Improving Literacy for English-Language Learners
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Improving Literacy for English-Language Learners

Expert Presenters:

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An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24hrs.
Effective English Literacy
Instruction for English Learners

Diane August
Center for Applied Linguistics
The Role of Research

- No need for statistics showing the challenges facing English learners
- Teachers doing the best they can to meet the needs of ELs
- Best chance of improvement is to rely on previously successful approaches
- Research is the best way to determine what has been successful
The Nature of the Evidence

- National Literacy Panel for Language Minority Children and Youth provided comprehensive review of research evidence
- We have updated the review through 2009
- We will summarize the findings from the experimental studies
1. Effective instruction for ELs emphasizes literacy components.

English Learners benefit from explicit instruction in:

- Phonological awareness and decoding
- Oral reading fluency
- Vocabulary
- Reading comprehension
- Writing

This means there are growing numbers of studies that are revealing the kinds of instructional practices that make a difference in teaching these aspects of literacy to EL students
2. Effective instruction for ELs is similar to what works with native speakers.

- The same kinds of commercial programs are effective with both groups
- The same kinds of instructional approaches or procedures are effective with both groups
Application: instruction beneficial to all

– Benefits of explicit instruction in the components (including cross-component benefits)
– Decoding instruction delivered in small groups
– Vocabulary instruction that teaches individual words and word-learning strategies, provides rich and varied language experiences, and develops word consciousness
– Comprehension instruction that engages students in making meaning
– Writing instruction that provides modeling, practice, teacher feedback, and editing
– For products look at What Works Clearinghouse
3. Effective curriculum and instruction must be adjusted to the needs of ELs.

- To be maximally effective, instruction needs some adjustment
- A problem with the research: It has not been explicit about how basic instructional routines were altered or how they compared with non-altered conditions
Application:
strategic use of the first language

- Preschool children hear storybooks read in their primary language at home followed by classroom storybook reading in English
- Elementary school children preview and review vocabulary lessons in their first language
- Middle school children participate in reciprocal teaching to develop comprehension first in Chinese and then in English
Application:
adjustments for differences in knowledge

• Phonemic awareness instruction that emphasizes English sounds like ‘v’ that might be difficult for Spanish speakers
• Vocabulary instruction that helps students draw on first language knowledge
• Reading and writing programs that take into consideration first language reading and writing skills
Application: adjustments for differences in knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
<th>Spanish Word</th>
<th>Spanish Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Necesario</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Application:
adjustments for differences in knowledge

Student Chart 6.4B
Work with a partner to find all the cognates in the paragraph. There are nine more.

The Chemicals of Life
The cells of all living things are composed of chemical substances. The most abundant chemical substance in cells is water. Other chemical substances called carbohydrates (kar boh HY draytz) are a cell’s main energy source. Two other chemical substances, proteins (PRO teenz) and lipids (LIP idz), are the building materials of cells, much like wood and bricks are the building materials of houses. Finally, nucleic (noo KLEE ik) acids are the genetic material—the chemical instructions that direct the cell’s activities.
**Application:**

**adjustments for differences in knowledge**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English Cognate</th>
<th>Letter(s) in Spanish, not in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sustancias</td>
<td>substances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>químicas</td>
<td>[chemicals]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>célula</td>
<td>[cells]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compuestas</td>
<td>[composed]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abundante</td>
<td>[abundant]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energía</td>
<td>[energy]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carbohidratos</td>
<td>[carbohydrates]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proteinas</td>
<td>[proteins]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lípidos</td>
<td>[lipids]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materiales</td>
<td>[materials]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finalmente</td>
<td>[finally]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ácidos</td>
<td>acids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nucleicos</td>
<td>[nucleic]</td>
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<tr>
<td>genético</td>
<td>[genetic]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instrucciones</td>
<td>[instructions]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>dirigen</td>
<td>[direct]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actividades</td>
<td>[activities]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Application: adjustments for differences in knowledge

Using the ELMO, show students the following Likert Scale. Explain to students that some of the cognates sound more alike than others. Direct students to identify how alike or not alike the sets of cognates sound on a scale of 1 to 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sounds completely different</th>
<th>Sounds slightly different</th>
<th>Sounds similar</th>
<th>Sounds exactly alike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. substances / substancias
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4

