Overview

• Introduction (Objectives, Focus)
• Assessment of English Learners (ELs)
  – Comparison with English native speakers
  – Variability in skills
  – Using data to group students
• Review of recent EL research on:
  – Effectiveness of instruction and student growth
  – Language proficiency and reading ability
  – Vocabulary development and reading comprehension

Assessments

• Need to be reliable and valid.
  – Two or more examiners administered and scored
    the test the same way (Reliability)
  – The test is interpreted and used appropriately.
    • For example: If we are testing kindergarten ELs on PA,
      should we assess them on a language proficiency test?

Assessment of ELs

• Can we use the same reading tests for
  English Learners that we use for
  English only students?
  – Evidence
Correlation Coefficients between Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Understanding and Oral Reading Fluency in first grade English-native Speakers and English Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>English-only students (N=1547)</th>
<th>English Learners (N=603)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic Awareness and Nonsense Word Fluency beginning of first grade</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonsense Word Fluency and Oral Reading Fluency middle of first grade</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonsense Word Fluency and Oral Reading Fluency end of first grade</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonsense Word Fluency beginning of first and Oral Reading Fluency end of first grade</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Differences on Nonsense Word Fluency and Oral Reading Fluency for First Grade Students

Mean Differences in Oral Reading Fluency in Third Grade

Interpreting Reading Assessments for English Learners
Grouping Students

• Using the data from the scatter plots, how would you group students?
  – For developing PA skills:
    • Group them according to their PA skills

  – For developing Phonics skills:
    • Group them according to their phonics skills (Be aware that ELs (particularly Spanish speakers, may require more explicit instruction and practice with vowel sounds and certain consonant blends (e.g. sp, sc, bl, etc.).

Conclusion

• Use and interpret data to make informed decisions about grouping English Learners.
• Ensure that ELs are grouped during reading instruction according to their reading scores, particularly in early literacy skills (PA and phonics).
• Integrate vocabulary and language activities throughout the day.
• Adjust instructional delivery to incorporate ELs needs.

Review of Current EL Research

• Criteria
  – Publication within the last three years in peer-reviewed journals
  – At least 20 ELs participated in the study
  – All studies focused on ELs learning to read in English.
  – Focus on language proficiency, vocabulary development, and teaching techniques (Does not include all research articles on the topic, only the ones more widely cited in other research journals.)

A qualitative study

Purpose

• Summarize findings regarding the relation between teacher’s instructional practices and students’ reading outcomes for first grade English Learners.

• Participants: 20 classrooms in four urban school districts; 281 students were assessed on a battery of reading measures. 10 of the classes had ELs only, the other half had also some English speakers.

Findings

• Qualitative distinctions in more effective and less effective classrooms.
• Consistent relation between observations and students’ reading growth.
• Teachers used reading as a vehicle for language development. Systematic instruction on PA was enhanced with reading of connected text and comprehension instruction.

Findings cont.

• Vocabulary
  • Vocabulary and language was emphasized and integrated throughout each activity
  • Included basic and essential words
  • Simple activities that require little preparation (defining words, using words in sentences, asking sometimes more sophisticated questions to dig deeper into nuances of the word)
Participants

- 790 English native speakers
- 188 ESL speakers representing 33 different languages.
  - (Predominant languages were: Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Spanish, Persian, Polish, and Farsi).
  - Relation of ESL status and SES of the schools may not have been significant (individual SES differences may have been significant).
  - English Learners were immersed in the regular English classroom.

Findings

- Phonological awareness instruction in kinder is as effective for ESL speakers as for English native speakers.
- In kinder, ESL speakers performed more poorly on rhyme detection, pseudo word repetition, memory for sentences, syntactic awareness, and rapid naming.

Findings cont.

- The connection between reading and writing activities was very clear.
- Alternate complex and demanding activities (e.g. concept maps) with more well-defined activities (e.g. spelling or dictation).


- Longitudinal study K-2
- Purpose: Examine the development of reading and the kindergarten predictors of subsequent reading ability for ESL children receiving classroom instruction in English.
Findings

• By 2 grade, ESL children performed better than English native speakers on word reading tasks, rapid naming, and real word and nonword spelling.
• English native speakers and ESL students with reading difficulties had low scores on spelling, phonological processing, and working memory tasks.

Findings cont.

• For the ESL group, phonological processing was the single best predictor of word reading and reading comprehension in grade 2.


• Method: ELs identified with reading problems were provided with 58 sessions of supplemental reading instruction by trained teachers. Training included modeling, how to use ESL strategies, identifying key characteristics in the lessons, and assessment.

• Participants: 26 second-grade ELs in schools in the Southwest. (70% of Ss in the schools were low SES).

