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How Does The Use Of Annotation Affect Reading Comprehension In The Primary Grades Of Immersion Education?

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HOW DOES THE USE OF ANNOTATION AFFECT READING COMPREHENSION

IN THE PRIMARY GRADES OF IMMERSION EDUCATION?

By

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Every school year, I get a new group of second graders who have worked so hard in their previous years of school to harness their ability to read in a language that is not their native language. They have enough knowledge in phonics to sound out words and they have had experience and practice with sight words. Phonics, sight words, and other strategies have given these students a good foundation that has led them to be able to start to read with fluency and accuracy. These students are still learning to become active readers and to connect all of those words together into something with meaning. Now that they have this foundation, they will start to harness their reading comprehension skills in my second grade Spanish immersion classroom.

A trend that I have begun to see over the last couple of years, is a steady rise in my student's difficulty with comprehending what they are reading. Throughout the year, I have seen my students increase their fluency and accuracy but their comprehension does not follow the same steady upward trend. I first looked at our reading curriculum which includes some close reading strategies, such as rereading and questioning to increase comprehension. Next, I researched other reading strategies that support reading comprehension and noticed that a close reading strategy that our reading curriculum does not include is annotation. This has led me to ask *How does the use of annotation affect reading comprehension in the primary grades of immersion education?*

Chapter One Preview

This chapter will provide the background of my experiences teaching reading comprehension to primary age students who are also second language learners. First, I will describe my personal background including my teaching experience. Then I will explain the reading programs that the two schools I worked at used. Finally, I will share my rationale for this project and give an overview of chapter two.

Personal Background

After graduating from The University of St.Thomas with my teaching license in K-12 Spanish, I applied for the position of a language and cultural assistant in Spain through the Spanish Department of Education in order to grow as an educator and perfect my Spanish language skills. I worked in Spain teaching English at a government sponsored adult language school and an after school language program for kindergarteners. My everyday experiences in Spain and speaking the language for two years improved my language skills and gave me more confidence in my language abilities than my five years of Spanish classes prior to college and my four years of studying for a major in Spanish combined.

This experience cemented the idea for me that the best way to learn a language is to immerse yourself in it. This forces you to only use that language to communicate. This experience also helped me to realize that I didn't want to teach K-12 Spanish but that I wanted to use my Spanish while teaching elementary students. I would be able to do this while working at a Spanish immersion school. In order to teach Spanish immersion at the elementary level, I went back to school and got an additional license in K-6 Elementary. I

was then hired for my first full time teaching position in a great district as a second grade Spanish immersion teacher. I taught for 3 years before taking a leave of absence to teach at an American School in Queretaro, Mexico. This was my first time teaching in English as a foreign language as I was hired as a 1st grade English immersion teacher for two years.

In both of my experiences, I was teaching reading, writing, math, social studies, and science to seven and eight year olds in their non-native language. Through my curriculum and instruction class on teaching foreing languages and my time working with second language acquisition, I learned the importance of meaningful communication. I strive to guide all children to develop as good communicators in order to share their opinions and participate in discussions about the world and issues around them.

Confidence plays a big role in communicating. I have seen my student's confidence skyrockets when they start to comprehend texts. This confidence leads them to participate in discussions about the text and start to form their own opinions about it as well. Text discussions allow students to practice their communication skills which helps improve reading comprehension. A close reading strategy that has shown to improve reading comprehension and support text discussions is annotation of texts.

My seven and eight-year old students have good foundations in their ability to read and I feel that annotations will help increase their reading comprehension. "Annotation is a way to deepen comprehension by marking the text with one's thoughts, comments, or wonderings. In the primary grades, you can begin this by circling a vocabulary word or words that students may not know." (Ensley and Rodriguez, 2019, p.

224). Fisher and Frey (2014), explained that highlighting is not annotation. "Students should be encouraged to write questions, comments, and notes to themselves in the margins (not just circling and underlining)" (p.227).

I feel that close and active reading is a crucial skill that all students need to succeed in their future educational and occupational lives. Due to the internet, there is a plethora of information about everything and anything easily found. Students must learn how to decipher and understand all this information. In society today, people need to be active readers so they are able to evaluate information.

We need to build strong active readers who will interpret information in order to form their own opinions and not passively accept anything they read as truth. Through the close reading strategy of annotation of text, I hope to increase student engagement while reading and confidence in being able to comprehend a text and participate in text discussions. Through annotation, students will become active while reading and form their own opinions about the text.

School Reading Programs

In my first teaching job, I taught 2nd grade Spanish Immersion. When I started in 2015, the district had just piloted a new language arts curriculum and was implementing it district wide. My elementary school actually piloted the program and my coworkers were already very familiar with the new curriculum. The curriculum is from The Center for the Collaborative Classroom and is called Making Meaning.

The Making Meaning program for grade two has 10 units:

1. The Reading Community: Fiction and Narrative Nonfiction,

2. Making Connections: Fiction

3. Visualizing: Expository Nonfiction, Poetry, and Fiction

4. Making Inferences: Fiction

5. Wondering: Fiction

6. Wondering: Fiction and Narrative Nonfiction

7. Wondering: Expository Nonfiction

8. Using Text Features: Expository Nonfiction

9. Determining Important Ideas: Expository Nonfiction and Fiction

10. Revisiting the Reading Community

Each unit was translated into Spanish by teachers in the district and given to the Spanish immersion teachers to use. Each unit also included a handful of specific read aloud books and those books were either found in a Spanish translation or another book already in Spanish was used as a substitute.

The first unit really helped to build a reading community in my classroom and taught them great procedures for gathering together for the mini lesson in which I model the strategie. It also teaches them how to communicate with a partner for "Turn and Talk" and "Think, Pair, Share." These are routines that I used in all my class subjects to encourage conversations about a topic. I found these procedures and routines so helpful that when I went to my next position, teaching in English to Spanish, Korean and Chinese speakers, I started the school year teaching them to my students as well.

I started teaching at the English immersion school in 2018. I taught 1st grade English immersion at The John F. Kennedy American School in Queretaro, Mexico. Even

though it was 1st grade, the students were still seven and eight years old. At JFK, they

had pre-first grade after kindergarten to give students another year with English

immersion. At the end of my first year, I piloted two units of a new language arts

curriculum and the school decided to implement this curriculum throughout the

elementary school the next year. The curriculum was Lucy Calkins and Colleagues

Reading and Writing Workshop.

The Reading Workshop for grade one has four units:

1. Building Good Reading Habits

2. Learning about the World: Reading Nonfiction

3. Readers Have Big Jobs to Do: Fluency, Phonics, and Comprehension

4. Meeting Characters and Learning Lessons: A Study of Story Elements.

Each lesson contained a mini lesson, small group work, mid-workshop teaching,

transition to partner time and share. I did not receive as much training or guidance with

this program as I did with the Making Meaning program. This experience made me

realize how important it is for schools to invest in training and support when they ask

teachers to start to use a new curriculum or program. After a year, my other three team

members and I still did not feel fully comfortable or confident with the program. We also

did not see as much progress with our students using the new curriculum with the

previous curriculum.

I will be returning to my previous school and back to the Making Meaning

reading curriculum. This Making Meaning program focuses on nine comprehension

strategies that are formally and informally taught. The strategies are: making connections;

retellin;, visualizing; wondering/questioning, using text features; making inferences; determining important ideas; analyzing text structure and summarizing. Research has shown that these are important strategies for comprehension but these curriculums do not take into account second language learners.

Rationale

My students are second language learners and in our school the second language they are learning is Spanish through immersion. There is more research on how to best teach English language learners. Two instructional principles derived from that research are using visuals to help students and teachers have a clear understanding of what is being discussed and using both oral and written modalities frequently (Gersten, 1999) .

The close reading strategy of making annotations is a written modality that creates visuals that allow for students to more clearly understand a text and to show the teacher what they are understanding. Using the written modality of symbols to connect to the reading and show comprehension fits well with my students' stage of cognitive development as well.

My second grade students are in the preoperational stage of the four development stages of Jean Piaget's cognitive theory. In the preoperational stage, children use symbols. They think symbolically and use objects or words to represent something else. Based on research of English language learners and Piaget's cognitive theory, integrating annotations within the existing reading curriculum will greatly support second language learners.

The close reading strategy of annotation also supports students to comprehend

more difficult texts due to a focus on text analysis for the Common Core State Standards. These Standards push for more complex texts for students in order to push teachers to prepare students for standardized tests. The use of more difficult texts and standardized test preparation has led to the adoption of close reading as an instructional practice in many schools (Ensley and Rodriguez, 2019).

