

CHAPTER 1

THE CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPING LITERACY FOR BILINGUAL STUDENTS

Key Findings of the following:

- *Ramirez – students in the late exit programs had higher academic achievement than students in either of the other two programs. (structured English Immersion and early exit bilingual).*
- *Thomas and Collier – English Language learners in programs that teach academic content in the first language at least through sixth grade achieve at higher levels academically than students in other types of programs.*
- *Greene – Greene concluded that limited English proficient students who are taught using at least some of their native language perform significantly better on standardized tests in English than similar children taught only in English.*
- *All-Instruction in the primary language improves the school achievement of English language learners.*

I am amazed by these findings. Not that they don't make sense to me, they totally do! I guess what I'm trying to say is that I'm not surprised by the findings but they are new to me. I have not been taught any of this in any of my classes to prepare me for teaching. Also, I like these studies because they were longitudinal and involved large amounts of students. This information can help me in my classroom with my ELL students. At least some of them anyway. Since I am proficient in Spanish I could help my Spanish speakers. I would have to design a program to do this. My questions are, though, what about my students whose first language is not Spanish or English? Also, if I implement a plan but the other teachers in my school do not, would this still benefit my students somewhat?

My view of language of initial literacy instruction:

I think that a Biliteracy program with the goal of students becoming proficient in reading, writing and learning in two languages would be beneficial for students whose first language is not English as well as those students whose first language is English. A program like this would benefit our ELL students tremendously and would not hurt our English only speakers, but would help them as well. It is a win-win! Now if we could only get our policy makers to listen to reason! Also, teachers would need to be able to teach in this way and have a knowledge of a second language/be bilingual.

Guillermo's reading lessons:

Other than my student teaching experience, which involved whole language to some extent and drew on themes and connected subjects together while connecting to the students' experiences, this is what I've experienced in classrooms. Guillermo's lessons remind me of every single classroom that I have subbed in for the past three years here in the Cedar Rapids Metropolitan area! There are certain strengths of teaching this way, for example the repeated readings and predictable patterns used to help the students follow the story and make sense of it. But, it would make more sense to be making literacy time more

meaningful and relevant to the students' lives. Perhaps in small reading groups? (which is used here in CR in conjunction with the reading books that are scripted). It would make even more sense to teach the students in Spanish and English. But of course, Guillermo does not have this option in his school.

CHAPTER 2

A WORD RECOGNITION VIEW OF READING

A view of reading:

According to this book, a "view of reading is a set of beliefs about how the reading process works." In my vocabulary schema the word "belief" means that it could be an opinion or something that isn't true, although it may seem true to that person. In other words, I thought that the information I received, mostly in classes, about teaching reading was more fact based on scientific research than just a belief. I guess, though, that beliefs can either be something conjured up out of thin air or based on research. Time to examine my beliefs about reading!

Concerns with the Word Recognition View:

I was surprised to find that there are concerns with the word recognition view of reading. After all, it includes all of the following: *phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension*. Many of the concerns regarding Word Recognition claim that it does not include comprehension, when comprehension is one of the "five pillars" for Word Recognition. I do agree, however, that the use of phonics and fluency could be confusing to native Spanish speakers and do not personally feel that as much time should be "wasted" on certain activities in the classroom as described in this chapter. There are certainly other approaches that would work better for ELL students.

Word Recognition vs. Sociopsycholinguistic:

In my experiences, the Word Recognition View is, without a doubt, the reading view used to teach reading; however, the way in which comprehension is taught is more along the lines of the Sociopsycholinguistic view. Can the two not be combined?

Vocabulary:

- **Word recognition view** – reading is primarily a process of learning to recognize words by converting written language to spoken language and then combining the meanings of individual words to construct the meaning of a text.
- **Sociopsycholinguistic view** – Reading is a process of constructing meaning from texts within a social context using background knowledge, psychological strategies, and linguistic cues.
- **Colonias** – unincorporated areas that often lack public services such as road maintenance, water and electricity.
- **Multidimensional fluency scale** – The scale can be used to rate students' reading in three areas: prasing, smoothness, and pace.

CHAPTER 3

A SOCIOPSYCHOLINGUISTIC VIEW OF READING

Christina's Room:

Christina's classroom is very much how I envision my own to be! Through reading about Christina's classroom and her approaches to teaching reading I now see the complete picture regarding Word Recognition vs. Sociopsycholinguistic. I thought I held a Word Recognition View because of the comprehension component and thought that about the classes that I have subbed in as well. However, it seems now that the classrooms where I have taught have a mixed approach between the two. There is Word Recognition present daily, especially in the younger grades, but overall the Sociopsycholinguistic view is what is being taught with a huge focus on making meaning, for example, through making connections and predicting. Basically, if one keeps the focus on meaningful reading and writing, skills and academic concepts and vocabulary can be taught effectively.



