many teacher preparation programs teach about how to support ELLs but many preservice teachers do not get the chance to work with them (Okhremtchouka & Sellub, 2019). As a result, classroom teachers feel less confident working

with ELLs because they do not have the experience working with them. All teachers need to know how to support ELLs no matter how much experience they have working with ELLs.

ELLs struggle in several aspects in the classroom including culture, language, and complexity of assessments. This capstone will provide different methods to help ELLs in each area. For example, language supports include different literacy strategies, vocabulary instruction (Proctor et al., 2007), and translanguaging (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). These types of strategies and a method of instruction help ELLs access the language needed to attain standards. In addition, ELL students struggle because they lack the background knowledge of American culture to complete some assignments (Johnson, 1982). Pre-teaching or making sure there is no bias at all in assignments will help ELLs access the materials. Assessments also need to be given in a way that ELLs can access them. This can include simplifying the wording of the questions (Bird & Welford, 1995). In fact, using simpler sentence structures and wording allows ELLs to read the questions with ease since there are no difficult tenses or unknown vocabulary used.

Purpose

Classroom teachers need to know how to make literacy instruction accessible for ELLs. In order to mitigate this problem, a professional development (PD) will be created for classroom teachers. This PD will be given in the fall to all classroom teachers and it will be given over two sessions. The first session will describe the different methods and strategies teachers can use to make literacy instruction accessible for ELLs. The methods and strategies will be broken down into five sections: translanguaging, vocabulary instruction, literacy strategies, general scaffolding support for ELLs, and motivating ELLs. Then the presentation will be given. The strategies that will be discussed in the presentation are: breaking down words into roots, prefixes, and suffixes, changing the syntax and grammar of questions, hyperlinked glossaries, recording definitions,

drawings as visual anchors, t-charts, providing students with boxes for prediction and analysis, sentence frames, ordering events in a text, repeated readings of texts, modeling, and wait time. At the end of the first session the teachers will be provided with a reading passage that they will work with partners or their cohorts to make questions and modifications to. Then the modifications and questions will be discussed as a whole group at the end. The closing activity will be a form done online to have the teachers set a goal to work on before the next session. The teachers will be asked to bring materials to modify during the next session.

The second session will be a time for teachers to bring an assignment to modify the assignments they brought. The session will begin with a review of the strategies from session one and then the teachers will work together in cohorts to modify all the assignments. After discussing ways to modify all the assignments teachers in their group brought, the group will come back together to ask questions and bring up concerns. The teachers will be given time to write one thing they would share with a first year teacher from this PD.

Conclusion

Classroom teachers need to know how to make literacy instruction accessible for ELL students. These modifications and strategies will include translanguaging, literacy strategies, scaffolding, vocabulary instruction, and motivation strategies. Ensuring students have teachers that are confident in how to support their learning is necessary for ELLs to have academic success. The PD will provide classroom teachers with methods to support their students as well as an opportunity to modify an assignment with the support of other teachers.

Chapter 2 will provide a literature review of the different methods and strategies in literacy for ELLs. Chapter 3 will be an in depth discussion about the PD and Chapter 4 will

discuss implications for learning and teaching as well as recommendations for further study. Lastly, the appendices will include all the handouts and tools for the PD.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Swain's (1985) Comprehensible Output Hypothesis builds on Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis. Krashen claims that second language (L2) needs to be modified for second language learners to understand the language. This can be done through simplifying sentences, using slower speech, enunciating, and using simple vocabulary. Ellis (2015) argues that Swain builds on this and said second language learners need to have opportunities to produce the language. Whereas Krashen focused on the passive parts of language production like listening and speaking, Swain focused on the production side of writing and reading. These two theories together form the basis of language acquisition, focusing on all facets of language acquisition. Consequently, in the classroom teachers need to provide ELLs with input they can understand as well as opportunities to produce English. In other words, many factors go into knowing how to make literacy instruction accessible for ELLs. This section will focus on the literature about translanguaging, vocabulary instruction, literacy strategies, general scaffolding support for ELLs, and motivating ELLs.

Translanguaging

Translanguaging is when ELL students use their home language (L1) to aid in the acquisition of content learning, and multilingual literacy (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Pacheco & Miller, 2015). This can look like using knowledge of root words to figure out a new word in English, using the L1 instead of English words they do not know, or translating words to the L1 to use previous knowledge associated with the word. The home language of a student is a

resource, not a hindrance, if teachers view it as such. The way a teacher views the importance of the student's L1 will affect how comfortable the student feels to use their L1 in the classroom.

Teachers can make ELLs feel comfortable in the classroom by expressing interest in the L1 and learning some words to communicate with the student in their own language (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). When ELLs see a non speaker use their language, it shows there is effort being put in to learn more about who they are. This can affect the family connection as well (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). The family will see the teacher's efforts and see that even if the school district does not use a bilingual structure, the home language is still valued.

Prior Experience in the Home Language

ELLs have a wealth of knowledge in their home language and this is a resource teachers can draw on. Although the students may not immediately recognize the English word for vocabulary in their home language, they can translate words and look for cognates to help them understand the definition (Dong, 2009). Relating words to prior experiences helps students remember the word in the new language. Using a student's experience makes the unfamiliarity of English seem less daunting because now they are linking the word to a familiar experience.

