

Reading the Students: Reading Instruction in Multilingual Classrooms

Abstract: The ever increasing multicultural character of the academic system in Canada makes the task of forming a common English reading program and analyzing it a complex and multi-faceted issue. Students' age, language, country of origin and previous educational experience play vital roles in determining the level of support they require to succeed in the classroom. The multilingual, multicultural setting of Ontario schools offers a rich setting of ELL observation and analysis.

Given the significant role of reading activities in ELL, I investigate how ESL students from diverse cultural settings are faring in the English reading program, and if they are achieving the objectives of the Ontario ESL Curriculum, how the assigned reading materials relate to their lives, which reading strategies these students apply to comprehend and respond to English medium literacy material, and which problems teachers face while assigning the reading texts. My specific goal is to understand these students' socio-psychological adjustments as they study their assigned reading texts, and whether these adjustment efforts reflect in their ELL performance.

To conduct this research, I apply case study approach. A longitudinal research design will be used to capture the whole spectrum of the phenomenon. The data collection methods will be questionnaires, semi-participant observation, document analysis and semi-structured interviews. I plan to include students from various socio-cultural backgrounds and hence a multi-level analysis will be performed to account for their background specific effects.

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