

Notes for OELA Conference 2003

Tuesday, December 2, 2003

“Relationship of First and Second Language Literacy”

Presenter-Michael Kamil, Stanford University (mkamil@stanford.edu)

- Created a National Literacy Panel, comprised of 6 subgroups, that systematically reviewed the literature on the relationship between first and second language literacy.
- The subgroups specific focus was to study literacy development (i.e. the relationship between oracy and literacy as well as the transfer skills from L1 to L2). They also looked at strategies and professional development that promoted literacy as well as appropriate assessment strategies for measuring growth.
- The questions that framed their study were: How is learning to read in L2 the same as or different from L1, what elements transfer from L1 to L2, and what L1 elements interfere with L2?
- There were a total of 920 studies with 61 of them being specifically geared towards the language transfer process.
- They used Gates (1929), Odlin (1989) and Bransford & Schwartz (1999) work to define the transferring process.
- Their general findings were that 20-30% of L1 skills transfer to L2
- The things that transfer are cognates (Spanish and English), approximately 10,000-15,000 which is equivalent to 1/3 - 1/2 of the average educated person's active vocabulary (Nash, 1997)
- They also found that some strategies transferred and some didn't (it depended on whether they were dependent or independent of the language structure
- With regards to writing, they found that writing often surpasses oral proficiency, and may be dependent on orthography and is connected to spelling.
- Their findings regarding spelling is that there is short- term negative interference from the first language, as well as predictable invented spelling errors.
- In conclusion they found that there was a positive transfer between L1 and L2, especially with regards to phonemic awareness with few negative transfer outcomes.
- They also found that vocabulary transfers with greater ease from one cognate language to another as well as the comprehension strategies.

Presenter – Dr. Zehler

“Transfer of literacy skills from non-Roman script languages to English”

- Conducted an 18 month cross linguistic study in conjunction with OELA that looked at 5 specific languages (Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Laos, and Khmer).
- Their language analysis procedures focused on describing the property of languages and much of their content was derived from research reviews.
- Their research focused on meta-linguistic awareness in literacy development; connecting written languages with spoken
- They found that meta-linguistic sensitivity promotes a recognition of the specific ways spoken language elements are mapped onto graphic symbols in the writing system.

Wednesday, December 3, 2003

“General Session”

NCEA (National Center for Education Accountability) Brad Digan, CEO

- He began by stating that our educational system is in need of pervasive, systemic change, and the only way to do this was through data analysis, “without it you’re just another guy with an opinion.”
- He specifically mentioned the need to “attach the drop-out rate of the Hispanic populous” and to do this through data collection, creating the big picture and best practice dissemination.
- He described the goal of NCEA is to create a dialog between schools on ‘what they’re doing that works’...to create a common conversation
- The five basic themes that guided the data collection were: curriculum, leadership, practices, monitoring and recognition/intervention
- He also described the roles and responsibilities districts, schools and classrooms.
- At the district level he said they must provide clear objectives (curriculum standards), provide highly qualified teachers, scientifically based research, student assessment procedures and resources to support schools and teachers.
- At the school level their job is to focus on curriculum, develop specific programs and interventions to meet the needs of the students, monitor how well the programs are going and make adjustments accordingly.
- At the classroom level, teachers must know the content they are teaching, collaborate, clarify curriculum (create a forum for discussion), build professional development around student needs and continuously monitor and intervene.
- Their studies looked at 106 school districts across the stats looking for: improvement, reducing the achievement gap and consistency.
- Schools need to do a ‘gap analysis’ to self assess their needs and then compare and contrast themselves to other similar schools in the country
- The top five schools in the country are: Long Beach, CA, Boston, MA, Garden Grove, CA, Louisville, KY, and Norfolk, VA
- The time allocated to each grade to prepare students: 46.2% Elementary, 23.1% Middle School, 30.7% High School
- Of the 106 schools considered, 2 of the districts that placed in the top five had started implementing specific reform tactics 10 years ago (developed a clarity of purpose, established pre-requisite requirements, instructional considerations, assessment, connection to other objects, modifications and exemplars of student work)
- Other important factors that were implemented, schools districts providing benchmarks, time to learn, sufficient resources to change and support standards learning, developing student assessments, strong leaders, good teachers, monitoring and adjusting

“ELL’s – An Important Piece to the Puzzle in the Long Beach Success Story”

Director of Bilingual Department and of Middle School

- Long Beach School district is the 3rd largest district in California

- “Implementation is the key to success – plan, do, study, act and teamwork is pivotal as well”
- Began the reformation process 10 years ago by building up their professional development department, setting standards for all disciplines and all departments working collaboratively.
- Their reform process consisted of: delivering curriculum through research based practices, curriculum embedded assessments, infused literacy strategies in all disciplines, and included multiple pathways for students to achieve content standards
- Their curriculum is standards based, designed in collaboration with teachers, designed to produce results, efficacy, and is consistent across the district (content standards for every subject).
- All curriculum has a pacing chart-it is the chart that drives whether the students have learned the information or not.
- Course outlines-every single content area has extensive course outlines (books, teaching plans, resource, etc)
- Each of the units of study also come with a pacing guide, instructional materials that correlate with the lesson, monitoring assessment correlation, and essential foci for each unit of study.
- For their methods of instruction they used SADAI which is comprised of instructional strategies to support L2 students which focus on career connections, assessment for diagnosing, monitoring and evaluating, a standards portfolio and grading criteria that is aligned to the standards.
- The schools responsibilities with regards to the reformation were to analyze their size data, establish school goals, design curriculum maps, modify annually, provide essential questions for each unit, utilize content standards, provide assessments, appropriate instructional materials and strategies.
- Defined quality of instruction as: dependent on content knowledge, pedagogical skills and belief system of the teacher.

“Parents Bill of Rights”

National Coalition of English Language Learners (NCLB - Title 1, Part A)

Parent, Family and Community Involvement Committee-Lorena Dickerson, OELA

- Our civil rights as American’s insure more that English proficiency, the should also ensure our academic success.
- NCLB tools: accountability, flexibility, proven educational programs, choices for parents.

Thursday, December 4, 2003
“Update on NABE’s Legislative Activities”

“Closing Luncheon”