

Intervention: Reading Program

Effective Reading Instruction for Struggling Spanish-Speaking Readers: A Combination of Two Literatures (using *Descubriendo la Lectura* Program) by Roxanne F. Hudson and Stephen W. Smith (2001)–LD Online (Upper Elementary Grades 3–6)

The United States has a long history of welcoming immigrants but never before at such a rapid rate and from so many countries. Students from Hispanic families make up a large part of the influx of immigrants that teachers are finding in their classrooms. Because of this large and increasing proportion of the student body, it is important to develop programs that address the needs of English- and Spanish-speaking Hispanic students. This is particularly true because many Hispanic students are not finding success in U.S. schools. According to the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress, 60% of Hispanic fourth graders were below the basic level of proficiency in reading (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Proficient reading is universally regarded as a skill needed for school and work success, and by the end of first grade, poor readers of all ethnicities show lower self-esteem, self-concept, and motivation to learn to read. Difficulty learning to read also puts culturally and linguistically diverse children (including Spanish-speaking, limited English proficient students) at higher risk for special education labeling and placement (Segan, 1998).

There are many questions about why such a large number of Hispanic students demonstrate a high rate of reading failure. Bilingual educators and theorists attribute this failure to a lack of literacy instruction in the child's first language, and other researchers cite a lack of effective early reading instruction (e.g., Crawford, 1999; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). We propose that both situations are true: Young children whose first language is not English and who are not proficient readers are not getting the type and quality of reading instruction they need in the language in which they need it.

The purpose of this article is to describe the theoretical and empirical basis for cross-language transfer between students' first and second languages. We also describe research on effective techniques for early reading instruction and a program that blends both areas into an intensive tutoring program for young, struggling readers in their first language.

Second-language acquisition theory

To help explain the relationship between people's first and second language, Cummins (1991) proposed a common underlying proficiency that supports second-language learning by transferring skills from the first language to the second. That is, knowledge of the first language and how language works will transfer to the second language and enhance its acquisition. Related to the common underlying proficiency is Cummins' idea of two types of language.

The first is everyday basic interpersonal communication skills (BICs), which rely heavily on the context of the conversation (i.e., body language, physical objects, emotions, repetition). Examples of BICs include:

- conversation between two children during recess;
- small-group discussion of a topic;
- science lesson with physical examples of vocabulary that children can touch; and
- a lecture with gestures, graphic organizers, and pictures.

The second type is cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP), which is needed to understand communication without contextual support. Examples of CALP include:

- reading about an unfamiliar subject,
- listening to a lecture without visual cues,
- writing a report, and
- taking a standardized test.

Cummins theorized that CALP developed in the first language transfers to the second and helps support second-language literacy acquisition. Further, Cummins argued that if children do not develop a certain level of CALP in their first language, the benefits will not transfer to the second language, possibly leading to

problems in reasoning and literacy. Thus, teaching children to read in their first language helps them learn to read in their second.

Cummins' theory is supported by several research studies showing that skills such as phonological awareness, reading strategies (e.g., using first-language cognates to help understand second-language vocabulary, translating, transferring information across languages, and reflecting on text in either the first or second language), and vocabulary learned in the first language will transfer to the child's second language. Durgunoglu (1998) found that children's performance on Spanish language pre-reading tasks (i.e., concepts about print, phonological awareness, and letter identification) was significantly related to their English word reading ability, even without formal English-language reading instruction.

Effective reading instruction

Another explanation of why Hispanic limited English proficient students have difficulty reading English is that they are not getting the type and quality of reading instruction they need. Many researchers (e.g., Torgesen, 1998) have found that effective early reading instruction for at-risk, struggling readers consists of small-group or individual instruction delivered by a highly trained teacher. A highly trained teacher would explicitly and systematically teach critical early reading skills in a balanced reading program (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). An example is a small group lesson during language arts instruction using magnetic letters to build decodable words from a story and manipulating the letters to make new words. For example, the child could manipulate letters to build cat and then to change cat to rat, change rat to mat, sat, fat, fan, and then to man or alternatively, building the Spanish word "gato" and changing it to "pato," "pavo," "tio," and "rio" after a guided reading of the story.

