

ADDRESSING NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN MAINSTREAM CLASSES: LESSONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN IRELAND

Patrick Farren*

School of Education

National University of Ireland, Galway

The context of this paper is the practicum that forms an integral part of the pre-service post-primary teacher education programme in the School of Education at the National University of Ireland, Galway. The paper focuses on English language learner (ELL) strategies and the impact student teachers perceived these strategies had on the progress of students with English as an additional language in the context of mainstream, post-primary school classes. Data were collected from a cohort of student teachers during a plenary session and from a subgroup of the cohort in a follow-up, focus group discussion. Findings suggest that particular strategies are helpful in supporting English language learners (ELLs). The study fills a vacuum in Irish educational research about how pre-service student teachers can be supported in addressing the needs of this group.

Proficiency in the English language is a key competency required by students living in Ireland irrespective of their particular ethnicity or mother tongue in order that they can access curriculum content, socialise, and achieve success at school. By implication, any citizen of Ireland, wishing to derive at least some of the educational, social, cultural, and economic benefits that Irish society has to offer needs to be able to communicate in the English language. It follows that promoting social justice in schools involves supporting English language learners (ELLs) and any other students with literacy difficulties. In post-primary schools, ELLs' needs are addressed by English language support teachers who offer courses based on the mainstream curriculum and who work in collaboration with serving mainstream teachers. The Department of Education and Skills (DES), through its support services, has delivered in-service courses for teachers with the aim of supporting them in bringing about successful integration and participation of ELLs. In addition, the DES Teacher Professional Network

* Patrick Farren can be contacted at patrick.farren@nuigalway.ie

has provided funding for peer professional development through the English Language Support Teachers Association (ELSTA). However, in general, student teachers attending pre-service post-primary teacher education programmes are not offered any significant support or guidance addressing ELLs' needs.

The current study was undertaken in the School of Education at the National University of Ireland, Galway, in the context of the Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) programme during 2013-14. The programme is organised around university-based work and post-primary school teaching practice (practicum). Volunteer student teachers who participated in the study came from a range of disciplines, mainly from English, History, Geography, and Business subject areas, with fewer student teachers from other disciplines (e.g., Science, Religious Education, and Modern Languages). Since 2012, all PDE student teachers have attended a series of lectures on ELLs. These lectures form part of a larger module, Education for Diversity and Social Justice, in the context of PDE, and introduce student teachers to the relevant literature, various theoretical frameworks (e.g., socio-functional linguistics) and classroom strategies that are aimed at supporting them in addressing key needs of ELLs.

The focus of the study is on ELL strategies and the student teachers' perspectives on the impact of the strategies on the progress of ELLs during the practicum. The first part of the paper deals broadly with the rationale for the study. It outlines the Irish context of increased immigration, the theoretical underpinnings of the study (supporting social justice and social constructivism) and the skills required in teachers to help ELLs. In the second part of the paper, data collection procedures are described. This is followed by a thematic analysis of the data and a conclusion that discusses key findings and implications for teacher education.

IRELAND AND THE GROWTH OF IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

Immigration into and across Europe presents many social, educational, linguistic, cultural, and economic benefits as well as challenges. Measures to improve educational provision and quality for students from ethnolinguistic minority backgrounds form an important part of the equity agenda of the EU and OECD. An important underlying message of two major cross-cultural studies – the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) – is that European education

systems need to improve on meeting their targets for ethnolinguistic minority populations (EUCLIM-TE, 2010). According to the European Commission, a higher number of immigrant students studying in the EU but who were born outside the EU, or whose parents were born outside the EU, have not reached minimum levels of reading, mathematical or science literacy when compared to their native peers (European Commission, 2008). According to Wößmann and Schütz (2006), these findings are a cause for concern as inequality has a negative impact on social cohesion as well as on economic development. Inequality in education ‘implies that human potential is being wasted’, and this is leading to ‘lower levels of political participation and a general inability to participate in the richness of society’ (OECD, 2005). Education systems need to address these issues, which may have serious implications both for the well-being of immigrants and the future of Irish and wider European society.

Since around 1995 Ireland has seen a large influx of immigrants. This has resulted in approximately 10% of students in primary schools and about 8% of students in post-primary schools having immigrant backgrounds (OECD, 2009). These percentages are likely to rise in the coming decades as civil unrest spreads in the Middle East (e.g., Syria and Iraq) and North Africa, (e.g., Libya). In the past, Ireland had small-scale immigration (mainly from Italy) but large-scale immigration has been a phenomenon for the last 20 years approximately. According to the OECD, the suddenness of growth in immigration in Ireland has made it difficult to measure educational experience and performance results for second-generation immigrants. Although Ireland does not have many second-generation immigrants, this is set to change in the decades ahead.

