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Translanguaging Writing Strategies for the High School Classroom and Low-Level Literacy EL Students

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Low-Level Literacy EL Students

By

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DEDICATION

To my mom and children, without whom none of this would have been possible.
I love you.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the research question: *How can translanguaging in writing be used to help secondary students, who are low-level literacy in L1, be successful at the high school level?* This chapter will first describe why this topic is an important one to me and to other teachers. Next, it will describe why some of our EL (English Learner) populations are struggling in high school, and finally, I will describe how my online resource module will guide teachers to become better equipped to help students be successful accessing and demonstrating content at the high school level through the pedagogy of translanguaging.

Teaching High School ELs

Several years ago, I was teaching a new high school EL course to high beginner students that required students to analyze as well as write in the areas of narrative, informational, research, and argument. The class was large with 28 students and they were mostly successful at writing essays. There was one student in particular, Javier (not his real name), from El Salvador, who worked very hard to learn English. He finished his assignments, participated in class, and completed all the requirements that are needed to be successful in school, yet he struggled. He had to work incredibly hard for every gain he made in learning English. In the same class, there was another student who seemed to absorb English like a sponge with water. I could not figure out why Javier was having such a difficult time. Throughout the year I learned little bit about him; he was 19, worked full time, and had moved all around central America to avoid being killed. After

he told me this, I paused and double checked that I had understood correctly, and yes, for several years he had moved every year to a different country, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, back to El Salvador in an attempt to not be murdered by gangs. A few months later, he was writing an argument essay and doing a wonderful job. He had all the necessary writing conventions except capital letters. I said to him, "Why are you not using capital letters at the beginning of your sentences? This is the same in Spanish as it is in English. You always capitalize the beginning of sentences. You know this." He replied, "No! No one ever taught me. I stopped school in fifth grade." I was dumbfounded. This student had been out of school for more than five years when he came to the US and was put into high school. I went home thinking about what he said and the implications of his words. Here was a young adult who worked so hard and yet still struggled with the writing basics, but more importantly, how could I help him? The other teachers and I discussed this on a daily basis. How could we help students read and write in English, when they had little to no literacy in their home language? I continued to do my usual teaching style of comprehensible input utilizing the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) model (Echevarria et al., 2007) using lots of pictures, building background information, and simplified language, but there were always a few students who made little to no progress. A year later, my district invested to get all of the high school and middle school teachers trained in Orton-Gillingham (OG) (*Institute for Multisensory Education*, 2020) phonics as a way to help struggling readers in our English learner program. I appreciated the training I received and learned a lot about the structure of the English language, but it mostly works as background knowledge for me as a teacher. Most of my students have some level of encoding and decoding literacy in their

L1 (first language) and do not need whole-class phonics instruction. OG helped me to see patterns in the English language which I could then point out to the students. But in the three years I have used it, I have not seen a lot of improvement in the reading and writing skills of my students due to targeted phonics instruction. Then I learned about Translanguaging in one of my courses at Hamline. Translanguaging, is a theory that advances the idea that bilinguals have one unitary language system that enables them to use all their language features fluidly (García et al., 2016, p. 184). Translanguaging is also a pedagogy and it is the pedagogy that I will be focusing on more heavily. As I learned more about translanguaging pedagogies, I thought about how it went against the unofficial English-only policy in my district and I began to change my own way of thinking and teaching. I began to encourage students to hold academic discussions in L1 and then share out in English. I began to allow students to translate words and read texts in their L1 to access the content. I also began encouraging students to use their L1 as a prewriting tool to produce work in English. However, I wondered how would translanguaging in writing work for students who did not have access to their entire linguistic repertoire? What would it look like for students who were not academically fluent in their first language, or who had interrupted schooling? How would a student who was functionally illiterate in their L1, utilize their language skills to produce meaningful content in English? Studies have shown that students with literacy skills and knowledge in L1, have a more successful time in learning L2 (second or third langauge) (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014, p.157). Schecter and Bayler (2002) say that being able to read and write in L1 is an asset for students developing literacy in L2 and that the L2 students surpassed the L1 students because they had literacy resources in two langauges (as cited

in Celce-Murcia et al., 2014, p.157). Using the literacy resources from two different languages is translanguaging without being called translanguaging. I hope to help teachers access more of their student's knowledge through this approach.

The Need for a New Approach

I teach at a large, urban high school in Iowa. There are almost 600 EL students. The students come from a variety of backgrounds including refugees and undocumented immigrants, as well as students who were born in the USA, but grew up in their country of origin and are returning for their schooling. A lot of our students are not fully literate in their L1 or they have a low-level of literacy due to some sort of interrupted schooling. This could be for several reasons including poor quality of education in a refugee camp, a rural school setting, fear of attending school, dropping out of school due to gang violence or other safety reasons. In some cases, a student's L1 was not the language of instruction and school was conducted in their second or third languages. It does happen that students come to the US from large, developed, urban areas. Those students tend to be fairly successful in school quite quickly. However, when students do not have a strong literacy background in L1, learning L2 (or 3, 4) becomes more difficult. The students that come to my school are cognitively on par with American high school students of the same age, but often they lack the academic literacy they need to be successful. The major problems are two-fold; the student's ability to show their previously acquired knowledge to their instructor in an academic setting, and the willingness of their teachers to modify assignments or scaffold instruction to support students. SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) has been the preferred method of instruction for content area teachers in my district. Many teachers have some training in SIOP strategies. I am

proposing a new pedagogy that builds on top of SIOP. Whereas SIOP strategies are intended to be used in English, I am suggesting that students, especially those with low-level literacy in L1, would benefit from the addition of translanguaging pedagogies.

According to Batalova et al., (2021) there were more than 44.9 million immigrants living in the USA in 2019. School aged students deserve an equal education and teachers that know the best way to teach them, so that they are able to process new content and produce content at their level of thinking, not their level of language acquisition. Translanguaging theory and pedagogy dovetail nicely with the Natural Approach theory by Terrell and Krashen (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014, p.8). The Natural Approach is a comprehension based approach which is the basis for the SIOP model discussed earlier. Both the Natural Approach and SIOP rely on English only instruction and comprehensible input to teach students L2. However, translanguaging pedagogy is the idea of allowing students to utilize all of their linguistic resources. For example by encouraging students to write in their L1 and then translate into L2, have a discussion in L1 with other students who speak the same language before they begin to write, create a graphic organizer, or prewrite as a group before individual writing, and of course using the scaffolds of paragraph and sentence frames. I believe that all teachers want what is best for their students and want to teach their students effectively. By creating an online resource course, it is my hope that content teachers specifically, but all teachers, can learn new ways that they can use to engage their students, in particular their low-level literacy students, so that the students are able to show their background and content knowledge and the rigorous thinking that is occurring, even though the students written command of L1 and L2 may be low.

While I was researching I found *A Translanguaging Pedagogy for Writing: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators* (Espinosa, C. et al., 2016) which is full of valuable information for teachers at all levels. I took information from this guide, the SIOP model, and some other resources that I discovered and combined them into an online resource course for teachers to help our low-level literacy students access and demonstrate content knowledge using their entire linguistic repertoire.

The Online Resource Course

My project is to create an online resource course on the Canvas Learning Management System (Canvas) used by my school. The course is aimed at general education teachers in my current high school to be used with emergent bilinguals in their content classes. The guide will include a self pre-test for teachers to help them determine where they stand on using translanguaging strategies in the classroom. This is a crucial step for teachers as it will help them to narrow down their beliefs around writing and using the student's L1 in the classroom. It will include a get to know you survey for students, to inform teachers about student's interests, background, and literacy level so that they can differentiate instruction as needed. Furthermore, there will also be a pre-test for students to share with their teacher of what their perception is of the current writing environment in the classroom, and if they feel safe and valued, writing and having discussions in L1. The online resource course will also provide theoretical and practical information, as well as writing strategies for teachers to use with their students. The course will include a post test for both teachers and students to use after an intentional adoption of a translanguaging writing strategy, to reflect and analyze what worked, what did not work, and what changed in the classroom environment.

