
THE ELL OUTLOOK Volume 2, Issue 4, April 2003

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~ ~ **IN THE NEWS** ~ ~

Just cut and paste links into your browser to view stories.

Shouldering a language burden

The Philadelphia Inquirer - 3/9/03

Children whose parents don't speak English often find that the burden of translation means growing up fast.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/2003/03/09/news/local/5352940.htm>

Families Absorb Languages Through Children

The Washington Post - 3/17/03

Dual-language immersion programs can stimulate language learning not only for children, but also for their parents.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A35105-2003Mar16.html>

Eagle Valley schools blend dual languages, cultures

The Denver Post - 3/16/03

An influx of Hispanic ELLs requires the speedy adoption of new tactics by Colorado teachers.

<http://www.denverpost.com/Stories/0,1413,36%257E11583%257E1245501%257E,00.html>

English-only students do better on state test

The San Francisco Chronicle - 3/26/03

Proposition 227 proponents point to gains, results disputed by some school personnel.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2003/03/26/MN197410.DTL>

~ ~ **ELL UPDATE** ~ ~

WWC EVIDENCE REPORTS AND ELLS

In the wake of the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act*, and in light of a renewed quest to hold schools more accountable for raising the academic achievement of all students, the need for scientific, research-based educational programs and materials that produce quantifiable results has also grown. In realization of the fact that “even when rigorous research exists, solid evidence rarely makes it into the hands of practitioners, policymakers, and others who need it to guide their decisions” (WWC, “About the WWC”), the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) was started in August of 2002.

WWC was designed to provide a central, non-political source for evidence on “what works” in education, in the form of searchable web-based databases. It was established by the U.S. Department of Education through a contract with American Institutes for Research (AIR) and the Campbell Collaboration. The overall goal of the WWC is to “transform educational improvement into an evidence-based field by clearly establishing ‘scientifically based research’ as a benchmark for determining the effectiveness of replicable educational interventions” (WWC, “Frequently Asked Questions”). To do this, the WWC will:

1. **Develop standards for evaluating and synthesizing research.** Through input from and review by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), the WWC has already drafted standardized systems for a) assessing the research design of a study and its validity, through the Study Design and Implementation Device (Study DIAD), and b) evaluating the depth, breadth, and consistency of evidence presented in a study, through the Cumulative Research Evidence Assessment Device (CREAD).
2. **Define topic areas for “WWC Evidence Reports.”** Through input from the public, interviews with policymakers, review of existing research, and review of law such as the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the WWC will define the subjects that will be reviewed and synthesized. In addition to the ELL topic (which will be discussed in the next section of this article), K-12 topics include “Interventions for Beginning Reading,” “Curriculum-Based Interventions for Increasing K-12 Math Achievement,” and “Programs for Preventing High School Dropout” (WWC, “Evidence Report Topics”).
3. **Produce and distribute “WWC Evidence Reports.”** In order to assemble these reports, individual “Evidence Report teams” will be created, consisting of a project coordinator, senior content advisor, methodology consultant, and other analytic staff. All guidelines and protocols will be approved and

reviewed by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Then, using these guidelines, the team will perform a literature search to determine which studies will be reviewed and summarized in the final report. Results for this work will include reviews of programs, products, and testing instruments.

In addition, a "Registry of Outcome Evaluators" will be established for all topics. "This resource is designed to help schools and districts, as well as educational program and product developers, select evaluators to conduct studies on educational outcomes" (WCC, "Frequently Asked Questions"). This registry will contain contact information, skills and experience, and services offered by the WWC.

How Will This Effect the Education of ELLs?

On April 4th, 2003, the WWC announced seven topics for its first WWC Evidence Reports. Among the first group of topics was "Interventions for Elementary School English Language Learners: Increasing English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement." In recognition that, "on average, ELL students receive lower grades, score below their classmates on standardized reading and mathematics tests" (WWC, "Evidence Report Topics"), a systematic review of ELL studies will answer these four questions:

- Which programs for elementary school English Language Learners (ELLs) increase the English language and academic outcomes of these students?
- Are some interventions more effective than others for certain types of outcomes?
- Are there common components of these interventions that are more effective than others?
- Are some programs more effective for certain types of students? (WWC, "Evidence Report Topics")

Although the possibility of establishing a blueprint for successfully educating ELLs in elementary schools is exciting in theory, it remains to be seen if this can be achieved in practice. Considering the politically charged English-only versus bilingual battle that has raged for years, a WWC Evidence Report—no matter how scientific—still might not be accepted by the general public.