In response to the changing situation, the Irish Government has introduced various policies and strategies to promote social justice by supporting equity, inclusion and quality in education among immigrants (OECD, 2009). As part of this response, the DES has delivered in-service courses for mainstream post-primary teachers with the aim of supporting them in bringing about successful integration and participation of students with English as an additional language (EAL), referred to in the current study as ELLs. In addition, the DES Teacher Professional Network has provided funding for peer professional development through the English Language Support Teachers Association (ELSTA). In general however, pre-service, post-primary teacher education programmes offered by Irish universities do not give any significant input (e.g., by way of a module or course) to student

teachers on addressing the needs of ELLs. This is surprising considering that since 2014 the Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) has become a two-year Professional Masters in Education (PME) that is validated by the Teaching Council.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EDUCATION

The 2004 Eurydice Report identified three issues that need to be addressed in European teacher education: the critical importance of teaching the language of instruction, recognition of mother tongues of students from diverse language backgrounds as a potential resource, and the promotion of inter-culturalism. From the perspective of the current paper, English language development for ELLs is founded on the value of social justice of which, according to the literature, there are three complementary aspects: distributive, participative (Cochran-Smith, 2009; North, 2008), and relational (Fraser, 2008). The distributive aspect is about equity in the distribution and accessing of education in terms of its benefits and outcomes. The participative aspect concerns the capacity and opportunity to participate in making decisions, both at macro and micro levels (North, 2008), and the relational refers to recognition and respect for social and cultural difference (Cochran-Smith, 2009). An important argument of this paper is that social justice implies that teacher education programmes and school systems not only allow access to all areas of education to ethnic minority students but also support student teachers in addressing their key needs. By implication, this means that student teachers should be taught to make use of appropriate pedagogies that support students who have diverse linguistic, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, and particular learning needs.

For social justice to happen in schools, conditions need to be put in place that make it possible for all students to have an appropriate educational experience as well as a reasonable opportunity for educational achievement, and, by implication, for participating in society. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some members of ethnic minority communities living in the EU feel marginalised from mainstream majority populations. It is important that countries across the EU recognise the dangers that marginalisation poses to wider society and take steps to address it and other related issues including unemployment. Education has a key part in addressing these issues. For example, it can create conditions that support the host and ethnic minority communities in developing mutual understanding and respect and can foster

self-awareness and critical thinking. By implication, educational systems in countries across Europe need to create the conditions that support social interaction and inter-culturalism and that promote openness and a positive disposition and attitude to the 'other'.

SOCIO-CONSTRUCTIVISM

Language learning and content learning depend on a) an independent cognitive dimension, and b) a social interactive dimension (Candy, 1991; Little, 1999) between teacher and students, and between students and other more capable peers. Vygotsky summarises this succinctly as follows: 'What the child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow' (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 211). Vygotsky, who, according to Terwel (1999, p. 195) was 'a seminal figure in social constructivism', considered the social environment as critical for learning.

The teacher's role is crucial in helping students to complete tasks that they cannot do independently. As Vygotsky (1978) argues, students' cognitive functions (e.g., problem solving) are internalised from social interaction between student and teacher, and between learners of varying capabilities. By creating conditions for students to engage in these interactions, the teacher supports them in developing a 'lexicon' that enables them 'to direct, control and plan their activities during problem-solving. Finally, students internalise this as inner speech and develop a vocabulary that they can draw on to direct their action' (Vygotsky, in Bershon, 1992, p. 37). This suggests that private speech mediates mental processes (e.g., problem solving, planning and evaluating) (Lantolf, 1994). Private speech, therefore, has cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective functions (McCafferty, 1994). Learning content and making use of the English language should go hand in hand for it is in this way that students' cognitive capacity and language proficiency develop together.