ELLs have varying experience in their home language ranging from no formal schooling to above grade level. The amount of knowledge students have in their home language impacts learning a second language. The closer the language distance, the easier it is to learn English (Ellis, 2015). Students with formal schooling in their home language can relate grammar structures if the languages are close in structure. Just because a student has no prior experience does not mean they are not capable of learning a new language, it only means they have less experiences to draw on as they learn the new language.

Cognates

Cognates are words that look the same in both languages. They may not be spelled exactly the same, but they are close enough to make a connection between the languages (Ellis, 2015). Cognates are an easy way for ELLs to begin to feel confident in a new language. They draw on their previous knowledge of their home language and figure out meaning. Although cognates are mostly helpful in language acquisition, there are false cognates that look like a word in the home language but mean something completely different (Dong, 2009; Hernández et al., 2016). Overall, cognates are more helpful in language acquisition, especially if it is paired with teaching root words.

It is important teachers point out cognates so students can see the connection between the home language and English. For some languages this will be fairly easy because the roots used in English are the same roots the home language uses. For other languages with different symbols representing letters or roots, it may be hard to find cognates to point out for students. It is still important to try and make connections to the home language even if it is through different methods.

Grammar Similarities and Differences

Depending on the closeness of the language structures, prefixes and suffixes can also be used to help students figure out the meaning of words (Hernández et al., 2016). The prefixes and suffixes may not be exactly the same in both languages, but similarities can be brought to ELLs attention. For example, ‘in’ in the Spanish word ‘increíble’ means not. The English translation is unbelievable. The prefix ‘un’ also means not. Although the prefixes are not exactly the same, teaching the similarity in meaning of the prefixes can help ELLs understand the concept in English.

Spelling patterns are another way to help ELLs learn English. Teaching consonant digraphs and how they relate to the home language will help ELLs understand the spelling patterns in English (Hernández et al., 2016). Pointing out differences in the languages is helpful for students because it is explicitly showing the students which parts of the spelling or grammar structure are different. In Spanish, consonant digraphs are not as prevalent, so teaching consonant digraphs through cognates is a way for students to see how sounds relate to their home language. For example, in Spanish ‘alfabeto’ does not have a consonant digraph but the English word ‘alphabet’ does. Teachers can explicitly teach the difference in a consonant digraph in English and how Spanish does not use them.

Strategies Using Translanguaging

Translanguaging is a pedagogical approach that teachers can implement in any classroom. Allowing students to use their home language in the classroom can be used in speaking, writing, reading, and listening. In speaking and writing, teachers can allow the students to use their home language to fill in vocabulary words they do not have yet in English (Rowe, 2018). This allows ELLs to use English confidently, even if they do not have the vocabulary needed to speak sentences completely in English. Having students speaking and writing English is a way for the students to produce meaningful output (Ellis, 2015). When allowing students to use their L1 in the classroom, it is important the student feels comfortable in that environment. ELLs may feel their L1 is less important than English, and it is up to teachers to show ELLs and Native English speakers that the home language of ELLs is important. Providing ELLs with bilingual texts and opportunities to listen to texts in both languages helps students with comprehension and feeling comfortable using their L1 in the classroom (Rowe, 2018). Students who are native English speakers will see the teacher including bilingual texts in the classroom

and it reinforces the idea of the ELLs home language being important and worth using in the classroom.

Modeling. Teachers can model how to use translanguaging during teaching (Rowe, 2018). Even if teachers are monolingual, they can learn a few words of an ELLs L1 and use them while teaching or in a writing sample. This shows students what teachers mean when they allow students to use their home language in speaking or writing assignments. This shows students how to authentically use their home language in conversation to convey meaning (Rowe, 2018). This opens the door to allowing translations to occur real time during conversations for both people involved to learn something new, or in a writing assignment, the teacher can find meaning using translations.

Dual Language Texts. Dual language texts allow ELLs to use and develop their knowledge in both languages (Rowe, 2018). Providing texts that have both languages allow the student to read in their first language as well as English. This is also an opportunity for ELLs to write completely in their home language. Writing in their L1 first provides a space for them to organize their thinking into paragraphs before writing in English. It is beneficial to provide bilingual texts to all students to increase classroom community (Rowe, 2018). Having students look at another language and have the ELL read the text gives the native speakers a chance to experience what it is like to try and figure out a text in another language, giving more appreciation and sympathy to what the ELL is going through.

Voice Recordings. Having a voice recording of definitions or notes in one or both languages will help ELLs when referring back to notes (Pacheco & Miller, 2015; Rowe, 2018). Teachers can provide ELLs with the English word and definition. Depending on the level of the ELL, the ELL will have the option to record the English of the word and definition, the L1

pronunciation of the word and definition, one of those, or all of those. Hearing the word in both languages can reinforce the vocabulary word through association.

ELLs could also take a picture of their notes and read them aloud in English to a voice recording (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). This way when referring back to the notes, the student can independently read what the notes were about. The words that are a struggle can also be translated to the ELLs L1. The whole notes page would probably be a lot to translate completely to the home language, but difficult vocabulary can be translated to aid in studying later. The goal is to create notes the student can refer back to without having to look up a bunch of English words to understand the notes. It should be easy to understand because the notes are students created for their personal needs.

Translanguaging is a resource for students to use in the classroom. It is important teachers allow students to use their home language and provide students with a comfortable environment to use their L1. Teachers can show the similarities and differences in vocabulary, spelling, and grammar using translanguaging. Having ELLs create their own audio notes and dictionaries provides a space for the students to listen to the English as well as use their home language when needed, providing easily understood notes to refer back to.

