Instructional Styles Used by Regular Classroom Teachers While Teaching Recently Mainstreamed ESL Students:

Six Urban Middle School Teachers in Texas Share Their Experiences and Perceptions

By Ellen "Aileen" Curtin

Introduction

It is the teachers of America who meet the daily challenge of addressing the culturally diverse needs of both immigrant and native students. Researchers demonstrate that understanding the background and culture and immigrant children is a necessary component for teachers to provide a more successful educational experience for these students (Banks, 2001; Gay, 2000; Olson, 1997; Sleeter & Grant, 1991).

Much educational research illuminates that the majority of teachers who do not have English as a Second Language (ESL) background or training can be ill-equipped to work with immigrant, non-English speaking, and culturally diverse children (Trueba, Cheng, & Ima, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Research reveals that 75% of non-English speaking students are placed with teachers who lack specialized training in second language acquisition, English as a second language, or bilingual education (McKeon,1994).

What instructional methods do non-ESL trained teachers use in their classrooms with ESL students? Byrnes et al. (1998) examined the practices used by regular classroom teachers involved in teaching ESL students. Using survey data, the researcher team examined teachers' knowledge about second language learning and

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their classroom practices. The findings of this study suggested that teachers who had not typically received formal training in second-language learning demonstrated inadequate teaching strategies for ESL students. The study demonstrated that there were inadequate resources available to regular classroom non-ESL teachers, and that these teachers were engaged in teaching practices that were detrimental to the academic and personal development of ESL students.

Many states including Texas require that all students pass state standardized tests (TAKS: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) to graduate from high school. The impact of such state mandates also effects ESL students at the middle school level who are now required within three years to achieve on-grade level academic goals in a second language. What specific teaching strategies do regular content middle school teachers use to ensure that their ESL students can meet state level expectations?

This article presents the results of a qualitative research study conducted in one Texas urban middle school. One of the purposes of the study was to investigate the instructional methods used by regular classroom teachers to address the unique needs of ESL students recently main-streamed into these teachers' regular content classes.

Western Heights Middle School

The site chosen for this study was an urban middle school in a large school district in Texas. This school was located in an economically disadvantaged urban setting, had an immigrant student population of more than 30%, and has an "acceptable" academic rating on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS: Texas Assessment of Academic Skills) for the 2000-2001 school year. The state standardized test was named Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) during the data collection period. The test was replaced the following year by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test.

The immigrant students for this study spent a year in the Immigrant Welcome Center, a service that was supported by local funds from the district. After a year in this center, the immigrant student spent a minimum of one year in a Language Center (sheltered ESL center) developing basic English language skills acquired from the Welcome Center while learning grade level specific content.

All teachers in the Language Center were ESL certified teachers. The teachers in the Language Center determined when each ESL student was ready to be mainstreamed into the regular classrooms for some or most of the day. This usually occurred during the students' third year in the United States and their second year at the Language Center. The student was also required to take the TAAS test at the end of the third year of education in the United States. All participating students in this study were in their third year in the United States and actually took the TAAS test

for the first time during this research period. Once mainstreamed, the ESL students were placed with a teacher who had no ESL certification or training.

Participant Selection and Characteristics

The participants[1] for the study were selected ESL students and their regular classroom (non-ESL) teachers from Western Heights Middle School. I used "snowballing" and "networking" sampling techniques to identify participants (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). After I gained official permission from the school district and the principal, I became part of the school culture for six months.

The teacher participants were limited to six teachers teaching ESL students in regular classrooms. The teachers were selected from the following disciplines: reading, English, mathematics, science, and social studies. These disciplines were selected because review of prior research suggested that ESL students had more difficulties academically in these courses because of the level of English language use and writing skill required for success.

I audiotaped 30 hours of teacher interviews. I observed for a total of 18 hours in the classrooms. I maintained extensive field notes of all my activities and reflections. I spent time in the teachers lounge, cafeteria, hallways, and around the school in general. All the audiotapes were transcribed and field notes typed. All these sources generated approximately 1,000 pages of written data. All data were then coded qualitatively for recurring themes and patterns. Observing teachers consistently over a six month period helped ensure that the patterns and themes that emerged were consistent and that triangulation of data was possible.

