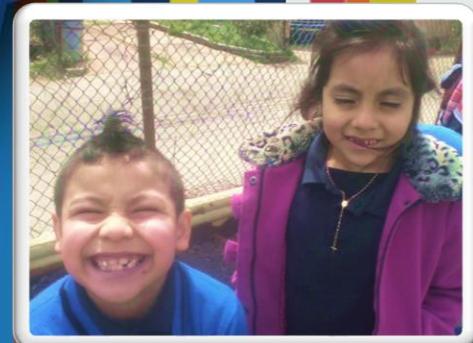




# K-12 ELL Students: An Interventional Approach to Acknowledging Student Schemas in Pedagogy and Testing Practice

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# Agenda



- Introduction
- Brief discussion of current problems (*review of the literature*)
  - Testing (ESOL placement and standardization)
  - Newcomer support
  - Preservice training requirements
  - Teacher attitudes and professional development
- Proposal for an pre-placement interventional course
  - Modules and implementation goals
- Discussion and conclusion
  - Optional: survey for my future dissertation research 😊

# Introduction



- U.S. public schools are not well-equipped to meet the needs of ELLs
  - Non-standardized entrance and exit procedures (*Ragan & Lesaux, 2006; Bailey & Carrol, 2015*)
  - Atmosphere of negativity and lack of institutional support (*Garza & Crawford, 2005; Talmy, 2009; Salazar, 2008; Olivos & Ochoa, 2008*)
  - Inadequate preparation in teacher education programs (*Watson, Miller, Driver, Rutledge, and McAllister, 2005*)
- WIDA ACCESS testing (currently in 37 states and DC)
- Newcomer K-12 ELLs underrepresented in research
- BICS and CALP (*Cummins, 1979*); translation of L1 literacy skills is not commonly perceived

<https://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS20.aspx>

# Testing – What’s the problem?

- **Placement**
  - Lack of consistent state-state assessments; criteria overly broad and fail to consider long-term success (*Lesaux, 2006*)
  - *Bailey and Carroll (2015)*: “The system needs improvements at every level” (p. 39).
  - Shift from assessing development to assessing proficiency (*Bailey & Carroll, 2015*); consider socialization and acculturation and type of language being assessed
- **In the classroom**
  - Necessity of “teaching to the test” under Common Core content-based standards and accountability of NCLB
  - Inaccessible ethnocentric curriculum means ELLs and other minority students can fall behind
  - Concept that ELLs are capable of learning complex content not realized
  - *Franquiz and Salinas (2013)*: Study of a social studies teacher before and after standardized testing

# Supporting Newcomers

- Placement testing is often immediate and therefore intimidating
- Culturally-specific vocabulary may be included
- Pre-verbal / SLIFE students:
  - Testing results are important, yet students may not understand what is happening or even been tested before
- Creation of a supportive atmosphere is important
- Student schemas: all learners bring knowledge and experience into the classroom
- Example of Mr. Moon (*Choi, 2013*) and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

# Preservice Training

- *Watson, Miller, Driver, Rutledge, and McAllister (2005)*: Exploratory study of twenty-five most commonly used preservice teacher education textbooks
- Spreading university ELL infusion models, but still no federal standard requirement (*Nutta, Mokhtari, & Strebel, 2012*)
- One Plus Model one developing example (*Nutta et al., 2012*)
- Practical and implementable ideas:
  - Newcomer Booklet (*Marshall & DeCapua, 2010*): sharing information with teacher used for subsequent instruction
  - Mainstream integration and peer tutors (*Hademenos, Heires, & Young, 2004*)

# Attitudes and PD: Relevant Studies

- *Salazar (2008)* : three-year ethnographic study; there was no mention of students' first languages/cultures at the chosen school and parents were never informed about ESOL-related policies
- *Talmy (2009)* : connotations of “disrespect, pragmatic incompetence, and moral and intellectual impairment” seemed connected to the term ESOL at a high school
- *Garza and Crawford (2005)* : critical ethnography at an elementary school; disconnect between official discourse about respect for diversity and a clear assimilationist agenda
- *Olivos and Ochoa (2008)* : critical ethnography that concluded that similar above discourse was composed of false promises and part of a system that actively structures inequality along racial and class lines
- *Bartolomé (2012)* : unconscious beliefs can be damaging to students