The close reading approach is professionally significant to me because the close reading strategy of annotation will allow for deeper understanding and help facilitate conversations within my immersion classroom. Students need to feel comfortable, safe and supported when trying to speak a new language. Their confidence is very important for their progress and understanding. Annotation of text will help them have little notes to refer back to when it is time to discuss the text. It will be a visual reminder of what they were able to understand from the text and questions they have about it. It will give them confidence and support their oral communication in discussions which will lead to better comprehension of the text.

Annotation of text is a strategy that I have not seen used by teachers in my current school, but I have read about annotating while researching strategies to improve reading comprehension. My aim is to integrate the close reading strategy of annotation into my district's current reading curriculum in order to support reading comprehension by second language learners in the primary grades.

The results and insights I receive from this research project will be a helpful resource not only for my grade level team but also for all teachers because there are different levels of text annotation that can be used with different age groups. It can also

be a great way for teachers to have a quick visual formative assessment of students'

understanding of a text. This quick formative assessment will help teachers adjust their

lessons and realize how they need to support each individual student. It will also be

important information for my administrators to consider when shaping our reading

curriculum and instruction specifically for the immersion classrooms.

Summary

In this chapter I wrote about my personal background and experiences as an

immersion teacher for seven and eight year old students in Spanish and English. While

teaching, I saw how a student's confidence in communicating in the target language can

play a huge role in their understanding and comprehension. I shared how I feel that close

and active reading is a crucial skill that all students need to succeed in their future

educational and occupational lives and how that success starts with reading

comprehension. The current reading curriculum does not include the teaching of

annotation and I have presented my rationale for deciding to integrate that strategy into

my district's current reading curriculum for my primary classroom of second language

learners.

In the next chapter, I will provide a review of the literature that is relevant to

including the strategy of annotation into an immersion classroom. Chapter 3 then

includes a detailed description of my project and my plan for adding the teaching of

annotation into the reading curriculum. Finally, in chapter 4, I reflect on all that I have

learned while researching my question: *How does the use of annotation affect reading

comprehension for primary students in immersion education?*

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

When peering into an elementary school classroom these days, there is one prominent change from when I was a student in elementary school in the early 1990's. That change is the omnipresent technology screen. Most districts and schools have implemented the use of technology by computers, chromebooks or Ipads into the elementary school classroom. Some districts have been able to provide one to one devices. Students are using screens to do all sorts of educational activities from math apps, watching science videos, to reading. The number of reading applications and websites has skyrocketed. There is Learning A to Z with Raz Kids, Readability, Epic!, Reading Eggs, Khan Academy Kids, ReadWorks, Read Theory, Istation, MackinVia, PebbleGo, Lexia Reading and more. Now with our school going to an on-line method of teaching due to Covid-19, my second grade Spanish immersion students are reading more and more on a screen instead of from the books in our classroom. These technological resources have brought about some great improvements and support for students but have also led to more surface reading.

Cai and Tang (2012) explain that "surface reading is fast reading with low-level cognition and aims at entertaining" (p.95). I have also noticed that while I am looking through my Facebook, Instagram, or Apple News I just skim articles and rarely take the time to actively read the whole article. I feel that I usually get the gist of what the article

is saying but I know that I don't have a deep understanding of what I just read. I want my students to be active readers to improve their knowledge by comprehending what they are reading. Research has shown that annotation of text can help to prevent surface reading and support students to be active readers. This has sparked my questions of *How does the use of annotation affect reading comprehension for primary students in immersion education?*

There is ample evidence to show that students who struggle with reading comprehension stay mostly passive while they are reading. They are not improving their understanding by actively using strategies to foster comprehension (T. Mariage, Englert, & M. Mariage, 2020). It is even more important for my students who are in an immersion classroom to not become passive readers because they are not reading in their first language.

Chapter Two Preview

This chapter addresses a few aspects of reading in an immersion classroom. There have been many different instructional practices and methods implemented to improve reading comprehension throughout the years. It is first important to understand the complex topic of reading comprehension. Research done with first language (first language (L1)) and second language (L2) students regarding the factors that affect reading comprehension will be discussed and reviewed for their insights. The first part of this section provides various components of reading comprehension. The second part of this section discusses reading strategies that have been successful in improving reading comprehension for primary students.

It is also important to understand language learners in the context of an immersion education in order to investigate the research questions of *how does the use of annotation affect reading comprehension in the primary grades of immersion education?* Then I will zone in on an instructional reading method that has become increasingly popular for its fusion of multiple reading strategies.

Research has shown that the reading strategy of annotation of a text has a positive effect on promoting students' reading ability including improving reading comprehension, creating an interaction between students and text, and improving students' reading confidence (Yang, Yu, & Sun, 2013). The last section of the literature review provides an overview of the strategy of annotation of text and the second part of this section looks at the use of annotations to support reading comprehension in primary education.

Reading Comprehension

Snow explained that the RAND group defines reading comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (as cited in Helen & Turner 2003, p.2). The Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education appointed the RAND Reading Study Group (RRSG), a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis, to create strategic guidelines and a research agenda to focus on issues in literacy, particularly in the area of reading comprehension. A focus on reading comprehension by the educational communities and the U.S Department of Education has been fueled by the stagnant

levels of American student's reading ability, the widening achievement gap between students of different demographics, and the importance placed on high-stakes standardized testing.

Many of the key points put forth by *The Rand Report: Reading for Understanding: Toward an R&D Program in Reading Comprehension* are supported by other scholars' research including the importance of comprehension instruction beginning at the kindergarten level. Reading development is conceptualized as a continuum with progress continuing from one grade to the next. Reading strategies should be introduced at the elementary grades in order to establish a strong foundation to support academic achievement. Many studies which have shown the strong longitudinal effects in the development of reading have concluded that early reading interventions in kindergarten will support continual progress in subsequent years. (Gentry & Shapiro, 2006; Helen & Turner 2003; Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2011).

This literature review focuses on text-level reading comprehension, which is a complex cognitive skill taught in schools and pertinent for general academic and life long achievement. Research on the factors that affect second language learners reading comprehension will also be discussed and reviewed for their insight into reading comprehension for first language (L1) and second language (L2) students. The first part of this section provides various components of reading comprehension. The second part of this section discusses instructional strategies that have been successful in improving reading comprehension for primary students

Components of Reading Comprehension

It is important to understand the components that lead to reading comprehension in order to understand how to improve it. Researchers often break down the complex topic of reading comprehension in order to understand it better. The RAND study explains that there are three determinants of reading comprehension: one, the reader who is doing the comprehension; two, the text that is to be comprehended and three, the activity or act of doing the comprehension (Helen & Turner, 2003). The first part of this breakdown is the reader. This study points out that the areas of cognitive abilities - motivation, knowledge and fluency all support the reader in comprehension .

The area of cognitive abilities refers to a student's abilities in attention, memory, inference, visualization and more. Motivation is the area supported by teachers giving student choices, challenging texts, and collaborative learning activities. One example of collaborative learning activities is discussions which play a large role in supporting reasoning and comprehension of a text (Fisher &Frey, 2014b). Knowledge of specific comprehension strategies, range of vocabulary, and knowledge of the specific topic of the text fall under the area of knowledge. Finally, the area of fluency refers to the "continued attention to the speed and automaticity of word decoding and lexical access" (Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2011, p.1816). It is important to note that reading instruction that focuses on improving fluency has shown significant improvement in word recognition and fluency but little improvement in reading comprehension (Helen & Turner, 2003).

Hoover and Gough (2009) claim that reading comprehension comes from word decoding and listening comprehension (as cited in Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2011,

p.1805). Listening comprehension includes the linguist processes involved in the comprehension of oral language. Word decoding is a component of word recognition and refers to the blending of letter sounds to read a word. Verhoeven and Van Leeuwe refer to several other studies that provide evidence for the proposition that reading comprehension is the product of word decoding and listening comprehension for first language learners. They conducted a study to analyze if this same framework applied to second language learners.

A study by Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe in 2011, with a sample of 1,293 first language (L1) and 394 second language (L2) learners from 72 urban elementary schools in the Netherlands, found that reading comprehension achievement can be predicted from listening comprehension and word decoding abilities. According to their data, importance should be placed on the fluency and automaticity of word decoding for elementary students. This seems to contradict the findings of Helen and Turner (2003), who suggested that an instructional method focused on fluency and word decoding did not lead to significant improvement in reading comprehension. I did not find that the literature or research could come to an agreement that giving substantial time and focusing on a student's fluency led to improved comprehension. I have also found a divide among teachers on this topic. Some teachers emphasize fluency and spend substantial time on fluency, while others give fluency the same amount of time as the other reading activities.

While Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe's study focused on two cognitive skills; word decoding and listening comprehension, a study by Hansen and seven other researchers

looked at ten cognitive skills associated with text-level comprehension. This study broke

down reading comprehension into two component skills (linguistic processing

component and memory and reasoning component) that each include a number of

variables (See Appendix A). They assessed the overall reading comprehension of 72

immersion bilingual (second language learners L2) and 72 monolingual students (first

language learners L1) aged seven to 14 through the assessment of specific cognitive and

linguistic skills. This study is specifically looking for any differences between

immersion bilingual and monolingual children's reading comprehension and literacy

acquisition. According to the study, there was no evidence of differences in the overall

reading comprehension between the two groups even though there were differences

between the two group's scores in the linguist processing component and memory and

reasoning component (Hansen et al., 2017).

The immersion bilingual students scored lower in the linguistic processing

components but showed higher scores in the memory and reasoning components which

led to a similar overall comprehension score between both groups. In the immersion

bilingual group, their memory and reasoning skills helped to compensate for poor

linguistic skills in order to achieve monolingual comprehension levels. Hansen et al.

(2017) suggests that this study shows the flexibility of literacy acquisition. Students can

all have different capacities in the specific skills that lead them to succeed in the

complex activity of reading comprehension. This also highlights the importance of

teaching multiple strategies for reading comprehension. There should be a large variety

of strategies for students to choose from in order to all achieve the same goal of

comprehension.

Instructional Strategies for Comprehension

There are two goals that effective teachers should focus on for reading comprehension. The first goal is to help students to understand the text and the second goal is to help students to become active readers who use a variety of strategies to understand the text. To improve reading comprehension, Helen and Turner state that, "effective teachers enact a wide range of instructional practices that they use thoughtfully and dynamically" (2003, p.3). It is commonly known that students that struggle with comprehension are not effectively monitoring their understanding and are not sure what strategies to use to help them understand the text better. Baker and Brown explained that the ability for students to know which particular comprehension strategies to use before, during, and after reading is a defining factor between a strong and weak reading comprehender (as cited in Gentry & Shapiro, 2006, p.2).

Researchers have shown the importance of providing cognitive strategies to support students who struggle with reading comprehension. Cognitive strategies are a way for students to interact with the text (T. Mariage, Englert, & M. Mariage, 2020). It is important to note that these strategies are used to help students understand the text and educators need to be careful to not put more focus on the mastery of these strategies than making sense of the text. These strategies should be used fluidly and flexibly while reading with the end point being comprehension.

The most commonly used reading curriculums in elementary schools are usually based on a three phase transactional strategy instructional method. This method of

teaching cognitive strategies starts with first selecting the group of cognitive strategies to be taught. Examples of these strategies are: activate background knowledge, text structure, prediction, questioning, imagery, monitoring and summarizing. The second phase is the explicit teaching of all the strategies through modeling the use and process of each strategy with teacher think-alouds. The last phase is providing scaffolding to slowly release the responsibility of the strategy from the teacher over to the student. (T. Mariage, Englert, & M. Mariage, 2020).

The first phase of this transactional strategy is selecting the cognitive strategies to be taught. There is numerous research about which strategies are to be focused on and given the most attention. Brown, Palincsar and Armruster identified six fundamental activities related to successful reading comprehension: understanding the purposes of reading; activating schema or background knowledge; focusing on main idea;, evaluating critically; monitoring comprehension;, and drawing inferences (as cited in Gentry & Shapiro, 2006, p.16).

Another strategy that many researchers have found beneficial to improving reading comprehension is awareness of text structure. Annotation of text helps to bring that awareness. After finding the relationship between reading comprehension, word decoding and listening comprehension, Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe (2011) also indicated that special attention should be given to the structure of texts in order to support a child's comprehension. Dickson, Simmons, and Kameenui also stressed that reading instruction should focus on the organizational structure of text, such as the identification of signal words and topic sentences to help readers determine the main ideas in a text and

improve reading comprehension (as cited in Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2011, p.12).

Gentry and Shapiro (2006), also include the use of text structure as one of the valuable learning strategies they discuss that improves comprehension and recall. They explain that knowledge of text structure of literature gives information about plot, setting, and characters that improves comprehension. The other two learning strategies discussed in their study were text marking and vocabulary knowledge. They did a study with fifty-seven pre-fourth graders from 14 private schools to determine if teaching text structure with annotation produced higher comprehension scores than the method of teaching vocabulary. The results of their study showed that the vocabulary focused group and the annotation of text structure group had similar reading comprehension scores. Both groups improved their reading comprehension but there was no significant difference to conclude which learning strategy is better for comprehension. Gentry and Shapiro (2006) states, "clearly, students need strategic instruction in how to identify the different types of text structure, discriminate between important and trivial information, organize the hierarchical information through annotation, and derive word meaning of new vocabulary"(p.21).

The role of vocabulary instruction in having a large impact on improving reading comprehension is complex (Helen & Turner, 2003). Beck & McKeown discuss the research that shows that student's learning of vocabulary does not result in enhanced text comprehension (as cited in Gentry & Shapiro, 2006, p.18), while other studies have found that students with broad vocabularies do perform better on reading comprehension tests. Belsile (1997) explains that developing a rich vocabulary is an important priority

and continual challenge in reading instruction. A narrow knowledge of vocabulary leads to difficulties for students to comprehend readings and express their thoughts and opinions.

Research now proposes the idea that perhaps it is the traditional methods of vocabulary instruction that has led to some studies concluding that a variety of traditional vocabulary exercises increase vocabulary knowledge but do not lead to an improvement in reading comprehension (Gentry & Shapiro, 2006; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). It is important for teachers to use the vocabulary words they have focused on in written comments about student's work, in messages on-line and in conversations with students to help them understand the new vocabulary. When new vocabulary words are rarely used or spoken their meaning is forgotten. Also, for vocabulary development to occur students need to develop ownership of the word by relating it to their own lives or their backgrounds. Some instructional strategies for helping students develop ownership are: context clues, vocabulary webs, synonyms and antonyms, using analogies, giving multiple literal meanings, and using other cultural tools (Gentry & Shapiro,2006; T. Mariage, Englert, & M. Mariage, 2020).

Vygotsky explained that cultural tools are the real tools and symbolic tools that play a prominent role in cognitive development with language being the most important. Some more examples of cultural tools that help students to derive meaning and support their comprehension are cue cards, language stems, discussion norms, annotations and memory aids (T. Mariage, Englert, & M. Mariage, 2020). Cultural tools can help facilitate discussion about those cognitive strategies, also known as thinking strategies,

that have been proven to enhance reading comprehension.

These strategies along with discussions help students to monitor their understanding while reading. Wilkinson and Son (2010) noted that there has been a "dialogic turn" in reading comprehension instruction. Teachers and students' rich dialogues about reading helps students build the habit of using cognitive strategies while reading themselves. Wilkinson and Son (2010), explain that the instructional method of dialogues and discussions helps students have a more "automatic, fluid articulation of strategies necessary for generative and flexible comprehension"(p.376).

This research only covers some of the components that studies have found to affect reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is a complex skill that is activated by other cognitive components such as linguistic processing and memory and reasoning. It was also discovered that students can have a varying degree of mastery in each of the different skills and still achieve comprehension. For example, one student might have higher scores in linguistic processing but lower scores in memory and reasoning while another student might have lower scores in linguistic processing but higher scores in memory and reasoning and in the end, both students receive similar scores in the overall ability to comprehend the text. This research also only covers some of the instructional strategies proven to improve reading comprehension.

The next section will zoom in on reading strategies used specifically in supporting second language (L2) learners. Students in immersion are learning to read in a language that is not their native language or the language that is spoken at home by their parents. Learning a language through immersion instruction and reading strategies used to

enhance reading comprehension for second language (L2) learners will be discussed in the next section.

Immersion Education

The process of learning another language is not easy and takes a lot of practice. There are a number of different instructional ways to learn a new language. There is the traditional classroom instruction where students' exposure to the language is limited. There is dual immersion and bilingual education where two languages are focused on at the same time. Then there is immersion education or instruction, where the target language, usually the non-native language, is the only language used to teach. Two terms associated with immersion education are second language (L2) and first language (L1). Both of these terms were seen in the previous section when discussing Hansen and Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe's studies. Second language (L2) is also called the target, or minority language and refers to the language the students are learning and is the language of instruction. In the United States, English is normally referred to as the first language (L1) language, dominant, or majority language. In immersion instruction, all classroom subjects - reading, writing, science, social studies, and math are taught in the second language (L2) or target language.