Conclusion

I am operating under the premise that all students want to learn. Students, especially those with interrupted formal education or low-level literacy, need a new approach that allows them to not just learn, but demonstrate proficiency at the cognitive level of their peers. High school has a high level of academic language and thought requirements and the students frequently do not have the language to access, and or demonstrate the content. This leads to frustrations from the students who give up, and from the teachers who don't understand why the students aren't learning. I am proposing there needs to be a shift in schools and the way they approach teaching emergent bilinguals. Teachers can use my online resource course to support students so that they can be their best selves through translanguaging and be in charge of their education.

Chapter 2 Preview

I will go about answering the research question of *How can translanguaging in writing be used to help secondary students who are low-level literacy in L1, be successful at the high school level?,* through careful research of the literature in the areas of emergent bilinguals, student access to knowledge, low-level L1 literacy, and translanguaging in writing strategies. By researching each of these four subtopics I hope to provide a clear picture and understanding of who our students are and what they need to be successful in high school.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will examine four key areas needed to understand *How can translanguaging in writing be used to help secondary students, who are low-level literacy in L1, be successful at the high school level?* Success at the high school level means accessing content and producing work at the target level so that the students can pass their classes, graduate high school, and learn English. Each class has a curriculum guide with grading topics and learning targets based on the Iowa Common Core standards. The learning targets for English learner courses also include the ELPA21 (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century) standards mixed in. The learning targets are the skills that students need to demonstrate mastery of for each course. Every year there are a significant number of students who seem unable to access the content despite the scaffolds put into place, such as sentence frames, pictures, and slowed teacher speech. I have noticed that many of the unsuccessful students are low-level readers in English and in their L1. I wanted to find the reasons behind the student's lack of success and find a way to help mitigate their struggles.

In this chapter, I will review four key areas that I believe contribute to student's lack of success in school; emergent bilinguals, content knowledge acquisition and production, low-level L1 literacy, and translanginging. I will begin with who emergent bilingual students are, and why some of them struggle in high school, and why some of them do not. I will look at the different ways that emergent bilinguals are able to understand the content they are being taught, as well as the different ways they are able to

demonstrate their understanding to the teachers. Next, I will investigate what exactly is meant by the term "low-level literacy level in L1" and how it affects a student's academic success at the high school level. Finally, I will explain what translanguaging is, both as a theory and pedagogy, and why it is important for teachers to implement translanguaging strategies, such as interactive journaling in L1/L2, to help students access their background knowledge and demonstrate proficiency in the learning targets to ultimately pass their classes, graduate high school, and learn English.

Emergent Bilinguals

Emergent bilinguals in the United States come from all walks of life and a variety of educational backgrounds, home languages, and cultures. What they have in common is the desire or need to learn English so that they can fully access US culture and utilize resources afforded to them in the United States. There are many different types of immigrant students to the US with a variety of backgrounds. There were approximately 87.5 million immigrants in the US in 2020 (Batalova, 2021). In 2019, almost half of immigrant children, or 20.7 million children aged 5 and over, were considered Limited English Proficient (LEP), a government label that identifies students whose parents checked the box on the home language survey that said they spoke English, "not at all" or "not well."

Many students come to the US with a gap in their education or a lack of formal schooling. This is often due to lack of formal schooling in refugee camps or rural settings, and dangerous home country situations that prevent students from attending school. We refer to these students as *students with interrupted formal education* (SIFE). Potochnick (2018) found that 65% of SIFE students who arrive in the US at the

secondary level are often two years behind their peers. While we often think of SIFE students as refugees, there are thousands of immigrants whose schooling was poor or interrupted, but who are not refugees. Students who come as immigrants often have different needs than refugees. Many students struggle with balancing life outside of school with life inside of school and lack the cultural capital to fully understand or participate in the American school system (Hos, 2020).

Hos (2020) reports on several studies that describe what needs to be in place in school for immigrant and refugee students to be successful. Student's language and culture must be respected and the school environment must be welcoming and caring. There must be a safe environment for students to explore their racial and ethnic identities. When students are taught in a way that values their funds of knowledge, rather than focusing on what they do not know, they have a happier experience in school. It is important to have EL teachers that are trained in the best practices of additive bilingualism to deliver high quality, rigorous instruction to the students. Ideally, there would also be bilingual counselors. Many students suffer from acculturative stress, the adjustment of refugees and immigrants, as they settle into a new country and learn a new language as well as the difficulties around daily life (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok. 1987).

Students not only need to learn basic English, but the academic English required in their general education classes. SIFE students often become the casualties of the hidden stratification of the school system due to their lack of formal skills in an educational setting, their unrealistic expectations of graduation requirements and career options, their need for social-emotional support, and their outside responsibilities such as child-care and work (Hos, 2020). Students may not live with family members and so they

lack the emotional and financial support of their families. They may also be responsible for younger siblings before and after school, and have jobs.

Translanguaging pedagogy is one way teachers can support students and help reduce their acculturative stress load. By encouraging use of L1 in the classroom in discussion, listening, reading, and writing, teachers send the message that they care about students and that they support the student's whole self. Teachers can support students in the use of their full language repertoire thus encouraging students to use their voice and support the dissolution of the hierarchy of language practice that judges some language practices as more beneficial than others (García & Leiva, 2014).

Students who come to US schools with little to no English are labeled as Limited English Proficiency or English Language Learners. Labeling students as LEP or ELL suggests a deficit approach to learning and sets students up as "lacking" instead of celebrating the wealth of knowledge the student is bringing to the classroom. Using these terms sustains the language deficit thinking around students who are not fluent in English (Sayer, 2013). Our students are not lacking in anything and in fact bring a lot of valuable cultural and content knowledge to school. However, many teachers are ill-equipped in strategies to help students share their knowledge. Garica (2011) argues that the label *emergent bilingual* is a better fit than LEP or ELL. The term emergent bilingual supports student learners who bring a wealth of language and cultural knowledge to the classroom (García, 2009). ELL, ESL, and LEP is a deficit model of looking at language acquisition. It suggests that the student is *less than* until they have learned English and it denies the existing language and cultural resources the students bring to the classroom. Instead of encouraging sharing of resources, it puts a damper on them and only tries to force

students to acculturate into America. It is common in the US to believe that English

monolingualism is a feature of being American, even though the country is multicultural

and multilingual (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). This is a false belief as the language or

language one speaks, does not make them more or less American. Emergent bilingualism

suggests that all of the student's linguistic resources are valued and the student is on the

path to full bilingualism.

Student Access of Knowledge

How do emergent bilinguals access their funds of knowledge when they do not

speak the language of instruction? How do teachers facilitate the students' demonstration

of knowledge?

Secondary teachers often focus on the fact that their students do not speak

English, rather than focusing on their strengths such as, their prior content knowledge,

their diverse cultural and linguistic experiences, and their previous daily lives where they

may have had first hand experiences with the skills being taught (Perez & Holme, 2010).

The use of only English in the teaching of English to students has been thought of as the

best way to teach L2 for several decades. The idea being that the use of L1 would

interfere in the acquisition of L2 (Paterson, 2020) which has been shown to be false

(Celce-Murcia et al., 2014; Schecter and Bayler, 2002). As a result, most schools and

districts have an official or unofficial English-only policy that guides emergent bilingual

instruction (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). L1 is ignored completely in classrooms in

favor of more L2 and has been for over a century (Cook, 2001).