Final results for this WWC Evidence Report on elementary school ELLs will be available in Spring 2004. For more information on the What Works Clearinghouse, visit <http://www.w-w-c.org>.

~~ **AT ISSUE** ~~

COLLABORATIVE INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: PUSH-IN VS. PULL-OUT

By Judith B. O'Loughlin

ELL Outlook Contributing Writer

Each day Chika, a second grade English language learner, in a small suburban New Jersey public school, leaves her classroom with her ESL folder and walks to a small group instruction room. There, with three or four other second grade ELLs, her ESL teacher greets her. Chika and her fellow students spend 30 minutes with their teacher reviewing homework, practicing their oral conversation skills, learning new

vocabulary, and reading or being read to. At the end of the lesson, Chika and her classmates return to their classrooms.

While Chika was gone, her classmates had begun their group reading lesson. Students are now engrossed in independent or paired reading and reflective journal writing activities. Chika cannot read and comprehend the books in the class library, nor can she write more than a few words in her journal. She quietly chooses a book and sits alone looking at the pictures and trying to recognize and read some of the words in the text. Her teacher, who is walking around the classroom, interacting with different students, will stop by Chika's desk and help her sound out some words and read the text. But the teacher, with 20+ students in her class and few appropriate reading resources for Chika to use, will have only a few minutes to spend with Chika before moving on to the next whole group activity.

In a similar scenario, Rodrigo, a fifth grade ELL, will return to his class after his 30-minute ESL lesson to find his classmates deeply engrossed in an American history map activity. They are drawing the thirteen original colonies, placing the names of the settlements in the appropriate colony. The students are using their social studies text to find the information to complete their maps. Rodrigo sits with a classmate and copies his work, although Rodrigo is unclear as to what a colony is, who the Pilgrims and Puritans are, and why he has to complete this map. Most of the information and directions for this lesson were given while Rodrigo was out of the classroom.

Elementary Education and the English Language Learner

Elementary ELLs have traditionally been taught in an instructional setting separate from the mainstream learner as portrayed above. (Editor's note: In some districts with very large ELL populations, pull-out has not been a traditional program model. Rather, students are placed in self-contained structured immersion classroom, or they are taught English as part of their bilingual programs.) ESL teachers take small groups of students into a separate room and provide English language instruction, for the development of their Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills [BICS] and beginning Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency skills [CALP] (Cummins, 1981). Groups usually consist of students in the same grade and varied stages of language development. After instruction, students return to their grade-level classrooms. In this pull-out model of instruction, used for many years in elementary schools, ESL lessons are taught in isolation from the mainstream curriculum. Little time was available to assist students in developing extensive content knowledge.

In low incidence elementary settings, the ESL teacher has an added dimension to instruction, since there are only a few students from multiple language backgrounds and ability levels scattered throughout the grades. ESL teachers must combine age, grade, and ability levels to form groups and must differentiate, and often individualize, instruction for each child. In the low incidence school the classroom teacher may have just been assigned his or her first ELL in the classroom and may be quite unfamiliar with how to work with this new child. This becomes an added responsibility for the ESL teacher, who must now assist and provide in-service training for the classroom teacher on a daily basis.

Rationale to Push-In

Much of the richness of language and content, interaction with mainstream peers, and learning of grade-level materials is lost in the pull out setting. In a push-in environment, on the other hand, both the ESL and the mainstream teacher work together as a team to differentiate grade-level content instruction for the ELL.

Schools with clusters of 3 to 10 students in a particular grade level, including low incidence districts, would benefit most from collaborative instruction. Students, language levels, the subject area, and the students themselves should be carefully chosen for the collaboration. High beginner through advanced students form the best cluster of ELLs to be included in a collaborative group. The choice of subject area can be based on a number of factors. Grade level, difficulty of curriculum area, and benefit to the students from push in instruction should form the basis for the decision to develop a collaborative team.