Immersion language instruction began in Canada in the mid-1960's in the French speaking province of Quebec. English speaking parents sent their children to French immersion schools. The first immersion school in the United States of America were in Culver City, California in 1971. Immersion programs are growing in popularity everywhere around the globe. There are many reasons why parents choose to send their

children to immersion schools. Parents may choose to do so in order to enhance their child's career prospects, promote multicultural integration, or connect them to a cultural heritage (Hummel, 2014).

The main goal of immersion education is to provide exposure and participation in another language that would lead to students' functional usage of that second language (McLaughlin, 1995). Early immersion programs that start in kindergarten or 1st grade give students exposure to the target language for about 6000 to 7000 hours while traditional language instruction only gives 1000 hours throughout their time in elementary school. Research has shown the effectiveness of immersion education in learning another language (Hummel, 2014). The first part of the next section provides an overview of learning a second language through immersion instruction. The second part of this section explores reading strategies specifically promoted for use within content and language integrated learning known as CLIL, which is used in immersion education.

Language Learning and Immersion

As infants, language is learned first by listening. After listening, we began to speak in order to communicate wants and needs. Then reading and writing skills are mastered. Learning a second language follows a similar process. Listening and speaking skills are engaged in before mastering reading and writing skills. In 1981 Gordon Wells conducted a study that looked at how interactions within a family led to language development. He found that the act of both the parents and the child conversing in order to express needs, ideas and intentions is critical to the language development of the child.

This collaborative conversation is called "negotiating meaning" (As cited in McLaughlin, 1995, p.6 and 7). Parents and caregivers slow down their speech, repeat, and expand their language in order to ensure communication. Michael Long suggested that creating a setting where meaning is negotiated through interactions is best for language acquisition. (As cited in Curtain & Pesola, 1988,p.41). Using language as a means for communication is a primary focus for an immersion education program. "Research indicates that teachers will aid students in acquiring a second language in an immersion context if they focus on communicating content" (McLaughlin,1995, p.7).

When teachers are communicating content, it is important to remember Stephen Krashen's input hypothesis theory. Stephen Krashen wrote several theories that were the result of extensive research of second language acquisition. His input hypothesis is most meaningful applicable to elementary schools and language classrooms. The input hypothesis explains that the amount of language acquired by a learner is based on the amount of comprehensible language that the learner can fully understand plus a little more. This is often represented by "i +". The "i" is the student's current level of understanding and a +1 would be just a little bit beyond their understanding while a +2 would be a little bit more beyond their understanding and so on.

Piaget's cognitive theories and Krashen both explain that the learner should always be challenged but never over challenged to the point of creating immense frustration. When the target language is used at all times in the classroom, a teacher should use gestures, illustrations, examples, experiences and caregiver speech, which is described above, to ensure that the child can understand and does not become frustrated

(Curtain & Pesola, 1988). The input hypothesis also shows the importance of creating listening opportunities and curriculums that focus on listening skills for language learning. Giving more listening time allows learners to gather meaning without pressure or fear of having to respond immediately.

Ample listening opportunities are important especially for early learners but a language needs to also be used in order for it to be learned. Thus, it is important for the learner to be an active participant in order for meaning to be communicated. Immersion education programs create a rich and authentic language environment with ample opportunity for students and teachers to negotiate meaning in the target language. Immersion instruction highlights the students as an active learner and encourages the use of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning allows for student to student interactions that promote learning through communication (McLaughlin, 1995).

Gerseten (1999) discusses some specific classroom practices that are helpful for language learners. She mentions the importance of using visuals to reinforce verbal content and also the frequent use of oral and written modalities. Focus on about five to eight core vocabulary words in each lesson with visuals to show the concept and word meaning. There is a large amount of research and literature that highlights the importance of vocabulary for language learners. Usually "students arrive at school with a command of 2,000 to 6,000 words, most immersion students begin their academic experience at point zero" (Belisle, 1997, p.2).

Developing a rich vocabulary supports communication and literacy skills. Vocabulary is also important for developing second language (L2) reading skills.

Vocabulary knowledge has been found to have a stronger impact on the reading comprehension of second language (L2) learners than that on first language (L1) learners. Focusing on vocabulary is just one of the strategies used to support reading and literacy skills for language learners. Students should also be provided with different reading strategies in order to learn to read in a foreign language especially in an immersion program that uses content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

Reading Comprehension in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Content and language integrated learning is an educational approach where content is taught through the target language. It is also known as Content Based Instruction (CBI). Language is taught at the same time as instruction of disciplinary subjects is given (Hummel, 2014). This approach has been shown to improve learning of language and subjects. Most immersion education programs use CLIL. Reading strategies and promoting reading comprehension is vital for a student's success in CLIL. "Promoting reading comprehension is essential in the CLIL approach, since it facilitates access to language and contents" (Garipova & Román, 2016, p.116).

Yolanda Ruiz de Zarobe and Victoria Zenotz (2015) conducted a study on the effect of strategic reading instruction in a CLIL programme on reading comprehension in the Basque Country of Spain. The students were in their 5th year of primary immersion education. The results of this study showed that the group receiving strategic reading instruction increased their score on the metacognition reading test. Thus, supporting the idea that reading strategy interventions positively affects reading comprehension.

The study explained that the experimental group's reading comprehension improved not because they were introduced to a high number of strategies or specific strategies but because they had better control and awareness of how and when to use the strategies. "There results seem to corroborate some literature in the field (Dhieb-Henia 2003; Kusiak 2001; Ramírez Verdugo 2004; Salataci and Akyel 2002; and Zenotz 2012), which supports the view that strategic reading does not depend solely on the number and types of strategies used but also on the metacognition use of the strategies" (De Zarobe & Zenotz, 2015,p.330). Many studies agree that strategic readers, readers that use strategies while reading, acquire language and content more easily because they are more efficient, creative and flexible (De Zarobe & Zenotz, 2015).

There are a number of strategies that help to foster strategic reading: summarizing, questioning, prediction, clarifying, previewing a text, scanning, and guessing the meaning of unknown words. According to Khaki (2014), the most important and useful strategies for language learning students are summarizing orally and answering questions about the text. (as cited in Garipova & Román,2016, p.118). Another factor that positively influences reading comprehension in the CLIL approach is exposing students to challenging texts in order to develop reading proficiency and increase motivation. This can be accomplished through the use of intensive reading.

Extensive reading and intensive reading are two reading approaches used in CLIL. Extensive reading is reading to learn and focuses on a general understanding of what is being read. In a CLIL context, students should do extensive reading at home where they process the information then in the classroom they prepare some sort of

presentation based on their reading. The objective of extensive reading is to expand content knowledge whereas the objective of intensive reading is to develop reading skills, vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Intensive reading allows for the CLIL reader to activate their world and language knowledge which helps them to remember new information and practice their reading strategies.

This literature review only covers some of the components that affect second language acquisition. It specifically looks at language development connected to immersion education programs. Language development occurs best in this context when a rich language environment creates opportunities to listen, negotiate meaning, be an active participant, and engage in cooperative learning. This literature review also focused on reading strategies in a CLIL approach and found that the use of a higher number of strategies or a certain type of strategy does not seem to lead to improved comprehension. It discussed intensive reading as a way to expose students to more challenging texts to improve their use of reading strategies and enhance vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

As mentioned above, Piaget's cognitive theories and Krashen's input hypothesis both explain that the learner should always be challenged but never over challenged to the point of creating immense frustration. Thus, it is important that teachers are strategic in choosing the appropriate level of text for their students. There are many ways for teachers to support their students while they are working with an intensive reading text and to participate in collaborative discussions about the text. One practice that has shown to support language learners access to higher level texts is annotation of text. The

last section of the literature review provides an overview of the strategy of annotation of text and the second part of this section looks at the use of annotations to support reading comprehension in primary education.

Annotation of Text

Throughout the research a common definition for annotating started to emerge. Generally speaking, annotation of text is a strategy to help students comprehend difficult texts by marking it with symbols, marks and also writing in the margins. It is important to remember that having your students just highlight parts of the text is not annotating. C. Porter-O'Donnell used the title of *Beyond the Yellow Highlighter* and L.Gehr wrote *More than Highlighting* to drive home this point. Annotations are a visible record of the thoughts that emerge while making sense of a text. The majority of literature also touched on how annotation leads to higher engagement, active reading and a deeper understanding of the text.

