

Reading in America

Supporting English Learners in the Quest for Literacy

In a Snapshot...

Who is this research about? The research is about the increasing population among English Language Learners.

What is the research for? Teachers teaching ELLs.

Why is it important? Effective teachers need to be aware of best practices, supported by research.

Where can this information be applied? American classrooms composed of Emerging Bilingual students and English Native speakers.

When can this information be put to use? It can be applied while teaching in a Dual Program, English only, or Transitional Classroom.

How...



Findings

Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners author, Wayne E. Wright (2019) documents the research done by three separate entities and their findings in regards to language and literacy development among ELLs.

- Literacy instruction approaches for mainstream students are not sufficient for ELLs.
- English oral language development is critical for English literacy development beyond word level skills.
- Literacy instruction must be combined with high quality ESL instruction.
- Oral proficiency and literacy in the first language is an advantage for literacy development in English.
- Individual differences contribute significantly to English literacy development.
- Most literacy assessments do a poor job of gauging ELL strengths and weaknesses.
- Home language experiences can have a positive impact on literacy achievement.
- Effective literacy instruction for ELLs provide direct instruction in interactive learning environments.

Recommendations

- 1). Teach a set of academic vocabulary words...using a variety of instructional activities.
- 2). Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching.
- 3). Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills.
- 4). Provide small group instructional intervention to students struggling in areas of literacy and English language development.

-Institute of Education Sciences (Baker et al., 2014)



Conclusion

- ELLs do not learn like their native speaking peers.
- The research is promising for ELL students to achieve proficiency and narrow the achievement gap that exists. Cannot accomplish without meaningful and intentional instruction.



Recommendations, con't

- Provide explicit instruction in literacy components.
- Screen for language and literacy challenges and monitor progress.
- Develop reading and writing abilities of ELLs through text based, analytical instruction using a cognitive strategies approach.
- Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
- Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.
- Foster student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.

-National Academies report (Peregoy & Boyle, 2017)

Findings, con't


- ELLs need to acquire phonemic awareness, phonics skills, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension skills. And even when English Learners do learn the skills to decode at the word level, their oral language may not be developed enough.
- Comprehension skills still fall behind that of their peers who are proficient in English

(Wright, 2019, p.197)

Findings, con't

- Even after ELLs have mastered decoding skills, they still fall behind that of their English native speaking peers when it comes to making meaning from the text.

"All three reports conclude that students with well developed oral skills in English achieve greater success in English reading than students with less- developed skills" (p. 197)




Findings, con't


- A quality ESL program is necessary through instruction of oral language.

According to Wright (2019), "the National Academies found that the failure of elementary schools to provide instruction that appropriately addresses the linguistic, cultural, socioemotional, and academic needs of ELLs leads to their lack of progress."

(p. 197)



Findings, con't

- In a two way dual program, students learn skills in English while still utilizing their native language.
 - Despite their success, Dual Programs are not the norm.
 - Experts agree an additive not subtractive approach to attaining English proficiency is the best approach to learning a second language (Lightbown, Spada, 2017).
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Findings, con't

- Things to consider in support of student's English development: abilities, knowledge, and background.
- *Get to know students individually, no 2 ELLs are alike!*

(Wright, 2019, p. 198)




Findings, con't

- Phonemic awareness is an indicator for reading success in later grades (Kazakoff, Macaruso, Hook, 2017)
- However, research shows that ELLs benefit more from using their native language to read, write, and speak (Werblow, Duesbery, Koulidobrova, 2019)
- To consider: *What current assessments are we using to assess strengths and weaknesses in ELLs? Are we making connections and distinctions between English and Spanish assessments?*

Findings, con't

One study looked into home language and literacy practices among bilingual students in a multilingual environment.

It found that even though English comprehension levels were not *directly* increased by home language and a healthy literacy environment, home language and literacy environments did affect the vocabulary and morphological awareness in students in such a way that reading comprehension also improved as a result (Relyea, Zhang, Liu, Wui, 2019).



Findings, con't

- The CREDE report recommends teacher use an interactive approach to learning.
- An interactive approach “*emphasizes learning mediated through interaction with other learners or more competent readers and writers*” (p. 199).



Sources

NLP report (August & Shanahan, 2006a, 2006b; August et al., 2014)

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005, 2006)

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017).



References

Lightbown, Spada. (2017). *How Languages are Learned*

Kazakoff, Macaruso, Hook. (2017). *Efficacy of a blended learning approach to elementary school reading instruction for students who are English Learners.*

Wright. (2019). *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners*

Werblow, Duesbery, Koulidobrova. (2019). *Shifting the Perspective.*

Relyea, Zhang, Liu, Wui. (2019). *Contribution of Home Language and Literacy Environment to English Reading Comprehension for Emergent Bilinguals.*

Collier, Thomas. (2004). *The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education*