Also as I was reading about Christina's classroom and thinking more about bilingual education I remembered back to ten years ago when I first started college. I had known for quite some time then that I wanted to be a teacher and after taking Spanish all through high school and tutoring a Spanish speaking student in their native language decided that I wanted to teach Spanish. However, after a couple of semesters I changed my major to Elementary Education because I did not want to work with high school students and instead wanted to work with Elementary students. In the past couple of years I have thought about getting my minor in Spanish so I could teach Spanish in elementary schools that offer the class as a special, but have been reluctant to do so. However, after reading this the thought just occurred to me that I would love to be a bilingual teacher! So, now, once again I find myself pondering a new direction. Once I get my reading endorsement and hopefully get a teaching job other than subbing, this may be something for me to look into.

Processes in the brain while reading:

Eye movement research was so interesting to read about! I knew that predicting, using background knowledge and making inferences were important components of reading, but I did not know about sampling (eyes moving in stops and starts while reading), fixations (stops) and saccades (starts). The book explains on p. 55 that "The process is similar to what happens as we view a movie." This is a great analogy and it makes more sense to me now!

A Universal Process:

I was glad to read that people all around the world process language in the same way when reading and talking because the reading process is universal. This is great news! This means that if I am successful in teaching students to read in English I could use the same approaches to teach my students in their native language!

The Checklist for Effective Reading Instruction:

I found this to be very helpful and wanted to include it in my journal.

- 1. Do students value themselves as readers, and do they value reading?***
- 2. Do teachers read frequently to students from a variety of genres?***
- 3. Do students have a wide variety of reading materials to choose from and time to read?***
- 4. Do students make good choices of books to read?***
- 5. Do students regard reading as meaning making at all times?***
- 6. Do students make a balanced use of all three cueing systems?***
- 7. Are students provided with appropriate strategy lessons if they experience difficulties in their reading?***
- 8. Do students have opportunities to talk and write about what they have read making connections between the reading and their experience?***

CHAPTER 4

THE HISTORY OF LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN SPANISH AND IN ENGLISH

“The more things change, the more things stay the same.”

This chapter started out with this saying and as I read I became more aware of why it was chosen to start out the chapter. The pendulum is always swinging in education and throughout the ages it seems that although a lot of research has been done to support what works best regarding teaching reading and what is best for our kids, what is taught in our schools is still largely motivated by politics. Lawmakers pick and choose which research they want to utilize and modify it to what they want. I personally see laws like ____ in California as very racist in nature. The result is to keep children who speak anything other than English as their first language from succeeding. This is troublesome to me especially now with our political climate in the U.S. targeting immigration especially of people from Mexico and Central and South Americas. Conversely, there have been times in history in different parts of the world and U.S. where what works is supported in the classroom for teaching reading to our ELL students. This brings me to my next thought...

“Part of being a professional is knowing the history of our subject.”

As I was saying, there are classrooms in the U.S. currently and around the world that are successful teaching reading by means of using research in favor of Sociopsycholinguistic methods. There have been successes in the past. There are two things that are important to

me concerning the history of teaching reading. 1.) History is important because we can learn from the mistakes and make improvements. 2.) If we, as educators, take responsibility for doing the best job we can it is up to us to find what has worked and is working regarding teaching reading to our ELL students. It is difficult for those teachers, like Francisco, who have laws barring them from doing so. The laws must be changed. But for those of us who do not have laws restricting us we must work harder to implement new strategies in our classrooms to benefit our ELL students.

CHAPTER 5

METHODS OF TEACHING READING IN SPANISH

The Whole Word Method:

As a substitute teacher I see the whole word method being used all the time. Mostly in K-2 classrooms. The most common is the word walls. The other activity that I've led with students while subbing is during reading group. The whole lesson consisted of showing the students flash cards. They either played Around the World with the flash cards or played Bingo.

"But Mommy, I worked so hard on that!"

