Knowledge and Strategies for Educating English Language Learners

Second Language Acquisition

As elementary classroom teachers responsible for teaching a variety of content to diverse students, it is **imperative** that you clearly understand the similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition.

The Contextual Interaction Theory (Almaguer & Esquierdo, 2013), is based on 5 empirically grounded principles:

1. **Linguistic Threshold** (Cummins, 1976)
   a. "The degree to which [bilingual students'] proficiencies in L1 and L2 are developed is positively associated with academic achievement" (Collier & Thomas, 2004)
2. **Dimensions of Language Proficiency** (Cummins, 1981)
   a. BICS – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills are easily acquired through daily living and take ELLs 2-3 years to develop.
   b. CALP – Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency is acquired from academic settings and take ELLs 5-7 years to develop.
3. **Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) Model** (Cummins, 1981)
   a. One central location in brain for language acquisition and processing.
   b. Knowledge and skills are transferrable between languages
4. **Second Language Acquisition** (Krashen, 1982)
   a. Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis
   b. Natural Order Hypothesis
   c. Comprehensible Input Hypothesis
   d. Monitor Hypothesis
   e. Affective Filter Hypothesis ** see hand-out for further details
5. **Student Status** (Almaguer & Esquierdo, 2013)
   a. ELLs need high expectations, supportive school environment, understanding of differences in culture, language, age, economic status, & ethnicity

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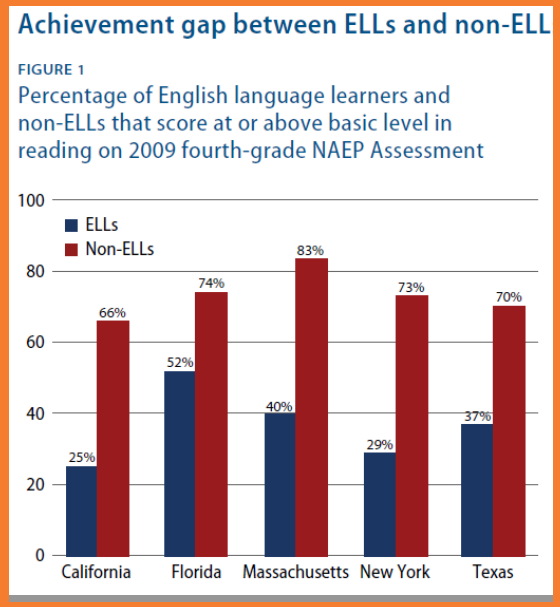

"We focused…on the different ESL strategies used and highlighted which strategies are appropriate for different levels of language proficiency and which strategies would help all learners, not just ELLs" (de Oliveira, 2011, p. 60).

Knowledge and Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners

Strategies for Elementary Classrooms

According to Samson & Collins (2012, p. 11), elementary classroom teachers need to:

1. **Support Oral Language Development**
    a. Direct teaching of vocabulary within context (hearing, seeing, saying)
    b. Use nonverbal cues, visual aids, gestures, hands-on experiences
    c. Establish routines, extended talk on a single topic, provide students with immediate feedback, opportunities to converse with teachers, speak slowly, use clear repetition, paraphrase
2. **Explicitly Teach Academic English**
    a. Explicit instruction in vocabulary, syntax/grammar, & phonology within academic context
    b. Understand difference between informal and academic language
    c. Expose students to formal variations of academic vocabulary and sentence structures
    d. School wide consistency of curriculum across content and grade levels
    e. Build on foundation of prior knowledge
3. **Value Cultural Diversity**
    a. Reaffirm social, cultural & historical experiences of all students
    b. Character education – accept, explore, understand different perspectives to prepare for global citizenship
    c. Interact with diverse cultures through reading materials, assemblies, traditions, cafeteria food
    d. Home-school partnership using letters home, bulletin boards, community events, etc.

Inquiry Based Learning

Guccione (2011, p. 576) researched strategies for embedding inquiry based learning and literacy across content curricula.

1. **Writing instruction** (30-60 min. daily)
    a. Students use writing to document thinking through research process
    b. Move at own pace on meaningful topics to individuals
    c. Share out writing and ideas for further discussion and learning
2. **Science instruction**
    a. Discovery learning
    b. Model questions and curiosities on topics
    c. Expose students to a variety of texts
3. **Social Studies instruction**
    a. Explore topics related to

5E Science & Literacy Pedagogy

(Carrejo & Reinhartz, 2012, p. 35)

• **Engage** – students identify topic of interest and make connections between past and present learning. They ask higher order questions.
• **Explore** – students interact with materials and resources to satisfy curiosity. They observe, collect data, converse with peers, and begin analysis.
• **Explain** – teacher introduces science content language associated with engage & explore phases, encourages language opportunities to make connections and understanding between facts and concepts.
• **Elaborate** – students build relationships, use models, and connect ideas and theories.
• **Evaluate** – students are formatively assessed on mastery of fundamental skills, academic language, science ideas, interpretations of visual representations and graphics through writing, oral and written exercises such as a vocabulary loop, and interactions with peers and teacher.

"Every strategy you used was important and each would be beneficial to different kinds of learners. As with any learner, one size does not fit all, so using a variety of strategies is crucial" (de Oliveira, 2011, p. 61).