Literacy Strategies

Literacy includes more subjects than English, it encompasses every subject in and out of school. When teachers know how to support ELLs using basic literacy strategies, the strategies can be used in every area that teacher teaches. There are ways to adapt instruction as well as specific strategies when reading or writing. The strategies in this section are presented in an English setting, but they all can be modified to every subject.

Simplifying Language

When working with ELLs it is important to be aware of the language used during instruction. Teachers should use sentences with simple grammar structures as well as simple vocabulary (Goldenberg, 2008). As the language is simplified, it is crucial the content is not changed. Using short sentences with basic grammar structures allows the students to access the information without changing the information. Simplifying language needs to take place in all assignments and assessments, not just during instruction.

Another way to simplify instruction is to enunciate words and slow speech (Hill, 2022). When speaking with people who speak another language, it is natural to slow down speech and enunciate (Ellis, 2015), but it is crucial teachers are intentional in how they speak. Teachers can also be intentional about the way they use gestures and pointing (Hill, 2022). Having visuals for every lesson gives a point of reference to direct the student's attention to. These images could be pictures of vocabulary words or diagrams. In addition, having something to point and gesture to allows ELLs to relate a word to a physical thing, not just a concept.

A study by Bird and Welford (1995), looked at the effect of simplifying the language of a high school science assessment. 24 questions were written, and those questions were modified by changing the length, wording, and the syntax of the questions. There were two groups in this sample, a group of ELLs from Botswana, and a group of students whose native language was English in the UK. There were 100 students in each group and 50 students from each group took the test with the original questions and the other 50 students in each group took the test with the modified questions. The results showed there was no significant difference in scores for the native English speakers, but there was a significant difference in score for the ELL students. This study found there is a significant effect on changing the wording of questions for ELL students. The authors suggest the complexity of the questions was reduced by changing how the question

was asked grammatically and syntactically. Bird and Welford contend that ELLs are not as proficient as their peers in English, so expecting them to answer questions that are written exactly the same for their peers is not fair. Adding that the language demand is much higher and the question can be changed without changing the content of what is being assessed. The wording of the questions were also changed, taking out unnecessary words or changing them to simpler words. This does not mean the key vocabulary was changed, just the words in the questions that were not being tested. By changing the syntax, grammar, and word choice, the questions were shorter, leaving ELLs with less words to process and comprehend.

Teachers need to practice modifying their assessments, assignments, and instruction for ELLs. Phrasing is crucial for ELLs and the content must not be changed (Goldenberg, 2008). ELLs need to work on the same assignments as their peers, with modifications to make the language accessible. Simplifying grammar, word choice, and syntax are the best strategies to make the language accessible.

Meaningful Phonics Instruction

Phonics instruction is the foundation of learning English in American schools. Depending on the level of ELLs and the grade they are in, this may be difficult to achieve in classroom instruction. As a result, meaningful phonics instruction needs to be given in context of what the ELL is learning (Cárdenas-Hagan & Carlson, 2007). If an ELL is reading a book for English class, the teacher can use small group time to go over vocabulary. During vocabulary instruction, the teacher can focus on specific phonics skills of the words. As the ELL reads aloud, the teacher can monitor the words the student is mispronouncing and talk about the phonics involved with the mispronounced word. Having the feedback and instruction occur during a lesson makes it more meaningful.

Root words, prefixes, and suffix instruction can happen whole-group or in small groups. All students can benefit from learning and reinforcing these skills, and ELLs can benefit from this instruction when it is linked to their home language. Pacheco and Goodwin (2013) indicate that there are two ways to break down words: by syllables or by root words, prefixes, and suffixes. When breaking down words Pacheco and Goodwin found it was more beneficial to students to break the word into bigger parts. This allows students to not rely on only morphological awareness. Root words are shared across several languages, so ELLs might find it easier to find the root of a word to see if they already know the definition. Prefixes and suffixes are added to the beginning or the end of a root and can change the meaning. Therefore, the authors maintain that roots, prefixes, and suffixes allow ELLs to look at familiar patterns in English to figure out the definition. Teachers can provide a list of prefixes, suffixes, and root words to ELLs to refer back to and use in class.

Strategies Used for Literacy Instruction

There are many ways for teachers to support student learning in literacy. This capstone is focusing on reading and writing strategies in an English setting. All these strategies can be used in other subject areas.

Repeated Readings. ELLs need more time to process language and one way teachers can help with this is by reading a text several times (Hill, 2022). Through multiple readings, students have more chances to hear or read through a text and process. For ELLs, listening to a story the first time through can help them with words that are unfamiliar. Sometimes ELLs know words through spoken language that they have not seen written yet. During the second read, ELLs can read on their own and add notes. Hill suggests that depending on how well the student

understood the passage, it may be read a third time. Exposure to the text several times allows ELLs to be familiar with the content.

Ordering Events in a Text. Once ELLs complete the first reading of a text, the teacher can provide images of the main events of the text (Proctor, 2007). The student will order the events chronologically. Once the events are in the correct order, students can glue them into a notebook and during a second read of the text they can add summaries or notes about the text next to the corresponding image. Notes are a great place for students to use translanguaging to help them understand what is going on in the text.

