ED 498

The Prism Model for ELLs
Overview

- Is this topic relevant?

- Prism Model
  - What is it?
  - Where does it fit?
  - What does it mean for our classroom practice?
  - What does the research say?
Figure 1. Growth of ELL and total school population between 1995-96 and 2005-06 (from U.S. DOE)
The Prism Model

Developed and refined by Wayne Thomas and Virginia Collier from George Mason University.
The Prism Model: What is it?
“If they would just learn English, everything else (in their school performance) would fall into place.”
Sociocultural Processes

Cultural:

- Adjustment to a new country, city, etc.
- Adapt to a new education system

Psychosocial:

- Affective
- Socioeconomic
L1 and L2 Cognitive Development

- Preferred learning styles and processes
- Opportunities for higher-order thinking (cognitively demanding)
- Connection to prior knowledge in problem solving
- Meaning making
- L1 cognitive development
L1 and L2 Academic Development

- Academic language development
- Opportunities for interaction in classroom
L1 and L2 Language Development

- Developing academic language in L1
- May be learning to read/write in L1
- Acquiring L2
  - Phonology
  - Grammar
  - Meaning
  - Pragmatics
  - Paralinguistics
The Prism Model: Where does it fit?
The Prism Model can serve as a guide for our professional practice with ELLs...our interactions, our language, our lesson plans.
- Academic discipline
- Academic language development
- Transfer from L1 to L2 (Cummins)
- Integration of concepts across disciplines
- Krashen’s 5 Hypotheses
- CALP and BICS (Cummins)
- Stages of SLA
- Language domains and proficiency levels
- Cognitive load (Cummins)
- Strategic approach to learning
The Prism Model: What does it mean?
Case story analysis: Tinou

Questions:

- What do we know about Tinou? (i.e., status and needs)
- What can we do? (Implications)
  - Academic
  - Linguistic
  - Cognitive
  - Sociocultural
What does the research say?

Length of time to reach on-grade-level performance?

- For ELLs who are schooled in English in U.S., and had no schooling in L1 = 7-10 years
- For ELLs who are schooled in English in U.S., but had at least 2-3 years of L1 instruction in home country = 5-7 years
- For ELLs schooled bilingually in U.S., = on-grade-level in L1 and will take 4-7 years in L2
The most important predictor of long-term school success for ELLs is the presence of cognitively complex on-grade-level academic instruction through the students’ L1 for as long as possible (at least through Grade 5 or 6) and cognitively complex on-grade-level academic instruction in the L2 for part of the school day.
Program model effectiveness

Figure 6

PATTERNS OF K-12 ENGLISH LEARNERS’
LONG-TERM ACHIEVEMENT IN NCEs
ON STANDARDIZED TESTS IN ENGLISH READING
COMPARSED ACROSS SIX PROGRAM MODELS

(Results aggregated from a series of 4-8 year longitudinal studies from well-implemented, mature programs in five school districts)

© Copyright Wayne P. Thomas & Virginia P. Collier, 1997

Program 1: Two-way developmental bilingual education (BE)
Program 2: One-way developmental BE, including ESL taught through academic content
Program 3: Transitional BE, including ESL taught through academic content
Program 4: Transitional BE, including ESL, both taught traditionally
Program 5: ESL taught through academic content using current approaches
Program 6: ESL pullout--taught traditionally