2. chemical / químicas
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4

3. cell / célula
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4

4. compose / compuestas
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4

5. abundant / abundante
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4

6. energy / energía
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4

7. protiens / proteinas
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4

8. carbohydrates / carbohidratos
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4

9. lipids / lípidos
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4

10. materiales / materials
     - 1
      - 2
      - 3
      - 4
Application: enhanced instructional delivery

• Providing more time to complete the lessons
• Instruction in small groups so teachers can better target instruction
• More scaffolding:
  – Use of visuals and gestures
  – Clarifying difficult words and passages through instructional conversations
  – Additional modeling
  – Additional review
1. Read the word: **ecosystem**

2. Pencils up if you know the meaning of the word ecosystem. Pencils to the side if you have heard the word ecosystem but are not sure what it really is. Pencils down if you have never heard the word ecosystem.

3. Look at the picture. In this ecosystem we see deer, rabbits, birds, grasses and trees.

4. An **ecosystem** is all of the animals and plants in a particular area, and how they are related to each other and to their environment.

5. Un **ecosistema** está formado por todos los animales y plantas que viven en un área específica, y que se relacionan entre sí y con su medio ambiente.

6. Who can name a living thing in the ecosystem near our school? [Possible responses: birds, squirrels, skunks, trees, ladybugs, etc.]
Biomes

A biome is a large geographic region with similar biotic factors. The climate and soil in a biome determine the plant life that will grow and flourish or successfully survive there. In turn, the plant life helps determine the animal life in the area. There are six major land biomes of the world: tundra, coniferous forest, deciduous forest, tropical rainforest, grasslands, and desert.

What is a biome?
A biome is a large geographic region with similar biotic factors.

What determines what plant life will grow in a particular biome?
The climate and soil determine the plant life and plant life determines animal life.

Name the six major land biomes.
tundra, coniferous forest, deciduous forest, tropical rainforest, grasslands, and desert.
Application:

enhanced instructional delivery
4. Effective instruction for ELs is comprehensive and multidimensional.

- Sufficient amount of time
- Complete curriculum (all of the components earlier noted)
- Skills coupled with enhanced meaning-emphasis
- Enhanced interactions among students and with teacher
- Parent involvement
Application: comprehensive and multifaceted instruction

• With ELs pay particular attention to:
  – Respecting diversity
  – Teaching all students to high standards
  – Building on students’ background knowledge
  – Differentiating instruction to accommodate students’ strengths and needs
5. Effective instruction for ELs develops oral English proficiency.

- Language minority students who begin school proficient in English catch up with native English speakers in reading comprehension but limited English proficient language minority students do not.

- Methods to develop oral language proficiency
  - In content area instruction, focusing on both language and content objectives
  - Grouping ELs with English proficient speakers to provide opportunities for meaningful interaction in English
6. Other important factors

• Instruction is differentiated
  – Teachers hold all students to high standards, but differentiate instruction to help ELLs at all levels of proficiency meet these grade-appropriate standards

• Teachers are well-prepared to meet the needs of ELs

• Instruction is respectful of the home language
  – Instruction in home language improves literacy (even with older students)
  – Use of home language as a valuable adjustment to instruction
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Improving Literacy for English Language Learners

Considerations for English Language Learners and the Common Core State Standards

Gabriela Uro
Education Week Webinar
May 4, 2011
Council of the Great City Schools

- National member organization focused on improving urban education
- 65 schools districts enrolling over 7 million students
- Collectively enroll almost 30 percent of nation’s ELLs
- First education member organization to call for common core standards
Presentation Outline

- Common Core State Standards—opportunity or menace for greater access
- ELL implications of CCSS shifts in instruction for English Language Arts
- Current Challenges in Improving Literacy for ELLs
- CCSS Implementation—breaking the mold so ELLs are not an afterthought
Opportunity for improved access

- CCSS present an opportunity for ELLs to have greater access to rigorous instruction and high expectations.
- CCSS pose a challenge to change how ELL instruction has been approached and delivered.
- CCSS require a shift in overall instruction and a 2nd shift in how ELLs are perceived.
CCSS Shift in Instruction for Language Arts

- Elementary--Today about 80% ELA curriculum is based on literature but the CCSS calls for 50% of Language Arts instruction to be based on “Reading from Informational Text.”

