Validity of strategizing for all students with vocabulary and comprehension

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Abstract

Dual Language Learner (DLL) populations have instructors that are held to a high standard for performance. All students should have instructors that are held to a high standard with regards to strategies in vocabulary and comprehension. Educators need to be attuned to their student's needs regardless of what languages they have skill in. Language development needs to be focused on with strategies that meet the needs of each individual student so that success is attained at school and in life. Positive outcomes with vocabulary and comprehension are a result of intentionality and best practices. More research is needed to substantiate this view so that change can happen across all school districts.

Keywords: comprehension, vocabulary, intentionality, language, communication, DLLs

Introduction

Dual Language Learners (DLL) are focused on in regards to the understanding of the school language which differs from their home language (Winsler, Burchinal, Tien, Peisner-Feinberg, Espinosa, Castro, LaForett, Kim & De Feyter, 2014). Strategies that have been given to DLL populations to increase vocabulary and comprehension (Silverman, Crandell & Carlis, 2013) have been earmarked, sold, and propagandized for that particular population, but would seemingly be best practice for all students. This paper will purport findings that identify activities and strategies that are used for DLL, but can benefit any student struggling with vocabulary and comprehension. Teachers as well as the strategies they use help with vocabulary extension (Massey, 2012). Teachers need to be mindful of what they decide to do so that students will be motivated to acquire challenging word usage (Vygotsky, 1978). A consensus for educational approaches that help all students struggling with reading and comprehension should be the goal for educators working with children.

Increased vocabulary functions as a mechanism for confidence is a viable strategy in the classroom (Blum & Koskiner, 1991). Demonstration of confidence with vocabulary is vital for students struggling to increase vocabulary and comprehension. Language is what allows individuals to express themselves and learn new skills (Norel & Popa, 2014). What works for DLLs in vocabulary building strategies is equitable for students struggling with vocabulary and comprehension. Special attention to one group of students is not beneficial for a holistic learning environment.

An understanding of strategies used with DLLs is needed for correspondence to students struggling with vocabulary and comprehension. The teacher's guidance in the strengthening of vocabulary is vital to the process (Silverman, Crandell & Carlis, 2013). The effectiveness of the teacher matters because this is a determiner of the strategies that will be utilized (Macrina, Hoover, & Becker, 2009). The planning and structure that the teacher provides makes it possible for depth of knowledge with vocabulary that the family context alone isn't sufficient enough to produce (Schwartz, 2013). The quality of the teacher's involvement needs to be based on functioning with the use of peer relations (Vygotsky, 1978).

The language barrier has been identified as grounds for the teaching strategies that are utilized for DLLs (Nemeth & Brillante, 2011). A higher degree of intentionality regarding interpretation of DLLs has led to more effective interventions that are culturally sensitive. The background of DLLs is clarified as being unique.

In an effort to support DLLs with how they express themselves their home language is given validity in being categorized as a linguistic resource. Observations of DLLs get attention so that plans of action in the classroom take account of the differences not only in how DLLs learn, but in the behavior that is demonstrated because of the status of DLL. Educators of DLLs are required to change the strategies utilized even if they have been successful in the past so that this special population gets optimal use of language skills in the academic setting (Nemeth & Brillante, 2011).

Problem Statement

DLLs have been identified as needing strategic methods for communication to expand (Chen & Shire, 2011). Communication is helpful in academic success as well as social competence. Language and communication work together because of the expression that is inherent in these skills. DLLs have also been identified as having many challenges in the school system and their proficiency has been focused on so that risks for reading and learning difficulties are lowered (Han, Silva, Vukelich, Buell & Hou, 2013). The diversity and growth of DLLs is the reason that they are singled out as requiring instructional strategies for success in school. Collaborations of educational staff have met regularly and support DLLs so that their communication needs are met in hands-on activities with extensive emphasis on meeting needs with varied materials. Some examples are visuals of familiar objects and labels of emotions (Chen & Shire, 2011).

Strategies are used with DLLs to ensure that language barriers don't get in the way of reading development which is a precursor to literacy development (Pilonieta, Shue & Kissel, 2014). Words have meaning, but the emphasis that DLLs receive is broken down and updated due to the attention this demographic receives (Chen & Shire, 2011). One category that gets attention for DLLs is problem solving in the context of reading proficiency. Problem solving strategies with implementation to reading have been showed to be used more with DLLs (Hong-Nam, 2014). These strategies have an emphasis on higher order thinking that is lacking for the general populations of students.