Discipline Management and Teaching Styles of Teacher Participants

When I began interviews and classroom observations, it became apparent to me that teachers differed in both discipline and teaching styles. I subsequently conducted a review of the literature during the research period, as it related to culturally responsive teaching, and found Dreikurs' (1972) discipline model and Bank's (2002) teaching model to be closely representative of what I observed in the classroom. Tables 1 and 2 present an explanation of the two models followed by the categorization I developed of each teacher's discipline and teaching style. As shown in Table 1, I interpreted teachers' *discipline management styles* according to Dreikurs' (1972) three-pronged model of democratic, autocratic, and permissive attributes.

I interpreted the *teaching styles* of the teachers using my own adaptation of James Bank's (2002) multicultural teaching behaviours, as shown in Table 2.

Following six months of classroom observations and interviews, I delineated the teaching and discipline management styles of participant teachers, as presented in Table 3.

My classroom observations and data from interviews revealed that the two veteran teachers, Miss Monroe and Mrs. O' Reilly, demonstrated more interactive and democratic characteristics than the other four teachers in the study. Both veteran teachers always greeted students by name at the beginning and at the end of class. Both teachers incorporated the cultural backgrounds of their students conversationally in classes. Both teachers used cooperative learning a lot and always forced students to interact in class. While I observed these two veteran teachers, I noticed that they circulated the room and

Table 1
Dreikurs' Discipline Management Styles

Discipline Style	Characteristics of Teacher
Autocratic	Forces will on students to prove that they have control of the class; motivates students with outside pressure instead of stimulating from within; silence
Democratic	Order, limits, firmness but kindness; respect of students; students involved in decision making; cooperation; competition eliminated; sense of belonging in group
Permissive	Rules and orders inconsistently enforced; off-task behaviors; noise

Table 2
Multicultural Teaching Styles

Interactive	Didactic
Personalized (knew all students by name; greeted students at door; empathized with students; incorporated students' cultural backgrounds; knew backgrounds of students well; communicated with families; used humor well and incorporated classroom interruptions humorously)	Impersonalised (did not know all students by name; did not greet all students at door; handed out worksheets; blamed students and families for lack of academic progress; did not acknowledge or attempt to address students' cultural diversity; saw students cultural backgrounds as deficits)
Used cooperative grouping (students in pairs or grouped regularly)	Individualistic (students in traditional rows and settings; students independently practised skills; grades called out in front of class)
Child centred (individualized instruction regardless of district or TAAS expectations: individualized testing procedures; planned for different learning styles; forced all students to interact)	Subject centred (all students on same page and skill; subject watered down to lowest common denominator (Gifted and Talented ESL students suffered here and did not feel challenged); heavy emphasis on TAAS and district testing; worksheets; procedures; did not account or plan for different learning styles)
Focus on process of teaching (how to teach)- focuses on improving delivery of instruction; views teaching as fluid and ever changing; teacher circulated around the room)	Focus on what to teach (curriculum and content)-focussed on blanket coverage and covering content; teacher sat behind desk; heavy emphasis on TAAS skills
Intuition, empathy, non-verbal communication, classroom wittiness (knew what all students were doing); made exceptions to rules for students;	Pragmatic, non-empathy, less likely to pick up non-verbal communication of students, little classroom wittiness (students engaged in off-task behaviors without the teacher knowing); rules enforced equally and no exceptions made·
Students and teachers active and constantly interacting (more conversation and discussion)	Students and teachers more passive and teacher less active (more silence enforced)
Classroom Discipline Style (Democratic). Less emphasis on silence and behaviors	Classroom Discipline Style (Autocratic). more emphasis on silence and behaviors of students

called on every student. These teachers were very aware of how ESL students learned in their classrooms. Miss Monroe told me what she did when she explained a new concept to students:

I may say it four different times, different ways...and you can tell immediately ...when a ESL student gets it...it clicks...it's like you can almost see this light bulb go off and you go "okay." She continued, "I single them (ESL students) out to say to them, "so you understand?"