Candy (1991) and Little (1999, pp. 81-82) conceive of learning as having individual cognitive and social interactive dimensions. Little argues that one of the central tasks of pedagogy is to find ways of bringing these two types of knowledge into 'fruitful interaction ... in order to enrich and extend, and especially to make more explicit the autonomy that students already possess as a product of their natural environment.' Betakova (in Little, Dam & Timmer, 1998, p. 181) has claimed that partnership between teachers and students can be better 'fulfilled in teacher-student and teacher-group

interactions than in interactions with the whole class'. In analysing discourse competence, Trosborg (1984, p. 188) found that a 'marked increase in student participation and motivation was clearly manifest in student-group interaction as opposed to teacher-led instruction'. Her study supports findings of other studies that suggest that social interaction is not only important in promoting motivation but is an important factor in language acquisition. Clearly, this body of work has implications for mainstream teachers of all students, and, in particular, of students with English as an additional language.

HELPING TEACHERS TO SUPPORT ELLs

A prerequisite to any supports teachers may offer ELL students is teachers' personal and professional attitudes and dispositions. Teachers need to value linguistic diversity and social justice in schools and in the wider society (Perez, 2004). In addition, they need to have awareness of the connection between language, culture, and identity, and of the socio-political dimension of language use, and language education (Bartolomé & Trueba, 2000; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008).

Having pedagogical expertise to support ELLs suggests that teachers may need to make use of strategies (Browne, 2007; Carrier & Tatum, 2006), classroom interaction, and scaffolding (Gibbons, 2002). In practical terms, this involves providing particular types of support for ELLs to create conditions that engage them in social interaction with more capable peers; involve them in setting their own learning agenda (e.g., planning goals, setting targets, monitoring progress and self-assessing); and help them to express meaning to one another. In addition, teachers should provide formative feedback so that students can extend their development levels.

If teachers are to offer effective support to ELLs, essentially they need knowledge and understanding of the structure of the English language, and of what is involved in second language learning. They also should understand differences between conversational and academic English language use. For, as Cummins (2000) notes, ELL students take several years longer to develop academic English than conversational English. In addition, teachers require skills in analysing text types and features of academic English (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). Knowledge, understanding and skills in these areas are important for teachers to help them identify the linguistic demands of classroom tasks, including key vocabulary, and understand the complexity of semantic structure (words, phrases, symbols, and their meaning), and

syntactic structure (relations among words in a sentence, and in a text). In other words, teachers should be able to set tasks for ELLs with awareness about what is expected of learners in terms of language use in the context of particular prototypical types of text (e.g., scientific, geographical explanation of phenomena, historical narrative) and for particular communicative purposes (e.g., reporting, describing, instructing, explaining).

DATA COLLECTION

In 2013-14, I gave a series of three lectures on addressing the needs of ELLs to student teachers in the context of the PDE. The lectures began with input from me, which was followed by group discussions among student teachers and, finally, by feedback from volunteer student teachers. At the beginning of my second lecture I invited student teachers to participate in the current study that was aimed at supporting them in addressing key needs of ELLs. I informed them that the study would not form part of any formal assessment process on the PDE programme and, in addition, that there was no obligation on them to participate. At the end of the lecture, I distributed a list of ELL strategies to approximately two hundred student teachers. I invited them to select strategies from the Strategies Framework devised following a review of literature (see Appendix), to make use of any other strategies they thought appropriate, and to monitor the impact their selected strategies had on ELLs' learning during the subsequent six-week school practicum. The student teachers taught (mainly at junior cycle) in a variety of school types (Secondary, Comprehensive, and Vocational) including DEIS (designated disadvantaged) schools, and in a mix of urban and rural settings. A tiny minority taught in Gaeltacht areas.

Student teachers are offered varying levels of encouragement and support from serving, cooperating teachers. However, since there is no official mentoring system, there is no guarantee that appropriate levels of support are available. The type and level of support varies from school to school. Support is generally given in instances of student misbehaviour or bullying, though student teachers may seek support from their cooperating teacher if or when they feel the need for it. In the current study no student teacher made reference to any support received from their cooperating teachers with regard to how to teach ELLs specifically.

When student teachers returned from the practicum I organised them into groups of five during an hour-long plenary session. Groups were not

organised according to any particular subject area. Then, on my advice, each group elected a chairperson, note-taker, and rapporteur. The Strategies Framework served to guide their discussions. After 20 minutes, rapporteurs from volunteer groups were invited to report to the whole group. Approximately ten rapporteurs presented findings, representing about 50 student teachers (25% of the cohort). The rapporteurs provided information about the perceived impact of different strategies and discussed the success of the strategies for ELLs' progress. Data came from a spread of subject areas (e.g., English, History, Geography, Science, Religious Education, Modern Languages). On my invitation, one volunteer student teacher noted the findings presented by each rapporteur. Her notes, projected onto a screen, were visible to the whole group and were subsequently made available on the university blackboard to all PDE student teachers. As part of my teaching strategy I wanted to create conditions that would support student teachers in learning from one another, in integrating strategies into their teaching and in researching the impact of particular strategies on ELLs' progress.