Sentence Frames. Sentence frames are when the teacher provides a student with the starting or ending phrase of a sentence and the student fills in the rest of the sentence. Wiley & McKernan (2016) note that ELLs, especially at the early stages of language acquisition, can struggle with how to phrase sentences when answering a prompt. With sentence frames, students are still writing the sentence, but the sentence starter is a scaffold that will eventually be removed as the student progresses with language acquisition. If the main goal of the lesson is to write about content learned, the support can be provided and the students fill in the content information. If the goal of the lesson is to create sentences in a story, another scaffold will need to be used so the objective is still being met.

Providing meaningful phonics instruction means having students learn phonics during a lesson when they come across the spelling pattern. There are many ways to break down words, but roots, prefixes, and suffixes are easier for most ELLs to understand because depending on their home language, they can relate the words to previous knowledge. Sentence frames, repeated readings, and ordering events in a text are just a few ways to support ELLs in literacy.

Vocabulary Instruction

One of the most important parts of working with ELLs is providing vocabulary instruction. There are three different levels of vocabulary. Tier one words are words found in everyday conversation. Tier two words are words found in all disciplines. Tier three words are words specific to a certain field. Depending on the level of ELL is where the vocabulary instruction is going to start. No matter the tier vocabulary, the ELL is learning through drawings as visual anchors, pre teaching vocabulary and hyper linked glossaries will aid ELLs.

Pre Teaching Vocabulary

In order for ELLs to understand a text, teachers need to anticipate and pick out the difficult words in a text. In order to support ELLs, there are strategies like hyper linked glossaries and using drawings as visual anchors to help students learn new vocabulary.

Hyper Linked Glossaries. Proctor (2007) maintains that hyper linked glossaries are a way for students to have a personal dictionary of words they need or have had defined. Hyper linked glossaries link the word to a dictionary definition of a word. This allows students to look up the word quickly whenever needed. The pronunciation of the word is often available depending on the dictionary that the word is linked to. Proctor suggests that another option is to have the students record the word and definition themselves. This is a great way to support vocabulary development because it can include translanguaging. The student can include the home language in the definition or provide a translation of the word which embraces the pedagogical practices of translanguaging.

Using Drawings as Visual Anchors. Pacheco and Miller (2015) remind us that having a visual for students to look at helps the students remember the vocabulary. Visuals help ELLs see what the vocabulary word represents. Seeing an image helps reinforce the vocabulary word. Having pictures around the room of the schedule for the day is an example of having a visual anchor. Eventually the student will hear the word repeated and associate it with that image.

Vocabulary is crucial to an ELLs literacy development. Teachers can aid in this process by predicting which words ELLs might struggle with and providing the students with an opportunity to learn the words before starting a text. Two strategies that can be used in pre teaching vocabulary are using drawings as visual anchors and using hyper linked glossaries. There are many scaffolds that can be used to help ELLs that do not include vocabulary instruction.

General Scaffolding for ELLs

There are many scaffolding practices out there, but it is important teachers know how to use these scaffolds in a way to support ELLs. These scaffolding strategies can be used for all students, but there is a way to use them to best support ELL learning. Using charts, organizers, providing background knowledge, providing keywords, explicit modeling, and use of wait time are the strategies focused on in this capstone.

Charts and Organizers

T-charts can be used to organize ideas as ELLs read keeping main ideas on one side and vocabulary words on the other (Fagan, 2003). Using T-charts in this way allows the students to pause after a designated amount of reading, depending on ELL level, and write the main ideas of the paragraph or page. Fagan observes that sometimes ELLs struggle with reading comprehension, and by giving the students a guide on when to stop and reflect about what they

read, the students will either know what the main idea is, or need to go back and reread. Instead of doing an entire reading and not being sure of what it was about, T-charts allows teachers and ELLs to see where the comprehension difficulty was and to make modifications.

Organizers can be used in many ways when it comes to supporting ELLs. Organizers allow ELLs to visually organize their thinking into categories, helping them focus on specific elements of a text. One way to use an organizer is to provide an ELL with forming an opinion based on a fact. The next box will have the student write their opinion on the fact. In the last box, the ELL will explain their opinion (Lee, 2018). In this example, the ELL is getting a step by step guide on how to do opinion writing. Breaking down each step into a box with instructions guides the completion of the task. Another organizer that can be used is providing boxes next to reading passages that give space for the student to do prediction and analysis of a text (Proctor, 2007). Organizers allow ELLs to break their thinking down into steps, and have boxes throughout a text available for ELLs to pause and do prediction or analysis with aid in comprehension.

Providing Background Knowledge

Teachers need to be cautious about the assumptions made about what ELLs know. Just because something is well known to native English speakers, it may be a totally new concept to ELLs. Providing background knowledge is a way for teachers to make sure all students in the class are on the same page. This can be cultural as well as academic. Depending on how much formal education ELLs have had, the previous knowledge they have about a subject may be lacking or less developed than their peers. Maunsell (2019) indicates that background knowledge can be presented to ELLs in a few different ways. One way is to do a reading as a class on a topic. For example, if the class is reading a book about the Vietnam War, the teacher may provide a reading and images to give a brief lesson about the key events.

Teachers can have the students complete a KWL chart to gauge where the class is about a topic before reading (Maunsell, 2019). In the first box, students fill in the first box with what they already know about a topic. The second box has what the students want to know or things they have questions about a topic. The last box is filled in after the assignment with things they learned. KWL charts are typically done at the beginning of the reading. The teacher may need to come up with guiding questions to have students fill in their background knowledge of a specific topic. For example, if a reading is on the Vietnam War instead of giving ELLs the broad category, teachers may provide events that happen during the story to find out what the students already know.

