

Future Directions for Practice with English Language Learners

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Common Themes Presented by Colleagues at this Conference

- Prereferral intervention (RTI) must be more emphasized and carefully documented
- Assessment should not underestimate language proficiency (non-nons)
- Assessment should focus on strengths in both languages
- Curriculum based and dynamic assessment should be combined
- Assessment should occur in natural settings
- Assessment should include dialect & register
- Assessment should inform instruction
- So called “semilingualism” should be seen as emerging biliteracy
- A three tiered model of instruction should be utilized
- Native language literacy instruction should be given priority
- Language development intervention should start early and not after the student fails
- Systematic, explicit reading instruction should be utilized including phonological, alphabetical and word reading skills
- Teachers should integrate in a natural manner enriched vocabulary and language development into their core reading instruction
- Teachers should provide cognitive, identity development and personal engagement in the learning process
- Optimal instruction should focus on meaning, language and use
- Teachers should integrate reading and writing instruction
- Parents should be actively and meaningfully involved in the education of their children
- Teachers should close the gap between what we know and what we do
- Better staff development is desperately needed
- Teacher training should focus more on the development of cultural and linguistic competence
- Cultural competence should be based on the teacher’s ability to craft respectful, reciprocal, and responsive interactions both verbal and non verbal across diverse cultural parameters
- Teacher training should be interdisciplinary in nature and focus on the whole child including the affective domain
- Higher education should improve how regular classroom teachers are prepared to teach students with diverse needs
- Demonstration projects utilizing effective practices for ELL students should be funded and replicated

Other Important literature that should guide our future practice with ELLs

The work of Roland Tharp and the CREDE Project

Standard 1

Teacher and Students Producing Together

Tharp CREDE: From At-Risk to Excellence

- Joint productive activity: “experts” & novices work together on a common goal with opps to converse = shared understandings/language; connection betw school & everyday concepts

Standard 2

Developing Language Across the Curriculum

Tharp CREDE:

From At-Risk to Excellence

- Develop language & literacy across curriculum

Standard 3

Making Meaning: Connecting School to Students' Lives

Tharp CREDE:

From At-Risk to Excellence

- Contextualize teaching & curriculum in community/home experiences & skills

Standard 4

Teaching Complex Thinking

Tharp 1997/CREDE:

From At-Risk to Excellence

- Challenge students toward cognitive complexity: high-level thinking (application, analysis, synthesis, eval); remember ZPD

Standard 5

Teaching Through Conversation

Tharp CREDE:

From At-Risk to Excellence

- Dialogue, especially instructional conversations: dialogue with a purpose
Other Important literature that should guide our future practice with ELLs

The work of Nadine Ruiz Optimal Learning Environment OLE (Ruiz,1995)

- Take into account students' sociocultural backgrounds and their effects on oral language, reading & writing, and L2 learning.
- Take into account the students' possible learning handicaps and their effects on oral language, reading, writing & L2 learning.
- Follow developmental processes in literacy acquisition.
- Locate curriculum in a meaningful context where the communicative purpose is clear and authentic
- Connect curriculum with students' personal experiences
- Incorporate children's literature into reading, writing and ESL lessons.
- Involve parents as active partners in the instruction of their children.

Other Important literature that should guide our future practice with ELLs

Principles of Explicit Instruction (for meaningful access to gen'l curric & active engagement) Gersten, 1998

- Providing frequent feedback on quality of performance and support so that students persist in activities.
- Providing adequate practice and activities that are interesting and engaging.

- Reinforce oral language with written cues & material
- Pay attention to language: synonyms, idioms, etc.
- Vocabulary development: model, explain, everyone uses
- Mediation & feedback: rephrasing, expanding responses

**Enhancing Literature Instruction for students of ESL
Gersten & Jimenez, 1994**

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The work of Kathy Escamilla

Authentic Language Use

- The best practices for English language learners focus on language acquisition through authentic language use.
- English language learners need to be active participants in, rather than passive recipients of, language.
- Authentic language use does not take place when language acquisition is treated as a separate subject in the students' day where they repeat dialogues and study vocabulary lists.
- Neither is it (except in very limited instances) about learning how to ask for directions to the bus station, the bakery or the post office or other similar basic "survival skills."
- Rather, authentic language usage in schools takes place when students use language to talk about:
- The content they are exposed to in their other school subjects, and
- Other activities students participate in throughout the normal school day.

Guidelines for Best Practices

- The following six guidelines provide a framework for enhancing the teaching of all CLD students:
- 1) CLD students should be held to the same high expectations of learning established for all students.
- 2) CLD students should develop full receptive and productive proficiencies in English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- 3) CLD students should be taught challenging content that enables them to meet performance standards in all content areas, consistent with those for mainstream students.
- 4) CLD students should receive instruction that builds on their previous education and that reflects both their cognitive abilities and language proficiency levels.
- 5) CLD students should be evaluated with appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned with state and local standards, and that take into account the language acquisition states and cultural backgrounds of the students.
- 6) The academic success of CLD students is a responsibility shared by all educators, the family, and the community.

Bilingual Special Education's Best Practices

Bilingual exceptional students will be best served when:

- Prevention will be viewed as a priority through Professional Collaboration
- An ongoing, broadly based, non biased assessment will be provided
- Early intervention will be offered
- Some possible disabilities will be viewed as symptoms rather than disorders
- A gifted rather than a remedial approach will be used
- A broad range of special education services will be offered in an Inclusive Environment
- Instruction will be provided in the students' primary language and ESL in the content areas is used
- Regular classroom teachers (including bilingual teachers) will be involved in the program planning and implementation
- A variety of special education services will be offered to meet the variety of disabilities
- Parents will be provided with maximum amounts of information in a language they understand and should be meaningfully involved in planning and reinforcing instruction

In Conclusion:

Reflecting on the Reform Movement, Standards, and Diversity

- The U.S. is becoming more diverse, with a need to develop a more culturally competent citizenry. The school reform, standards, and high stakes testing movement are providing more rigid and repressive climates that may be antithetical to pluralism, equity, dialogue, and deliberation. The movement toward curricular and instructional standardization, the narrowing of the curriculum, and the drive to cover material quickly directly impacts the ability of the teacher to examine their own cultural selves and those of their students. Thus the challenge for the future is how to implement culturally responsive programs within this reform context.

Finally

What is needed for the future of Practice is a focus on **systemic change** utilizing Robert Rueda's idea of the 3 planes of sociocultural theory. Much of our work in the past has focused on the personal plane (looking for within child deficits)

We must now focus on the interpersonal plane by assuring an **opportunity to learn** via the RTI model.

We must also focus on the **community plane** acknowledging that it takes a whole village to educate a child & thus the importance of involving the parent and community.