# So what can we conclude?

- 1) Increased support on a national level (standardization of curriculum, clear requirements for teacher training, allocation of resources, etc.) is needed
- 2) Professional development should focus on cultural awareness, sensitivity, and advocacy, along with pedagogical techniques
- 3) Perhaps we should re-evaluate immediate testing upon arrival – *what options do we have?*
- 4) A balance must be found between teaching to the test and taking a catered, specialized look at ELLs and providing them the support they need

# Proposed Interventional Course



**Entry-Level ESOL for Primary School Students**

# Description

- A month-long preparatory course provided for newcomers and taught by ESOL instructors could help to ease the transition into a new school and culture and instill basic language skills
  - 15 hours in total, provided in one 45-minute pull-out session each day (4 week-long modules)
- It would create a safe place for students to test their ability in a new language and develop confidence prior to the placement test, meet their peers, and adapt to school culture
- Early linguistic scaffolding and preparation forms a strong foundation for any form of ESOL program implemented at a school

# Program Goals

- General content: Common English expressions, basic phonics, introductory math skills, information about American culture and school expectations
- Larger objective: This course has the goal of preparing students for placement and for the ESOL curriculum they will begin after the intervention
- *Ideally, the same teacher will teach subsequent ESOL classes so the student is already familiar with the instructor.*
- *An audio lingual approach would be assumed, since not all students would necessarily speak the same language. L1 can be used when appropriate and possible.*

# Modules & Objectives

## ★ **Module 1: Getting Started**

Terminal Objectives: Module 1 has the goal of welcoming students to a new school and introducing them to basic aspects of conversational English and school culture. SWBAT orally introduce themselves, use new vocabulary to describe their family and interests, identify their country of origin, and acquire a basic familiarity of the alphabet.

## **Module 2: Phonics and Word Recognition**

Terminal Objectives: Module 2 has the goal of developing fluency among students in letter and sound recognition, as well as developing a reflexive recognition of very basic sight words. SWBAT fluently recite the alphabet, demonstrate a developing ability to identify basic sounds to letters when asked (short vowels and regular consonant sounds), understand that words are composed of sounds, and will be on their way to recognizing approx. five basic sight words.

# Modules & Objectives

## **Module 3: Practical Application of the 4 Skills**

Terminal Objectives: Module 3 has the goal of directly and effectively preparing students for ESOL coursework by encouraging them to practically apply what they've learned. SWBAT write letters and transcribe basic words, follow simple oral instructions to perform activities, continue to develop the ability to decode sight words, and give oral responses to questions using a scaffolded structure. Students will continue to study phonics and basic letter sounds, and will be introduced to numbers and basic math words.

## **Module 4: Final Preparation and Reinforcement**

Terminal Objectives: Module 2 has the goal of reinforcing previous instruction, discussing American culture and school expectations, and ensuring that students are comfortable with the alphabet and letter sounds. Students will have basic communication skills, an understanding of basic phonics, and will be introduced to math skills as well as American and school culture.

# Questions? Comments?

- I would love to hear about your experiences and opinions!

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- Note: My future dissertation research is related to this concept, but I would first like to gauge perceptions of FL teachers and their experiences:
  - Pilot survey for an initial understanding; please complete anonymously if you are a current K-12 teacher with ELLs in your class! (IRB has been submitted, but data will not be used yet)
  - I will use your honest feedback in my research, as well as report what I have learned today as part of a poster session at TESOL International next month.

**THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!**

# Please make sure you have...

- A survey to complete (if you have kindly volunteered to do so!)
- A copy of the references/studies I consulted
- A description and sample of the interventional program and its modules

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