Researchers (e.g., Snow et al., 1998) have identified the following skills as necessary for developing reading competence for all children:

- phonemic awareness (i.e., the insight that language is made of individual sounds),
- concepts about print (e.g., book handling skills, purposes for reading),
- understanding the alphabetic principle (i.e., the connection between letters and speech sounds),
- decoding strategies (e.g., blending sounds, using analogies),

- reading fluency (i.e., reading quickly and accurately with expression), and
- comprehension strategies (e.g., using background knowledge to understand a passage).

Without these early skills, a reader cannot understand and construct meaning from text, which is the goal of reading.

Possible solutions

- By providing young Spanish-speaking children with high-quality reading instruction in the language in which they need it (i.e., their dominant language), teachers should be able to help them learn to read without experiencing failure.
- By teaching the essential elements of successful reading in the child's first language, teachers will be supporting the development of the child's first language cognitive academic language proficiency, which will then transfer both to acquiring English as a second language (ESL) and to developing English literacy skills. Even if children receive their primary reading instruction in English in a submersion or ESL program, there is theoretical and research support for providing supplemental instruction in the first language. However, this first-language instruction needs to be the most effective (i.e., explicit and systematic) and focused on the essential skills of reading. Without effective teaching and a rich, supportive language environment, evidence shows that young struggling readers will continue to fail (e.g., Gersten, Brengelman, & Jimenez, 1994; Lyon, 1999).

Effective teaching for children who speak Spanish and who are struggling to learn to read can be provided in an intensive individual Spanish-language tutoring experience. One such tutoring program that provides intensive instruction in Spanish is called *Descubriendo la Lectura* (DLL), an application of *Reading Recovery* (RR) in Spanish (Escamilla & Andrade, 1992). *Reading Recovery* is a short-term intervention program developed for monolingual readers experiencing difficulty (see Clay, 1993) that has been successful in preventing and remediating reading difficulties in first graders.

Descubriendo la lectura

Session components

Five components make up the daily 30-minute tutoring sessions in Spanish:

1. Reread two or more familiar books to build fluency. The student orally reads two familiar books from previous lessons while the tutor notes strategies used correctly and independently to be discussed afterward.
2. Take a running record. The student reads aloud independently from the book introduced the previous day while the tutor takes a running record of the text, marking words read correctly and noting miscues. After the child reads, the tutor discusses the story to reinforce comprehension and highlights strategies used during the reading. The tutor may also use magnetic letters to help the student work on words missed in the reading and to teach new strategies.
3. Write a story. The discussion of the story read for the running reading record often provides material for the daily story writing. Here each student writes in a notebook that includes a practice page and a "perfect page" for the final story. Student and tutor work together to figure out the spellings of words and practice them on the practice page before writing them onto the story page.
4. Put together the cut-up story. As the student writes in the journal, the teacher writes the previous day's story on a sentence strip and cuts it into separate words. The student then reassembles the sentence, rereading it several times. This sentence is put in an envelope to be reassembled and read at home.
5. Attempt a new story with coaching. In the last part of the lesson, the tutor introduces a new book by previewing the story, modeling new words and phrases orally, and asking the student to predict what will happen. The student and tutor then read the book together, discussing the story and working on new strategies for reading the print.

More programs like DLL, but with more direct and explicit teaching of critical literacy skills, need to be developed and researched to provide support for early, struggling Spanish-speaking readers. The *Descubriendo la Lectura* program is a good first step, and elements can be incorporated into the classroom to support any struggling reader because it is based on *Reading Recovery*, which was developed for struggling English-speaking readers. It is our belief that if teachers consider both the language and the method of instruction for Spanish-speaking students who are struggling to read, the result will be improved outcomes that can ultimately enhance students' educational opportunity.