I observed both her and Mrs. O'Reilly forcing students to interact and especially "picking" on those who didn't have their hands raised in class.

Miss Monroe did a lot of peer grouping and told me "we do a very informal question and answer session. It's very laid back trying to get how they feel...." I noticed that both Miss Monroe and Mrs. O'Reilly had a tendency to "tease" the students and Miss Monroe told me:

Interacting with them (ESL students) in the classroom through the classroom conversation, you start thinking about them socially. You start picking up, you know, on their quirks and who is a friend with who. The teasing helps a lot in making sure that sometimes the shy ones will ask questions.

Both Miss Monroe and Mrs. O'Reilly had a sense of humor and students were cajoled humorously in class rather than chastised or criticized for off-task behaviours.

The two novice teachers, Miss Lockhart and Miss Montague, I classified as didactic in their teaching styles. They always stayed close to the chalkboard or overhead projector. I observed that they both were still developing discipline management styles that were consistent with the literature pertaining to beginning teachers (Joyce & Showers, 1989). I observed that the novice teachers, Miss Montague and Miss Lockhart, tried to implement autocratic styles that became permissive at

times as students demonstrated off-task behaviours that resulted in their having to raise their voices to get the class under control. These teachers criticised students for off-task behaviours and did not interact humorously with students.

These novice teachers tended to blame the families of students (in the interviews) for lack of support in relation to homework and failing grades. Threats of extra homework and detentions were commonplace in these classrooms. These teachers never stood at the door to greet students by name. I observed ESL students being ignored in these classrooms and never called upon in class.

These novice teachers tended to stay close to the overhead projector or chalkboard and did not circulate throughout the classroom like the interactive teachers. Worksheets and the completion of independent assignments were frequent activities observed in these classrooms and students rarely, if ever worked in pairs or groups. These teachers struggled a lot with students' behaviours and a lot of interaction with students concerned classroom behaviours like "sit down," "pay attention."

Miss Bell had a very Interactive and warm personality and did greet students at the door. While teaching in her classroom she was very strict and set very high behavioural expectations. She did use humor and interacted informally in the classroom when she was direct teaching. I did, however, observe that her students spent a lot of time reading independently and completing TAAS practice reading assignments independently. During these times she was sitting behind her desk rather than circulating the room.

Her discipline style was autocratic with strict enforcement of rules and consequences. Her teaching style was didactic in that she tended to remain at the top of the classroom and checked answers with students. She did implement cooperative learning activities on a monthly basis that

allowed her to be more interactive in her teaching style during those times. During my observations of her, I noticed that she paid more attention to the male students in her room and during one classroom observation never called on Latino female students. For the purpose of this study, I categorized her discipline style as autocratic and her teaching style as both interactive and didactic.

Mr. Bond demonstrated the most didactic and autocratic characteristics of the six teachers in this group. He placed a heavy emphasis on rigid structure and behaviours and the students clearly knew their limits with him. He did use group work periodically, but even then his discipline management style was very rigid and students were limited to clearly defined directions and behaviours. I observed students completing a group project on a famous African American in his room for three days.

The students all followed the same format. Each group had to draw a picture of their assigned individual that they copied in a similar manner from prepared transparencies given to them. Students were given the actual research material and simply had to copy from these packets and for ESL students the information was highlighted. All finished student-generated projects at the end were similar except for content. Students entered his classroom silently; he passed out worksheets at the door, and never greeted students by name.

He rarely interacted with students on a personal level other than to ask for the correct answers. During one classroom period I observed him ignore a Latino female who had been absent and consequently never included in the group work that the rest of the students were doing. I happened to be sitting beside this Latino female student and I told her to ask Mr. Bond what she was expected to be doing in class while the other students worked on their group projects. Mr. Bond did not come to her for the first fifteen minutes of class even though her hand was raised. When he finally noticed her, he assigned her to read a separate worksheet and answer questions.

