

Supporting Young English Language Learners' Reading Comprehension

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Background

The number of students designated as English Language Learners (ELLs) in U.S public schools continues to increase. Although improving the education of ELLs is a national educational priority, most multilingual students are placed in full immersion English-speaking classrooms with teachers who lack preparation for teaching ELLs. In order to help students who are struggling with comprehension and expression because they are learning more than one language, we examined how teacher questioning and responses affected these students' learning. Our research question is: How do teacher prompting and questioning affect ELLs' engagement in reading? We used a variety of different strategies such as modeling/setting expectations, using culturally relevant texts as well as making personal connections to the students lives.

Methods

Setting and Participants

- We are working with a group of ELLs
- Whole group and small group teaching

Data Sources

- Anecdotal records
- Transcripts
- whole/group small group access ment

Data Analysis

- We analyzed our anecdotal records and transcripts , and identified instances were that illustrated key prompting and questioning strategies that supported ELL's engagement in reading

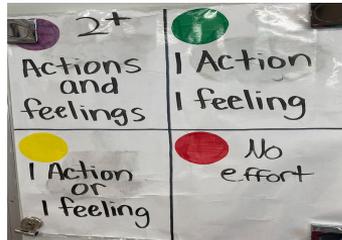
Findings

Finding 1- using culturally relevant text



While working in small groups we noticed a significant increase in understanding displayed by the students because they were able to relate to the content. Our role as the teacher was to rephrase the same questions that were addressed in whole group and model using hand motions to increase comprehension. Another strategy that we used to increase engagement was to use text that were culturally relevant or that they could relate to!

Finding 2: Setting expectations



While the students were able to be emerged into content comprehension during whole group, they were were also able to complete the independent work according to the standard and expectations that was held for the classroom according to the spotlight benchmark. In whole group instruction ELLs were not completing the exit tickets because they lack that extra scaffolding and more times than often left their work blank. When we began using all different strategies and modeling the expectations based on the expectations

Finding 3: Observations

Anecdotal records

T	Today we are going to read a story and look for words we don't know. Let's whisper read our book!
S	"Students whisper read small group reading book with support"
T	Good job guys, lets look at some words we don't know. Turn to page two. Okay lets look at the word father. What clues do you see that can help us?
S1	"points to the photograph"
T	Yes so we see a picture of...
S2	Dad!
T	So, what do you think the word father means?
S1	Dad!
T	Good job!

We have placed one of many anecdotal records collected from our ELL students above. The student was able to use context clues when reading to find the meaning of the unknown word. Within whole group the student was unable to identify a singular unknown word however after small group prompting the student identified the word, meaning, and context clue which supported their understanding for three words.

Discussion

- Culturally relevant material motivates students to engage
- Prompting in whole group was less effective than in smaller groups
- Students better understand content after teaching
- Increase in work shown when in small groups

Conclusions

As the number of multilingual learners in mainstream classes increases, it is even more important for mainstream teachers to use effective practices to support all students' development of communicative and academic English and the content area knowledge they need for school success. The guidelines offered here are designed as initial suggestions for teachers to follow. However, we recognize that all teachers need much more. Due to the increase of comprehension and the enhancement of listening and speaking skills that were observed through this research we suggest that educators continue to include specific teaching strategies and provide as much scaffolding for their ELLs through out their teaching career.

A crucial takeaway from this research would be to be considerate of each of your students needs not only while planning but throughout implementation. Teaching is a never ending research field where there will always be room for us to grow and help our students alongside us!

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