* For information on Reading Recovery's *Descubriendo la Lectura*, go to:

http://www.readingrecovery.org/reading_recovery/descubriendo/index.asp

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(For a complete list of References, see the article at the link blow.)

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Intervention: Reading Program

Success for ALL

(From Florida Center for Reading Research) (**Upper Elementary 3-4**)

What is *Success for All*?

Success for All (SFA) is a comprehensive reading, writing, and oral language development program for pre-kindergarten through third graders. It can be used as a stand-alone curriculum or in conjunction with other basal curricula. Its underlying premise is that all children can and should be reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Several key features of the program work toward achieving this end. Initial reading instruction, delivered in 90 minute daily blocks, is thorough and research-based, and immediate intervention with tutors who are certified teachers is given each day to those students who are having difficulty reading on a level with their classmates. Furthermore, Family Support Teams and full-time *Success for All* Facilitators at each school work to support classroom instruction by encouraging parental involvement, working to decrease absenteeism, training teachers, overseeing student assessments, and assisting with decisions about group placement and tutoring. KinderRoots and ReadingRoots comprise the K-1 reading instructional program. The 2-3 grade components are called ReadingWings. A typical 90-minute instructional session for both levels would be a 50-55 minute lesson set between two 20-minute periods.

There are several unique features of the *Success for All* program:

- Students are grouped by reading level/ability, not by grade level. Therefore a single reading class might consist of children of a variety of ages.
- Students are assessed every eight weeks, so that groups remain fluid and children are monitored and moved appropriately on a frequent basis.
- Cooperative learning between students and individual accountability are strong components of the program, maximizing children's opportunities for involvement and responses.
- Support teams are in place not only for immediate intervention when necessary, but also to help with such impediments to reading as the need for eyeglasses, etc.

- *Success for All* requires whole-school involvement, including strong leadership from the principal and administration.

(Go to SFA website for ordering materials & training)

http://www.successforall.net/about/about_how.htm

From: http://www.fcrr.org/FCRRReports/PDF/Success_for_All_Report.pdf/

Intervention: Reading Strategies for ELLs

Capitalizing on similarities and differences between Spanish and English by AdLit (2007) (All Grade Levels)

Fortunately for Spanish-speaking English language learners (ELLs), there are many similarities between English and Spanish.

First of all, both languages use the Roman alphabet. That knowledge helps build a phonemic and phonics foundation.

Secondly, 30% to 40% of all words in English have a related word in Spanish. With similar sound, appearance, and meaning, these cognates help students transfer that word knowledge into their second language. ([Click here](#) to learn more about cognates).

Thirdly, except for a couple of word order exceptions (adjective before noun in English and noun before adjective in Spanish), sentences in both languages have the same basic structures (as compared to English and Chinese or other non-Latin derived languages).

And fourth, learning to read and write uses the same basic processes (phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, comprehension, writing mechanics).

When teachers and students know these basic similarities between the two languages, it saves time and guess work as students transfer their knowledge of Spanish literacy into English literacy.

Phonemic and phonological differences between Spanish and English

There are also some differences between the two languages that may interfere with English pronunciation (phonemic differences) and with decoding or spelling (phonological differences).

Perhaps the greatest difference between English and Spanish is that Spanish has only five vowel sounds while English has more than 14, depending on regional dialects. This is the reason Spanish speakers have difficulty differentiating between vowel phonemes in words like seat and sit. Both phonemes are pronounced differently from the Spanish sí (yes), which is pronounced somewhere between those two English phonemes. These differences also affect students' spelling. Here are some other examples of possible interference from Spanish:

Here are a few differences between Spanish and English:

- The consonants: *v, ll, h, j, r, rr, z, ñ, x*
- Combinations in Spanish that are pronounced differently: *que, qui, güe, güi*. For example: the *u* is not pronounced unless it is written as *ü*; therefore, students may not be sure how to pronounce words like *queen, quiet, or quick*
- Quotation marks vs. dashes: "Come here," he said. -Ven aquí-le dijo.