How would this work? The ESL and mainstream teacher would team-teach content lessons. Before this begins, however, the school administration and teachers have to plan carefully. The administration needs to ensure that the schedule includes common planning time and the appropriate placement of certain ELLs in a particular mainstream classroom. The ESL teacher gives the administration input into the choice of ELLs for this push-in setting. Newcomers and beginners still need pull-out instruction, with or without push-in instruction, and the schedule needs to accommodate this need. The teachers, both ESL and mainstream, have to plan together at the start of the program to define their roles, discuss turf sharing, share knowledge of students, and define the strengths and expertise that each brings to this collaboration. For the mainstream teacher, this expertise is extensive content knowledge and classroom management techniques. For the ESL teacher, it is cultural knowledge, language acquisition theory, and differentiation strategies.

Push-In Teaching Formats

Push-in teaching techniques vary from the least "invasive" to full collaboration. The ESL teacher can provide roving support to ELLs in the classroom by assisting students as needed. One teacher can teach the lesson, while the other writes or charts on the board. The teachers can plan for cooperative activities, which can be configured as cooperative groups or station teaching. Both teachers then plan the activity, decide on grouping configurations, and choose roles for each of the participants. Teachers can team teach a single large group, with one as the main teacher, and the other elaborating, retelling, or reinforcing information in modified language with the use of visuals, hands on materials, graphic organizers, and realia. Finally, teachers can become full instructional partners, team teaching the entire lesson together.

How Do Collaborative Partners Assess Students?

Collaborative teachers can design a variety of assessments to differentiate for the ELLs in the mainstream environment. Assessments should be based on the types of completed content tasks. Observational portfolios and checklists provide information on skills and language development, student behaviors during a hands-on activity, and student strategies to accomplish a task either independently or in a cooperative group. Student reflective journals and checklists provide for ongoing teacher assessment and adjustment of curriculum. Double grading could divide an assessment into content and structure (for writing activities) or effort and performance (for cooperative social studies and/or science activities). Finally,

collaborative teaching partners can develop multiple versions of tests, having different degrees of depth, word banks, visuals, simplification of vocabulary, number of questions, or directions.

What Does This Mean for Chika and Rodrigo?

Having two teachers “negotiate” by differentiating content instruction will help Chika and Rodrigo feel less frustrated. They will be provided with appropriate materials, language and content strategies, and assessments for their linguistic levels. More than just learning appropriate content, Chika and Rodrigo will be learning with their peers, listening to and participating in authentic English language classroom discussions, and building confidence and self-esteem.

Judith B. O’Loughlin is an ESL and Special Education Teacher in the Ho-Ho-Kus Public Schools (K-8) and an adjunct teacher trainer in the ESL/bilingual and Special Education P.E.E.R.S certification program in the Multicultural Department of New Jersey City University. She has also been a contributor to many texts and has given numerous workshops at the state and national level.

~ ~ JUST THE FACTS ~ ~

COLLABORATIVE INSTRUCTION RESOURCES

As a follow-up to this month’s article in “At Issue” called COLLABORATIVE INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: PUSH-IN VS. PULL-OUT, we’ve included some further resources for investigating collaborative teaching.

Books:

The Co-Teaching Model, by Richard Villa. National Professional Resources.
<http://www.pbrookes.com/store/books/villa-6059/>

Teachers' Guide to Inclusive Practices: Collaborative Teaming by Martha Snell and Rachel Janney (Paul H. Brookes Publishing, 2000; ISBN 1-55766-353-X)

Website article and school districts using collaborative methods:

“Teaching: Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners Through Collaboration,” by Bronwyn Coltrane, Center for Applied Linguistics
(<http://www.cal.org/ericcll/News/2002spring/team.html>)

Arlington Public Schools, “ESOL/HILT Models of Instruction.”
(http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/curr_inst/esol_hilt/e_hdept/elm_program/program/models.html)

Kirby Elementary School, Woodbridge, Virginia.
(<http://www.pwcs.edu/pwc/schools/kilby/Departments/esol.htm>)

~ ~ FROM THE FIELD ~ ~

WHAT REALLY WORKS FOR ELL STUDENTS? AN INTERVIEW WITH DIANE AUGUST

By Michelle Adam

ELL Outlook Contributing Writer

During a recent interview with Dr. Diane August, senior research scientist of the Center for Applied Linguistics, she noted a growing interest on the part of the federal government in English Language Learners. "I think there has been a much greater commitment on the part of the federal government to research aimed at improving the education of English Language Learners recently," she said. "I think the Department of Education and The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development are making a real effort to further our knowledge base in this area."

