Exploring, Elaborating, and Extending ELL Engagement

Kathleen A. J. Mohr
Associate Professor
Utah State University
June 25, 2014
The Challenge

• ELLs often suffer from a lack of OTL—opportunity to learn—compared to their native-speaking peers (Abedi & Herman, 2010).

• The OTL concept has been expanded to encompass the quality of curriculum and instruction and their alignment with what is assessed.
The Challenge (cont.)

- Cultural and linguistic minority students have **less exposure to content**, and their instruction tends to cover less content relative to nonminority students (Masini, 2001).

- ELLs have had **less access to a challenging curriculum** that would prepare them for success on today’s academic standards (Guiton & Oakes, 1995; Wang, 1998).
The Challenge (cont.)

- ELLs are grossly overrepresented among those dropping out (Silver, Saunders, & Zarate, 2008) and those failing to pass high school proficiency exams and thus are in danger of facing the dire consequences that accompany the absence of a high school diploma.
Improving OTL for ELLs

- Teachers of high-ability courses emphasize *higher thought processes*, rather than drill and practice.

- Educators must implement instructional approaches that offer promise for teaching the conceptual and knowledge-based reading competencies that are critical for academic success, particularly for *academically vulnerable populations* (Lesaux, 2012).
How to maximize OTL for ELLs?

- Teachers must have sufficiently high expectations and sufficiently expert skills to engage ELLs in effective teaching and learning activities.

- Rather than a lesser language, a reduced curriculum, and a slower rate of instruction—can we sophisticate instruction?—enrich the curriculum?—accelerate instruction?
Engage, Elicit, Elaborate, Extend

- **Engage** ELLs in more oral participation
- **Elicit** ELLs’ background knowledge and interests
- **Elaborate** for and with ELLs
- **Extend** their comments, ideas, sentences
Summary of the Response Protocol

- To encourage ELL oral interaction, enlarge your response repertoire:
  - Speak clearly
  - Allow sufficient wait time
  - Revise the Initiation-Response-Evaluation (I-R-E) format to be I-R-F, where Feedback includes: connections, elaborations, extensions,
  - Use exploratory talk
Six Response Categories

How can you elaborate on or extend:

- 1. an appropriate or correct response
- 2. a partially correct response
- 3. an incorrect or inappropriate response
- 4. a response in their native language
- 5. another question
- 6. no response
Ways to Elaborate or Extend

*Responses that are correct*
--confirm their comments and encourage students to add more information.

*Responses that are partially correct*
--value the contribution, reinforce the correct portion, and then attempt to refine the response.
Ways to Elaborate or Extend

*Responses in a language other than English*

--encourage the student to provide any known words in English

--ask the student to call on a friend to help translate

--elicit input of other students to “reconstruct” the response in English
Ways to Elaborate or Extend

- Responses that are questions
  --celebrate students’ questions
  --give more information
  --involve other students in providing an answer

- Responses that are inappropriate or wrong
  --assume that the student is working to process the information, but may need clarification
  --ask for more information
Ways to Elaborate or Extend

- Silent responses
  -- Hold high expectations
  -- Allow demonstrations
  -- Use come-backs
Your Response Repertoire

- The Response Protocol is characterized by two key elements: *valuation of students’ response efforts* and the teacher’s *efforts to scaffold elaboration*.

- “Beckon, broaden, and build” students’ language and conceptual knowledge.

- Address more of the instructional content and develop more *sophisticated language use*. 
Other Oral Language Tips

Progress to upper levels of proficiency takes more time and attention.

Language learning strategies contribute to language development.

Language use and cognitive risks need to be as important as task completion.
Some Research Particulars

• As Johnston (2004) admonished, we “have to think more carefully about the language we use to offer our students the best learning environments we can” (p. 1).

• Brown and her colleagues (as cited in Cazden, 2001) determined that working class boys needed twice as many prompts as middle class children to elicit the same knowledge base.
Teacher Challenges

- It is important that supportive protocols become **naturalized ways of talking** about learning (Johnston, 2004) and pivotal platforms for critical thinking.