At the end of the plenary session, I invited approximately 10 volunteer student teachers from a variety of subject areas to participate in a more in-depth, focus group discussion, again guided by the Strategies Framework. The student teachers were training to be teachers of History, Geography, English, Religious Education, and Modern Languages. I recorded the discussion with the consent of participants.

A possible limitation of the study is that I did not collect any written notes that student teachers made during the course of their practicum. Also, due to time constraints, it was not possible to obtain data from all volunteer student teachers. Finally, it would have helped to validate findings if the study had been organised in a way that would have made it possible for ELLs to provide feedback.

A number of recurring themes emerged from the plenary and focus group discussions and these were used to analyse the data. All of the themes related to what student teachers had to say about the use(s) they made of particular strategies as well as about the impact they found various strategies had on ELLs' progress in specific classes. In the next section of the paper, findings are presented under each of the themes as follows: Background knowledge and inter-cultural awareness; pre-reading strategies; brainstorming; mind-maps; word banks; concepts; pair work, group work, and role play; peer-feedback and teacher feedback; praise for students' work; and use of visuals and realia.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF PLENARY AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Background Knowledge and Inter-cultural Awareness

A majority of student teachers in the plenary session and focus group discussion referred to how they tried to make inter-cultural connections between students' prior knowledge and new knowledge. An example was given of an inter-cultural week held in a particular school, and of how students' experiences during that week had enhanced their inter-cultural awareness. As part of the week's events, several students gave presentations about their particular country of origin. Nigerian, Polish, Lithuanian and other stands were set up and these stands sported flags of countries of members of the school community. There were mannequins dressed in national costumes as well as ethnic food tasting experiences. In the context of a Leaving Certificate class, groups representing three countries took part in a fashion show, with each group representing their country of origin.

Findings suggest that a whole-school approach to inter-cultural awareness is beneficial. The approach was successful in creating self-motivation among students. It served to support students in making cross-curricular links, in accepting responsibility for self-directing, and in learning about, and from, one another. The data suggest that a more integrated and cross-curricular approach enhances teaching and learning and, by implication, supports ELLs and inter-cultural awareness across the school community.

Pre-reading Strategies

Language teachers and teachers of History and Geography in particular found that use of pre-reading strategies helped ELLs to activate any background knowledge they had about the topic and to predict the topic of the text before they embarked on reading it. Student teachers found that eliciting prior background knowledge of a subject by highlighting key words supported learning. For example, in the context of studying coastal erosion in a Geography class, a teacher elicited from students any references in a text to particular items students had already suggested. Pre-reading strategies supported students in moving from the known to the unknown and prompted them to develop active reading strategies instead of waiting for the teacher to give answers. The subject teachers also noted that, when ELLs were not asked to read aloud in front of their peers, they felt less anxious and less inhibited about contributing to class discussion (e.g., about the meanings of particular words contained in a text).

Brainstorming

Almost all student teachers found that brainstorming a particular topic before they gave any formal input supported students in constructing knowledge with the teacher, and, in addition, supported students in building their self-confidence to add new knowledge to existing knowledge. Brainstorming took the focus off the English language and onto completing the task. In other words, ELLs were learning the English language in doing the task. Use of brainstorming supported students in constructing definitions in their own words. Follow-up learning involved checking their definitions against dictionary entries and recording the definitions in vocabulary notebooks.

Mind Maps

Several student teachers in the focus group referred to how mind maps 'put up on board', and transcribed by students into their 'note-books, supported students in contributing to the lesson', in expanding on their existing knowledge, and in developing their English language proficiency. In other words, use of mind maps supported students in developing their understanding and encouraged them to be less dependent on the teacher.

Word Banks

A number of rapporteurs noted that the use of word banks was a helpful learning aid. Some student teachers invited their students to find dictionary definitions for particular concepts and to write these definitions in their home language. Use of word banks supported students in making cross-curricular linguistic links and in accepting responsibility for clarifying the meanings of key terms involved in learning tasks as well (e.g., explain, compare, contrast, define). Student teachers found that when students had clarified the precise meanings of key communicative imperatives as expressed, for example, in the above terms, they were able to transfer their understanding from one subject to another. Analysis of data from the follow-up focus group discussion showed that the use of word banks proved particularly useful for learning languages.