 What has happened is that educators do not even notice or think about the

English-only policies in our schools, or their impact on a students ability to demonstrate

knowledge, and often do not think of ways that students can demonstrate their

proficiency in their L1. Teachers do not recognize student's L1 as a resource, only as a

barrier to learning L2. Many educators believe in the positive benefits of bilingualism.

However, they also subscribe to a language ideology of monolingualism and

nativespeakerism. This practice of teaching separates learning into two distinct languages

rather than one language that utilizes all of a student's linguistic resources (The Douglas

Fir Group, 2016; García, 2009). Ethical ESOL talks about the destructive practices of

denying a students access to their L1 and it is contradictory with learning from a

cognitive view. It is known that lessons should come from student's lives and experiences

to foster learning and development of identity. "A monolingual approach denies students'

their human right to draw on language resources. It also excludes deep reflection and

forces students to use a childlike level of speaking (and subsequently thinking),"

(Ethical ESOL, 2019, para.5). The result of denying students the use of their L1 is that a

large part of who a student is, their culture, language, their whole self, is ignored and

even denigrated.

Kiramba (2016) found in her study of translanguaging in multilingual students in

Kenya, that students will continue to use their entire linguistic repertoire to communicate

in writing, even when they are penalized for it. I have watched students cry because they

did not have the English words to share their knowledge with me or the class. It broke my

heart and I still believed I was doing the right thing by denying them translations. I have

since learned that I was wrong, and I now encourage students to speak with other students

in their L1 or use translation apps to communicate with me. Teachers often believe that

allowing a student to translate or use a bilingual dictionary is cheating (Kerr, 2014). I

have come across this in my own prior teaching, and I see it all the time in content teachers. The idea remains that the students just need more comprehensible input to understand.

Classrooms across the US, including many in my district, operate under Krashen's Monitor Model (Loewen, 2020) which has five hypotheses to explain second language acquisition; the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Input hypothesis and the Affective Filter hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis (Lai & Wei, 2019)(Schütz, nd).

The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis says that there are two separate systems of L2 acquisition, the acquired system and the learned system. The acquisition system is very similar to what children go through when they learn their first language. It is implicit and it requires meaningful interaction in the first language. The learning system is explicit, instruction in the target language, much like what happens in a classroom.

The Monitor hypothesis describes the relationship between acquisition and learning and explains the influence of the learning on acquisition. The monitor acts in a planning, editing and correcting function when three specific circumstances are met for the learner; sufficient time, focus on form, and knowing the rules.

The Input hypothesis is concerned with language acquisition, not learning. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and moves along a natural order when they receive L2 input that is one step beyond their current stage of L2 abilities. This is Krashen's formula of "i+ 1", where "i" stands for the present level of the learner and "1" refers to the language materials that are somewhat higher than the current level of the learners. (Lai & Wei, 2019). The ideal input is comprehensible, interesting and relevant to

the learner. It is not grammatically sequenced, and there is an ample amount of input for learning.

The Affective Filter hypothesis discusses Krashen's view that a number of affective variables play a role in L2 acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and personality traits. When teachers can create routines, a positive environment, etc, they can lower the students' affective filter. A high affective filter can and does prevent students from learning. Anything a teacher can do to lower the filter, helps the student to learn.

Finally, the Natural Order hypothesis believes that the acquisition of language structures or grammars is conducted in "a certain predictable order" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) as cited in Lai & Wei (2019) that can be used by teachers when planning instruction.

The idea that enough comprehensible input leads to language acquisition is what has led many schools to use the SIOP or Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol method in their ELL and ELD classes (Echevarria et al., 2007). Sheltered instruction is an approach to teaching English that teaches subject matter content comprehensively while also supporting the student's English language development (Echevarria et al., 2007, p5). The SIOP Model is a lesson planning and delivery system that focuses on language acquisition through meaningful use and interaction of English (Echevarria et al., 2007, p16). The SIOP protocol has eight main areas that include Lesson Preparation, Building Background, Comprehensible Input, Strategies, Interaction, Practice/Application, Lesson Delivery, and Review/Assessment (Echevarria et al., 2007, p16). Teachers integrate language and content objectives into the lesson plan and use many teaching strategies

such as visuals, modeling, demonstrations, graphic organizers, vocabulary previews,
adapted texts, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and native language support
(Echevarria et al., 2007, p17). The SIOP model is a very good method for lesson planning
and teaching of English learners. However, some students still struggle with learning and
I would like to suggest adding the pedagogy of translanguaging to the SIOP model as a
way for students to use their entire linguistic repertoire while learning English.

One way schools are including more students and increasing their understanding
is through linguistic landscapes. A linguistic landscape is "language in the environment,
words and images displayed and exposed in public spaces" (Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D.,
2008). Menken et al.(2018) go a step further beyond the "physical representations of
languages within school buildings to also consider the languages heard and spoken,
including the use of students' languages in classrooms–particularly in instruction." More
schools are creating multilingual visuals, labeling nouns with the language of the
students, and gathering multilingual books and other resources (Menken, 2018).
Multilingual schoolscapes is a shift in thinking for many administrators and teachers, and
is a way to support and build upon student's bilingualism (Menken, 2018). Examples of
multilingual schoolscapes are multilingual word walls, multilingual signs in the hallways,
multilingual welcome packets, and multilingual libraries.

Menken et al.(2018) note that the most difficult members of the school
community to change their thinking around bilingualism and English learners are the
general education classroom teachers. Teachers that were able to begin to implement
multi linguistic and translanguaging strategies,such as a discussion in L1 or reading in
L1, did report that students were able to access content knowledge better than before. It

also allowed emergent bilingual students to use their L1 for meaning making and understanding before producing in English (Menken et al., 2018). This strategy helps to raise the level of comprehensible input the student can then receive in the classroom.

There are many ways teachers can support students who do not have full command of the language of instruction such as learner centered classroom, peer collaboration, and experiential learning. Translanguaging as a learning and teaching strategy provides support and acceptance for students on their journey towards learning the new language. Encouraging and using the students L1 in order to teach L2 helps to lower the affective filter as well as encourages students to share their knowledge. Thematic lessons that draw on students' lives and interests also engage students.

Low-Level L1 Literacy

How do teachers effectively support students, particularly secondary students, when they have a low level of literacy in their L1, gaps in their education, or nonexistent formal education? Literacy is the ability to "take part fluently, effectively and critically, in the various text- and discoursed-based events that characterize contemporary semiotic societies and economies,"(as cited in Windle & Miller, 2019, p40; Freebody & Luke, 2003, p53). Literacy teachers need to first find out what the literacy levels of their students are and use this to guide lesson planning and scaffolding as needed. Wolfersberger (2003) found that for students with literacy in L1, there is transfer of writing skills into L2. In general, the lower the proficiency in L2 of the student, the more they relied on their L1 during the writing process. Some students only brainstormed in L1, while others wrote the entire essay in L1 and then translated into L2. This strategy

allowed the student to demonstrate their content knowledge even though their L2 knowledge was low.

However, there are a large number of students who do not have the literacy skills in their L1 to directly transfer to L2. According to Echevarria et al., (2007), the basis of school success is academic literacy in English. When students are lacking proficient oral and written language skills in English, it is difficult for them to demonstrate content mastery. Teachers then must use all the instructional techniques they can to both build the students' English language and help students use their entire linguistic repertoire to share their knowledge. Some techniques that work with emergent bilinguals are cooperative learning, connecting to student experiences, targeted vocabulary development, slower speech and fewer idioms, visuals and demonstrations, and adapted text (Short & Echevarria, 2004, as cited in Echevarria et al., 2007). Kristiina Montero et al. (2014) found that adolescent SIFE students can increase their literacy in English through the use of guided reading and running records. They found that although students were lacking in print literacy skills, they were rich in oral literacy skills. This depth of oral skills helps to support discussions in the classroom in L1 if possible, but even in L2. Teachers need to select text that acknowledges and integrates the student's life experiences and funds of knowledge. (Kristiina Montero et al., 2014)

Students need access to appropriate reading materials, a classroom community, and high expectations. Reading materials that are in the students L1, audio in L1 or L2, and books written at the correct reading level of the student, but with the appropriate grade level and interest level have been successful at engaging students and helping to increase their reading fluency. A classroom community that is a safe place where students

know they can make mistakes and not be made fun of, is paramount to lowering the affective filter and increasing learning. The high school aged student still needs to meet the expectations and rigor of a high school student. Teachers can help facilitate that by using translanguaging techniques and working with the student to find alternative ways that they can demonstrate proficiency beyond paper and pencil tests in English (Kristiina Montero et al., 2014).

