Components of Effective Reading Instruction for English Language Learners

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Reading First
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Who are English Language Learners?

“Students who come from language backgrounds other than English and whose proficiency is not yet developed to the point where they can profit fully from English-only instruction”

(NRC Report, 1997)
The National Academy of Sciences report strongly cautions that more research is needed to identify characteristics of both effective bilingual programs and effective English-only programs.

“There is little value in conducting evaluations to determine which type of program is best. The key issue is not finding a program that works for all children and all localities but rather finding a set of program components that works for the children in the community of interest, given the community’s goals, demographics, and resources.” (NRC,p.138)
Instruction for ELL

• Use knowledge of stages of language development to plan instruction and choose materials
  • Distinguish between the different purposes of language used in school
  • Students learning a second language require different periods of time to develop age-appropriate levels of conversations skills when compared to academic language skills (Cummins1981)
Instruction for ELL

• Attend to both oral language development and reading skills
• Research indicates that ELLs and native speakers follow similar paths in the development of early literacy skills (Lindsey, Manis & Bailey, 2003)

    Integrate our knowledge on how to best provide instruction in each of the five components
• Align the instruction in ELL and general education classrooms
• Ensure that ELLs participate in supplemental and intervention programs
• Use ongoing assessment
• High expectations (August and Hakuta, 1997)
Interventions for Struggling ELLs

English language learners benefit from interventions (both in English and in Spanish) that are grounded on SBRR Instruction.

“Based on these findings, supplemental reading instruction seems a viable approach to boost the reading achievement of Spanish-speaking students, and it does not need to wait until they become fluent in English.” (Barbara Gunn 2005)
Characteristics of High Quality Instruction

- Is explicit and systematic
- Provides multiple opportunities for practice
- Maximizes student engagement
- Increases time on task
- Models skills and strategies during lessons
- Lesson objective is clear
- Makes relationships among concepts overt
- Emphasizes distinctive features of new concepts
- Explicit feedback
Characteristics of High Quality Instruction

• Provides scaffolds in how to use strategies, skills and concepts
• Adjusts own use of English to make concepts comprehensible
• Selects and incorporate students’ responses, ideas, examples, and experiences to the lesson
• Gives student time to respond
• Ensures quality of independent practice
• Asks questions to ensure comprehension
• Provides extra instruction, practice and review
Phonemic Awareness and ELLs

- Awareness in individual speech sounds in L1 correlates with awareness in L2.
- PA instruction can be effective even when ELL are not fully proficient in English.
  - Neither Spanish nor English oral language proficiency predicts learning to read English words.
- ELLs can learn PA and decoding skills when provided with research-based reading instruction.
Phonemic Awareness and ELLs

• ELLs may need to acquire new phonemes or orthographic patterns as well as new matches between phonological segments and orthographical patterns

• Accept oral approximations
  – Students often borrow from their native languages when pronouncing words in English.

• Initially select words that include sounds common to both languages and separate auditorily similar sounds.

• Be aware of differences in pronunciation when assessing PA
  – Even though a student may struggle with pronunciation continue instruction. This does not indicate a lack of understanding
Phonemic Awareness and ELLs

- Ask student to repeat the word before attempting a task
- Accompany the words with pictures to provide context and or use words from read aloud selections
- If reading instruction is only in English, it might be supplemented with PA in both English and Spanish
- Use small group instruction so ELLs have multiple opportunities to hear models and to maximize participation.
- Use manipulatives/ actions to actively engage students.
- ELL students who start with serious delays can make substantial improvements in reading when provided with SBRR instruction
  - Delays in reading may be due to lack or gaps in instruction rather than to language difficulties
Response Cards

(Different)

(Same)
Elkonin Boxes
Object Sorting

• Object sort by Initial Sound “This is a snake. Say Snake. What does snake start with? Where would it go?”

s m t
Sound Clapping Center

• Students put on their clapping gloves and choose a picture card. They say the name of the picture than clap the number of sounds in the word and check to see if they are right by turning the card over.
Phonics and ELLs

• Began reading instruction with ELLs before they are fully proficient in oral English. Evidence has accumulated over the last 2 decades indicating that ELLs can learn to read English even when their oral skills are not fully developed.