Concepts

The practice of writing learning outcomes, key concepts, and homework on the whiteboard supported students in understanding the lesson. This strategy was successful according to a majority of student teachers. When students wrote the definition of a concept in their own words and then compared their

definition with a dictionary definition, their understanding of the concept was enhanced.

Pair Work, Group Work, Role Play

Pair work was seen as useful by a majority of student teachers. Student teachers of Geography found that ‘more capable students would help (other less capable) students’. The whole class stood to benefit from group work between an ELL and other students – it ‘helped all students to incorporate cultural knowledge and experience’ of ELLs into their learning. In the context of Science, ‘pair work’ between ELLs and other students (e.g., a student of Pakistani/Latvian origin, and a native Irish student) supported ELLs in gaining self-confidence and in making use of English in solving tasks. Several student teachers of History found that ‘pair work supported ELLs in understanding technical terms’, and that ‘writing words phonetically on the whiteboard supported ELLs pronouncing the word as well as in remembering how to pronounce it later on’. In the context of English drama, several student teachers made use of peer teaching and referred to how students ‘would make use of colloquialisms to support learning’ (e.g., pairing and sharing their own definitions of basic terms). In general, student teachers found that pair-work activity enabled students to learn effectively, and supported ELLs in gaining clarification from their peers. Pair work, group work and role play supported students in expressing their meanings in English, in developing content knowledge, and in increasing self-motivation.

Peer Feedback, Teacher Feedback

The practice of students reading a completed task aloud opened the way for peer feedback. One student teacher referred to the positive impact this particular strategy had. He used it to support ELLs in reflecting on their use of English grammar. For example, once ELLs had pronounced a verb ending aloud, the particular sound of the verb ending would sometimes alert them to the need to make a correction. This approach enabled peer correcting as well. One student teacher would give a hand signal that involved a backward movement when indicating to students that they needed to review particular tenses (e.g., to replace a present tense ending with a past tense ending). She found that hand signals supported students in self-correcting. This approach, she felt, broke with more ‘traditional’ forms of teaching that focused on reading and writing activities to the neglect of listening and speaking activities.

The literature suggests that formative assessment supports students in reflecting on their learning and making improvements as a result. Pollard reminds us of the need to ‘focus comments upon the actual work, rather than the student’ (2005, p. 325) while Black and Wiliam (1998) have argued that students need to have an overview of their learning targets and to think and talk about their learning.

Praise for Students’ Work

All student teachers found that praising students’ work had a positive impact. One student teacher found that writing positive feedback to parents about a particular student’s progress was a useful way to encourage ELLs. Offering encouragement to ELLs may involve praising any success achieved. For example, in the context of Media Studies, ‘praising a simple thing like how well notes had been copied accurately into notebooks, and how there had been an improvement in homework’ supported ELLs in developing self-confidence. An unusual strategy was used by a student teacher of Geography to reduce anxiety levels among ELLs. She ‘graded them in an examination out of what they had answered and disregarded any questions they had not been able to answer’. She found that this ‘alleviated stress on students’ and helped to allay fears of what their parents might say to them. In addition, students were assured that the level of accuracy in the English language, particularly grammar, did not adversely affect their result.

Use of Visuals and Realia

Many student teachers reported that ‘use of visuals/videos, a summary of main points, explanation of a particular concept, or scene from a play’, supported students in developing interpretive skills. It offered a ‘springboard’ for discussion and supported students in improving their use of English. In a Religious Education class, students were asked ‘to create their own visuals of the four evangelists based on biblical texts (e.g., identity of person, occupation, background, and country).’ Appealing to the senses made ‘learning more appealing and relevant’. In the context of Science, ‘use of a more visual, practical, tactile approach, as in the use of models, skeletons or experiments, helped to support students in understanding abstract concepts’. Having students ‘make posters, label diagrams, or visuals’ were useful strategies. A student teacher of Geography referred to how she would first ‘model’ the use of such props and then invite students ‘to label other key parts of a particular visual, poster or diagram’ (e.g., an estuary), and ‘to

identify other key features/definitions/functions linked to the labels'. This is consistent with the work of Oxford (1990, p. 2) who defined learning styles as 'the general approaches – for example global or analytic, auditory or visual – that students use when acquiring a new language'.