Explicit Modeling

Lee (2018) emphasizes that teachers need to model what they are going to do to help ELLs with comprehensible input. Demonstrating to students the expectations and how to complete a task will help ELLs understand the process of the assignment. Verbal directions are not always enough for ELLs, and explicitly showing each step will help ELLs become independent and know what to do.

Wait Time

Wait time is the amount of time given to students before picking a student for an answer (Hill, 2022). This allows ELLs time to process the question and come up with an answer. Teachers typically give wait time, but when teachers have ELLs in their class they should give more wait time than they give to native English speakers.

Scaffolding is how ELLs are able to complete the same objectives as their peers. The way ELLs arrive at the goal may look different than their peers, but the same objective is reached. Over time the scaffolds will be removed and the ELL will be able to complete the task on their

own. Wait time, explicit modeling, providing background knowledge, and using charts or organizers all provide ELLs with scaffolds that will help them reach the same end goals as their peers.

Motivation

Motivation is how willing the student is to complete a task on their own. Ellis (2015) claims that students learning English has a big impact on their motivation. The view of English at home and at school plays a role in the motivation of ELLs. Ellis points out that if a student is forced to learn the language, there is less motivation to learn the language.

Teachers need to find a way to motivate their students. López (2010) explains that one way to do this is by showing ELLs their home language matters. According to the author, when ELLs view English as a language that is forced on them and it is the only way to speak, students are discouraged and unmotivated to learn English. How students view themselves matters. If a student feels unvalued both linguistically and academically, the student will have no motivation to keep pushing through. López contends that second language acquisition is not easy and teachers play a role in how students view themselves. The way a teacher presents information also affects how motivated a student is. For example, if a teacher is not excited about what they are teaching, the students will not be interested either.

Conclusion

There are many ways classroom teachers can make literacy instruction accessible for ELLs. This capstone included motivating ELLs, general scaffolds, vocabulary instruction, literacy strategies, and translanguaging. ELLs need to be motivated to learn English in order to effectively learn it. Teachers can be excited about what they teach, as well as support the use of the ELLs home language in the classroom. Scaffolding allows students to reach the same

objectives as their peers. Providing a space for ELLs to make predictions, ask questions, form opinions, and explain their opinions are some ways to use organizers throughout the writing and reading process. Giving ELLs wait time to process information and providing explicit modeling helps ELLs complete the task on their own. Literacy strategies like simplifying language, grammar, and word choice helps students comprehend the same content in a simpler manner. Providing ELLs with sentence frames or having ELLs order pictures of events of the story help the students process the story. Phonics instruction needs to be given as the concepts arise, instead of given in an out of context lesson. Having students use their knowledge in morphemes, graphemes, prefixes, and suffixes is a way for students to figure out the meaning of words. Vocabulary instruction needs to have visual aids and an opportunity for students to make their own personal dictionary. Translanguaging is a way for students to use their entire repertoire of knowledge in learning. This can include using cognates, prior experience with learning the home language, and comparing language grammar structures.

There are many ways to make instruction accessible and knowing the ELLs in the class is the best way for teachers to support students. As indicated by the research here, not every student learns the same way, so having a variety of strategies available to try with students is key. Classroom teachers need to modify literacy instruction to support ELLs in their classrooms through the research based strategies presented here. Therefore, in the next chapter I will describe the product and tools in this capstone's professional development.

Chapter 3: Professional Development

This professional development will be two sessions long. Both sessions will be addressing how to make literacy instruction accessible for ELLs. The first session will give different strategies and methods and the second session will allow teachers to apply the

knowledge they learn in the first session. In this chapter, each day will be described. The learning targets of each day, strategies and methods, materials, and the reason behind each strategy for session one will be provided. For the second session, the reason for the activity will be explained. The materials used will be in the appendices A and B, at the end of the capstone document.

Session One

Session one is an informational session, providing classroom teachers with different resources and methods on how to make literacy instruction accessible for ELLs. Before the session begins, every teacher will be given an agenda as well as a handout with a list of all the strategies presented in the session. There is space available on the sheets for notes to be taken during the presentation. All handouts and materials will be available in Appendix A: Session One. The session will start with the ice breaker question: Which is your favorite and why? There are several images of different types of animals and each teacher will choose one and turn and talk to the person next to them or their group to answer the question.

The teachers will then be provided with the learning goals of the session. The learning target for day one is: I will be able to use strategies given in this professional development to modify a reading passage for ELL students. This learning target has teachers applying what they learn about different strategies and methods in a way that would actually be used in the classroom. The strategies that will be discussed are: cognates, breaking down words into roots, prefixes, and suffixes, dual language texts, using audio recordings, simplifying language, meaningful phonics instruction, repeated readings, ordering events in a text, sentence frames, vocabulary instruction, drawings as visual anchors, charts and organizers, providing background

knowledge, wait time, and modeling. This is an opportunity for teachers to use the strategies and ask questions before they do it in their classrooms.

Once the teachers understand the learning target, the presentation of the different strategies and methods will be given. The strategies and methods presented are based on the literature review in chapter two. The strategy is named followed by a brief explanation of why it is beneficial to ELLs as well as some of the contexts it could be used. This information will also be available in notes format on a handout (see appendix A) for reference as the teachers work on their own assignments in the classroom.