• Capitalize on students’ native language reading ability.

  Ells may have letter knowledge and an understanding of the alphabetic principal in their native language.
Phonics and ELLs

• Explicitly teach sounds in English that have no equivalent in the student’s native language.
  
  Spelling errors made by Spanish-speaking students in English are usually predictable

• Teach the alphabetic principle in a meaningful context

• ELLs can learn word identification skills in English at the same rate as native speakers
Phonics and ELLs

• Teach students how to transfer what they know in their native language into English.
  – Students whose home language is Spanish may apply their knowledge of phonemes from Spanish to pronounce English consonants such as /l/ and /d/.

Teach students to read unknown words by analogy

  – Many rimes, morphemes, and syllables show consistent spelling patterns over a number of English words. Model the use of analogy by asking questions.
Elkonin Boxes

b   a   t
## Word Sorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ai</th>
<th>a_e</th>
<th>ay</th>
<th>oddball</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pain</td>
<td>cake</td>
<td>play</td>
<td>eight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fluency and ELLs

• Several theoretical frameworks suggest that oral reading fluency is a prerequisite skill for the development of comprehension and serves as an indication of overall reading ability
  – A measure of oral reading fluency correlated .91 with Reading Comprehension subtest of the Stanford Achievement Test.
Fluency and ELLs

- Repeated reading, teacher modeling and progress monitoring have been used with at-risk ELL
  - Provide opportunities for choral reading
  - Make explicit the skills good readers use and model how they are applied to reading in English
  - Provide opportunities to reread books using audiotapes

Disfluent ELL often read syllable by syllable in their native language and may attempt to use this strategy while reading in English.
Repeated-Reading Practices

**Paired Reading**
- Higher reader serves as model for lower reader

**Computer-Based/Tape-Assisted Reading**
- Model the proper phrasing and speed of fluent reading

**Readers Theatre**
- Involves small groups of students rehearsing and reading a play
More Fluency Building Practices

Choral Reading and Echo Reading

• Actively involves students as they read in unison or repeat after the teacher

Chunking

• Involves reading phrases, clauses, and sentences by parsing, or dividing text into chunks.
Comprehension and ELLs

• Preview new concepts
  Use photos, artifacts, and hands-on activities before the lesson and discuss the concepts after the lesson to clarify and review.

• Use semantic maps to delineate relationships
  Because the spoken work is fleeting, visual aids and word banks give students a concrete system to process, reflect on and integrate information.

• Activate and draw about students’ background knowledge in relation to the story.
Comprehension and ELLs

• Provide explicit instruction in comprehension strategies before, during and after reading.
• Use different levels of questions when discussing text.
• Beware of teacher talk that may be confusing to ELLs
• Provide support to student by doing “Think Alouds”
• Use Peer-Assisted learning strategies to promote comprehension skills
Comprehension and ELLs

• Actively involve all students and summarize frequently.
• Include opportunities for discussions of read alouds.
• Check comprehension and monitor progress frequently.
• Allow ELLs to express their thoughts in their native language.
Comprehension and ELLs

- Use culturally relevant text as well as those incorporate aspects of students’ life experiences to draw upon prior knowledge.
- Point out language in text with features that can make them difficult to understand.
- Engaging students in identifying big ideas in a text and in graphically depicting the relationships among these ideas improves student recall and comprehension of text.
- There is some evidence that ELLs have more difficulty utilizing context than their monolingual peers.
Improving Comprehension

- Teacher read alouds
- Effective questioning
- Meaningful discussions
- Graphic organizers
- Retellings
- Monitoring understanding
- Explicit instruction in strategies
- Focusing on story and text structure
Types of Questions

• *Right There* questions involve responses that can be found word-for-word in the text.

• *Here and There* questions can be answered by looking in the text (often in more than one place), but the answers are more complex and require a response of one or more sentences.

• *What I know* questions cannot be answered by looking in the text; they require students to think about what they have read, think about what they already know, and think about how it all fits together.
Vocabulary and ELLs

• Use segments of class time in which to directly teach key vocabulary.
• Focus on a small number of critical words.
• Provide multiple exposures of words to build depth of knowledge and emphasize words over time.
• Encourage parents to read to their children in their home language.
Vocabulary and ELLs

• Provide ELL with frequent opportunities to use oral language in the classroom. ELLs have little opportunities to converse.
  – Active daily language use should be structured to include both conversational and academic discourse.
  – Only 4% of ELLs day was spent engaging in “student talk”.
  – Only 2% of ELLs day was spent engaging in “academic talk”.