Annotation of text has been used in higher education and secondary school for many years. There is a plethora of research that found that annotation of text supports and improves reading comprehension in higher education. It is a tested note taking strategy that allows students to understand and read enormous amounts of text at the university level. C. Porter-O'Donnell is a 9th grade English and Reading teacher who uses annotation of text with his students. Each student receives a bookmark that lists the specific annotations to be done before, during, and after reading. They also specify if the student should mark the text or write in the margins. For example, under the during

reading section, it states to mark in the text characters, setting and vocabulary while writing in the margin is used for predictions, connections, questions, and opinions.

It is important to know, not only the researcher's point of view on annotation but also students' personal feelings about using annotation of text. The literature shared that at the end of the first semester after learning to use annotations, Carol asked his students to reflect on how they have changed as readers and their use of annotation of text as a strategy for reading to learn information. While sorting the students' reflections, four phrases emerged. The four phrases are: "reading is a process, annotation changes comprehension, annotation slows the reading down, and annotation helps to be more active readers" (Porter-O'Donnell, 2004, p.85).

Implementation of the strategy of annotating a text in primary education began more in the 2000's with research and literature being published within the last decade. Most literature about annotation of text in primary education is connected to the instructional practice of close reading. In lower elementary classrooms, students and teachers annotate the text together while rereading, whereas in higher elementary classes, annotation of text can be done during the first reading of the text. Instructional practices that incorporate annotation of text and are used in primary education are close reading and collaborative reading. In the literature, the reading strategy of annotation has also been referred to as text marking and mark it/jot it. The next part of this section provides an explanation of the various ways that annotation is taught in primary classrooms.

Annotation in Primary Classrooms

The Common Core State Standards push for more complex texts along with

asking teachers to prepare students for standardized tests has led to the adoption of close

reading as an instructional practice in many schools (Ensley & Rodriguez, 2019 and

Fisher & Frey 2014a). Close reading includes the practice of rereading, annotation, and

text-dependent questions. Annotation of text is a foundation of the close reading program.

It is usually the second step, which occurs after the initial reading of the text. In close

reading, after annotation comes the text-dependent questions. It is important to note that

teachers of the primary grades usually annotate with and for students.

Fisher and Frey in 2012, investigated the use of close reading in elementary

schools. A group of 14 experienced teachers, two from each grade level of K-6

participated. Through discussions about annotationing in their own personal classrooms

and referring to additional research, a list of annotation skills were developed.. They took

into account the developmental learning needs of the students at each grade level and the

amount of teacher support required to teach each skill. The scope and sequence of

annotation skills builds on top of the previous ones taught in each grade, so what was

done in kindergarten is done in all grades but each year more skills are added. In

kindergarten, students would underline key ideas in big books with the teacher and in 1st

grade they would also do this in their own personal books. In both grades, teachers would

lead some note taking about the books.

In 2nd and 3rd grade, students begin to use sticky notes and bookmarks to write

notes on texts. In 3rd grade, they begin to circle key phrases and keywords that are

confusing or unknown. In 4th grade, the added skill is the use of the exclamation point to

note something that surprises them and write a single word in the margin. In 5th grade the

question mark is used for questions and writing the question in the margin. Also the mark of EX when the author gives an example with a short comment in the margin is encouraged. Finally in 6th grade, an arrow is used to mark where a text connection has been made (Fisher & Frey, 2012).

Across the literature and research, importance was given to the teachers' involvement and guidance of how to mark the text. If students are not given purposeful instruction when asked to highlight a main idea they will just highlight the whole page of a text or just the first line. Teachers can not just tell students to highlight or underline ideas but must model the skill in order to support their students in learning this comprehension strategy (Gentry, 2006; Gehr, 2019; Fisher &Frey, 2012, 2014a). The close reading instructional practice which includes the annotation of text has been a great way for teachers to model their thinking process while annotating during the second reading of the text. The other instructional practice that includes the strategy of annotation of text that is used in primary classrooms is called collaborative reading.

Collaborative reading is a mix of shared reading and close reading. Concourse Village Elementary School in the Bronx of New York City has used it along with other reading strategies to drastically improve their students' reading comprehension. Everyday all classes from pre-k to 5th grade use the collaborative reading approach to deconstruct an above grade level text for 15 to 20 minutes. The students work with the text and reread the text multiple times in order to support deep comprehension. The five phases of collaborative reading are understanding the main idea, annotating the text, identifying

key ideas and details, dissecting the author's craft, and summarizing (Minero, 2019). The visual in Appendix B explains the five phases of this shared reading plan.

With collaborative reading, the teacher reads the text first. Then the students read the text together to understand the main idea. During the 3rd reading of the text the students annotate on their own and then discuss in a small group before sharing with the class. Each week the class focuses on just one main annotation marking symbol, but students can use the other as well (Minero, 2019). The school uses seven symbols in Preschool, Kindergarten, and 1st grade(See Appendix C). The school uses six symbols in 2nd through 5th grade. Four of the symbols from the earlier primary grades are still used with two more symbols that focus on words and details that support the main idea of the text (See Appendix D). This school adopted a standardized way that all classrooms and grades will do annotation of text. Fisher & Frey (2014a), mention that schools are most successful with annotation when they are systematic about the annotation symbols they teach.

At each phase of collaborative reading students work in small groups to discuss what they just read. These daily discussions help students build their communication and collaboration skills as well. Working together and creating annotations in a group can help the students stay engaged while annotating. Gehr (2019), explains that using visuals and collaborative strategies is a more 21st century way of annotation that gets students excited and increases student comprehension and understanding. Google docs, Smartboards and Adobe Spark are technological resources that support annotation of text. In China, classrooms are using annotatable multimedia e-readers (AMEs) and a system

called SURF to digitally read and make annotations. It also supports the sharing of annotations and interactive discussions on the annotations.

Research from China on primary students in English immersion classrooms and non-immersion classrooms showed that annotation sharing can support the exchange of knowledge and improve students' reading comprehension (Chen et al.,2019; Hwang et al.,2015, Yang et al.,2013). This sharing of annotations supports a dialogue and leads to deeper discussions about a text. These deeper discussions allow for students to have a better understanding of the text. Mariage (2020) found that an annotation of text strategy called mark it/jot it helped a 3rd grade ELL student in the United States enter into a dialogue with and about the text. This strategy helped to improve that student's reading comprehension scores.

Teachers can look at a student's annotations and see a visual representation of their reading process. Annotations are beginning to be collected for grades or assessments. Fisher and Frey explained, "Teachers would be wise to regularly collect their student's annotations to determine the type of instruction their students need " (2014a, p.224).

This literature review only covers some of the research about the use of annotation of text in primary classrooms. Research has shown that annotation of a text has a positive effect on promoting students' reading ability including improving reading comprehension, creating an interaction between students and text, and improving students' reading confidence. Also, the majority of the literature discusses that annotation sharing and collaborative annotating can facilitate knowledge, increase a student's

participation in discussions and improves reading comprehension (Chen et al.,2019; Gehr, 2019; Hwang et al.,2015; Minero, 2019; Yang et al.,2013).

Conclusion

I looked at the literature connected to my question of *How does the use of annotation affect reading comprehension for primary students in immersion education?* While researching reading comprehension, I am reminded of the complexity of this topic and the numerous variables that affect it. It is evident that teachers must create a text rich, supportive and challenging environment for students. Multiple cognitive reading strategies need to be strategically modeled and explained by the teacher. Students require whole group lessons, small group discussions, and individual practice in order to understand and feel comfortable using those reading comprehension strategies. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and immersion programs have found that purposefully including the use of visuals and collaboration helps to support language learners with their reading comprehension. Annotation of text is a great way to integrate the use of visuals and collaboration. It also scaffolds the understanding of text features and gives students the ability to work with more challenging texts.

Time and time again, the literature about reading comprehension, immersion education and annotation of text stated the importance of students having discussions and collaborating together while working with a text in order to deepen understanding and support reading comprehension. Annotations are visual notes that help students enter into discussions about the text. This especially supports students in an immersion classroom because many times they are hesitant to engage in conversations because they don't have

the target language words and it is more difficult to quickly skim a text and remember where you read a detail in a target language. Students can refer back to their annotations which allows them to be active participants in the text discussions leading to enhanced comprehension.

Summary

Chapter two provides a summary of my literature review that focused on reading comprehension, immersion education and annotation of text. Each section went more in depth into the literature that pertained to primary age students. In the first section, look at the complex skill of reading comprehension. Research showed that multiple cognitive components such as linguistic processing, memory and reasoning play a role in reading comprehension. It is important for students to have multiple strategies for reading comprehension and for teachers to use cultural tools, annotations and text structures to provide scaffolding to support students in participating in discussion about texts. Literature was found in each of the sections that highlighted the importance of discussions and collaborative learning to support reading comprehension in all classroom settings.

