

The Importance of Literacy Development in the First Language for
English Language Learners

María Florencia Aguilar de Rodríguez

A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Education

The Evergreen State College

March 2012

Grace Huerta, Ph.D., Member of the Faculty

Date

Abstract

Through my experience as an ESL teacher, I have encountered students who lacked literacy in their native language. As demographics change, education needs to fit students' needs. The intention of this research project was to look at how important literacy development in the native language affects the acquisition of the second language, in this case, English. This research took place in a community college, working with adults, and focused in the development of literacy skills in Spanish in order to be able to transfer those skills to English. The use of home visits, students' and teacher's interviews, teacher's observations, and collection of students' artifacts, I was able to demonstrate that literacy development in the first language is essential to be able to acquire the second language. Pretests and posttests were administered to show the growth in English basic skills.

Keywords: English language learners, literacy development, language transfer

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	6
Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review.....	7
Introduction.....	7
One country, different points of views.....	8
English only.....	8
Equal education?.....	9
E.S.L and bilingual programs.....	9
L1 and L2 acquisition process and theories.....	10
Native language instruction.....	12
Chapter 2: Methods.....	18
Settings.....	18
Participants.....	19
Data collection and methods.....	20
My plan.....	20
Data analysis.....	22
Limitations.....	23
Chapter 3: Findings.....	25
Classroom setting.....	25
Qualitative data collection.....	26
Teacher interview.....	27
Home visits and students interviews.....	30
Carmen.....	30

Clara.....	34
Isabel.....	38
Observations and student artifacts.....	41
Prior schooling.....	42
Comprehensive input.....	43
Literacy development.....	44
Funds of knowledge.....	47
Affective filter.....	49
Quantitative data.....	50
Chapter 4: Description of Research Findings.....	53
Connections between the research question, literature and research	
Findings.....	53
Recommendations.....	54
Getting to know the students.....	54
Program model.....	56
Areas for further investigation.....	58
Conclusion.....	59
Appendix A: CASAS Descriptors.....	60
Appendix B: Test Competencies.....	61
Appendix C: Letter of Consent in English.....	62
Appendix D: Consent Agreement.....	63
Appendix E: Consent Agreement in Spanish.....	64
References.....	65

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank God, for giving me health and strength, for being able to learn to write and read, learn a second language and share that knowledge with others.

To “mi maestra”, Grace Huerta, for all of her encouragement and patience. For all of her help and being there for me when I needed her.

Thank you to my daughters, Luján, Rosario and Lourdes, for understanding that this Master degree is for all of us. For knowing that even if sometimes I was not able to do things with you, I still loved you.

To my caring husband, Lorenzo, who held my hand all the way to end, for being always there for me, listening and encouraging me to do my best.

To Mami, for being the best E.S.L teacher I have ever known and being my role model.

To Papi, Marta, Pedro and Megan, for being there when I needed the moral help, support and believing in me.

A la Tia Blanca, por venir desde Argentina a ayudarme con las nenas y familia y darnos todo su amor.

To my classmates, Mohamed, Kristen and Benjamin, for helping with editing and reviewing my work. Above all, for their support and friendship.

Thanks to Dawn and Bonnie, who helped me so much taking care of Lourdes. For all their support. I could not done this without you...

Last, but not least, to my students, especially the participants, from whom I learned that life is wonderful and there are always reasons to keep learning. They remind me day by day why I chose to become a teacher.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Así sufrimos nosotros. Y por que sufrimos tanto en nuestra juventud,

Dios nos tomó en cuenta y ahora estamos aquí.

(We suffered this way. And because we suffered a lot during our youth, God took us into consideration and now we are here.)

-Isabel, 70, study participant.

Introduction

The purpose of this action research project is to examine the importance of the development of the native language or L1 when acquiring the L2, in this case English. There are many immigrants who come to the United States in hope for a better life. They bring with them their cultures and languages. As varied as these students are, so are their literacy levels in their native language. It is well known that formal schooling plays a key role in the development of the first and second language. Having worked at a community college for the past 11 years, helped me realize that I taught students with different levels of literacy in their L1 in the same English as a Second Language (ESL) level class. This presented a challenge when preparing curricula in Spanish because I had students who could not understand instructions, write or read very well in their L1. Therefore, in this action research project I studied how the use of an adult English language learner's (ELL) native language affects the developmental literacy of the L2 in a beginning ESL class.

One Country, Different Points of Views

English only.

The United States is a very diverse country, comprised of immigrants who bring with them different traditions and languages. Learning English is one goal of many students. Some people see this linguistic diversity as a problem instead of a resource. Molesky explained, “Supporters of the recent English-only movement might depict the United States as a nation of Anglophone by right but threatened by Babel-tongued immigrants from abroad and by disloyal ethnolinguistic minorities at home” (1988, as cited in McKay, 1988, p. 29). Many people believe that by just teaching English in schools maintains national unity. Lukes (2009) mentions that “This movement is fueled in part by widespread misconceptions about language learning and also by racism and growing anti-immigrant sentiment”. Some states have adopted laws that affect how teachers need to instruct their students. For example, California adopted Proposition 227, while Arizona adopted Proposition 203, which both eliminated primary-language instruction in schools. The elimination of the student’s home language from the learning process has profound and negative consequences on the viability of democratic schooling in the 21st century (Gutierrez et al, 2002).

Equal education?

Lau v. Nichols, the Lau Remedies, and the Equal Educational Opportunity Act, of 1974 are unanimous in their call for the equalization of educational opportunity for students of limited English proficiency (Reeves 2004). This means that there are

misconceptions of how to practice and adopt them in schools. Teachers throughout the country follow them according to their understanding.

The No Child Left Behind law, adopted by the U.S Department of Education in 2001 to measure student progress serve all students equally, lacks clarity of how to instruct minority groups and to test students in a reliable, yet valid manner. Schools throughout the country are to provide reasonable accommodations for students to whom English is not their first language. However,

the law neither defines “accommodations” nor defines what constitutes “reasonable”. Second, no monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure that schools actually provide accommodations. Third, there is no consensus on what constitutes an acceptable accommodation: thus state accommodation policies vary substantially. (Rivera & Collum, 2006, as cited in Wright, 2006, p. 23)

ESL and bilingual programs.

ESL and bilingual programs have been implemented to better accommodate ELLs needs. Title IV, or the Bilingual Education Act, was implemented in 1968. The main idea of this act was to provide education in the mother tongue of the student and also in English. As McKay (1993) explains

Bilingual Education is the use of two languages, one of which is English, as the medium of instruction for the same pupil population in a well-organized program which encompasses part or all of the curriculum and includes the study of the history and culture associated with the mother tongue. A complete program maintains the children’s self-esteem and a legitimate pride in both cultures (as cited in Paulston, 1980, p.8).

There are many varieties of programs. The main differentiation between them is the percentage of the use of English and the students' language. Some provide some subjects in English and others in the first language: others use both languages for the same subjects (Krashen, 1994).

ESL programs also vary in the amount of time, languages used and when students receive the instruction. For example, students can be pulled out of the classroom or receive these services in the classroom while class is taking place.

L1 and L2 Acquisition Process and Theories

Children begin learning their first language at an early age with parents and caregivers serve as the facilitator. Infants do not follow language patterns until they are about six months old. At that time, cries can be distinguished according to the child's needs (hunger, needs to be changed, etc.). Parents interact with the child as he/she attends to the baby's needs. At the age of two months, babies start using their gestures, like waving. This is done after others around the baby have done it, and now the baby repeats the gestures. All this time they have been surrounded in an environment where others interacted. Adults model the language all the time. We read to babies, talk and play with them. This gives them a chance to interact with others. By 12 months, the infant has social and interactional understandings (Lindfors, 1987). During the first year of life, children internalize language. Then children go through the one word stage. They label objects, people, and actions. This is simplification of adult speech and they use variable pronunciations for the same word. Later they put two words together, usually noun-verb, verb-object or noun-object. They continue to expand on their vocabulary as they interact with others in their environment until they can form complete sentences.

A person acquires a second language the same way they acquired their first one.

There is one main difference between the acquisition of L1 and acquisition of L2:

“academic skills, literacy development, concept formation, subject knowledge, and learning strategies all transfer from L1 to L2 as the vocabulary and communicative patterns are developed in L2 to express that academic knowledge” (Ovando & Collier, 1998, p.94). For example, L2 learners already have the concepts of print and what purpose it serves, knowledge of basic meanings and control of the muscles needed to talk. Language acquisition cannot take place in the absence of shared social and situational contexts because the latter provide information about the meaning of words and sentences structures (Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009).

During the period of acquisition, the person goes through the basic interpersonal communicative skills or BICS (Chamot, 1981). He or she hears, identifies labels and phrases in reading. The learner goes through the “silent period” (input coming in, but not producing output). Then he or she starts producing and imitating words, and there is internal translation to and from first language (Chamot, 1981). The first language is transferring to L2. This person is now ready to interact with others in informal situations. As we know, people need socialization in order for acquisition to take place:

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture-both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives. (Lado, 1957, as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2001)

When the learner acquires factual information from listening in decontextualized situations, he is able to analyze and apply this in academic speaking and writing (Chamot, 1981). The process of formal learning in school is starting. The learner starts to synthesize the information that he read or listened to, generalizing and is able to explain, make inferences and draw conclusions. Then the person is ready to evaluate the accuracy, value, and applicability of ideas acquired through reading and listening (Chamot, 1981).

Depending on the affective filter, the learner is going to acquire the language or not. The affective filter is the influence of others and the environment on the learner. Variables like motives, needs, attitudes and anxiety can affect how the student learns. If the student is tense, bored or anxious, the affective filter, or predisposition to learn, the acquisition of the language is not going to take place. If the learner is relaxed, confident, and motivated, the acquisition process can take place.