- Goal: Integrate the development of word and text reading efficiency in L2 reading.
  - #1: Examine the effects of context on reading efficiency for ELs and L1 readers.
  - #2: Do the same processes drive word and text reading efficiency in ELs and L1 readers.
  - #3: Examine similarities and differences in profiles of EL1 and ESL groups that differ in their reading efficiency.

Intervention

- Individual students or groups of 2 or 3.
- 30-35 minutes/day
- Lessons included fluent reading, phonological awareness, instructional-level reading, word-study, and writing.

Findings

- Significant gains for passage comprehension and segmentation fluency.
- Students gained more than 2 words per week on oral reading fluency during intervention (this gain was lost after supplemental intervention stopped).
- Similar patterns in reading difficulties to English only struggling readers.

Participants

- 183 ESL children in second grade and 67 English only students. (Lower SES and great variability in educational levels in the ESL group).
- ESL status was based on parent consent form.
- ELL students received 30-40 minutes of ESL, otherwise all instruction occurred in the regular classroom.
Findings

• ESL and English only scores did not differ in word recognition task, accuracy, and word attack task, although language proficiency levels were different.

• Reading in context appears to be more accurate than reading isolated words.

Droop & Verhoeven. (2003). Language proficiency and reading ability in first- and second-language learners

• Purpose: Explore the influence of language proficiency on reading comprehension
  – Is there a difference in oral language, word decoding, and reading comprehension skills of first- versus second-language learners from different minority groups and SES backgrounds?
  – Is there an interaction among oral language, word decoding, and reading comprehension of first- and second-language learners?

Findings

• RAN, PA, and well-developed recognition skills contribute to word and text reading efficiency for ESL children.

• ESL children who were efficient readers also had higher oral proficiency in English AND higher scores on phonemic awareness than ESL and English only children who were less efficient readers.

Participants

• 143 Dutch and 122 Turkish and Moroccan third graders attending school in the Netherlands.
  – 60 Dutch children with high SES
  – 83 Dutch children with low SES
  – 60 Moroccan children and 62 Turkish children with low SES
Findings

- Turkish and Moroccan children learning to read in Dutch, scored lower on reading comprehension and oral language proficiency at the word, sentence, and text levels.
- Vocabulary differences increased over time.
- No difference in decoding skills. Minority children were just as efficient decoders as native Dutch-speaking children.

Findings cont.

- Minority children depend more on their vocabulary knowledge for reading comprehension than Dutch children.
- The combined influence of decoding, vocabulary knowledge, and morphosyntactic knowledge on reading comprehension is stronger for L2 readers than for L1 readers.


- Purpose: Devise a model of L2 reading that can be applied to a sample of students whose first language is Spanish.
- Participants: 135 Spanish-speaking fourth-graders from three different school sites: Chicago, Boston, and El Paso.

Findings

- Wide range of scores on all the measures.
- Knowledge of the alphabetic principle and speedy word recognition are essential to comprehend text successfully.
- In the upper grades, language proficiency has a stronger influence on reading comprehension than decoding skills.
Findings

- Vocabulary knowledge contributes significantly to reading comprehension.
- Listening comprehension has by far the strongest effect on reading comprehension.


- First study on the impact of an English vocabulary enrichment intervention that combined direct instruction with instruction in word strategies on the word knowledge and reading comprehension abilities of ELs.

Focus of the intervention

- Which words?
  - General purpose academic words
- How do we introduce words?
  - In meaningful contexts
- How often?
  - Several times in diverse contexts with varying tasks
- What aspects of word knowledge do we need to focus on?
  - Depth of meaning, polysemy, morphological structure, cross-language relationships, spelling and pronunciation
Participants

- 142 ELs and 112 English native speakers in 5th grade in California, Virginia, and Massachusetts.
- Classrooms were randomly assigned to experimental and control group.

Findings

- A challenging curriculum that focuses on teaching academic words, awareness of polysemy, strategies for inferring word meaning from context, and tools for analyzing morphological, and cross-linguistic aspects of word meaning, improve the performance of ELs, AND English only students.
- Explicit teaching and using: (a) activities designed to manipulate and analyze word meanings, and (b) writing and spelling of words several times, are effective.

Intervention

- 30-45 minutes per day
- 10-12 words a week
- Review of words every 5th week
- Specific topic: immigration (Information came from different sources)
- Spanish-speakers previewed the text on Monday before introducing it on Tuesday.
- Identifying target words and activities to practice these words in heterogeneous groups.
- Activities to promote depth of knowledge and word analysis.

Conclusion

- Reading can be a vehicle for language development.
- Vocabulary needs to be emphasized throughout the day.
- English Learners and English native speakers benefit from direct and explicit instruction on phonemic awareness and phonics skills.
- Struggling readers (whether ESL or English only) behave similarly.
References


