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Regis University
College for Professional Studies Graduate Programs
Final Project/Thesis

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE LEARNER CURRICULUM

by

Robyn Rioux

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

REGIS UNIVERSITY

April, 2009

ABSTRACT

English Language Learners and the Development of the English Language Learner Curriculum

English Language Learners struggle on a daily basis upon entering United States schools. The delivery of ELL content has been addressed on a regular basis; however, the design of ELL curriculum does not receive adequate attention. In this project, the author created a Power Point presentation that assists educators with a foundation of origin for ELLs, addresses the need for concentration of ELL curriculum development, reminds the audience of textbook bias, and presents a variety of coteaching models. The presentation is designed for elementary educators, although it may be adapted to any level.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, school demographics change on a constant basis. Over the past dozen years, immigration has been at a record high (Waters, 2007). Enrollment of English Language Learners (ELL) in U.S. schools has increased 150% in these 12 years, with an estimated 5,074,572 students reported by state statistics for the 2005-2006 school year (Waters). To educate these students and help them to assimilate into a new culture has become a challenge for teachers.

Statement of the Problem

As immigration levels remain elevated within the continental U.S., the children of these immigrants are afforded the opportunity to attend public schools and receive a free and appropriate education. The nationalities of such children constitute a broad range, and they come from places such as: (a) South America, (b) Asia, (c) Europe, (d) Africa, and (e) Australia, as well as (f) many islands and provinces. Educators in the U.S. have the responsibility to assist these ELL students to learn the English language while, simultaneously, the students attempt to assimilate into the culture. The quandary that teachers encounter is not necessarily the delivery of instruction to ESL learners, but the development and preparation of such instruction for the teachers involved within the scope of the education.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project will be to furnish educators with information related to the importance of the development of ELL curriculum that includes input from both the core area teachers and ELL teachers who are involved. In addition, she will provide strategies to confront textbook bias, as well as the stereotypical perspectives of students toward their peers. This information and strategies shall be conveyed to participants through an inservice.

Chapter Summary

Based on recent statistical reports from state governments, immigrant student numbers are at an all time high in the U.S. (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2008). Even though educators have made progress in the education of these students, it is more difficult for the teachers to devise curriculum and plans for implementation. The intent of this project will be to provide teachers with an inservice that educates them about: (a) the value of ELL curriculum development, (b) the strategies to confront textbook bias, and (c) how to assist ELL learners with peer bias.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Immigration into the United States has reached colossal numbers, which means that not only must adults try to assimilate into the U.S. culture, but children as well (Waters, 2007). Along with the need to absorb a new culture, migrant children must learn English as a Second Language (ESL) while they attend core educational classes in a mainstreamed environment. According to Waters, the enrollment of English Language Learners (ELL) in U.S. schools has increased 150% in the last 12 years. According to state government agencies, 5, 074, 572 ELL students were enrolled in U.S. schools, pre-K through grade 12, during the 2005-2006 school year (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2008). Success is indicated when ELLs master the English language. However, the planning of ESL curriculum has been a source of difficulty for teachers, as well as the lack of available tools for instructional delivery.

Monolingual and Bilingual English-Speaking Children

Immigrants come to the U.S. from all over the world in search of a new life and various opportunities. These foreign origins include: (a) South America, (b) Europe, (c) Africa, (d) Asia, (e) Australia, and (f) a host of other provinces and islands (US Census, 2008). When the immigrants enter the U.S., some are able to speak only in the native tongue, while others are familiar with different languages, including English.

According to Linse and White (2001), immigrant children are enrolled in U.S. schools and entered into an ESL program that will assist them to learn the English language, as well as some U.S. customs and traditions. Part of the learning process includes interaction with monolingual English speaking peers. These peers are asked by teachers to assist the new students with various classroom tasks and activities. While some of the monolingual students accept teacher requests, others do not always welcome children who do not speak English (Linse & White).

Linse and White (2001) conducted a project that took place at University Park Creative School of the Arts in Charlotte, North Carolina. The researchers felt that empathy for ESL students was more important than sympathy. Thus, they constructed activities that provided opportunities for the ESL students to share personal stories and to read in their native tongue to their peers. The authors reported that the heterogeneous composition of the class provided the opportunity for ESL students to work with monolingual students who had various academic capabilities and English language fluency.

Benefits for Both

Prior to participation in the activities of the study, 75 monolingual English speakers participated in a survey that asked them what it would be like to be in a place where no one spoke English (Linse & White, 2001). Linse and White reported that the students were given three choices: (a) nervous, (b) scared, and (c) excited. According to the researchers, no students chose excited, and the majority chose either nervous or scared. Clearly, the answer choices were limited in the survey.

Six ESL students, 4 boys and 2 girls, were selected to work together and prepare books in their native language to share with their monolingual English speaking fourth-grade peers. Linse and White (2001) grouped the children together for a meeting, one to two times per week, over a period of 5 weeks. The ESL students agreed to write about themes that pertained to family and home. Some of the students were not able to translate the stories into their native language and solicited help from other family members. Additionally, the students supplemented their stories with cultural artifacts.

When the ESL student presented their stories in native tongue, the English speaking peers were asked to listen to the stories and look at the foreign words, while they tried to comprehend the stories (Linse & White, 2001). The audience of students became irritated as the readers continued, and the audience began to ask the readers to speak in English.

Upon completion of the book sharing, the 75 English speaking students were given the same questionnaire that they received prior to the activity (Linse & White, 2001). The second set of answers revealed a change; 40% of the students chose the (c) excited option as opposed to the first two options, (a) nervous and (b) scared (Linse & White). The researchers concluded that the (b) scared option dramatically decreased after the project, and the children were not as frightened that others would say bad things about them.

All children involved were able to benefit from this project (Linse & White, 2001). The ELL students gave presentations about stories that were true to them and their cultures. The presentations afforded the presenters a chance to transfer their literacy skills into their native language and to increase self-esteem levels. The monolingual

English speaking audience gained a better understanding of the immigrants' view of U.S. schools and culture, and they became more empathetic to their ELL peers. This project revealed that the climate between students must be taken into consideration in the planning of lessons.