Translanguaging is when students are able to use their home language in assignments and in the classroom (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Pacheco & Miller, 2015). Cognates are words that are similar looking in both the home language and English (Ellis, 2015). Having knowledge of the students first language will help teachers be able to utilize cognates to help ELLs gain confidence in the language.

Breaking down words into roots, prefixes, and suffixes has students chunking words into bigger, more comprehensible parts (Pacheco & Goodwin, 2013). There are many ways to break words down and breaking words down into parts ELLs might recognize because of their home language is most beneficial.

Using texts in both languages helps ELLs with comprehension (Rowe, 2018). Teachers may not be able to make direct connections to the text, students will fill in information they did not understand using the home language text.

Most teachers know how to implement different strategies to support their students, but knowing the needs of ELLs will influence how and when these strategies are used. Using audio recordings is beneficial to ELLs. Hyper linked glossaries are a way for students to have a

definition of a word using a recording or a link to the definition of a word or phrase (Proctor, 2007). Students can also record the English or home language translation of a word to help with the definition. This strategy was included in a presentation because it is a way to include technology in a meaningful way for students. The students have easy access to what they need quickly based on their own needs.

Literacy strategies help ELLs with literacy skills in all subjects. One way to support students is by changing the syntax, grammar, and or word choice of a question (Proctor, 2007). This allows ELLs to process less information, focusing on the content instead of language. This is especially important for non-English subjects.

Including grammar instruction as the need arises allows ELLs to get a meaningful context around the instruction (Cárdenas-Hagan & Carlson, 2007). Teachers need to provide practical examples of instruction, and doing it as issues or questions arise helps ELLs relate the instruction to an experience.

Reading a text more than one time helps ELLs process the language and helps with comprehension (Hill, 2022). Teachers read texts more than once frequently to help all students with comprehension, but ELLs need more time to process the information, so reading the passage more times helps with that.

Ordering events in a text has students putting images of what happened in the text in order after the first read (Proctor, 2007). This helps the students with comprehension of events. This strategy is used in the presentation because it is a way to aid in comprehension that is not a common strategy every teacher knows.

Sentence frames begin a sentence for ELLs and the ELL completes the sentence with what the question is asking (Wiley & McKernan, 2016). Phrasing can be difficult for ELLs in the

beginning of acquisition so providing phrasing helps them focus on content instead of the language.

Vocabulary instruction is crucial for ELLs since their language skills are not fully developed. Teachers need to ensure students are receiving the definitions of words to aid in comprehension, as well as academic knowledge.

When drawings are used as visual anchors, ELLs have something to associate with an English word (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). The drawings could be images, photos, or drawings. This strategy was chosen because words are associated with images in our minds and providing a consistent image with a word can help ELLs with the meaning in English.

T-charts can be used in many situations to organize ideas (Fagan, 2003). T-charts are one of the many different ways to scaffold ELLs and providing them a space to keep their ideas organized can help with comprehension. This strategy was chosen so teachers can learn how to use common organizers to specifically support ELLs.

Providing students with boxes next to a reading passage allows students to have a space to make predictions and analysis of a text (Proctor, 2007). This strategy is useful in this presentation because it shows teachers that ELLs need to explicitly take the time to summarize as they read to help with comprehension of a text.

Providing background knowledge to ELLs helps fill in the gaps of knowledge they may not have gotten in their previous educational or cultural experiences. Teachers need to be aware of these differences to support students so the tasks are relevant and achievable.

Wait time and modeling are good practices most teachers do because they allow time for processing. ELLs need more modeling and wait time than their peers because of the language barrier.

After the presentation of different strategies is over, a passage from the 2022 New York state third grade test will be provided and the teachers can work with a partner or cohort to work on creating questions and possible modifications the ELLs could need to answer the questions. The cohort will create a multiple choice and a written response question. This reading was chosen because it represents what the state believes is a grade level text. At the end of the time to work on this, each group will share the modifications they made with the whole room. This reading passage is interdisciplinary so the teachers can practice modifying a reading assignment that is applicable to multiple subjects, not just English. This activity is open ended as well so there are many different ways to modify the reading. Depending on the students the teachers have, the assignment may need to be different, so sharing with the whole group what changes were made allows everyone to see how one reading can be changed in many ways to meet the needs of each ELL.

As a wrap up activity, the teachers will reflect on what they learned in the presentation and through modifying the reading passage. The teachers will create a goal list of something they want to work toward before the next session. The goal list will be completed through a google form. The next session is to be done a month after the first so teachers can have time to start modifying assignments on their own in the classroom. Having a goal gives the teachers something to work toward as they wait for the next session.

Finally, the closing activity will be a handout where teachers will write one thing they learned within the two sessions to share with a first year teacher. This has the teachers reflecting on the strategies and methods they used during the PD. It also allows the presenter to see what the teachers are taking away from their professional development. The presenters' contact information will be available for teachers to have if any questions come up.

