Effects of Sheltered Instructional Strategies on the Active Engagement of English Language Learners in an Elementary Classroom

Kristine Weldin

The Evergreen State College

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Grace Huerta Ph.D, Member of the Faculty

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Abstract

Through my experiences as a teacher and as a guest teacher, I found a lack of engagement on the part of English language learners in the general education classroom. With an ongoing increase in ELL populations, teachers will need to be prepared to fit the demand of their students. The intent of this research project was to look at a specific ELL strategy, sheltered Instruction, and how it affected the active engagement of ELL students in the classroom. The research took place in a second grade classroom and focused on one ELL student deemed highly disengaged during most classroom activities. With the use of video transcripts, field observations, interviews, and the collection of student artifacts I was able to determine that the use of Sheltered Instructional strategies had a positive effect on the active engagement of the ELL student.

Keywords: English language learners, engagement, sheltered instruction

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Chapter One: Introduction and Literature Review

In my first year of substitute teaching, I had the opportunity to work in a multitude of elementary classrooms and school districts. Every school had a support system designed to assist English Language Learners (ELLs). Even though these schools all had some type of support system, the ways in which they assisted English as a second language (ESL) students, differed. Looking at these different ESL programs, one commonality has been blaring. English language learners lack engagement toward academic content. Even with services such as pull-out ESL, ELLs are lacking in engagement during their time in the general education classroom. Many studies have shown the importance of engagement in language acquisition (Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Leow, 1997; Qi & Lapkin; 2001; Schmidt, 1993; Storch, 2008).

School racial-ethnic proportion, the proportion between majority and minority students, may have an influence on student engagement (Johnson, Corsnoes & Elder, 2001; Marks, 2000). When minority students do not feel comfortable or socially integrated at school, they tend to withdraw from heterogeneous classmates and classroom activities (Johnson et al., 2001). Other school characteristics may also affect minority student engagement. Minority students more often attend larger schools. The size of the school lends itself to greater numbers of absenteeism, drop outs, low academic achievement, and various ranges of academic engagement (Johnson et al., 2001). In educational research, the question of whether minority students are less engaged academically has been posed (Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996 as cited in Johnson et al., 2001). More recent research on this subject has provided mixed evidence on racial-

ethnic engagement differences (Johnson et al., 2001; Marks, 2000). Students who are engaged are "more likely to learn, to find the experience rewarding, to graduate, and to pursue higher education" (Marks, 2000, p. 154). Students who are academically engaged are "less likely to drop out of high school and [less likely] to engage in problem behavior and delinquency" (Bryk & Thum, 1989; Crosnoe, Erickson, & Dornbusch ; Farkas, et al. 1990; Hirchi 1969; Jenkins 1995 Newmann 1981; Newmann, Wehlage, Lamborn, 1992 as cited in Johnson, Corsnoes & Elder, 2001, p. 318).

Even though there is a strong emphasis on the significance of student engagement in school and the classroom, studies have shown low levels of engagement over the past two decades (Goodlad, 1984; Oakes, 1985; Sizer, 1984; Steinberg, 1996 as cited in Marks, 2000). Many of these studies have attributed low engagement to "curricular fragmentation, weak instruction, and low expectations for student learning" (Marks, 2000, p. 154). Student disengagement has been linked to adverse affects on student achievement, which then can lead to deteriorated student behavior (Johnson, Corsnoes & Elder, 2001; Marks, 2000). In secondary classrooms, this disengagement is the result of ineffective teaching strategies. The affliction of chronic disengagement has been reported in 40% to 60% of secondary schools students (Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin, & Cusock, 1986; Steinberg, 1996 as cited in Marks, 2000).

In this action research project, I focused on how ELL engagement can be increased in a general education classroom. My research question asked, how does the implementation of sheltered instruction strategies affect the active engagement of English language learners in a general education 2nd grade classroom? Observation took place in a classroom where sheltered instruction was put into practice. I tried to determine if there

was a correlation between sheltered instruction and the ESL student's engagement. I observed an elementary teacher that used sheltered instructional based strategies to support the language and academic achievement of her ELL students. The purpose of sheltered instruction is to make content comprehensible to ELL students in the general education classroom (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000). The study focal point was on one specific student who was learning English as a second language. Observations focused on an English language learner who was at an intermediate level of ESL proficiency. Interviews and observations were conducted, as well as the collection of student artifacts.

Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical perspectives of this study are gathered from theories by Lev Vygotsky, Michael Long, and Richard Schmidt. Vygotsky maintained that language and knowledge develop symbiotically through social interaction (1978). In other words, learning is social and knowledge is constructed through interaction (Vygotsky, 1978; Wedin, 2010). The theories of zone of proximal development and scaffolding are essential to an accommodating classroom environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Language learning takes place when students are supported by their teachers and more capable peers. Learning is social; "The educational experiences of adolescents occur not in a vacuum, but within the school institution" (Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2001, p. 319).

In 1978, Evelyn Hatch published two seminal papers on language learning and interaction. She invited and challenged researchers to look at interaction as a means to second language (L2) development (Pica, 1994). Since then, much research has been focused on the role of interaction in L2 acquisition. The work of Michael Long has often

shaped the discourse on second language acquisition (SLA) and interaction. Long's hypothesis of interaction maintained that when interaction occurs between a non-native speaker and a native speaker, an environment is created where language acquisition can transpire (Long, 1983; Pica, 1994; Storch 2009).

Long's 1996 version of the interaction hypothesis is as follows:

> It is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 processing capacity, and that these resources are brought together most usefully, although not exclusively, during negotiation for meaning. Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 developments, at least for vocabulary, morphology and language-specific syntax, and essential for learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts.
>
> (Long, 1996, p. 414 as cited in Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 174)

When non-native and native English speakers engaged in dialogue, they are more likely to use conversational tactics such as repetitions, confirmation checks[1], comprehension checks[2] and clarification requests[3] (Mitchell & Miles, 2004). These collaborative efforts are beneficial for language learning. Long's theory also argued that L2 learning is facilitated by self awareness caused by authentic interaction (Long, 1983; Pica, 1994; Storch, 2009). This self awareness allows the second language learner to produce output in their target language and become an active participant in their knowledge gain (Long,

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[1] Confirmation checks: Moves by which one speaker seeks confirmation of the other's preceding utterance through repetition, with rising intonation, of what was perceived to be all or part of the preceding utterance (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 168).

[2] Clarification requests: Moves by which on speaker seeks assistance in understanding the other speaker's preceding utterance through questions and statements such as *I don't understand*, or imperatives such as *Please repeat* (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 168).

[3] Comprehension checks: Moves by which one speaker attempts to determine whether the other speaker has understood a preceding message (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 168).

1983; Pica, 1994). The main component essential to my research, is Long's focus on the importance of interactions in SLA.

Another significant researcher in the field of second language acquisition is Richard Schmidt. Schmidt proposed that noticing, the act of putting attention toward a form of comprehensible input[4], is essential for second language development (Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1993). Schmidt also defined three different levels of attention: registration, noticing, and understanding. These levels were dependant on the level of awareness involved (Schmidt, 1993; Storch, 2008). Registration involves recognition; this was where no true cognizant awareness was taking place. In other words, the student may be aware of something, but there is no metacognition of their awareness being experienced. Noticing occurs when recognition and awareness happen concurrently. Finally, Schmidt describes that understanding "involves a higher level of awareness than noticing because it involves more complex processing in long-term memory" (Schmidt, 1993; Storch, 2008, p. 95). In Schmidt's noticing hypothesis, awareness and conscious attention are necessary for language learning to develop (Leow, 1997; Schmidt, 1993). For learning, "noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input" (Leow, 1997, p. 468). These acts of noticing or attentiveness are the very definitions of what engagement is (Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Leow, 1997; Qi & Lapkin; 2001; Schmidt, 1993; Storch, 2008).