Mr. Bond told the student it was not possible for her to be assigned to a group because the students had already started their projects. He never came back to check on her even once during the remainder of the class period. Mr. Bond expressed to me later when I asked him about this classroom incident that rules applied to everyone and every student should be treated equally. He never made any exceptions to the rules he told me. Because this student

Table 3
Categorization of Teachers' Discipline Management and Teaching styles

Teacher	Teaching Experience (including current year of study)	Discipline Management Style (democratic, autocratic, permissive)	Teaching Style (Interactive, Didactic)	Subject Taught
O'Reilly	23	Democratic	Interactive	Science
Monroe	10	Democratic	Interactive	English
Bond	9	Autocratic	Didactic/Interactive	Soc. St.
Bell	5	Autocratic	Didactic/Interactive	Reading
Lockhart	3	In Development (Autocratic/permissive)	Didactic	Math
Montague	2	In Development (Autocratic/permissive)	Didactic	Math

was absent at the beginning of the project period she could not participate, he told me. Students were generally silent in his classroom and worked individually.

Observed Teaching Style Most Culturally Responsive and Conducive to Instructional Needs of ESL Students

The literature pertaining to culturally responsive teaching clearly supports teachers with an interactive and democratic classroom management style that tends to exhibit more culturally responsive teaching practices in general than those with a more Autocratic and Didactic discipline and classroom management style (Banks, 2001).

My study corroborated these findings by Banks (2002). Miss Monroe and Mrs. O' Reilly, who demonstrated more Interactive and Democratic teaching styles, I observed to be the two most culturally responsive teachers of this group. The novice teachers, Miss Montague and Miss Lockhart, were the least culturally responsive as their styles were Didactic and Autocratic or Permissive. They were also the least experienced teachers and substantiated the literature as it pertained to beginning teachers and the development of confidence in relation to classroom management styles (Joyce & Showers, 1989).

Mr. Bond and Miss Bell whose discipline styles were autocratic tended to have classroom that were very strictly disciplined with students silently completing assignments at their desks. These teachers tended to be strict and students were not as vocal or interactive as they were in Miss Monroe's and Mrs. O' Reilly's classrooms. This finding supports the literature that culturally responsive teachers tend to encourage conversation and participation in class, which is important for language and vocabulary development of ESL students (Banks, 2001).

Teachers Perceptions of Experiences of ESL Students Learning Subject Content in Mainstream Classroom

I found that Interactive and Didactic teachers had different perceptions about how ESL students learned the subject content in the mainstream classrooms.

Interactive teachers such as Miss Monroe and Mrs. O' Reilly relied a lot on their sense of intuition and gauging of the faces and non-verbal communication to monitor frustrations of ESL students as they learned their subjects in class. The Interactive teachers were very aware that the ESL

students exemplified less frustration when using hands-on materials. They also noticed that the ESL student seemed better at solving problems and thinking critically and were challenged by such activities especially in science. The two Interactive teachers were more aware of the frustrations their ESL students encountered. These two teachers were more conscious about how their students were learning.

I observed that the Didactic teachers, such as Mr. Bond, Miss Montague, and Miss Lockhart, were not as tuned to the frustrations and body language of their students. These teachers tended to stay in one spot in the classroom, and even if they did walk around I observed them looking at work of students rather than the faces of their students. The Interactive teachers maintained eye contact and monitored, assessed, and gauged the faces of their students. The Interactive teachers constantly interacted, asked questions and involved all students. The Didactic teachers, I observed, tended to give a direction, call on the same students, have students work individually and silently at their desks. The interactive teachers constantly questioned for understanding, clarification and restatement. The interactive teachers never made reference to any classroom behaviours only academic progress.

The two novice teachers, Miss Lockhart and Miss Montague, who had Didactic teaching styles, were unaware of the frustrations of the ESL students in their classrooms. My classroom observations substantiated this finding as I observed ESL students with hands raised, never called upon and rarely invited to participate. The novice Didactic teachers expressed that they chose not to call on the ESL students for at least the first four to five weeks in the mainstream classroom to avoid student embarrassment. The novice teachers tended to spend a lot of time at the front of the classroom and were unaware of off- task behaviours throughout the room. I also observed that these novice teachers contributed to the frustration levels of students' either by not calling upon students, choosing to ignore students who were annoying them, or just progressed too quickly through the lesson without giving enough practice time to students. There was no wait time after the teacher posed a question and all students worked individually at their desks.

