The Effects of ESOL-Infused Pre-Service Teacher Preparation on Elementary Teachers’ Beliefs and Instructional Practices

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Overview: The Florida Context

FDOE reported 231,801 ELLs in 2009-2010 (8.8% of total enrollment).

Additionally, FDOE reported 204,287 former ELLs in 2009-2010 (7.7% of total enrollment).

Most ELLs (66%) are enrolled in the elementary grades, including 40% enrolled in grades K-2.

About 80% are Spanish-speakers

Source: http://www.fldoe.org/aala/omsstat.asp
The Florida Context: Preservice Teacher Preparation Requirements in Florida

- Teacher education programs have prepared candidates through an “infused” ESOL endorsement program since 2001
  - Minimum of 2 ESOL stand-alone courses taught by ESOL faculty
  - ESOL Performance Standards must be addressed and assessed in the program
  - ESOL content is “infused” in coursework throughout the program
  - Field experience requirement
Project DELTA

- Five-year US DOE grant funded post-training assessment study, designed to understand the relationship between teacher preparation (JustTeach) and ELL achievement

- Mixed methods design includes
  - Surveys
  - Case study teacher graduates (n=6) Interviews, observations, archival data
  - EDW (FL DOE dataset)

Here we focus on two case study teachers, JustTeach program graduates (Suzy and Kate)
Research Questions

(1) How (and how well) do teacher graduates from an ESOL-infused teacher education program believe the program has prepared them to work with ELLs?

(2) What practices do teacher graduates use to facilitate learning (language, literacy & content) for ELLs in their classrooms?

(3) How do teacher graduates’ classroom practices reflect what they believe they have learned in their teacher preparation program?
Theoretical Framework: Quality Teachers of ELLs

A
Teacher background and experiences

B
Teacher knowledge of teaching and learning processes of ELLs

C
Teacher knowledge of ELLs as learners

Figure 1: Characteristics of Quality Teachers of ELLs
Methods

- Two case study teachers, north Florida, mainstream elementary classrooms. Data consisted of
  - (1) survey of beliefs of preparedness and efficacy working with ELLs (98 items);
  - (2) detailed, videorecorded observations of math and reading/language arts classes, which were transcribed (150 pp plus 38 pp field notes)
  - (3) pre-, followup and post- observation interviews (audiorecorded) (101 pages);
  - (4) archival data (classroom artifacts)
# Teachers, Classrooms, & Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Suzy</th>
<th>Kate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Grades teaching</td>
<td>K-2 multiage classroom</td>
<td>4/5 loop (Alpha Program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Years of teaching experience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. First language</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-assessed second language and proficiency level</td>
<td>Intermediate Spanish</td>
<td>Advanced Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Specialization within the elementary <em>JustTeach</em> program</td>
<td>Educational technology</td>
<td>ESOL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classrooms</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of ELLs in classroom</td>
<td>1 (second arrived mid-year)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aide or paraprofessional</td>
<td>No (but 1/2 year with special education aide for ESE student)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>County A (sub-urban)</th>
<th>County B (rural)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Grade levels within school</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Title I funding</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adequate yearly progress</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Free/reduced lunch rate</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ELL Background Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELLs’ backgrounds</th>
<th>Jorge (boy)</th>
<th>María (girl)</th>
<th>Adriana (girl)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher</td>
<td>Suzy</td>
<td>Suzy</td>
<td>Kate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Origin of country/L1</td>
<td>Venezuelan/ Spanish</td>
<td>Honduras/Spanish</td>
<td>Puerto Rico/Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Grade level of ELL</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. English proficiency level (described by teacher)</td>
<td>Teacher does not receive test scores; beginning level Oral: he has a “problem.” Writing: very low; too much Spanish in his writing. Reading: at grade level</td>
<td>Teacher does not receive test scores; very beginning level (non-verbal English)</td>
<td>Teacher does not receive test scores; intermediate to advanced Oral: fluent in social conversations; however, academic oral proficiency is not as high as conversation language. Writing: good; ELL received a 4 (on 6.0 scale) on her FCAT writing. Reading: high level one student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Research Question #1: How (and how well) do teacher graduates from an ESOL-infused teacher education program believe the program has prepared them to work with ELLs?

- Survey and interview data indicated several common areas where both teachers felt highly prepared to work with ELLs
  1. Structure classroom activities for ESOL students to interact with non-ESOL students
  2. Modify English by paraphrasing and simplifying
  3. Expanding ELLs’ oral language development through extension of student responses and/or repetition

Teachers felt that good instruction for ELLs was good for all students. Kate noted, “[m]any of these practices are exhibited in my classroom for ALL students—native and non-native alike. A lot of below-level activities are an excellent resource provided to for ELLs.” (5-143, p. 5) (emphasis retained).
Findings: Research Question #2: What practices do teacher graduates use to facilitate learning (language, literacy & content) for ELLs in their classrooms?

