

LD - Combined Conference

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Features of this Power Point

- Considerations of second language acquisition (SLA)
- Special consideration for teaching students who are refugees
- Identifying one group of students who are refugees – from Burma
- Considering ways to support students

Teaching Students who have ESL

Barriers to learning:

- Language load – the amount of academic language students are expected to cope with; the language of the classroom
- Learning load – expectations of what students are asked to do within specific class context
- Cultural load – the amount of cultural knowledge required but not explicitly explained
- Cognitive load – the number of new concepts embedded in a lesson; code/language switching for understanding; cognitive flexibility

Second Language Acquisition Considerations

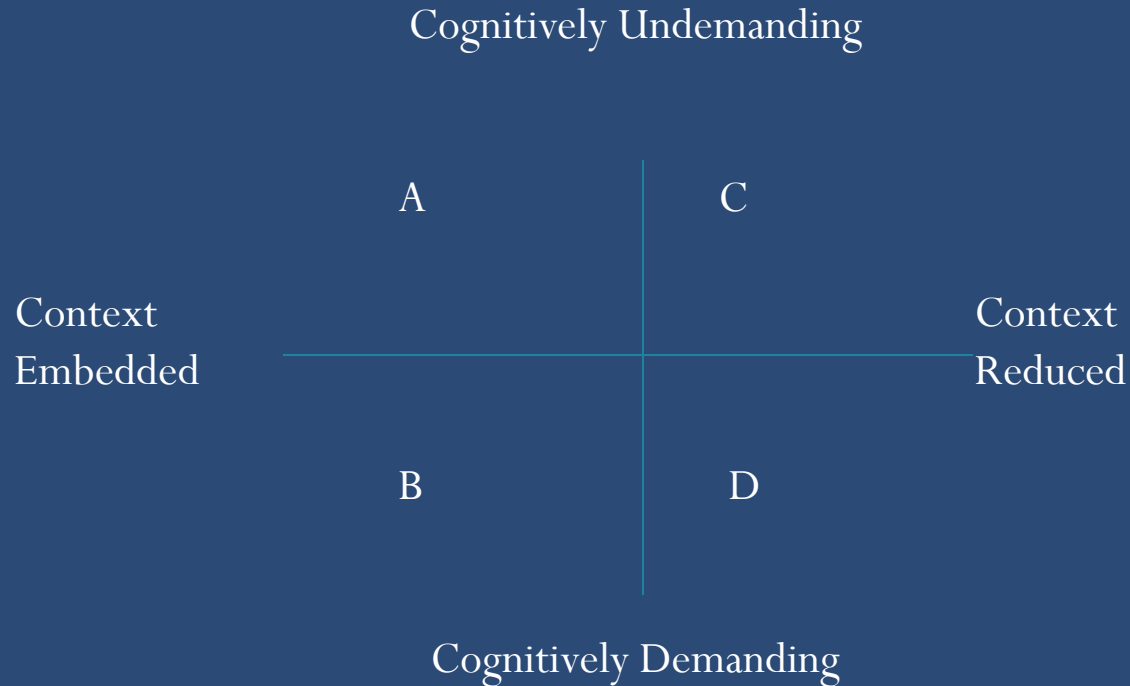
- Awareness of second-language acquisition theory
- BICS – basic interpersonal communication skills
 - Everyday communication skills – understanding relies heavily on the context of the conversation (body language, physical objects, emotions, repetition)
 - Found in playground/classroom conversations, small group discussion on a topic, lessons that provide examples of vocabulary that students can touch (e.g. science lesson with physical examples), a lesson/lecture with gestures, graphic organisers and/or pictures

Second Language Acquisition

Considerations con't

- CALP – cognitive/academic language proficiency
 - Needed to understand communication without contextual support
 - Found when students are reading information on an unfamiliar topic, listening to a lesson/lecture that does not have visual cues, writing an essay/report/assignment, taking a standardised test
- Cummins (1980) argues that if children do not develop a certain level of CALP in their first language, they may have difficulty in reasoning and literacy in their new language

BICS-CALP



Range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in communicative activities (Cummins, 2001)