Learning Styles Observed by Teachers among Their ESL Students

The learning styles observed by the teachers among the ESL student popula-

tion depended on whether their teaching style was Interactive or Didactic.

The two interactive teachers, Miss Monroe and Mrs. O' Reilly, were more focused on what students were cognitively experiencing and attempted to try different instructional methods. They were more able to describe the learning modalities associated specifically with the ESL students, whereas the other four teachers were able to describe behaviors mostly related to discipline and classroom management.

The other four teachers, Miss Bell, Mr. Bond, Miss Lockhart, and Miss Montague, described the behaviors of students in their classrooms (what the student was doing) and not how the student learned best (how the student learned). Clearly the Interactive teachers like Mrs. O' Reilly and Miss Monroe, used a greater range of teaching strategies to incorporate different learning styles and modalities. The Didactic teachers did not.

The Didactic teachers described behaviors that these students did in class and what they observed them actually doing. These behaviors described by the Didactic teachers were what the ESL students did in response to specific tasks given to do in class. The Interactive teachers allowed more choice in assignments and they were able to tell me specifically that they noticed the ESL students tended to choose certain modalities. The Didactic teachers did not mention modalities, learning styles or learning preferences like the veteran teachers did.

What Instructional Practices Did Teachers Use To Meet the Academic Needs of ESL Students?

All teachers were cognizant that they had to do something different in their teaching to incorporate the ESL students in their classrooms. What clearly differentiated the teachers was whether they had an interactive or didactic teaching style. The Interactive teachers (Miss Monroe and Mrs. O' Reilly) were more student-centered in their instructional styles. I observed them emphasizing the content of the lesson first as opposed to vocabulary development.

The Interactive teachers demonstrated the following characteristics: They were empathetic; used non-verbal cues of students to guide their instruction; understood the cultural differences and learning styles among students; developed techniques to work specifically with ESL students; tried different teaching strategies, and focussed

on concept and curriculum content as quickly as possible in the lesson.

I observed that the Didactic teachers (Mr. Bond, Miss Lockhart, Miss Montague, and Miss Bell) tended to display teaching characteristics that were more subject-centered. Some of what I observed them doing were as follows: Slowed down their directions; watered down (simplified) what they taught; put emphasis on vocabulary first before they taught concept; repeated directions several times; expressed that they wished they could speak Spanish in order to teach the ESL students better; used terms about teaching ESL students was like 'spoon feeding' and expressed their concern that they were unable to cover the desired content at the pace they would ideally prefer.

Student-Centered Strategies Used by Interactive Teachers
(Miss Monroe and Mrs. O' Reilly)

Interactive teachers used cooperative learning, pair work, visual cues, hands-on activities, etc. There were specific strategies used to cater especially for the ESL student. The teachers had organized students in cooperative groups; there were numerous activities; the emphasis was on teaching the content of the lesson rather than on slowly repeating directions.

Their classrooms were less teacher controlled. The students interacted more with each other. The teacher consciously did something in the planning of the lesson to meet the needs of the students and knew that students would experience less frustration. There was either a group project, choice of assignment, hands-on activity, video, conversation or interaction in the lessons. Their classrooms were more vibrant and were not silent.

The Interactive teachers used non-verbal communication as a way of gauging the frustration levels of their ESL students. They did not ignore their ESL students. These teachers individualized more for the ESL student and were more at ease with incorporating the cultural heritages of the ESL student in a natural and conversational way in the classroom. The Interactive teachers used a variety of different teaching methods, gave differentiated tests, used more kinesthetic activities and tried to involve critical thinking and problem solving. The interactive teachers modified how they were teaching to include the ESL student. Miss Monroe told me:

> I usually make a point to have them {ESL students} up front close to me so I can see facial expressions as well as making sure they're on the right page. Sometimes

you can tell by just looking at them, you wanna go "you're not getting this are you?"...I usually always make sure that I ask them...I put them up close to me to make sure that they are at least near me...I single them out to say "do you understand?"...looking to make the eye contact. We do a very informal question and answer session. It's very laid back trying to get how they feel and the first thing is if I give them an assignment and they don't do pretty well on it I pretty much know that it's time for questions and answers. I do a lot of peer grouping so maybe if they're not getting it from me maybe someone else can speak their language so they can get it. Reflective writing helps a lot too ...they're more comfortable writing down what they're thinking rather than everyone listening.

