

UC Berkeley

The CATESOL Journal

Title

Promoting Student Engagement During Integrative Lessons: A Model Classroom

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8ns159t7>

Journal

The CATESOL Journal, 24(1)

ISSN

1535-0517

Author

Sturman, Heather

Publication Date

2013

DOI

10.5070/B5.36166

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed



Promoting Student Engagement During Integrative Lessons: A Model Classroom

Using integrative grammar- and vocabulary-related activities, the high school English language development (ELD) teacher in this qualitative case study engaged her students by involving them in their own education. Drawing on research addressing student engagement (Kelley, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Faller, 2010; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Ryan, 2008), I coded 25 hours of field notes for instances of engaged and noncompliant behavior during integrative activities over 6 months during the 2009-2010 school year. The focal teacher employed a mixed-methods approach, and I observed that engagement was high during activities that had students creatively manipulating new grammatical forms and vocabulary words in a variety of ways. My findings suggest that this teacher's methods were generally successful in promoting the engagement of her high school ELD students.

Introduction

While research has been conducted on child and adult second-language learners, not enough has been done on adolescent learners (Carhill, Suárez-Orozco, & Páez, 2008; Harklau, 1999; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). English language learners (ELLs) often are placed in English-only content classes as well as English language development (ELD) classes in which students' native languages and cultures can be suppressed in favor of English and US culture. Particularly in content classes, teachers may have little training in teaching ELLs and have to teach to the majority (i.e., native English-speaking students) because of time constraints, which can lead to unintentional marginalization of ELLs (Short, 1999). Not all ELLs can read at grade level or comprehend and produce oral English well enough to understand and communicate with their teachers, counselors, or peers (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). In 2010, 43% of California's population reported that they spoke a language other than English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). These statistics, particularly in California, a state where native English-speaking (NES) whites are the minority (Baldassare, 2000), need to be considered when "English-only" policies are implemented. Not all students arrive with equal preparation for mainstream education, particularly not adolescents, who are developing lin-

guistic and cultural identities as they prepare for adulthood. This study reports on one high school ELD class during the 2009-2010 school year focusing on how the teacher motivated her students to learn and how the students exhibited engagement during integrative grammar and vocabulary lessons.

Literature Review

Defining Engagement

Engaged language learners exhibit a variety of characteristics that can lead to effective language learning in social contexts. Several second language acquisition researchers have developed criteria that define such effective language learners (Bernhardt, 2009; Kelley, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Faller, 2010; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2001; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Rubin, 1975; Ryan, 2008). An effective language learner:

- Is involved in the language classroom and in social contexts in which potential for communication in the target language (TL) is present (Norton & Toohey, 2001). He or she is motivated to communicate often and is not afraid to “appear foolish” when attempting to produce new linguistic forms (Rubin, 1975);
- Develops a metacognitive awareness of the TL as a system and can attend to linguistic form and meaning, as well as communication and cultural norms that are connected to the TL (Naiman et al., 1995; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990);
- Can monitor his or her own and others' performance of the TL (Naiman et al., 1995; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Rubin, 1975);
- Employs a variety of learning strategies, including guessing, management of demands placed upon them by language learning, and using prior linguistic and general knowledge when working on tasks (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990); and
- Is provided in-class reading material, assignments, and projects that are varied, relatable, and allow students to be creative (Bernhardt, 2009; Kelley et al., 2010; Ryan, 2008).

One cannot categorize all language learners as effective versus ineffective students because learners have unique backgrounds, cultural knowledge, language backgrounds, personalities, and so forth. A learning environment can lead to effective and motivated learners, however, by considering this individuality and by employing a variety of learning and elicitation strategies within projects and assignments that promote creativity (Naiman et al., 1995; Ryan, 2008). Henze (1999) reports on a high school in which ethnicity became the focus of content classes (e.g., a debate class covering immigration policy), which allowed students to not only “understand themselves and their own backgrounds better but also to see the diversity within their own ethnic groups” (p. 543). Ethnically focused curriculum can help students make personal connections with literature (cf. Vyas, 2004) and school subjects and can help them form their own social, ethnic, and linguistic identities. Choosing relevant read-

ing material is essential to teaching them how to discuss their lives, beliefs, and opinions comfortably (Harklau, 1999; Short, 1999; Vyas, 2004). Additionally, Short (1999) suggests teachers use the students as sources of information. All students come to school with knowledge and opinions “that add richness to the discussion. . . . By focusing on ELLs as resources, teachers validate the students’ knowledge and experiences and make them part of the educational process” (pp. 127-128). Last, teachers should “increase multicultural content in teaching” by using supplemental texts, inviting community members to speak to the class, or addressing how discussions may relate to different cultures (Short, 1999, pp. 128-129).