When I read the quote at the beginning of this chapter it reminded me of a situation with my daughter last year. My daughter, Julia, will be going into second grade. Her school uses basal readers with the typical worksheets to go along with them as well as guided reading groups using what seems to be a more Sociopsycholinguistic view. Talk about eclectic! Anyway, my daughter has had a lot of trouble in school because of being out of her seat and causing a lot of problems. The more I read the more I think that it must have been a shock to her to go from our home where everything is more holistic and natural and print is everywhere. Being a student and a teacher I've always provided as many meaningful opportunities with reading, writing and print (including calendars, shopping lists, even e-mail). So, needless to say the worksheets she has to do at school are very challenging for her. So, one day I was sorting her papers brought home from school that week into a keep pile and a throw away pile. The keep pile included things Julia had drawn or written herself, like her morning news or journal pages and the throw away pile included all the worksheets. In my mind I didn't want to keep the worksheets because to me they were not authentic. Well, Julia saw the throw away pile and became very upset. She held up one of the worksheets and between tears got out "But Mommy, I worked so hard on that!" I realize now just how hard she must have worked just to get through the work page and to not get in any trouble from her teacher. Reading must be meaningful and teachers must stop sending mixed messages to children about reading!

Vocabulary:

- **Synthetic** – Synthetic methods go from the parts, usually sounds, letters, or syllables, to wholes; from Word recognition view of reading. *Examples: The Alphabetic Method,*

The Onomatopoeic Method (sounds different letters make), The Phonetic Method, The Syllabic Method.

- **Analytic** – Methods that go in the opposite direction from synthetic, from whole to part; from Word recognition view of reading. *Examples: The Global or Visual Concept Method, The Lexical Method, The Eclectic or Mixed Method.*

CHAPTER 6

A PRINCIPLED APPROACH TO TEACHING READING

Environmental Print Tasks:

It was fascinating to read about the interviews conducted with these children and to see the results of the experiment. Certainly I know a lot of children who can recognize right away Oreo packages or a McDonald's sign. But, I had never thought of environmental print being in context before! Isolated text must be very frustrating to our emergent readers. Also, we live in such a print rich environment with all of our advertisement signs, restaurant and store fronts and products in stores. Our children are learning to recognize print in context just by shopping for groceries with their parents!

Functions of Print Tasks:

This was also interesting to read about. I would love to do this with young children! I do remember learning about something similar in my reading methods class I took before graduating with my B.A. It wasn't a test, but it had to do with making sure our students had access to real life things they would read or write in life. For example, our TA said that when she taught 3rd grade, she would often pay bills and write checks, write shopping lists, write letters and update her planner during Writers' Workshop. She would let the students know what she was doing and talk about it with them. Some of the kids even chose to make their own shopping lists and such and loved it. Another thing I was thinking about is when I hear "I hate to read" from students when I'm subbing. Usually it is boys. So, I always start talking to them about what they like to do and most of the time they like video games. This makes a great segue for me to ask them if they like to use computers and like using the Internet and e-mail. Of course they say yes. So, I nonchalantly point out that reading e-mail or reading an article on the Internet about a new video game is reading. It is amazing how they have never thought of this as reading before! A lot of people don't. Another example is I was on MySpace the other day and was reading a profile of a friend of a friend. One of the questions is what you like to read. Their response was "Who the hell reads anymore. I have the Internet!" I guess he didn't realize that he was reading.

Too many thoughts!

I made so many notes in my book during this chapter. There was a lot of great information. The following especially stood out to me:

- Students working in pairs during Interactive reading in bilingual classes to provide each student the opportunity to be the leader.
- Fader's former students able to break out of a cycle of poverty and crime because they loved books.
- The Checklist for SSR.
- The problems with SSR with quizzing (such as AR). I sub in a district that does this and I have always had a problem with it. I'm so glad to read that I'm not the only one that feels this way!
- Great Ideas for follow-up activities for after reading. I especially liked the database program a teacher created where students could read and add their own comments.
- The technique that uses "hallacas" as an example that helps students make and confirm predictions.
- I love the use of the word biliterate!
- Books to note for future reading:
 - ❖ *Rhymes and Reasons: Literature and Language Play for Phonological Awareness* by Opitz
 - ❖ *Reaching Readers: Flexible and Innovative Strategies for Guided Reading* (Opitz and Ford)
 - ❖ Series of books by Linda Hoyt (strategy lessons)
 - ❖ *Teaching the Dimensions of Literacy* by Kucer and Silva's

CHAPTER 7

EFFECTIVE WRITING INSTRUCTION

Process Writing:

This is very familiar to me, as this is the type of classroom I student taught in. In my three years of subbing I have yet to be in a school where the time for writing was so open and flexible! There was not only writer's workshop that was completely open to creativity, but writing was integrated into language arts, science and social studies and drew on the students strengths while also incorporating art and music. We would have sharing time each Friday where whoever was to that point in their writing process would get to sit in the teachers chair and read to the class. There were some very imaginative and captivating stories to come out of the 3rd and 4th graders I worked with! As far as the cross curricular writing, it was tied to two main themes, the first was Science unit called Night Creatures and the next was Social Studies unit on Biographies. The Night Creatures unit started with writing research notes (the students picked which night creature they wanted to learn more about), then went on to writing a paragraph, that went through the whole editing process before being copied into the writing journals with an illustration, next the students worked on a story board to plan for a KidPix slide in which they would write something about their animal and what they would record themselves saying about their animal, next they typed this on KidPix and created their animations and recorded themselves reading what they wrote. As kids finished up their KidPix they worked on an art project that they wrote a description for to put in the hallway. Finally, the slideshow was compiled and put on a CD for the kids to check out and take home to share with their families and the whole class

watched the completed slideshow as a group. For the Biographies unit the end product was a book with biographies the kids wrote about someone in the classroom or a family member. Each student received a copy.

Writing is Shared and Social:

I just had a brainstorm as I was reading about the different ways students could share their writing. Of course, writings can be shared in the classroom through an Author's Tea, etc. but technology is such a huge part of our society that the following ideas came to mind:

- **PowerPoint or KidPix-** students can make slideshows to present a topic where they have to write first then type into the slide they create. (Similar to the Night Creatures unit but this could be modified or changed completely depending).
- **WebPages-**Students can design their own webpage with the content being their own interests (the student really likes skateboarding, their site could be all about this interest) or tying into the curriculum (the students are learning about regions, they can design a web page for a state and the class can compile it as a whole website. This could be shared with the school, it would not have to be a published website).
- **MS Word or Publisher-**typing up stories or other writing, adding graphics to stories or poems, making a newsletter, making posters, designing a brochure, etc.
- **E-mail-** In addition to writing to communicate (sometimes classes have pen pals from another school) they could use e-mail (or if they do not have e-mail available for students at their school at least practice typing up messages).

Animales salvajes:

Since I will be teaching kindergarten this coming school year I enjoyed reading about the activities Jeff used in his classroom to encourage the early stages of writing present in his classroom. I also liked the idea of having color-coded Spanish and English words next to pictures.

Book to Remember:

Getting the Most Out of the Morning Message and Other Shared Writing (daCCruz-Payne and Browning-Schulman 1998).

CHAPTER 8

STAGES AND LEVELS OF WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Stifling the inventive force:

I go back and forth with the correcting students writing/spelling vs. the students taking risks with their writing. This chapter has helped me realize that it all depends on where the child is developmentally regarding writing stages. For instance, if they are in the early phonetic stage I would spend very little time correcting their spelling. But, if they were in the phonic stage I would spend a lot of time using literature in the classroom to teach children about conventions and have mini-lessons on spellings that do not follow the rules. These would be the word wall words that do not follow the rules, or "outlaw" words. "proscrito" in Spanish. I would have two word walls, one for English words and one for Spanish words. The top of the word walls would be for outlaw words and the bottom for phonetically

spelled words. I may even go a step further and make the outlaw words look like they are in jail by some sort of decorations on the wall such as bars or a picture of an outlaw.

Manuel's Spelling Test:

It seems a little early to me to be giving a spelling test to Manuel in the first place. However, I feel that if one was given it should have been for the sole purpose of finding out where he landed on the stages of writing continuum.

CHAPTER 9

THEMATIC TEACHING TO DEVELOP BILITERACY

Thematic Teaching in Biliterate Classrooms:

Teachers in bi-lingual and dual language classrooms:

- *Keep focus of both reading and writing instruction on constructing meaning*
- *Scaffold instruction by following the gradual release of responsibility model*
- *Understand normal developmental processes in both reading and writing*
- *Support their students who are becoming proficient users of two languages*
- *Understand that language is best learned as students investigate big questions, drawing on resources from the different content areas*
- *Teach language through academic content*
- *Organize curriculum around integrated themes connected to content standards*

The connection between developing Biliteracy and drawing on culture:

This ties in with one of the main ideas of Writing Sense, that connecting cultural experiences with writing helps ELL students learn to their best potential and, of course, shows the students that they are valued as individuals and their culture is valued. A positive classroom environment such as this also aids in learning in that students feel comfortable with taking risks and participating in strategies that will help them with their language, reading and writing.

Future Leaders:

The authors' view stated at the end of the book is a reflection of my own and goes right along with my Social Science interest and background. We have to go further than teaching reading and writing, we need to teach them to think and act to build a better world because biliterate people will be our leaders of tomorrow. After reading Writing Sense, I see a huge opportunity to incorporate cross curricular learning through themes as well as including culture in the classroom and social studies activities to help students become more socially aware and active.