August cited an increase in the federal government's commitment to research. As principal investigator of the federally-funded National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth, she oversees a 13-member panel that is conducting a comprehensive, evidence-based review of the research literature on the development of literacy among language minority children. The panel, established through a contract from the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to SRI International and the Center for Applied Linguistics, plans to present the results of its two-year study in the spring of 2004. A final report provided by these researchers will offer conclusions and recommendations for policy makers, educators, and others committed to teaching ELLs.

"For a long time, federal funds were focused on trying to decide whether the use of English or some use of the native language was the most effective approach to educating English Language Learners. The problem with those studies is that they didn't fully describe what was going on in schools and classrooms. So, in the end, it was hard to know what it was you were really comparing," said August. "We need to look at what kinds of strategies are really effective in helping English Language Learners achieve higher levels of literacy and content knowledge. There are very few studies that look at that."

While still in the process of gathering data from studies published on the Internet and in journals, August has discovered that much research conducted on ELL teaching also fails to test successful ELL teaching methods. "Most of the studies that do attempt to look at effective strategies don't use research that enables causal inferences to be made about why something is or isn't working. That should be the first step, and the second step should be trying out those methods in more systematic ways. Usually that second step doesn't happen."

According to August, even studies comparing English-only classrooms to those using native language as part of the curriculum are often misleading. "The students that are most proficient within programs using some native language would transfer out earliest. So, if you looked at the kids that were in transitional programs at the end of third grade and compared them to kids that were in English-only programs, in many instances you would just be comparing kids who were not successful in acquiring English to kids that had been successful," she said.

When we spoke with August, the National Literacy Panel was meeting for the fourth time out of a total of six meetings. August concluded that by the time they complete this project, the panel will provide a very comprehensive summary of research on the acquisition of literacy by ELLs. Unfortunately, with the many holes remaining in

research already conducted, she also expects the panel will recommend that further experimental or quasi-experimental research be conducted to validate promising strategies for teaching ELLs.

With a background in teaching and managing multilingual programs, a Ph.D. in second language acquisition and cognitive development, and a post doctorate that focused on the development of literacy in language minority students—not to mention more than five years as a researcher for the Center for Applied Linguistics—August is in a good position to comment on the current state of ELL teaching. “ELLs aren’t doing that well. We need to put enough resources into schools to ensure greater successes, and we need to do much more and better research to determine what works,” she said.

August described the recent pressure to abandon bilingual education for English-only teaching as pure politics. “I think, unfortunately, policies have often been made based on political reasons, and not based on research. For example, our research indicates that native language literacy skills transfer from Spanish to English. Families, schools, and communities should have flexibility to implement the programs they think work best for their children, and these programs should be rigorously evaluated on an ongoing basis to make sure they are working.”

With regard to bilingual education, Dr. August stated that many people aren’t willing to wait long enough to see how these students develop. “I think the students aren’t being provided with English language literary instruction early enough (they often wait until the 3rd grade). We might consider English-literacy instruction earlier while maintaining the native language later.”

In the meantime, August suggested that teachers use research-based practices such as Isabel Beck’s work with vocabulary (*Bringing Words to Life, 2002*). Then she offered the following advice to publishers: “To a large extent, many of the mainstream publishers haven’t developed materials from the onset with ELLs in mind. By considering the strengths and needs of ELLs in the initial development of materials, they could create programs that are strong for all students.”

While many questions still remain regarding the best teaching methods for ELL students, August hopes that the National Literacy Panel’s conclusions will provide direction for state and federal policy that moves beyond politics. The end result of her research, and that of the panel, will be to ultimately provide a proven and successful blue print for teaching ELL students.

~ ~ **FROM THE STATES** ~ ~

ESOL IN FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, is working hard to educate all types of learners. In FCPS, the debate isn’t about program models or language of instruction, but how ELLs can learn English and meet grade level content.

FCPS projected enrollment for the 2002-2003 school year is 166,072 (FCPS, “Statistics”), 30% of whom are considered language minority (meaning that they speak a language other than English at home). 12% of these language minority

students are considered ELLs. 50% of ELLs in Fairfax County speak Spanish as their native language.

The department in charge of educating ELLs in Fairfax County is the Office of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). This office conducts dual language assessment for ELLs new to the district as well as staff development for both ESOL and mainstream teachers. The director of the Office of ESOL, Francisco Millet, feels that it is important to be involved with the community and with all types of teachers throughout the district: "For our kids to be successful, our program needs to be visible."