The second section explained that collaborative learning, also known as cooperative learning along with listening opportunities, in a rich language environment supports language development. In an immersion program that has a Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach, teachers model and guide students through intensive reading in order to improve their use of reading strategies, enhance their vocabulary knowledge and deepen their reading comprehension. The reading

strategy of annotation of text has been shown to support students during intensive reading and fosters discussion in collaborative reading activities. The last section of this literature review focused on annotation of text which is a "comprehension strategy that combines the processes of paraphrasing, using text structure, and regulating comprehension" (Gentry, 2006, p.4). Annotation of text has a positive effect on promoting students' reading ability including improving reading comprehension, supporting student participation in discussions and improving students' reading confidence.

Chapter three provides a plan for how I will use this review of literature to support the reading comprehension of my 2nd grade students in Spanish immersion. I will explain how I plan to use this research to add the strategy of annotation of text to my district adopted reading curriculum. This will serve as a guide for implementing annotation of text for the 2nd grade team in my building and also in the other five elementary schools in my district.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

This capstone project is developed to support students' reading ability and comprehension. I want to improve my students' interaction with texts and hope for students to not just passively read but to actively engage in their reading which will lead to a deeper understanding and better comprehension. My research began by looking at close reading strategies to help develop active readers. Through my investigation, I found that the strategy of annotation leads to actively reading a text and helps to form questions about the text. Annotation of text is used in middle school and high school so I want to introduce the annotation concept to my primary level students so they can start to understand and practice these skills. This led me to my research question: *How does the use of annotation affect reading comprehension for primary students in immersion education?* In the previous chapter, I discussed research on reading comprehension, immersion education, and annotation of text in order to help me answer this question.

In Chapter Three, I will discuss the process and elements I used to answer my question. I begin this section with discussing my research paradigm and framework. In the method rational section, I explain the personal experiences and literature that guided my decision for a curriculum based capstone project to answer my research question. I also explain the purpose and goal of this capstone project. Next, I give an in depth

description of my project including the setting, participants, and curriculum model.

Finally, I conclude with my timeline for the project and a summary of chapter 3.

Research Paradigm

Through my courses at Hamline University and my literature review, the choice

for my capstone project was guided by different theories/paradigms, frameworks and

research. My paradigm or approach to the research is influenced by the educational value

of constructivism. This philosophical worldview is also known as social constructivism

which believes that individuals work to understand the world around them and develop

their own meanings from personal experiences. My intent is to make sense and interpret

the research. Social constructivists assume that meaning is generated socially and arises

from an interaction with others. Thus, I feel that collaborative discussions support a

deeper understanding and that text discussions improve reading comprehension.

Framework

The most commonly used reading curriculums in elementary schools are usually

based on a three phase transactional strategy instructional method. This method of

teaching cognitive strategies starts with first selecting the cognitive strategies to be

taught. I have chosen the strategy of annotation of text. The second phase is the explicit

teaching of the strategy through modeling the use and process of the strategy with teacher

think-alouds. The last phase is providing scaffolding to slowly release the responsibility

of the strategy from the teacher over to the student. (T. Mariage, Englert, & M. Mariage,

2020).

Choice of Method

Through my literature review, I found research that supported a curriculum that includes teacher modeled use of cognitive strategies followed by collaborative discussion about a text to improve reading comprehension. Annotation of text slows down the reading process and creates opportunities for students to intentionally use those cognitive strategies modeled by their teacher. It supports students in their text discussions because they have a visual reminder of the thoughts they had while reading that they can share in a discussion. Language learners need visuals to improve their understanding and short phrases or notes to spark and support the sharing of their ideas in another language. This visual representation of annotation of text is a key that allows language learners in immersion programs to participate in conversations about texts.

Through my personal experience as an immersion teacher and a language learner myself, I know the fear and uncertainty of actively participating in a discussion about a topic in another language. I found that visual notes help me to enter and continue to participate in the conversation. Sentence starters and visual notes also allow my students to participate in discussions. These personal and professional experiences guided me to research and to read more literature about annotation of text. My district's current curriculum already focuses on researched based cognitive reading strategies that improve comprehension but do not include annotation of text.

Therefore the purpose of this capstone is to present the development of lessons on the use of annotation of text to support collaborative discussions centered around the cognitive reading strategy that a unit is highlighting. The framework will be a three phase

transactional strategy instructional method, as described above. Through the development of these lessons, my goal is to support my immersion students with a deeper understanding of each strategy and participation in text discussions which will lead to an improvement in their overall reading comprehension.

Project Description

I will design lessons on annotation of text to add to my district's adopted reading curriculum of Making Meaning. In each unit I will add a lesson on annotation of text. A specific annotation symbol that represents the strategy taught in that unit will be taught to be used when annotating a text. In this next section, I will explain the setting, participants, and a more detailed description of the reading curriculum I will be adding my lessons to.

Setting

I teach in a first tier district in the Midwest. The school district where I teach covers one community and serves 10,900+ students. It is a highly sought after district for open enrollment and serves 3,600 nonresidents. The district offers K-12 Spanish and Chinese immersion with seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. It also has an early education program with ready start and a large Community Education Center. This district has high achievement scores with a 97% graduation rate. Its reading proficiency is at 82% and its math is at 81%. The area that this school district does not score high in is diversity with white students making up 84%. Demographics also include 5.9% Hispanic, 3.9% African American, 1.3% Asian, 0.2% American Indian, 4.7% two or more races. Only 6.6% of students receive free and reduced lunch.

I teach in a K-5 elementary school that includes a Spanish immersion program with an average enrollment of 875 students. We have 15% minority enrollment with a majority of Hispanic students. We have the same low number of free and reduced lunch students as the district at 6%. Math and reading proficiency is high at 77% for math and 79% for reading. We have two pull out reading intervention teachers and one math intervention teacher. Our students can also be pulled out for math enrichment. We also have a full time nursing assistant and a half time nurse. After 2nd grade, students in Spanish immersion begin to receive English language arts instruction. In most grade levels there are more classes of Spanish Immersion than English instruction. In kindergarten through 4th grade there are four Spanish Immersion classrooms and two English classrooms. Thus, in 2nd grade where I teach, I am one out of four Spanish immersion teachers.

Our building wide professional learning community (PLC) goal has focused on reading proficiency and achievement. In order to continue to support this goal of reading achievement our school has many continuing education seminars about reading for teachers. Our district also puts resources and money into helping support reading proficiency. About six years ago our district adopted a language arts literacy program from collaborative classrooms. The program is called Collaborative Literacy and focuses not only on developing strong readers and writers but also creating classroom communities. Lessons integrate academics with social skill development. The program is made up of three modules: Being a Reader, Making Meaning and Being a Writer. Being a Reader is for early readers. In 2nd grade we use Making Meaning as our reading

curriculum. This resource provides lessons to teach students comprehension and

self-monitoring strategies along with vocabulary lessons. One of my favorite parts of this

program is that all lessons center around an engaging read-aloud text.

Participants

For this capstone project, I will develop a curriculum of text to annotate lessons

that will be integrated throughout our 2nd grade reading curriculum. We have 145

students in 2nd grade. My grade level consists of 4 Spanish immersion classrooms with

87 students and 2 English classrooms with 58 students. We have 2 intervention teachers

and 2 enrichment teachers that work with our grade level. We also have two special

education teachers, one speech pathologist, one behavior specialist, and one social

worker.

Our 2nd grade professional development community is focusing on increasing our

student's reading engagement. I feel very lucky that our principle supports our

classrooms libraries and allocates funds to order engaging and diverse texts. In the

classroom we use istation, which is an on-line reading program to assess students spanish

reading ability and a program called Fast to assess fluency. We also have Razkids to

support reading skills. Our reading specialist uses fountas and pinnell reading levels. She

normally works with them to develop reading in Spanish. She only uses English when

assessing dyslexia and has a program called Fundamentals through Wilson Dyslexia

Curriculum to support those students. Our reading specialist works closely with us to

support struggling readers. She even has a certified reading assistance dog she brings to

school sometimes.

I currently do not have a final class list so I do not know the demographics of my students. I have taught 2nd grade Spanish immersion for three years at my current school so I know the reading curriculum well. I will use my knowledge of the curriculum and my research on annotation of text to create engaging, meaningful, and productive lessons on annotation of text.

