English Language Learners and Reading Instruction

Citation: Practical Guidelines for the Education of English Language Learners: Research-Based Recommendations for Instruction and Academic Interventions [K-12] Center on Instruction Reading Recommendations (pp 30-1)

Conclusions

Supporting and promoting the reading development of the growing population of ELLs is both a challenge and a necessity for educators across the nation. In this section, we identify six recommendations to guide the planning and implementation of any instructional approach or academic intervention to promote ELL’s reading ability:

1. ELLs need early, explicit, and intensive instruction in phonological awareness and phonics in order to build decoding skills.

2. K-12 classrooms across the nation must increase opportunities for ELLs to develop sophisticated vocabulary knowledge.

3. Reading instruction in K-12 classrooms must equip ELLs with strategies and knowledge to comprehend and analyze challenging narrative and expository texts.

4. Instruction and intervention to promote ELLs’ reading fluency must focus on vocabulary and increased exposure to print.

5. In all K-12 classrooms across the U.S., ELLs need significant opportunities to engage in structured, academic talk.

6. Independent reading is only beneficial when it is structured and purposeful, and there is a good reader-text match.

These recommendations apply whether the instruction serves a preventive, augmentative, or remedial function, and whether the domain of focus is for class-wide instruction or small-group intensive intervention. These are decisions that must be made locally by the educators supporting ELLs on the basis of characteristics of the population being served, combined with feasibility and appropriateness, given the instructional goal and/or target skills of focus.
**Reaction Questions:**

1. In your view, what do ELL students need in order to increase their reading ability/literacy?

2. In your opinion, why is early, explicit, and intensive instruction in phonological awareness and phonics development important for English Language Learners?

3. Currently, what opportunities are available in your school/district for ELLs to develop sophisticated vocabulary knowledge? Please give examples.

4. From your perspective, what opportunities are available in your school/district for ELLs to gain comprehension strategies across challenging narrative and expository texts? Please give examples.

5. In what ways is increased reading fluency supported in your school/district?

6. From your perspective, what do you see as the intended outcome of these recommendations on supporting reading development of ELLs?

7. From your experiences, what do you believe are the implications of these recommendations for increasing students who are English Language Learners’ exposure to print throughout the school/district/community/home?

**Application Questions:**

1. What instructional strategies can our school/district provide to develop the vocabulary knowledge and increased exposure to print needed by ELL students?

2. Who are the school personnel that need to be involved in planning and implementing instructional approaches and/or academic interventions to promote increased reading skills of ELLs? How can educators work together to plan appropriate class-wide instructional approaches and small group interventions?

3. In what ways can the school/district provide the necessary professional development supports in order for educators and families to improve reading development/literacy of ELL students?

4. How can the state/district/school/community work together to strengthen and refine the existing educational system to better meet the reading needs of ELL students?

5. What resources/opportunities might be helpful at the classroom, building/district/state/community levels to ensure proper implementation of the research-based recommendations for K-12 instruction and academic interventions in the reading/literacy development of students who are ELL?
6. What assessments do educators need in order to plan appropriate instructional approaches or academic intervention to promote the reading ability/literacy development of ELL students?

These questions were developed by the following stakeholders working together within the IDEA Partnership:

Role: Family Member
Location: California

Role: Teacher
Location: California

Role: Consultant
Location: North Carolina

Role: General Education Administrator
Location: Pennsylvania

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