Cultural Bias and United States Textbooks

Thus far, this researcher has demonstrated that immigrant children must endure the speculative perspectives of their peers within new schools while they try to learn the English language. Although one would think that English would be the best choice as the exclusive language of the U.S., such viewpoints are discriminatory, provincial, and show a lack of understanding of language in general (Vandrick, Messerschmitt, & Hafernik, 1996). Immigrant students must tolerate textbook bias in addition to the previous difficulties mentioned.

The Purpose of Instructional Materials

A variety of textbooks and academic materials can be utilized for instructional classroom learning, as well as cultural assimilation (Ndura, 2004). Learning a new language should be associated with the negotiation of a new culture. Classroom materials and textbooks should be used to assist students with new learning and comfort zones. Typically, school district administrators spend months and years in the careful research and scrutiny of publishers in order to select the best choice for their students. However, textbooks and supplementary materials are not always appropriate to students' success and learning. Frequently, in their study of English in U.S. public schools, these students are presented with ESL textbooks written from egocentric perspectives, in which factual, multifaceted perspectives are not provided.

Ndura (2004) conducted a study to determine whether U.S. ESL textbooks contained ESL and cultural bias and to present five strategies to address these implications. In her study, Ndura analyzed seven textbooks that were currently used in a Western U.S. school district, in both elementary and secondary schools. According to Ndura, the selected textbooks represented different foci and different levels from elementary to high school. The books were: (a) Tools, (b) Into English, Level G, (c) Into English, Level D, (d) Voices in Literature, Bronze, (e) High Point: Success in Language, Literature, Content, Level C, (f) ESL: Accelerating English Language Learning, Level 1, and (g) Launch into Reading, Level 1.

Stereotyping

According to Ndura (2004), stereotyping is when one set of people is perceived to demonstrate a specific set of: (a) values, (b) behaviors, and (c) roles. The author reported that several examples of stereotyping were found in the ESL textbooks studied. The textbook, Tools, portrayed more pictures of males than females; moreover, the males did tasks that were more difficult and operated more complex tools and machinery than the females. In English speaking societies, for example, men and women use language in different ways, which revealed a deep seated bias against women (Haviland, 1996). The current understandings of gender are more sophisticated and focused variously on gender identity, a sense of oneself as masculine or feminine, and do not see gender as determined (Sunderland, 2000).

In the textbook, Highpoint, there was a story about a boy who used his superior technological skills to assist a female neighbor who had a computer predicament; thus, the male was portrayed as he assisted a female victim (Ndura, 2004). In addition,

stereotyping was portrayed in a passage about an African boy, who worked hard and attained an education to advance his life, which is not a realistic illustration of life in Africa. Additionally, themes throughout the Launch into Reading text depicted Africa as a land of mummies and chimpanzees.

Invisibility

Ndura (2004) noted that invisibility is the omission of information about any of the main variables. Also, none of the six ESL textbooks included any type of reference to religion, although many cultures are centered in a religious context and base their existence on congruent beliefs. In one text, students compared and contrasted holidays based on food, singing, dance, games, and gifts, while in another text, there was a picture of a town that contained not one house of worship.

Also, many software programs that supplement textbooks may contain the invisibility characteristic. According to Waters (2007), software programs contain a virtual world that utilizes the English language. However, this virtual world does not represent the real world that students live in or their native lands. The omission of houses of worship clearly does not represent numerous societies, as religion plays an important role in the maintenance of social solidarity (Haviland, 1996).

Unreality

Unreality is something that students encounter on a daily basis in school (Ndura, 2004). While in school, students learn basic academic foundations and honorable characteristics. However, life outside of school is different. Students may endure chores, chaos, or even loneliness. Violence is not accepted in U.S. public schools; although,

many students witness violence on a daily basis outside of school. The reality of life may not be portrayed in U.S. textbooks.

According to Ndura (2004), both invisibility and imbalance lead to unreality, a situation in which controversial topics, such as discrimination and prejudice, are avoided in favour of a more idealistic and traditional view of national history or current issues. In these textbooks, there was no mention of daily struggles and/or the communal barriers that average people endure while they attempt to conform to the predominant cultural norms, although diverse groups of people were pictured in positive and productive activities. Past hardships were discussed, yet current hardships that derived from the past were not addressed. The stories were told from perspectives that did not necessarily provide the thoughts and feelings of natives to the theme.

What Textbook Bias Teaches

The presence of bias in a textbook can hinder the education of ESL students (Ndura, 2004). Stereotyping teaches students that what the textbook portrays is a model of what U.S. culture actually is. According to Ndura, the skewed perception of gender roles will impact the immigrant students' academic and professional choices, because they may feel confined to certain ascribed roles and options. Additionally, the use of stereotyping in textbooks can create distorted student views of other societies and cultures. However, the effects of a text on learning are impossible to predict because one cannot predict a given reader's response to that text (Sunderland, 2000).

Textbooks should present real life issues from diverse perspectives, in order to allow students to relate the information to their own lives or those of others (Ndura,

2004). When textbooks avoid topics such as religion, they eliminate religious diversity, and students are prevented from being able to attain higher level thinking connections.

Ndura cited the American Association of University of Women (1992) and stated:

if we do not begin to discuss more openly the ways in which ascribed power — whether on the basis of race, sex, class, sexual orientation, or religion affects individual lives, we cannot truly prepare our students for responsible citizenship (p.149).

Immigrants sound, and sometimes look, different when they enter a new culture. If textbooks generate an unrealistic picture of the real world, immigrant students may have a harder time with the assimilation process, as they search for models to pursue.

Strategies to Tackle Textbook Bias

It is important for teachers to critically evaluate the textbooks and related materials that are selected for the curriculum they teach (Ndura, 2004). In the examination of curricular materials, Ndura also states teachers need to increase their awareness of various types of bias and their effects on students' perceptions and learning experiences.