For many people, teachers are the first contact with the culture of the social world outside the home (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Teachers need to learn what we can expect from each student based on their schema, background, education in their first language, and culture. Teachers can immerse students in the learning by creating curricula related to their schema, create opportunities for input, model activities, give enough input, use group activities, and make personal connections with them, and learning about them. The most important thing that educators always need to remember is to be patient with these students; basic interpersonal competence takes about two to three years to develop, and cognitive academic language proficiency six to seven years.

Native Language Instruction

There are many studies that show the importance of teaching students in their native language. As Cummins notes,

Motivational factors and features of the educational environment also make a difference in mediating the relationship between the two languages, there is ample reason to assume that the level of the language skills is one of the critical determinants of success in acquiring the second language. (McGroary, as cited in McKay and Wong, 1988, p. 302)

Many students lack print literacy for various reasons: poverty, war and cultural expectations, among others. Bigelow and Schwarz (2010), conducted a study to learn the reasons why many people come to the United States with such different levels of formal education, if any. They wanted to examine what are the challenges and strengths these students brought with them and what is the effect of learning on the brain. These researchers looked at adults from different countries and found that the learning can vary very much from a person who already has literacy skills in their L1. Teaching them in their native language will reduce “their marginalization within their own language communities and increasing their empowerment and standing in the wider community” (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010).

Menken and Kleyn (2010) studied the experiences of long term ELLs in the U.S schools. This study consisted of 29 students, five school administrators, and four ELL teachers that worked with the students in New York City. The students ranged from 9th to 12th grade, and had been living in the United States for an average of 10 years. Twenty- one of the participants received services in ESL and weak bilingual programs,

and their services had been interrupted by attending English only classes. The other seven participants received ESL services only. One student received bilingual education constantly since the 4th grade, and had a strong background in Spanish, since she attended school in her native country. All of these students were bilingual orally, but did not know how to write or read in Spanish, with the exception of the last student. The students' grades in English, language courses and math were analyzed over a period of three years. The research also consisted of interviews to find the interconnection between the schooling experiences, current academic challenges and language use. The researchers found out that the participants were placed in the wrong classroom, ESL, since they needed to receive instruction in writing and reading designed for native speakers. The bilingual programs that they were placed in were only transitional, and it was their focus to move the students to English only classes instead of helping them develop literacy skills in their native language to support the literacy in the L2. The students reported having to use both languages with different people and situations, preferring to write or read in English since they did not learn to do this in their L1.

Another study by Felix (2009) showed that when ELLs attended Spanish classes that were designed for monolingual English speakers, the teachers used them as experts, and they were not encouraged to develop higher skills in the language. As Wright (2006) commented: "Foreign language experts testified at the National Briefing on Language and National Security in 2002 that 'the U.S government's language capabilities remain grossly inadequate' and that 'we need more linguists in more languages at higher levels of proficiency than ever before.'" As we can see, these students need to be offered

consistent opportunities in school to develop their native language as well as English. Helping students developing their L1 in school is a great resource for our country.

Attending classes and programs in the native language, whenever possible, gives a great opportunity to develop the L1. During a Spanish literacy project, Larrotta and Ramírez (2009), these researchers answer the question of what are the benefits of parent literacy engagement in a literacy project. The classes offered were in Spanish, lasting a total of 12 weeks, with two hours meetings once a week. Thirty-two parents participated in the project, but the focal point were ten mothers who were at the meetings at least 80% of the time. These mothers were between the ages of 30 and 50, with an average schooling of six years. Parents participated in surveys, interviews and wrote reflective journals. The first hour of the class, adults met with the bilingual teacher to talk about literacy strategies, readings that they chose in Spanish and wrote journals, while the children were being supervised in another room. The second hour, mothers and children met together and shared their projects that were assigned the week before and read together with their children. There are several findings from this study: one of them is that parents literacy experiences were enhanced, they could share their culture with the children. Also parents learned from each other, they expanded their academic and conversational vocabulary and the most important, parents and children acquired reading habits at home.

Another study by Lukes (2009) showed that classes taught in the native language have higher attendance and retention rates. This study took place in Plazas Comunitarias and other areas around New York City, where students attended classes two times a week: one day for an ESL bilingual class and the other for developmental literacy. In

some places, students attended five days a week. The results were extracted from surveys, attendance and participation. Findings showed that instruction of students in their heritage language, they were acquiring the literacy skills needed to be successful in life. Attendance for these programs were higher than regular ESL programs and students learnt to be more independent. At the end of the program, students reported having new higher aspirations, like obtaining a GED, starting their own business, or attending college.

Adult students who are beginning ELLs and did not have the advantage of receiving a lot of instruction in their first language, therefore this can lead to not only see changes in the dynamics of their families, but also need to find resources in their communities. If the parents are not literate themselves, the child may in fact play the role of the reader and writer for the entire family (Hamayan, as cited in Richards, 1994, p.278). This can affect the family structure, as the children serve as translators when in the community, help reading correspondence, school notes, and in many cases translate at their own teachers' conferences. At the same time, these adult learners "become very resourceful about networking with others when the need arises" (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005, p. 127). People in these communities help each other using their funds of knowledge. For example, a person who knows how to read English may help another who does not, and they trade services with one another.

With so many studies that show the positive results of improving L1 literacy, and the effects of transferring those skills to English, I wonder, why are we still teaching this way?

As Huerta (2009) comments,

Students who have a strong foundation in speaking, reading, and writing in their L1 before they begin to learn English will learn English more rapidly and will achieve better academically than students who have a weak foundation in their first language and/or are exited into English-only settings prematurely (p. 250)

How does the use of adult ELL's L1 affect the developmental literacy in a beginning ESL class? This is the question that I examined in this action research project.

Chapter 2: Methods

Setting

In order to answer this question, this action research project took place in a community college. The city where this college was located is near Olympia, the capital of Washington State, with a population of about 16,000 habitants. The town was not very big, with its demographic changing very fast. Many Latinos and some Asians and Russians have moved into the area in the past few years. These people worked mainly in agricultural jobs, such as Christmas trees farms, chicken ranches, dairy farms, reforestation and some as housekeepers in various hotels from around the area. As a result of this change, more government subsidized housing was built in this area.

This midsize community college served about 10,000 students and was opened in 1925. It was one of the oldest continuously operating community colleges in Washington State. The college offered different degrees and certificates, besides other programs, like high school completion, ECEAP (Early Childhood and Education Program), Adult Basic Education, GED (General Education Development), in both English and Spanish, and ESL classes, among others.

The ESL classes at the college have been offered for many years and have served various ethnic groups, but the majority Latinos. At the time of this research project, classes took place during the morning, afternoon and evening. People interested in the services went through an orientation, in which demographic data and placement tests were given. These tests were called Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS). Students are placed in classes from level 1 or beginner (ABE011) to 5 or

advanced (ABE016), depending on the standardized test (see Appendix A). Then students chose the class that will fit in their schedule since all levels are offered throughout the day.

The teachers at this college had at least four years of college, ESL certificates and some have a Master's degree. Most of the staff had some knowledge of Spanish and attend ESL conferences and trainings, when the budget allowed for it. There was a good sense of community among these instructors and students, since most of them formed part of the community and worked together towards the same goal: education. For example, over a year ago, teachers and students collected goods and had a yard sale, in which we all worked and collected money for events like potlucks that take place at the end of each quarter, Immigration Day, where lawyers and volunteers worked all day on a Saturday completing immigration forms and answering legal questions, and teachers' trainings, like the WAESOL conference that takes place in October.

ESL students had the opportunity to receive these services for free because this program, like many others are federal funded. As a result, Washington state mandated that all students entering the program took a CASAS pre test, and every 45 hour of instruction the following form, or next test. These were used to measure life skills in reading and listening.

Participants

The participants were selected from my "Reading for Civics" class. This was a class designed to teach civics and government in order to pass the citizenship test given by the U.S. Immigration Services. I chose to work with three participants who had different levels of literacy in Spanish and were from 65 to 75 years old because I thought

they would benefit on the development of literacy skill in Spanish, their native language. They were from Mexico and they varied on the amount of formal schooling they have received, poverty, and lack of access to schools. I could tell that they varied in the amount of formal schooling because of conversations and observations in my class. These students were respectful, eager to learn and attended class regularly. They had been in the United States for several years and attending the beginning ESL class for at least a quarter. They had been placed in this class because of their CASAS test scores, 200 or below. All of these participants attended my class with other students that have different levels of proficiency in their L1 and English. Besides attending my class, these students attended a beginning ESL class from Monday to Wednesday, for three hours in the evenings.

Data Collection and Methods

In this study, I used mixed methods by exploring case studies, interviewing and doing observations of how the L1 affects the literacy development of English in adult ELLs. By using quantitative methods I looked at tests scores to compare growth in English from the beginning to the end of the quarter. I aim for this study to be a transformative participatory action research, in which “involved members of the community in the research process in varying roles” (Mertens, 2010, p. 258). I am part of the Latino community in this town and my goal is to improve the learners’ education. This is something that could keep taking place after this project is finalized.

My plan.

My plan included to do home visits, interviews, collect students’ work and create portfolios, write on my field journal and compare pre and post tests. This allowed for

“consistency of evidence across sources of data” (Mertens, 2010). Mertens suggested that triangulation involves looking for information from different sources and finding patterns in order to get to a conclusion.

During the home visits to the participants’ homes, which took place at the beginning of fall quarter, I was able to know them better and learned about their histories. I spent about an hour, or longer if needed, visiting my students. I did this informally and using Spanish, without recording or taking notes because I wanted this to be a fun, relaxing experience where people can open up and share their experiences. I knew these people had wonderful stories to tell me. I looked for cultural tools because I wanted to learn about their funds of knowledge, what their experiences and knowledge they had, which helped me plan and find curricula relevant to them.