CONCLUSION

Findings from student teachers about the impact of strategies on ELLs generally support the literature. The use of strategies supported individual cognitive and social interactive dimensions of learning (Candy, 1991; Little, 1999) and had a beneficial effect on student teachers' teaching. The study supported the student teachers: in bringing the two dimensions of learning into a more coherent, fruitful and dynamic alliance; in affording them an opportunity to use selected strategies in teaching ELLs during the practicum; and in encouraging them to accept responsibility for improving teaching by learning to monitor the use and impact of strategies. In addition, the study created conditions for student teachers to share their teaching and professional learning experiences with their peers.

Student teachers found the Strategies Framework a useful reference for teaching. While some strategies were used more than others, there was broad agreement that all strategies in the Framework had the potential to be helpful. Student teachers also tended to agree that there needs to be more understanding among mainstream teachers that teaching any subject content involves teaching the English language as well.

It is essential that mainstream teachers integrate English language teaching into mainstream curriculum content. This is because learning is mainly dependent on students' ability to access and produce content in the language of instruction. The importance of addressing the needs of ELLs is particularly acute in Ireland because of recent demographic changes in Irish schools and society. Mainstream teachers have a responsibility for supporting all students including ELLs in developing their competency in the English language in their particular subject area, in creating conditions that support them in having a more positive social and educational experience, and in achieving success in State examinations. The study described in this paper has shown evidence of how ELLs benefitted from use of strategies by student teachers and, albeit limited, is significant as it fills a void in the research literature about the impact of ELL strategies on Irish pre-service teacher

education and, by implication, on Irish post-primary school teaching and learning.

Much more needs to be done in the context of teacher education programmes and in the context of teachers' professional development about addressing ELLs' needs. Offering a tool-kit of strategies is clearly only a beginning. A formal mentoring system, in which mentor teachers would offer systematic support to student teachers in addressing ELLs' needs, should be the norm. A mandatory course or module should be introduced into the PME, and offered to serving teachers or mentors as part of their professional development. The aim of the course would be to support them in developing their knowledge, understanding, skills, capacity, and dispositions in the context of addressing the needs of ELLs. Key components would include second language acquisition theory, systemic functional linguistics (SFL), content-area language and discourse, subject-specific content, social interaction, reading strategies, and inter-cultural awareness, as well as other appropriate teaching, learning, and assessment strategies. In addition, and above all, there needs to be wider understanding and recognition that addressing the needs of ELLs is not just a language issue. It is a social justice issue that requires a fulsome response from all teacher education providers.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, R. (2008). *Towards dialogic teaching* (4th ed.). York: Dialogos.
- Bartolomé, L.I., & Trueba, E.T. (Eds). (2000). *Immigrant voices. In search of educational equity*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Bershon, B. (1992). Cooperative problem-solving: A link to inner speech. In R. Hertz-Lazarowitz & N. Miller (Eds.). *Interaction in cooperative groups* (pp. 36-38). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Black, P. & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practices*, 5(1), 7-74.
- Browne, A. (2007). *Teaching and learning communication, language and literacy*. London: Sage.
- Candy, P.C. (1991). *Self-direction for lifelong learning: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Carrier, K.A., & Tatum, A.W. (2006). Creating sentence walls to help English-language learners develop content literacy. *The Reading Teacher*, 60(3), 285–288.

- Cochran-Smith, M. (2009). Toward a theory of teacher education for social justice. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan, & D. Hopkins (Eds.), *The international handbook of educational change* (2nd ed., pp. 445-467). New York: Springer.
- Cummins, J. (1991). Language development and academic learning. In L. Malavé & G. Duquette (Eds), *Language, culture and cognition* (pp. 161-175). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- European Commission. (2008). Green Paper. *Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems*. http://ec.europa.eu/education/school21/com423_en.pdf
- EUCIM-TE (2010). *European core curriculum for inclusive academic language teaching*. Accessed at: <http://www.eucim-te.eu/32340>.
- Farren, P. (2008). The European language portfolio in pre-service teacher education in Ireland: Reflection, interaction and autonomy. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Trinity College, Dublin.
- Fraser, N. (2008). *Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world*. Columbia University Press.
- Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lantolf, J.P. (1994). Sociocultural theory and second language learning: Introduction to the special issue. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(4), 418-420.
- Lesaux, N.K., Lipka, O., & Siegel, L.S. (2006). Investigating cognitive and linguistic abilities that influence the reading comprehension skills of children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. *Reading and Writing*, 19, 99-131.
- Little, D. (1999). Developing learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: A social-interactive view of learning and three fundamental pedagogical principles, *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, 38, 77-88.
- Little, D. (1995). Learning as dialogue: The dependence of learner autonomy on teacher autonomy. *System*, 23(2), 175-181.
- Little, D., Dam D., & Timmer, J. (Eds). (1998). *Focus on learning rather than teaching: Why and how? Papers from the International Association*