Vocabulary and ELLs

• Continue to work on vocabulary well beyond the point of basic communicative competence to ensure adequate vocabulary on increasingly difficult text.

• Use stories and writing projects to provide context.

• Integrate the teaching of word meanings with the content area and context that they will be used, rather than a separate list of words.
  – Show connections between words using semantic mapping.
Vocabulary and ELLs

• Teach students different word learning and strategies to apply on their own.
• Preteach critical vocabulary prior to student reading.
• Teach students to learn to distinguish and look up words that seem most essential to the meaning of the text such as those that are repeated four or five times.
• Teach students to look at morphological cues within the word that might indicate something about it’s meaning or part of speech.
Vocabulary and ELLs

- **Use of visuals to reinforce concepts and vocabulary.** The double demands of learning content and a second language are significant, and the difficulty should not be underestimated. Give students a concrete system to process, reflect on, and integrate information.

- **Cognates:** Since many of these words in English share common roots in Greek and Latin with their Spanish equivalents there exist a large number of cognates, or words that have the same meaning in two languages. ELLs benefit from formal instruction in using cognates to improve their English reading and vocabulary. Research indicates that Spanish speaking students’ recognition of cognates contributes to their reading proficiency.
Choosing What Words to Teach

• What is the difference between vocabulary and spelling words?
• BE ALERT: Don’t limit vocabulary words to students’ reading ability.

• Maria admired the building’s eaves.

Which word would you choose to preteach?
Choosing What Word To Teach

admired

• Why?

• Verbs are where the action is
  Teach admire, admired, admires…
  Likely to see it again in grade-level text
  Likely to see it on statewide assessments

Why not eaves?

Rarely seen in print
Rarely used in stories or conversation or content-area information
Choosing What Words to Teach

• What is the difference between vocabulary and sight words?

• BE ALERT: Often your core reading programs will confuse these concepts.
Dictionaries: Proceed with Caution

• Things to consider when asking students to look up words in the dictionary.
  – Students must already have some knowledge of the word for the definition to make sense.
  – The definition does not explain how the word is different from other analogous words.
  – Definitions often use vague language with insufficient information.
  – When reading definitions, students have difficulty taking syntax, structure, and part of speech into account.
Student Friendly Explanations

- Characterize the word and explain how it is regularly used.
- Describe the meaning of the word in everyday language. Include words like something, someone, or describes. These words assist students in attending to the whole definition.
Strategies for Using the Dictionary

1. Locate the unknown words in the glossary or dictionary.
2. Tell yourself what the text is about.
3. Read each definition and select the best one.
4. Try the possible meaning in the sentence.
5. Ask yourself, “Does this make sense?”
Example Selection

• The most important aspect of teaching vocabulary, regardless of the procedure is selecting a set of appropriate examples.
  – Examples should demonstrate the intended meaning.
  – Student should be able to learn an interpretation other than the intended on.
  – The word must be correctly applied to a set of examples.
Example Selection

• Positive examples

• Negative examples

• Minimally different pairs
  – Focus attention on the characterizes that determine whether an example is positive
Modeling Examples

• **Step 1:** Teacher models positive and negative examples

• **Step 2:** Teacher tests
  • Present positive and negative examples until the students make six consecutive correct responses

• **Step 3:** Teacher tests by asking for names
  • Present the examples until students make 6 consecutive correct responses
Using Synonyms

• State the new word, the synonym, then test
  – The new word is gigantic, Echo. “Gigantic means very big”
  – What does gigantic mean?

• Give positive and negative examples until 6 consecutive correct responses are given
  – The house only had one room and one bathroom. Was the house gigantic?
  – The whale is as big as two football fields. Is the whale gigantic?
  – Sally realized that the monster was as tall as the mountain. Was the monster gigantic?