Sunderland (2000) suggested that teachers should be aware that, also, bias may be found somewhere other than in the text. Thus, Ndura (2004) suggested that the following variables be considered when materials are examined: (a) lifestyles, (b) relationships between people, (c) heroes, (d) possible effects on students' self-image, (e) background of the author and/or illustrator, (f) the author's perspective, (g) word choice, and (h) the copyright date. Additionally, lesson outcomes should be considered in addition to how the materials relate to the students' world.

Supplementary materials can assist the teacher to provide various perspectives in relation to a topic (Ndura, 2004). Diverse learning is beneficial to all students, because it addresses multiple learning styles. Ndura provided several recommendations: (a) biographies, (b) news clips, (c) newspaper articles, (d) television shows, (e) field trips, (f) music, and (g) guest speakers from the community.

Ndura (2004) reported that students ask many perplexed questions and want to know answers to a variety of miscellaneous questions. Teachers should answer student questions as openly and honestly as they can, within appropriate guidelines set forth by school officials. Avoidance of issues that students face on a daily basis hinders their critical thinking skills if they are not exposed. When students are able to participate in discussions and are provided with alternative perspectives, they will have a better understanding of the issues.

When immigrant students are allowed to share experiences and stories from their home culture and their acculturation experiences, they are not only empowered, but also they enrich their teachers and classmates (Ndura, 2004). Such experiences will allow ESL students to become more confident and accepted (Linse & White, 2001). Also, the shared experiences will help dispel some biases and misconceptions about their lives and those of other immigrants (Ndura).

Collaboration Between ESL and Content Teachers

Many in the field of education view Partnership Teaching differently. According to Davison (2006), Partnership Teaching is based on the concept of co-operative teaching when two teachers, or indeed a whole department/year term of other partners, work to develop plans for curricular development and staff development across the school.

Traditionally, co-teaching is defined as the collaboration between general and special education (SPED) teachers for all of the teaching responsibilities of all of the students assigned to a classroom (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008). However, current U.S. education trends modify the participants in such partnerships to include other disciplines, such as ESL. According to Davison (2006), often, co-teaching is viewed, as “another pair of hands” (p. 456) in the classroom, and this is not the case. Bias exists among educational professionals and their perception of what their roles and responsibilities are within the school community.

Such partnerships are ideal in nature; however, it is difficult for professionals to add another planning period into an already tight schedule (Davison, 2006). Planning is crucial to the success of co-teaching relationships, as it gives teachers the opportunity to divide lesson preparation tasks and modify classwork, textbooks, and homework assignments so that all students can take part in the learning process (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008). In addition, such planning periods will give the teachers the opportunity to systematically plan language development, and not just for the inclusion of ESL students in ongoing activities of the mainstream classroom (Davison). Also, teachers may feel uncomfortable within their co-teaching relationship. This feeling may be the result of personality conflicts, mandated partnerships, or the students assigned to the teachers.

The Study

Davison (2006) conducted a 3 year study to depict and examine the process of co-planning and co-teaching among content area teachers and ESL teachers. Davison addressed the key assumptions related to effective collaboration between content area teachers and ESL teachers within his review of literature to support his conduct of the

research project. Davison argued that partnership between said teachers is relatively undertheorised and needs further evaluation and reconceptualisation if it is to be effective.

The Davison (2006) study took place in a large K-12 international school located in Taiwan, with English as the medium language. The student body was comprised of more than 50 different nationalities. The majority of students were Chinese speaking and had links to the Taiwan American communities; moreover, the faculty was comprised of teachers from the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. An American based curriculum was utilized for the study, with local cultural alterations.

For the purpose of the study, 12 classroom teachers from Grades 1, 2, and 5 worked in partnerships with 5 ESL teachers and contributed feedback through short open ended questionnaires and follow-up of semistructured interviews, while they focused observations at the end of the year collaboration (Davison, 2006). The researcher utilized a qualitative approach to evaluate the data (e.g., teacher feedback) and categorized the data in an interpretive way, which was based on grounded theory (Glaser & Strass, 1967, as cited in Davison).

The collection of data via the use of questionnaires was a constant process completed in stages (Davison, 2006). These stages were dictated by emergent topics from teacher responses, and then the data were categorized according to theme in conjunction with the related research literature. Davison formulated various models in conjunction with different coding systems with the data and maintained that the analytical framework was not predetermined nor imposed.

Davison (2006) utilized the Halliday model (1985, as cited in Davison) of language to evaluate questionnaire responses. Three domains were identified, which provided a framework for response examination. These domains included: (a) field (i.e., subject); (b) tenor (i.e., participant relationships); and (c) mode (i.e., organization of the language).

Field, Tenor, and Mode

According to Davison (2006), field refers to the topic of the language used, tenor refers to the roles and relationships between the interactants in a communication, and mode refers to how the language is organized (e.g., spoken-like or written-like). Subsequent paragraphs will provide further details about field, tenor, and mode.

When interpreting the answers from the questionnaires, indicators of success included the way in which teachers adopted each others' language, especially technical terminology (e.g., lexis, outcomes) and content specific formulaic phrases (Davison, 2006). Teachers who experienced success used specific language instead of general terminology. Responses that generated specific data and details indicated more success within relationships than did simplified responses. Higher levels of performance were associated with successful teacher collaboration, while less successful collaborations made more use of material and relational processes, in regard to dialogue.

According to Davison (2006), the tenor domain of the results indicated higher achievement between partner teachers who had stronger relationships, which indicated more equality shared among all parties. Additionally, participants exhibited more detail within quotes, and concrete attainments were associated with stronger successes. When

mutual respect is ascertained, individuals feel as though they have a purpose in a relationship.

The last domain mode was utilized to determine how distant the language of the response was in reference to the actuality it described (Davison, 2006). Successful relationships in this domain encompassed congruent metaphors, a great deal to say, and participants who were content to put responses in writing.