Integrative ESL Instruction

Arguably, the most effective type of ESL instruction is integrative, in which grammar and vocabulary are taught in conjunction with one another in a particular lesson or activity. Within such activities, a variety of skills may be emphasized (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking), as long as the connection between grammar and vocabulary is made clear to students. Some current research (Kelley et al., 2010) separates these issues (e.g., discussing only integrative vocabulary activities). For example, there exists some research that deals with instruction that is integrative with respect to issues other than vocabulary and grammar for ELLs that is both oral and written or form focused and communicative (Kim, 2008; Nassaji, 2000). This research on integrative instruction suggests that not only should more research in this area be conducted, but that educators should employ integrative techniques in their classrooms. What follows is a short discussion on current research on this issue.

Current research on integrative instruction (Kelley et al., 2010; Kim, 2008) shows that integrative techniques promote high levels of engagement in students mainly because they typically employ a variety of approaches to introducing and revisiting material. For instance, Kelley et al. (2010) developed and successfully field tested middle school curriculum designed to teach academic vocabulary featuring readings that were relevant and important to the students and vocabulary was introduced and revised. Also, Kim (2008) worked with two kindergartners learning English using both oral-only instruction and integrative oral-writing instruction on a variety of topics. It was found that the students overwhelmingly learned more from the integrative instruction rather than the oral-only instruction, as is evidenced by the length and number of oral utterances made during and after the instructional periods.

With respect to grammar instruction, an implicit Focus on Form (FonF) approach draws students’ attention to linguistic forms as they arise in lessons or texts (Doughty & Williams, 1998). Some proponents of another approach, the communicative method, argue from the interactive perspective, in which “learning a new language is a function of social and meaningful interaction” (Nassaji, 2000, p. 243). While many argue that the FonF and communicative approaches are at odds, Nassaji (2000) posits that they can and should be integrated for successful learning and gives concrete examples of integrative tasks implemented in the study.

There are a variety of ways to incorporate a focus on form into communicative activities in classroom contexts. One way is *by design*: that is, communicative activities can be designed with an advanced, deliberate focus on form. Another method of integrating form and communication is *by process*: that is, by incorporating focus on form in the process of, and as it occurs naturally in, classroom communications (Nassaji, 2000, p. 245 [italics in original]).

However, relying on classroom strategies alone is not enough for effective language learning and retention. Sanaoui (1995) describes effective language learners who immersed themselves in the TL by acquainting themselves with TL media in addition to classroom training. Also, research (Kelley et al., 2010) shows that students benefit from learning multiple strategies so they can employ ones that work best for them. Mixed methods and integrative approaches that provide both meaning- and contextually based information are more beneficial than any one method alone. It is vital to draw learners' attention to form and to encourage repetitive retrieval and varied usage, with respect to new grammatical concepts and vocabulary words. In this way, learners will successfully learn and use these concepts outside the classroom.

I have provided a working definition of effective learners; suggestions for promoting engagement in the classroom; and theoretical background regarding integrative ESL instruction. The above research suggests that engagement is best promoted through an integrative approach. No one teaching method will be helpful for all students. Rather, classroom instruction should be varied, relevant, and useful. However, there is not much research concerning engagement during integrative grammar and vocabulary instruction. In this study, I attempted to fill this gap by analyzing the level of engagement during such instruction. My guiding research questions were: How did this teacher promote engagement among her students during integrative grammar- and vocabulary-related lessons? Also, how did students show engagement (or noncompliance) in the classroom?

Methodology

Participants

Wildwood High School is a northern California school serving approximately 1,200 students in grades 9 through 12, half of whom are Latino/a.¹ I examined an intermediate ELD classroom with Spanish- and Punjabi/Urdu-speaking students. The size of the class fluctuated during the school year, but at any one time, approximately 10 students were in the class.

Also present were Carol Brown, an English-speaking teacher, and an aide, Linda, fluent in English and Spanish. Because of time constraints and only some of the students' willingness to be interviewed, only 4 out of the 10 students, Muhammad, Abia, Haifa, and Mara, agreed to talk to me outside of class. Mara, a 10th-grader originally from Mexico, had been in the US for 3 years before this study. In particular, she enjoyed learning English, playing the guitar, and her geometry class, and always tried to use new English vocabulary with