- of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) Conference (Krakow, Poland, May 14-16, 1998)*. Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College, Dublin
- Lucas, T. & Grindberg, J. (2008). Responding to the linguistic reality of mainstream classrooms: Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser & D.J. McIntyre (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (pp. 606- 636). New York: Routledge.
- McCafferty, S.G. (1994). Adult second language learners' use of private speech: A review of studies. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(4), 421-36.
- Muller, C. (2001). The role of caring in the teacher-student relationship for at-risk students. *Sociological Inquiry*, 71(2), 241-255.
- North, C. (2008). What's all this talk about "Social Justice"? Mapping the terrain of education's latest catch phrase. *Teachers College Record*, 110(6), 1182-1206.
- Nutall, C. (2005). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. Oxford: Macmillan.
- OECD. (2005). *Equity in education: Thematic review. Finland country note*. Paris: Author.
- OECD. (2009). *Reviews of migrant education, Ireland*. Paris: Author.
- Oxford, R.L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.
- Perez, B. (Ed). (2004). *Sociocultural contexts of language and literacy* (5th ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Piaget, J. (1971). *Biology and knowledge*. University of Chicago Press.
- Pollard, A. (2005). *Reflective teaching: Evidence-informed professional practice* (2nd ed.). Continuum. London and New York.
- Schleppegrell, M.I. (2004). *The language of schooling. A functional linguistic perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Terwel, J. (1999). Constructivism and its implications for curriculum theory and practice. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 31(2), 195-199.
- Trosborg, A. (1984). Stimulating interaction in the foreign language classroom through conversation in small groups. In D.M. Singleton & D.G. Little (Eds), *Language learning in formal and informal contexts. Proceedings of a joint seminar of the Irish and British Association for Applied Linguistics held at Trinity College, 11-13 September, 1984* (p.

- 177-189). Irish Association for Applied Linguistics, Trinity College, Dublin.
- Wößmann, L. & Schütz, G. (2006). *Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems*. (EENEE Analytical Report No. 1 prepared for the European Commission). [electronic version]. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1987). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

APPENDIX

STRATEGIES FRAMEWORK

The following strategies were presented to student teachers:

1. Support students in making connections between their prior knowledge and new knowledge (Piaget, 1971).
2. Pair ELLs with native/more proficient English speakers, and more academically capable students (Vygotsky, 1978).
3. Endeavour to reduce ELLs' anxiety levels about communicating in English (Ellis, 1994).
4. Offer encouragement, (e.g., praise, note improvement) (Muller, 2001).
5. Create tasks that require more extensive language use in social interaction (pair work/group work) (Vygotsky, 1978).
6. 'Pedagogical dialogue': gear teaching toward supporting students in developing the capacity to express their meanings (Little, 1995); 'dialogic teaching' (Alexander, 2008).
7. Consider linguistic demands as well as cognitive, academic demands when setting classroom tasks or when making use of textbooks (Cummins, 1991).
8. Involve ELLs in different reading comprehension strategies (Nuttal, 2005; Lesaux, Lipka & Siegel, 2006).
9. Promote home reading and mother tongue as resources for learning (Cummins, 2000).
10. Provide scaffolding (Gibbons, 2002):

- a) Visuals including video, graphic organisers, maps, charts, timelines;
 - b) Verbal (e.g., list key vocabulary/words definitions, concepts on the board);
 - c) Role play, drama, experiential learning.
11. Use writing tasks as a metacognitive tool (Little, 1999; Farren, 2008).
12. Clarify the type of text required (e.g., factual, social, or literary), its core communicative purpose(s) and organisational features.
13. Supplementary language strategies, including:
- a) asking students to give the meanings of key concepts contained in the text in their words, and to make note of them;
 - b) providing an outline/summary; and
 - c) showing what successful completion of the task involves.