Davison (2006) was systematic in his connection of research and questionnaires to determine the qualitative findings for his study. The findings indicated a transformation in the attitudes of many teachers. Some individuals began the study with a self-interested attitude and less concern for partner teachers, while others were genuinely engrossed in the project and its purpose. Through examination of the questionnaires and feedback, it was evident that teachers, who were more involved in partnerships without self-seeking interests, had more successful relationships and outcomes with their colleagues.

An Emerging Framework

Davison (2006) suggested that the use of Partnership Teaching requires effort from all contributors involved with the team and its purpose. Whereas the delivery of instruction is vital, additional effort is necessary in the preparation and curriculum of the ESL program. Planning among the involved teachers is crucial to the success of the partnership and the ESL student success rates. Open communication and flexibility are characteristics necessary for those who are involved in this type of partnership. Teachers need to develop communication strategies that consistently keep all parties informed and allow for shared decision making (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008).

Teachers, who work in a partnership, need a vehicle to maintain communication about a variety of ideas, such as: (a) curriculum, (b) students, (c) instructional plans, (d) lesson ideas, (e) teaching strategies, and (f) supplemental materials. Honigsfeld and Dove (2008) suggested the use of a teaching log to frame the major concepts and skills that all students must learn for a particular unit of study and assist the ESL and classroom teacher to organize lessons.

Students have learning styles that vary from their peers, and co-teaching offers a variety of methods to address various student needs (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008). One type of partnership consists of one lead teacher and one teacher “teaching on purpose” (p. 9). The teachers take turns instructing the entire class, while the other teacher teaches on purpose and concentrates on a specific skill or task, or provides the opportunity for pre-teaching a lesson or re-teaching a lesson.

Another style of co-teaching allows the class to be divided into two heterogeneous groups; each teacher provides instruction to a group (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008). This type of model allows ESL students to experience additional opportunities to: (a) interact with each other, (b) listen to their peer models, (c) volunteer responses, or (d) receive feedback from the teacher.

Also, Honigsfeld and Dove (2008) suggested that the two teachers instruct the class together and teach the same lesson at the same time. The teachers can interject and provide examples for one another in an effort to present the lesson in a way that all students can comprehend. Also, the teachers can assign the students to groups and monitor or facilitate the groups at the same time.

Additionally, teachers can assign students to one of two groups based on their language proficiency levels, knowledge, or skills for target content (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008). The teachers can address student needs according to this type of flexible, temporary grouping.

Also, teachers can co-teach with technology (Waters, 2007). According to Waters, numerous programs are available to teachers and ESL students that offer context based instruction, which puts students into lifelike situations with the use of digital video. The use of immersion models force students to work through the program without any translation or explanation from their native language. The use of language learning tools allow teachers to step back a bit from their ESL students, to act more often as facilitators in the learning process (Haynes, 2006, as cited in Waters, 2007).

Chapter Summary

In this review of literature, the author presented a variety of ideas that are focused on the learning of immigrant students in the U.S. These students encounter a variety of obstacles, yet they can find ways to share their cultures customs to ease the apprehensions of their peers. United States textbooks in ELL programs contribute to the obstacles of learning with a variety of biased views, such as: (a) stereotyping, (b) invisibility, and (c) unreality. The literature provided examples to assist teachers with strategies to tackle textbook bias. Co-teaching was discussed, as well as the benefits provided to all students and various models of partnerships. Though a variety of ideas is represented individually in this chapter, these ideas are all crucial components to the development of ELL curriculum.

In Chapter 3, this author describes the method to develop an inservice for classroom and ELL teachers. The inservice will focus on a PowerPoint presentation with a variety of topics to assist teachers in the development of ELL curriculum. The topics to be covered shall include, but will not be limited to: (a) combat textbook bias, (b) plan and implement lessons together in partnerships, and (c) co-teaching models and strategies.

Chapter 3

METHOD

The purpose of this project will be to furnish educators with information related to the importance of the development of English Language Learners' curriculum that includes input from both the core area teachers and ELL teachers who are involved. In addition, she will provide strategies to confront textbook bias, as well as the stereotypical perspectives of students toward their peers. This researcher is a classroom teacher of ELLs at the fourth grade level, and continuously seeks ways to improve learning for her students. It is the intent of the researcher to design a Power Point presentation that can be viewed during an inservice for teachers. Additionally, the workshop attendees can leave with a printed copy of the Power Point along with handouts that provide the strategies and ideas presented.

This researcher provided a variety of research in Chapter 2. It is the intent of this researcher to synthesize the information provided about United States textbooks, co-teaching options, and ELLs in order to assist others in the development of ELL curriculum.

Target Audience

This project will be designed for all classroom and ELL teachers of Grade K-8 students. High school teachers may wish to access the project if they have ELLs in their classes; however, high school teachers do not spend the amount of time with their

students that teachers of K-8 do. Also, supervisors of instruction and department chairs will also be interested in this project.

Organization of the Project

An informational PowerPoint presentation will be developed for classroom and ELL teachers who seek new ways to assist their students learn the English language while they assimilate into the U.S. culture. Ideas and strategies shall include, but will not be limited to: (a) combat textbook bias, (b) plan and implement lessons together in partnerships, and (c) co-teaching models and strategies. The information for the project will be furnished by the references provided in this project, as well as experts in the education community. Also, the PowerPoint will be printed as handouts for teachers to take with them upon completion of the inservice.

Peer Assessment Plan

A total of seven teachers, one from each grade level kindergarten through grade five, and one ELL, will be provided with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation. This researcher will ask the teachers to view and discuss the PowerPoint collectively. Upon completion of their examination, the teachers will be asked to provide feedback that addresses the following ideas: (a) the content of the presentation was informative, (b) participants will utilize presentation information, and (c) current participants' opinions about the presentation content.