- Talking and thinking go together: assume that the student may have something to say beyond what the student's teacher or peer is thinking or already knows.
Talking and Thinking

Conversational uptakes are connective comments that respect the student and afford linguistic scaffolds that foster more and better discussion of academic topics. As Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) pointed out, “teachers who apply the concept of instructional conversations embrace the philosophy that talking and thinking go together”.

Thinking and Writing

Recent research summaries have emphasized writing as the critical challenge in ELL language development and students’ academic achievement. Writing is thinking and moves students from receiving knowledge to generating understanding. Fortunately, when writing, the student has the time to compose thoughts, which supports thinking.
New TELPAS Domain Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain Weight</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing Realities

The mean score of the 2011 NAEP Writing was 150 of 300; only 27% of all 8th graders scored above Basic on the 2011 assessment. The average score for Latinos was 136, compared to 158 for Whites and 165 for Asians. For 8th-grade English language learners (ELLs), the average score was 108 compared to 152 for non-ELLs.
Writing Imperative

The 2014 Educator’s Practice Guide for ELL Literacy reviewed related research and generated four recommendations:

--one recommendation targets *vocabulary* development.

-- two of the four recommendations target *writing* as important aspects of content-area learning.
2014 Educator’s Guide

- **Recommendation 1**: Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities.
- **Recommendation 2**: Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching.
- **Recommendation 3**: Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills.
In a comparison of Spanish and English spelling skills, neither motivation nor intelligence were correlated with spelling achievement—exposure and direct instruction accounted for the difference in students’ spelling.
Writing Research Findings

- Teachers should increase the level of difficulty in spelling to challenge students’ awareness of English orthography.

- Research recommends the use of dictation, proofreading, free composition, and clozes.
Modeled Writing (Mohr)

- Picture/Text/Experience Talk
- Vocabulary Brainstorming/ Word Web
- Modeled Sentence Drafting/Writing
- Mini-lesson on Aspect(s) of Shared Text
- Language Analysis
- Rereading
- Sentence Dictation
- Adding More/Individualized Instruction
Modeled Writing Sample

After sharing an experiment with a blow dryer and a ping-pong ball, the students helped generate the following “anchor” sentences.

Key words: force, push, pull, gravity

A force is the power to push or pull. Air can push up. Gravity pulls down.
Modeled Writing (Mohr)

- Picture/Text/Experience Talk
- Vocabulary Brainstorming/ Word Web
- Modeled Sentence Drafting/Writing
- Mini-lesson on Aspect(s) of Shared Text
- Language Analysis
- Rereading
- Sentence Dictation
- Adding More/Individualized Instruction
A force is the power to push or pull. Air can push up. Gravity pulls down. The hair dryer pulled up the ping pong ball. It was up for a little while and was danced in the air. It fell on the ground when the ping pong ball wasn’t near the hair dryer.

Daniela
Mohr’s Modeled Writing

- Customized writing project utilizing aspects of the LEA, interactive writing, and sentence dictation

- Provides a shared experience for oral language discussion, followed by co-constructed expository sentences that are reread, analyzed, and reviewed before being removed from sight
Mohr’s Modeled Writing

• Co-constructed sentences are dictated to students who write the sentences as best they can

• Students extend the modeled sentences with sentences of their own and draw an accompanying picture
Modeled Writing Study Findings

- EOs’ and ELLs’ writing can differ markedly, yet respond well to intervention.

- Intensive writing instruction can help reduce the achievement gap between EOs and ELs.

- Writing productivity is a critical component to writing achievement.
Modeled Writing Findings

- Counter to previous research, no significant gender differences were found in this analysis.

- A focus on expository writing appears to positively influence narrative writing achievement.

- Modeled Writing appears to support all levels of EO and EL writers.
Recommendations

- More instruction on **description**. (Scoring incentives.
- A grade-level focus on writing can improve achievement among EO and EL writers **without** reducing interest and motivation for writing.
- Writing achievement is a function of **productivity and complexity**. Writing productivity may need to precede a focus on writing complexity among beginning writers.
More Talking; More Writing

- Hold higher expectations for ELL engagement.
- Get ELLs more involved in classroom discussions
- Focus on more writing across the curriculum.
Accepting the Challenge

To **engage, elicit, elaborate, and extend** both students’ oral and written language—

- What can you do?
- Where will you start?
References


References (cont.)


References (cont.)