Mrs. O' Reilly explained what she did:

> I use a lot of non-verbal communication, hand signals...I look for a lot of recognition. If it's not there I keep trying to find a word until they understand it. I do a lot of pointing to the textbook and try to get them to understand that way but again non-verbal communication is essential because they understand that.

Mrs. O' Reilly further explained to me as follows:

> I use multiple intelligences a lot. I attack all of the major modalities, kinaesthetic, visual, and auditory. Of course at this age they are not very auditory but they're more auditory that we think though. So I use that for every single lesson and also I try to use a lot of differentiation and sometimes I'll do it by modalities. There is one lesson that I did knowing which kids were auditory and which ones were visual and which ones were kinaesthetic and had them do the assignment in their modality. Another way is that I find a particular interest in a subject and one particular avenue of interest, divide them into groups like that...I just did this lesson on atoms and to get them to understand all the different subatomic particles. We had different "Reese's Pieces" and I showed them how to make a model and then the yellow ones were a certain thing and then the red. They loved it. And they get to consume it and they thought that was great.

Subject-Centered Instructional Strategies Used by Didactic Teachers
(Miss Bell, Mr. Bond, Miss Lockhart, & Miss Montague)

The Didactic teachers repeated more, slowed down, but did not alter the delivery of instruction. The instructions were still Didactic and teacher controlled. There was nothing specifically done to teach differently to the ESL student.

I observed these teachers at the front of the classroom at chalkboard or overhead giving a brief example, and then requesting that the students practice independently and silently at desks. The teacher did or did not walk around the room, checked in after 10 minutes or so and the assignment was graded together (students sometimes swapped papers and graded each other's), and grades were sometimes requested aloud in front of class and recorded by teachers in the grade book.

Miss Lockhart explained how she helped ESL students learn best:

> Verbally speaking...put it on the overhead... repeat the directions multiple times and always reinforce by saying, "Does everybody understand what I am saying, does anybody have any questions?"... {puts the responsibility on the student to initiate}...walk around the classroom and monitor as much as I can. So I use the overhead a lot but definitely everything I write down, I repeat it multiple times and I always try to walk round the room and I say, "I want everyone to write this down" as they are writing down I say, "I'm gonna walk around the room and make sure we're all writing it down' to keep everybody on task.

Miss Montague used the following strategy:

> I try to use terminology like you have to use different terminology...like at a lower level, say it differently to explain things.... I try to praise them if they do something good, if they answer a question or I'll go, "that's great" or, you know, whatever...I repeat as much as possible because I know that they need the repetition of words. I give bonus points, you know, do this work tonight; use this study guide; bring it back tomorrow and turn it in, it's for the test, and it's a bonus.

Miss Bell used specific TAAS strategies to make sure that students passed the TAAS test successfully. She was emphatic that these strategies were not just for ESL students but also for all students.

> We have a strategy called the hand plan that breaks things up...if you can give kids chunks instead of the whole big picture it helps them out...I teach them strategies in how to find different things and in a paragraph...they number the paragraph, I have them look at the words that are repeated...it teaches the kids how to find the words that relate to each other, find those words, and that teaches them how to write a summary...if you take those words and combine them you have summary. So they have summary out to the side. A lot of times when our kids are reading a passage, our ESL kids reading

a passage,they are not really comprehending what they read. That's where the hand plan comes in because it allows them to stop, think about what they are writing, and write a summary out to the side. And once they get to the end of the passage, a lot of these kids don't remember what they read at the beginning of the passage, but they can go back and read their summary and that will tell them then, it's one step. It'll tell me if they understood or not.