Chapter Summary

One can conclude that ESL students encounter a variety of obstacles during their assimilation into the U.S. This researcher intends to develop a PowerPoint presentation that describes challenges encountered by students and teachers. Also, the presentation

will furnish the viewers with information about combating textbook bias, developing lessons that meet student needs, and models of co-teaching partnerships. In Chapter 4, the PowerPoint presentation is presented with supplemental materials placed in an appendix.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The number of immigrant students in United States schools has more than doubled in the past 15 years (Waters, 2007). As students enter US school systems, they are faced with language barriers in addition to other assimilation obstacles. Students must begin focusing on a new language as well as a new culture. US teachers undertake enormous measures to assist English Language Learners in their new responsibilities. However, ELL educators also have responsibilities. Such responsibilities include, but are not limited to: (a) assisting ELLs with the English language, (b) providing meaning full school experiences that will aid in cultural assimilation, and (c) provide ELLs with successful learning experiences. The purpose of this project is to help teachers attain these responsibilities by: (a) planning lessons together, (b) utilizing various coteaching models, and (c) scanning textbooks and supplemental materials for bias. This researcher's intentions are to support the ELL professionals in these goals with a power Point Presentation.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER CURRICULUM

A research project
by
Robyn Rioux

REGIS UNIVERSITY
April, 2009

Good day!

I would like to thank you all for attending my in-service presentation regarding *English Language Learners and the Development of the English Language Learner Curriculum*. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mrs. Robyn Rioux, and I am a graduate student attending Regis University in Denver, Colorado. This presentation is part of my Research Project and serves as a culmination to my learning experiences. Additionally, I am a fourth grade elementary classroom teacher, and I have English Language Learners mainstreamed into my regular education class.

I have compiled the information and prepared this presentation with the intention of alerting fellow educators to the significance of curriculum development in the ELL area. The presentation you will observe not only discusses curriculum development, but it also addresses co-teaching models and textbook bias.



Who are ELLs?

What is an English Language Learner?
Where do ELLs come from?

- An English Language Learner (ELL) is a person who is learning the English language in addition to their primary language. It is a misconception to think that ELLs primarily speak Spanish (in the US). ELLs come from all over the world and speak their native tongue while grasping English content.
- Most ELLs are immigrants into the United States of America. Immigrants come from Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, Australia, Antarctica, provinces, and numerous islands.
- Here at Walnut Street Elementary School, we have numerous immigrant children, and over twenty-two languages are spoken among our students at their homes.

Immigration

- Immigrants come from various countries, islands, and provinces
- Immigrants assimilate into our culture
- Educators have a professional responsibility to assist ELLs with their education



- The demographics of the United States are constantly changing. Immigration plays a great role in these continuous fluctuations. Immigration patterns depend upon many variables, including (but not limited to): family status, skills, trades, and economic opportunities.
- As I mentioned earlier, the origins of immigrants consist of the seven continents, numerous islands, and some provinces.
- While they attempt to study a second (or third) language, ELLs must also face other challenges. Such challenges include, but are not limited to: economic issues, occupational shortfalls, harassment, loneliness, confusion, frustration, prejudice, etc. Cultural assimilation should always be considered when interacting with immigrants.
- Federal law states that all students are entitled to a free and appropriate education. Public educational systems are governed and regulated by the states that they are located in. Regardless of residency, green cards, and taxpayer status, educators have a moral responsibility, within proper Board of Education guidelines, to assist ELL students with their educations.
- May I address any questions about immigration and who English Language Learners are?

Educator Teams

- ▣ ELL Teachers
- ▣ Classroom Teachers
- ▣ Special Area Teachers
- ▣ Child Study Team
- ▣ Building Supervisors
- ▣ Principals
- ▣ District Administrators

- ▣ *Teaching models to follow*



- Educator Teams involved with ELLs include ELL teachers, classroom teachers, special are teachers (i.e. physical education or art), the Child Study Team, building supervisors, building principals, and district administrators.
- The amount of involvement members have with actual curriculum is dependent upon the school district and how they assemble staff member teams. Administrators and designated teams typically formulate curriculum, with input from other staff members. The ELL and classroom teachers will have the most contact with the students. Special are teachers, and sometimes Child Study Teams, will have limited direct contact with students.
- At this time, are there any concerns or questions about variations of teams in different school districts or team member roles?

Slide 5

Planning
Lessons
Together



- It is crucial that classroom teachers and ELL teachers have ample time to plan and prepare lessons together for students.
- Though time is not abundant in the educational world, attempting to include a portion into planning periods is necessary.
- The classroom teacher and ELL teacher are the experts pertaining to the needs of their students.
- Both teachers working together will only enhance the ELL lessons.

- Planning time is crucial to coordination of lessons.
- In the real world of education, time is practically nonexistent. It is imperative that the classroom teacher and the ELL teacher take even one planning period every other week to discuss student needs and how they can be met. Each teacher is a piece of this puzzle and offers a different variation for the ELL. By conferring with one another, the teachers can make simple adjustments to lessons that will provide students with opportunities for success. The cooperating teachers will be able to make suggestions to one another that can assist student learning. For example, Teacher One might say, “Jennifer has increased her sentence fluency since listening to the stories on tape. Perhaps you can provide her with the audio tape and earphones for the weekly reading selection so she can follow along.”
- The teachers need time together so they can communicate.

Slide 6

Implementing Lessons Together



FIVE TEACHING MODELS FOLLOW...

- ▣ Classroom teachers and ELL teachers may use a variety of methods to implement lessons in the classroom.
- ▣ Communication is essential to the success of a teaching team.
- ▣ Each team member must accept that they are a colleague, and no one teacher is more vital than the other.

- It is essential that partnerships remain professional and harmonious. The ELL students have their own issues and difficulties to be concerned with. A tense atmosphere will not aid them in their learning.
- Partnerships and communication are critical to success.
- Cooperating teachers are equal on the totem pole. Both educators are professionals hired by a Board of Education to accomplish the task of teaching. Neither professional should be considered primary to the other.
- I will now present five different teaching partnership / relationships that can be practiced in the classroom. These teaching models may be adapted to suit the needs of other teaching relationship, such as in-class support. The models are not limited to ELL teams.