Teachers have also had success by involving the families' personal knowledge in the classroom. Begin by learning about your students and their traditions and culture. Engage parents with messages home in their L1 and find a bilingual liaison to connect with parents. Parents and students need to be explicitly taught the US academic culture so that they can be successful in school. This includes school behavior expectations, credits needed to graduate, and how to get into college. During lessons, monitoring and feedback along with recycling and expansion of materials are crucial to student success (Kristiina Montero et al., 2014).

Windle and Miller (2019) found through their study that recycling information and adding to the L2 input throughout the lesson increased language learning. For example, continuing to reuse the same familiar text, but making the tasks increasingly more difficult and rigorous. They also found that adjusting language while keeping the main ideas of the subject is important to content acquisition. Teachers can switch back and forth between synonyms, have an academic and common language vocabulary T-chart, pre-teach vocabulary, and use pictures, gestures, and realia to teach academic vocabulary. Students who are low-level literacy in L1 benefit from whole class

discussions prior to any expectation of output, to help them access their prior knowledge (Windle & Miller, 2019).

Freeman et al. (2001) found that three intentions helped low literacy students be successful in school; classroom routines, literacy environment, and high expectations. Classroom routines help to build school capital and provide comfort from the culture shock that accompanies newcomer students. Students benefit from knowing what the expectations and routines are and allows them to focus on learning rather than navigating school. A whole school based environment that is based around literacy supports a students language acquisition. Signage, surveys, and school powerpoints can be multilingual. Classrooms need to contain multilingual word walls, books, posters, and handouts. High expectations acknowledges a student's cognitive abilities and age, as well as encouraging content and language growth.

Many U.S. immigrant students come from collectivist cultures such as Latin America and Asia. The United States is a strong individualistic culture and education pedagogy follows individualist ideals. DeCapua and Marshall (2011) discuss how scaffolding, a SIOP tool discussed earlier, has the ultimate goal of producing independent learners, which is an individualist way of thinking. Teachers are so immersed in American culture that they don't even realize that the simple task of being responsible for your own learning is in fact a cultural ideal. Educators will benefit from taking some time and researching collectivist cultures and ways to support students such as group work, oral discourse, and projects.

SIFE students also benefit from having the teacher include why the material is immediately pertinent to their learning (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). SIFE students are

often more comfortable with oral communication, and teachers need to find ways to connect the spoken word with reading and writing. An example in the classroom is for the teacher to always include spoken instructions with written instructions. When students produce written work such as in math or science, they can orally share their work with their partners to connect the written work with their oral explanation. When a student is struggling with a written assignment, it behooves the teacher to engage the student in conversation to see if they can demonstrate proficiency orally and then give grades based on that oral production and not insist on written work. Body language, such as showing numbers on fingers or showing big vs small with their hands is another way teachers can help students connect the oral and physical with the written.

Academic work needs to be focused on the mechanism of the learning process to help move students towards more abstract thinking (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). O'Hallaron (2014) found that when writing, students benefited greatly from explicit instruction in the genre of writing they were doing, text-structure specific graphic organizers, and discussion. Students need to understand the exact structure of the type of writing they are doing. For example in persuasive writing, there needs to be an argument and a minimum of three pieces of evidence to support the argument. This needs to be clearly demonstrated to students through model essays. When students engaged in whole-class discussion, and the teacher modeled completion of the graphic organizer in response to the prompt, the students produced longer and higher quality work.

Another successful writing strategy for emergent bilinguals is the use of multimodal writing and translanguaging. Ramos and Musanti (2021) conducted a case-study that integrated multimodal writing opportunities for students. The students

were encouraged to respond to the writing prompts in either their L1 or L2, use Google Apps and digital tools, and use any image, and font to demonstrate their written response to the prompt. Many students also used Google Translate to both directly translate L1 to L2 or back translate L2 to L1 to clarify their meaning. Google Translate helped a student to see the difference in sentence word order between Spanish and English and provided practice for the development of English and Spanish spelling and vocabulary. Teachers are often very hesitant to allow Google Translate, but as the study shows, students use it as a learning tool. Peer editing is another strategy that was successful. Students were peer editors and responded to each other in whichever language they felt worked best to help the author grasp the structure of English. Peer editing also fostered student discussion around their writing and helped students to add more depth and meaning to their responses.

Translanguaging in Writing

How do educators support the emergent bilingual students in their classroom? How do teachers help students write in L2, while also honoring and supporting the cultures and languages that immigrant students come to the classroom with? Supporting students through translanguaging pedagogies such as code-switching, oral discourse, and graphic organizers are only a few methods that can be used. Validating students' own stories also leads to greater success in writing (Hernandez et al., 2020).

Translanguaging began in Wales in the 1980's byWelsh educationalist Cen Williams as a way to challenge the dominance of the English language and to give equal value to Welsh (Lewis et al., 2012). The use of two languages were planned for teaching and learning within the same lesson with one language used for input, and the other used

for output. The idea being that one language reinforces the other through dual language processing (Lewis et al., 2012). As cited in Lewis et al (2012), Colin Baker lists four important educational benefits of translanguaging:

1.deeper and fuller understanding of subject matter,

2.development of the weaker language,

3.home-school links,

4.integration of fluent speakers with early learners.

Deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter is the main goal of American high school and is a real problem with our new-to-country, low-level literacy students. The students' brains are absolutely available for learning, but their language skills in the language of instruction are not. Encouraging translanguaging builds on the idea of Vygotski's "zone of proximal development," (García et al., 2016, p62) which describes what the learner can achieve with scaffolding and/or help from a more knowledgeable peer or teacher. This allows students to build on the knowledge they already have and achieve greater academic success.

Translanguaging also supports cross-linguistic transfer. Working in both languages encourages the development of both languages on an academic level. This is of key benefit for SIFE students who may not have had much, if any, academic learning done in their L1. Through translanguaging they can build both of their languages (Baker, 2011). When students are low on written skills, the teacher needs to make a concerted effort to engage the students orally and allow for alternative assignments to show proficiency.

Translanguaging can also help with school-home connection as students are educated in a language other than the one spoken at home. By using both languages for deeper understanding and learning in school, the student is able to discuss their learning with their parents in L1 (Baker, 2011). Students are learning academic language in L2. When they also learn the vocabulary and concepts in L1, they are able to engage their parents who may have real life experiences to connect with their child about.

Finally, as students are integrated into general education classrooms, they are more likely to be exposed to students who are fluent in their L1 and L2 which will help both students to process content at a greater depth. Students who speak the same L1 should be grouped together to foster deeper learning and understanding for both students. The more fluent student will wind up reteaching the content to the less fluent student, thereby cementing the content in their head, and the less fluent student will be able to process the content and contribute to class because they understand the content being taught.