Session Two

Session two is an opportunity for teachers to share and reflect on modifying assignments for ELLs. This is also a time for teachers to create modifications with their grade level as a whole. Teachers will be provided with an agenda for this session. All handouts will be available in Appendix B: Session two. The second session will begin with a slideshow that will have pictures of some activities and the teachers will discuss with people around them which they would choose and why. Then teachers will be provided with the learning target. The learning target is: I will be able to make modifications in my cohort on the activities I brought from my classroom. This learning target has the teachers making modifications on things they will actually be using in the classroom. Modifications can be made to any assignment, but it is more meaningful when the modifications are done for real students in a teacher's class. There will then be a slideshow on a brief summary of different strategies and methods on how to make literacy instruction accessible for ELLs. Refer to Appendix A: Session One for the list of strategies and modifications provided to the teachers during the first session.

Next, the teachers will work with their cohorts to create the questions and modifications. Another copy of the handout from the first session will be provided to guide teachers on what kinds of modifications to make. Giving time to work on the assignments as a cohort allows the teachers time to talk out their modifications. Teachers will have time to ask questions and talk out some of the ways they may modify for a specific student. Once time is up, teachers will come back to their cohort one assignment they modified and why according to the needs of the student.

Finally, the closing activity will be a handout where teachers will write one thing they learned to share with a first year teacher. This has the teachers reflecting on the strategies and methods they used during the PD. It also allows the presenter to see what the teachers are taking

away from their professional development. The presenters' contact information will be available for teachers to have if any questions come up.

This professional development has teachers learning different methods and strategies that can be used with ELLs. The first session provides teachers with the strategies and the second session has the teachers creating modifications with a cohort. This PD shows teachers how to make literacy instruction accessible for ELLs and has the teachers applying what they learn to materials in their classroom.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Introduction

Most teachers get some basic training on ELLs in college, but not all of them have interactions with ELLs in the classroom. This capstone was created to help classroom teachers know how to modify literacy instruction to support ELLs' language production. Several strategies and a method was presented in this capstone to help classroom teachers. The goal of using these strategies is to increase ELL academic performance. ELLs struggle in several aspects in the classroom including culture, language, and complexity of assessments. The strategies and method presented in this capstone help support ELLs with these struggles. When teachers know the needs of their ELLs, the academic performance of these students will increase.

Conclusions

During the research for this project, there was an abundance of strategies available for ELLs. Not every strategy and method could be covered in the professional development (PD) presented in Chapter 3 but strategies that would be helpful for the majority of ELLs were chosen. Some ELLs may benefit from one strategy over another, but in general, the strategies in this capstone PD could be applied to any ELL student.

Translanguaging was overwhelmingly the most abundant topic in this research. This shows how important it is to use the student's home language during instruction. Information from their home language can transfer and aid in second language acquisition (Ellis, 2015). It is important for ESOL teachers and classroom teachers to collaborate and talk with each other as much as possible so new and different strategies can be used based on the needs of the student. Although some districts are so small the ESOL teacher has a handful of students across several grades and it can be difficult to accommodate for every student in every subject. Therefore, it is up to the classroom teacher to ask about different strategies and implement them in their own lessons. It is crucial there is good communication between these teachers so the students can be provided with support that works best for them (Okhremtchouka & Sellub, 2019).

Explicit language teaching can be a tough area for classroom teachers, especially if their focus is not in English Language Arts. Classroom teachers can help their students when they make connections to the ELLs home language. Some teachers may have to do some diving into the home language of their students if they are not familiar with the structure (Hernández et al., 2016). The teacher does not have to know everything about the language to make some of these connections. Classroom teachers may be nervous about making these connections in an unfamiliar language, but it can be so helpful to students if they create these connections based on the little bit of research they do know

Using organizers is another way to help ELLs. In order for these organizers to be beneficial to ELLs, they must be explained and done together the first few times. The organizers could also be within reading or writing assignments so knowing the needs of the ELLs in the room is helpful when trying to decide how many places the organizers are used and what they are used for. For example, if a student is struggling with summarizing, at the end of every paragraph

a box would be provided with a question that prompts them to summarize what they read in that paragraph (Fagan, 2003; Lee, 2018). Organizers are used in all classrooms, but classroom teachers need to know when and why organizers are used for ELLs.

Implications for Student Learning

This capstone was written with the general ELL learner in mind. The needs of each student will vary but all the strategies presented could be tried with every ELL. Each of these strategies could be used to help students in different ways across disciplines.

Translanguaging uses the home language of the student to support their learning (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Pacheco & Miller, 2015). Students who have varying experience in their home language could use their home language in different ways based on the experience they have had. For example, if students have oral language knowledge in their L1, audio versions of texts and definitions could be used to support English instruction. If they have writing experience, the students can use the foundational grammar knowledge in their home language. In both cases, the students are receiving instruction that relates to what they already know and have experience within their home language.

Literacy strategies are used to support the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills of students. Simplifying language and providing students with meaningful literacy instruction makes the material more accessible for students. When the language is simplified, students are able to focus on the content of the question rather than the English demands (Goldenberg, 2008). Sometimes their English skills need to be assessed, but during classwork, it is important the students have access to the material so they are learning the language as well as the material. When literacy instruction is provided during a lesson, the students are learning the information in a meaningful context (Cárdenas-Hagan & Carlson, 2007). Doing a whole bunch of English

grammar lessons is overwhelming to most ELLs. When the instruction happens as the skills are coming across in readings or writing pieces, there is a reason ELLs will remember the mini lesson. The mini lesson is connected to the current material they are working on.