Spanish does not have the following sounds (listed by category):

- Vowel digraphs: *ou, ow, eigh, au, aw, oo*
- Consonant digraphs: *sh, th, wh, ph*
- Consonant blends: *sl, sm, sts, scr, spr, str*
- Initial sounds: *kn, qu, wr, sk*
- Final sounds: *ck, ng, gh*
- Endings: *-ed* (pronounced /d/ or /t/ or /ded/ or /ted/)
- Endings: *-s* (pronounced /s/ or /z/ or /ez/ or /es/)
- Endings without a vowel: *-ps, -ts*
- Suffixes/prefixes: *un-, over-, under-, -ly, -ness, -ful, -est*
- Contractions: *don't, isn't, weren't*, etc.

Strategies for Spanish-speaking ELLs

- Point out differences when you introduce phonemic awareness activities (distinguishing sounds) by showing students how to make those sounds. Say to students, for example:

To make the sound for /sh/ in *ship*, pronounce it like the Spanish /sh/ by letting air out between your teeth. Notice how you can stretch the /sh/ sound until you run out of air. But, to make the sound /ch/ in *chip*, you touch the top of your mouth with your tongue and let the air out with a little explosion. Notice how you cannot stretch that sound.

- Spanish speakers have difficulty distinguishing the ways to pronounce the final *-s* in plurals and third person. Give students examples for each as follows:

"We pronounce it /z/ when the word ends with..."

Final Letter Plurals He, She It

B mobs grabs

G bugs brings

V caves loves

D parades slides

M jams slams

N vans bans

L dolls calls

R doors stars

W cows sows

"We pronounce it /s/ when the word ends with..."

Final Letter Plurals He, She It

P caps stops

K tasks asks

T dots pats

F puffs stuffs

"We pronounce it /iz/ or /is/ when the word ends with..."

Final Letter Plurals He, She It

S glasses passes

CH matches watches

SH dishes washes

- Spanish speakers have difficulty distinguishing the ways to pronounce the *-ed* in past-tense verbs. Give students examples for each as follows:

"We pronounce it /d/ when the word ends with..."

Final Letter Past Tense

| | |
|---|---------|
| B | mobbed |
| G | begged |
| V | loved |
| M | jabbed |
| N | banned |
| L | called |
| R | starred |
| W | sowed |

"We pronounce it /t/ when the word ends with..."

Final Letter Past Tense

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| P | stopped |
| K | asked |
| S | passed |
| F | stuffed (and laughed) |

"When the word ends with *t*, it sounds like /tid/ as in *patted*."

"When the word ends with *d*, it sounds like /did/ as in *added*."

- Spanish speakers may leave out word endings when saying or spelling a word. For example: *restauran* instead of *restaurant*; *end* instead of *ended*. They may also have problems spelling words that contain the consonant blends, initial sounds, and final sounds listed in the box above.
- Additionally, students might substitute:
 - // for *y* (because // is the nearest sound in Spanish. For example: *llelow* instead of *yellow*.)
 - j* for *h* (because *h* is silent in Spanish, they might use *j*. For example: *jope* instead of *hope*.)

- There are also some differences in question and sentence structures between both languages.

Do you want to go to the movies tonight?

Question markers ¿Quieres ir al cine esta noche?

(Spanish speakers will likely leave out *do*)

white horse

Adjective-Nouns caballo blanco (horse white)

(Spanish speakers will often use the adjective after the noun)

With these similarities and differences in mind, pay close attention to your Spanish-speaking ELLs' written and spoken "errors." When you recognize a student saying *horse white*, for example, point out that in English the noun and adjective are reversed: *white horse*, *brown cow*, etc. Once ELLs understand these patterns, they will begin to apply them on their own to new situations.

(For a complete list of References, see the article at the link below.)

From: <http://www.adlit.org/article/14092>