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Preservice Teachers' Use of Frustration to Enhance Communication

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Pre-Service Teachers' Use of Frustration to Enhance Communication

Literature

“The pre-service teaching experience is the only indisputably essential element in professional education” (Conant, 1963, 142) **making supervised training beneficial (Zimpher, deVoss & Nott, 1980).**

One purpose of teacher education is to alter attitudes of teacher candidates towards the content and towards the learner (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

New and pre-service teachers lack training to teach ELLs and in multicultural awareness (Schneider, 2003).

Less than one in six education programs offer training in ESL instruction for mainstream teacher candidates (Menken & Antunez, 2001).

All education students need training in language teaching and in TESOL (Lucas, Villegas & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; Wong & Snow, 2002; Richards & Crookes, 1988).

Willard-Holt (2001) describe a six-day overseas experience for education students which resulted in a broadened concept of cultural diversity, and **Yang (2011) calls for more overseas, international, cross-cultural experiences.**

Methods

- 20 student teachers, ages 21-23 (18 females; 2 males);
- 6 with State TESOL endorsement
- In 3 educational programs (ECED, MCED, and AYA)
- Student taught in English in 10 countries
- Survey questions related to teaching ELLs
- Interviews to clarify survey responses
- Researchers combined or eliminated data not consistently supported by responses
- Coding produced two main categories; each with sub-categories
 - Frustration
 - Confidence

Frustration

Lesson Planning

Diversifying plans to include second language learners was daunting.

Preparing engaging lesson plans for ELLs overseas induced feelings of panic, shock and anxiety

“I felt mentally clouded and ignorant...and assumed that I was more ready than I was.”

Translation/Communication

Students were surprised at the amount of patience and effort needed to understand, communicate, and develop skills for communicating across cultures

...[frustrated] “with myself for not being able to communicate effectively with my entire class”

“...math terminology, specifically related to language, was often a difficult thing to gage.”

Background knowledge/ Diversity

Students became aware that background knowledge is different for each culture and different from their own.

[I] “...would chat about different cultural traditions and so much of my students' background factored into my teaching and into my lessons.”

“I have learned to think through every learning style.”

[I] “...able to learn from the students and the students were always able to bring interesting comments to the table during any group discussion.”

Conclusion

- **All twenty education majors participating in this study struggled with teaching ELLs.**
 - **None spoke the language of their host countries**
 - **Most were not trained to teach ELLs.**
- **Dealing with ELLs produced multiple areas of frustration that negatively impacted teaching.**
- **Students used frustrations to propel themselves to creativity, to research and to positively adjust their teaching .**
 - **Student awareness**
 - **Breaking down content**
 - **Engaging students**
 - **Necessity for daily assessing**

Confidence

Classroom Language

Standard American English is not considered Standard English by people in other parts of the world.

Students confronted the dichotomy between ELL Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS)

Learned to recognize gaps in student academic language

“...Once I realized the struggle was with the science vocabulary, I was able to help more effectively.”

Changes to Self

Students learned to adjust their linguistic register.

Forced to recognize and modify the plethora of idioms in everyday American speech

“acting out” (for misbehaving)

“blurting out” (for speaking out)

“to change words to make it less cultural and more universal.”

Accepted mistakes with sensitivity, humor, patience, and humility.

“My personal language skills were not nearly as diverse as the majority of my students.”

[Adjusting my speech to terminology the students would understand] “is a humbling practice that requires a lot of patience”

Cultural awareness

Recognized the need to adapt , make necessary adjustments through differentiated instruction and accept their own shortcomings.

“This experience has made me much more sensitive to the broad range of abilities I will see in my classroom.”

- **Most important lessons learned were those of language and culture.**
- **American, idiomatic English is not a world-wide English.**
- **Understand the meaning of cultural diversity.**