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Case Study # 3

Developmental Analysis

Phonology (Receptive and Expressive)

Since Andy has Korean as his first language and his parents at home have very limited English speaking skills, he is left with not knowing much English at all. When learning the English language Andy is going to need to learn the different sounds that the letters of the alphabet make. This will be his first step when learning how to speak it. Once he learns the sounds of all 26 letters, he will need to put them together and form phonemes, such as the A in cat and E in bread.

Morphology (Receptive and Expressive)

Morphology being the study of morphemes or the smallest unit of meaning, Andy will learn basic word of the English language like ball, walk, talk and house. He will need to know that when you add and S at the end of ball it becomes plural so there is now more than one ball. Or if you add an ED at the end of walk it becomes past tense, someone already walked. He will also learn that when there is more than 1 foot it becomes feet not foots, the same goes with mouse, when plural it becomes mice not mouses.

Syntax (Receptive and Expressive)

Syntax is another word for grammar in the English language. Once Andy has mastered the sounds of the words and able to perceive the difference of morphemes and understands morphology now he is ready to learn grammar. Such as where a period goes or a comma, when to capitalize letters like at the beginning of a sentence or if it's a proper noun. He needs to know the order of words in a sentence like the noun comes first then verb then adjective.

Semantics (Receptive and Expressive)

Semantics are another word for vocabulary or word meaning. Concrete-contextualized (current situation) Abstract-decontextualized (ideas, concepts). Remembering vocabulary is receptive language with many students, especially ELL will have trouble with. Without knowing the meaning of words, expressive language is going to be very limited. With strong vocabulary skills, students with therefore, become better readers and stronger writers. The more vocabulary Andy learns, the more he will be able to express himself visually on paper in English.

Pragmatics (Receptive and Expressive)

Pragmatics is the goal, purpose or intent of communication. Students should think about the point they are trying to make when communication such as asking questions, feelings, information, ideas, wants/needs, and persuasion. Trying to think about the purpose of communication takes receptive language and once they have

identified it and expressed it then it becomes their expressive language. Once Andy becomes comfortable with his English, which he may not for a while because shy students may think they are not doing as well as they are. Eventually he will be able to understand the point that he is trying to get across when communicating which will take time.

Discourse & Fluency (Receptive and Expressive)

The stronger Andy's skills become with speaking, understanding and writing in the English language he will be able one day to write and speak fluently in the language other than his first native language. Discourse is another name for a paragraph or a body of information, stories or ideas. When his vocabulary and syntax become fluent then writing long bits of information down on paper will be no problem for him.

Cultural or Experiential Factors

Andy was not brought up in a household with an English rich language environment therefore his English is very poor. He has been labeled learning disabled and has been placed into a segregated learning support classroom for his basic instruction. He receives ESL or English as a Second Language instruction during a daily half hour pull out program. Shyness and embarrassment may be a large part of a second language learner's world. Students who are learning another language may feel uncomfortable talking in front of their peers because of frequent errors. Since Andy is from Korea and speaks it at home with his parents, pronouncing the phonemes may be difficult for him in his classes. If Andy had a language rich environment at home it would make his learning process a lot faster and easier, not only on him but his teachers also.

Impact on Learning

Some students may need silence at times, such as a student like Andy who gets distracted easily. Sometimes a child might need a "tune-out" period where he or she can take a break from learning and just listen to the language which they are learning. Silence is also needed to give students a time to collect their thoughts before they respond. Moving too quickly can discourage second language learners from participating. With second language learners, errors can be a positive step, the student might be trying out new grammatical structures. Instead of correcting the errors, the teacher can repeat what the student has said using the correct format. This way the student has a model to correct those errors in the future. Before each lesson, his teachers provide clear lesson goals and materials. This constant repetition of goals prepared Andy and the rest of the class for the lesson expectations. The teachers use a step by step process with frequent examples.

Strategies for Intervention

The teacher must observe English as a second language class to develop sensitivity to and awareness of the learners' needs and to learn effective teaching

strategies. Students also keep a journal to document their growing knowledge. One way to draw on English language learners' prior knowledge is to invite these students to talk and write about their previous literacy experiences. Many teachers have noticed that students will respond enthusiastically when the teacher demonstrates an interest in their previous learning. Teachers can encourage students who have difficulty writing in English to write their answers in their native language. Other subject matter teachers can use this writing exercise to learn about their students' previous learning experiences whether it's in science, math or social studies.

Today I have called a meeting to discuss a student named Andy who is a ten year old fifth grader. He is from Korea and lives at home with his parents and sister who have very limited English. Andy has been labeled learning disabled and has been placed into a segregated learning support classroom for his basic instruction. He receives ESL instruction during a daily half hour pullout program. All the information discussed in this meeting is confidential and only on a "need to know" basis you have this privileged information.

Andy made continuous progress on the focus issues of this action research. The goals were to improve his vocabulary, use of articles of speech, priority sight words, and sentence structure. He improved in all of these areas, pretest and posttest data, permanent products, anecdotal records, journal entries, and standardized test scores document this progress. At the end of the intervention Andy received a 97% accuracy on his priority sight words. At the end he only had one error in the reading of 24 sentences.

During instruction Andy loses his focus. He will drift off frequently. Routine redirection, eye contact and hands on activities are required to re-engage him. When asked a question, Andy sometimes will defer to a joke. He often asks for the question to be repeated. He appears to be sensitive about his language limitation so if he gets frustrated when trying to communicate we have to help him the best we can to understand

what he is trying to say. Also especially if he is shy then he will be more sensitive when he makes a mistake.

Group strategies include cooperative learning, paired sharing of the reading, clear lesson objectives, routine schedules, closures that summarize the lesson, careful directions, semantic organizers and games. The teachers take into consideration the needs of the class, the needs of individual students, and the preferences of the students. They routinely implemented the jigsaw and pair-share approaches to cooperative learning. Using word banks encouraged the students to modify their written work to help with editing and prepare for testing.

Since the parents at home do not speak very much English it will be hard for them to work with Andy on his skills. Parents who don't speak English can help by speaking with children in their native language because it helps them build transferable language skills. Another is reading with children in their native language to help build the transferable language also and by taking them to the library to look through books and talk about the pictures (Cardenas-Hagan). One support strategy that mainstream teachers can use is activating English learners' native language and prior knowledge. Some teachers may fear that students will use their native languages as a crutch that will ultimately impede their learning of English. Other teachers fear that their own lack of understanding of the students' native language may impede their ability to support student learning of the subject matter in English. The linguistic and cognitive interdependence between the first and second languages facilitates rather than impedes students' learning of English in general and of academic English in particular. This interdependence becomes even stronger as the student moved into higher grade levels.