More recently, the pedagogy of translanguaging has been further explored by Suresh Canagarajah, Nancy Hornberber, Creese and Blackledge, and Ofelia García. Canagarajah (2013) uses the term translingual to mean the common underlying processes and orientations motivating the communicative modes. He argues communication transcends individual languages such that languages are always in contact with one another and influence each other, users treat the languages or codes that they use as one repertoire and not distinct registers, and that languages are not fighting each other and can influence each other positively. Canagarajah (2013) says that translingual is about the strategies of communication within the diverse situations and codes that all people find

themselves in every day and that the user has in mind the end product and adjusts accordingly. He speaks about the importance of speakers and writers negotiating the norms for the situation they are in with their translingual repertoires. Canarajah (2017) goes on to say that it is possible to not have full fluency or proficiency in a language, but to still be able to perform meaningful activities in that language. He gives the example of an astronomy scholar who is highly proficient in the language of astronomy in English, but who struggles with daily conversations or when he needs to speak with a lawyer. This clearly demonstrates the users ability to move along the continuum of his languages and negotiate meaning using his full linguistic repertoire as he sees fit.

Nancy Hornberger and Holly Link (2012) define translanguaging as how bilingual students communicate and make meaning by drawing on and mixing linguistic features from different languages. They suggest that educators can examine the context of language use to focus on the mix of multilingual-to-monolingual language and oral-to-literate language practices that might best facilitate students' learning. Hornberger and Link (2012) use the term, *continua of biliteracy* to describe what happens when students use their full linguistic repertoire. Biliteracy is about communication in two (or more) languages in or around writing. They suggest that educators recognize, value, and build on the many communicative repertoires of students and their families.

Creese and Blackledge (2015) conducted research in a Punjabi complementary school in Birmingham, UK. The teacher made teaching points both in Punjabi and English thus requiring students to make meaning in both languages. The students and teacher engaged in discussion retaining Punjabi for words associated with Sikhism and family. The students were proudly using all their linguistic repertoire to maintain their

cultural values and traditions thereby leveraging their language use. Putting students in charge of their learning is the best way for engagement and learning to happen. By encouraging the use of all of their languages, educators can empower students in their realization of their full multilingual selves.

Translanguaging, as stated by García (2014) is the flexible and meaningful actions through which bilinguals select features in their linguistic repertoire in order to communicate appropriately. Bilinguals do not have two languages but one linguistic repertoire. Velasco and García (2014) conducted a case study of independent translanguaging use in five different writing samples from bilingual elementary students. Students showed examples of translanguaging in the planning, drafting, and final product stages of the writing process. Students were able to access a higher level of creativity and complex thought by using their entire linguistic repertoire. Students demonstrated code-switching, prewriting in L1, and phonetic spellings using the spelling patterns of L1, but the letters of L2.

The Translanguaging Classroom by García et al. (2016, p16) says, "Translanguaging classrooms are powerful, equitable learning environments for bilingual students that enable these learners to (1) engage with complex content and texts, (2) strengthen linguistic practices for academic contexts, (3) draw on their bilingualism and ways of knowing, and (4) develop socio emotionally with strong bilingual identities." These four items are what all teachers want from engaged learners. Teachers want to teach and we want students to learn. Why not employ translanguaging strategies and support translanguaging in our classrooms to help our students achieve to the best of their abilities?

Kiramba (2016) studied the use of translanguaging in a rural fourth-grade classroom in Kenya. Kiramba, citing Canagarajah (2013), states that negotiation of meaning is not separate from identity and that writers address their voices through the text they write. Karimba (2016) conducted a case study of writing in the classroom and used a focus student to highlight translanguaging practices. Fourth-grade in Kenya is the transition year when instruction changes from mother tongue to English-only instruction. When writing, the students were expected to write in the language of instruction at that time, similar to most bilingual or dual language programs in the United States. If a student mixed languages in their writing, they were penalized and lost points. From the essays collected, the use of mixed language ranged from 8-35%. Karimba found that the focus student produced well-developed essays when writing in her native language and that her English essays were not as well-developed. The focus student continued to mix languages in order to get her thoughts and author's voice across to the reader, despite being punished for doing so.

Martínez-Álvarez (2017) studied 53, six and seven year old emergent bilingual students with the goal of creating spaces in the classroom that encouraged translanguaging use by giving the students digital cameras to take pictures of their home life. They then self-selected pictures for future multimodal literacy activities. After several activities, Martínez-Álvarez (2017) concluded that translanguaging is utilized by students and the hybrid use of all of their linguistic resources, supports their hybrid identities, and full range of linguistic and intellectual competencies. By allowing the students to create their own photos and then choose which photos to include, the teacher is supporting student's bilingual identities and home cultures. It also allows students of

different language abilities to all participate in the same assignment but at their language level.

In Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners The SIOP Model by Echevarria et al., (2007), there are several features that support translanguaging within the SIOP model.

Feature 5 on p. 34 is "Adaptation of Content to All Levels of Student Proficiency." This feature includes many ways to make difficult content accessible to students such as graphic organizers, outlines and scaffolds, leveled study guides, and recorded text. I have included the ones that can easily be adapted using the students L1. Providing an outline in English, but encouraging the student to use any part of their languages to complete the outline is one way to support your student's learning. Providing recorded text in the L1 allows the student to be on equal footing in knowledge with the other students in the class and demonstrate age appropriate academic thinking.

Feature 16 on p. 118 "Frequent Opportunities for Interaction and Discussion" is about the importance of linguistic turn-taking between teacher and students, and students themselves. There is an important relationship between oral proficiency in English and reading and writing proficiency (August & Shanahan, 2006). Oral skills in a language translate into higher reading comprehension and writing skills. Teachers usually do the most talking in class. This feature is to encourage teachers to design their lessons to allow time for student discussion and discovery. To take this one step further into translanguaging, pair students of the same L1 for discussion and then have them share out in English. They are then developing both their L1 and L2.

Feature 19 on p. 128 is titled "Ample Opportunity for Students to Clarify Key Concepts in L1." It is known that skills learned in L1 will transfer to L2 (August & Shanahan, 2006). Students greatly benefit when they can clarify content and concepts with other students who speak the same language. Using L1 provides students with language support to help them demonstrate proficiency. There are many more opportunities for the SIOP teacher to integrate translanguaging into their lessons and thereby support their students' entire linguistic repertoire and development.

Conclusion

Translanguaging use among bilingual writing is lacking in research, especially at the high school level (Callahan, 2004 as cited in Martínez-Álvarez, 2017). Creativity is engaged when students can choose the language and words they want to use across their bilingualism. By translanguaging, students are able to make political decisions about their word and language use (Stewart and Hansen-Thomas, 2016). My Canvas resource will provide teachers with the latest ideas and strategies to use translanguaging in the classroom to help students demonstrate their knowledge, while simultaneously building their L1 and L2.

My research has shown that students need to feel welcome and supported in school in order to be successful. One way this can be accomplished is through the use of L1 alongside L2 and translanguaging strategies alongside SIOP strategies to answer the research questions, *How can translanguaging in writing be used to help secondary students who are low-level literacy in L1 and do not have the academic skills in their L1 available for language transfer?*

Combining translanguaging with the SIOP methods already in place in many schools appears to be the best way for teachers and students to work together for learning. Teachers can make simple modifications to their lessons and students can access their voice through translanguaging. By encouraging students to use translanguaging strategies, students have a say in their education and learning. Students stay connected to their culture and families through their language. They learn to feel comfortable in two worlds and be their authentic selves.

Chapter 3 Preview

Chapter 3 will include an overview of Adult Learning Theory and explain how adults like to learn. I will also explain what the Canvas LMS is, and why I chose to use it to complete my online resource for teachers. I discuss the participants and the setting of my school and the relevant teacher standards that guide teacher professional development in Iowa. I will also describe my project and how it answers the question, *How can translanguaging in writing be used to help secondary students who are low-level literacy in L1 and do not have the academic skills in their L1 available for language transfer?*

CHAPTER 3

Project Methods

Introduction

The review of the literature shows that there is a great need for additional support for our emergent bilingual students who have low-level literacy in their L1. I have created a Canvas course for teachers at my high school to guide them to strategies that they can implement in the classroom to help their students with writing. The Canvas course provides a collection of resources to address the question, *How can translanguaging in writing be used to help secondary students who are low-level literacy in L1 and do not have the academic skills in their L1 available for language transfer?* The course includes teacher assessments, teaching strategies, and articles for further research by educators supporting translanguaging in writing.

Adult Learning Theory and Canvas

Knowles's theory of andragogy guided my creation of the Canvas (Instructure, 2021) course. First, I will go over the key elements of Knowles's theory. Then I will explain what exactly Canvas is and how the platform works with adult learning. The following information regarding Knowles's theory of andragogy is taken from the book, *The Adult Learner* (2011). Knowles's theory of andragogy lists six characteristics of adult learners that set them apart from children: the need to know, the learners' self-concept, the role of the learners' experience, readiness to learn, orientation on learning, and motivation. First, adults need to know why they need to learn something before they begin the process of learning it (p63). The adults in question need to understand the benefits to the learning and the consequences to refusing to learn. Second, adults have a

very strong feeling of being responsible for their own lives and decisions (p63). They

need to feel in charge of their own learning. Third, adults come to any learning situation

with a large variety of educational and life experiences (p64). There will always be a

range of skill levels among the adult learners, which is conducive to a self-paced and

self-directed Canvas module. Fourth is readiness to learn. Adults are ready to learn things

that they need to learn to help them with their real life situations (p65). My hope is that as

a teacher sees the need for additional learning strategies to help their students with

writing, they will access the course. Fifth is orientation to learning. Adults are life

centered and are motivated to learn in proportion to how they think the learning will help

them in life (p66). Sixth is motivation. Although adults are externally motivated to a

degree, they are mostly driven by internal motivation (p67). For example, while the

motivation to make more money at a better job is present, the real motivation is increased

job satisfaction, increased quality of life, increased self-esteem, etc.

       Canvas (Instructure, 2021) is an online learning management system that allows

schools and businesses to create content that can be accessed asynchronously by the

student. I have used Canvas as a student at Hamline University, as a content creator for

my school district, and as a teacher for content delivery to students. It is a blank canvas

and you can create documents, discussions, turn in assignments, recordings and many

more offerings. Canvas also has a feature called The Commons, where creators can share

the courses or modules they have created with everyone else on Canvas. This is

especially beneficial for smaller school districts who may not have the time or resources

to dedicate to full course creation. Instead, the teacher can download a course from

Canvas and then modify the course to fit their specific needs and students (Instructure,

2021). I decided to create a Canvas course for use by content area teachers at the high school level to help them support their ELL students with limited literacy skills in their L1, specifically in writing, by using translanguaging strategies.This course will be added to the existing school Canvas tile, under the ELL section. The goal of creating this course is to give teachers the tools to help more students who are struggling at the high school level due to low-level literacy. Teachers have a wide-range of available time, interest, and background knowledge. The course is set up so that the teacher who is interested in more research, can click on that research, and the teacher who only needs a strategy to help with the current writing assignment, can find that strategy quickly. There is a guide that was put out in 2016 by The City University of New York from which I have gained a lot of inspiration and knowledge. Their guide is very comprehensive and focused on all levels of K-12 education. I have included several of their strategies as well as more that I have found in my research. The course has a focus on the high school level and will be tailored to my school and district.

Participants and Setting

The participants are two fold. The main participants are the teachers as the course is written for their independent use. My high school has about 130 teachers and the district has more than 5,000. The secondary participants are the students because they are who the practical translanguaging writing strategies are for. The school district is a large urban school district in the state of Iowa. The district has six comprehensive high schools; five are traditional brick and mortar schools and one is a virtual school. There are more than 8,000 currently identified EL students and 33,000 students in total in the district. My high school, where this course will first be introduced, has around 600

currently identified EL students and hundreds more multilingual students. The largest language group represented is Spanish, but the school is very diverse with immigrants and refugees from around the world. The district, and by default the high school, have an unofficial English-only policy. The previous EL curriculum coordinator, who was bilingual in Spanish/English, felt very strongly about English-only in the classroom and this spilled over into curriculum design and teacher attitudes. Many teachers feel that it is ok to have discussions in L1 and even have modified text in L1, but I haven't heard of any teachers encouraging translanguaging in writing as a learning strategy to help students access their deeper thoughts and further learning. In fact, when I did an informal social media poll of teachers asking about translanguaging in writing, most teachers felt uncomfortable with the idea and felt that students were cheating by using translating apps or dictionaries and needed to write in English. Most teachers felt that allowing students to write in Spanish was counterproductive to them learning English. They felt the students needed to be using as much English as possible, even at the expense of learning difficult concepts. The overall feeling was, learn English first, then you can learn the difficult concepts. However, this mindset is counterproductive to student success, especially at the high school level when students are racing against the clock. The standpoint of teaching in the district has been comprehensible input and scaffolding via the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) method. In the past there has been money for SIOP coaches to help train teachers to work with EL students and many content teachers use at least one SIOP strategy such as increased wait time. Unfortunately, there is a high turn-over rate of teachers and many new teachers coming in have not had any training on how to best serve their EL students either through SIOP or any other method. As a result,

there are still a large number of students who are failing and are not able to either access the content or share their knowledge.

Relevant Standards.

I have included two sets of standards. The Iowa Teaching Standards and the Iowa Core Writing Standards for grades 9-10. I did this because I think there is strong evidence in the two sets of standards for implementing the strategies in my Canvas module. There are eight teacher standards in Iowa that teachers must demonstrate competency in every year through an online form. In the document teachers must list their goals for the year, based on the standards, and then demonstrate how they met those standards in their teaching. They must list artifacts and show their growth. Based on my social media study of teachers in my district, I expect a large number of teachers to push back regarding the course. There is not a lot of knowledge around translanguaging and even less knowledge around language acquisition in the district as a whole.

Most teachers are very resistant to allowing students to access or produce work in their L1 because they, falsely, believe that this does not lead to English acquisition. My hope is that by including and emphasizing the Iowa Teaching Standards, that more teachers will be willing to try the strategies in the course. The relevant teaching Standards are 1, 3, and 4 (The full standards can be found in Appendix A.) All three of these standards require teachers to take into account a student's diverse backgrounds and learning needs to help the student to perform at their best level. The standards also require that the teacher creates a welcoming classroom culture and engages all students. My hope is that the course becomes another tool for teachers to use to meet the needs of their students and their own personal growth as teachers.

The Iowa Core Writing Standards for grades 9-10 contain three standards and require students to produce arguments, informational texts, and a narrative text. (The full standards can be found in Appendix B) In my own experience, students are often unfamiliar with the specific text structures of American high school essays and often fail to complete even the pre-writing because they do not understand the purpose or the essay structure. This is further hindered by a lack of English academic language that is needed for essay completion. Teachers need to explicitly teach EL students the text structures and academic language. This is done in EL classrooms, but not in content classrooms because the teachers assume the students know and understand essay structure. There are many different types of writing a person needs to be able to produce, but in high school, these three types of writing, argument, informational, and narrative, are paramount. I propose that teachers use translanguaging strategies to help their students to craft essays that meet the learning targets at proficiency.

Materials

The Canvas course is fully digital and part of the public domain. It includes a syllabus that lays out the organization of the course as well as a description of how the course came into being. The front page of the course contains a definition of translanguaging and why teachers should use it. Further down the page are links to the rest of the course. It begins with the ongoing conversation piece where teachers can ask and answer questions specific to their classrooms and use other teachers as a fount of information. The next few links are the teacher and student assessments. Following are the translanguaging writing strategies. Each strategy gets its own link and a full

description of how to implement it into the classroom. Finally, references and resources are included for further reseach.

