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Educating English as a New Language Students Using a Multimedia Based Approach: How Educators Can Assist ENL Students in the Mainstream Classroom

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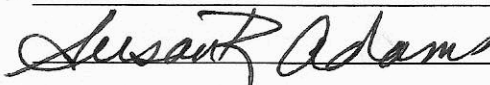
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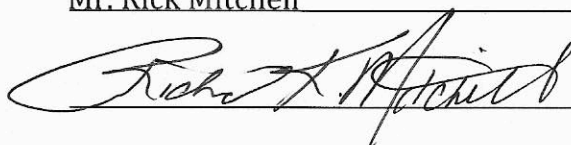
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Educating English as a New Language Students Using a Multimedia Based
Approach:

How Educators Can Assist ENL Students in the Mainstream Classroom

Ashley M. Jones

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Abstract

This project will delve into the realm of English as a New Language (ENL) in the mainstream classroom. The main research will be conducted in a secondary school setting, specifically a freshman level English class. This research will be based on observation and interaction with both students and educators. The main topic being explored will be the theory that ENL learners can be educated successfully right alongside their peers through the use of multimedia platforms such as images to accompany lessons, and iPad apps. The research will investigate how students are currently learning in mainstream classrooms and how this can be changed to benefit them in an ideal, different, more media friendly environment. Too often ENL learners are expected to perform using the same tools as their peers, when there is a great need for a different way for them to learn. This research project will culminate in a presentation of an action research based approach to the subject, presented at the Undergraduate Research Conference at Butler University.

Keywords: English as a New Language (ENL), multimedia, action research

Introduction

Picture a student's first day walking into a foreign language class; if your experience was anything like mine, the teacher spoke completely in the language of choice, hoping that students were able to keep up and catch on at some point. For an ENL (English as a New Language) learner, this is not just one class; it is the way that school is structured for the entire day. For students, this can mean not being able to yet read signs pointing them toward the bathroom or being able to ask someone to help them.

Though I was never personally a new language student, I have seen students sitting quietly, puzzled looks on their faces, trying their hardest to decipher a new spoken and written language. After watching these students trying to figure out a new language in addition to new subjects, I have come to a conclusion. As a future educator, I am concerned that ENL students are not being fully supported in the mainstream classroom as they are currently structured. I have completed background research and believe that students could be supported by using easily accessible technology in addition to the assignments that they are already asked to complete.

During my first weeks in a field experience in an urban middle school setting, I was an observer in a classroom setting in which the veteran teacher appeared to be struggling a bit with supporting each individual student and their diverse set of needs. While she was aware that some of her students were struggling, she was not aware of resources that could help her support each student individually. When talking to the students, I found that they were struggling, but were making slow progress. So even

though students may not have been fully supported, they were still growing as learners. Due to this, I believe that simple strategies can be put into place to support classes as a whole, to ensure that they are making the most gains possible in daily lessons. One particular comment that fueled my passion for this project was, “I’m not dumb. I can do this, I just don’t get a chance”. Though I don’t think this comment was completely true, as students are given room to grow, I believe that it is important to recognize that students may be gaining some negative thoughts towards school. While it can be incredibly challenging to meet the needs of every student, I believe that there are some technological resources available that can support an entire class, including ENL learners.

Unfortunately for the field of education, many teachers are viewed as being lazy. What some may not realize is that teachers are constantly dealing with low pay, overtime work, and strict guidelines from the government and other educational companies. Teachers are constantly under the gun of standardized testing. Their pay and school ratings depend on students’ ability to meet a certain test score, not how much the students are learning individually or how much work the teacher puts in on a daily basis. While there are many roadblocks for teachers on a daily basis, there are emerging strategies of planning lessons in new and creative ways by incorporating multimedia elements to aid students in simpler ways than some may think. These strategies range from posting pictures throughout the classroom to adding differentiated instruction to lesson plans. Differentiation can be summed up as changing lessons to fit the needs of individual students.

My hope is that my research, and the work that will follow, can encourage teachers to find creative ways to support students in their classrooms to make learning as engaging and enriching as possible. Perhaps this research will only make a difference in my own classroom. Either way, I will see this project as a success, because more is being added to the conversation about ENL learners and I am taking the time to focus on a student population that may not always served to the greatest extent possible.

Literature Review

Before engaging in research, it is important to identify key pieces of information that can be helpful and necessary to consider when working through this project. The first of these “buzzwords” is, content literacy. Content literacy, put simply, can be defined as, “the ability to use reading and writing for the acquisition of new content in a given discipline,” (McKenna, 1990). This can be seen in a classroom as students utilizing reading and writing skills to help them acquire new knowledge. This “literacy” can be broken up into three principle components; general literacy skills, content-specific literacy skills, and prior knowledge of content (McKenna, 1990).

Content literacy is important because it is the goal for teachers of ENL students to support English literacy development necessary for content subject mastery. For example, in an English classroom, the one in which my research will take place, the goal is not always for students to have perfect grammar or conventions of writing, but for them to comprehend the “point” of the content. While it is important for students in the classroom to participate in individual and meaningful

learning, the opportunities that are presented while using direct instruction are equally as important. The students should be well versed in the content, but may not yet be proficient in their ability to communicate or express what they know and can do.

Surprisingly enough, teaching content directly can automatically create the opportunity for students to become more content literate. Another important point is that, “Content literacy has the potential to maximize content acquisition,” (McKenna, 1990). In other words, this means that if students are considered literate in a content, they have the potential to get the most out of their learning. Teachers having a solid foundation of knowledge in a content helps to give students the ability to more deeply understand and analyze material, which can help them to create more in-depth, engaging, meaningful learning experiences in the classroom (Alber, 2014). Rebecca Alber says, “Literacy is an every-century skill”, so it is important that we consider this each day with our students (2014). Being fully “literate” in a content means that students can reach a full comprehension of material, meaning that they would be able to demonstrate tasks while using higher order thinking proficiencies such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Tankersley, 2005). Researcher Karen Tankersley says, “The ultimate goal of literacy instruction is for students to be able to be able to process text at the level of evaluation, synthesis, analysis, and interpretation,” (2005). Meeting these higher order thinking proficiencies are usually a “next step” for students, but they do need to meet these proficiencies to be completely literate. For teachers with ENL learners, content acquisition can be a huge challenge, especially when trying to address the needs of all students.