At the elementary school level, ELLs in FCPS are educated mostly in the mainstream classroom through collaboration between mainstream and ESOL teachers. ELLs are pulled out of their classrooms for up to 1.5 hours per day to work on ESOL and content skills, so as to gain better access to grade level content in the mainstream. At the middle school and high school level, ELLs are educated through sheltered instruction, with the goal of bringing them up to grade level content as soon as possible. In general, ELLs are taught with the "same curriculum and the same concepts, but with different strategies," said Millet. ELLs in FCPS are monitored for two years after being considered Fluent English Proficient (FEP).

When asked about the academic achievement of ELLs in FCPS, Millet said that ELLs "do about as well as general education students in math and science in high school." He also mentioned that the drop out rate for Hispanic students was less than 5%, but that they had not yet calculated drop out rates for ELLs.

Teacher Training in FCPS

FCPS does not use bilingual paraprofessionals to teach ELLs, as many districts do. ELL teachers at the elementary and middle school levels must be endorsed in ESOL in addition to holding a general teaching endorsement. At the high school level, ELL teachers are required to have ESOL endorsement and endorsement in the subject area they teach to ELLs. For instance: If a teacher was teaching a sheltered class in science, that teacher would have to have both an ESOL and science endorsement.

In addition to the staff development conducted by the Office of ESOL, 120 FCPS ESOL teachers attended this year's TESOL conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

Millet says that he looks "forward to the day when we don't need ESOL teachers, when all teachers can modify their instruction for all students." The district works hard to have ESOL and mainstream teachers work together as much as possible. At the elementary level, every Monday is a half day for students. This lets teachers work together, attend workshops on specific subjects, and undergo more in-service ESOL training. At the middle school and high school levels, an hour a day is allocated for team teaching, planning, and other activities. Millet says there is strong sense of teamwork and combined purpose for all teachers in FCPS.

Other Services for ELLs

One of the continuing challenges in FCPS is ensuring that ELLs are able to take advantage of all services available for students in the district. To foster this, FCPS has changed the assessment procedures for gifted and talented programs, and

moved ESOL teachers into what Fairfax calls "Professional Technology Centers," which act as vocational schools. Additionally, FCPS offers:

- Language immersion schools -- FCPS originally offered immersion programs as a way for native speakers of English to learn Spanish, Japanese, French, and German as foreign languages. They have recently started offering a dual immersion bilingual program for ELLs and native speakers of English. The program starts at the kindergarten level in one elementary school, and FCPS plans to increase the grades and the schools in which the program is offered in future years.
- Bilingual/bicultural parental liaisons -- Parental involvement is an important component of every student's education. By recruiting members of the community who are bilingual, FCPS strengthens the home-school connection with home visits and free adult ESOL classes for ELL parents.
- Transitional high schools -- Designed for immigrants newly enrolled in FCPS who are below grade level, four transitional programs have been established to bring new ELLs up to grade level as quickly as possible. With afternoon and evening classes from 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm, ELLs are enrolled in content classes and ESOL language arts.
- Reach To Teach: A Guide for Assessing and Planning Differentiated Instruction, Grades K-6 -- In response to a more and more diversified student body, FCPS has developed their own materials for assisting teachers. ESOL, Gifted and Talented, and mainstream teachers collaborated in developing "Reach to Teach," which offers sample lesson plans for language arts, science, social studies, and math. The included "planning guide" covers stages of language acquisition, cultural connections, providing comprehensible input, and scaffolding as ways for mainstream teachers to help ELLs.

Information for this article came from interviews with Francisco Millet, Director of the Office of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and with Larry Kugler, Elementary Standards of Learning and No Child Left Behind Coordinator, in Fairfax County Public Schools.

For more information on the education of ELLs in Fairfax County Public Schools visit <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OESOL/index.htm>.

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In the same way that educational materials act as the bridge between theory and practice, we would like The ELL Outlook to act as the bridge between educational publishers and educators. By providing summaries and analysis of current research, profiles of state and district methods for educating English language learner (ELLs), and interviews with in-the-field educators, policy makers, and researchers, The ELL

Outlook *will strive to investigate and reveal methods for attaining our shared goal: high academic achievement for **every** student, in **every** classroom.*

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