Slide 7

Co-teaching model #1



- One group; one lead teacher and one teacher that 'teaches on purpose'

The mainstream teacher leads the class through the lesson. The ELL teacher circulates the room and gives support to individual students or pairs in the form of mini-lessons. The teachers may exchange roles.

- The students remain as one group for whole class instruction.
- One teacher teaches the content and the other (ELL) teacher can teach individuals or pairs.
- It is important to reiterate that the teachers may (and should) exchange roles. Students will have an opportunity to remain in a whole group setting, yet they will receive concentrated instruction on a specific skill.

Slide 8

Co-teaching model #2

- Two groups; two teachers teaching the same content

Divide the class into two heterogeneous groups. Each teacher should teach the same exact content simultaneously.



- In Model #2, there should be two groups of students that are heterogeneous in nature.
- Each teacher can take a group and instruct that group with the same material and content, simultaneously.

Co-teaching model #3

- Two groups; two teachers teaching the different content

Divide the class into two groups based on their language proficiency. One teacher can teach new material, while the other teacher can reinforce previous skills. The groups may be changed on the basis of needs and content.



- Co-teaching model #3 creates two groups of students that are NOT heterogeneous in nature. The groups are based on language proficiency.
- Each teacher takes a group and instructs their group with the appropriate materials and content respective to student needs. Both teachers complete teaching simultaneously.

Co-teaching model #4

- Multiple groups; both teachers monitor / teach

Divide the class into small groups based on topic, skill, proficiency, etc. Both teachers can circulate the room and monitor group progress or assist students with learning and tasks.



- In Co-teaching model #4, multiple groups of students (2-4 per group) are created. The groups are based on proficiencies, skills, themes, topics, and/or other ideas.
- The classroom teacher and ELL teacher can both monitor the groups and assist students where needed

Slide 11

Co-teaching model #5



- One group; two teachers teaching the same content together

The teachers can work together to provide the class with whole group instruction. In this situation, teachers will feed off of one another to provide examples, explanations, and expansions of key ideas to promote student learning.

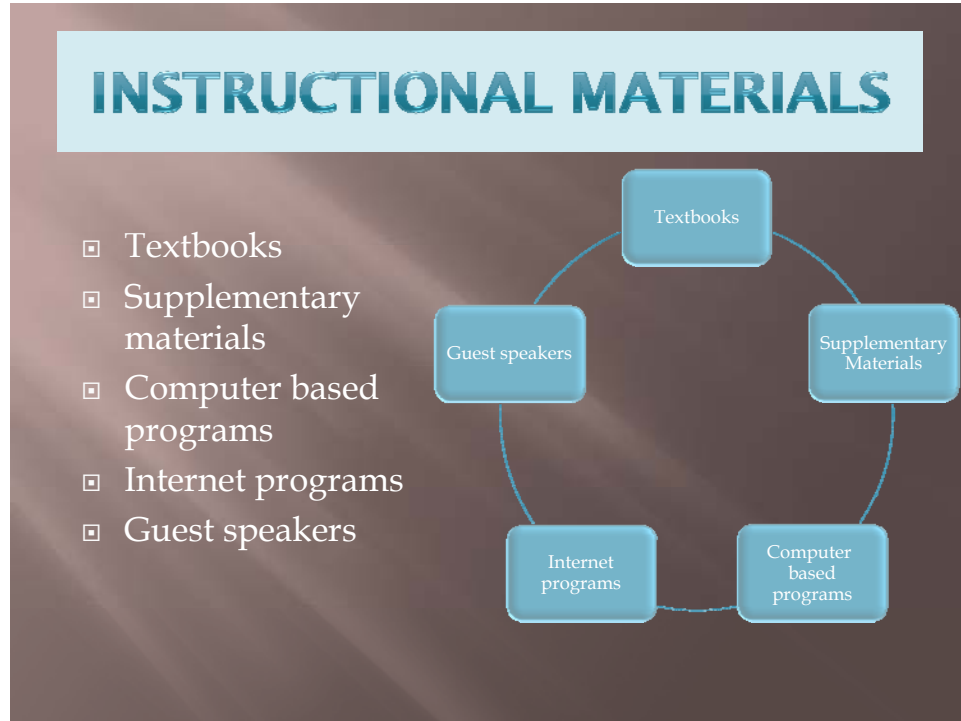
- Co-teaching model #5 is more of a traditional form. The class remains as one group of students for whole class instruction that is provided by both teachers teaching the same content together, as a team!
- Both teachers teach the content in a team type situation, enhancing each other's ideas, examples, explanations, and so forth.
- At this point, are there any questions or concerns about educational teams and / or the five co-teaching models?

Curriculum Development



- The importance and value of ELL curriculum
- Factors that comprise the ELL curriculum
- Educators involved with the curriculum development

- ELL curriculum is vital to success for immigrants in the US. When newcomers arrive in foreign territory, they deal with language barriers. However, many other issues arise and need to be dealt with. ELL curriculum assists students in becoming familiar with English, but it also aids in the burden of cultural assimilation.
- Factors of ESL curriculum include, but are not limited to: textbooks, computer software programs, internet based programs, flashcards, auditory programs on tape/cd, maps, story/picture books, newspapers, magazines, toys, puzzles, word identifiers, and so forth.
- Educational team members involved with ESL curriculum may include, but are not limited to: Boards of education, superintendent(s), district curriculum supervisors, ESL supervisors, principals, building supervisors, ESL teachers, classroom teachers, other special area teachers, and PTOs.
- The following slides will illustrate some of the factors involved in ELL curriculum development.
- May I answer any questions about curriculum development?



- ELL instructional materials may include textbooks, supplementary materials, computer based programs, internet programs, and guest speakers. However, other materials not mentioned may also be suitable.
- The following slides will give further details about these five components.