At the beginning of the quarter, I conducted a short interview with the participants. The questions were “used in a semistructured way to ensure coverage of important issues yet allow for flexibility in responding” (Mertens, 2010, p. 370). The questions focused on their literacy practices and prior schooling along with their view of education and goals.

These interviews took place at the college, and in the case of a student who could not attend, I visited that person at their house.

Other teachers were also part of these students education. I conducted an interview with their ESL instructor during the second week of the quarter. I wanted to see her point of view about the development of the native language and what can we do to serve them better. These interviews were audio recorded.

I meet with my students five hours a week, one hour on Mondays, one on Wednesdays and three hours on Thursdays. All the classes were instructed in Spanish, except on Thursday, when the Civics class met and I only worked with the group using Spanish during the last hour of class, while using both English and Spanish during the other 2 hours. I brought Spanish materials to read, write, listen and play with. These included picture books, magazines, newspapers and articles from the Internet, songs and several games. I looked for their interactions and attitudes among their peers, as a way to observe their reading comprehension. During these interactions in the classroom I kept a journal on hand. In addition, I recorded those observations and comments in it during and after class. I observed participants' interactions, willingness to participate in the activities and students' comments. I also looked at their writing development by collecting their work (portfolio) in order to be able to track their development. This was a collection portfolio, which "contains all of the student's work that shows how the student deals with daily class assignments" (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996, p. 37). Photographs were taken to document classroom activities. At the end of the quarter, students were assessed using the CASAS test in reading.

Data analysis.

During the analysis of the data, I listened to the recordings from the interviews, study the conversations and transcribe parts of them. I looked for common themes and codes. Students' progress such as a Listening to the pre interviews demonstrated the comprehensive output of the students.

I also looked and compared student's portfolios individually, looking at the progress of a student, and as a whole, comparing and looking for similarities and differences of growth. I defined common themes that came across these portfolios. Listening to the interviews showed me the output of the students. The observations from the field collected in the journal provided me with data that I used in assessing students' development. By examining the CASAS pre and post tests scores showed the growth of English skills in reading and listening.

By looking at all the data collected, I used triangulation to find similarities, patterns or common themes that come across. Then I coded the data. I hoped to see a correlation between the development of ELLS' native language and the acquisition of English.

Limitations.

Like any study, this one can have limitations. One of those limitations was the time limit to complete this project. Having limited time to apply this plan and conduct the research could not show great changes. It would be great to have more time to show more development of the native language and the effect in English. At the same time it is a good starting point that can turn into a long project.

Inconsistent attendance or attrition could also impact this study. Some of these adults had jobs and sometimes they did not come to class because of schedule changes, were too tired after a long day at work, and had family obligations. We also need to take in consideration how the affective filter affected students, such as through the lack of confidence, feelings towards being an adult learner and their basic literacy skills in their own language.

Being the teacher and part of the students' community could have limited the objectivity of the observations. Having the same cultural background as the participants could have impeded me to see ordinary events. However, this limitation compensated with being able to better understand the participants' experiences, culture and language. I had the opportunity to learn English as a second language myself, and I am a strong believer that these students would benefit by learning more academics in Spanish in order to transfer that knowledge to English.

Other limitations could be due to the testing. Pretests were administered in reading, but not in speaking, listening or writing. I looked at the students' portfolios for gains in writing. Also, depending on the pretest scores, the difference on the posttest could be minimal.

During the month of September I talked to the participants and had them sign the consent form to be able to participate in the research. I also visited them at their homes and interviewed them at school, as well as their ESL teacher. The first week of the quarter, the students took a pretest as well as I started to work with them and observe them in the classroom.

In October I kept on observing the participants for four weeks. During the weekends I had the opportunity to look at my notes and think about coding. At the same time, I collected student's work in order to create a portfolio.

During the month of November, I finished working with the portfolios. Students took a posttest and I analyzed the data.

Chapter 3: Findings

Classroom Setting

The setting for this action research project took place in an ESL classroom with three rows of tables, for two students per table. The desks faced a large white board. Students usually sat with a peer even if the group was very small. The teacher stood in front of the board. She explained the day's lesson by translating for the students, drawing and using total physical response to ensure that they understood the content. The students, the majority of whom were Latino/a were encouraged to participate, ask questions, and work in groups, even if they needed to use their Spanish.

The teacher was an English speaker, but throughout the years she had learned words in Spanish and practiced putting them together into sentences with the support of her students. There was a sense of pride when they could teach the instructor, and the teacher was very happy to be able to learn from them, the experts in Spanish. During the time I met with the participants of this study, I used a small classroom that was connected to the side of the ESL classroom. In this room, two tables were put together and we all sat around. I was able to observe all students and we were able to see each other face to face. It was a relaxing environment where we were able to share our knowledge in our first language, Spanish.

In addition, the Citizenship class where I also taught took place in a large open area in the college library. Offices, a classroom and a computer lab surrounded this area. During the time we met, everybody that worked in offices was gone for the day. The only other class taking place at the same time was the GED Spanish class. Our classroom consisted of large tables put together in a "u" shape. Students sat facing the large board

on the wall. We had access to technology, like a projector, copy machine and the computer lab. I wrote our agenda for the class on the board and explained it. We followed the agenda and students were encouraged to use both their English and Spanish skills at all times. There were usually 12 to 15 students attending this class. All students were from Central America, and Spanish was their first language, but they had several different levels of English. Everyone in class participated and was encouraged to write sentences on the board during the dictation exercise. Students helped each other with spelling and punctuation. During the last hour of class, I worked more in-depthly with the lower level of English students. We all sat around a table and we all participated in the activities that I planned. Students were encouraged to go to the board and participate. All the talking, writing and reading was in Spanish.

Qualitative Data Collection

I conducted home visits during the first and second week of fall quarter, September 2011. During these visits, I learned more about these students' history and family life. When teachers shed their role of teachers as experts and, instead, take on a new role as learner, they can come to know their students and their families in new and distinct ways (López, 2010). The interviews took place during the third week, in the beginning of October. Throughout the interviews students shared more about their lives and more in depth their educational background. I also conducted an interview with their ESL teacher during this week.

Observations and teaching took place on Mondays and Wednesdays for an hour each day, starting the first week of the quarter in September through the third week of October. During these days, students met for their ESL classes with another teacher and I

would come in and met with them for an hour. Also I met with students every Thursday evening for three hours, during our Citizenship class. During these two hours I taught all students in a bilingual environment. Students were allowed and encouraged to write and speak in Spanish and then translating to English, either with my or other peers help. During the last hour of the class, I divided the participants of the study and the other students into two groups, and I worked with the participants using only Spanish. The rest of the students had a choice of working in groups on reading or using a computer to practice for their citizenship interview. Participants' work was collected throughout classes and kept in a collection portfolio.

Teacher interview.

Mrs. Smith taught English as a Second Language for 11 years. She enjoyed her work and has taught all different levels throughout the years. This teacher graduated with a Bachelors of Arts from The Evergreen State College in June 2000. On September of that year she was hired by this college and served as a teacher aid for the IEP (Intensive English Program). During the following winter quarter, she was offered the position to teach all the classes, speaking, listening, writing and reading, for this program. At the same time, she was hired to teach the upper level of ESL. Throughout the years she had taught all levels depending on the need of the college. Mrs. Smith had been teaching the first level of ESL since January, 2009.

During the interview, I asked her if she could tell how much education a student had in his/her native language. She said she could tell because of the questions students asked, how they responded to certain things, for example a book, a worksheet and their reaction towards the material. Then, she could tell if students have done that sort of

things before. Many times she encountered students that used language that they could only have learned at school, like “gerund” among others, and Mrs. Smith would know if they had received formal schooling. She also mentioned that she just asks them, but she could usually tell based upon their language production.

When asked what Mrs. Smith taught when her students had low literacy in their L1, she responded that she is more patient because they move slower than other students. She mentioned the use of modeling and provides worksheets and step-by-step instructions to assist them. Mrs. Smith was patient, talked slowly and gave them assignments to take home. She uses literacy material and still, some of them insist that she translates for them. She explained, “Students tell me: ‘quiero saber que quiere decir’ (I want to know what that means), and then I say okay, and I translate basic sentences and sometimes explanations like “ando, endo”, stuff like that” (personal communication, Mrs. Smith, October 3, 2011).

Mrs. Smith also talked about the curricula she used with students that had low literacy in their L1. She emphasizes literacy as the main focus of her curriculum and adds extra content for the people who had received more formal schooling. She said, “Extra content would go to the other people who are literate so they can move faster and do more things, and the people that need more literacy can focus on the basics.”

Part of her teaching consisted on administering standardized testing to all the students. I asked Mrs. Smith about what she thought about the CASAS tests and if they worked for these students. She answered that the question was a tough one. Mrs. Smith mentioned that the assessment has its value, but on the other hand, “it does not always measure their ability, such as students are seeing the alphabet and they are pronouncing

things correctly and they are spelling correctly, the tests do not show that progress.” She gave the example of giving students a word, they could tell her the first letter and the last one, they know the sounds, but the results cannot be demonstrated in the CASAS tests. Another example occurred when she was teaching pupils basics words like “the store”. She noted how happy they become when they can say things like: “I picked shampoo, I can read what it said, everything,” and that is not in the CASAS exam (personal communication, Mrs. Smith, October 3, 2011).

The college where the research was conducted offered different levels of ESL instruction with students attending a certain class according to their level. I asked Mrs. Smith if she thought that the low literate students were assessed and placed in the right class or if they needed a different class. She explained:

I think there are two things to that. One is they need extra special instruction, like a tutor, and it would be nice if they had a kind of class, maybe not for the whole class, but a section of the class focusing on literacy, but I also think is good for them to be with people who are at their same level they are, but they are not illiterate because they get encouraged and people are actually really nice. I talk to them of the whole idea of not having an education, it’s not an indicator of how smart you are, it’s simply an opportunity. (personal communication, Mrs. Smith, October 3, 2011)

Mrs. Smith said that one had more opportunities than others, so students all know and feel their potential is equal. She doesn’t want them to feel bad if they did not catch on quickly. It is a positive school setting for people with or without prior schooling to understand each other. Mrs. Smith added “They also need separate time.”