Mr. Bond kept all his students, ESL included, on the same schedule and used a slower pace. He referred to ESL students needing modifications like the Special Education Student. He did not identify specific strategies he used with ESL students. He told me:

Usually those (ESL) students are pretty much set on the same schedule...and it becomes fairly obvious that some students are ESL...so I speak to Miss. Winters (ESL teacher)...she gives us information and sheets about their previous work deficiencies/modifications. In the classroom I go with the standard rules we have set at the beginning of the year...I spend more time going slowly over the information, checking for understanding and walking around the classroom to check and see that they are on the right page, repeat the answers and questions...go at a slower pace, allow group work, things of that nature but pretty much what I would normally do in the classroom but probably at a slower pace and allow more time for note taking, quizzes and things of that nature. Again, pertaining to the instructional strategies you have to slow down the pace giving them more time to copy down the notes. You may have to repeat yourself a couple of times to make sure your students understand what you are asking of them...we receive so much training and it's pretty much all the same thing, just ways of modifications, different ways of modifications, and modifying work for students if they are language students and if they are special education students, all different kinds of modifications that pretty much follow the same path.

The Didactic teachers, I observed, kept all students on the same page and schedule and made the work basic so that all students could understand it. That approach became a problem for one of the ESL students I interviewed who expressed his boredom in Mr. Bond's classroom because he did not feel challenged academically. Mr. Bond, the student told me, highlighted the material to be copied by ESL students and called out the answers at the end of lesson (i.e., a, b, c, or d) without any explanation. The strategies Mr. Bond used tended to meet the needs of the challenged learner (Special

Education students) but at times could be frustrating for students who were ESL but also very gifted and talented.

How Teachers Individualized Instruction

Depending on their teaching style, teachers individualized instruction differently for students. The Interactive teachers used differentiation and choice in assignments and hardly ever mentioned teaching to the TAAS test. The Didactic teachers and especially the novice teachers relied heavily on TAAS tutoring for the 26 days before the test.

The Interactive teachers (Miss Monroe and Mrs. O' Reilly) adapted instructional teaching levels, used pre-testing to gauge the level of students and then planned accordingly, they used different modalities and gauged their perceptions of student understanding by monitoring face and body language. They also incorporated group work on a weekly basis.

Mrs. O' Reilly explained:

Besides using the multiple intelligences and the different modality I will also use a lot of student mentors so that means I will try to pair up a really slow kid with a fast kid and let them work together. And we do group work and a lot of times I get answers you know I don't ask.

The Didactic teachers (Miss Montague, Miss Lockhart, Mr. Bond, and Miss Bell), however, emphasized passing of TAAS a great deal and grouping students by ability for TAAS, using computer programs that already self-paced the students. These teachers relied mainly on the district provided strategies of mini-assessments, benchmarking, etc. They drilled and practiced TAAS skills with their students.

Miss Lockhart expressed to me:

My goal is to get them to pass TAAS... three levels {of students}...It is a trial to have all the low kids in one room twice a day especially my lowest...one of my lowest classes is at the end of the day.... They just want to leave, they're off the wall, and looking at the clock.

Miss Montague explained to me how she individualized instruction for her ESL students:

I ask students, "Tell me again what it is you didn't understand?".... So those that get it can move on and those that don't it becomes a homework assignment...I try to give them a bonus question, and the bonus question is challenging and it's something they've never seen before and a less challenging for the ones that have the ability to look at it, it's easy, you know,

with a formula as long as you know how to apply the formula. It's just a formula they have never seen before and they can figure out certain things. That's how I try to figure out the ones that are actually getting ahead.

Miss Bell explained her developed TAAS strategy:

A lot of the kids in this school they have problems with concentration and recall so I teach them ways to remember those things. It's the same things as adults we just don't write it down we make a mental note in our minds so it's teaching them strategies...the hand plan it teaches them how to summarize because a lot of kids they don't know what a summary is. Like at the beginning of the year they can't write a one-sentence statement about the whole paragraph. So I teach them how to look at the paragraph and how to underline the words that are repeated that can go in a box. I show them how to label the box, tell me the words that could fit in this box. And once they get those words they put those words into a sentence by adding, you know, their conjunctions 'a' and 'is' and 'the' and they seem to grasp that...lots of time even on the TAAS test they have to summarize every single paragraph. And if there are 16 paragraphs they have to have 16 different summaries, one for each paragraph.