TEXTBOOK BIAS

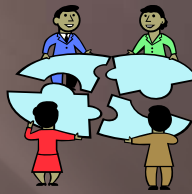
- ▣ Stereotyping of cultures
- ▣ Stereo typing of societies
- ▣ Distortion of gender roles
- ▣ Real life issues
- ▣ Religion



- An enormous amount of varied bias' can be found in textbooks. Differences between cultures and societies are skewed to the views of the publishers.
- Stereotyping can distort views of other cultures and societies.
- Textbooks create egocentric views and impose such views onto their audience.
- Bias can be seen in gender roles and how such roles are portrayed in the text (i.e. women taking care of babies, while men use tools).
- Often, real life issues are not portrayed in the text (i.e. latch key children and gangs).
- Religion is a dominant element in most cultures and societies, yet religion is skewed from textbooks. If you look through many textbooks, it is likely that you will not even see a house of worship.
- At this time, I would like you to feel free to share other forms of textbook bias that you can think of with your colleagues.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

- ▣ Magazines
 - ▣ Catalogs
 - ▣ Puzzles
 - ▣ Flash cards
 - ▣ Story/picture books
- ▣ Obtain such materials from:
 - Local libraries
 - Yard sales/ flea markets
 - Local thrift shops
 - Dollar stores
 - Stores that are discarding materials



- The slide discusses various supplementary materials, as well as how and where to obtain such materials (*read the list*).
- Are there any other places anyone would like to mention?

COMPUTER-BASED AND INTERNET PROGRAMS



- ❑ Educate students
- ❑ Enhance learning
- ❑ Enable student achievement
- ❑ Allow for individualized instruction and learning
- ❑ Provide fun while learning
- ❑ Address various modalities of learning

- Many computer and internet based programs serve as wonderful teachers and supplements.
- Many programs available enhance learning and reinforce various skills.
- Such programs provide for achievement, which enables the student with a sense of accomplishment (i.e., the student's ego gets a boost).
- These types of programs can also individualize instruction and learning making it personal to student needs.
- The computer provides fun...students will gain knowledge while they think they are playing!
- Computer programs also have the capability to address many modalities of learning, such as visual, auditory, etc.

GUEST SPEAKERS

- ▣ Enhance societal and cultural relationships
- ▣ Provide students with real life experiences
- ▣ Vary learning experiences
- ▣ Provide opportunities for students to inquire with personal questions and / or concerns



- Guest speakers provide opportunities to strengthen societal & cultural ties.
- Guest speakers provide real life, first-hand experience in person and bring a reality to the audience.
- Varying learning experiences with opportunities like this make learning exciting.
- Guest speakers provide students with opportunities to address their own personal concerns and questions directly to someone with knowledge and receive immediate feedback.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MATERIALS

- ▣ Increase your awareness of bias to assist students
- ▣ Examine and scrutinize all student materials (including pictures, themes, heroes, etc.)
- ▣ Formulate a repertoire of supplementary materials
- ▣ Avoid the avoidance game
- ▣ Listen to your students

- Teachers need to be aware of the biases that their students face on a daily basis (at home and in school).
- All student materials should be examined very critically from the Table of Contents to the Index, including storylines, themes, relationships, heroes, and so forth. Looking at these materials from a different viewpoint is quite enlightening.
- It is a benefit to the students (and teachers) to comprise a great repertoire of supplementary materials, including those mentioned in the supplementary materials slide.
- Answer student questions in a factual manner to uncover relevant biases and allow for higher level thinking (within Board of Education guidelines). When you avoid the avoidance game, you are being honest with your students and assisting them with what real life offers in the United States in addition to teaching them the English language.
- Take time to listen to ELL students and learn about their acculturation experiences. Not only will this help them, it will help you as well.

RESOURCES (WEBSITES)

Educational & Fun
www.funfonix.com
www.puzzlemaker.com
www.funbrain.com
www.funfiles.com

Reading
www.scholastic.com
www.ericycenter.net
www.starfall.com

Math
www.allmath.com
www.multiplication.com
www.coolmath4kids.com

Science
www.howstuffworks.com
www.sciencenetlinks.com

Social Studies
www.odci.gov
www.50states.com
www.nps.gov

Teacher Resources
www.worksheetworks.com
www.holidays.net
www.escafe.com
www.culturalquest.com
www.worldculture.com
www.multiculturalpedia.com
www.ESJmagazine.com
www.a4esl.org
www.iteslj.org

These are websites available to assist students and teachers. You will find them in your handout.

RESOURCES (COMPUTER PROGRAMS)

- ❑ Pearson's English Language Learning and Instruction System (ELLIS)
- ❑ Rosetta Stone
- ❑ Kidspiration
- ❑ ESL Reading Smart
- ❑ Whitesmoke
- ❑ Esreadingsmart.com



This slide provides examples of computer programs to assist ELL in their studies. (Read the list.)

Three Key Ideas for Success

Three ideas that will assist ELL and promote successful mastery are:

1. Plan and implement lessons together.
2. Utilize various co-teaching models.
3. Combat textbook bias and utilize supplemental materials in teaching



- In summation, I would like to point out that many components may be synthesized together for a successful ELL curriculum and program. I have found that three key ideas need to be focused upon more closely to ensure student success.
- Idea number one: Plan and implement lessons together. This pertains to the ELL and classroom teacher who have primary contact with students. By working together, you may be enhancing one another and supplementing each other's teaching.
- Idea number two: Utilize various co-teaching models. This is a partnership. Working together as equal colleagues and providing different learning environments will allow student needs to be met. Moreover, this pertains to all students in the room, not just ELLs.
- Idea number three: Combat textbook bias and utilize supplemental materials in teaching. Take the time to scrutinize the materials you use in your classroom. Add and delete such materials as needed. Create a repertoire of various genres and materials to assist students.
- At this time, I would like to thank you for your time, consideration, and participation in this project. Are there any questions or concerns that I can address for you?