Proposed Solution

Read aloud interventions are effective for increasing vocabulary and comprehension with DLLs (Silverman, Crandell & Carlis, 2013). As educators one of our goals needs to be for all our students to improve in vocabulary and comprehension. Explanations need to be rigorous for optimal effect (Silverman, Crandell & Carlis, 2013). Pictures, non-verbal's, and props help with new understanding of vocabulary (Maricarmen, Hoover & Becker, 2009). Being able to back up interventions with extension purposes is tantamount to being detailed in tools utilized in this regard. The instruments a teacher decides to use affect the mental activity going on in the student for vocabulary and comprehension improvement (Norel & Popa, 2014).

DLLs have been identified as having different vocabulary needs (Hammer, Hoff, Uchikoshi, Gillanders, Castro & Sandilos, 2014). Vocabulary representations are seen as a specific part of language that proficiency is needed in (Mancilla-Martinez, Christodoulou & Shabaker, 2013). Programs dealing with DLLs have had their accountability requirements upgraded so that the student's needs are met (Castro, 2014). Accountability measures are what is designated to show improvement for this population. More time and effort has been given to DLLs in regards to their experiences in early childhood (Castro, 2014). Family and teachers have been worked with to improve standing in linguistic avenues (Castro, 2014). DLLs have been identified as needed more contextual explanations so the strategies that are used with them have been adjusted in order to make up for educational gaps.

Assessment for DLLs has been intentionally and ongoing (Magruder, Hayslip, Espinosa & Matera, 2013). The factors that have been innovated with intentional support are lessons, activities, and interactions with regards to improving linguistic skills. Instruction for DLLs has revolved around a focus on decoding and comprehension of the school language. Support and understanding has been identified as being vital to DLLs so that balance of their language is maintained. The factors that have been designated for DLLs to have quality language experiences have as much regard for all students struggling with language because of the intentionality and support that is engaged in.

Children's interest has been noticed as being needed for communication to improve (Magruder, Hayslip, Espinosa & Matera, 2013). Vocabulary is improved on with books, singing, word games, and talking. Engagement in these types of activities needs to happen every day. Language development is required to navigate in the school environment.

Teachers of DLLs have been informed that they must make the environment safe for their students to explore language as they see fit (Magruder, Hayslip, Espinosa & Matera, 2013). DLLs have focused strategies and practices for educators for optimal effectiveness with language and literacy.

Vocabulary enrichment programs have been deemed necessary for DLLs (Restrepo, Morgan & Thompson, 2013). Since vocabulary indicates comprehension DLLs have been focused on so difficulties can be minimized. Shared book reading, hands-on activities, and repetition have been used to close up the achievement gap with DLLs (Restrepo, Morgan & Thompson, 2013). Practicing vocabulary in meaningful contexts has been used for semantic improvement. Intensive interventions have been utilized so that DLLs development improves. The rate of learning vocabulary for DLLs was looked at and taken into consideration when deciding intervention strategies (Restrepo, Morgan & Thompson, 2013). The efficacy of intervention with DLLs has been dissected in order to determine if best practices are being utilized.

Instructors are concerned with the vocabulary gap of DLLs (Mendez, Crais, Castro & Kainz, 2015). Vocabulary has been established as the gateway for reading achievement. Special status had been given to DLLs since they have been identified as having development that is bilingual (Mendez, Crais, Castro & Kainz, 2015). Labeling in this way has had positive and negative correlations for DLLs. Assessment has taken on changes due to DLLs strategies concerning vocabulary enhancement. Methods have been compared in order to find what works best for DLLs (Mendez, Crais, Castro & Kainz, 2015). The special consideration has focused on vocabulary due to its links to comprehension. The evidence that has been generated in supporting DLLs has been sensitive to the environment at home as well as in school (Mendez, Crais, Castro & Kainz, 2015).

Explicit language awareness for DLLs has focused curriculum and intentionality in an understanding manner with cultural sensitivity as a special regard (Kearney & Ahn, 2013). Parent involvement is crucial to this endeavor. The cognitive processes involved with language acquisition have been taken into consideration so that development capabilities are a priority. The product and process of DLLs has been studied in order to get a better understanding of what strategies should be utilized (Kearney & Ahn, 2013). Linguistic diversity has been identified as being crucial to school readiness. The content that needs to be taught to DLLs is vocabulary and communication within the material of the existing curriculum (Kearney & Ahn, 2013).