One important objective for high school freshmen in the state of Indiana is to be able to decode and create an in depth understanding of a complex text (IDOE, 2017). For this research project, that objective falls directly under the umbrella of content literacy. Understanding complex texts is the basis of the freshmen honors class that I am working with, so content literacy is undeniably important. To be able to get to this point of understanding, students must be able to have a grasp on basic pieces of material such as vocabulary and understanding the theme of a text. From there, with more content literacy based scaffolding done by the teacher, students can move to a deeper understanding. Scaffolding is the building of background knowledge for students (2012). According to theorist Lev Vygotsky, students should be working in the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD), a space where they can learn on their own, with some assistance from their environment or from the teacher (2012). It is said, “The ZPD has become synonymous in literature with the term scaffolding,” (McLeod, 2012). The texts that students are working with in this particular setting are discipline-specific based texts, or books required by the school’s curriculum that are labeled as appropriate for high school freshmen to read.

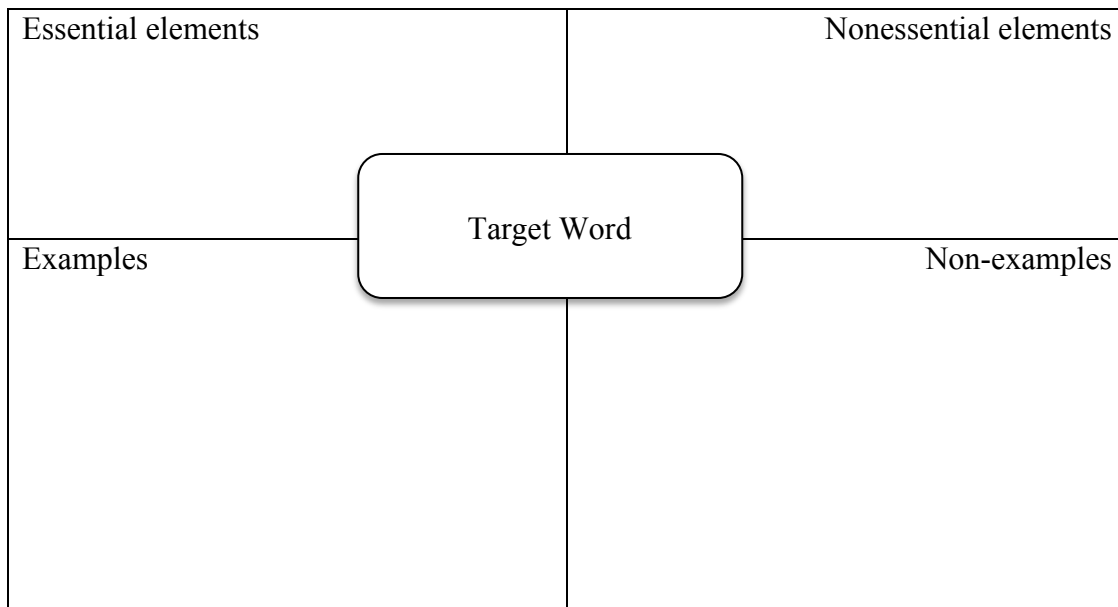
Two important strategies that might be used in this research will be a conversation round table and directed reading/ thinking activities. Both of these activities come from the text, *50 Instructional Routines to Develop Content Literacy*, written by authors Douglas Fisher, William G. Brozo, Nancy Frey, and Gay Ivey (2015). The conversation roundtable involves students working in a small group and being held accountable for the work that takes place. One of the main concerns during group work is that all students have the ability and will complete the work that they

are assigned or completing a list of tasks given. The worksheets that are presented during the roundtable allow a space for reflection and accountability among group members. This way, teachers can be more of a participant during group work rather than a “babysitter” checking and double-checking that students are completing their assignment. This is different from a more traditional model of group work in which a single product is turned in, without indication of each group members’ contributions. Another strategy presented in the book is a directed reading-thinking activity. This involves students making predictions before, during, and after reading. Making these predictions not only makes reading more meaningful, but it allows the chance for formative assessment to take place (Dodge, 2009). Formative assessment supports the idea that, “teachers should focus more on assessment for learning”, and gives the teacher an indication of where instruction can continue and where students may need extra supports built into class work (Dodge, 2009). These types of assessments support learning during the process, which gives students more credit for the work that they are doing, rather than assessing them as one major test, at the end of a unit.

Two additional activities that can be used come from the text, *35 Strategies for Developing Content Area Vocabulary* (Guillaume, 2009). While it may not always be the most important aspect of a lesson to focus on vocabulary words, they can help to build overall content literacy knowledge, so they are worth considering adding among instruction. One activity is using a graphic organizer known as a Frayer model (Guillaume, 2009). This involves students preparing to learn words and building word knowledge, both important at the beginning of units. This model of learning vocabulary, seen in figure 1, which involves 4 different boxes drawn on a sheet,

“encourages students to think critically about the components of complex concepts” and also “helps students activate relevant background knowledge and to consider how new learning is related to what is already known” (Guillaume, 2009). This model can be used to help students recognize material that they already know as well as encouraging them to think about the vocabulary more deeply than just in the context of their lesson that day. The second strategy from this text is the “sketch to stretch” strategy (Guillaume, 2009). This strategy provides an opportunity for “the translation of meaning from one set of symbols (such as language) to another (in this case, pictures)” (Guillaume, 2009). It also supports students in meaning making by allowing them to represent what they are observing through pictures rather than trying to write it all out, which can be particularly challenging for ENL students. This strategy also supports peer discussion and classroom talk, both of which can give ENL students a social experience in the classroom, which is vital to their language acquisition and overall success in the classroom (Guillaume, 2009). All of these activities can help not only to create content literacy among students, but can also be edited to help better aid ENL students as well. This editing could involve taking away any text on the page so that students have a chance to draw pictures explain their thoughts when necessary. Even though the activity involves word based work, it is important to provide students with learning opportunities that make them feel more comfortable and encouraged in the classroom.


Figure 1: Frayer Model Graphic Organizer



An instructional design approach related to this project is the universal design for learning, better known as UDL. UDL can be easily defined as “a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn” (2013). The principles included in UDL guide teachers to support all students in the classroom, not necessarily just those that are struggling or require extra help due to a disability or learning English as their second language. UDL involves guidelines for making a classroom as inclusive as possible, but without interrupting daily learning. These guidelines can be seen in figure 2 below. This guideline for lesson planning allows teachers to provide targeted, tiered instructional opportunities, which allow all students access to full curriculum, regardless of learning preferences or English language ability.

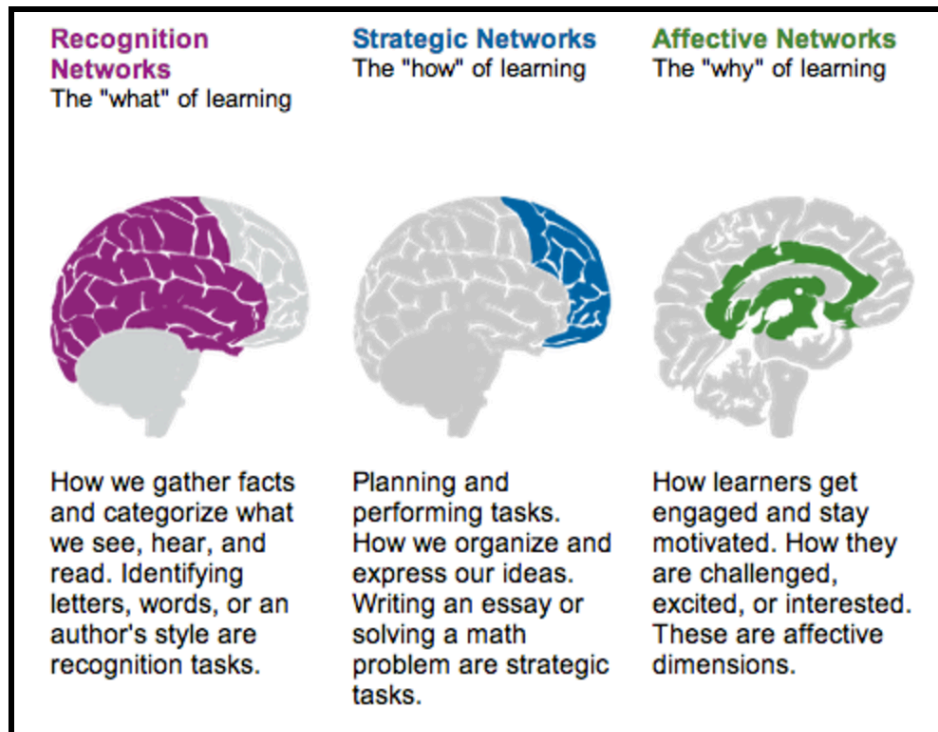
Figure 2: UDL Guidelines (CAST, 2016)

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines		
I. Provide Multiple Means of Representation	II. Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression	III. Provide Multiple Means of Engagement
1. Provide options for perception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options that customize the display of information Options that provide alternatives for auditory information Options that provide alternatives for visual information 	4. Provide options for physical action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options in the mode of physical response Options in the means of navigation Options for accessing tools and assistive technologies 	7. Provide options for recruiting interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options that increase individual choice and autonomy Options that enhance relevance, value, and authenticity Options that reduce threats and distractions
2. Provide options for language and symbols <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options that define vocabulary and symbols Options that clarify syntax and structure Options for decoding text or mathematical notation Options that promote cross-linguistic understanding Options that illustrate key concepts non-linguistically 	5. Provide options for expressive skills and fluency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options in the media for communication Options in the tools for composition and problem solving Options in the scaffolds for practice and performance 	8. Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options that heighten salience of goals and objectives Options that vary levels of challenge and support Options that foster collaboration and communication Options that increase mastery-oriented feedback
3. Provide options for comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options that provide or activate background knowledge Options that highlight critical features, big ideas, and relationships Options that guide information processing Options that support memory and transfer 	6. Provide options for executive functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options that guide effective goal-setting Options that support planning and strategy development Options that facilitate managing information and resources Options that enhance capacity for monitoring progress 	9. Provide options for self-regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options that guide personal goal-setting and expectations Options that scaffold coping skills and strategies Options that develop self-assessment and reflection


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It is important to note that UDL is not, “one-size-fits-all customized, individualized, specialized instruction,” but rather an opportunity to consider what instructional strategies can work best for student in the classroom in need of more differentiation in learning (CAST, 2016). UDL means using the best possible lesson plan to reach the most students possible while still creating an effective, engaging learning experience. UDL addresses the “what”, “how”, and “why” of learning. Remembering these three basic areas of learning can help to guide planning and instruction can lead teachers to meet the biggest percentage of students possible. In the figure 4 below, the “UDL Brain” is broken down. It is important to understand the fundamental questions of learning so that we can better understand student brains and what they need to be best supported in their learning.

Figure 3: The UDL Brain (CAST, 2016)



One major facet of the UDL model is that students can be given a plan for personalized learning, which can be vital to them in the adolescent stages of their development. Personalized learning involves tailoring instruction for student needs (Gewertz, 2016). Whether this be slowing down the pace of discussion or allowing students to draw instead of write an essay, the learning is completely focused on student needs and not as much focused on what will be the most efficient strategy or assignment for the teacher to use or what the curriculum for the school or classroom outlines to be done.

This usage of differentiated instruction allows teachers a sort of “flow” in the classroom that can allow them to grow and change their lesson plans along with the needs of their students from day to day. This theory can also involve using technology as an added support, not as a full solution to the need for differentiation in instruction. Using technology as a support will be a large part of a component of my

research in planning for supporting ENL students. Due to the limitations of access to technology, this could become limited, but different results may appear in different school settings in the future.

The most important part of planning for students that are English as a New Language learners are the WIDA standards (2014). WIDA stands for, “World-class instructional design” which gives a basic definition of the work that they do. WIDA “advances academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators” (2014). The WIDA standards for assisting English language learners were originally published in 2007, modified in 2012, and continue to be used and changed to help students in the best ways possible (WIDA, 2014).

Method

In setting out to complete this research, it was vital to find a research style that would meet both the needs of this project and of my students. In considering options for the course of this project, it was concluded that the best possible option for completing it was Action Based Research. This research style allows for the identification of a problem, an analysis of data, reporting of results, and a chance to adjust the theory originally used and to begin again. As an undergraduate researcher, it is important to me to be able to not only complete a short study of research, but to continue it throughout my teaching career, master’s degree research, and potential doctorate degree research.

The process of action-based research involves six major components. The first step of this process is to, “identify the problem and envision success” (Creswell, 2010). In this research project, the main problem is that students defined as ENL are not being supported well in the classroom. Students are being given basic supports as ordered by the law, but there many other, simple, ideas and strategies that can assist students to successfully work throughout daily lessons. Most students identified as ENL are continually going through second language acquisition, while also trying to employ the language successfully. In other words, the students are attempting to learn a second language while also keeping a passing grade in classes that utilize the English language.

After identifying the problem, the next step was to develop a plan of action. As the student teaching experience was very new to me, it was important to address this plan of action by using very fluid ideas and concepts, ones that could stretch across multiple lessons and experiences in the classroom. In brainstorming about these ideas and concepts, it was determined that the best formats for collecting data about student learning using multimedia formats for successful ENL learning involved using images and visual supports such as emojis to assist in daily lessons. Using easily recognizable social symbols such as emojis can allow students to make social connections in the classroom since they use these to communicate with peers. Using these as a form of a “check in” can allow teachers insight into how students are feeling and what they are thinking about the lessons that they are being asked to complete.

Originally, the plan of action was to utilize iPads, apps, and potentially iTunes music during class time. However, due to the socioeconomic level of the placement school, a one-to-one model of technology was not available for use. A one-to-one model means that students are all given a laptop or iPad to use during school time to support their learning.

Many schools are moving to this model, as technology is becoming increasingly present in the modern world and is important to address in today's classrooms. It would seem that iPad apps and iTunes music would be easily accessible, but based on funding in schools and the ability of students to afford technology for themselves, accessibility can be incredibly limited. However, the use of images such as emojis is a simple, cost-effective tool that can be easily implemented into everyday lessons. To summarize, the solution for this problem in the classroom is to implement technology in the classroom that can be used with a wide variety of students to benefit the widest percentage possible while also supporting ENL students in the process.

Figure 4: Action Based Research Concept Map



The data for this research project will come from a range of sources. The first of these will be observation of student performance before the implementation of technology, as well as after. This analysis will be based on the quality of work, not the quantity of products produced, so it will be important to observe the changes in student learning before and after technology implementation. It will also be observed how student work products differ when given extra support. This research data will be based on student reactions to work, ability to complete assignments given, and student feelings toward learning that is taking place in the classroom. Data documentation will take place in the form of notes, an online grade book, videos, and student work samples. While some of these will not be documented in this research writing, they will be posted on a personal teaching blog and kept for personal records, with permission from the cooperating mentor and students. This blog will be kept private during completion of research and will be made public at completion to help benefit other researchers curious about this topic.

In this field experience-based research, I am participating in the learning community as a student teacher. The students in the classroom that I am working with come from many different backgrounds. The school is suburban, with a 91.2% minority population, 63.9% of students receiving free or reduced lunch, and a total of 3,306 students. While a school setting like this can be incredibly challenging due to funding available for schools and access of resources for students, it can be even more challenging when students with IEP's (individualized education plans), 504 plans, and ENL supports necessary.

Analysis

During the analysis of this initial action based research process, I came to many realizations. My research analyzes data and forming conclusions in this paper, reporting the results, and adjusting the theory and beginning additional research for the future. This model is based on an action research design approach described by Creswell (2010). Data completion was done in three main steps in the placement classroom. The first step of this research was observation and analysis of the classroom environment. This initial section took up a week of time, as 6 weeks of research would be spent working with students and the last week of student teaching would be spent reflecting and writing during the time that students were completing state standardized, tests.

The process of observation involved note taking, chart making, and watching class as performed by the mentor teacher. Note taking during this time was very simple and involved utilizing a clipboard, notebook paper, and sticky notes to write down quick thoughts about students, the environment, the school setting, and the teaching strategies utilized. These notes often included phrases such as “rules posted on walls” and “student in back of room= talkative with friends”. In addition to notes, charts were created to identify and focus in on students that were classified as ENL and students with other learning needs. Keeping track of 61 students with extra needs out of 148 total students can be a difficult task, but needs can be easily identified using an excel chart, which was created and recommended by the mentor teacher during observation. Notes taken during the observation week allowed for discussion between myself and the cooperating mentor at the conclusion of each day.

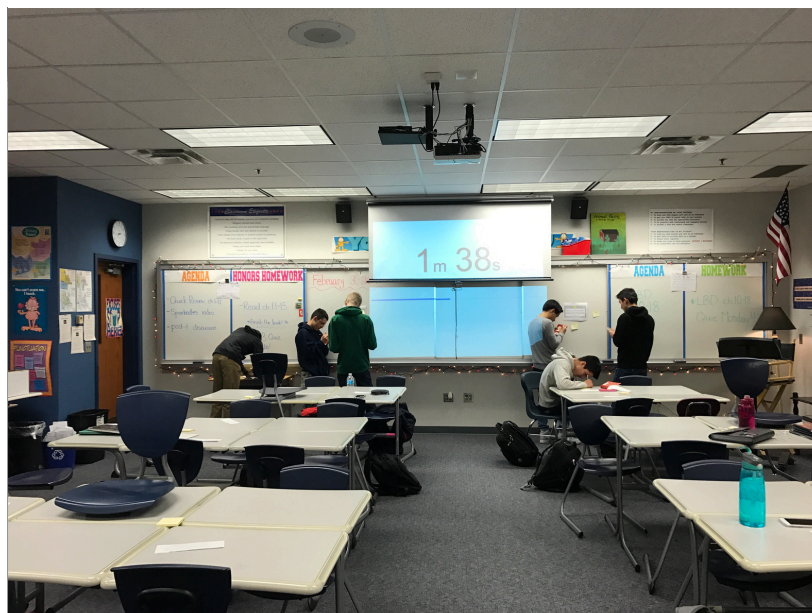
A regular day of teaching involves arriving at school at 6:30 am, 6 minute passing periods between classes, 25 minutes for a lunch break, and meetings immediately following the conclusion of the day at 2:30 pm. In this hectic, 8-hour day, it is not often that a teacher has time to sit and reflect on the work that they completed during the day. Knowing this as a researcher, it was important to set aside time to discuss strategies, theories, and game plans with the cooperating mentor. The meetings completed after the regular workday were almost always followed up with a debriefing session between myself and the mentor teacher, with the department head or other administrators present if felt that it was necessary. These debriefings, while by definition, brief, allowed insight into the classroom environment, needs of students, and ideas for future research from a veteran teacher's perspective.

While it may seem that certain things in the classroom just 'ended up there', everything present in the learning space is by design. Each poster, chair, lamp, or supply has a purpose, and everything is utilized throughout the year. To learn more about strategies for ENL students, it is important to think about the layout of the classroom first. In the student teaching environment, desks were set up to be easily moved throughout the free space in the room, but were most often arranged in groups of 5 students with space for the teacher to move easily between areas of the classroom. See figure 5 for an image of the classroom setup. According to Professor Rick Mitchell of Butler University, "Proximity = power". In other words, if the teacher has the freedom and space to teach while standing next to a student, they will be more likely to focus on their work and will do as they are asked. Knowing this, the teacher had set up desks so that she could easily move to students to help prompt

them to stay on task, to check in with them about grades, and to ensure that each student has an opportunity to receive the individual attention that they required for success in the classroom.

In relation to ENL students, working in groups with other students can be beneficial to their social acquisition of language (Block, 2003). Group work allows the students to interact with peers, not only to help them with their work, but also to make social connections with others so that their classroom community experience is enhanced. Students are not often given time to interact with peers that come from different backgrounds and first languages as themselves, which can greatly improve their relations with others and with their work. Theorist Vygotsky “views interaction with peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies,” (McLeod 2012). Social interaction can greatly benefit students by improving attitudes, comfort level in the classroom, and overall engagement with their work.

Figure 5: Classroom Desk Setup



Another interesting asset in the classroom was the presence of lamps and strings of colored lights in various areas of the room. When asked why she chose to include these lamps and strings of lights in her room, the cooperating teacher replied that it created a comfortable, homey environment for students, which made the classroom feel more welcoming for students. This is beneficial for all students, but especially for ENL students because of their need to feel welcomed and comfortable as members of the classroom. Students in a brand new environment, with new cultures and customs can have a hard time adjusting to the ‘old-school’ classroom setup involving desks in rows, the teacher standing at the front of the classroom, and blank walls. Having these lights also helped to create a calm, peaceful atmosphere for students working on tough assignments. While this was not considered in my initial research, environment can have a huge impact on student learning. As stated by researcher Mark Phillips, “The physical structure of a classroom is a critical variable in affecting student morale and learning,” (2014). We can also invite students to have a part in creating the classroom environment because, “Students’ involvement in the process of creating their environment can empower them, develop community, and increase motivation,” (Phillips, 2014). By creating welcoming, comfortable spaces, we can give students an area in which they feel confident to let learning happen.

One final classroom trait that was important for students was the presence of labels and instructions of procedures throughout the room. This makes it easy for the teacher to not only define classroom management, rules, and procedures, but also to give students ownership over their learning. At this time in adolescent development, it is important to give students more responsibility over themselves (Caskey, 2014).

Students have a particular set of needs at this time due to their development, and it is important that teachers are a-tune to these (Caskey, 2014). Until this point, they have been guided through learning and have been nurtured to a greater extent than they need in their high school years. While it is important to be a comforting presence for students, it is vital for them to have opportunities for growth and maturity development in the classroom environment, as they will be completely independent in the near future. The signs posted throughout the room still give students a safety net of sorts, but are helping students build scaffolds to becoming independent.

Scaffolding is defined as, “a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding, and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process,” (NWEA, 2015). In most cases, it is the teacher’s responsibility to build these scaffolds for students, or to help them find material to build these on their own. Since different cultures consider adulthood to be reached at different ages, it can be important to consider this when working with ENL students that come from different cultures than our own.

With a better mental image of the classroom environment, I can move to discuss my triumphs and areas for growth in my teaching future through this research. The largest triumph came with a ‘go with the flow’ attitude toward the research. Rather than following exactly what I had hoped to see and only looking for very specific things in the classroom, I learned to let the students guide me in learning about them and their needs.

In relation to the set up of students’ seating assignments, it turned out to be very beneficial for students. While we often moved desks for different activities or

testing, students appeared happier, less stressed about their work, and more willing to collaborate when seated in small groups. Students were observed keeping their heads down, not looking at work, or getting off task when seated in rows. While students were seated in groups, more space in the classroom was available for movement and use of free space. Because of this, I was inspired to test a strategy of using post it notes for a discussion format, rather than a discussion out loud, which can sometimes be intimidating for all students, let alone students using a language that is not their native one. This strategy of discussion was a last minute decision and was added to a lesson plan just hours before the discussion took place. Students were given instructions asking them to spend 2 minutes at each station, first reading the question, then discussing with their small group at the station, and finally adding a short comment on a post it and adding it to our “discussion board stations” by sticking it to the space surrounding the question so that other students could collaborate by adding ideas and further questions for peers to think about. At the completion of the discussion, it was the job of each group that ended at their respective station to read peer responses and create a 30 second summary of what their peers answered to the questions. This discussion got students moving, discussing with all classmates without speaking out loud, and allowed the teacher to observe student progress and to check in periodically. This format was also easily changed to encourage students to draw what they were thinking in the event that they were struggling with utilizing language. The students that were encouraged to draw were mainly ENL students. Surprisingly, however, many of the ENL students chose to write down their thoughts so that their answers were similar to their peers. This practice also allowed ENL

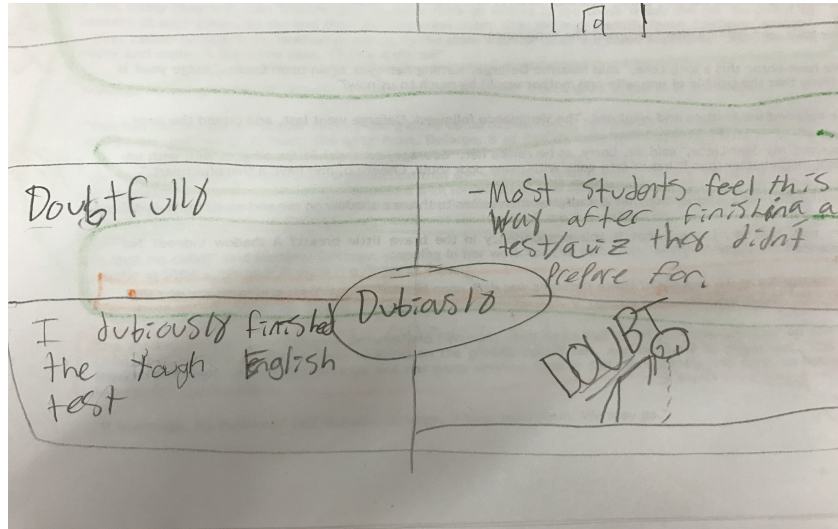
students to use when composing their responses. By reading other peers' comments and seeing their thoughts, ENL students appeared more comfortable with adding their own contributions. This gave ENL students a low-pressure environment to practice their writing in, as their name did not appear on the post it and their classmates could not tell who had written each comment. Overall, the strategy was incredibly useful, and I will definitely be using it in my own classroom in the coming years.

Another aid in teaching ENL students that was not originally considered was the use of Google Translate during daily lessons. While students are often given a dictionary that translates individual words to use, it can be difficult to explain something in a different way for students. Rather than trying to look up each word and figure out what they wanted to say, I encouraged students to utilize their cellphones, which most students had, to translate and help me understand what they needed. I also realized that Google Translate is incredibly helpful to create a connection between the students, shared technology, and myself. I could easily type what I wanted to say into the phone, and it would relay information to the students in a language that they could easily understand.

Translation may not be encouraged in all schools, as some believe in complete English immersion and not using the students first language, but I am a firm believer that it is more important to help students along the way and to give them opportunities to interact with classwork using their native language to make them feel more comfortable and feel that their language and culture is being respected during learning. Vocabulary strategies such as the Frayer model are easy to implement in the classroom (Guillaume, 2009). The models can also take time to teach during lesson

time, but can be very beneficial for students in coming lessons. Students need scaffolding and background information about vocabulary before completing a Frayer model. In the classroom I was a part of, this was done by reading the text and discussing the vocabulary words, as well as writing down a few, particularly difficult, definitions together. Scaffolding can be critical to ensuring student success during certain lessons.

In addition to strategies that were not originally proposed, it was interesting to see variations of my proposed strategies and ideas come to life in the classroom. Some students commented that they had used the Frayer model strategy before, and they seemed to enjoy the opportunity to get creative with their vocabulary by drawing and adding a definition in their own words, rather than just copying and pasting a definition from a dictionary. An example of an ENL student's work with the Frayer model is included below, in figure 6. In this example of student work, while short and somewhat scribbled, it is clear that the student understands the word and what it means to them when they wrote, "I dubiously finished the test". The student used the word properly in context, used new vocabulary learned this year to describe the definition in their own words, and added an illustration that properly represented the definition and description of the word.

Figure 6: Student Frayer Model Example

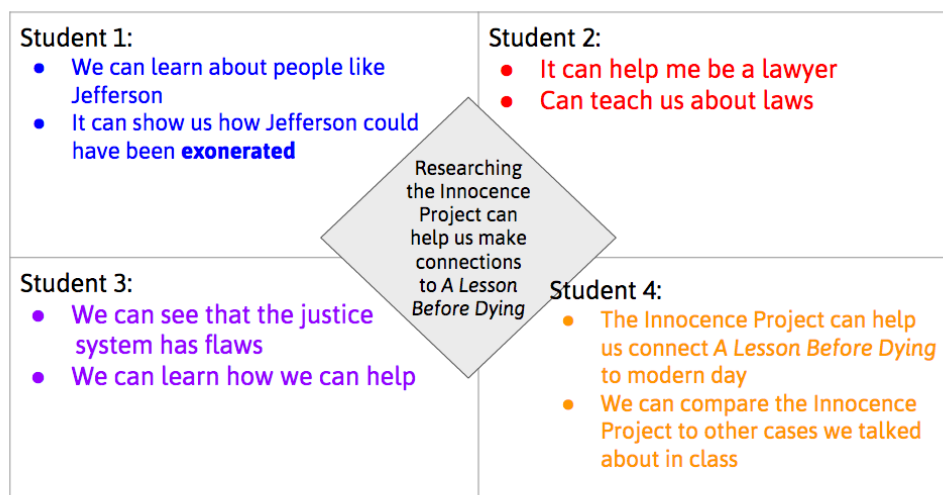
A second, proposed strategy that was successful in its use with students was a group discussion graphic organizer to help keep track of group contributions. This strategy did not take variation to complete during this lesson, but it could have been implemented if needed. This graphic organizer was used when students had access to a computer lab, which only came twice during this research time. The students were given a discussion prompt based on research that they had been completing and were asked to think about the question, discuss it in their groups, and add their thoughts to the Google Slide shared with them online. Each student was responsible for working in their group, logging on to Google Docs, and adding their thoughts in an individual box with a color of their choice, to distinguish themselves from other students.

Google docs allows the teacher to see which students were logged on, and who was typing into each box based on a feature provided by the Google website. This was an easy way to keep track of student work and to ensure that students could be redirected and put back on track for the lesson if needed. While this was not able to be used multiple times during the course of research due to availability of

computers for students, it was very helpful for the time that students were able to utilize the online discussion form. This could be a simple exit ticket to use with students in a one-to-one technology setting school. An exit ticket is a basic product, often student created, that shows learning has taken place during class time. As defined by education researcher Kelly Goodrich, “The exit ticket is simply a question that is posed to all students prior to class ending,” (2012). While exit tickets can be completed in schools without much access to technology, it can be done quicker in settings with access to computers or handheld technology.

An example of student discussion is shown in the image below in figure 7. Students 1, 2, and 3 are ENL students at different levels of English proficiency, and student 4 was a student with English as their first language. While the responses from the ENL students may not be as long as that of student 4, their contributions have value based on their discussion completed, and observed, in the classroom. Student 1 even shows a use of classroom vocabulary, which was put in bold text to highlight their knowledge. Using this guideline for discussion held students accountable for contributing to their group, allowed them to use technology in a daily lesson, and allowed for easy implementation of social learning among peers.

Figure 7: Student Google Doc Discussion Example (student names replaced with pseudonyms)



Pictures and images throughout the classroom proved to be very beneficial for all students, but ENL students especially. Posters with pictures of novels, rules, and school procedures were already posted around the room before my time as a student teacher, but as a researcher, I knew that new images could be added to improve student experience in the classroom environment. In the article *The Third Teacher*, it is said that it is, “both an art and a science to design (as proposed to decorate) a learning environment that responds to our ultimate goal as educators-to develop independent and rigorous thought,” (Fullan, 2012). After a week of observation and discussion, it was clear to me that the regular teacher had a hard time checking in with students in a quick manner during lessons each day. Often times, when she asked that students how they were feeling about their work, some would smile, others would nod, and the rest would look at her with blank stares. Based on this observation, and my knowledge of images being used to help students, I decided to

implement two different charts into the classroom to test student responses to images and to serve as a tool to check student comfort level with material being taught.

The first chart implemented in the classroom was a chart utilizing emojis. Emojis are small images used in text messaging, mainly on smart phones, in place of words to show emotion or add more to a conversation. I often observed students using emojis in text messages to each other and displaying them on materials such as their backpacks, folders, and even t-shirts. Based on these observations of students' usage and my personal use of emojis, I felt that an effective way to create a "check-in" system using images was to use emojis to represent student emotions. See figure 8 to see the chart that was used in the classroom.

Figure 8: Emoji Comprehension Chart



During class time, after this chart was implemented, I could easily have students point to the emoji that they were feeling after the lesson. Alternatively, for more student interaction, I could have students make the face of the emoji, both for fun and for a quick visual observation of how students were feeling with material. For even more fun for students, they could text their emoji responses to a certain cell phone number, which could be displayed on a screen at the front of the room. While this could pose a problem in low-income schools, it can be very useful in a setting where a majority of students have cell phone access, and the teacher can show text message responses up on the board. Alternatively, in a classroom with no technology access, emojis could be printed out and given to students to hold up when prompted. This way, students without cell phones would not feel like they were being excluded from the classroom community, and the teacher can still have a visual representation of how students are feeling toward their work.

When asked, a majority of students said that they enjoyed using the emojis because they were fun and students felt like the teacher cared what they thought about the work being done. As an observer, this strategy was a simple way to take account of which lessons were working for students, and which ones needed to be rethought. Emojis are a part of students' everyday lives. Rather than fight student use of "fun" technology, it can be effective and helpful for teachers to roll with it and embrace parts of student lives that are fun and can be useful in a school setting. Emoji check-ins are a simple, time friendly formative assessment strategy that can be easily implemented into a classroom to help ensure student success and comfort level in the classroom, as well as giving teachers an indication of their lesson effectiveness.

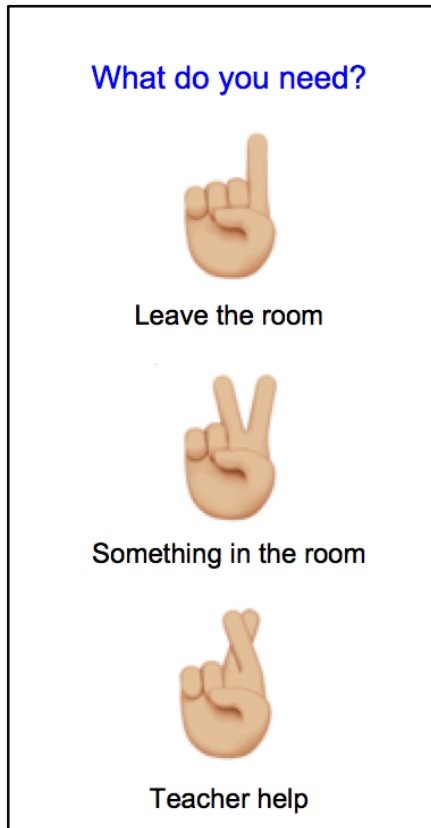
In addition to emojis being useful in the classroom, utilizing hand signals can be very beneficial for students. Hand signals are a non-verbal strategy that can tell teachers exactly what students need, without interrupting the flow of learning. I have watched this strategy be used in multiple classrooms, usually to signal the need to use the restroom or the need for teacher assistance. It can be very distracting for teachers when students need something while they are speaking, and raise their hand to interrupt by asking a question.

Using silent, non-verbal cues can alleviate this issue, and can allow students that are not comfortable always speaking in the language of the classroom to express their needs in a stress-free way. Knowing that students could be aided by using non-verbal cues, and seeing the student interest in emoji usage, I decided to experiment with using a chart of emojis to represent hand signals that students could use to communicate in the classroom. A chart was provided to students and posted on the board at the front of the class in addition to a demonstration being given of the hand signals that students could use. The list of hand signals that students could use is presented seen below in figure 9.

While seemingly simple, this chart was easy for students to use, and allowed for the flow of class time to run much more smoothly from day to day. Teachers can look around the room, assess what students need, and either help the student or allow the student to help themselves all within a matter of seconds. This chart and use of hand signals was a great tool for classroom management, and became a way to assist ENL students with expressing their needs in a more comfortable way than having to speak directly to the teacher. The only downfall with this strategy was that it may

require a more in depth explanation of what the student means by the signal. In a future classroom, I think it could be incredibly useful to employ a longer list of hand signals, to accommodate more students and multiple needs. Knowing this, I would like to research this further in the future.