Chapter Summary

According to the educational professionals, the project was enlightening and instructive in a variety of ways. The viewers mentioned that they were aware of most immigrant origins, but not all. Delivery of content was a familiar topic to the audience, and they expressed their neglectful practices toward planning lessons with ELL teachers. The ELL teachers were more familiar with planning strategies and requirements than classroom teachers. Classroom teachers were also receptive to textbook bias concepts, supplementary material ideas, and coteaching models and strategies.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Contribution of the Project

The purpose of this project was to furnish educators with an inservice related to the importance of the development of English Language Learners' curriculum. Currently, a majority of educational trends emphasize the delivery of ELL instruction without addressing the origination of the curriculum. In addition, examination of textbook bias and the use of coteaching models can support teachers with their mission. This author participated in conversations with teacher colleagues and found many to be frustrated with development of the ELL curriculum that they deliver. Though the curriculum has a solid foundation, there are not many opportunities for ELL and classroom teachers to plan lessons together and implement various coteaching scenarios.

The goal of this research project was to furnish educators with information related to the importance of the development of ELL curriculum that includes input from both the core area teachers and ELL teachers who are involved. Additionally, the author intended to provide the audience with strategies to combat textbook bias and experiment with various coteaching models.

Limitations

While developing the research project, this researcher believed that ELL teachers had more opportunities to assist in curriculum development. Limitations on time and curriculum development allow difficulties to arise in communication among the teaching staff. Additionally, while effectively conducting research and conversations with

professionals, it became apparent that personal views of who ELLs are varied among staff members.

This research project was intended to focus on a larger variety of ELLs that spanned across the United States, while the majority of ELLs at the research designated location speak Spanish and come from Spanish cultures. Therefore, this researcher believes that future viewers of this presentation must consider the information provided applicable to a vast array of cultural origins. For example, a regular education classroom teacher might apply the suggestions from the presentation to an immigrant student from Nepal.

Though five strategies are provided as coteaching models, the teaching staff may want to discuss the roles and how to implement them in the classroom prior to executing the suggestions. Meeting and discussing various curriculum ideas and coteaching strategies are a wonderful idea. However, teachers may have to work together to locate a common period that is conducive to all parties involved.

Peer Assessment Results

Seven educators evaluated the inservice project: (a) two ELL teachers, (b) # regular education classroom teachers, and (c) two special education teachers. Each of the educators was asked to participate in an online survey asking whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following items: (a) the presentation provided insight about where ELLs originate from, (b) the presentation provided me with more knowledge as to who is involved with curriculum development, (c) the presentation provided me with new options for coteaching, (d) I am more aware of the components that can be incorporated into ELL curriculum, (e) the presentation provided me with

various forms of textbook bias, (f) the presentation provided me with ideas for a variety of supplemental materials, (g) after viewing the presentation, I will try to plan more lessons with the ELL teacher, (h) after viewing the presentation, I will try to utilize the coteaching models, and (i) after viewing the presentation, I will screen textbook and supplemental materials on a regular basis.

All educators agreed that the presentation provided them with insight about the origins of ELLs and who is involved in ELL curriculum development; however, the majority said they strongly agreed. The majority of those surveyed claimed they do not plan lessons with ELL teachers, while three teachers stated they did. All agreed that new options for coteaching were provided in the presentation, and the majority strongly agreed. All strongly agreed and agreed that the presentation familiarized them with components that can be incorporated into the ELL curriculum. All participants, minus one, strongly agreed that the presentation provided them with a variety of ideas for supplementary materials. Five of the seven participants strongly agreed that they would try to utilize the coteaching models provided. All strongly agreed and agreed to screen textbooks and supplemental materials for bias. Five of the seven participants agreed that they would try to plan more lessons with ELL teachers, while two participants strongly agreed.

Recommendations for Further Development

There is a robust distance between the curriculum of the regular education classroom and the ELL program. The teachers involved possess positive intentions for linking the programs with a positive outcome for the student. Researching migration

patterns in the US and immigrant learning styles will support educational professionals in their target of student success.

The feedback from this presentation was positive and endorsing. Teachers remain hopeful that a continuance of workshops and presentations will be of assistance in their daily practices. Additionally, continued support from administration is welcomed and embraced. Moreover, more research into the development of ELL curriculum development and textbook bias to uphold student learning is needed.

Project Summary

This project provided the audience with a general overview of the ELL curriculum development, textbook bias, and various coteaching methods. The project was designed with the intention of assisting classroom teachers and ELL teachers in curriculum development, becoming familiar with bias in textbooks and supplementary materials, and becoming familiar with a variety of coteaching scenarios.

The accomplishment of the project was positive feedback from all participants who assessed it. According to the educational professionals, the project was enlightening and instructive in a variety of ways. The viewers mentioned that they were aware of most immigrant origins, but not all. Delivery of content was a familiar topic to the audience, and they expressed their neglectful practices toward planning lessons with ELL teachers. The ELL teachers were more familiar with planning strategies and requirements than classroom teachers. Classroom teachers were also receptive to textbook bias concepts, supplementary material ideas, and coteaching models and strategies.

A primary limitation that presented itself was the lack of qualitative research on this topic. Upon researching numerous resources, this researcher located plentiful articles on content delivery. However, locating research respective to the planning of ELL curriculum was difficult. Perhaps ELL curriculum development is an appropriate research topic that requires more attention, while benefiting ELL students simultaneously.

A secondary limitation that presented itself has to do with the participants who attended the workshop. Though the researcher had planned for a broader range of teachers in grade levels taught, the audience that was able to participate differed. It was quite difficult for all invited professionals to attend, which resulted in a different audience than anticipated.

This project amalgamated immigrant origins, ELL curriculum, textbook bias, and coteaching models with the intention of assisting educators in their goal of assisting ELL students to be successful. This author is hopeful that time will be allotted in the planning schedules of educators to diagram ELL curriculum and content delivery for students. The Power Point presentation may be modified to include future findings.

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