

Content Questions from Dec 4 TESOL Virtual Seminar

Mireya's story is touching and heart-breaking for an adult. but I have a question: What is considered a poem in American classroom? I am from Russia and for us it should rhyme and be rhythmical. Mireya's story Answer: The poem is modeled after an epic poem, "I am Joaquin" by Rodolfo Gonzalez. It is not a poem with rhyme...However, as you note, there cadence/rhythm that is quite well followed by the students and follows the original poet's cadence. No, poems do not all rhyme.

what do you think about such factor as whether the culture is reading or only oral, and if the family encourages reading or not? (I am speaking about the 3rd type of students). In the case of the third type of student, it may or may not be an oral culture (probably often is). However, the student has been in English speaking schools for five to seven years and still not acquired literacy. This speaks to school failing our students. Many times this is because first language literacy and culture were ignored. I blame the schools not the home.

Hi Dr. Freemans :), I would like to just hear your explanation about why you moved from four "types"/categories of ELLs (2003) to three "types" (since 2004). Thank you. We only spoke of four because of time, but there is also the "standard English learners." Is that what you mean? We addressed the fourth in our newest book (first chapter) in detail. You can get that chapter, I believe, free as a download going to www.heinemann.com and going to Freeman and Freeman and "Academic Language" book.

Do you have any national statistics on Longterm ELLs?

In schools where there are only a few students with limited formal schooling and not the 'critical mass' numbers of students with this profile (and the students can't travel to a different school), how can the school best program for them? We would say to follow the keys we talked about and differentiate instruction for those students...(for example, they can label and draw while others write longer pieces). In addition, it would be important for someone to read to them frequently high interest books (find a peer or volunteer). These books should be picture books that are appealing. The more language the students are exposed to the better. We would not say to drill them on sounds and letters. Make instruction meaningful and comprehensible.

In our district we have an articulated curriculum which is aligned with the mainstream. I think that the materials we use are organized as you advocate, Big Ideas, themes, high expectations, etc. Still, we have LTELLs that are not succeeding. We have a diverse group of over 65 L1, so use of the L1 in the class is limited. This means we spend time on building background. We do differentiate for levels of English. I do think we have developed a good instructional program. and yet we don't seem to meet the needs of our LTELLs. Suggestions?

My students mostly had limited formal schooling, but are not newly arrived. They are new to school, but have been in the U.S., working at low-level jobs or at home, for some years. How would you classify this group? I understand the type of student you are talking about. They probably have some limited informal oral English that they needed for their work. They would be a kind of subgroup of limited formal as literacy in L1 is not present, but they would have different needs. Would their needs for English be more functional?

Do you think the SIOP model will help teachers to accomplish the goals you have mentioned today?

Thank you soooo much! It was a great presentation! Very informative and interesting. Thought-provoking. Natalia

In the USA, each state has content-area standards---some now have English Language Development Standards. Do you have advice about how to "dovetail" those standards in planning instruction? We answered this talking about language and content objectives.

How do you assess differentiated reading times when students are in different books? We answered this in quite a bit of detail.

How do we integrate these 4 keys when we have a "guaranteed & viable curriculum" and pacing guides that dictate when/how quickly we must move through concepts in the content areas? We talked about this.

At what point does a student with interrupted education who continues to study here become a long-term learner? Is there a generally accepted definition? No, there is not generally accepted definition. The research is not that clear cut. If the student has been here for 5 to 7 years and can read and write at a minimal level, perhaps they become a long term learner. The point of the long term learner is that they have oral language, but only limited academic reading and writing proficiency in English.

Are you aware of studies of drop-out rates differentiated by these three types of ELL students?

What do you recommend in terms of LFS students who enroll in school in the US but don't have enough time to learn English and accrue graduation credits before they "age out"? We talked about this some. ..community college if the community college is prepared to work with the students.

How might practitioners distinguish the difference between the effects of limited schooling (including cognitive delay) and true learning disabilities? This is a common mistake made by many well intended educators. This was also discussed during the webinar.