[4] Comprehensible Input-From Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Comprehensible input is messages, oral or written, that students understand. This input is slightly beyond the student's current level of language. This input (i+1) leads to acquisition of second language. Ways in which teachers can insure that input is comprehensible, they can use pictures, gestures, tone of voice, and hands-on activities (Freeman & Freeman, 2004).

Engagement

What is engagement? The term engagement is used quite liberally throughout the field of education. Svalberg (2009) defines engagement as "physical or metaphorical close contact and some force driving things forward or pushing in a direction" (p.242). Engagement is essentially where learning happens (Svalberg, 2009). Engagement in the classroom comes in a variety of forms. Academic engagement is the process of specific student behaviors such as: participating in a task, reading aloud, talking about academics and asking and answering questions (Greenwood, Horton & Utley, 2002). Social engagement lends toward student behavior such as participation in classroom community, cooperative learning, and participation in classroom discussions. Students' roles in engagement are linked to students' academic achievement (Greenwood et al., 2002).

In the research paper "Academic Engagement: Current Perspective on Research and Practice," academic achievement was shown to be correlated with engagement in academic responding, and engagement was increased by the use of instructional interventions (Greenwood et al., 2002). This presented itself in significant gains in reading, language, and arithmetic achievement (Greenwood et al., 2002). Students who were the most at-risk for academic failure also showed an increase in academic engagement and achievement. This suggested that the instructional strategies and the inclusion support strategies implemented, worked to increase achievement in at-risk students (Greenwood et al., 2002; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Leow, 1997; Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Schmidt, 1993; Storch, 2008).

Many specific academic behaviors have been linked to academic achievement. In reading, such behaviors as attending, volunteering, and awareness to surroundings were

shown to correlate with academic achievement. In mathematics, such behaviors as, attending, awareness to surroundings, and compliance correlated to achievement (Greenwood et al., 2002; Diperna & Elliott, 2002; DiPerna, Volpe, & Elliot, 2001). DiPerna and Elliott, (2002) defined the concept of academic enablers as "attitudes and behaviors that allow a student to participate in, and ultimately benefit from academic instruction in the classroom" (p. 294). These enablers create opportunities for engagement, motivation, interpersonal skills, and ultimately academic achievement to occur (Diperna & Elliott, 2002; DiPerna, Volpe, & Elliot, 2001). Increasing these engagement behaviors has been connected with increases in student achievement (Greenwood et al., 2002). In a study done by Greenwood, Delquadri, and Hall, three classes of behaviors were identified that correlated to student achievement on standardized tests (1984, as cited in Greenwood et al., 2002). These three classifications were positive, neutral, and negative correlates. Examples of positive behaviors were reading aloud, reading silently, and writing. An example of a neutral behavior included looking at a teacher, while an example of a negative behaviro was looking around. So by increasing academic enablers, attending, volunteering etc., teachers can create an engaging learning environment that promotes academic achievement.

There has been little research on the quality of engagement and its impact on second language learning, (Storch, 2009). Leow, (1997) wanted to look at the qualitative and quantitative role of awareness "in relations to Schmidt's noticing hypothesis in second language acquisition" (p. 467; Schmidt, 1993). By using think aloud protocols in a L2 classroom, Leow found two different types of noticing occurring; simple noticing and noticing accompanied by meta awareness (1997). Leow concluded that noticing

accompanied by meta-awareness was a "more elaborate form of noticing because it contained conceptually driven processes such as hypothesis testing and rule formation" (Storch, 2009, p. 97). The research found that the level of noticing, or engagement to the learning activity, correlated to the learners' aptitude on the L2 task (Leow, 1997).

Qi and Lapkin (2001) examined the role of noticing in the second language writing process. By using a think aloud protocol in an adult ESL classroom, they were able to establish two levels of noticing (2001). These two levels were perfunctory noticing and substantive noticing. Work that required substantive noticing, was more likely to be remembered (Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Storch, 2009). These researchers concluded that the level and quality of noticing, has an impact on L2 learning (Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Storch, 2009). Kuiken and Vedder (2002) conducted a similar study and also concluded that two levels of noticing were apparent in second language development. However, how the level of noticing related to the second language learner's performance was not investigated (Kuiken & Vedder, 2002). As an expansion on all three of these studies, Storch (2008), investigated whether the level of engagement affected the language development of English language learners. This study showed that when L2 learners engage with linguistic choices, no matter at what level of engagement or noticing, language development occurred. Storch (2008) concluded the following:

> The engagement over language items exposes learners to linguistic input positive and corrective feedback and serves as a cognitive focusing device, which generates attention to language choices. However, we need to distinguish between simple attention and a deeper or more elaborate form of attention or understanding (Schmidt, 1995). It is deeper attention to language reflected in

> elaborate engagement over language choices that seems more effective in leading to language learning or in the very least to a more robust memory of learnt forms. (p. 111)

When students participate in elaborate engagement, they "deliberated over alternatives, and questioned and explained their suggestions" (Storch, 2008, p. 110). This elaborate engagement led to a deeper level of understanding (Storch, 2008).

Authentic Instructional Strategies and Engagement

In classrooms where teachers implemented curriculum with low cognitively demanding tasks, student's opportunities for learning were restricted (Wedin, 2010). Second language learning students in these classrooms are not given the opportunity to grow linguistically. Low engagement caused by this restricted curriculum does not allow students to engage in learning which is vital for second language acquisition (Wedin, 2010). Even if classrooms are outwardly friendly, caring, and inclusive, they may not be providing the opportunities for SLA linguistic and cognitive challenges (Wedin, 2010). Specific instructional strategies need to be implemented to support L2 students.

As argued by Seifert (2004), Sutherland, Alder, & Gunter, (2003) and Williams & Baber (1992), many students who struggle early on in their academic careers, may face later challenges such as "learned helplessness, decreased motivation, negative attitudes about school and lower levels of engagements" (as cited in Ornelles, 2007, p. 3). Many struggling students are often observed withdrawing from peer activities (Ornelles, 2007). The use of classroom based interventions has been shown to increase engagement as well as interaction skills in the general education classroom (Ornelles, 2007). In 2007,

Ornelles studied three first-grade students, who were reported as having difficulties "engaging in classroom activities, contributing to classroom discussions and completing assigned projects" (p. 5). Each of the three students were given structured interventions. The outcome of this study was that all three students showed an increase in academic engagement (Ornells, 2007). Implementing specific instructional strategies to support ELLs could potentially increase engagement. In Long's hypothesis of interaction, negotiations made by the teacher, such as clarification of requests, confirmation, and comprehension checks, can facilitate language learning by making the input more comprehensible to the English Language Learners (Long, 1983; Storch, 2008). In a study by Marks (2000), the use of authentic instructional work[5] enhanced student engagement in all grades. The authentic instruction helped students reach a high level of thinking, a greater depth of knowledge, as well as a connectedness to the world beyond the classroom (Marks, 2000). The analysis of Marks research implied that more authentic work created higher levels of student engagement (2000). Instructional strategies exist that accelerate academic engagement (Greenwood, Horton, & Utley, 2002). One of the simplest strategies that teachers can implement, is to increase the amount of time that students spend in learning situations that are confirmed to promote academic engagement (Greenwood et al., 2002). The instructional tasks that were shown to promote academic engagement were worksheets, paper and pencil tasks, other media (computers), workbooks, and readers (Greenwood et al., 2002). One-on-one situations and small groups were effective instructional grouping situations. Teacher position also played a

[5] Authentic Instructional Work-Work that is cognitively challenging and connected to the world beyond the classroom (Marks, 2000).

role in student academic engagement. The teacher located in front of or to the side of the student or at the student's desk, promoted engagement (Greenwood et al., 2002).