- Secondary (6-12)—CCSS calls for a three-way distribution of types of text used for instruction: 1/3 scientific, 1/3 informational/literary non-fiction, and 1/3 literary

- Writing—currently schools teach and stress writing personal opinion (what you feel and think). CCSS will expect students, by 6th grade, to write to inform and to argue with supporting facts across ALL content areas.
Shifts in Instruction--Sample of Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts (2 Domains)

- Reading from Informational Text (4 clusters)
  - Key Ideas and Details
  - Craft & Structure
  - Integration of Knowledge and Ideals
  - Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- Writing (4 clusters)
  - Text Types & Purposes
  - Production & Distribution of Writing
  - Research to Build & Present
  - Range of Writing
Comments from Council Survey

In general, comments elaborated on:

- Need for clarification
- Need for examples
- Implications for specific student groups
  - ELLs, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged
- Which standards would require a significant shift in instruction
  - Not currently taught at a specific grade level
  - Deeper content knowledge/PD/resources for teachers
Comments on ELA Standards

- Concerns over whether standards are an appropriate measure of the skills themselves, or of language proficiency (for ELLs).

- Clarifications and examples needed for:
  - Key ideas and details
  - Text Types and Purposes

- Concerns over how students are to demonstrate comprehension
  - Integration of knowledge

- Need for significant shift in instruction to emphasize writing skills
Current Challenges to Improving Literacy for ELLs

- Improving literacy of ELLs in urban districts continues to be a challenge
- Systemic issues—ELLs as afterthought
- Instructional issues—appropriate core instruction and interventions
- Professional development
CCSS Implementation—opportunity to overcome challenges

- Council Districts
  - Pilot Sites: Albuquerque, Atlanta, Boston, Cleveland, Philadelphia, St. Paul
  - DC and NYC and other member districts
- Integrated and focused work related to ELL components of implementation
  - Researchers, experts and practitioners working together
- Flowchart—critical points for ELLs
Establish Cross-functional Planning Team

*Made up from representatives of central office departments, school administrators, teachers/union and state department officials

*Specify objectives and charge, roles, and the benefits of having decision makers and practitioners on the same team

Pilot District partners meet to clarify the intention of the standards regarding student performance, build common language, and guide the development of curriculum and assessments.

*Include representatives from each partner group
  *Include ESL, special ed representatives to flag standards during curriculum development process
  *Include research department representatives
  *Collaborate with standards writers
  *Collaborate with other pilots beyond this meeting

Use clarified standards to identify gap between current curriculum and common core standards in both General Education, ELL, and all special programs.

Share matches and gaps with teachers and administrators. Discuss classroom implications.

Share matches and gaps with teachers and administrators in current textbook and teaching resources.

Write Implementation Plan based on the findings from planning for change committees and subcommittees; full participation of partners

Monitor and adjust implementation

Work with end users to design a system of materials and support to help fill the gaps

Design and vet criteria for revising curriculum, including special populations and ELD aligned to clarified standards.

Design and vet criteria for revising formative and summative assessments aligned to curriculum, and use of data from those assessments to inform instruction.

Address Professional Development Issues
* Determine success and shortcomings of current pd
* Determine criteria for district and site-based pd and support
* Describe criteria for evaluating the success of pd for all stakeholders (including administrators and staff)

Design and vet criteria for walkthroughs and monitoring, including how data from the walkthroughs will be used to improve instruction and student performance.

Design and vet criteria for examining student work, as well as teacher collaboration around student work.

*For ELLs, student work needs to take into consideration English language proficiency level
Flowchart examples

- Design and vet criteria for revising curriculum, including special populations and ELD aligned to clarified standards.

- Design and vet criteria for walkthroughs and monitoring, including how data from the walkthroughs will be used to improve instruction and student performance.

- Design and vet criteria for examining student work, as well as teacher collaboration around student work. For ELLs, student work needs to take into consideration English language proficiency level.
For more information
guro@cgcs.org

Thank You
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