Vocabulary knowledge has been identified as a key precursor to the competence that comes with reading comprehension in young children (O'Leary, Cockburn, Powell & Diamond, 2010). Language skills and vocabulary are the basis for mental capacities that are being developed in young children (Norel & Popa, 2014). Understanding differing word meanings is needed for school achievement. Vocabulary knowledge can be indicated in several ways. One way it is shown is through oral comprehension. For oral language to be propelled contrasting methods of instruction need to be employed. The intentional introduction of new vocabulary words is required on a daily basis so that best practices are being adhered to. When children are engaged in play with peers the conversations should be guided in meaningful ways so that correlations are made for phonological awareness to be integrated appropriately. When children are motivated to learn based on procuring words that spontaneously are discovered to not be included in prior knowledge the natural curiosity that is being built on has long ranging potential for understanding (O'Leary, Cockburn, Powell & Diamond, 2010).

Phonological awareness which is a part of vocabulary comprehension is a predictor of reading ability (Irwin, Moore, Tornatore & Fowler, 2012). Phonological awareness is just one component of what is required to have oral proficiency. The less vocabulary selection a child has the harder it will be for that child to identify words. Because of the need for extended vocabulary educators need to be intentional in approaching language and modeling the skills concerning vocabulary production. The intentionality needs to take into consideration the interest of the students so that the students will be engaged in the methods being employed concerning vocabulary building. Varied hands-on experiences need to be engaged in with literature so that interaction is a reciprocal process (Irwin, Moore, Tornatore & Fowler, 2012).

Teachers that model language learning to all students base their reading on student's interest have positive results (Carbo, 1993). Educators who observe and build on those observations learn what to model to reach all their students. If a student is enjoying what they are doing with literacy they will be more likely to engage in the activity (Carbo, 1993). Beginning in the reading process is what fosters fluency in vocabulary. Story telling when modeled appropriately is a way to use oral language that familiarizes students with the sound of written language. Recorded books help fill in the gap with students who struggle with the sounds when the recording is done slower.

Pairing a student struggling with vocabulary with a student with higher vocabulary enhances their abilities in a positive way. Creativity with approaching these activities is needed so that the interest of all the students is focused on (Carbo, 1993).

Oral fluency has been proven to improve comprehension (Blum & Koskinen, 2001). When students have multiple opportunities to engage with fluency they become more confident. Instructional opportunities need to be based on interest and content for motivation to be optimal. When students are interested they retain more of the material that is being covered. Once students at different levels are given many opportunities to engage together at their own paces fluency improves. Cooperative learning gives opportunities for reflection and improvement for all of those involved in the process (Blum & Koskinen, 2001). One example of cooperative learning is storybook reading. It has been stated that storybook reading helps DLLs with vocabulary development (Walsh, Rose, Sanchez & Burnham, 2011).

It has been found that vocabulary improvement does equate to comprehension increasing (Elleman, Lindo, Morphy & Compton, 2009). The current state of a student's vocabulary demonstrates their background knowledge. Students who are able to draw intelligent conclusions based on their understanding of vocabulary are better at achievement goals concerning comprehension. Comprehension just isn't about knowing, but being able to apply that knowledge when required. Students with exposure to text, not just oral speech, have a more extensive vocabulary (Elleman, Lindo, Morphy & Compton, 2009). The reciprocal approach for vocabulary extension gets positive results (Bruner, 1983). The back and forth of language interactions must be based on reciprocity to build the foundation for vocabulary and comprehension success.

Vocabulary instruction needs to be contextual for associations within the context to be viable (Elleman, Lindo, Morphy & Compton, 2009). Contextual references concerning vocabulary need to be included with word exposure in order for retention to be gained. Activities need to go beyond introduction categories for accurate processing to take place. Educators need to emphasis challenging without limitations so that students reach true understanding of vocabulary. Vocabulary understanding doesn't stand alone, but happens within the context of varied enrichment activities. The effectiveness of vocabulary instruction improves when diverse activities are implemented in meaningful ways (Elleman, Lindo, Morphy & Compton, 2009). Instruction needs to be direct, repetitious with context that is enriching, structured according to the student's needs, and with a variety of strategies in use so that varied abilities are addressed (Elleman, Lindo, Morphy & Compton, 2009).

Language helps with mental capacities for preschool children (Norel & Popa, 2014). Internalization of language acquisition happens with guided encounters (Vygotsky, 1978). Distinguishing points of moral dilemmas can be demonstrated with fairy tales (Norel & Popa, 2014). Different ways to approach these tales is acceptable because students learn in different ways. Methods that can be used to improve expressive communication can be adapted in different manners to reach all students. The methods that are used need to be determined based off analysis of observations. This is done so that the quality of communication is focused on with each student's abilities being the focus (Norel & Popa, 2014).