Since the object of my research was to develop more literacy skills in the first language, I asked her thoughts about how students would benefit from developing basic skills in their L1. She replied, “Yes!” She also mentioned that it depended on the student:

I seen one person who was illiterate and totally moving forward, without any literacy in his own language and he actually learned a little bit of his first language while he was learning English. He went on all the way to level 5 or 6. But somebody else, it I seen just depends on the age and circumstance, their abilities, people have different abilities. Some don't have the capacity to go actually that fast, so it may depend on that too, and knowing their first language will help probably. Simple things, like using the dictionary, can be hard if you don't know your first language. So learning the first language I think is very helpful. (personal communication, Mrs. Smith, October 3, 2011)

Mrs. Smith reported that students are able to transfer knowledge from their first language to English. The more schooling one had, the easier it would be to learn English. She added, “if we had the money, we could make sure the college supplies tutors, so the people who needed help, because people need specific things, like some come to class and they are really good at speaking and reading, but they need help with writing.

Home visits and student interviews.

Carmen.

Carmen was from Michoacán, Mexico. She was born in 1943, being the oldest child of the family. Besides Carmen, the family was composed of two more girls and a boy. Both of her parents were from Bucaneo and they raised their children there. Her father was a “jornalero” (laborer), and had always worked, even to this day, with a

“yunta” (yoke, team of oxen) and later in life with a tractor. Her mother was a housewife who dedicated her life to raise her children, and take care of her husband, for example, taking the “lonche” (lunch) to her husband while he worked in the fields.

As a child Carmen had some time to play, but as she grew older, she shared some of the household responsibilities. She had to go to the “molino” (mill), to buy the corn and grind it in order for her mom to make the tortillas. She mentioned that there was another ranch, down the hill from where the family lived, where there were other stores like a butcher shop and general store.

Since Carmen was four-years-old she attended school. Her mother knew about the importance of writing and reading, since she did not receive an education. She remembered walking for about a half an hour by herself to school. Her sisters and brother had the opportunity to go to school as well. She mentioned that not many children went to school those days, they had to help with the work on the ranch, like cutting wood among other chores, but she had the opportunity to go for about 10 years. Carmen noted that not many people knew how to read or write back then.

The school that Carmen attended was an old big house with three big rooms, in which first and second grade were taught in one and third and fourth in another, and fifth and sixth in the third room. She remembered the lack of services and she said that there was only one bathroom available for everybody. There was one teacher per classroom and one principal. Children came to school from different ranches. Children were divided into the grades according to their ages.

Carmen met her husband when she was almost 15. She recalled that he worked for a neighbor who fathered him, but her husband had always lived with his mother since

he was an illegitimate son (born outside the marriage). Back then, this was a bad situation. Her husband was two years older than her. They decided to get married a few months after meeting and their first child was born a year later. The couple had 17 children, but lost five of them. Carmen had her children at home with a “partera” (midwife). The ones that survived were five boys and seven girls.

Life was very hard for the family. Carmen’s husband worked in the fields, while she was a housewife, raised the children and worked from home to help her husband financially. She did laundry by hand and ironed for other people, besides her own. She used to cut “nopales” (cacti leaves), cleaned and sold them. She also mentioned that she sold “pulque” (drink made out of the juice from the agave plant). She knew how to get the water out of the agaves and people from different ranches came to her house to buy the water that later was mixed with hot sauce, onions and oranges among other ingredients. She remembered not having electricity and using petroleum lamps.

The family children had the opportunity to go to school. Most of the children went to third grade or beyond, but did not finish high school, except one daughter that is a teacher in México.

Some of the children of the family decided to move to the United States in order to find a better life. The couple had eight children here and four in México. Twelve years Ago, Carmen and her husband came to the United States for three months to visit their children. She decided to stay and her husband returned to México. Carmen lived with a daughter, her son-in-law and three grandchildren in a three bedroom house. Other family members lived next door and some others in the vicinity. Carmen had worked for Simmons Frozen Foods for a few years and, at the time of the interview, she was not

longer working there. She stayed home, sent children to school in the mornings and watched a three year old grandson while his parents worked, mom at a local Jack in the Box and dad at a ranch in a nearby town. While visiting her one of her sons visited her and was collecting numbers and money for the “quinela” (guess who is going to win the soccer games), as the family and other members of the community tended to play in order to win some extra money.

Religion was a central part of this participant’s life. Carmen said that she attended the Catholic mass in Spanish every Sunday with her daughter and family. At home a painting of the Lady of Guadalupe was hung on the wall, as well as a Rosary. Carmen helped the Priest during Communion and was a “Ministra de Eucaristía” (Eucharistic Minister), her job was to give the “Blood of Christ” (the wine). She described her job with pride, as it really is considered something not many people get to do in the church.

Carmen mentioned that she likes to read, especially the Bible and inspirational books. Her writing was not developed enough since she did not have the need to use it except when writing letters back home and she had been very busy raising her children.

Carmen decided to start attending ESL classes a year ago. She mentioned needing to learn English to be able to understand and dialogue with American people. She knew the importance of being able to communicate as she mentioned: “hay mucha gente buena aquí, pero no les entiendo nada” (there are a lot of nice people here, but I don’t understand what they are saying). Another important class for her was the citizenship class. At the time of the interview, she was in the process of filling up forms

to become a U.S. citizen. By obtaining her citizenship she would be able to help other members of her family legalize their status.

Clara.

Clara was born in El Parotal, Guerrero, Mexico, in 1944. She was the oldest of eight siblings, five girls and three boys. She mentioned that her parents did not have the opportunity to attend school. Clara's father worked in the fields planting corn, chilies and other produce. Her mom was a housewife who took care of her children and helped her husband. She also knew how to "curar el empacho" (cure indigestion by using very traditional rituals).

Growing up was a very difficult time for Clara. Since she could remember she lived at home with her family and also with her maternal grandma in a little ranch close to her home. She remembered that her dad took goods, on the only two donkeys that the family owned, to sell to other ranches in the vicinity and on the way there Clara was dropped off or picked up from "abuelita's" (grandma's) house. While at abuelita's home, her memories consisted of having a swing under a big tree and swinging there for hour and hours. She said that she loved her grandma very much and she did not liked to be at her house because her mother was "mala" (mean).

Her mom was ill most of the time and Clara had to take over the household chores. Clara recalls mom yelling and hitting her all the time and Clara had to do all kinds of things around the house since the age of eight. The jobs included cooking, doing the laundry for the whole family, getting up very early and making the "lonche" (lunch) for her dad to take to the fields, and then for the rest of her siblings. The family did not have running water or electricity. Clara recalled doing laundry in another small ranch

close by, where she had to walk or ride a donkey and wash the clothes in a “pozo” (a water spring). She said many times the water was dirty and she remembered taking baths at the same place every other week.

Clara’s family was very poor. Her siblings, including herself and father collected “lechuguilla” (a type of wild grass) from a nearby lake. Then the material was dried, painted and Clara’s dad made thick ropes and then put together “hamacas” (swings). This helped the family financially, since Cara’s dad took the hamacas to be sold. She also mentioned being cold and wet during long winter nights. The family did not have enough blankets, and the roof of the precarious house had holes. Many times people in the ranch did not have food, and everyone would go to the “monte” (hill) to collect wild fruits, like “camuchines” (small figs), among other fruits and nuts.

Clara recalls, “no he tenido la oportunidad de ir a la escuela” (I did not have the opportunity to go to school.) She mentioned that she attended a school when she was very young for about three months. Clara said that the teacher was a “borrachita” (little drunken), and hit the children. She could not learn in an environment like that. She recalled learning the alphabet. Two of her brothers attended school a little bit longer than she did. Clara had to quit going to school because her mother got ill and she had to attend to the family.

When Clara was 15-years-old she recalled that the family moved to El Infiernillo, Michoacán. Some of her brothers and father worked on the construction of the El Infiernillo Dam and building roads at the same place. A couple of years later, Clara decided to move to Tijuana.

In Tijuana, Clara held different jobs. She sold “nopales” (cacti leaves), did laundry and ironing for other people and worked making homemade tortillas at a taco stand. Clara became a single mother and had three boys and a girl. Her children had had better luck attending school. Clara’s three older children went to school to 10th grade and the youngest one finished high school in the United States.

All of Clara’s children immigrated to the United States. She decided to try her luck in 1994 when her daughter invited her to come. Clara commented that the first time that she tried to cross the border she got caught by an immigration officer. She got sent back to Tijuana where she bought a fake American passport with the help of some family members that were in the business. She mentioned she used this passport and she was able to cross the border, and she used it two more times after traveling to México. During one of those trips, she met her future husband.

Clara met her husband after helping him with alcohol problems. The couple lived in Mexico for a while and then decided to come to the United States. While here, Clara could not work because she had health issues with her back. Her husband worked at a restaurant owned by a relative of hers and soon had the opportunity to become a legal American resident. Clara’s cousin had the chance to help one of his workers receive this benefit and he chose his cousin’s husband. After Clara’s husband got his residency, the couple decided to get married in order to start the process to legalize Clara’s status. She mentioned that at that time this task was not very difficult.

Clara lived with her husband in a trailer park. Her husband worked night shifts at the cannery in a nearby town. Their home was very cozy and she had many plants and pictures of her family around and on its walls. She shared that her daughter and two of

her sons lived in the same town, and the other son in San Francisco. She was very close to her family and her children dropped grandchildren at her home in the mornings because they needed to get to work. All of them went to school, giving Clara the opportunity to do other things around the house.

Clara had many gifts. During the home visit she said that she knew midwifery or how to “acomodar bebés” (accommodate babies in place in order to be born). She said that nobody taught her how to do that, but she started helping other women when she was young. Another thing that she was very knowledgeable of was working with natural herbs. She knew how to cure different symptoms by preparing teas and using herbs in various ways. Clara also knew how to inject medicine intravenously. This woman also spent her time sewing and “bordando punto de cruz” (embroidering) napkins, pillowcases and tablecloths turning them to beautiful works of art.

Clara mentioned that she was Catholic, like most of the Latina/os in the area. She said that she liked to attend the mass in Spanish every Sunday with her husband. She also commented that she liked to read the bible and other magazines that the Jehovah Witnesses gave to her when they visited.

Clara started attending school three quarters ago, in the spring of 2011. She knew that English is important, but also she wanted to become a U.S citizen. She has been in the same level class, beginning all this time. She mentioned that sometimes she got frustrated but she knew that she needed to attend in order to learn. Clara did homework everyday because she liked practicing writing.

Isabel.

Isabel was born in 1941 in the outskirts of the small town of Santa Cruz Tacache de Mina, Oaxaca, Mexico. She was the oldest of four sisters and two brothers. Her parents and grandparents were from the same town. Isabel mentioned that her father had the opportunity to attend school since his family was successful financially and he was the first born child. She had heard that her dad was sent to a bigger city to study, to a bigger school, not a university because at that time there were not universities available. She thinks that he had completed high school or the equivalent at that time. At the time of this project, her father was 101 years old.

Isabel's family lived and worked in the fields cultivating a great variety of produce. She mentioned that her father planted corn, chilies, and beans, and during the times of the year that it would not rain, her dad had his lands of "riego" (small manmade lake). The family also cultivated watermelon, melons, and tomatoes. She recalled her father working with the "yunta" and said that he was still working at the time of the interview. When the produce was ready, it was taken by her father to Huajuapán de León, a bigger city and sold it. Isabel had memories of her mother working in the kitchen making homemade tortillas, atole (hot drink made out of corn starch, sugar and other ingredients), and going to help her husband in the fields besides attending the house and children. She said that her mother did not have the opportunity to go to school and she never learned how to write or read. The family also collaborated by making hats that were sold by the dozen at a nearby beach.

Isabel had the chance to go to school growing up. The school she attended was a federal public school located a few miles from her home. She recalled having to walk a

few miles with other girls and boys from the “barrio” (neighborhood). The building and the classrooms were big. Children were divided into age groups and they all shared a big field and patio to play in. Isabel left school in fourth grade.

This participant met her husband while he was visiting some relatives that lived in her town. She mentioned that her husband was very, very poor growing up, his mother passed away when he was two while giving birth and later he lost his father at an early age. He only had one brother and one sister and he recalled being so poor that there were times when he went hungry. Isabel was 20 and her husband was 27 when they decided to get married. The couple suffered a lot because of finances and had nine children, five girls and four boys. Later the family lost one of their baby girls. All of the couple’s children were born at home with the help of a “partera.”

This family was also very hard working. Isabel was a housewife who looked after the children and took care of the house chores. Besides, she cooked tamales and pozole among other foods, to sell and help provide for the family, while her husband raised chickens and sold them to different people. Isabel mentioned that her husband had a beautiful voice and he used to go to the city to sing in cantinas (bars) and restaurants to make some extra income. Once the couple’s children got older, they attended school and Isabel’s husband moved to a close town to expand his business. He did not receive any formal education and did not go to school until spring quarter, 2011. He did not have any schooling but he was a very smart man who knew how to do math in his head.

When the children could not longer continue their education in their small town, Isabel and the children moved to the town where Isabel’s husband lived. One of their

daughters was a secretary at a government office in Mexico. The other children went to high school for a few years.

Once the children were educated and moved away, Isabel had the opportunity to go back to school. She mentioned that there were “escuelas para analfabetos” (schools for illiterate people). One of her husband’s nephews was a teacher at the school in their town and invited Isabel to participate. He also invited his uncle, but he was always working. Isabel took this opportunity and finished secondary school (9th grade). She recalled the graduation party and was very proud of her achievement. She decided to spend more time at home and did not continue on to 10th grade.

Some of Isabel’s children moved to the United States. One daughter moved here 25 years ago, and married a man from Mexico who had American citizenship. She later became a citizen and back in 2007 the couple invited Isabel and her husband to come and visit them. They decided to stay, since by then there were five sons and daughters living in the area. The couple lived with the daughter that first moved to the United States and her family. Isabel mentioned that her husband said: “Así sufrimos nosotros, porque sufrimos en nuestra juventud, Dios nos tomó en cuenta y ahora estamos aquí” (we suffered like this, because we suffered when we were young, God took us into account and we are here now).

Isabel helped her daughter taking care of the three children before and after school, cleaning and cooking while the daughter worked at the cannery in the area and her husband for a construction company. The couple owned their home and Isabel was very happy and proud of them.

Isabel knows how to do a variety of tasks. She recalled using all kinds of herbs for different purposes and she said that she bought them in stores around the area and brought many of them from her country. She mentioned that if she would have had a chance to study she would choose nursing because she enjoyed helping people.

Education is very important for Isabel. In spring 2011, she and her husband started ESL classes at the local community college. They also attended the Citizenship class because one of the couple's main goals was to become U.S citizens to be able to help their sons and daughters that do not have a resident card, obtain the residency. She said that she felt proud of being part of the college and happy to be able to meet more people.

Isabel liked to read in Spanish. She said that she enjoyed reading about Mexican history and its heroes. At the same time she recalled that she had problems reading because she does not practice reading very often, because she had other chores and a husband to attend. She also mentioned that she did not need to write a lot in Spanish, but she recognized she needed more practice: “cuanto más escribimos, la mano practica y mejoramos” (the more we write, the hand practices and we get better at it).

Observations and student artifacts.

Journaling was an important tool used in this research. I took notes regarding activities, reactions, participation and comments students had both during and after class. When students did writing activities, I collected those and kept them in order to analyze progress. Codes that surfaced the data were: prior schooling, comprehensive input, literacy development, funds of knowledge and the affective.

Prior schooling.

Formal schooling played a mayor role in this research. The difference of opportunities that the three students had on attending school showed how the lack of education affected their reading and writing. Clara attended school for about three months. Since she lived in a ranch, access to school was not easy. The long walk, her mother's illness, and poverty stopped her from being able to continue her education. During the home visit, interview and class, she mentioned several times that she could not learn because she had headaches and thinks they were the cause of having a very hard life. At the same time she showed excitement when she was able to write a few words and others could read her writing to convey meaning.

Carmen had the opportunity to attend school a lot longer than Clara. She mentioned that her mother was the one that sent her because she wanted her daughter to learn how to read and write. Carmen had to walk for a long period of time to get to school, but her persistence and family support helped her obtain an education.

Isabel was very lucky to be able to go to school for as long as she did. She completed fourth grade when she was a child. Her father knew that education was good for his daughter since he was well educated and her mother wanted her to have knowledge of reading and writing since she herself did not. Later in life, Isabel saw the opportunity to go back to school when she was invited by a family member and took the opportunity to finish all the way to ninth grade. She commented that it was not easy, but she knew it was important to learn.

These three women saw the importance of education even as an adult. They were attending ESL classes in order to learn English and be able to communicate in English in

their new country. At the same time, they knew that it was also important to become an American citizen in order to live a better life and have more opportunities in the United States.

Comprehensible input.

According to Krashen comprehensible input is making the message understandable (Krashen, 1984). During class, I observed Mrs. Smith using total physical response to make sure her students understood the concept that she was teaching. Some students asked for clarification and a few times for her to translate what she was saying. Since Mrs. Smith had a limited knowledge of Spanish, she asked other students for help translating, and many times the same students served as the ‘more capable peer’ the person who helps or provides guidance as the person learns, when further explanation was needed.

During the time I worked with the participants, I used Spanish when speaking. The amount of participation increased as students felt comfortable speaking in their L1. Their affective filter was low and were able to carry longer discussions about topics being presented in class. According to Krashen, (1985), “Speaking is a result of acquisition and not its cause.” Speech cannot be taught directly but ‘emerges’ on its own as a result of building competence via comprehensive input” (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 47). It was clearly noted that output was stronger when students were able to use their L1.

Reading was another area where the participants showed willingness to participate. During most of the classes, I brought different kinds of books and articles for students to read aloud both in and out of the classroom. Carmen borrowed a few children’s books, such as “Un Pez, Dos Peces, Pez Rojo, Pez Azul” (One Fish, Two Fish,

Red Fish, Blue Fish), “Cucu, Cucu Cantaba la Rana” (Cucu, Cucu, Sang the Frog), “Lo que los Maestros no Pueden Hacer” (What Teachers Can’t Do), among others to read to her grandchildren. She mentioned that practicing reading was good for her and the children enjoyed spending the time with her. She borrowed the books for about five weeks. During class, Clara, Carmen and Isabel had the opportunity to read aloud some of these books as well.

I also brought news articles from the Internet for the participants to read. One of my observations was that the three of them had problems when they encountered longer or unfamiliar words. When this problem rose, I told them to break the words in smaller parts and since in Spanish there is a one to one letter sound correspondence, to read those slower. Unfamiliar words were discussed, and many times one of the participants knew what the word meant or we would try to deduct what the meaning was according to other words in the sentence.

Literacy development.

For these students, enjoyment was a result of being able to read and understand the context of the text as well as being able to write in Spanish. According to Vygotsky, who believed that culture, social factors and language affected the cognitive development, his theory of zone of proximal development is a clear example of how important is the role of the environment because it refers to what a learner is capable to do on his own and what he is capable of doing with the more capable peer. Scaffolding is provided. Scaffolding is what the learner can do with more help (Walton, 2010). This process needs to be initiated by the learner. He viewed interaction with peers and an effective way of developing skills and strategies. This is why teachers need to make sure

that students work in groups with others that have different abilities in order to provide scaffolding for others, since each learner brings his own special set of neurons to class (Zull, 2002, p. 104).

During writing time, I asked students to write simple sentences in Spanish answering some comprehension questions I brought as part of the curriculum. The questions were related to the story as well as their opinions about the topic of the book. When we read “Lo que los Maestros no Pueden Hacer” (What Teachers Can’t Do), the questions were:

- What is your favorite part?
- Did you have a chore at school? What was it?
- What is the book about?

Isabel was the participant that could write a little bit faster, followed by Carmen and Clara. The first participant had a fewer mistakes in spelling than the other two students. This was clear in the analysis of the writing portfolios. Some of these mistakes that the three participants made throughout the writing process were common mistakes: the use of: “ll” instead of “y”, “i” instead of “ y”, missing the “h” (the h does not have a sound in Spanish, unless accompanied by the letter “c”), misuse of “s”, “c” and “z” (they have very similar sounds), the use of “b” instead of “v”, “nb” for “mb”, lack of accent marks, capital letters and punctuation marks. We talked in class about their errors and students took homework home to be able to practice. “If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided” (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 165).

The students were aware of their lack of writing practice and throughout the research they mentioned: “yo no sé escribir” (I do not know how to write), mentioned Carmen, as well as Clara, who said: “escribir es difícil, tengo que pensar y mirar lo que escribí para completar las palabras con las letras correctas” (writing is hard, I have to think and look back to what I wrote to complete the words with the right letters). She also commented that she had a hard time distinguishing between the letters “b” and “d”, since they looked almost the same. I explained what the difference was (the side where the circle is), and she seemed a little bit less confused. Carmen mentioned that when she learned to write in Spanish, she learned cursive, and that is how she wrote because she did not learn to print. Clara read her sentences aloud to verify that she was not missing letters or words. At the same time Isabel, who knew how to write more, served as the “more capable peer” and helped the other two participants. At the end of the research project, Clara mentioned “esto sí sirve, nosotras escribimos y María nos ayuda a corregir” (this works, we write and María helps us correct our work).

Another writing activity that students seemed to enjoy was writing on the board. This was a voluntary task, where students were invited to write words using letter combinations that we learned that day. They could write many words and sometimes they did not have the right spelling. I did not correct the mistakes unless these interfered with the meaning of the word. Students were motivated to read and write and were very excited to be able to decode words. The participants helped each other. Everybody has something to contribute to the group. According to Donato (1994) “in this way, independent evidence is given that peer scaffolding results in linguistic development within the individual” (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 217).

Funds of knowledge.

Other activities like the reading of the article “Segundo Gran Satélite Caerá a la Tierra en Octubre” (Big Satellite will Crash on Earth in October), was a great activity since the participants listened to the Spanish news on the radio and on television. I used this article, found on the Internet, because I heard Clara and Carmen talking about some pieces of the satellite that fell in California. Clara had family members there, and was worried about them. I wanted to use their funds of knowledge.

The article was read aloud during two consecutive classes, one hour each, in which the three participants showed excitement to be able to read more about their topic of interest. Turns were taken while reading, and like it was mentioned before, longer words were broken into pieces and read slower. Sometimes they encountered unknown words which had accent marks, and that gave me the opportunity to talk a little bit about how to read and pronounce accent marks, when to use them and how they can change the meaning of the word if not used. I was amazed at the level of comprehension and vocabulary that the participants had, since the level of the article was not low. While Carmen was reading, I noticed that she knew how to read abbreviations, like “km” (kilometer) among others. At the end of each paragraph, I asked comprehension questions to make sure the reading was understood, and Isabel offered very detailed explanations of the text.

At the end of the reading, I asked the participants to write about their reaction to the topic. Isabel wrote a paragraph showing how important the news are for people, while Carmen and Clara wrote shorter sentences about their concerns about the satellite.

Reading the article “‘Jova Azotó México y Causó Dos Muertos” (Jova Hit Mexico and Caused Two Deaths), gave me a greater perspective at the participants funds of knowledge. This four-page article was found on the internet because I had hear from a Mexican friend living there that there had been a very bad storm for a few days and this was very uncommon on that part of the country, on that time of the year. I thought students heard the news and I wanted to bring something related to what was happening in their countries to their families. The reading was done aloud over the course of two days by students. Students shared their comprehension by relating the text to their knowledge of storms and “tiempos de aguas” (raining season). Isabel shared her concern that the seasons were changing because of global warming. Clara mentioned that sometimes people were not able to communicate with their loved ones when something of this magnitude happened and how concerned people could be. Carmen said that she had heard the news on television during that day.

Once the reading was over, I asked the participants to share their thoughts by writing their concerns on a piece of paper. The students shared that they were very concerned because the hurricane killed people “se trata de perdidas de seres humanos [sic]” (it is about losing human beings), and also that it affected their country: “sentimos demasiado nuestros paisanos por que somos de alla y sentimos lo que pasa [sic]” (we feel for our people because we are from there and we feel what happens). Another discussion we had was how the raining season affected agriculture. The three participants had knowledge of irrigation during the dry season and how the water is stored for that time of the year, because they grew up in the countryside and their families depended on the work in the fields for survival.

Affective filter.

Comprehensive input is not enough for learning to take place. According to Krashen (1992):

The Affective Filter Hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their affective filters. Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong affective filter—even if they understand the message, the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the Language Acquisition Device. Those with attitudes more conducive to second language acquisition will not only seek and obtain more input, they will also have a lower or weaker filter. They will be more open to the input, and it will strike ‘deeper’. (Mitchell and Myles, 2004, pg. 48)

Carmen, Clara and Isabel mentioned feeling comfortable in the classrooms. They had been with their ESL teacher and I since they started attending classes three quarters ago. During the interview, Clara mentioned that she liked her teachers. She mentioned that she met the ESL coordinator from church a long time ago, and that is how she decided to come to school. Isabel had a similar story and mentioned: “las maestras nos enseñan con su corazón” (the teachers teach us with their hearts). She also added that she did not have anything to complain about because all the staff was very professional and nice. Carmen commented that she felt very comfortable and enjoyed going to school because she liked the teachers and peers.

These participants loved to talk about a variety of topics, especially when it was something related to their lives. All their talking was done in Spanish since they did not know enough English. During the ESL class, which was conducted in English, they were very quiet and rarely participated in the conversation. Many times, the teacher would ask them a question and they would answer using their Spanish. The teacher would help them translate the answer to English and they would repeat it very slowly and with difficulties.

During the bilingual class, the participants seemed to be more open and participated with the help of the other Latino students. Everyone participated since they were welcome to write either in English or Spanish I came around to help them with the process. Students with more formal education were always available to assist because they knew that other people needed the help. Many of these students had been in the same class for at least three quarters and knew each other from either their ESL class or the community.

Quantitative Data

As part of this research I wanted to see if the participants showed growth in English. At the beginning of the quarter, students were administered a standardized test, CASAS form 28 or 82, depending on their prior scores attained. This reading test assessed students in English in areas such as:

- discrimination and recognition among upper and lower letters
- sight words
- telling time
- identifying months, dates and days of the week

- reading, interpreting and following directions found on public signs
- counting currency
- completing a personal information form
- reading information to make or keep medical and dental appointments

At the end of the research, during week six, I administered the tests, according to the next suggested tests, which was CASAS 28, to the participants. Students took about half an hour to complete the test. As shown in table 1, the results of the test show some improvement

<u>Student name</u>	<u>Pretest score</u>	<u>Posttest score</u>
Isabel	175	181
Carmen	176	187
Clara	176	184

At the beginning of the project, these participants were in the Beginning Literacy or Pre-Beginning ESL level. As it is shown in the CASAS level descriptors, students placed in this level are communicating just by gestures and function minimally in English. The increase of a few points placed the students in the Low Beginning ESL level. At this level of proficiency, students are functioning in a very limited way in English, recognize letters and numbers, as well as recognizing and reading common sight words. For further explanation see Appendix A.

I decided to fill a class profile competency form in order to compare the answers that were missed. The results are shown in Appendix B. We can see that the three students missed some of the same answers as other students missed a few that the other students got right.

These tests show that literacy development of the native language is very important for the acquisition of the second language. Student's affective filters are lower when they are able to get comprehensible input in their native language, as well as other students can serve as the 'more capable peer', making them feel an important part of the classroom.

Chapter 4: Description of Research Findings

Connections Between the Research Question, Literature and Research Findings

The main goal of this action research project was literacy development in the ELLs' native language in order to transfer some of those skills to English. It is well known that L1 literacy, concept formation and academic skills are transferred to the L2 (Ovando & Collier, 1998; Chamot, 1981). By being able to achieve this goal, students who participated in this research made gains in their CASAS tests. Many studies advocate the importance of the L1 development (McKay & Wong, 1988; Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Felix, 2009; Larrota & Ramirez, 2009, Huerta, 2009). Through the collection qualitative and quantitative data, such as interviews' artifacts, observations, pretests, posttests, and home visit field notes correlations between the literature and the research question became evident.

Over the years, I have experienced teaching ESL students with various levels of prior education. I have learned that in many countries education is not a right, but a privilege. Poverty, as well as the lack of access to schools, is one of the main reasons many ELLs did not have the opportunity to attend school for an extended amount of time. While conducting this research, I found out that the schools that the participants attended in their native countries, was far away from their homes. They also had to work growing up in their families' fields.

The affective filter also played a major role in these students (Krashen, 1992). By being able to use Spanish in the classroom and receiving comprehensive input in their language, Clara, Carmen and Isabel mentioned feeling comfortable and enjoying learning how to write and read in their language.

During class time, participants were able to write and read in Spanish. The reading was mainly done aloud. Their comprehension was remarkable and when the person reading needed help, the more capable peer helped her by not only deciphering the word, but also placing the student in the zone of proximal development (Zull, 2002). The more capable peer was not only there to help with the reading, but also with the writing. Many times, Isabel, who received more education in Spanish than Carmen and Clara, was able to help by answering to spelling questions.

It is known that acquisition of a language takes place in the social context (Gass & Selinker, 2001). During the time that I observed the participants interact with their ELL teacher, students and teacher negotiated meanings. For example, the teacher would use total physical response and tried to explain a few concepts in the students' language. At the same time, the students helped her with the translation and felt proud to be able to teach their instructor. The teacher's personality also played a major role in the classroom. Mrs. Smith was open to questions and comments, as well comfortable when receiving feedback on her Spanish. When Clara, Carmen and Isabel worked with me in the Reading for Civics class, we used a bilingual approach for a couple of hours, while working with all the students, and then instruction was done in Spanish for about an hour when we were by ourselves. The participants were very talkative in Spanish, and were able to share ideas as well as concepts.

Recommendations

Getting to know the students.

With a changing population, teachers need to be prepared to work with students from different backgrounds.

Teachers need to learn what to expect from each student based on their schema, background, education in their first language, and culture. We can immerse students in the learning by creating curricula related to their schema, creating opportunities for input, modeling activities, giving enough input, using group activities, and making personal connections with them, and learning about them.

Taking every opportunity to participate in workshops about diversity and language acquisition is a great idea. Getting to know students' funds of knowledge is essential (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005). In addition, conducting home visits gives teachers an inside look at students' lives. By finding out more about the students we are serving, teachers can plan culturally relevant curriculum to students' needs and interests, making lessons meaningful, and by doing this, attendance would improve.

Using authentic assessment provides a good way for teachers and students to see their improvement. In many cases, state mandated test would have to be used, but at the same time, teachers can develop portfolios, make observations and have students participating in their assessments. By learning about linguistics and language development, teachers can be aware of what to expect in their classrooms.

It is understandable if teachers do not have time to get to visit a student at their house. These time constraints can be accommodated by having short interviews that could be arranged before or after school to get to know students better. During these interviews, the teacher should ask open ended questions about their backgrounds, prior schooling and interests, without judging the students from their answers. This way, teachers can learn about their students' cultures and knowledge. Being able to implement

curricula about students' culture and interests would create a learning environment where the instructor serves a facilitator instead of using direct instruction.

By conducting home visits or interviews, students feel a connection between themselves and the teacher. The relationship created by the teacher and the student is very important for the student to feel comfortable in the classroom. Many times the teacher is the only person the student knows outside his/her family (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). The teacher needs to be a role model for students.

Keeping communication open between the teacher and student creates a sense of belonging and welcoming. If a student stops attending class, teachers should call the student to see what is happening. Many times, students feel discouraged or have a problem and stop coming to school. A phone call reminding them that they are missed in class can make the difference, in addition to teachers listening to their problems in order to direct them to community resources. This is why teachers need to be aware of what is available in their community and have connections with these resources. Teaching ESL is not only teaching English, but it is also important to be there to serve students with their needs.

Program model.

As Mrs. Smith and I believe, students that have low literacy in their first language need separate class time, and if available, separate literacy classes conducted in their L1. When students have the opportunity to develop literacy skills, those skills transfer to the L2. The problem that many programs encounter is the budget and finding bilingual staff to instruct those classes. Also, in many large cities, where there are more variety of languages spoken by students, it could be difficult to find teachers suitable for these

positions. The community should be used as a resource. Many times, by getting to know students, one can find out from them if there are other members of the family, or community that could help as tutors in the classrooms, in the case that the teacher is not bilingual in the language of the student. In the case of this research project, I was bilingual in English and Spanish, as well as other teachers, and the main L1 of the students was Spanish. This gave me the opportunity to work one on one with them on literature development. In the case that a teacher feels comfortable in the student's L1, this one should be used to promote reading and writing.

Another program that colleges or community programs can adopt, if students, needing the intervention are Spanish speakers, is a program called Plazas Comunitarias. This is a certified program by the Mexican Secretary of Education, in which literacy in Spanish is developed. Depending on the level of literacy of the student in Spanish, he or she is placed in the class, which is conducted either in the classroom or in the computer. Besides this literacy in Spanish, Plazas Comunitarias provides "other comprehensive services like counseling, job development, legal services, and parent education (Lukes, 2009, pg. 167).

The idea of a bilingual library is another option. During my research, the participants borrowed Spanish and bilingual books. I created a lending library where the participants could take books home to read and share with their grandchildren. Another idea is to connect students to the college or public library. A field trip is encouraged in order to be acquainted with the place, as well as to fill out applications. Having activities to do with their families not only helped the students in this research but they practiced their reading, but they spent quality together as a family. Different studies show how

important these family activities are (Larrota & Ramirez, 2009, Rivera, 1990) in strengthening families' ties.

Areas for Further Investigation

There is still research to be done about the study of how the development of literacy affects the acquisition of the L2. In this study, Carmen, Clara and Isabel were the participants. More research can be done implementing this study model in classrooms where there are more than a few participants and more than one native language spoken by the students.

There are other areas that also need to be researched. The proposed program models can vary according to the population teachers are serving, budgets and willingness to work the extra mile in order to accommodate students in the classroom. Also different states can demand standardized tests, creating a conflict between the curricula being taught in the classroom and the standards that the state imposes on the program. Attendance is another issue, and as teachers who work with adults, the teacher needs to remember that these people have responsibilities and many times do not attend on a regular basis. This could be a product of family issues, work schedules and even immigration status. The teacher needs to be prepared to work and change the lesson of the day according to comes to class on that day.

Home visits and interviews are a great way to learn about the students. At the same time, some students would not be comfortable to talk about their past. There is more research to be done about how to be able to communicate with students who come from cultures where this practice is not common.

Conclusion

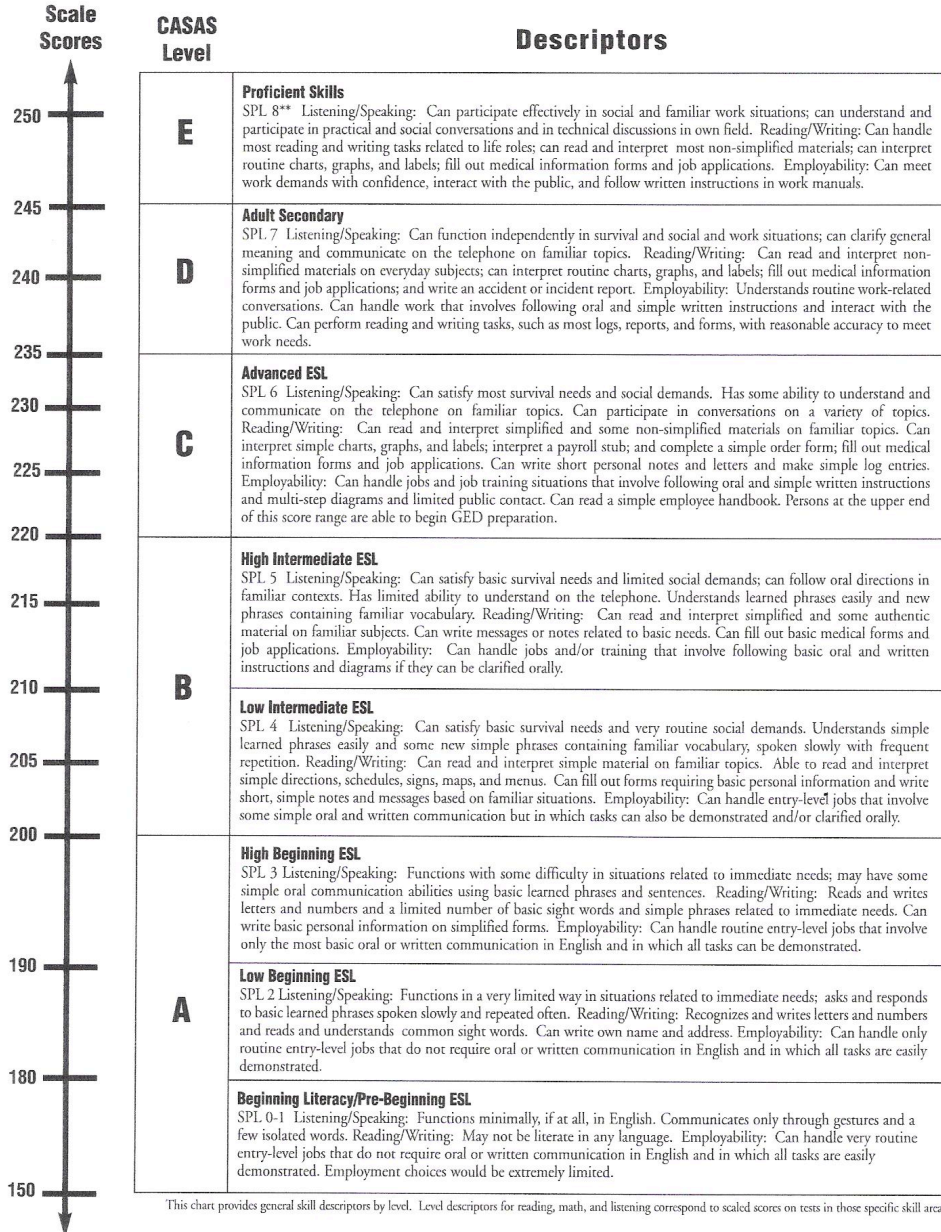
In this research I looked at how literacy development in the L1 affects the acquisition of the L2. Through the collection of students' artifacts, home visits, interviews, observing, and teaching literacy in Spanish, I can conclude that literacy development in the native language is necessary to be able to acquire a second language.