In sheltered English instruction, various strategies are implemented to make classroom curriculum content more comprehensible. Sheltered instruction is generally taught by content area teachers rather than ESL specialists. In order to support comprehensible input, content instruction is simplified through the use of visual aids, hands-on activities, body language, supplementary materials, and cooperative learning, (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000). Cooperative learning is a strategy used to diminish high anxiety in English learners by creating an environment where students work together in small groups to accomplish various instructional tasks. Through the use of cooperative learning, students with different language levels and skill abilities can work collaboratively to help each other accomplish the learning task (Arends, 1998). Anh Tran, suggested that cooperative learning can be used to promote vocabulary learning and reading success for ELL students (2007). ELL students were observed participating in cooperative learning groups. In this activity students were organized in pairs. Cooperative learning, "improves student's learning when they work in groups with structured objectives, promotes individualized accountability, and provides each student with an opportunity to succeed" (Tran, 2007, p.61). Sheltered instruction is not solely a set of additional or replacement strategies, but instead "draws from and compliments methods advocated from both second language and mainstream classrooms" (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000, p. 13).

In my research, I looked for a correlation between active engagement and the implementation of sheltered instruction. The concept of active engagement is the

student's full immersion in the learning task. Active engagement is both affective and behavioral participation in the learning experience (Marks, 2000; Savalberg, 2009). Active engagement goes beyond the role of engagement. It includes engagement with the task, social engagement, and engagement with the language. Engagement with the language is a "cognitive, affective, and social state and process in which the learner is the agent and the language is the object" (Svalberg, 2009 p. 244,). Active engagement is a state and a process; the cognitive, affective, and social aspects go beyond mere engagement (Svalberg, 2009). When students are actively engaged, they are "actively constructing their knowledge not only by mental processes but also equally by being socially active and taking initiatives" towards their own learning (Svalberg, 2009, p. 246).

Chapter 2: Methods and Analysis

Setting

The research on the effect of sheltered instruction on active engagement of ELL students was conducted in a second grade classroom. This classroom was located in a large school district that met the needs of a large and diverse population of suburban students and families. The community consisted of a large number of military families. In 2003, the city in which the school district is located updated their Growth Management Act. The purpose for this act was to combat urban development patterns. Two of the main goals of this act are to encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner, and to reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling low-density development[6]. The city in which the school district resides has seen an increase in its immigrant population. As a result of this act, more affordable economic housing has been built in this area. In 2010, this school district had an enrollment level over 13,000. At the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year the district had a record number of students enrolled, 14,000, 400 more students than were expected. In May of 2010 the elementary school, "Sunny School" (a pseudonym) had an enrollment count of 712, teaching students K-2. In May of 2010, 22 students were transitional bilingual. In this 2nd grade classroom two students were labeled as needing ESL services and one student was a non-native English speaker. The class consisted of a heterogeneous mix of 21, native and non-native English speaking students.

[6] This information was attained from the city's website. Due to anonymity issues the website will not be cited.

Participants

For this action research project, the student I focused on was classified as at-risk for low student achievement. These types of students would generally be struggling in a general education classroom and show less engagement during regular instruction and regular learning tasks. I chose Maria (a pseudonym) due to her ESL status, her at-risk status, and her English language proficiency level. I feel that Maria would benefit from the implementation of sheltered instructional strategies in her classroom. This student was also chosen because of her willingness to participate in interviews and to be observed during classroom activities.

Due to the criteria stated above, I hypothesized that this student will show an increase in active engagement because of the implementation of sheltered instruction. With the implementation of sheltered instructional strategies, Maria may show active engagement in tasks and teacher instruction. The assignments and assessments will establish that learning is taking place. Also, my participant will potentially demonstrate active engagement towards school and learning during her interviews.

Data Collection

I used a case study method for my research. A case study is an "in-depth exploration of a single case, or example, of the phenomenon under study" (Mertens, 2008, p. 233). My phenomenon was the active engagement of ESL students when sheltered instruction is implemented. Some types of qualitative data, I collected included the thick descriptions of the case study participant, and the physical setting. Three different types of data were collected to support triangulation. Triangulation entails

comparing information that has been collected by different methods. This allowed for "consistency of evidence across sources of data" (Mertens, 2008, p. 258). Mertens (2008) suggested that triangulation should be thought of as a prism; multifaceted sources of data brought together to represent some conclusion. Collection consisted of qualitative data through observations, interviews, and the compilation of student artifacts.

Observation. The main source of my data collection was through observation. My role was as a complete and direct observer (Mertens, 2008). I did my best to be as inconspicuous as possible. My goal was to see how the ESL students engaged with the learning task. If I was any type of participant, I would have affected the way in which students interact with each other, the teacher, and the learning environment.

During observation specific behaviors were apparent. Observations took place over a two week period for four 40 minute sessions. These observations took place during the afternoon, and the time was divided between math and science lessons. Focus was centered on the program setting, human and social environment, program activities and participant behaviors, informal interactions and unplanned activities, nonverbal communication, as well as observing what is not taking place (Mertens, 2008). For the duration of the observation, video-recording of the classroom was implemented. The video allowed me to further analyze student behavior. The video was transcribed and used for data gathering purposes. During teacher instruction, focus was given to pedagogical approaches. For example, was the teacher using sheltered instruction, and if so, how was it being implemented? I focused on the students as they reacted to the instruction and demonstrated types of engagement behaviors. After the instruction took place, I observed how the students behaved during the assignment or guided practice

portion of the lesson. Three types of observational records were used. A field notes, a behavior tally sheet as well as video transcriptions were employed.

Student and teacher interviews. My next method of collection was through one-on-one interviews held during available classroom time as suggested by the instructor. I interviewed my participant, and the teacher. I used an unstructured, informal type of interview process (Mertens, 2008). During the interview, questions were open-ended. This helped establish a relationship between myself, the researcher, and the participant. This style of interview allowed the participants to express their concerns and interests (Mertens, 2008). Cognizant of whom my participants are and the power differences between our roles, was at the forefront of my mind during the interviews. I conducted a teacher interview regarding instruction strategies and opinion of student engagement. During the student interviews, I focused on Maria's perceptions of specific strategies and tasks, feelings about school, motivation, family support and feelings about engagement. A list of the interview questions is featured in Appendix A.

The teacher interview was conducted after class time. The student interviews occurred when class time permitted. Two types of student interviews occurred. In the preliminary interview, Maria was asked about her individual connections and motivations with school. The secondary interview took place after each observation period. The interviews were video recorded. This allowed me to better attend to the student and teacher.

Student artifacts. For my third and final method of data collection, I collected student artifacts. Student work was collected after each observation of a learning task. Some examples of student work that was collected are writing samples, coloring

assignments, reading tasks, and/or math assignments. Collected work consisted of work from the Maria as well as work from several native speakers. I compared what behavior manifested during the assignment and how those behaviors showed themselves in the student's work.

Analysis

Using triangulation I looked at the data and compared my results. Doing this comparative I looked for patterns and identify codes within my data. The patterns looked for are as follows:

What is the relationship between…?

- student engagement and quality of work,
- sheltered instruction and level of engagement,
- the specific teaching strategy and level of engagement,
- engagement and task completion,
- student engagement and known academic achievement enablers,
- the ESL student to Native speaking student
- the ESL student and another ESL student

Through this analysis of data, I hoped my findings would identify many different patterns. I hoped to see a correlation between sheltered instructions and the active engagement of the ELLs.

Limitations

Due to the nature of my participants, I encountered several threats to validity. My participant was an ESL student with intermediate English language proficiency. Before I began my interview of Maria, I suspected that she may not comprehend some questions due to her proficiency level. To counteract this potential threat to validity, I did two things. The interview questions that I posed were modified to meet her English language proficiency. I spoke slowly and in a direct manner. I used simple language that was comprehensible for beginning to beginner-intermediate ELL proficiency levels. Also, the language I used was modified to relate to a second grade student.

