Supporting ELLs in the Mainstream Elementary Classroom: Instructional Strategies for Second Language Acquisition

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Presentation Outline:

* Research Question
* Educational Relevance
* Literature Review
* Study Development & Methodology
* Data Collection & Analysis
* Outcomes
* Conclusions & Potential Impact
Research Question:

Which instructional strategies most effectively support English language acquisition in the mainstream elementary classroom?
The face of the American classroom is changing. Specifically, increases in immigration to the United States create diverse classroom environments full of learners with countless cultural and linguistic needs (Helmer & Eddy, 2012, p. 14).

**Educational Relevance:**

The face of the American classroom is changing. Specifically, increases in immigration to the United States create diverse classroom environments full of learners with countless cultural and linguistic needs (Helmer & Eddy, 2012, p. 14).

**Reasons for Choosing Study Topic:**

- aligned with my professional growth needs and serves as a topic of high interest
- addresses student needs in my classroom
- provides classroom teachers, who often lack adequate preparation and training with regard to CRI, with strategies
- benefits newcomer ELLs in America’s public schools
- targets a gap in current ESL research
McCafferty & Rosborough (2014)

gestures are complicated, and full comprehension of a gesture requires participation in a cultural construct; however, gestures can aid ELLs by making input more comprehensible.

Durgunoglu & Hughes (2010)

preservice teachers are not adequately prepared to meet the needs of ELLs in the mainstream classroom.

Panzach Heredia & Luchini (2015)

“good” ELLs use certain strategies and metacognitive processes to help them acquire English.
Study Development & Methodology:

Setting: large, k-5, suburban public school focused on CRI; 12% ELL population

Participant: Spanish-speaking newcomer; 3rd grade

Procedure: IRB approval, consent and safeguards, three weeks of data collection and analysis

Measures: rating-scale survey, participant interview, classroom observations
Data Collection & Analysis
Week I - Lexia:

**Interview Snapshot:** “I am learning the meaning of the words.”

**Observation Snapshot:** The student repeatedly sought affirmation from peers while using the program.
The strategy helped me with my English, listening, observing, and mimicking my friends. I learn more words in different ways by using observation.” The student also requested to keep using the strategy because it helped him “get more information about American students.”

Observation Snapshot: The student observed and mimicked peers. He attempted to make input more comprehensible by seeking pictures, repeating key words and phrases back to me in Spanish with a questioning intonation, and calling friends’ names while making a questioning face or gesture as if to look for guidance or reassurance. Surprisingly, he only sought help from a Spanish speaking peer one time as compared to an English speaking peer 12 times.
Interview Snapshot: “I saw how to write words that I didn’t know how to write before.”

Observation Snapshot: The student placed both texts side-by-side on his desk and continuously went back and forth between the English and Spanish while the story was read aloud. The student pointed out cognates without being prompted. He favored the Spanish book during independent work time, choosing to ignore the English text while looking at pictures and rereading from the Spanish book.
Outcomes:

Classroom Observations

* participant’s high-self efficacy
* participant’s optimism
* participant’s need for peer affirmation, approval, and acceptance
* participant’s “carry-over” use of strategies
Conclusions & Potential Impact:

Primary Investigator’s Classroom:
- Work intentionally to further develop student relationships and leadership
- Incorporate all three instructional strategies on a regular basis
- Build on student’s pre-existing confidence by offering specific feedback in both English and Spanish

Mainstream Classrooms in Public Schools:
Because the purpose of this study is to investigate which instructional strategies most effectively support English language acquisition in the mainstream elementary classroom, findings from the study can be used to guide the selection of and advocate for professional development opportunities and resources for mainstream elementary teachers who work with ELLs in their classrooms. Additional studies using a larger population or examining additional CRI strategies for second language acquisition may also be conducted.
References:


