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A Pedagogy of Care for Adolescent English Learners: A Formative Experiment

Never give up—we might be the reason for other people's happiness.
- Zola, High School English Learner

Zola, a high-school English learner (EL), pointed out that though our work may be challenging, our reward is making a difference in the lives of others. In the case of educators of adolescents in the dynamic process of English acquisition, as Zola suggests, it is our goal to increase the happiness and success of the students we are privileged to serve through nurturing their academic, emotional, personal, social, and civic development. It is, therefore, essential that educators understand the implementation and impact of teaching through a framework of care.

This can be challenging in light of the current educational climate. Educators are faced with the challenge of teaching an ever more diverse student population as curriculum and instruction has become increasingly standardized (Enright, Torres-Torretti, & Carreon, 2012). This paradoxical shift particularly harms English learners (Luke, 2012), who drop out of school at higher rates than their peers (García, 2012). Research suggests that the increased drop-out rate of ELs results from the detrimental effects of high-stakes testing (Menken, 2010) and years of subtractive schooling (Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Valenzuela, 1999), an educational environment that divests students of their cultural and linguistic resources.

Subsequently, there is a pressing need to envision new pedagogies that promote educational equity for adolescent ELs by using a different orientation than that of the mainstream literacy class (Au, 1998). In order to utilize students' rich culture, language, and heritage to move toward a socially just education, the present study employed a formative experiment design to implement a pedagogy of care which draws from Au's (1998) framework for addressing literacy needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The formative experiment took place in two high school ESL classes to answer the following questions:

- 1) What specific actions can teachers take to enact a pedagogy of care for high school ELs through literacy instruction?
- 2) How does this approach affect students' engagement in literacy activities?

Theoretical Framework and Related Literature

Noddings' (2003) stated that caring should be the priority of teaching and should come before any academic learning. While caring is an abstract concept most related to a feeling, Noddings (2003) explained how caring in this context moves beyond feeling to

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include an ethical action, where students feel genuine care from the instructor. That is, students must feel that they are more important and valuable to the teacher than the subject matter. In establishing the relationship before teaching, the teacher assumes the position that "I am first and always one-caring" (p. 175), because she realizes that students cannot effectively learn until they feel cared for. Therefore, teachers must first care for the students. Then, it becomes possible to work towards academic mastery, particularly in light of standards-based reforms.

It is true that caring student-teacher relationships are important for all students, but it is most significant with diverse learners (Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suarez-Orozco & Camic, 2008; Stewart, 2016). In a study of Mexican-American high school students, Valenzuela (1999) explained the difference between aesthetic and authentic care. Aesthetic care is primarily concerned about practices that, on the surface, appear to foster student achievement such as teaching to the test or strictly following mandated curriculum. On the contrary, she explains that most Latino students are motivated by authentic caring that is based in relationships. When that relationship is absent, misunderstandings proliferate between student and teacher, which may ultimately lead to student failure. Valenzuela (1999) concluded that most immigrant families believe that compassionate teaching that is based on mutually respectful relationships is foundational for learning.

Translated into ethical action, truly caring for students transcends traditional classroom languages, materials, and relationships that often span the scope in addressing caring pedagogy. Thus, caring cannot be narrowed down to one specific action, but is a result of many systematic classroom decisions. Therefore, this study is grounded in literacy education theory that assumes caring for adolescent English learners begins by leveraging students' culturally-embedded ways of knowing in the classroom, fully embracing their assets to mediate literacy instruction (Patterson, Wickstrom, Roberts, Araujo, & Hoki, 2010; Wickstrom, Araujo, Patterson, Hoki, & Roberts, 2011).

Building on Cummin's (1986) empowerment framework, Au's (1998) diverse constructivist orientation systematically addresses the contexts, roles, and responsibilities of schools that mediate educational experiences for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, which includes ELs. This framework (Au, 1998) addresses seven areas that work in tandem to create optimal literacy learning for ELs. We use this framework to guide the pedagogy of care used in the study. The seven areas Au (1998) addresses are below:

1. Goal of Instruction. According to Au (1998), the overarching goal of instruction for mainstream students may be to develop positive attitudes toward literacy as they partake in meaningful literacy practices. The prime goal for CLD students, in addition to the aforementioned goals, is ownership, as students utilize literacy for their own purposes. Furthermore, ownership implies that the activity is deemed important by the students. The content of their learning should be personally meaningful to them.

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While ownership is certainly important for all students, ownership is even more essential for CLD students because they might need to overcome past indifference to classroom literacy activities that have not acknowledged their cultural and linguistic strengths. Au (1998) notes that the framework for CLD students is not oppositional to that of mainstream students; rather the framework is continuum of degrees. Ownership is more essential on the continuum for CLD students than for mainstream students.

Teachers can develop ownership by making literacy activities immediately rewarding—even before students are fluent readers in the language of instruction (Au, 1998; D’Amato, 1987). Ownership occurs in the classroom as students are actively engaged in choice independent reading and authentic book discussions (Polleck, 2010) as well as writing and creating that leverages their lived experiences (Honeyford, 2014).

2. Role of the Home language. All English learners already possess at least one home language. Some come to the classroom already proficient in multiple languages. Whereas their ability to read and write in the home language might vary, all students will have oral proficiency in that language. They do not come to the classroom empty, but know a language that can be harnessed for learning. Consequently, this language is a strength that should be acknowledged, utilized, and even further developed for academic success in the second language, English (Martínez, 2010).

Au (1998) further contends that L1 literacy is not merely a way to develop L2 literacy in English. L1 literacy is valuable in its own right. It can be used to discover, explore, share one’s learning, make sense of content, engage in critical thinking, reflect, and debate. Many support this view even in the secondary classroom, illustrating the many ways that middle and high school language arts teachers can bring their ELs’ languages into the official classroom curriculum (Cook, 2001; García, Flores, & Chu, 2011; García & Sylvan, 2011; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016).

3. Instructional Materials. Clearly, all students should be exposed to authentic literature that represents many different perspectives and peoples. Yet, Au (1998) explains that diverse curricula that represents the students’ languages, cultures, and lived experiences in the classroom is critical for CLD students. Educators must ensure that students not just have the window experience through literature as they learn about those different from them, but also have important mirror experiences to see their own lives reflected back through literature (Bishop, 1990). However, these materials must be used authentically, not as a token gesture to include a specific group of people in classroom learning.

When used appropriately, literature in the secondary ESL classroom is a powerful means for connecting literacy learning to students’ lived experiences (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002; Stewart, 2015). Therefore, multicultural literature is a focus of the classroom materials in this framework. In congruence with recent scholarship regarding using culturally relevant literature with English learners (Ebe, 2012; Honigsfeld, Giouroukakis, & Garfinkel, 2011; Rodrigues, 2014), the assumption is that students make greater literacy gains when they can relate to classroom literature. In order to most effectively experience a literary text, students need to make multiple meaningful

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connections (Brooks & Browne, 2012). Subsequently, the teacher intentionally selects and makes available a variety of literature that both reflects students' cultures and expands their knowledge through reading from other cultures.

4. Classroom Management and Interaction with Students. Au's (1998) approach is responsive to the communication differences between students' cultures and mainstream society (Delpit, 1988). This includes the teacher's role as well as the conversation and competition structures compatible with students' cultures (D'Amato, 1987). That is, the teacher is sensitive to students' cultural differences in interaction styles as a method of maximizing learning discourse. This sensitivity can appear in how the teacher chooses to implement (or not to implement) friendly competition in the classroom, whether students need to raise their hands before speaking, and the amount of cooperative learning structures in the classroom. By considering students' cultural discourse patterns, the teacher fosters a community of care where students are able to reach higher levels of literacy.

Interactions with students might also determine the way the teacher displays care. As illustrated in the difference of aesthetic and authentic care (Valenzuela, 1999), many ELs need teachers to take a personal interest in them. Scholarship suggests that a warm environment with a friendly teacher, or "emotional warmth", can increase the literacy gains of ELs (López, 2012; Stewart, 2016).

5. Relationship to the Community. Power relations will inevitably be at play in the literacy learning environment because the classroom is a microcosm of the larger society. Although language and literacy educators might not exercise great control over the outside of the classroom, they can purposefully work toward creating a classroom that has strong connections to students' communities. This is accomplished by learning about communities' knowledge and inviting members into the classroom to share that knowledge and make connections to academic learning (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Educators must work to dismantle power relations that exist on the outside, purposing to learn from the students in a dialogic model (Freire, 2000) where everyone has a voice in the learning community.

6. Instructional Methods. In addition to authentic literacy experiences, another emphasis in Au's (1998) framework is on explicit instruction in the literacy skills needed for participation in the culture of power (Delpit, 1988). As such, in addition to allowing opportunities for authentic engagement through choice reading and reader response, there is a structure within the language arts block for direct skill instruction that is contextually embedded. Taken together, these instructional approaches provide the support and motivation to reach the goal of ownership, because students are given a range of tools that meet their needs to fully participate in literacy practices for a variety of purposes.

Teachers of students who are simultaneously learning language and content must always be aware of these students' dual learning purpose. Adolescent ELs need content area instruction that incorporates more than the stand and deliver approach so often used in secondary classrooms. Secondary ELs report feeling frustrated when teachers do not

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use visuals and other activities to engage them in the content (Roy-Cambell, 2015). Consequently, in order to engage ELs in effective instruction, educators must consider how they teach including the language domains and strategies employed in day-to-day instruction.

7. Assessment. Certainly there are issues regarding assessment for any student, particularly in an era of high-stakes testing (Luke, 2012); yet we must be ever more vigilant in issues of bias in assessment for CLD students. Au (1998) encourages educators to consider various elements of assessment for CLD students. First, the prior knowledge assumed in the evaluation measure should be considered since many adolescent ELs' backgrounds differ from those of mainstream students. Second, the language of the assessment can greatly influence the validity of the test as students might have content knowledge but are still developing the language skills to demonstrate that knowledge. Third, the type of question or evaluation measure should also be taken into account. Many ELs will struggle early on with performance-based measures that require oral language fluency yet might be able to demonstrate their learning through another means.

Additionally, many assessments focus on a single, narrow form of knowledge such as large-scale writing assessments (Behizadeh, 2014) that disempower diverse students. Au's (1998) proposition calls for an alternative to standardized testing in the literacy classroom. This includes portfolios, reading and writing workshops, and performance-based assessments that are appropriate for students' language acquisition level. Many researchers have illustrated ways to assess adolescent ELs that empower rather than marginalize them. They assess student literacy learning through digital means (Danzak, 2011) and their multiple languages (Daniel & Pacheco, 2016).

Considering the current educational climate of standardized testing that disproportionately affects ELs in negative ways, it becomes apparent that a pedagogy of care is essential for teachers of ELs. Au's (1998) diverse constructionist framework for teaching literacy to culturally and linguistically diverse learners provides a foundation for creating a pedagogy of care. This study's pedagogy of care purposes to leverage and expand students' culturally-embedded ways of knowing. Doing so not only honors students' funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005), but also aptly provides students with the practices and tools that transcend the goals of testing and use literacy for their own purposes in the culture of power. Au (1998) further explains that the propositions she outlines "are intended as ideas to be explore, not as final solutions." (p. 309). As such, this study seeks to explore how to practically enact four of these principals in actual high school ELA classrooms with English learners: 1) goal of instruction, 2) instructional materials, 3) classroom management and interaction with students, and 4) instructional methods. This paper reports on how the researchers put these four elements into practice in high school ESL classrooms and the effect it had on student literacy engagement.

Methods

As noted by other educational researchers (Lee, 2001; Mahiri, 2004), theory often fails to meet practice when researchers theorize about instructional models, but are not

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actively involved in putting these ideals into practice. For this reason, the first author, Mandy, left the university setting for four months to teach in two different high schools. A formative experiment was used in order to allow the researchers to continually modify the instructional approach to be most effective for the student literacy engagement. This flexible, but defensible typology allowed the researchers to respond to the instructional needs of students at both school settings (Reinking & Bradley, 2008) with the theoretical focus of creating a pedagogy of care for adolescent ELs. In line with the distinguishing features of design research (Bradley & Reinking, 2011), this study was based on the following:

- 1) The intervention was designed using theory regarding literacy pedagogy for adolescent ELs, with;
- 2) the goal of the intervention to contribute to a pedagogy of care to engage ELs in literacy activities;
- 3) in the natural contexts of the high school ESL classroom with;
- 4) cycles of iterative data analysis.

Instructional Settings and Participants

One setting was a suburban high performing school and the second setting was an urban school that was the lowest performing of 200 high schools in the greater metropolitan area in a Southwestern border state. In both settings, the students were English learners in grades nine through twelve in English as a Second Language classes. All students ($N = 37$) received free lunch due to their economic status and were considered at-risk for not passing the standardized tests required to graduate. (See Table 1 for specific information.)

Table 1.
Participants and Settings.

	Classroom 1	Classroom 2
School	Suburban	Urban
Class	Language arts class only for ELs: Students receive ELA credit	Intensive summer literacy class only for ELs: Students do not receive credit
Number of Student Participants	29	8
English Language Levels	Beginner to Advanced	Beginner to Advanced
Countries of Origin	Mexico, Honduras, Vietnam, and the U.S. (Some long-term ELs)	Burma and the Congo (All refugees)
Time of Study	Last two months of school year. Classes met every other day in 90 minute blocks.	Four-week summer program. Class met for six hours a day, four days a week.

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Researcher's Role (Mandy)	Shared instructional responsibilities with the regular teacher. Participant-observer	The researcher was the only instructor in this class. Participant-observer
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Description of the Intervention

In each intervention, the researcher first learned who the students in the class were by way of their first languages, countries of origin, and English language levels. She then selected about 100 texts to include in the classroom for the intervention based on the basic information gathered. Throughout the intervention, texts were added based on data analysis. The specific texts were selected to connect to students' cultural knowledge, lived experiences, and interests. They were also chosen to engage students in reading in their first languages or in English by using texts they could more easily understand such as annotated novels, graphic novels, or picture books. In Classroom 1, the researcher worked with the teacher to determine how to structure literacy activities around this body of literature. In Classroom 2, the researcher made those instructional and curricular decisions alone as the sole teacher, but was guided by the results in the first intervention. Students were encouraged to write regularly for fluency and understanding rather than for accuracy in their journals. That is, they were told their writing in their journals would not be graded and they could write in any language. Students were encouraged to write as much as they could for as long as they could about the topic discussed and not continually pause to ask how to spell a word. Students also wrote within a writing workshop setting to publish selected pieces in class books.

In each of the classrooms, students had choice in what they would write about, usually by selecting an idea to further develop from their entries in their journals. Some of the ideas they were provided included how they related to a character or instance in a book, their migration narrative to the U.S., or what they like most about their countries. Sentence frames and mentor texts were also used to facilitate students' poetry writing. In all parts of writing, students were encouraged to use all of their languages.

The researcher also engaged the students in large amounts of shared reading, as she read aloud from a novel, poetry book, or short story, and the students followed along in their own copies. At certain places in the reading, the researcher paused and students asked clarifying questions, discussed the plot, or created a graphic organizer to understand specific elements in the text. Students were empowered to take ownership by participating in the selection of literature for shared reading with the class and independent reading they completed in class and at home.

Data Collection

- The multiple data sources were:
- 1) Pre- and post-surveys about students' engagement in literacy activities. (4 likert scale, 4 yes/no, and 6 open-ended questions)
 - 2) Researcher's field notes.
 - 3) Interviews with three focal students before and during the interventions. (Twelve 30-minute interviews with 3 focal students who represent the sample population:

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- a Spanish-speaking long-term EL, a recent arrival [year 1] from Mexico, and a refugee student [year 3] from Burma)
- 4) Student writing via journals, drafts, and final products.

The quantitative data from the surveys yielded change scores in students' engagement with literacy activities, while the qualitative data from all data sources were analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1968) to identify codes. Codes were then collapsed into the four larger categories based on four components of Au's (1998) diverse constructivist orientation: 1) goal of instruction, 2) instructional materials, 3) classroom management, and 4) instructional methods. Each of the categories contains sub-categories to explain how the goal was achieved and its effect on student engagement.

Findings

In order to understand *how* a pedagogy of care can be enacted (question 1) and *what effect* that has on ELs' literacy engagement (question 2), the findings are organized under the four focal components in Au's (1998) literacy framework for CLD students. Under each component, we explain the curricular and instructional decisions aimed at addressing one of the four categories. Within the same component, we then share the effect it had on student engagement in literacy activities.

Goal of Instruction

How. Students took ownership of learning that focused on expressing themselves and their lived experiences. Using mentor texts (Calkins, 1986; Newman, 2012), students wrote poetry about their lives, cultures, and families. Some students translated their poetry into their first language. (See Figure 1.) Some students engaged in translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014) by using a mixture of English and Spanish to demonstrate their transnational identity and take full ownership of her learning.

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I am from...

I am from the sun
From the food and the water
I am from the sheep
I am from the bushes
The bushes
Whose long gone limbs I remember as if were my own.

I'm from the *mole* and the land
From my father and my mother
I'm from chrims and *Noche Buena*
And from *dia de los muertos*

I'm from *Me duele la pansa* and *yo lo kiero*
And a song named *La Chona*
I'm from *Dia De Los Muertos*
I'm from *Acambaro* and *Michoacán*
Mole and Barbacoa
From My Grandfather
Hero
Stay with all the family
In Mexico
In Mexico ago a lot of years

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Yo soy del sol
 De la Comida y la Agua
 Yo soy del Rancho
 Borregas
 Yo soy de los Arbustos
 Los Arbusros
 Cuyas largas extremidades recuerda Como si ellos fueran mi mismo.

Soy de el Mole y la Tierra
 De mi Padre mi Madre
 Soy de la Navidad de la Noche Buena
 Y de Dia de los Muertos

Soy de "Me duele la pansa" y de "yo quiero eso"
 Y de la cancion llamada La Chona
 Soy de Dia De Los Muertos
 Soy de Acambaro and Michoacán
 Mole y Barbacoa
 De mi Abuelo
 Heroe
 Estar con toda la familia
 En Mexico
 En Mexico ase muchos anos

Figure 1.

A Beginning EL's Translated Poem about His Country and Family
 (See <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/> for more about Where I'm From poems.)

Additionally, students took ownership of their own literacy learning by enacting choice in many of their assignments. Students had many selections of multicultural literature available to them at various language levels and in multiple languages. They could choose poetry, short stories, chapter books, annotated texts, or illustrated books about a diverse array of topics. These selections were used for independent and shared reading. Students gave input and voted on the novel the teacher read out loud for shared reading.

Effect. Miguel, a recent arrival from Mexico, appeared unengaged in each class despite the inclusion of multicultural or multilingual literature. However, he was very engaged in writing a "Where I'm From" (Lyon, 1999) poem about himself and then eagerly translated it into Spanish (Figure 1) while helping the researcher translate her poem as well. Writing biographical poetry was a culminating project for his class, yet

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because students engaged deeply, it was chosen for the first literacy activity in Classroom Two where the poems were published together in an anthology.

Instructional Materials

How. The researcher chose literature to reflect students' cultures or past experiences. Survey results show that only 30% of students indicated they had read literature about someone with their own experiences prior to the intervention contrasted with 100% at the end. This suggests that this one action was a significant change from "business as usual" in these classrooms. These texts not only reflected the students' lives and worlds outside of school, but also accommodated for a variety of language levels. The researchers used websites such as Worlds of Words (www.wowlit.org) to ensure that each student in the classes had access to literature that included his or her culture, country of origin, and language. In addition to texts, other instructional materials were used such as videos and graphic organizers. For example, the researcher showed a video of Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor as she was sworn in with her mother by her side before reading a poetry about her life. Additionally, using graphic organizers helped students make sense of the plot and the various characters in novels read together as a class. ELs could refer back to their organizer to help them comprehend the text.

Effect. Specific and purposeful use of texts, videos, and graphic organizers led to increased student literacy engagement. Students in both classrooms demonstrated heightened engagement through their reading, writing, and discussions during a series of lessons about Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor, a child of parents from Puerto Rico and former EL. Ana wrote in her journal in response to reading about Justice Sotomayor: "I'm Latino, also, I want the respect of everybody. When I get to [my high school] I felt weird because no one spoke Spanish." She stated in an interview that after she had learned about Sonia Sotomayor, she felt she could be successful in her new country, explaining her positive engagement during these lessons.

Ana also began reading more independently during the intervention. She stated why: "Me identificaría más con él (el personaje en el libro) porque él se siente un poco raro porque nadie habla su idioma. Entonces a veces se siente como solo, y a veces no habla con nadie." (I would identify more with him [the character in the book] because he feels a little strange because nobody speaks his language. Then sometimes he feels like alone, and sometime he does not speak to anybody.) Indeed, a significantly greater percentage ($p < .05$) of participants reported that they read a book they enjoyed post-intervention (94.7%) compared to prior (57.6%).

Similarly, Jacky, a student also from Mexico stated on her pre-intervention survey that she did not read regularly: "No. I no have a book for read. Because I don't know speak English." She had not had access to books that interested her and were accessible to her emergent reading abilities in English. Prior to the intervention she also did not have access to many books in Spanish. During the intervention the researcher was purposeful to provide her both books in English at her level as well as novels in Spanish that might

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interest her. On the post survey in response to the same question about reading, she replied: “Yeah I like read because I feel relax and happy.”

Classroom Management and Interaction with Students

How. Creating a pedagogy of care in relation to classroom management occurred through shared, dialogic learning (Freire, 2000). In order to send the message that everyone was learning together, the researcher was purposeful to write when the students were writing and read when they were reading. This included daily journal writing time as well as independent reading. The researcher also published writing with the students. More so, to physically embody dialogic learning in community, the researcher sat with the students during the class. Desks were grouped together to form tables and everyone sat at a desk of equal size to complete the day’s reading, writing, projects, or discussion.

Although seemingly insignificant, the researcher made a point to learn specific words and phrases in each students’ languages. She greeted them in this language and tried to weave in a few words during the day. For example, in an effort to thank a student in her language, Karen, the researcher accidentally told her she was crazy. Spawning a round of laughter from the other students who spoke Karen, the entire class became involved in saying something was crazy using the Karen language on a regular basis.

Effect. At the end of both interventions, each student willingly participated in discussion, shared writing with others, and engaged in reading. Many students stated they read their first chapter book during the intervention. The learners in the classrooms developed relationships with each other and the teacher. For example, Raquel, a student from Mexico stated that she did not like to share her writing on the pre-intervention survey: “No I never share it. I don’t like sharing my writings because I’m bad in that thing.” However, on the post-intervention survey, she wrote that she liked to share her writing with others in the class: “Yes because it make my to remember about my past and know more what I want.” She wanted to share her writing about her country to help her remember and share the life she left behind with others in her class including the researcher and teacher.

Perhaps Myine, a refugee student from Burma, explains the effect of the classroom management strategy the best. On the last day of the intervention with the researcher she explained in a note: “I love your class because you not teach from book, you teach from heart.”

Instructional Methods

How. The students in these ESL classes needed to make general literacy gains while also acquiring elements of the English language necessary to pass the high-stakes tests required for graduation in their state. Some of the students were in the 12th grade and 19-years-old. They were on a race against time to acquire the academic language and content needed to pass the necessary tests which were English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. The tests are administered to all high school students in their

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state in the 9th and 10th grades. Students must continue to take the tests until they pass. For adolescent English learners, particularly late arrivals who do not enter U.S. schools until their teenage years, these tests are particularly challenging. They need to make great language and literacy gains over a very short period of time.

In order to meet Au's (1998) framework requirement for "authentic literacy activities [and] skills taught in context [with a] considerable amount of explicit skill instruction" (p. 307), the researcher taught everything within a theme based on the literature being used. Some of the themes were migration and social justice. The specific method of explicit instruction used the most was shared reading, which proved to be a way to effectively improve students' vocabulary and comprehension abilities in English as the teacher demonstrated fluency. The researcher read from a novel, short story, poem, or picture book out loud, while the students followed along with their own copies. She taught vocabulary in context and provided frequent pauses for clarification through discussion and graphic organizers.

Effect. Students engaged the most during shared reading as opposed to independent literacy activities. This was noted early in the intervention and more shared reading was introduced throughout the intervention. The post-survey indicated that more advanced students enjoyed independent reading, while the majority of the beginning and intermediate students stated that they enjoyed shared reading the most because they could understand more when the teacher read out loud with frequent pauses to help them understand the plot, characters, and new vocabulary.

To illustrate, Aye Cho Htay was classified as an intermediate English learner. She was in her third year in U.S. schools and going into the 10th grade. She had never read a novel in English. Through shared reading with the researcher and her class, she completed the novel *Sylvia and Aki* (Conkling, 2011) about segregation and Japanese internment camps in the U.S. during WWII. With explicit vocabulary instruction and the use of graphic organizers to understand the plot, Aye Cho Htay was able to comprehend the novel and write an essay comparing the characters' experiences in the book to her own. (See Figure 2.)

Hard Times

I learned about Sylvia and Aki in a book. They are two girls who overcame their hard times like me.

Sylvia's hard time was that she could not go to school with white people because her skin was brown. She went to a different school. Her school had flies and an electric fence.

Aki also had hard times. Aki was separated from her family because she got the chicken pox. Then her father was sent to a different camp for about two years. All of the Japanese–Americans were forced to evacuate to internment camps.

My hard time is when I was in Burma. I didn't have school because we lived in a village. It was hard to get an education. We also had to work hard and help our family to get food. Not only me, but all the children in village. Some of the soldiers came to my village and killed people so we didn't have peace. I overcame hard times. My family moved to Thailand so I could go to school.

Figure 2.

Aye Cho Htay's Essay

Discussion

The results from this study conducted at the nexus of theory and practice indicate that there are very specific actions teachers of adolescents ELs may take in order to implement components of Au's (1998) framework through what we term "a pedagogy of care". By providing adolescent ELs the most effective literacy instruction that honors who they are and their many strengths, we teach through caring for them.

Some of the teacher actions most critical to this form of instruction are giving students choice in their reading and writing while offering options that they deem meaningful and relevant to their lives. By practically providing engaging literacy opportunities in a classroom learning community, students were able to engage in authentic, complex literacy practices. With the goal of ownership, the researcher regularly provided instructional materials and practices that aligned with authentic choice. Second, the materials teachers choose to include or not include in the classroom have a great impact. By purposefully selecting literature that connects to students' cultures, lived experiences, and personal interests while also including texts accessible to them by being in their first languages or through supports to understand in English, teachers can more effectively engage ELs in literacy activities. Third, students responded positively to a learning environment where they were seen (Wickstrom, et al., 2011)—where the teacher acknowledges their multiple languages, backgrounds, strengths, goals, and unique needs. In addition, the dialogic discourse that was characteristic of classroom discussion in the study allowed students to actively participate in meaningful ways. Finally, students engaged in instruction that was scaffolded appropriately by the researcher in their second language (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2014). This study echoes Au's (1998) suggestion that ELs might need more contextually-embedded explicit

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instruction in second language literacy skills than students in the mainstream class. In this study, this was most effectively accomplished through shared reading, use of graphic organizers, and mentor texts for writing.

Although, only four elements of Au's (1998) framework were the focus for this study, we note that literacy instruction can be even more effective when educators can purposefully embrace the other three elements as well: home language support, relationship to the community, and assessment. These three crucial areas were beyond the scope of this study, yet need to be addressed within secondary ESL classrooms. Further research might address specific actions educators make to enact these principles in the secondary ESL classroom and the effect it has on student engagement and learning.

Conclusion

Au's (1998) constructivist framework for literacy education for culturally and linguistically diverse learners is even more relevant today than when she first proposed it. Adolescent English learners, who are being increasingly hurt by federal policy (Hopkins, Thompson, Linqunti, Hakuta, & August, 2013), cannot be separated from their rich cultures, heritages, or languages. In an era of standardization and accountability, researchers must creatively imagine and enact a pedagogy where the onus of accountability is to the students (Campano, 2007) through a pedagogy of care. Although care can be abstract, this study embraces the idea of improvisation in its design to create and describe specific methods to care for adolescent ELs. We must continually care through our pedagogy because, like Zola reminds us, "we might be the reason for other people's happiness."

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