Scaffolding of communication components involves modeling, repetition, and mutual interest (Bellon-Harn & Harn, 2008). Reciprocal interactions are the foundation for quality language development (Bruner, 1983). Labels and expansions of storybook reading are effective for improving utterances with students (Bellon-Harn & Harn, 2008). The labels and scaffolding need to have quality procedures for phonological abilities to improve. Any type of language impairment can be improved with scaffolding that naturally evolves due to expectations that are appropriate for the students being worked with. The complexity of language improves when oral language is paired with planned transitions that meet the needs of the students (Bellon-Harn & Harn, 2008).

The interactions between the students and teachers needs to be quality for vocabulary to improve (Silverman, Crandell & Carlis, 2013). The context of reading gets better with questions, reciprocal interactions, and in depth conversations. Read alouds that have extensions support vocabulary improvement in the area of expressiveness (Silverman, Crandell & Carlis, 2013). The explanations need to be pertinent to what is being covered and accompanied by gestures that enhance the communication process. Different methods work for vocabulary enhancement depending on the levels of the students. Students with lower vocabulary are helped by illustrations and acting out parts (Silverman, Crandell & Carlis, 2013).

Authentic reading activities provide stimulation and creativity within the student population when instruction is challenging in literature approaches (Boris & Owles, 2008).

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A story book must be listened to and the approach to the literacy needs to be interactive with the teacher making observations throughout in order to maintain interest. The teacher needs to determine if the students are enjoying the rhythm of the language of the story as the format is being introduced. Letter knowledge pertaining to the story can be maximized for optimal interest of the students by having extension activities that point out letters of the student's names so that correlations to self are legitimized for the personal connection to the literacy. The educator must also give his or her students the opportunity to tell stories so abilities with language and creativity can be assessed (Smogorzewka, 2014). The educator must offer assistance whenever needed so that growth is developmental appropriate with regards to vocabulary building that relates to the literacy in meaningful ways (Vygotsky, 1978).

A language rich environment with active participant's increases dialogue with all those involved (Massey, 2012). If the teacher is responsive the interactions with regards to language are positive and filled with meaning. Comprehension improves not just with scaffolding, but with content and activities that support the language (Massey, 2012). The comments and questions that are made throughout the process challenge for language and cognitive development. The quality of interactions does correlate to language and literacy development as well (Massey, 2012). When quality language strategies are utilized comprehension abilities like syntax, semantics, and narration improve (Massey, 2012). One form of a quality language strategy is storytelling. Storytelling helps with developing levels of comfort and confidence (Berkowitz, 2011). Retelling stories is helpful for children to be able to recognize patterns. When children have an opportunity to participate in identification of characters from a story relatability is established (Berkowitz, 2011).

Conclusion

Improvement in language translates to helping in development of cognition, behavior, and social skills (Winsler, Burchinal, Tien, Peisner-Feinberg, Espinosa, Castro, La Forett, Kim & DeFeyter, 2014). Based off this connection between language and other realms of development quality strategies should be used with all students struggling with vocabulary and comprehension. Modeling appropriate behaviors for all students has positive results (Carbo, 1993). Fluency which is linked to comprehension should be engaged in for all students to be motivated (Blum & Koskinen, 2001). The fact that language and vocabulary helps with mental abilities should be proof enough that all students language acquisition needs to be focused on (Norel & Popa, 2014). The reciprocal involvement which is the foundation for the back and forth of interactions needs to take precedence in quality instruction for all students (Bruner, 1983). Without this foundation students struggling with vocabulary and comprehension won't get what they need to succeed.

DLLs get compared to monolinguals to determine if the strategies and structure that is being used is enough for progress to happen in developmentally appropriate manners with vocabulary and comprehension (Schwartz, 2013). Vocabulary enhancement for DLLs has also been documented as a forceful predictor for reading achievement and school success, but needing to be done with respect for the diversity and backgrounds of the students (Mendez, Crais, Castro & Kainz, 2015). DLL instructors have been pinpointed to dissect methods that are utilized for language skills so that academic functioning is a goal that is supported regularly (Chen & Shire, 2011). Focus on language development with intentional methods helps young children to have increased vocabulary and comprehension (Kearney & Ahn, 2013). The most appropriate methods for vocabulary and comprehension strategies is to implement varied active that are interesting and challenging at all levels (Carbo, 1993). Alphabet knowledge, concepts, phonological awareness, and expressive vocabulary all need to be addressed in young language learners so that literacy competence will be realized (Irwin, Moore, Tornatore & Fowler, 2012). Extended literacy activities for young children that are based on reciprocal interactions with teachers have a positive impact on language skills (Massey, 2012).

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