Assessments

Because the Canvas course has two different groups of participants, I created assessments for both. Let's begin first with the teachers. I want teachers to recognize that there is a bias towards writing in English in high school and to understand that there are other funds of knowledge the students can pull from to demonstrate mastery and understanding. I have included a teacher pre-test that consists of questions that explore the teacher's thoughts around student's use of L1 and English in the classroom, and a place for the teacher to reflect on what they are already doing to support their EL students.

Teacher Pre-Test

1. Do you think that students should produce classwork only in English?

2. Do you think there is a place for student discussion in their native language in your classroom?

3. Do you think encouraging students to speak and write in their native language would help them produce higher quality writing in English?

4. In what ways do you support your multilingual students in your classroom?

Next, I want content area teachers to take the time to understand their EL students and find out about their background and then use that information along with translanguaging techniques to improve their teaching around writing. This assessment is for the students to take, but the data is for the teacher to use when planning their

instruction. Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to share how they perceive their classroom. I think sometimes teachers and students have very different perspectives on what is going on in the classroom. There are two initial surveys for students, the student pre-test where they share their feelings about the classroom environment and the student get to know you survey, which provides data to the teacher.

Student Pre-Test

1. Do you feel you can use your native language to speak to others in the classroom?
2. Do you feel you can use your native language to write in this classroom?
3. How does your teacher support your use of your native language for learning?
4. What could your teacher do differently to help you access what you know?

Who are your students?

Name:

Home country:

Collectivist or individualist society:

Interests:

Work:

Living situation:

Home Language:

Literate in Home language:

Other languages spoken:

Years of school attended or missed:

Kind of school:

Attitude toward past schooling:

Prefers working in groups, partners, or alone:

Access to print materials in the home:

Positive comments:

As a final assessment, teachers and students can retake the survey's and reflect on changes to their answers. If there is no change, a conversation between teacher and student needs to happen to see what can be done to increase feelings of comfort in the classroom around writing. Teachers and students can also look at the quality of writing students are able to produce using translanguaging strategies and compare it to previous writing examples or to native English speakers' writing production. Students need to be shown their growth and improvement to be encouraged to continue to stretch their comfort levels.

Instructional Strategies

The Canvas course is set up in a self-directed way. Any teacher who is looking for one or two strategies to add to their teacher toolbox, can explore the variety of writing strategies. For example, encouraging pre-writing discussion in L1, pre-writing in L1, using translated resources to access content.

In the interest of time, teachers often skip pre-writing discussions. Discussions are crucial for EL students to be successful. If possible, pair students who have the same L1 together to discuss what they will be writing about. If not possible, pair the EL student with another EL student and a couple native English speakers. This helps to remove English dominance because the native English speakers will need to modify their speech

and slow down to include their fellow classmates. EL students can contribute to the conversation by using whatever level of English they have, using Google Translate and then sharing with their peers, or accessing Google images. Teachers need to monitor discussions for racial and minority language motivated comments, and to remind the native English speakers to be inclusive of their peers.

Pre-writing in L1 is the next logical step after discussion. Teachers need to supply genre specific and labeled graphic organizers as a scaffold for students. This will benefit native English speakers as well as EL students. Students can complete their graphic organizers in pairs or groups, with other L1 speakers or native English speakers. They can also complete their graphic organizer in their L1 or a mix of L1 & L2, or L2, whichever the student chooses. This step is key to helping students access and demonstrate their knowledge. Teachers walk around and monitor that one student is not completing all of the work and that both or all students are contributing. After the graphic organizer comes the rough draft. Rough drafts can also be constructed in L1 or a mix of L1 & L2 depending on what the student is comfortable doing. Some students write in L2, but include specific words in L1. If the draft has been written in L1, the student now needs to take the additional step of translating it into L2. Students can use other students, Google Translate, a dictionary, or a bilingual family or community resource to help with this step. In my own classroom, I have seen vibrant discussions happen when students discuss the best English syntax to match what the student is saying in L1. Using these resources is not cheating. It is supporting the full linguistic repertoire of the student and helping the student to access the knowledge and skills they have in their head that has been prevented from being showcased due to language acquisition.

I have mentioned using Google Translate as a resource for students to access content. Other resources include using translated texts and websites, bilingual dictionaries, YouTube videos in the student's L1, and other bilinguals. The caveat is that translating is a very mentally demanding task and it should not be the sole responsibility of another student to translate the content for other students. The more fluent student is learning too and not yet an expert. They may not even know the academic words in their L1. Teachers need to find resources and images that allow them to teach their content to their students. Even a poorly translated document will get general vocabulary and concepts accross to the students and provide vocabulary they can use to speak with and build knowledge. If all of that fails and the student just does not understand, then contact someone who is a paid translator to convey the fundamental concepts to your student.

Over time, teachers should see an increase in student comprehension and learning of the content, as well an increase in their academic English, and ideally an increase in fluency of their L1 also. Students will begin to feel comfortable sharing their knowledge with their teacher in multiple ways. Student writing samples ideally would show growth in several areas including but not limited to; variety of sentence structure, higher order thinking, word choice, and flow of writing assignment.

Timeline

The Canvas course will have a soft roll out by January 2022 by being added to my high school's Canvas page. A few select teachers will be told of its presence and encouraged to utilize the course. The link to the course will be sent out to the teachers and they will be encouraged to pass it on to receptive teachers. Feedback will be welcomed and modifications made to update the course. I plan to present the course

during pre-teaching service days in August 2022 for my high school. I will also present

the course to all of the high school ELL teachers in the district. I am fully aware that

there will be resistance to the idea of supporting translanguaging. I hope that by using a

slow roll out, there will be enough positive feedback from the teachers who were

interested in using the course, to encourage those teachers who are not as enthusiastic.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have clearly laid out the theory behind adult learning and the use

of the Canvas course for independent learning. I have described the Canvas course in

depth and included some easy to implement and impactful teaching strategies that answer

the research question, *How can translanguaging in writing be used to help secondary*

students who are low-level literacy in L1 and do not have the academic skills in their L1

available for language transfer? I have also linked the use of translanguaging strategies

to the fulfillment of the Iowa Teaching Standards criteria and demonstrated how those

same strategies contribute to student success at reaching proficiency in the Iowa Core

Writing Standards.

Chapter 4 Preview

Chapter Four recapps how I have answered my research question, *How can*

translanguaging in writing be used to help secondary students, who are low-level literacy

in L1, be successful at the high school level? I discuss the major learnings that happened

as a result of this project and I revisit some key literature. Furthermore I will consider

limitations to my project and suggest some ways of reducing their impacts. I will

conclude my paper by sharing my future hopes for this area of research and

implimitation.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this capstone project was to investigate the research question:

How can translanguaging in writing be used to help secondary students, who are

low-level literacy in L1, be successful at the high school level? For the past five years

years, I have taught beginning and intermediate ELs at the highschool level. Many EL

students were not being successful at the high school level despite a widespread use of

SIOP strategies. I first heard of translanguaging, the use of a student's entire linguistic

repertoire, in my early classes at Hamline. I read several examples of the use of

translanguaging by teachers at the elementary level or in the domains of speaking and

reading, but very few examples in writing. When I took an informal poll of secondary

teachers, most were resistant to the use of translanguaging in writing. This capstone

project aims to show that translanguaging is an effective pedagogy when working with

high school students, who have a low-level of literacy in their first language, be more

successful accessing and producing high school content. After completing research, I

decided to create a Canvas LMS course for teachers to use with translanguaging writing

strategies.

This chapter will share the major ideas I learned about through my research and

the process of completing the capstone. I will review the literature in Chapter 2. Next, I

will discuss how this project is a benefit to the profession as well as its limitations. Then I

will suggest possible future projects. Finally, I will end with my final thoughts.