Behaviours associated with second language acquisition

- Extended periods of nonverbal or silent behaviours (e.g., active listening)
- Difficulty in use of English vocabulary during initial stages of development
- Systematic development of English words over an extended period of time
- May appear inattentive while attempting to acquire a second language
- Exhibits frustration/withdrawal reflecting cultural challenges in acquiring a second language
- May experience problems responding to others during early stages of acquiring English
- Demonstrates consistent progress in appropriate use of English is provided with sufficient time
- Frequent grammar errors evident, especially during early stages of English development
- May require longer 'wait' time before responding to a question or statement

Similarities/Differences in Behaviours

Learning Difficulties

Overactivity, distractibility, aggression, anxiety, reading miscues, fluency deficits, comprehension needs, problem with maths reasoning, vocabulary deficits, falling below expected age/grade norms, long – short-term memory deficits

Second Language Acquisition

Non-verbal/silent period, difficulty using English vocabulary, systematic development of English, may appear inattentive, may exhibit frustration / withdrawal from cultural challenges, may have problems responding in English, demonstrates consistent progress in appropriate use of English, frequent grammar errors, may require longer ‘wait’ time in responding to questions or statements

Special Consideration: Students who are Refugees

- Students who are refugees rarely have had little choice in leaving their homes
- Have been witness to various traumatic situations: war, violent death or injury of family or friends
- Personal physical/psychological injury with limited medical attention
- Deprivation of food, safe water, and other resources essential for survival
- Fear of discovery, arrest, detention, torture, rape, forced conscription into armies or militia

Resettlement and its Impact

- Fear of the future / fear of new, unfamiliar environment
- Isolation and feelings of not belonging
- Racism
- Injustice / devaluing of the person in new culture
- Detention centres / asylum seeking processes

With feelings of:

- Anxiety, grief, depression, shame, guilt, increased dependency behaviours, suicidal thoughts/plans, homelessness, loss of purpose

The Effects of Trauma

Belgian study (2008)

- 1294 migrant students 617 Belgian students (11-18 year olds)
- Found little differences in prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems between migrant and non-migrant school children
- But migrant adolescents suffered more post-traumatic stress symptoms such as high avoidance:
 - Internalise problems more than non-migrant group
 - More difficulty making friends
 - Possible mitigating circumstances:
 - May feel less comfortable reporting behaviours – taught to keep emotional and behavioural problems to themselves
 - Striving to improve circumstances for a better future – cannot be done through exhibiting behavioural problems

Derluyn, Broekaert & Schuyten (2008) European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

The Effects of Trauma con't

Swedish study (1998)

63 refugee students – average age 5.9 years

- 46% rated as having poor mental health five months after resettlement in Sweden
- 44% rated as having poor mental health 13 months later

Possible Mitigating Factors:

- Language and cultural barriers
- 42% had experienced political violence
- Life in Sweden – transitory housing, temporary hotel/apartments
- Constant fear of deportation while papers processed
- Poor motivation
- Children able to make more friends than their parents – but often only with children of the same nationality
- Family breakdowns in Sweden – family stress increased over time

Australian Perspective

- Before 1990 – refugee claims were processed overseas
- Upon arrival in Australia their permanent residency was established
- Had unrestricted rights to citizenship, social security, education, health services
- Such support allowed them to adapt well to their new country

- Since 1990 – change in government policy / change in groups seeking refugee status (unable to apply for refugee status in home country i.e. Afghanistan, Iran)
- New approach referred to as “humane deterrence”
 - Involves rigorous and time consuming assessment of refugee claims
 - Detaining certain categories of asylum seekers indefinitely in detention centres
 - Opening up detention centres in Pacific Island neighbour states
 - Offering only temporary protection visas of three years

Students who are refugees from Burma

- Karen – largest ethnic group under persecution in Burma
- Under constant threat by Burmese military – threat of torture, rape, detention, killing
- Many have fled across the border to Thailand – live in refugee camps
- More established camps have schools – very basic in amenities and resources
- Camps close to border continually raided by Burmese military



Supporting Students

- Become acquainted with their culture/background
- Provide a safe and supportive learning space
- Learn the basics of second language acquisition / how to use ESL bandscales to appreciate the process of learning
- Enact inclusive education programming – effective group work affiliations, promoting feelings of value, acceptance
- Not allowing racism, bullying, isolation to occur
- Become familiar with resources that can help – e.g. The Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma: <http://www.qpastt.org.au/>

In this powerpoint...

We considered

- Second language acquisition (SLA)
- Some comparisons of ESL/LD
- Special aspects of being a refugee – Burma
- Ideas on supporting students

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