**LLED 360­307 Fall 2017 Dr. Lorna Ramsay**

**Reading Analysis Reflection**

**Date:** Sept. 27, 2017 **Facilitator name:** Andrew Leong

**Text Chapters**:​ Coelho, E. (2012); Chapter 4: Language and Learning in Multilingual Classrooms

**Name of Outside sources:**

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/standards.pdf>

**BC English Language Learning Standards**

A comprehensive document that defines an ELL student and provides assessment standards as a resource to help educators work and deal with ELL students. Includes concrete, real-life examples but there are only four levels (CEFR has 6 sub levels) and the document is dated (16 years ago).

**Main Themes**:​

1. Language learning is complex and a process that takes around 5 years or more; some students progress quicker, and some may need some additional assistance / support to progress (p. 84). Developmental continua and descriptors of language competency can be used to better determine an idea of the student’s competency as a measuring point for development.
2. ELLs who do not have full proficiency of the English language should not be evaluated on the same criteria as native speakers (p. 85). Better practices for evaluating ELLs may include eliminating criteria that penalises L2Ls for lack of command of the language of instruction and adapting assignments to better suit their academic capabilities. ELLs may be appear to be illiterate in the language of instruction, yet, this is probably due to the fact that they are often not able to communicate or understand instructions.
3. Having a common framework for evaluating ELLs can help to eliminate inconsistencies in evaluation, assessment, and documentation across cultures (p. 86).
4. Teachers should adapt their instruction to facilitate the material and to ensure the academic success of the students, including but not limited to modified expectations, learning resources, and instructional strategies. This assistance may come in the form of “scaffolding, where teachers provide the support that enables students to perform beyond their individual limitations (p. 108).
5. Language learning is a gradual process. Most materials and textbooks are designed at concrete levels (level 1, 2, 3), and then into sublevels. Thus, in a classroom environment, there will likely be many different students at different language competency levels; it is on the onus of the teacher to tweak content and delivery based on these needs (pg. 84).

**My Critical Argument or Thesis**

ELLs learning the language of instruction cannot be held to the same academic standards as regular students. There must be separate, consistent, and fair standards of assessment for ELLs that is different from native speakers, such as the CEFR or BC English Language Learning Standards. Learning any language is a continuous, gradual process and evaluations should be based on their growth and what is reasonably expected of their performance; that is until they become proficient in the native language and reclassify to regular classes. Teachers can assist in language proficiency growth by conducting “scaffolding”, or strategies to accelerate development.

**New Vocabulary**:​

CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference for languages 🡪 a model of six levels between absolute beginner and high proficiency. The framework helps ensure curricula and assessments of performance are standardised, and documents such as results, evaluations, and certification are consistent from country to country. Consists of 3 broad categories of performance:

1. Understanding oral language and written text
2. Speaking in both interactive and one-way communication
3. Writing

Large-scale assessment 🡪 Purpose is to assess the effectiveness of an entire education system, such as a school district, a province, or a whole country. It becomes useful to include L2Ls in the assessment to compare their performance to native speakers. It is recommended that ELLs take standardized tests to see where they stand in relation to native speakers.

Scaffolding 🡪 Support and strategies that teachers undertake to assist L2Ls to reach for higher performance beyond capability.

Scaffolding in the Quadrants 🡪 A framework for differentiated instruction for L2Ls, as well as an explanation of each quadrant (avoid Quadrant D where tasks and instruction is cognitively undemanding and reduced scaffolding).

Zone of proximal development 🡪 The difference between what children can do by themselves and the next step or level they can achieve with assistance.

**Educational Implications:**

Insights and connections to educational themes and theories or more global issues

* L2Ls carry a heavy burden of learning; they learn English vocabulary on top of the standard homework they are assigned
* L2Ls need additional time to process information in two different languages, especially tasks involving higher, critical thinking
* The CEFR does a decent job at standardizing material on 6 levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2
* However, this framework was designed with adult learners in mind; global descriptions need adaptation and tweaking for students who are learning through this curriculum
* A student’s position on the CEFR is constantly changing; some may move from A1 to A2 within a couple of weeks, and some may take a few days
* Classrooms may have students and ELLs of different language capabilities
* My criticism of the CEFR is that it is very difficult to place a student on the scale; one may have B1 listening skills but only A2 writing, would that make them an independent user or a basic user of English?
* Teachers need to share with students clear and realistic expectations to promote personal development
* L2Ls often think in their primary language first, before converting to the language of instruction; this means that providing extra time will allow students to answer all questions

Insights and connections on practical teaching strategies

* Teachers can use developmental continua and performance to better create a plan about student language needs and current progress made, as well as monitor for improvements
* Scaffolding; teachers can modify their language or content to better allow students to focus on a set of vocabulary, as repetition of these few words is crucial for early English development
* Concrete or visual aids can enable beginning ELLs to demonstrate their knowledge (charts, diagrams), as well as materials that reflect cultural diversity
* For many ELLs, having dictionaries or personal bilingual dictionaries can help to understand the questions at hand, as well as additional time to complete course work
* ELLs tend to do better with opportunities for practice and feedback, which may include models of performance, specific criteria, and practice assignments

Questions

1. Have you observed, in your past experience, ELLs who were unfairly evaluated based on their lack of experience with the English language?
2. What are some ways we can more fairly assess ELLs in teaching practice?
3. How can you apply the idea of “scaffolding” and CEFR to your subject area?
4. How do we assess special needs? Do we need a separate set of standards or criteria?
5. What are some signs that the student is ready to be integrated into regular English classes

**Comments on discussion:**

­ Did a group member give new information or critique the facilitator at any point?

* New discussions on when to place student into regular English studies; determination should be based on tests and assessment based on ESL standards; if they are approaching proficiency and excellent results, they should be promoted
* Tests should be altered so that it better suits ELL capabilities; lots of graphics, diagrams, and extra time will allow them to do better 🡪 less writing and long answer
* Special needs evaluation should be evaluated through a similar process; set standards but you’re starting at a base level and then increasing the difficulty as competency improves

­ What was my contribution to engagement?

* Facilitated conversations and prepared the reading notes for today’s presentation.

­ Was the group engaged?

* Group was engaged and on task for the duration of the discussion.

­ Did the facilitator use strategies to include group members?

* Prepared a variety of discussion questions for group members to share.

­ Is there more research to be done on topics of discussion? If so, specifically state.

* Who is responsible for assessing ELLs? Should it be the individuals who set the standards for English proficiency? Or should it be teachers and administrators at the local level?
* Exploration of standardized exams and scenarios where a student is proficient in the home language but failing in the language of instruction. How should we proceed?
* What is the value of standardized assessment given the different language capabilities of students? At what point does equitable practices create a rift between ELLs and native speakers – *preferential treatment*?

**Critical considerations of the reading analysis presentation:**

­ Were all the objectives met with rigour?

* Yes, all notes and topics were covered. The discussions was helpful. Members provided personal stories and experiences to fully answer questions.

­ What suggestions do I have as self­evaluation for growth in presentation content or presentation organization and delivery?

* Better presentation of graphics; I referenced and brought the book to discussion but printouts of the diagrams could provide a better analysis.