Figure 9: Hand Signal Needs



Unfortunately, during this research time, Voice-thread could not be employed for a number of reasons. While seemingly a great piece of technology that would aid students in completing day to day assignments, the implementation of this iPad app was too time consuming and involved to complete during the short time that I was a part of the classroom. Another reason that this technology could not be used was because it required a subscription to use some of the features of the app. However, I believe that the Voicethread app could be used in a small group of students, perhaps

an ENL inclusion classroom. While this could not be used with a full class, I experimented with the app myself and found that it was very useful for recording spoken notes while looking at a worksheet. This could be helpful for students to document their thinking, especially in a different language. Students could then go back, listen to their initial thoughts, and translate the thoughts that they want to include in their completion of the assignment. Voicethread is a great education tool, but cannot always be implemented seamlessly into a classroom. Teachers may consider creating voice recordings through a video creation app or even on a platform such as YouTube for students to take home with them. This may be beneficial if there is a need for a lecture in class that students may not fully remember or had understood earlier. If they had the notes recorded, it could give students a chance to revisit material and take the extra time that they need to work and understand what they need to in order to understand the lesson completely.

In summary the main findings of this project were that images are incredibly beneficial to students, and implementing new strategies into daily learning can help to boost ENL students to the same levels of comprehension as their peers. Simple ideas such as asking students to use emojis to show their comfort level with material can make a huge difference for ENL students and can indicate to teachers what students do not understand. There are many apps and pieces of technology available to teachers for use, but incorporating multimedia into the classroom is easier than one might think. In addition to using multimedia platforms in the classroom, creating a sense of comfort and welcoming is crucial to the classroom community. By making

an environment student centered, the focus is placed completely on them and their needs.

Findings

The three main findings during this research were that some strategies do not work for all students, teachers should always take the opportunity to grow and change their environment to work best for the class as a whole, and that technology may not be readily accessible for all students, but there are still some technological and multimedia ideas that can be easily implemented into the classroom without using computers or iPads.

Implications

Strategies for student learning and growth.

Based on the research completed, teachers can make small changes in their classroom to better support student learning for their class as a whole, while also supporting ENL students. While teaching can be incredibly hectic day to day, it is important to take a step back and consider what is truly important for student growth and learning. Taking small steps everyday and re-evaluating curriculum decisions can change the way students learn and make it more engaging and meaningful for them. While considering what we can change, it is also important to consider that not every strategy will work for every student. Knowing this, an important question that teachers may consider asking is, “What do I hope to learn from this assessment that I do not already know?” If a teacher cannot answer this question, then it is not known what should be measured by assessment. If it is already known what students can do, an assessment is not needed. For example, consider whether students really need to

take a vocabulary test. Instead, they could try using Frayer models to review vocabulary that they will need to employ in the future, not just to memorize for a test and forget it soon after. Making learning meaningful can completely change the face of learning for students. By making learning matter to students, we can create more effective classroom environments and educational experiences for students.

Changing environment

Small steps taken daily can accompany big steps taken at the beginning of the year to create an environment for students that is more engaging and welcoming for them. After reviewing the strategies considered and used in research, an ideal classroom setup would contain visuals for students. Visuals for students could include labels on everyday objects to introduce students to a second language, emojis to help students describe how they are feeling about what they have learned, and hand signal charts to help students communicate without speaking. Visuals throughout the classroom can help students to make connections to their work, as well as the classroom environment. Teachers can take time to ask students what they like and dislike about the classroom, as well as get their input about what else they may need in the classroom to assist their learning. By having a greater understanding of their surroundings and what they need, students can become advocates for themselves and have the opportunity to take ownership of their learning.

Multimedia use in the classroom.

With the ever-growing world of technology, it is important to consider new and innovative ways that we may use different tools in the classroom. iPad apps, computers, music, pictures, videos, and even emojis qualify as multimedia materials

and can be implemented in the classroom daily to aid students in the work that they are already expected to complete. Even if students do not have access to more advanced technology, teachers can provide them with charts using emojis to show how they are feeling, ask students to draw pictures, or involve cell phones in the classroom to give students more experience using technology. Access to multimedia sources is proven to help students make connections to their learning both in and out of the classroom, and can keep them more engaged in the lesson, even if they do not fully understand the language being used. Multimedia resources are vital for ENL student success and should be used whenever possible.

Conclusion

Overall, during this research process, I did not get to observe everything that I had hoped for in the classroom. In retrospect, I now realize that observing, creating lessons that involve changing classroom practices, and implementing these lessons requires hours of work and months spent with students, both, which are hard to come by as a student teacher. While it was difficult to complete this research to its fullest potential, I believe that I learned a great deal about the classroom and will be able to better serve my future ENL students because of this project. I believe that this project's "fullest potential" would be to create a curriculum plan to help guide teachers in creating lessons and experiences for all students that are enriching, engaging, and overall beneficial to their education. Planning for a UDL classroom can be difficult without access to technology for all students, since multimedia sources can reach many more students at once. Due to this, teachers must press on, search for

new ideas, employ creativity, collaborate with co-workers, and work with available resources to ensure that ENL students are being supported in their endeavors.

This work can easily be revised in the future and used to assist teachers and ENL students. If I were to continue this research, I would experiment with more strategies that could be used in addition to those that have already been implemented and discussed. I believe that it is important to continue this project in a setting with a one-to-one technology system, in which students have a technology device that can be used to enhance their learning. Having technology for each individual student would open up more opportunities for integration of new strategies and multimedia implementation in daily lessons.

Throughout this research process, the most important idea that can be taken away is that approaching ENL students in the classroom does not mean completing years of training or completely changing one's curriculum. Steps can be taken during lesson planning and the setup of the classroom to benefit all students. Assisting ENL students in their daily lessons does not mean that we treat them any differently than students that use English as their first language, but rather consciously considering what we can add to our lessons each day to make learning a more memorable, meaningful, and engaging. The most important step for mainstream teachers to take in approaching ENL students is to make a daily effort to consider their needs. After considering their needs, they should translate their needs to correlate with strategies, curriculum planning, and instructional theories that can help them to complete their work while remaining a part of the mainstream classroom. By making a conscious

effort to consider student needs daily, teachers can improve their classroom and their students' overall education.

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