

Tentative Title:

Where to Begin: Applied Empathetic Instruction for Limited Level English Learners with Weekly Grade level CSO's

Keywords:

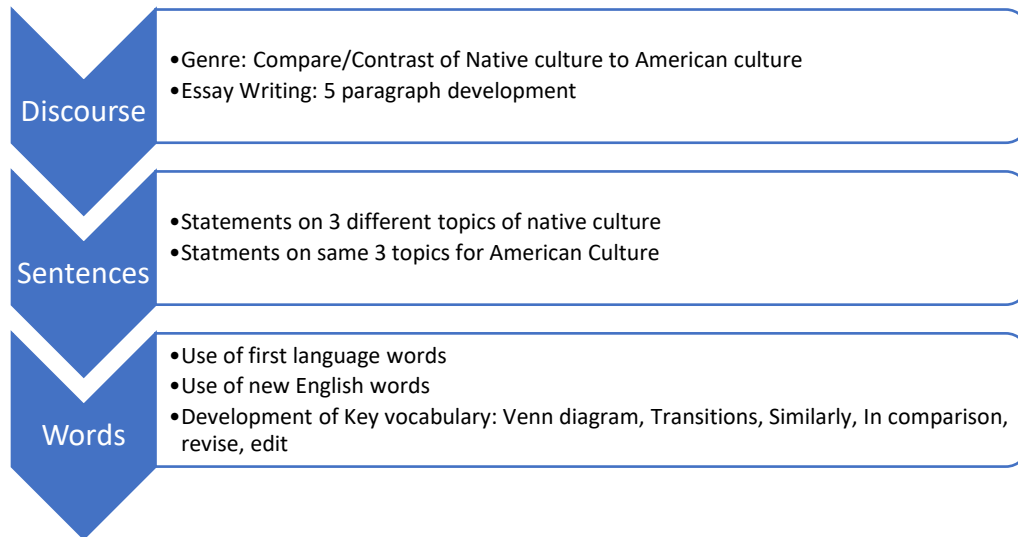
Applied, Empathetic, Instruction, Writing, Task oriented, Curriculum Mapping, Scaffolding, Assignment Creation, Culturally connective, English Learners, formative assessments, assessment-driven instruction, translanguaging

Synopsis:

Over the years there have been conflicting opinions about how second language is most efficiently acquired, extremes ranging from Grammar-Translation approach to Krashen's Natural Approach (Taber, 2008). Since English Learners(ELs) are an incredibly diverse group based on their language, educational, cultural, and social-economic backgrounds, the needs represented cannot be remediated by a cookie-cutter approach. I remember feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility as an educator of helping such a diverse group reach their educational goals in an efficient manner.

With no time to spare in helping ELs achieve their academic goals and gain access to the classroom content, an EL teacher must look at producing meaningful assignments as quickly as possible in order to allow the student to participate along with their native English-speaking peers. Since meaningful assignments should build on experiences and knowledge of the learner, assessment of each child's level of understanding and unique backgrounds provides information to guide instruction. Careful assessment can tap into each student's rich background and provide great insight into students' understanding of English and their interests, personality, and background from which to build a framework for further assignments that will also address grade-level Content Standard Objectives (CSOs). "Classroom research is so powerful and helpful that even the most modest attempt can bring provocative and insightful results." (Kochis). Furthermore, written tasks give ELs opportunity to share experiences from their native land and can generate an affective atmosphere for the students to let down their guard while experimenting with language. "Tasks are defined as activities that can stand alone as fundamental units and that require comprehending, producing, manipulating, or interacting in authentic language." (Nunan, 1989 by Oxford, 2001). The use of task-based assignments improve ELs use of English because attention is given to meaning over form. Task-based assignments that focus on meaning for the limited EL helps speed up the process of English Language Proficiency (ELP). Teaching ELs through grammar worksheets or repetitive vocabulary exercises does not provide conceptual understanding of topics and language. "The acquisition process, rather than involving primarily the sequenced building of forms and structures and vocabulary aimed at accuracy, fluency and complexity, is a non-linear and complex development process aimed at comprehension and communication." (Valdes, G., Balqui, A., Kibler, A.K & Alvarez.L., 2012, 43). Therefore, if teachers teach from a top down approach, in which the bigger picture is given first, then address language as it presents itself, ELs will become active within the classroom, studying content much more quickly. Look at the following assignment: a compare /contrast essay of their native life and American life: Student would compare elements of living in America versus living in their homeland (i.e. food, family life, schools). First, the students would find similarities and differences and list on a Venn diagram. Then the student would develop sentences about family life in one paragraph, food in another paragraph, and so on. After the first draft the teacher can evaluate the sentence development and grammar, provide instruction, and provide key vocabulary and transitional words that are rudimentary for compare/ contrast essays. Thus, students are developing the skills of

writing a compare/contrast essay while developing their English. An EL with limited language skills is capable of working on this assignment given the necessary supports.



Language objectives and content objectives should be taught simultaneously. Though this will likely naturally occur with very young ELs, it is vital to address content while working on language objectives for older ELs. An instructor must consider what is the academic language needed for ELS to achieve task. Assignments will also involve scaffolding to aid the students’ development of grade-appropriate language capability and content vocabulary understanding.

The use of the student’s first language should also be an integral part of this learning process, since the use of the student’s understanding in the first language promotes understanding and retention. Also, limited ELs can feel overwhelmed and exhausted communicating in English throughout the course of the day. Encouraging translanguaging* for ELs can aid in making tasks less cumbersome.

***Translanguaging** “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” (Canagarajah 2011 by Gunnarsson, n.d. p.6).

Tentative Table of Contents:

1. Where to Begin: Applied Empathetic Instruction for Limited Level English Learners with Weekly Grade level CSO’s
2. Literature Review
3. Implications for Teaching English learners
4. Discussion Questions
5. Exercises
6. Works Cited and References for Further Reading
7. Glossary Terms

Objectives, Impact, and Value:

This chapter is designed to help the per-service and existing teachers of English Language Learners understand and unpack tools to build quick, personalized assignments. This framework for creating such

assignments comes from peer-reviewed research that illustrates the quick and efficient way in which these assignments build new knowledge based on current language abilities and native language connections.

Target Audience:

Pre-service ELL teachers, Current ELL Teachers, Pre-Service Classroom Teachers, Current Classroom Teachers

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