• Review new word and other previously introduced words
  – Is Ms. Smith gregarious? How do you know?
  – Tell me something that is gigantic.
  – Do you admire your parents? Tell me why?
Teaching a Word

Consider…

• Level of knowledge
• Concept or label
• Learning a new meaning for a known word
• Learning a meaning for a new word representing an unknown concept
• Clarifying the meaning of a known word
• Types of examples to be used
Tiers for ELL

*Tier 1 Words*

- Basic words rarely require instruction (dog, cat, run, song). Many of these words students know in Spanish and need English labels. Add pictures to word cards.
- Idioms, metaphors or everyday expressions (e.g., make up your mind; let’s hit the books; once upon a time).
- Cognates (family, familia; color/color) rarely require instruction, but should be pointed out.
- False Cognates (rope, ropa; embarrassed, embarasade) usually need to be pointed out and the correct translation given.
Tiers for ELL

Tier 2 Words

- High frequency words in students’ reading and listening comprehension.
  - Words that are used in shared stories and story telling
  - Multiple meaning words/polysemous words
  - Troublesome for ELLs
  - Need to be deliberately taught (e.g., trunk, model, point)
  - Students must learn how to use them in various contexts
  - Many of these are Tier One words for English speakers
Tiers for ELL

Tier 3 Words

- High frequency words for ELLs are similar to Beck’s Level 2 grade-level words that are not cognates or are words that contain 2 or more phonemes make it difficult to recognize the word immediately (e.g., performed, avoidance)
Tiers for ELL

Tier 4 Words

• Low frequency words
  – Limited to specific domains such as social studies, math, or science: (e.g., lathe, isotope)
  – Same words as Beck’s Tier Three (limited to specific domains)
Rich Vocabulary Instruction

• Say the word, and have the students repeat it
• Ask students to respond with actions
• Rewrite definitions using student-friendly explanations
• Differentiate between examples and non-examples
• Provide example and non-example sentences
• Have students create sentences
  – Answer 3 or 4 of these: what, where, when, how, who and why
• Model and teach independent word-learning strategies
• Discuss the difference between the new word and related words
Rich Vocabulary Instruction

• Have students read the story aloud in a read, discuss, read, discuss cycle.
• After the story is read, post the story cover and words.
• Have students read the story two more times discussing words.
• Have students enter the words in a word log.
• Use the taught words in your daily language.
• Catch kids using or noticing others’ use of the words.
Have You Ever?

- Describe a time when you might urge/console/commend/banter someone
- Have you ever eaten something gruesome?
- Describe an animal that is fierce/dangerous/gruesome
- Describe a time when you felt terror/dread/scared/danger
Idea Completion

• The audience asked the **virtuoso** to play another piece of music because...

• The skiing teacher said Melanie was a **novice** on the ski slopes because...

• Lisa told me a **dreadful** story about ...

• Paul called Tim a **coward** when...
Building Categorical Knowledge

- Sorting words into categories and subcategories
- Semantic Feature Analysis
- Venn Diagrams
- Scaling (Moats)
- Antonyms
- Examples/Non-examples
Use High-Quality Oral Language

• Provide many opportunities for students to compare spoken language with literate language
• Model good language use
• Read aloud good literature
• Tell stories using elaborate language
• Scaffold students oral language
Promote Word Consciousness

Word Consciousness is the knowledge of an interest of words

• Word conscious students enjoy learning new words and using words in a variety of ways

• Word-consciousness promotes an understanding of how words and concepts are related across different contexts
Word Parts

• It is estimated that students can figure out the meaning of about 60% of the new words they encounter by analyzing the word parts.

• Between the first and fifth grade students learn approximately 4,000 root words, however during the same period, the number of derived words increases by about 14,000.
Teaching Word Parts

• Divide the unknown word into meaningful parts.

• Think what each part means.

  OR

  – Think of other words that contain that part.
  From those words formulate a meaning of the unknown part.

• Combine the meanings of the word.

• Try the possible meaning in the sentence.

• Ask yourself, “Does that make sense”? 
Promoting Wide Reading

Wide Reading …

• Involves reading a lot and reading a variety of different types of texts.
• Encompasses both the number of words read (reading volume) and the amount of time spent reading.
• Enhances students' abilities to comprehend an increasingly wider array text types and texts of increasing difficulty.