Making Meaning Curriculum

This fall, I will dive into our reading curriculum and choose the best units to add an annotation lesson. In the winter and spring, I will write lessons that will scaffold the skill of annotation of text for my 2nd grade immersion students. In the beginning of the year, we will have some introduction lessons and then more annotation will be sprinkled within the units and cognitive strategies. As mentioned earlier, my district's reading curriculum is from The Center for the Collaborative Classroom and is called Making Meaning.

The Making Meaning program for grade 2 has 10 units:

1. The Reading Community: Fiction and Narrative Nonfiction,

2. Making Connections: Fiction

3. Visualizing: Expository Nonfiction, Poetry, and Fiction

4. Making Inferences: Fiction

5. Wondering: Fiction

6. Wondering: Fiction and Narrative Nonfiction

7. Wondering: Expository Nonfiction

8. Using Text Features: Expository Nonfiction

9. Determining Important Ideas: Expository Nonfiction and Fiction

10. Revisiting the Reading Community

This curriculum was meant for native English speakers and was just translated into Spanish by teachers in our district. Adding lessons on annotation of text will help support immersion students in participating in the text questions and discussions.

Making Meaning has a very detailed scope and sequence that provides a complete calendar of the skills and reading covered in each unit, week, and day. It also gives an explanation of the comprehension strategy, vocabulary words and word-learning strategies. There are 10 units and each unit varies from one to four weeks. Each week has three days of instruction and practice. Our 2nd grade team follows the scope and sequence as laid out in the program. In the fall, we focus on making connections, considering character's feelings and points of view, understanding key details in stories, discussing a story's message, visualizing, making informal inferences, and exploring alliteration and meaning in poems.

In the winter, we continue to discuss a story's message and answer questions to understand key details but also important ideas in stories. We add exploring a story's structure, including character and plot, wondering and inferring to make sense of stories, exploring the differences between fiction and nonfiction along with identifying what they learn from texts. Finally in the spring, we still focus on making connections, inferences and visualizing to make sense of texts but we do those strategies with expository nonfiction texts. We explore text features of expository nonfiction, describe how reasons

support points an author makes, locate key information, and explain the connections between a series of events in a text.

Timeline

In the fall, students will receive an introduction to annotation of text with the teacher modeling and doing all the annotations during whole group lessons. Then in the winter, the teacher will continue to model but also have students follow along and be marking up their own copy of the text. Students could start to answer text dependent questions about the text using their annotations in small groups. Annotation of text can be used with all types of text but during my literature review I noticed that it was usually used with expository nonfiction which our 2nd graders focus on in the spring. This gives time for the skill of annotation of text to be scaffolded so that in the spring when students begin their work with expository nonfiction text they can start to annotate in small groups, pairs or independently.

Summary

The want to support deeper understanding and more meaningful text discussions among my 2nd grade Spanish immersion students in hopes of improving their reading comprehension is what drove me to create these lessons to integrate into the reading curriculum. In the setting and participant section, I described my district, school and classroom where my capstone project will be implemented. In the project descriptor section, I described how I will support my students by creating annotations of text lessons connected to the cognitive reading strategies. In chapter four, I will discuss my procedure

of creating these lessons and integrating them into my curriculum. I will also reflect on

all that I have learned through this process and my literature review.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Introduction

In preparation for my capstone project, I reflected on what I felt would support my students' learning and my professional growth as an educator. A trend that has begun over the last couple of years, is a steady rise in my student's difficulty with comprehending what they are reading. Throughout the year, students increase their fluency and accuracy but their comprehension does not follow the same steady upward trend. This led me to ask *How does the use of annotation affect reading comprehension in the primary grades of immersion education?*

I started my capstone before the 2020-2021 school year which was completely different due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our primary-school-aged students were given one-to-one I-pads a couple years before so they were already familiar with many of the education applications. Due to the pandemic, students were using their I-pads for almost all their academic activities. The main applications used for reading were Raz Kids, Istation and Epic. Students were on their screens all the time.

I believe that these technological resources have brought about some great improvements and support for students but have also led to more surface reading. Cai and Tang (2012) explain that "surface reading is fast reading with low-level cognition and aims at entertaining" (p.95). While looking through Facebook, Instagram, or Apple News I just skim articles and rarely take the time to actively read the whole article. I

usually get the gist of what the article is saying but I don't have a deep understanding of what I just read. I want my students to be active readers to improve their knowledge by comprehending what they are reading. Research has shown that annotation of text can help to prevent surface reading and support students to be active readers. I noticed even more this year, due to the high use of I-pads, than previous years that my students were scanning what they were reading on their screens/I-pads. They did not retain the information or have good comprehension of what they had read. This helped to solidify the importance of this capstone project for my and student development.

In this chapter I will revisit the literature review and share the key resources. The next section will focus on communicating the results and benefits to the profession. Then I will discuss the limitations and implications of my project. Finally, in the last two sections I will share my ideas for future research and a summary.

Revisiting the Literature Review

Time and time again, the literature about reading comprehension, immersion education and annotation of text stated the importance of students having discussions and collaborating together while working with a text in order to deepen understanding and support reading comprehension. Annotations are visual notes that help students enter into discussions about the text. This especially supports students in an immersion classroom because many times they are hesitant to engage in conversations because they don't have the target language words and it is more difficult to quickly skim a text and remember where you read a detail in a target language. Students can refer back to their annotations

which allows them to be active participants in the text discussions leading to enhanced comprehension.

This literature review only covers some of the research about the use of annotation of text in primary classrooms. Research has shown that annotation of a text has a positive effect on promoting students' reading ability including improving reading comprehension, creating an interaction between students and text, and improving students' reading confidence. Also, the majority of the literature discusses that annotation sharing and collaborative annotating can facilitate knowledge, increase a student's participation in discussions and improves reading comprehension (Chen et al.,2019; Gehr, 2019; Hwang et al.,2015; Minero, 2019; Yang et al.,2013).

The source that most influenced my project was a paper about the collaborative reading program at Concourse Village Elementary School in the Bronx of New York City. It has used it along with other reading strategies to drastically improve their students' reading comprehension. Everyday all classes from pre-k to 5th grade use the collaborative reading approach to deconstruct an above grade level text for 15 to 20 minutes. With collaborative reading, the teacher reads the text first. Then the students read the text together to understand the main idea. During the third reading of the text, the students annotate on their own and then discuss in a small group before sharing with the class. Each week the class focuses on just one main annotation marking symbol, but students can use the other as well (Minero, 2019). I used this information to help guide me on which symbols to introduce first in my activities.

This resource also reminded me of the importance of scaffolding and building on the use of each symbol. The school uses seven symbols in Preschool, Kindergarten, and 1st grade (See Appendix C). The school uses six symbols in 2nd through 5th grade. Four of the symbols from the earlier primary grades are still used with two more symbols that focus on words and details that support the main idea of the text (See Appendix D). This school adopted a standardized way that all classrooms and grades will do annotation of text. Fisher & Frey (2014), mention that schools are most successful with annotation when they are systematic about the annotation symbols they teach.

Communication of Results and Benefit to the Profession

I used this research to add the strategy of annotation of text to my district adopted reading curriculum. This will serve as a guide for implementing annotation of text for the 2nd grade team in my building and also in the other five elementary schools in my district. The curriculum's daily lesson plans are still followed per required by the district. The first three units have been enhanced with annotation of text activities. I will communicate my project to my district language arts chair in order to share this resource with all primary teachers. Our district shares resources through Schoology. I will also talk with my district chair about presenting my project during a PLC.

At the end of the three units, students will be able to show that they are actively reading with the use of hand signs, organize their thoughts they had while reading in a table, and mark-up a text to remember important words and their favorite parts. All three of these skills will help students' comprehension and support them during text discussions. The skills taught in these first three units can continue to be utilized and

practiced in the rest of the reading curriculum's units of second grade. They are also a

foundation for students to build upon in future classes. This will not only benefit primary

teachers but also middle and high school teachers because many middle and high school

students are asked to annotate and students will have already had an introduction to the

skill during their primary years.

Implications and Limitations

The implication of my project is that it will support all primary students reading

comprehension. My project focuses on immersion students, but all language learners and

students can benefit from gaining the skill of annotation of text. I specifically connected

my project to my district's curriculum in order to make it more accessible and beneficial

to all primary educators in my district. The annotation of text learning activities will

support the reading strategies taught in the first three units of the district's reading

curriculum instead of being completely separate activities. Thus the annotation activities

do not take extra time to teach. Yet another implication is that not only primary educators

in my district but all will be able to implement activities to teach the reading strategy of

annotating in order to improve text-discussions and comprehension.