Another threat to validity I encountered was the time in which I set aside for interviews. Due to the enthusiasm of second grade students, I found it difficult to allocate a time where I could interview the student without interruption or distractions. Also, Maria did not find it extremely important to sit for an interview. The participant's motivation to go out and play with her friends was stronger than sitting for an interview. Maria tended to rush through the interview and therefore shorten answers, giving less detailed answers or not answer the question altogether. In order to circumvent these limitations, I allocated a 15 minute interview period. I wanted Maria to be interviewed for 15 minutes after each observation period. I was flexible in where and when I did this. For example, if I was able interview the student for a solid 5 minutes, without interruptions and with quality answers from the participant, than I was satisfied and the interview was finished for the day.

The area of research that I am focused on can also result a threat to validity. Engagement is a difficult subject to conceptualize and research. Many students show different variations of active engagement. Student projections of engagement differ from

each other. Through my observations, ELLs may appear to be engaged; showing signs of attentiveness and volunteering answers but, when the time comes for them to demonstrate their comprehension and learning they are unable to do so. While other students may show signs of being off task, they might demonstrate comprehension during the assignment. Solely using observations for data collection may prove invalid. Triangulation will counteract this threat. Through observations, video-recordings, the collection of artifacts and interviews, I established a well rounded data set that showed when and where engagement was taking place.

Due to many circumstances, I had only one student sign the consent form to participate in this research. My goal at the beginning of this action research project was to focus on three different ELL students. Because the focus of this study was only on one participant, the findings may not be generalizable to all ESL students exposed to sheltered instruction. To enrich my data, I chose to use triangulation to help validate these findings.

Chapter 3: Description of Participants and Research Findings

Participants

Ms. Munson, a pseudonym, has been teaching for 11 years. During her first year of teaching she taught 1st grade. She then moved up to 2nd grade the following year and has taught it ever since. She has been fortunate enough to have always taught at Sunny School. Several years ago she received her Master's of Education degree. She has some training in ESL instruction and received ESL intervention training while attaining her Master's degree. She reported to having on average one ELL student a year. Recently, she has noticed an increase of non-native English speaking students. In the past three years, Ms. Munson had three to four ELL/non-native English speakers in her classroom. This year, she has two Spanish speaking ELL students who receive support services, and one native Russian speaking student, who has already tested out of the ESL program. Ms. Munson explained that she felt very comfortable teaching ELL students. She understands the various individual needs of her students, as well as the diverse backgrounds in which they come from.

Maria is one of two students labeled as a student needed ESL support services in Ms. Munson's second grade classroom. Ms. Munson depicted Maria as being the least engaged ELL student she has ever had. Other ESL students have engaged in discussions, class activities, volunteered answers and asked for help and clarification when they needed it. Ms. Munson characterized Maria's behavior, several times, as just "tuning out." Typically, Maria does not ask for help or ask for clarification. To try to engage her, Ms. Munson does several things. She has noticed that proximity, prompts, peer helpers,

and repetition of the directions are ways in which she can redirect Maria to the task. Ms. Munson described Maria as being externally engaged rather than internally. She is more focused on tasks where she is familiar with the task and the expectations. Ms. Munson also explained that Maria worked best in small groups. These groups could be teacher-led, one-on-one with a peer or with a teacher's aid. Maria was typically not academically successful during teacher lectures.

In this school district, standards-based grading is implemented. Students are given a score from one to four; four being above standard, three being at standard, two being near standard, and one being below standard. In Math, Maria is at a two, and in reading and writing, Maria is receiving ones. In reading, she is in the intensive group[7]. In mathematics, she is also receiving support through I-team[8]. Both programs are implementations of Response to Intervention (RTI)[9]. Maria consistently turned in her homework every week. On average, she received threes on her homework.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, Maria would attend ESL. This type of ESL program model is defined as pull-out. A pull-out ESL program is where the student is pulled out of the regular classroom for special instruction in ESL. This instruction may be provided by teachers who are assigned to just one building, or it may be provided by an itinerant teacher to serve small numbers of children scattered throughout the district.

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[7] Intensive reading group-At sunny school the 2nd graders are broken up into reading groups. There are seven different reading groups designed to meet the varying reading levels of the students. Maria has been placed in the lowest reading group, also known as the intensive reading group.

[8] I-team-I-team is a program that supports students in math. It is designed for struggling math students who need help to reach standard in math. Students attend I-team 4 days a week for 45 mins a day.

[9] RTI-Response to Intervention is a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities. (OSPI, 2010).

Students from different first- language backgrounds may be separated into groups for instruction. The teacher may or may not be trained in ESL and instruction is generally not bilingual (McKeon, 1987). In Maria's case, she would leave after lunch and get bussed to a nearby elementary school. She would then spend the rest of the afternoon at ESL and get bussed back to Sunny School just in time to ride her regular bus home. During these afternoons, she would be grouped with other second grade ELLs. The group was filled with students from different linguistic backgrounds. The teacher was only fluent in English. The students had instruction in math, reading, and writing with a heavy emphasis on language development. Maria was enthusiastic about her ESL class and enjoyed attending.

Classroom Description

The second grade classroom was set up in table groups. Each table group consisted of four to five student desks. I positioned myself at the back of the classroom. My camera was placed in two different locations during my observations. Camera positions were chosen in order to get the best view of the classroom activity, student participation, and teacher doings. Maria was positioned in a group of five students. Maria had four different student neighbors. I refer to these students as shoulder partner right, shoulder partner left, face partner, and diagonal partner. These terms are used in cooperative learning. Student desks were angled to allow for easy viewing of the front of the classroom, but also facing each other to allow for group discussions and discovery. The teacher usually positioned herself in the front of the classroom. The classroom also

had a carpet/meeting area. Students would gather at the carpet for more intimate lessons and directions/instructions.

Qualitative Data

I began my observations in October of 2010. My observations took place daily from 12:40-1:20 p.m. I was able to observe the tail end of math and the full science period. In math the students were working on graphs, data collection, data representation, and quick repetition of math facts. In science, the students were learning about insects and entomology. The teacher had informed the students of my presence prior to my appearance, so when I entered the classroom there was little to no distraction by my attendance.

Day one observations. As I began my observation on day one, students were already seated at the carpet being reintroduced to the directions of spaceship math. Spaceship math[10] is a program that helps students to develop their basic arithmetic skills. While at the carpet Maria's attention was focused on the teacher. Students were then excused to their seats. The students returned to their seats and broke into pre-assigned partners. As soon as all the students had returned to their seats, the teacher checked for comprehension. She asked the students to raise one hand if they were sitting next to their partner. Maria raised her hand. The teacher next asked students to stand if they were the person to practice first. Maria stood up at this time. This action showed the teacher that all students understood the task and also that Maria was comprehended the actions

[10] Spaceship math is broken into multiple levels usually identified by letter, where each level introduces a small number of basic facts. Students work in pairs to quiz themselves on the math facts. Depending on the teacher a test is given once or twice a week. Students test out into each new level where the facts become harder. The test is a timed one minute test.

needed to complete the task. Maria was paired with her right shoulder partner. This was a non-native English speaker, native English speaker partnering. During this activity Maria was consistently on task. As the first student to practice she began to speak aloud each math fact. At one point she stated that “1+2 equals 4”. Her partner responded by saying “No, it’s 3.” Maria repeated the problem with the correct answer three times and then finished the rest of the problems. This showed a high level of engagement with the activity. She was able to take in comprehensible input from here shoulder partner, correct her mistake, and continue on to finish the activity. Maria switched roles with her partner and began to check her partners answers. As Maria listened to her partner, she used her finger to follow along. This also showed a high level of engagement. She had to listen to her partner saying his math facts and follow along on the answer paper. Maria needed to focus attention to her partners output and compare his answers to the problem guide.

Once all students had finished with their spaceship math practice, the teacher transitioned the class to science. The teacher sat at the front of the classroom and began a review of mealworms. As she led the discussion, she did not use any visual aids as she reintroduced mealworm related vocabulary. Throughout this review, Maria appeared to be inattentive. Maria did not raise her hand to volunteer answers for questions posed by her teacher. Her focus was directed not on her teacher but on a conversation between her face and diagonal partners. After the review, the teacher passed out a vial. Each vial contained two mealworms and wheat bran. This activity was familiar to these students; as soon as students received their mealworms they grabbed a paper plate and poured their mealworms out for inspection. Before Maria poured out her own mealworm, she began to

look her tablemate's mealworms. Maria was occupied in discussion with different tablemates about their mealworms.

Maria then returned to her seat and proceeded to dump out her mealworm. She then progressed to investigating her mealworm, by holding it in her hand and comparing it with the other mealworms at her table group. She participated in discussions with her neighbors about the mealworm. At one point, she even exclaimed that "my mealworm isn't dead, it just not moving because it's shedding." Maria even grabbed a carrot to replenish the water source in her mealworm habitat. With an obviously established routine the teacher rang the bell and students began to clean up and put there mealworms away. Once all the students had returned to their seats the teacher began a discussion about the life cycle of the mealworms (some of the students' mealworms had expired). During this discussion, Maria was looking around the room, wiping off her desk, and fidgeting with her behavior chart.

During our interview, Maria was able to confirm her active engagement in the task. Even though she did not use the word "molting," but the interchangeable word "shedding," she was able to express her understanding of one aspect of the mealworm life cycle. She described to me how her mealworm was soon to shed because of its lack of movement. Maria also expressed her interest and excitement about the science activity. She liked having the opportunity to play and hold the mealworms.

Day two observations. As I entered the classroom, the students were already participating in a math activity. The unit of math they were working on was graphs. For this particular lesson the teacher was trying to teach the students the difference between the vertical axis and the horizontal axis. Students were all standing up at their desks. The

teacher explained that horizontal was side to side. She asked students to put their arms straight out creating a horizontal line with their arms. They then copied the teacher and shuffled side to side with their arms out. Maria was engrossed in this activity. Her focus was on the teacher and she was participating in the body movement. The teacher then informed her students about the vertical axis. She had the students make a V with their arms, arms straight up above their head, and jump up and down. Once again, Maria was engrossed in this activity, jumping up and down with her hands in a V above her head and eyes focused on the teacher. The lesson continued with the teacher telling her students a story. The students remained standing and whenever the teacher used the word horizontal or vertical, the students had to use the coinciding body actions. An example of the story is as follows, "…when I was going on a walk I saw a horizontal rock…" While the teacher said this part of the story the students jumped up and down with their hands above their head showing the vertical action, all the students except for Maria. Maria had her hands out at her sides and was shifting back and forth depicting horizontal. The teacher corrected the other students and had them depict horizontal. Soon after this correction, Maria left to use the bathroom and missed the rest of this activity.

Maria returned to the classroom as the transition to a new task was taking place. The teacher had the students sit at their desks while she used a PowerPoint slideshow to introduce different aspects of a graph. The teacher used the PowerPoint slideshow as an activity where students looked at data and volunteered answers about different aspects of the graph. The majority of students were participating in the discussion; they were volunteering answers, focused on the power point and staying on task. The PowerPoint slideshow that the teacher had used was very interactive. It contained music, sound,

graphics, and required student interaction. During this learning activity, Maria showed a number of off task behaviors. Many times throughout the lesson Maria was fidgeting with her behavior chart that was located at her desk. She did not volunteer any answers pertaining to the graph, and at one point she began to color a picture on a scrap of paper. Maria chose to show her picture to other students around her causing them to be off task as well. Maria had little to no engagement with this lesson. Even though this lesson was very interactive, more measures could have been taken to make this lesson more comprehensible for ESL students. This type of lesson is not considered sheltered instruction.

Next, the class transitioned to science. The students were asked to get out their insect journals. Maria had a hard time finding her journal due to the disorganization of her desk. Ms. Munson asked her students to turn to their October calendar page and record the arrival of the hissing cockroaches. Ms Munson used the document camera to project her October calendar onto the wall. Maria wrote in her journal. The teacher next asked her students to write down one observation of their mealworms; these they had viewed the previous day. Maria wrote her observation in her journal. Ms. Munson gave the students a variety of ideas to write, by asking students what they themselves, would write. Maria chose to write “my mweill wrms wol is sheding.” (my meal worm is shedding) During this, Maria was showing signs of on-task behavior. Even though she was not volunteering answers or participating in the discussion, she was working towards completing her journal entries. The teacher gave the students a few minutes to finish, then she asked them to turn to their mealworm observations.

As Maria turned to her milkweed bug observations and she began to read what she had previously written. The class turned to their mealworm observations page. The students had already drawn a picture of the first stage of the mealworm. Ms. Munson instructed the students to write down several observations of this first stage. As students began to write, the teacher began a monologue about what she was going to write in her journal. As the teacher did this, Maria was writing down her own observations. At times, Maria would glance up at the screen, which showed what the teacher was writing in her journal. As the class finished up their observations, they turned to their milkweed bug observations. Ms. Munson asked her students what all insects need to survive. Some students raised their hands to volunteer such answers like water, air, habitat, and food. During this time, Maria did not raise her hand to volunteer answers but she was focused on the discussion, watching other students speak as well as the teacher. In their journals, the students began to draw a picture of the milkweed bug habitat. They were to include all the aspects of the habitat as well as label the various parts.

During this portion of the activity, Maria was engaged in recreating her milkweed habitat in her journal. A copy of her journal is located in the appendix. In her milkweed habitat drawing, she was successful in drawing all the various aspects, but she only labeled two of them: the water source and the food source. In her mealworm larvae entry, she wrote “Eat Wheat bran driak jwice from carat wggek 13 sectios scin coller” (Eat wheat bran, drink juice from carrot, wiggle, 13 sections, and skin color).

Day three observations. As I began my observation, students were working independently on their November take home calendar. Each month students make a new calendar. Through this work period Maria was consistently on task. During this

independent work time, the teacher was using the document camera to read a story to the students. The chapter book was projected onto the wall. The teacher used her finger to show the students where she was. Some students were following along by watching the teacher, while other students were quietly working on their calendar. Maria was one of the students quietly working on her calendar.

After Ms. Munson gave the students ample time to finish their calendars, she transitioned the class to science. Five different insect stations were set up. The stations included painted ladies and ants, Madagascar hissing cockroaches, milkweed bugs, mealworms, and walking sticks. In their table groups, students would rotate through the stations, having two minutes to observe. Maria's group visited the cockroaches first. Some observation's Maria made were, "I see the cockroach on top. Look at all the babies. There is a baby cockroach!" During this activity, conversation was very active and animated. Much student interaction occurred. At Maria's table group, she was the only non-native English speaker.

Next, Maria's group moved to the walking stick. This was the first time they had encountered the walking sticks, so they were very interested about them. During this period, some observations Maria made were "Do you see his face? I see his face. They are so long and skinny." The students of this group continued to interact with each other. At one point they decided to duck under the table, to hide themselves, in order to see if the walking sticks would move. Maria was fully participating in these activities.

The next rotation was the mealworms. Students took their mealworms back to their desk and did observations there. Maria became very animated during this rotation because her mealworm and molted into a pupa. She exclaimed "Look! Mine shed and is a

pupa! Ms. Munson, mine shed and is a pupa! Mine shed its skin." Ms. Munson replied, "And what is it called now?" Maria responded by saying "a pupa!"

The students rotated, and next observed the milkweed bugs. At this station, Maria was observing the bugs, but the other students in her group were fighting over positions in front of the bugs. Ms. Munson needed to intervene and get students back on task. Finally, this group of students had the opportunity to look at the painted ladies and the ants. During this time, Maria was still engaged in looking at and making observations. The other students in her group were off task again and talked about other things. The students were dismissed to recess. Maria decided to stay in and look at the walking sticks. She expressed to me her excitement over her mealworm changing into a pupa, and the opportunity she had to look at the walking sticks and cockroaches.

Day four observations. At the beginning of this observation period, students were working independently on two graphing worksheets. As Maria worked on her graphs, Ms. Munson walked around the classroom checking student work, and giving students stamps on their work. When Ms. Munson arrived at Maria's desk, Maria had finished her first worksheet. Ms. Munson checked both sides of the worksheet and gave her a stamp, and then she collected Maria's work. Maria then began to work on her other worksheet. As she began this worksheet, Maria suddenly looked up and glanced around the room, her eyes landed on the teacher, who was across the room. Maria then turned to her partner and said "Molly, can you help me?" Molly seeming to understand what Maria needed, and read the question on the worksheet out loud to Maria. Maria then finished the worksheet on her own. After returning from turning in her paper, her right shoulder partner asked her for assistance and she helped him finish his work. Even though this was

independent work time, Ms. Munson had successfully set up a classroom where peers had the opportunity to support each other in their learning. Even though this element of a successful classroom isn't defined as sheltered instruction, the environment is designed to help students no matter what their linguistic proficiency may be.

A copy of Maria's worksheets is located in the appendix. Some areas have been erased to insure anonymity of the student and the research location. As demonstrated in her worksheet exercises, Maria showed a high level of understanding on how to create a graph using a supplied set of data, as well as how to look at a graph and analyze the data.

The classroom soon transitioned into science. Ms. Munson had her students get out their insect journals. The students turned to the November section of their journal and were asked to write down one observation they had from looking at the insects yesterday. Ms. Munson, using the document camera to project her own journal, wrote "WS-got to see one." This referred to the classes' opportunity to look at the walking sticks. Maria chose to write about her mealworm. She wrote "my willwerm shed it scin it trn to piaa." (My mealworm shed its skin and turned into a pupa).

Next, Ms. Munson asked her students to record the new arrival of the crickets. She told the students to write "CR-arrived." In her journal, Maria, wrote "see or the cricits air rigv." From her writing example, it was apparent that there was some language misunderstanding. Maria comprehended the recording of the cricket's arrival but not the use of CR to represent crickets.

After finishing up their November observations, the students flipped to their painted ladies recording sheet. Ms. Munson asked the students to draw a picture of the painted ladies. As Maria drew her own picture, she used the teacher's model as a guide.

As the teacher wrote down some observations of the painted ladies, Maria wrote her own. She wrote "6 six painted ladies. Ther black lin webs. Ther eat and dring." (6 six painted ladies. They're black. Live in webs. They eat and drink). Maria's entry varied from that of her teacher. Ms. Munson wrote "6 legs, hairy, black, and small as a finger tip." Maria had a high level of engagement in this task. Instead of just copying what the teacher was writing in her journal, Maria chose to write down her own observations. This level of engagement can be classified as active engagement. Here she is going beyond general participation to a higher level of engagement where she is constructing her own knowledge about the painted ladies. Instead of just copying what the teacher wrote, Maria is taking initiative in her learning and constructing her own knowledge (Svalberg, 2009).

While Ms. Munson walked around the room showing students the crickets, Maria was engaged in a dialogue with her table mates. She even showed her work to her partner. As the teacher approached, Maria turned in her seat to look at the teacher and stated "My lizard eats those kinds of bugs!" At the bell, the students cleaned off their desks and were dismissed out to recess.

Discussion of Data

Through the analysis of my data I looked for specific patterns or codes. The patterns identified are as follows;

What is the relationship between:

- student engagement and quality of work;
- sheltered instruction and level of engagement;
- the specific teaching strategy and level of engagement;

- engagement and task completion;
- student engagement and known academic achievement enablers;
- the ESL student to native speaking student;
- the ESL student and another ESL student?

As I sifted through my data, I deemed that some of the codes were directly related to my research questions while others, due to insubstantial data, had no relation. During my observations, and video transcriptions, I was unable to identify an instance where Maria interacted with another non-native English speaker. The other non-native English speakers were situated at different locations in the classroom that did not lend itself to ELL interaction. Non-interaction could have also lent itself to a social reason; the non-native English speakers may have not been close friends, nor have felt the necessity to interact with one another. Other coded relationship showed great import to the research agenda. Still, other codes where shown to be related to other coded pairs.

Student engagement, quality of work, and completion of task. Whenever Maria was engaged with the lessons, certain behaviors were representative. Maria attended, complied with teacher directions and participated in tasks. These behaviors are what I considered to be Maria's engagement with a learning task. Through analysis of the data I collected, I coded for the relationship between her level of engagement and the quality of her work. To do so, I had to compare my field notes, video transcription observations and her collected work. When Maria was engaged with the learning task, her quality of work on written work was high. An example of this occurred on observation day two. In their science journal, Ms. Munson, asked the students to write down one observation of their mealworms, which they had viewed the previous day.

Maria showed engagement by attending to the teacher, following directions and completing the task. In her journal on October 25th, she wrote "my mwiell wrms wol is shedding." She had observed that her mealworm was beginning to shed and in her journal she was able to correctly identify this process and record it. Also, on her mealworms page, Maria recorded information about the larva stage. Even though she chose to copy what the teacher was writing, she was creating quality journal work. Maria's engagement in this task was high and the quality of her work was also high.

During the day four observation, the students used the entire science time to work on their journals. Once again, Maria showed engagement by attending, compliance with the teacher's directions and participation in the learning tasks. While recording entries into her science journal, Maria used the teacher's example as a guide. At one point in this activity, Maria chose to record her own observations about the painted ladies instead of using the teacher's. Her engagement and investment in the activity produced a high quality of work.

Sheltered instruction, level of engagement, and known academic achievement enablers. During the science activity on observation day one, I was able to see multiple instances of on task behavior, off task behavior and active engagement. At the beginning of this lesson, the teacher was holding a discussion about what occurred the last time they looked at the mealworms. The teacher was trying to activate prior schema to encourage her students to develop new understanding during this lesson. This activation of prior knowledge is a well known 'effective' teaching practice (Greenwood, Horton & Uley, 2002). Many of the students were engaged, volunteered answers, and participated in the discussion and focused on the teacher. During this discussion, the teacher was located at

the front of the classroom. She did not incorporate any visual aids, or any other tools to enable comprehension for her ESL students. As a result, Maria was off task, and not participating in the discussion. Maria's non-engagement was represented in actions such as not raising her hand to volunteer answers, focused attention on discussion being held between two tablemates, and a lack of eye contact directed towards the teacher. During the investigation portion of the science lesson, Maria's behavior was very on-task. She showed comprehension of the task, participated in discussion with her peers, and was highly engaged in the task. The teacher created an environment using sheltered instruction that allowed Maria to be fully engaged with the learning task. Maria was able to expand her knowledge of the mealworm life cycle and apply it to her own mealworm, which, was identifying its lack of movement due to the fact that it was soon to molt. She was given the opportunity to practice her English skills by having an open discussion with her table mates about the mealworms and their development.

As the teacher wrapped up the science lesson by discussing aspects of the mealworm life cycle, she did not implement any strategies to support ELLs like visual aids or other non-verbal assists. Maria's engagement had a dramatic turn from the previous activity. She was looking around the room, wiping off her desk, and fidgeting with her behavior chart, these of which all being examples of non-attentiveness.

On observation day two, Maria participated in an activity where total physical response was implemented. Total physical response is a method of teaching language where physical movement is connected with comprehensible input. The teacher was using this strategy to teach the difference between the vertical axis and the horizontal axis. The actions of Maria were an example of her active engagement in the task. This

activity was very hands-on and combined the strategies of sheltered instruction and TPR. Students react to the output of the teacher with gestures or whole body movement to facilitate acquisition of target language concepts (Asher, 2009). Total physical response is used to a great extent with the introduction of new vocabulary. While the other students were doing a wrong motion, Maria was consistent with her understanding of the word horizontal and the action that went with it. With the support and implementation of a sheltered instructional strategy, Maria showed a high level of engagement as well as academic enablers.

On observation day three, the class participated in a bug rotation. Throughout the bug rotations, Maria was actively engaged. At each station she was on task, engaged in discussions with her peers, and making observations about the insects. This small group work allowed Maria the opportunity to use her language skills to communicate with her peers, the opportunity to use some of her scientific skills, and afforded her the chance to use some academic language. Her active engagement was cognitive, affective, and social. She was actively engaged in the learning task as well as her language acquisition. She was able to make observations about each insect as well as identify her mealworm as being in the pupa stage.

Chapter 4: Description of Research Findings

Connection between research literature and study findings

Throughout the research process the focal point was the relationship between sheltered instructional strategies and the engagement of the ELL student. The importance of engagement in language acquisition has been researched thoroughly as well as the importance of authentic teaching strategies to promote engagement in at-risk students, but little research has looked into the correlation between sheltered instructional strategies and their effect on ESL engagement (Greenwood et al., 2002; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Leow, 1997; Qi & Lapkin; 2001; Schmidt, 1993; Storch, 2008). Through the process of interviews, observations, video transcribing, and analysis of student artifacts the correlation between a given instructional strategy and the level of student engagement became apparent.

Through informal observation as a guest teacher in a variety of schools and school districts, I had the opportunity to view an assortment of ways to support English as a second language. Throughout these opportunities for observation, I noticed a lack of engagement in the ELLs. These minority students seemed to fall in the cracks and withdraw from the classroom environment (Johnson, Cornoes & Elder, 2001; Marks, 2000). Students who are engaged in the learning task and learning community are more likely to graduate and pursue higher education (Marks, 2000). At Sunny School, they continue to have an increase in their ELL population. With the city's Growth Management Act, intending to stop urban sprawl, more affordable housing has become available lending to an overall increase in student population. Not only in this district, but

all over the United States, teachers will be facing an increase of ELL students in their classrooms.

Theoretical lens. Through the lenses of Vygotsky, Long, and Schmidt's theroretical perspectives, I looked at how awareness towards language can improve upon the acquisition of that language. At times when Maria's engagement with the learning task was high, her quality of work and language output were high. Vygotsky maintained that when students are supported by the teacher and more capable peers, language learning can occur (1978; Wedin, 2010). Through activities such as spaceship math, and science rotations, the ELL students were able to interact with more capable peers, and were supported through the zone of proximal development and scaffolding. Since learning is social, Maria was able to construct meaning of language and of the learning tasks, through interaction with her peers (Vygotsky, 1978; Wedin, 2010).

Micheal Long maintained that when native and non-native speakers interacted with one another, it helped to create a more hospitable environment for language acquisition (Long, 1983). Ms. Munson often afforded her students the opportunity for discussions and the sharing of ideas. Maria flourished in this rich social environment, frequently speaking with her peers about her scientific observations. Through interactions with her native speaking peers, Maria was able to produce language output and negotiate through meaning. Interaction was vital for Maria's engagement and understanding of language and the learning task. During on worksheet task, she asked one of her tablemates to read her a question on the worksheet. The tablemate was able to help Maria understand what the question was asking and ultimately helped her to solve the problem. After Maria had turned in her own worksheet her shoulder partner asked for her help.

Maria was able to provide that help. These interactions relate to vygotsky's Zone of Proximal development theory as well as Long's interaction hypothesis.

Awareness and noticing also took place during Maria's engagement in learning tasks. An example of this occurred during the second day of observations. Ms. Munson was trying to reinforce the meaning of vertical and horizontal through the use of TPR. During one instance, Maria was the only student to do the right movement in relation to horizontal. This instance shows Maria's level of attention as understanding, the highest level of attention according to Schmidt's noticing hypothesis. Maria's understanding of the task involved a higher level of awareness and required more metacognitive processing (Schmidt, 1993; Storch, 2008).

Engagement behaviors. Greenwood, Horton and Utley identified engagement behaviors in students as participating in a task, talking about academics, and asking and answering questions (2002). Also, these behaviors lend themselves to social engagement like participation in the classroom community and cooperative learning (Greenwood et al., 2002). Maria showed many varieties of engagement behaviors. She participated in learning tasks, cooperative learning, and dialogues about academic topics with her peers. One type of behavior that Maria did not portray was that of asking and answering questions. During the observation process there was not an instance recorded where Maria raised her hand to volunteer an answer or to ask a question of the teacher. In mathematics, such behaviors as attending, awareness to surroundings, and compliance have been correlated to academic achievement (Greenwood et al., 2002; DiPerna & Elliot, 2002; DiPerna, Volpe & Elliot, 2001). Maria showed all three of these engagement behaviors during math learning tasks. An example of Maria's graphing work is located in

the appendix. Her work is at standard for second grade in statistics. Engagement behaviors like attending and compliance can be correlated to Maria's quality of work on written tasks.

Reasearch by Leow (1997), and Qi and Lapkin (2001), looked at the quality of engagement and the effect it had on second language learning. In each case, the level of engagement correlated to the L2 learner's achievement on the learning task. Through the observations of Maria, there were times when she was disengaged, engaged and then actively engaged in the learning task. When Maria was engaged or actively engaged in the task, she tended to produce more language output, and was highly invested in the learning activity. During times of disengagement such behaviors like inattentiveness, distraction of others, and overall lack of participation was paired with a lack of academic language output and low achievement during the learning task.

Instructional strategies and engagement. The use of classroom based interventions has been shown to increase engagement in students who are at risk for academic failure (Ornelles, 2007). In Ms. Munson's classroom a variety of sheltered instructional strategies were implemented. With these strategies, Maria's engagement was increased. In the study done by Greenwood, Horton, and Uley (2002), one-on-one situations and small groups were related to an increase in academic engagement behaviors. This was also true in Ms. Munson's classroom. In situations where peer interaction and cooperative learning were used to facilitate learning, Maria's engagement also increased.

Recommendations

With the continuing increase of ESL students and the continued cuts to education budgets, the occurance of ELL students in the general education classroom will be more frequent. Teachers will need the resources and support to help guide learning of English in their classrooms. One way in which to do this is to implement sheltered instruction. With disengagement in these students, sheltered instruction is an easy way to insure engagement and to insure academic content is comprehensible. The types of strategies that were the most effective for engagement in Ms. Munson's classroom were those that involved peer interactions, and those that allowed for interactive discussions. With the implementation of sheltered instructional strategies, Maria was brought into the curriculum rather than trying to grasp the academic meaning through her limited English proficiency. This had a high impact on her learning (Svalber, 2009). She was actively engaged in the task. Higher engagement in academic learning leads to higher educational success (Ornelles, 2007). I can only hope that these sheltered instructional strategies continue to be used as she progresses through her schooling.

Maria's engagement did not only affect her academic achievement, but her attitude toward school. With a positive connection to the curriculum, she became more engaged in the learning community of her classroom and the school. When minority students feel uncomfortable in the learning environment, they withdraw from heterogeneous classmates and even classroom community activities (Johnson, Corsnoes & Elder, 2001). I did not see this type of behavior in Maria. During my observations, I was able to observe Maria socializing on many occasions. She tended to enjoy talking to her tablemates who were all heterogeneous classmates. At no time was she observed as

being disengaged with homogeneous or heterogeneous classmates. Her attitude to everyday activities was always positive. Ms. Munson created a classroom with strong routines and procedures. This was an environment where students knew what was expected of them and this afforded them a level of control over their own actions. In my interview with Ms. Munson, she explained that Maria was the most successful when she was familiar with her task and knew what was expected of her. Sheltered instruction gave Maria the opportunity to not only connect with the curriculum, but with the learning community as well.

Influence on teaching. The opportunity to observe in Ms. Munson's classroom was very beneficial to my own teaching. Seeing the benefits of sheltered instruction and the way in which it supported engagement in Maria was informative. In my current classroom, I have two students where English is not their first language, and where it is not the primary language spoken at home. Even though these students do not qualify for ESL services, I have noticed a lack of engagement behaviors during complex academic learning tasks. With the implication that the use of sheltered instruction can aid the active engagement in English language learning students, I would be wise to use the strategies in my teaching. The use of these strategies in my classroom would aid my students in making complex curriculum understandable and to help them build on their English language skills. The use of cooperative learning would be an easy way to incorporate sheltered instruction and also create a commutative learning environment.

Obstacles and difficulties. Initially I wanted to do this research on three second grade students. Two of the students and their families chose not to participate. This left me with one participant. In order to make the research well rounded I took field notes,

transcribed video of the lessons, collected student artifacts and had interviews with the student and teacher. Even though triangulation was used in data collection, this does not negate the fact that only one student was observed. Even though sheltered instructional strategies worked to actively engage Maria in the learning task, the outcome may have differed with other students.

Engagement was also a very hard concept to research and identify within students and the classroom. Maria's engagement differed than the peers around her. Ms. Munson identified her has being frequently disengaged with the classroom environment and given learning tasks. Through similar studies on engagement, academic engagement behaviors were classified as attending, volunteering, completion of task, awareness to surroundings, compliance, and a positive attidute toward the leanring community (Greenwood, Horton & Utley, 2002; Diperna & Elliott, 2002; DiPerna, Volpe, & Elliot, 2001). In Maria's case, I never observed her raising her hand to volunteer an answer or to pose a question. Through analysis of my data and triangulation I was able to identify specific behaviors that Maria exhibited that showed she was engaged or disengaged in a learning task.

Areas for further investigation. The study of the affects of sheltered instruction on active engagement still has room for further investigation. In this study Maria was my only student participant. More research can easily be done with a wider range of participants. The more partakers in the research and a wider selection of classrooms and classroom environments would strengthen the validity of my research findings. More investigation is needed on the types of sheltered instruction being employed in the general education classroom. Even though I did not specifically look for this within my own research, I suspect that different sheltered strategies can cause more engagement

than others. A more in-depth look would also help validate the importance of sheltered instruction to promote ELL engagement.

Conclusion

In this action research study I looked at how the active engagement of an ESL student could be increased with the implementation of sheltered instructional strategies. Through observation, interviews, collection of student artifacts, and analysis of all data I can conclude that the use of sheltered instructional strategies did have a positive effect on the active engagement of my participant, Maria. Through this research I was able to observe Maria's engagement during times where sheltered instruction was implemented and times where she was disengaged when specific strategies to support language learning where not implemented. With further investigation I feel that these results will continue to be validated. With the ever growing population of non native English speakers, teachers will need the resources to meet the language and academic needs of these students. I feel that with the use of sheltered instruction in the general education classroom we can support the language acquisition of these L2 learners, and support their engagement in academic learning tasks.

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Appendix D: Consent Form

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Kristine Weldin, 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 implementation of Sheltered Instruction Strategies Effect the Active Engagement of English as a Second Language Students in a General Education Kindergarten Classroom?" The goal of my research is to determine what effect sheltered instruction has on the level of engagement of English language learners. Your student's teacher, _____, is allowing me the opportunity to observe her use of sheltered instruction in her classroom.

The information provided by your student will be used to create my Action Research Project. All information obtained will be used solely for this purpose. The identities of the participants will be confidential, and any identity markers will be erased from the study. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants including the teacher, school, and school district.

Any risks to the students will be minimal. Students might feel a small amount of embarrassment due to their actions being documented. Students will be video taped, solely for observational reasons. Any video taken will be destroyed after it has been transcribed. Students will not be offered compensation for their participation in this study. Students will be observed engaging in regular classroom activities, with only two informal interviews being conducted.

Your student's interactions and responses will only be used in creating my Action Research Project. My fellow cohorts as well as my professors will view this final product. All confidentiality of the participants will be sustained. At request, I will provide those with a copy of the final draft.

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

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Kristine Weldin

I, _____, hereby agree to serve as a subject in the research project title "How does the implementation of Sheltered Instruction Strategies Affect the Active Engagement of English as a Second Language Students in a General Education Kindergarten Classroom?" It has been explained to me that its purpose is to gather information about the benefits to engagement when a teacher uses Sheltered Instruction.

I have been informed that all data collected through observations and interviews will only be used for an Action Research project by Kristine Weldin 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. Kristine Weldin 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 Kristine Weldin at _____ or email her at _____. Likewise, the person to contact if I experience problems as a result of my participation in this project is _____, Academic Dean at The Evergreen State College, Library 2002, Olympia, WA 98505; Phone (360) 867.6972.

I understand that I will be videotaped, solely for observational reasons. I also understand that any video taken will be destroyed after it has been transcribed.

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 _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name_____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____Date _____

Appendix E: Spanish Consent Form

Estimados Padres o el Guardián,

Me llamo Kristine Weldin y soy una maestra de segundo grado aquí en South Bay Elementary. Estoy trabajando para completar mi educación de maestría y estaré escribiendo un papel sobre la participación de estudiantes quienes hablan inglés por segundo idioma. El proyecto es para aprender cuales actividades específicas pueden ayudar a estudiantes aprender el inglés mejor. La maestra, Mindy Miller, me está permitiendo observarla en su clase.

Cualquier información colectada sólo será utilizada para escribir mi papel. Las identidades de los estudiantes serán mantenidas privadas. No hay riesgo a su estudiante para su participación. La información será reunida durante tiempo de la clase. Estaré grabando la clase por vídeo. Esta cinta sólo será utilizada para reunir los datos, y será destruido después de que el papel haya sido escrito.

La participación es voluntaria y puedes parar de participar en en cualquier momento. Si querría, le podré dar una copia del papel finál. Siéntase libre de contactarme si tiene cualquier pregunta acerca de este proyecto o de la participación de su niño.

Me puede llamar en _____.
Mi dirección de correo electrónico es _____.

Kristine Weldin

¿Yo _____, concuerda en participar en el proyecto de Kristine Weldin quien esta estudiando actividades de ayudar a ninos aprender el inglés. He sido dicho que la información completa por Kristine Weldin sólo será utilizada por escrito de su papel. Las identidades de los estudiantes serán protegidas y no serán compartidas con nadie. Comprendo que no hay riesgos a tomar parte en esta investigación. Seré dado una copia del papel final si quiero una. Comprendo que ese tiempo de clase será grabado por video. Esta cinta sólo será utilizada para reunir los datos, y será destruido después de que el papel haya sido escrito. Comprendo que participar en este proyecto es voluntario; puedo parar participar en en cualquier momento.

Comprendo que si tengo cualquier pregunta acerca de este proyecto o mi participación en ello, yo puedo llamar a Kristine Weldin en _____ o por correo electrónico en _____.

La persona para contactar si tengo problemas es John Mclain, Academic Grants Manager en The Evergreen State College, Library 2002, Olympia, WA 98505: numero (360) 867-6045.

Nombre de estudiante_____

De Firma de estudiante_____Fecha_____

Nombre de Padre/Guardián_____

Firma de Padre/Guardián_____Fecha_____

Appendix F: Sample Interview Questions

Sample of questions that may be asked during student interview

Preliminary

1. Do you like school?
2. What do you like most about school?
3. Do you like to sit at the carpet?
4. Do you think school is important?
5. Do your parents think school is important?

Secondary

1. Is it hard to understand the teacher sometimes?
2. When she uses (specific sheltered strategy) do you understand better?
3. What did you like about the lesson?
4. What didn't you like about the lesson?
5. Did you do a good job on your work?

Sample questions that may be asked during the teacher interview

1. What students do you feel are the most engaged?
2. What type of student behavior do you see as engagement?
3. Are the ESL students as engaged as the native English speaking students? Explain
4. What types of engagement do you see the ESL students presenting?
5. Have you noticed that the ESL students are more engaged when you use sheltered instruction?