By developing literacy in the L1, students are able to build vocabulary, concepts, and transfer those skills to the L2. By scaffolding listening, writing, speaking and reading, students are able to make connections in their brains and learning takes place. Using students' funds of knowledge and culturally relevant curricula helps the student with their affective filter, making learning more accessible.

The use of the native language allows learners to discuss their current life experiences using their own words. It also allows them to retain ties to their culture and past (Rivera, 1990). Teaching a second language class does not only mean to learn theories, plan a class and deliverer it, but also remembering that our students are people from different backgrounds bringing their culture to the classroom and can have different needs. Instructors need to be patient, open minded, and make their classrooms a nurturing environment in order for learning to take place.

Appendix A: CASAS Descriptors

CASAS Skill Level Descriptors for ESL



Appendix B: Test Competencies

CLASS PROFILE BY COMPETENCY		◆ Comp- Task	STUDENT NAMES																	
Form 27 - Reading Beginning Literacy Life Skills			Clara	Isabel	Carmen															
Appraisal Score																				
Raw Score																				
Scaled Score																				
1	u																			
2	G																			
3	R																			
4	m																			
5	B/b																			
6	time																			
7	name		X	X																
8	DATE/date																			
9	STOP/stop																			
10	Clock time	2.3.1-5																		
11	Thursday/Thurs.	2.3.2-2																		
12	Public signs	2.5.4-4	X	X	X															
13	Price label	1.2.1-4																		
14	Clothing sizes	1.1.9-4	X																	
15	Bus signs	2.2.2-4																		
16	Public signs	2.5.4-4																		
17	Address	0.2.2-1	X	X	X															
18	Measurement: 1 cup	1.1.4-5																		
19	Coins	1.1.6-4	X																	
20	Arrows	2.2.2-4																		
21	Tape recorder buttons	1.7.3-3																		
22	Appointment card	3.1.2-2		X																
23	Low-Med-High settings	1.7.3-3			X															
24	Social Security number	0.2.2-1			X															
25	Signature	0.2.2-1	X	X	X															
26	Birth date	0.2.2-1	X																	
27	Month	2.3.2-2	X																	
28	Traffic signs	2.2.2-4	X	X																
29	Year	0.2.2-1																		
30	Date	2.3.2-1	X	X																

◆ First three numbers = CASAS competency. See the CASAS Competency List. Fourth number = Task: 1 Fill-in-the-blank; 2 Charts, maps, consumer billings, matrices, graphs or tables; 3 Stories, articles, paragraphs, sentences, directions or pictures; 4 Signs, price tags, advertisements or product labels; 5 Measurement scales or diagrams; 6 Selection of correct picture or response from oral cue.

Dear Participant:

My name is María Rodríguez, and I am currently working towards obtaining a Masters of Education at The Evergreen State College. In acquiescence with this program I will be conducting a case study entitled "How does the use of adult ELLs' first language affect the developmental literacy in the beginning ESL class?" The goal of my research is to determine how the use of the native language in the classroom influences the acquisition of English. I will be conducting interviews, home visits, collecting observations, students' work, audio recording and taking photos of students as they work.

Any risks to the students will be minimal. Students might feel a small amount of embarrassment due to their actions being documented. Any information provided will be destroyed after the final project has been completed. Students will not be offered compensation for their participation in this study.

Your interactions and responses will only be used in creating my Action Research Project. My fellow cohort peers, as well as my professors, will view this final product. All confidentiality of the participants will be maintained. At your request, I will provide you with a copy of the final draft.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this project or your participation in it. You can call me at 360-807-2065. My e-mail address is argenmaria@hotmail.com. The person to contact if you experience problems as result of your participation in this project is John McLain, Academic Dean at The Evergreen State College, Library 2002, Olympia, WA 98505: phone (360) 867-6972.

Thank you for your participation and assistance!

Sincerely,

María Rodríguez

Appendix D: Consent Agreement

I, _____, hereby agree to serve as a subject in the research project title "How does the use of adults ELLs' first language affect the developmental literacy in a beginning ESL class?" This will take place in the fall quarter of 2011. It has been explained to me that its purpose is to gather information about the benefits of using the native language in the classroom.

I have been informed that all data collected through observations and interviews will only be used for an Action Research project by María Rodríguez for her Master's in Education Program at The Evergreen State College. I also understand that any information that I

provide will be kept confidential and that my identity will also be protected.

I understand that the risks to me will be minimal, if at all. I also understand that no compensation will be provided for my participation in this research. María Rodríguez has agreed to provide, at my request, a copy of the final draft of her paper.

I understand that if I have any questions about this project or my participation in it, I can call María Rodríguez at 360-807-2065, or email her at argenmaria@hotmail.com. Likewise, the person to contact if I experience problems as a result of my participation in this project is John McLain, Academic Dean at The Evergreen State College, Library 2002, Olympia, WA 98505; Phone (360) 867.6972.

I understand that I will be recorded, interviewed, visited and observed solely for data recollection. I also understand that any information taken will be destroyed after the project has been completed.

I understand that my participation in this project is completely voluntary. I am free to withdraw my permission at any time before or during the project.

I have read and agree to the foregoing.

Participant Name _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

Appendix E: Consent Agreement in Spanish

Yo, _____, estoy de acuerdo en participar en el proyecto de María Rodríguez, quien está estudiando como implementar actividades para ayudar a adultos a desarrollar el primer idioma y poder transferir esos conocimientos al inglés. Estoy informado que la información recolectada por María Rodríguez sólo será utilizada en su trabajo. Las identidades de los estudiantes serán protegidas y no serán compartidas con nadie.

Comprendo que no hay riesgos en esta investigación. Una copia del trabajo final será compartida conmigo si así lo decido. Entiendo que durante el tiempo de clase seré grabado, observado, entrevistado y María hará una visita a mi casa. Esta información sólo será utilizada para reunir los datos, y será destruida después de que el proyecto haya sido completado. Sé que participar en este proyecto es voluntario; puedo dejar de participar en él en cualquier momento.

Si tengo alguna pregunta acerca de este proyecto o mi participación en ella, puedo llamar a María Rodríguez al 360-807-2065 o comunicarme por correo electrónico a argenmaria@hotmail.com.

Si tengo problemas, la persona a la que debo contactar es John McLain, Academic Grants Manager en The Evergreen State College, Library 2002, Olympia, WA 98505: su número es

(360) 867-6045.

Nombre: _____

Firma: _____ Fecha: _____

References

- Bigelow, M & Schwarz, L. (2010) *Adult English Language Learners with Limited Literacy*. National Institute for Literacy. Washington, D. C.
- Chamot, A.U. (1981) Table 1:1: Second-language learning model. Handout. July 22, 2010. Masters in Education Core Class. The Evergreen State College.
- Dudley-Marling, C. and Lucas, K. (2009). Pathologizing the language and culture of poor children. *Language Arts*. 85(5), p. 362-370.
- Felix, A. *The adult heritage Spanish speaker in the foreign language classroom: a phenomenography*. In the International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education. Vol. 22, No. 2, March-April 2009, 145-162.
- Fillmore, W., and Snow, C.E. (2000). *What teachers need to know about language*. Paper presented to the Center of Applied Linguistics.
- Gass, S. and Slinker, L. (2001). *The role of the Native Language: An Historical Review*. In Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course. London: Lawrence Erlbaum. p. 53-77.

- Gonzalez, N., Moll, L. and Amanti C. (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities and Classrooms*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Gutierrez, K. et. Al. (2002). "Sounding American": The consequences of the new reforms on English language learners. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 37(3), 328-343.
- Huerta, G. (2009). *Educational Foundations: Diverse Histories, Diverse Perspectives*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Krashen, S. (1994). *Bilingual Education and Second Language Acquisition Theory*. In Bilingual Education Office (Ed.) *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (2nd ed., p.47-75). Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assess. Center, CA State University.
- Larrotta, C. & Ramírez, Y. (2009). *Literacy Benefits for Latina/o Parents Engaged in a Spanish Literacy Project*. In *Journal of Adolescent Literacy* 52(7) International Reading Association (621-630).
- Lindfors, J. (1987). *Children's Language and Learning*. Englewoods Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Lukes, M. (2009). *We Thought They Had Forgotten Us: Research, Policy, and Practice in the Education of Latino Immigrant Adults*. In *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 8(2), 161-172. Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, New York University.
- McKay, S. and Wong, S. (1988). *Language Diversity: Problem or Resource?* Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

- Menken, K. & Kleyn, T. (2010). *The long term impact of subtractive schooling in the educational experiences of secondary English language learners*. In *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Vol. 12, No. 4, July 2010, 399-417.
- Mertens, D. (2010). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity With Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods*. California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Mitchell, R. & Myles, F. (2004). *Second Language Learning Theories*. London, Great Britain: Hodder Education an Hachette UK Company.
- O'Malley M. and Valdez Pierce L. (1996). *Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners: Practical Approaches for Teachers*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company,
- Ovando, J. and Collier, V. (1998). *Bilingual and ESL Classrooms: Teaching in Multicultural Contexts*. Boston: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Reeves, J. (2004). "Like Everybody Else": *Equalizing Educational Opportunity for English Language Learners*. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring 2004), p. 43-46.
- Richards, J. (1994). *Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, The Whole Curriculum, The Whole Community*. New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Rivera, K. (1990). *Developing Native Language Literacy in Language Minority Adults*. ERIC Digest: 1990/10.
- Wright, W. (2006). *A Catch-22 for Language Learners*. Educational Leadership.

November 2006, 22-27

Zull, J. (2002). *The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning*. Sterling, VA.: Stylus Publishing, LLC.