Implications for Teaching

Not all classroom teachers have the training needed to know how to support every ELL in their classroom. When the TESOL teacher is unavailable to make every modification for every student, the classroom teachers should know how to do it. The needs of the ELLs in the room are so important for teachers to know so they know which strategy will be beneficial to the students. Using strategies classroom teachers are familiar with helps to show how different strategies or organizers that are used by most teachers can benefit ELLs.

Classroom teachers need to know the needs of their ELLs to support them in a way that benefits them. The interests, home language, or the strengths and weaknesses of the students can influence the strategy used to support the ELL (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Pacheco & Miller, 2015). Knowing how to use these things to use the best strategy to support ELLs is crucial, and using strategies for ELLs has classroom teachers think about these things to determine which support to use.

Recommendations

Most colleges teach about supporting ELLs, but most of that information is not put into practice. Okhremtchouka (2019) found in a study that 70 percent of teachers needed to complete another course or professional development about ELLs after graduating college. While information is given to pre-service teachers, if the information is not put into practice, it will not be remembered to implement into teaching. The information provided to pre-service teachers

about ELLs also tends to be broad and done in an overview. It is hard to get good practical information that can be used when it is general.

In the study done by Okhremtchouka (2019), it was reported that 95 percent of in-service teachers have had interactions with ELL students in their classrooms. 46 percent of pre-service teachers reported having little to no interaction with ELL students. Almost half of the preservice teachers are not receiving experience with ELLs even though almost all of the teachers surveyed have had interactions with ELLs.

Teacher preparation programs should have students complete a student teaching placement that has ELL students. Even though not every teacher does TESOL, most classroom teachers have ELLs in their classroom. It is important teachers know how to support these students before having them in their classroom. The TESOL teacher does not always have every ELL for every class, so classroom teachers need to know how to best support these students.

Final Thoughts

Classroom teachers need to know how to make literacy instruction for ELLs. The professional development helps classroom teachers by presenting the following strategies: breaking down words into roots, prefixes, and suffixes, changing the syntax and grammar of questions, hyperlinked glossaries, recording definitions, drawings as visual anchors, t-charts, providing students with boxes for prediction and analysis, sentence frames, ordering events in a text, repeated readings of texts, modeling, and wait time. These strategies are a starting point for teachers to use what they know about their students in a meaningful way to help the ELL with language acquisition.

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Appendix A

Session One Materials

Day 1: ELL Strategies and Methods List

Translanguaging

-cognates

-breaking down words into roots, prefixes, and suffixes

-dual language texts

-using audio recordings

Literacy Strategies

-simplifying language

-meaningful phonics instruction

-repeated readings

-ordering events in a text

-sentence frames

-vocabulary Instruction

-drawings as visual anchors

General Scaffolding for ELLs

-charts and organizers

-providing background knowledge

-wait time

-modeling

Day 1: Reading Passage

Directions
Read this passage. Then answer questions 25 and 26.

The Watermelon Seed

by Kay Haugaard

- 1 Once there was a watermelon seed. It was smooth and black and shiny. It lay under the moist, soft brown earth.
- 2 The water in the soil seemed to say, "Drink me, swell up, wake up!" and the seed did. It swelled up and burst its shiny, black skin.
- 3 The pale white inside part of the seed pushed up, up, out of the dark earth. As it rose, the seed divided into two sprouts that looked like arms greeting the warm sun. The sun shone down on the pale, curving sprouts, and they turned into a strong, green watermelon vine.
- 4 The seed's lower part reached down into the dark earth and divided into roots, seeking nourishment. The roots carried the moisture and minerals from the earth up the stem into the vine.
- 5 The vine grew and reached out over the sun-warmed ground. Fine short hairs on the vines glinted in the sunshine. Green, lacey leaves soon spread like fans, opened flat to the sky, soaking up the sun's rays.

glinted = gave off sunlight
- 6 The warm sun poured energy onto the vine, and it bloomed with small yellow flowers. The flowers opened wide to welcome bees, who drank their sweet liquid called nectar.
- 7 While these small creatures fed, tiny grains of dusty yellow pollen stuck to them. The bees carried pollen from one golden cup to another, sending a message to the flowers: it is now time to produce juicy, heavy fruit.
- 8 When the flower petals fell to the ground, a tiny green bubble of a watermelon began to grow on the vine. It drank and drank water from the rain brought up from the roots. It swelled and swelled with the water and the heat from the sun. Its pale yellow belly touched the warm earth. Its

GO ON

green and yellow stripes stretched from end to end of its plump, rounded shape. It grew large and heavy in the hot summer sun.

- 9 One day the ripe melon was cut from its stem. It was carefully loaded onto a truck and taken to a farmers' market. There, it was bought by a man for his family.
- 10 Inside its smooth, striped skin was delicious, sweet red juice in red, crunchy flesh. The family cut it into large slices. They ate it with great pleasure, this special gift from the sun, the rain, and the earth filled with minerals.
- 11 The boy picked up a black shiny seed and smiled at it. It seemed to say, "Plant me. I will make more watermelons!"



Day One: Google Form

Describe one goal you would like to work on between now and our next session in regards to how to make literacy instruction accessible to ELLs.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNhE8-rU8Z14VOVh0pjRj7H4M-RYRAG_1R4xZSKxcWsNIhmQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

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Appendix B

Session Two Materials

Day 2: What You Would Tell a First Year Teacher

If you could give one piece of advice to a first year teacher about how to make literacy instruction accessible to ELLs what would it be? This could be anything you learned from session one or session two.

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