The limitation I have for my project is the lack of implementation. My additions

to the district's current curriculum were developed in the summer. Thus, I have not had

the opportunity to implement them with my students. Since these activities have not been

used yet I have not been able to collect feedback from students or other teachers. For this

reason, I am not yet able to adjust or alter my activities to allow for students' success and

learning of the reading strategy of annotation of text.

Future Research

During my literature review, I found that China has done the majority of research on the effect of annotation of text on the reading of primary students in immersion classrooms and non-immersion classrooms. I also found that there was a lack of research done on the use of annotation of text in the primary grades. There was much more research and resources about annotation in middle, high school, and college. Thus, I would recommend that in the future there is more research done here in the United States and more specifically in the primary grades.

Another area of research could be on the use of digital annotation tools. In China, classrooms are using annotatable multimedia e-readers (AMEs) and a system called SURF to digitally read and make annotations. It also supports the sharing of annotations and interactive discussions on the annotations. I do not know if these are available here in the United States. In my elementary classroom I would use paper and pencils/highlighters or SeeSaw as a digital tool to upload stories that students can digitally annotate.

Summary

In this final chapter I reflected on my journey through my capstone. This last school year and the intense use of I-pads due to the pandemic strengthened my need and want to answer the question of *How does the use of annotation affect reading comprehension in the primary grades of immersion education?* Revisiting the literature reminded me that the visual representation of annotation of text is a key that allows language learners in immersion programs and in general to participate in conversations about texts. I look forward to sharing my project with primary teachers in my district and

any other primary educators looking to further support their students' reading comprehension. Future research that this project has sparked is looking further into digital annotation tools.

      As my capstone project comes to an end, I am feeling a sense of growth and advancement. I am eager to implement all my findings and this project in my own classroom to see the benefits for my own students. I am thankful for this experience and hope that this project is a useful resource for other educators.

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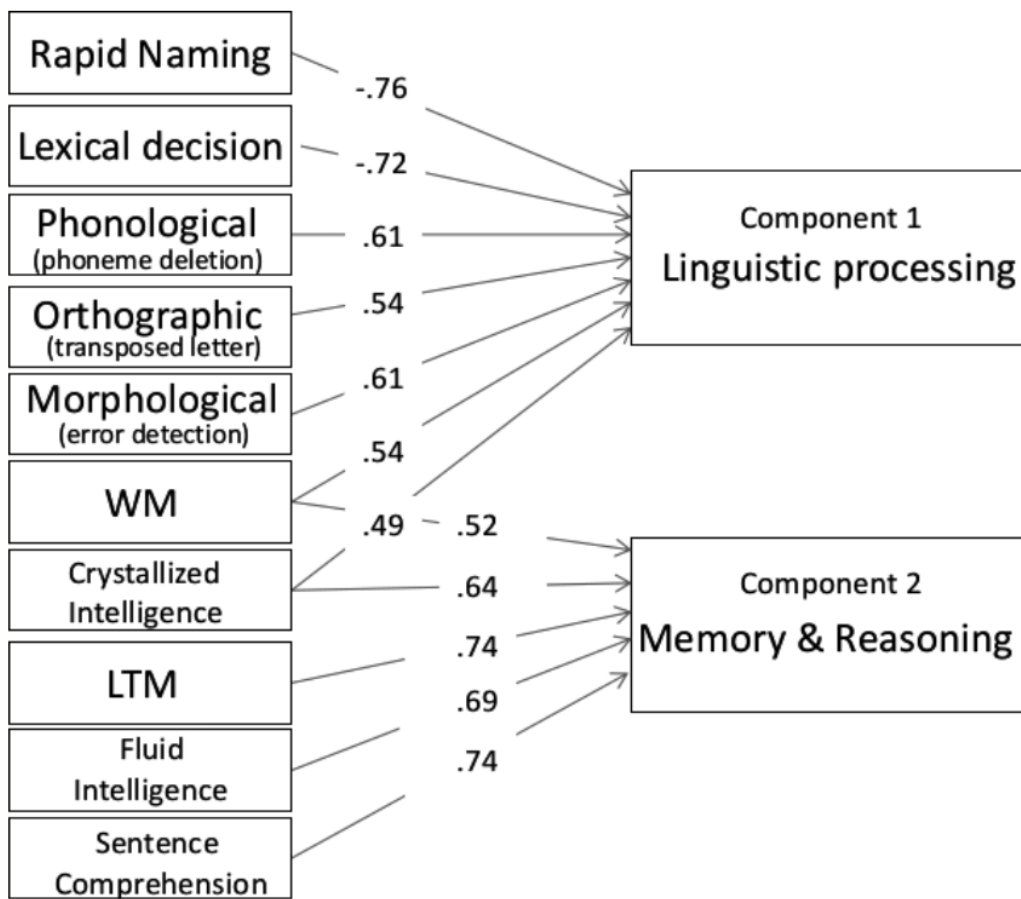
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Appendix A

Factors for Component Tasks

Appendix B

Five Phases of Shared Reading

SHARED READING PLANNING
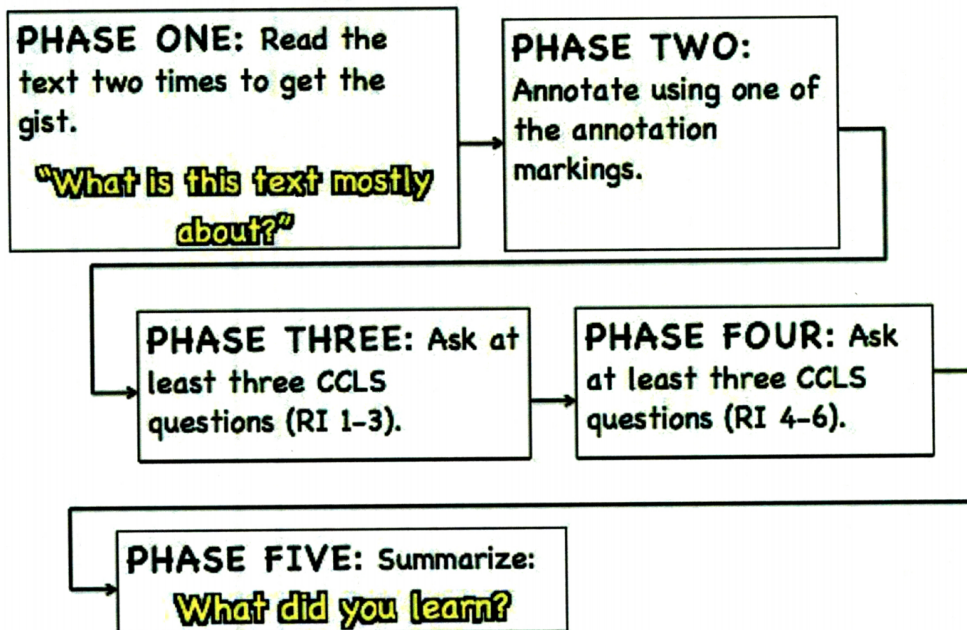
PHASE ONE: Read the text two times to get the gist.

"What is this text mostly about?"

PHASE TWO: Annotate using one of the annotation markings.

PHASE THREE: Ask at least three CCLS questions (RI 1–3).

PHASE FOUR: Ask at least three CCLS questions (RI 4–6).

PHASE FIVE: Summarize: *What did you learn?*

source: Concourse Village Elementary School, The Bronx, New York, via Edutopia.

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Appendix C

Pre-K through 1st Grade Annotation Symbols

Pre-K-1 CVES Readers Annotate
Text to Make Meaning While Reading

I have a **question** about this part of the text.

This is **important** and I have to remember it!

Underlining **important** words and/or phrases helps *me to better understand what I am reading.*
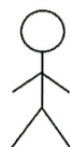
I made a **text-to-self connection.**

I **love** this part of the text and it is my favorite.

This is **interesting**!

FACT- this is **true** and can be **proven**.

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source: Concourse Village Elementary School, The Bronx, New York, via Edutopia.

Appendix D

Second through Fifth Grade Annotation Symbols

What are some annotation markings 2nd - 5th grade readers use to help them better understand a text?

So what? Annotation markings help us interact with the text so that we can keep track of relevant and/or important information.

CVES Annotation Markings

★		⌒	?	F	D
star important information	underline important words and/or phrases	connect and/or support ideas within the text	write a question mark in areas where questions arise	write an "F" next to facts to distinguish between fact and opinion	write a "D" next to details that support the topic or answer a question

So why?
Since our annotation markings allow us to leave a visible trail of our thinking, we are able to go back to the text to support our oral and written responses.

source: Concourse Village Elementary School, The Bronx, New York, via Edutopia.   9

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