Mr. Bond explained the school policy that assisted the teachers in differentiating instruction for students. Again he expressed a reliance on school and district policies. He told me:

At the beginning {of year} I try to do different types of lessons and determine what level kids are on. For example the students do a writing assignment. You take the writing assignment and see where their vocabulary skills are, their grammar, punctuation, spelling etc. Then you make a determination from that, you know, the writing abilities. Then you know, we have quite a few assignments daily where we actually do reading in class. You can determine their reading abilities from that. Plus we had to do a reading course, school wide, two years ago. And the kids are broken up by their reading ability and placed in different homerooms so you pretty much know like being the team leader, you know, the homeroom teacher which curriculum they teach what type of reading assignment they are teaching in there. So, you know, the higher level kids are in one particular homeroom and it's broken up into your lower level kids may be more extensive reading tutorial are placed in a lower homeroom classroom...ESL kids are main-streamed during what they call decoding classes, which are the lower level

classes where they get the basic phonics of the words and we go over meanings and pronunciation.

How teachers individualized for students was differentiated between Didactic and Interactive teaching styles. The Interactive teachers used differentiation and choice in assignments and hardly ever mentioned teaching to the TAAS test. The novices relied heavily on TAAS tutoring for the 26 days before the test for their students to gauge student progress. The Didactic teachers in general taught mainly for the test and relied on districting testing and procedures to assist them in identifying students who were experiencing academic difficulties in their classes.

All teachers regardless of years of experience perceived that it was important to have students working in pairs or in teams. The interactive teachers (Miss Monroe and Mrs. O' Reilly) cited the importance of teamwork, cooperation, the blending of suitable personalities for discipline as well as group work.

The novice teachers (Miss Lockhart and Miss Montague), while acknowledging the value of working in pairs and group work, did tell me that they were less likely to try it on a regular basis due to personality conflicts among students, whining, and their inability to deal with such a group configuration. These novice teachers were more likely to keep their students in rows and have them work individually for the most part.

Although all teachers recognized and acknowledged the value of group work as a way of building relationships among students, the teachers who had perceived their classroom management as still in progress were less likely to actually do it.

Summary of Findings

The literature on effective culturally responsive instructional practices supports the use of a teaching style that is highly interactive as well as the use of cooperative groups, and individualized testing and assessment procedures (Garcia, 1992). In this study I concluded that the Interactive teachers seemed to be the most culturally responsive and more cognizant of the instructional and learning needs of the ESL students. It was the novice teachers who struggled most to meet the individual learning needs of their ESL students.

It was the two veteran teachers who demonstrated more interactive teaching and who were more student centered in lesson planning and actual classroom delivery. These teachers used more cooperative learning strategies, and hands-on activities with all their students knowing that their ESL students would benefit from these techniques. The other four teachers were more subject-oriented in that their instructional focus was on the subject content, passing tests, and overall these teachers appeared from my observations and from what they shared in their interviews to be less in tune with the frustrations of ESL students learning the subject content in class.

Attention to varied student learning styles were either non-existent, subject-centered or student-centered, in which case the interactive teachers used differentiation, learning modalities and multiple intelligence theory to meet the needs specifically of their ESL students. The veteran teachers evidenced more student-centered approaches. The novice teachers were unable to try out more student-centered approaches because of discipline management issues.

What implications does this have to guide future teacher preparation and improve the teaching for ESL students? It would seem that teachers with an interactive teaching style are more at ease with the teaching of ESL students and their teaching style encourages cooperative learning and group work. among all their students. The literature and previous research pertaining to ESL students clearly supports an interactive teaching style as best for meeting the needs of English language learners. This study also supports previous researchers who demonstrate that many ESL students are placed with teachers who lack specialized training in second language acquisition (McKeon, 1994).

The importance of teaching ESL students is critical as states have increasing accountability standards on standardized tests. ESL students are expected to be on grade level proficiency within three years and teachers need to be able to meet the unique needs of these students. There is evidence from this study that regular content teachers who demonstrate a non-interactive teaching style could benefit from more support and training in the area of English as a second language acquisition.

Note

[1] All names are fictitious including the name of school to protect the identity of research participants.

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