- Three main themes emerged from within- and cross-case analysis of data. These related to the instructional choices made by the teachers:
  - 1. Grouping
  - 2. Language and Literacy Development
    - Focus on language
    - Focus on culture
  - 3. Language Other Than English (LOTE)
Finding 2 a: Grouping

Despite the belief that teachers felt prepared to group ELLs for language development, grouping was largely unplanned for ELLs:

Kate noted, “I don’t know that I have placed her [ELL] to any particular, especially on the floor. I don’t tell [the students] where to sit unless I see there is an issue going on with two students.” She continued, “Adriana always says, ‘come and sit next to me, come and sit next to me’ [but] I don’t do it on purpose per se.” (2-10, p. 11).

Suzy noted, “they’re based according to grade level when I pull them out for small group instruction, but for the regular squads, since we’re a K, 1, 2, I always make sure there is at least one second in each group, so that they can kind of be the leaders for the activity that they’re doing.” (2-10, p. 5). Suzy’s grouping decisions were made based on mixing grade levels among the students, and homogeneous grouping was reserved for direct and small group instruction.
Finding 2b: Language and Culture

Infrequent modifications to language/language development planning. Kate’s group was reading an excerpt from the poem, *Paul Revere’s Ride*, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The following exchange occurred:

A: What’s a lantern?
K: What’s a lantern, Adriana is asking. Can you [another student] describe it for her?
S: Um, it’s a, it’s a um light inside of a vase type thing.
A: Oh, those? I think I saw them in movies.
K: In the movies? Okay. And they walk around with a lantern, it’s like in a vase shape, what’s in it?, we said oil and it has a wick. It’s in a candle, right? And then you light the top of the wick, the oil helps to heat the fire.

In this typical exchange, the teacher stopped the lesson in order to clarify the vocabulary word, lantern, for Adriana.
Finding 2b: Language and Culture

Suzy’s learning center preparation in November
Finding 2b: Teacher-Student Language Exchanges

ELL interaction: 23%
Non ELL interaction: 77%
Finding 2c: LOTE

The two teachers’ language ability level in Spanish varied. The Latina teacher, Kate, used Spanish with parents but felt it was a hindrance to English learning; Suzy used it instructionally with her ELLs.

Kate: *I wanna say it was three years ago, when he first came, no English level at all. I mean he just didn’t’ know anything. He cried the first week to the school because he was so frustrated. And that was me speaking to him in Spanish. But he was just so embarrassed, I guess, and frustrated. He didn’t understand what everyone was saying. He didn’t understand what I was saying when I spoke in English, so again, if you ask, did I get the resources from the school? Unfortunately, no. It was me... our school, our class structure, the rest of the students were also wonderful to him... and now he is in seventh grade and doing phenomenal in middle school.* (2-09, p. 6)
Finding 2c: LOTE

Suzy used Spanish and allowed Spanish responses from her ELLs, more frequently with her beginning level ELL, Maria, who arrived mid-year:

*I’m using a lot of Spanish with her. I mean we’re doing addition strategies so you know I’ll say cuatro más cuatro. She has the blocks and stuff and then whatever I say in Spanish I ask her to try to repeat it to me in English, you know, so I’ll say cuatro más cuatro and she’ll say ocho, and I’ll say en inglés and she’ll say eight.* (2-10, p. 3)
Findings: Research question #3: How do teacher graduates’ classroom practices reflect what they believe they have learned in their teacher preparation program?

Essentially, findings from this study show that the “ESOL-infused” program reinforced inclusive classrooms where ELLs are folded into mainstream instruction.

Mainstream, native-speaker oriented curricula, pedagogical approaches and PD in *JustTeach* advance an agenda that ignores the specific linguistic and cultural background and needs of ELLs.

While the *JustTeach* program reinforces all three dimensions of the framework (esp. knowledge of teaching ELLs), this did not play out in the classrooms observed.
Discussion: Model of Quality Teachers of ELLs

*JustTeach* emphasizes dimension B, with some connections to dimension C; however, here we theorize that quality teachers of ELLs must include all three dimensions, which work together to inform quality teaching with ELLs.
Conclusion

- What is a quality teacher of ELLs in mainstream classroom settings and how do we prepare them?
- Preliminary results are that we must address each dimension – who teachers are, identities as teachers of ELLs, who they teach, and how/what they teach.
- Individual sources (books, studies) tend to emphasize one main area or another. For example, our field is replete with strategies books for teachers; other studies emphasize knowing the ELL; while others emphasize teacher identity. We theorize here that these three components provide framework for quality teachers of ELLs.