Research indicates that students who read widely become better readers-independent reading builds vocabulary and And background knowledge, enhances comprehension, and promotes reading as a “lifelong activity”
Advantages of Wide Reading

• If a fifth grader reads for one hour each day, five days a week (both in and out of school) as a fairly conservative rate of 150 words per minute, he will encounter 2,250,000 words in his reading over a school year.

• If 2 to 5% of the words he encounters are unknown to him, he will encounter from 45,000 to 112,000 unknown words.

• If, as research has shown, students can learn between 5 and 10% of previously unknown words from a single reading, a student will learn, at a minimum, 2,250 new words each year from his reading.
Reading Materials

• Students must know 90% to 95% of the vocabulary in the text before that text is used for reading instruction purposes.
• Use graded readers to ensure text difficulty keeps pace with vocabulary development. Be sure to supplement with authentic literature first in read alouds, then shared reading, and independent reading to ensure students are exposed to text that reflects natural speech.
• Encourage and provide opportunities for rereading
Learning from Context

Of 100 familiar words met in reading, a reader may learn 3-15 using context:

- Directive contexts: 86%
- General contexts: 49%
- Nondirective contexts: 27%
- Misdirective contexts: 3%
Using Context

• Explicitly teach students *how* to find the definition of a word within a passage
  – Model or *think aloud* to students how to do so
  – Consider the type of context
  – Often done by using a synonym or antonym
  – Harder if negative
  – Harder when implied or described rather than stated explicitly
Using Context

- Explicitly teach students a variety of strategies.
  - Put your finger on the word. Reread the sentence without the word. Think about what would make sense. Ask yourself, “Does this make sense?”
  - Break the word apart and look for smaller words that you know.
  - Look for affixes and pull them apart than reread the word.
  - Read the sentence before and after looking for clues and remind yourself what the text is about.
Indirect Learning and ELL

- Indirect learning has higher effects for students with higher levels of vocabulary.
- Characteristics of words impact recall and understanding more than the text features.
  - Nouns harder than (verbs, adv., and adj.)
  - Abstract harder than concrete or easy to image words
Vocabulary and Content Areas

Content Area Vocabulary

• is essential for comprehension of the topic of study
• usually represents unfamiliar concepts necessary to the topic
• is related to other content vocabulary in the same unit of study
• even ELL who demonstrate higher levels of English language proficiency will benefit from teacher support.
Vocabulary and the Content Areas

Effective vocabulary instruction in the content area includes:

1. **Integration**: relating new words with known words and concepts.

2. **Repetition**: providing students with sufficient practice to recognize words quickly and accurately while reading.

3. **Meaningful Use**: Designing activities and providing opportunities for students to use the words properly and in a variety of contexts.
Monitoring Understanding

• Ask questions about the target word to show they have a clear understanding.
  – Name three situations that make you feel nervous.
  – What are three words that describe your heritage?
  – What would a fireman do? (put out a fire, play a game, build a fire?)
  – What would a reformer be likely to do? (go to the park for a picnic, work to change rules that are unfair; notice someone is in trouble but do nothing)
Transfer of Skills and Knowledge

• General language transfer involves students using what they know in their home language to understand concepts and content in English.

• Positive and negative transfer.

• Transfer between different types of writing systems.

• When, how, what and what conditions are necessary.
Techniques for Working with Beginning English Language Learners

• Establish a set routine of activities so students can make sense of what is happening.
• Print and post classroom routines, rules, and procedures with accompanying illustrations.
• Label classroom objects.
• Use consistent and simplified language to introduce literacy activities and assignments, until it is clear from students' actions and responses that they understand what to do.
• Introduce new vocabulary and syntax gradually. Once students understand what is being said, slowly increase the complexity of your speech.
Techniques for Working with Beginning English Language Learners

- Use a variety of techniques to present information and engage students, including acting, using physical props or visual aids, singing, reading and writing.
- Open up instruction so that ELLs are comfortable asking questions, identifying unknown vocabulary, making predictions and inferences, sharing their interpretations, and asking for clarification.
- Provide a “safe haven” area, where children can find relief from the pressures of learning a new language.
- Work with parents to understand home literacy practices and promote reading at home.