Major Learnings

When I began this project, I set out to find the missing magical solution that would support low-level literacy EL students at the high school level. I was very frustrated as a teacher that students were continuing to fail, despite their teachers' best efforts and continued use of SIOP strategies. I first learned of translanguaging through my courses at Hamline and I was utterly fascinated and began reading more about theory and pedagogy immediately. I also began trying out some of the translanguaging ideas in my own classroom in a very informal and non systematic way. Very quickly it became apparent that encouraging students to use their L1 as a way to access their L2 was not, in fact cheating as I had previously believed, but was instead good educational practice with data to support it. I clearly remember the face of the first student I suggested they write their pre-writing mind map in Spanish. The joy on his face was truly wonderful. That particular student went on to craft a fully realized mind map with almost no effort and he was able to discuss his work with other students and help them with their mind maps.

I also learned that translanguaging is a wonderful addition to the already existing literature and pedagogies around second language acquisition. When I was first working on my teacher license in 2004, I was trained in the SIOP model and I have used those strategies in my teaching ever since, even when I taught in a general education classroom and not a sheltered classroom like I do now. SIOP strategies are second nature to me and my classroom. As I began my research for my Capstone project, I was frustrated with SIOP because it just was not working for an increasing number of students. My high school is very large, about 2000 students and has a very high number of active EL students, around 600 at the time of this writing. The 600 students does not include the

hundreds of students who already exited the program and are bilingual in the school. Over the last several years, the EL population had changed from a super diverse mix of worldwide students, to almost exclusively students from Latin America, specifically Central America. Many of the students were arriving at my high school with only an elementary education due to violence or scarcity of resources in their home country. The students wanted to learn, but quickly became frustrated with the English-only method of instruction and production and they would drop out of high school and enter the workforce. My colleagues and I felt like we were failing our students. When a student enters the United States school system at the high school level, it can be very difficult for them. The standards are very rigorous and the content output is high. In addition, our students were performing poorly in their general education classes as well.

Enter translanguaging. I learned that translanguaging, allowing, encouraging, and supporting a students entire linguistic repertoire was the key to keeping students engaged and helping them show what they know in content area classrooms. By combining translanguaging with SIOP a couple of things happen. First, the majority of teachers in my district have some level of knowledge of SIOP strategies and use them on a daily basis. Second, many teachers are already familiar with some aspects of translanguaging, such as turn and talk in L1, but they are not aware of the actual theory or practice of translanguaging. Third, it is not so much of a jump to encourage teachers to take what they know, SIOP, and add translanguaging. My goal with this project is to provide teachers with an easy to use and access resource where they can visit the course, pick a strategy, and implement it into their classroom with only a few modifications and mind shifts on their part.

Revisiting the Literature

Many of our students are experiencing acculturative stress (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok. 1987) and their affective filters are high. According to Hos (2020), typical EL students may have demanding outside responsibilities, such as full time jobs and childcare, that lead to them being stressed in school. Supporting a student's full linguistic repertoire is a positive way for teachers to show students that they care about them and value their culture and knowledge base.

 The use of only English in the teaching of English to students has been thought of as the best way to teach L2 for several decades. The idea being that the use of L1 would interfere in the acquisition of L2 (Paterson, 2020) which has been shown to be false (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014, p.157; Schecter and Bayler, 2002). Kiramba (2016) found in her study of translanguaging in multilingual students in Kenya, that students will continue to use their entire linguistic repertoire to communicate in writing, even when they are penalized for it.

Wolfersberger (2003) found that for students with literacy in L1, there is transfer of writing skills into L2. In general, the lower the proficiency in L2 of the student, the more they relied on their L1 during the writing process. Some students only brainstormed in L1, while others wrote the entire essay in L1 and then translated into L2. This strategy allowed the student to demonstrate their content knowledge even though their L2 knowledge was low.

Kristiina Montero et al. (2014) found that although adolescent SIFE students were often lacking in print literacy skills, they were rich in oral literacy skills. This depth of oral skills helps to support discussions in the classroom in L1 if possible, but even in L2.

Translanguaging also supports cross-linguistic transfer. Working in both languages encourages the development of both languages on an academic level. This is of key benefit for SIFE students who may not have had much, if any academic learning done in their L1. Through translanguaging they can build both of their languages (Baker, 2011).

Limitations

The project I constructed is a self-directed resource Canvas course aimed at content area teachers. The number one limitation is that there is no way to require teachers to implement the translanguaging strategies I have outlined. The course will be added to an already existing resource page for my high school and teachers will have to access the content as they feel the need. The second biggest limitation I found is the teacher mindset. I conducted an informal social media poll with fellow secondary teachers and most were adamantly opposed to students' use of translanguaging in writing. They were very supportive of L1 discussion and reading, but not writing. Teachers reported to me over and over again, that the students need to produce writing in English because that is the language of instruction. Most teachers felt that the use of Google Translate or bilingual dictionaries was cheating. Thirdly, there just is not a lot of research on translanguaging at the highschool level. More research needs to be done at the secondary level.

Future Projects

I would love to see someone take the SIOP model and go through each strategy and match up possible ways that translanguaging can occur and be supported by teachers. As previously stated, there is not a lot of research at the secondary level and a lot of the

research that is done, is done on bilingual education with a focus on Spanish speaking students. Research needs to be done on super diverse classrooms that contain multiple languages.

Benefit to the Profession

My hope is that teachers will embrace the new strategies that I have brought to their attention. Multilingual students translanguage every day whether their teacher supports it or not. I would love to change the culture at my school from an unofficial English-only model to a full inclusion of multilingual diversity. Supporting translanguaging only helps students to succeed and teachers to build relationships. It does not harm anyone.

Conclusion

Throughout my courses at Hamline and the research for this Capstone project I have learned so much about teaching and learning around EL students. I feel I have completely transformed as a teacher and I want to tell everyone on the street about what I have learned. When I have shared my project with other teachers, they are very enthusiastic and are eager to access the Canvas course and to share the course with other teachers. I am optimistic that at least some teachers will embrace my findings and they will encourage other teachers to do the same. Writing this paper has not been easy and many tears have been shed, but I truly 100% believe that I have conducted research and created a Canvas course that benefits students, and will lead to a more welcoming and inclusive environment at my high school.

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Appendix A

Iowa Teacher Standards

Standard 1 Demonstrates ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district's student achievement goals.

Criteria The teacher:

a. Provides multiple forms of evidence of student learning and growth to students, families, and staff.

b. Implements strategies supporting student, building, and district goals.

c. Uses student performance data as a guide for decision making.

d. Accepts and demonstrates responsibility for creating a classroom culture that supports the learning of every student.

e. Creates an environment of mutual respect, rapport, and fairness.

f. Participates in and contributes to a school culture that focuses on improved student learning.

g. Communicates with students, families, colleagues, and communities effectively and accurately.

Standard 3 Demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction.

Criteria The teacher:

a. Uses student achievement data, local standards, and the district curriculum in planning for instruction. Iowa Department of Education 2

b. Sets and communicates high expectations for social, behavioral, and academic success of all students.

c. Uses student's developmental needs, backgrounds, and interests in planning for instruction.

d. Selects strategies to engage all students in learning.

e. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the development and sequencing of instruction.

Standard 4 Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meets the multiple learning needs of students.

Criteria The teacher:

a. Aligns classroom instruction with local standards and district curriculum.

b. Uses research-based instructional strategies that address the full range of cognitive levels.

c. Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness in adjusting instruction to meet student needs.

d. Engages students in varied experiences that meet diverse needs and promote social, emotional, and academic growth.

e. Connects students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in the instructional process.

f. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the delivery of instruction.

Appendix B

Iowa Core Writing Standards

Iowa Core Writing Standards for grades 9-10.

W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

1. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
2. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
3. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
4. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
5. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

1. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings),

graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

2. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

3. Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

4. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

5. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

6. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

1. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

2. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

3. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

4. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

5. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.