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

**Reading Analysis Reflection** **Date**: 21 September 2017

**Facilitator Name**: Dan Hanoomansingh

**Text Chapters:**  *Language and Learning in Multilingual Classrooms: A Practical Approach*, Chapter 3

**Name of Outside Source:** Bilingual Education in California <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/battle-of-bilingual-education-once-again-brewing-in-california/>

**Main Themes**

* Not only do ELL students start at a disadvantage compared to their peers but they have to work to catch up as their peers continue to develop their skills.
* There is a difference between proficiency in “everyday language” and “academic language”.
* Segregating ELL students for more focused instruction may achieve short-term results but has a long-term negative social impact.
* ELL students should not be developing their English skills at the expense of their first language.
* Dual language education (in L1 and L2) is hugely beneficial but is logistically difficult and nearly impossible in Canada.
* Content-based L2 instruction is often beneficial; especially for older students who may already have a background in the content area.

**MY CRITICAL ARGUMENT OR THESIS**

* While placing English Language Learners directly into mainstream classroom environments will not create academic success, totally segregated learning environments for ELL students is equally harmful in the long term. Therefore, educators must balance the need for segregated, intensive language instruction with the social and curricular benefits of differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom environment.

**New Vocabulary**

* ***Everyday language proficiency***: The ability to talk, read and write about, and understand events occurring in various settings, either inside or outside of the classroom. The ability to use basic, high-frequency vocabulary and simple grammatical structures.
* ***Academic language proficiency***: The ability to talk, read, and write about, and understand content that is more conceptual in nature. The ability to correctly utilize more complex grammatical structures and low-frequency vocabulary that may change their meanings with context.
* ***Differentiated instruction***: Instruction that is altered to meet the needs of the individual learner.
* ***Native-born L2L***: Individuals born in Canada but for whom English is not a first language. This particularly applies to children born to immigrant parents who may not be especially fluent in English.
* ***Dual language education***: Using both the students’ first language and second language as languages of instruction.
* ***Self-contained language programmes***: Intensive, full-day classes delivered by specialist teachers that are designed to improve ELL students’ knowledge of English to the point that they can be integrated into the mainstream classroom.
* ***Language immersion***: L2 instruction in which the regular school curriculum is taught through the medium of the target language, which is normally a minority language in the community (i.e. French immersion in Anglo-Canadian schools).
* ***Content-based instruction***: Students learn the language by talking, reading, and writing about subject matter that is important to them. Essentially, it’s inquiry-based language learning.
* ***Underschooled***: An adjective to describe individuals who have experienced significant gaps in their schooling experience.

**EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

* There are doubts about whether or not the benefits of differentiated learning for individuals with processing difficulties can be corroborated by neuroscience.[[1]](#footnote-1) However, in the case of ELL students, there can be no doubt that “sink or swim” method of education does not work. ELL students cannot reasonably expected to learn at a similar rate to their peers when they are deficient in the language of instruction.
* Having said that, total segregation is not a viable long-term strategy. School is a critical tool for social integration. If immigrant students are not provided this opportunity, they will lose the ability to integrate into their peer group. Moreover, at some point, they will be expected to join the mainstream. I would argue that every effort should be made to make this transition during high school rather than post-graduation in the workforce or post-secondary education.
* There is also the question of L1 and L2 as components of the “whole person”. If L2 is developed at the expense of L1, particularly in younger students, that will damage the individual’s ties to their native language, culture, and family.
* Outside source: Education is political; we see that especially in social studies curricula as far as content and how that content is presented. Cohelo identifies that the U.S.A. is a prime candidate for bilingual language education because of the high proportion of students with Spanish as an L1. However, the Spanish language carries a lot of political implications in the U.S.A. because of the perceived connections to illegal immigration, poverty, and crime.

*Insights and connections on practical teaching strategies*

* Content-based L2 instruction is in line with the new curricula for BC as it is essentially inquiry-based learning as a vehicle for language education.
* In the case of ELL students whose L2 deficiencies are less pronounced, differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom might be sufficient. One strategy could be to partner them with an individual who has experience as an ELL student who can be a resource for the student. This way, the student has a peer contact between themselves and the teacher and can receive more informal mentorship in acquiring the L2.
* Assessment for ELL students in a mainstream environment could be differentiated to account for and encourage their continued use of their L1. They could submit a bilingual assignment and/or connect aspects of the assignment to the language and culture of their L1.

**QUESTIONS**

* At what point does a student’s L2 deficiency require them to be removed from the mainstream classroom?
* In the case of students who are not ready to be placed in the mainstream classroom, how can they still be socially integrated into the wider school environment?
* How can teachers, students, and support staff work together to support L2L students in a mainstream school environment?
* How should support and assessment for “underschooled” individuals differ from that for L2L students?
* Is a “dual language education” system possible in Canada?

**Comments on discussion:**

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

* No real critiques of any of my points. There was a lot of good building on ideas and connecting them to the group members’ lived experiences. In my opinion, that is the real value of these discussions. The more practical connections that can be drawn between topics of study and past experiences, the more valuable the learning experience.

­ What was my contribution to engagement?

* Facilitator

­ Was the group engaged?

* Yes. The group had all done the reading and connected it to both the previous weeks’ readings as well as the complimentary Reiss reading.

­ Did the facilitator use strategies to include group members?

* Ensured rotation of discussion to engage all group members.

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

* We agreed that there is a lot of grey area insofar as how to apply these strategies for ELL learners. At what point in a student’s L2 development do each of these strategies need to be engaged? How can this be mediated in a school environment that is centred around the mainstream classroom experience?

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

­ Were all the objectives met with rigour?

* Yes

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

* With a bigger group, I would approach it with a little bit more of a structured discussion. However, in this small group of 4 individuals, a free-form discussion occurs more naturally with limited facilitation required.

1. James B. Hale, et al., “Reconciling individual differences with collective needs: The juxtaposition of sociopolitical and neuroscience perspectives on remediation and compensation of student skill deficits,” *Trends in Neuroscience and Education* no. 5 (2016): 41–51. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)