Table 1
Student Demographics

<i>Name</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Native language(s)</i>	<i>Home country</i>
Haifa	Female	10	Punjabi/Urdu	Pakistan
Abia	Female	11	Punjabi/Urdu	Pakistan
Muhammad	Male	11	Punjabi/Urdu	Pakistan
Rahim	Male	12	Punjabi/Urdu	Pakistan
Saad	Male	10	Punjabi/Urdu	Pakistan
Hassan	Male	10	Punjabi/Urdu	Pakistan
Mara	Female	10	Spanish	Mexico
Max	Male	9	Spanish	US
Monica	Female	11	Spanish	Mexico
Jessica	Female	9	Spanish	Guatemala
Manuel	Male	9	Spanish	Mexico
Claudia	Female	12	Spanish	Mexico

her brother, for she understood the value of learning English to meet her goal of one day becoming a math teacher (interview, 3/12/10). Haifa, also a 10th-grader who had been in the US for 3 years before this study, favored her biology and English classes, the latter because it helped her learn material in her content classes and will prepare her to study to be a pediatrician. In particular, Haifa enjoyed school projects in which she got to use PowerPoint because it allowed her to express herself creatively (interview, 3/11/10). Interviewed together, Muhammad and Abia both came from Pakistan in 2009 and 2007, respectively. Both agreed that they liked their English class because, according to Muhammad, English enables people to “communicate with each other” and to “understand other people’s problems” (interview, 3/4/10). Even though they were undecided on college and future careers, both seemed dedicated academically. Abia emphasized the importance of studying hard to get good grades in difficult classes and Muhammad mentioned how hard he was working to improve his grade in his ELD class (interview, 3/4/10).

I was fortunate to work with Carol, as her activities were engaging and inspirational to observe. Very welcoming and eager to have me in her class, Carol, at the time, was a fairly new teacher with only a few years’ experience. She indicated that she received mainly ELD training in her teaching credential program and did her student teaching with an experienced high school ELD teacher in another district. She is CLAD (Cross-cultural Language and Academic Certificate) certified and considers herself “almost” bilingual in Spanish, but she chose to speak only English during class time to encourage her students to improve their English. Despite her training, Carol taught only one section of ELD, the rest being mainstream English literature classes.

But with my EL [English learner] students, I just feel very inspired to teach them. Sometimes more than I feel to teach my mainstream students because I understand their struggle. I understand their situation is quite challenging and so I guess just knowing that I feel inspired to really want to work with them and so, yeah. I love teaching them. (interview, 2/4/10)

The Findings section of this article will make clear Carol's passion for teaching ELD.

Description of the Setting

The classroom was organized with the desks grouped around the edges of the classroom and the teacher instructing from the center. The walls were decorated with motivational posters, calendars, students' work, and school-related postings.² Whiteboards were used to write assignments, homework reminders, dates, and journal topics. Textbooks and dictionaries were kept on bookshelves. Also, Carol played classical music from her computer when the students were working quietly at their seats.

Each class session was organized similarly. Each Monday, the students received a blank agenda (so named by Carol), an empty outline for the week, with space to write assignments, due dates, reading pages, and so on. The students filled in this agenda every day and received a stamp if they worked quietly. The students worked on their "ELD Opener," written on the board, a question that introduced the day's lesson. For example, for a textbook unit about heroes, the opener was: "What makes a hero? I think ___ and ___ are heroes because ___. I think a hero must be ___ and ___" (field notes, 11/18/09). After a few minutes, Carol asked them to share their answers orally. This led to the day's lesson, which was reading from the textbook, introducing new vocabulary, reviewing a grammar point, or another project. After the lesson was explained, the students worked in groups until the end of class, when Carol brought the students together and had them share their answers. In each class, the students manipulated English through writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Most Fridays, the students were tested on the week's vocabulary and/or grammar points.

Data Collection

Data were collected through classroom observations and interviews with the teacher and some of the students. Observations lasted from October 5, 2009, to March 12, 2010, twice a week for a total of 25 visits. Each class period lasted 1 hour, during which I recorded conversations, activities, and interactions in my field notebook. For each observation, I sat behind the students. Also, I digitally recorded two half-hour interviews with Carol. Because the students were not comfortable with being audio recorded, I took extensive notes during the 15-minute interviews, which were held outside of class in the library or the learning center. The students were interviewed in pairs or individually. My role at the site was minimal. Occasionally I passed out papers or guided group discussions, but I usually sat quietly and observed the class.

Data Analysis

After each observation, I typed my field notes and included additional thoughts or reflections. I also transcribed my interviews with Carol and the students. When coding, I focused on engaged behavior versus noncompliant behavior during integrative grammar- and vocabulary-related lessons.

Engaged behaviors included being on task (i.e., working on the task quietly, following directions); asking for clarification (i.e., asking for help with words or instructions, including looking up words in the dictionary, asking the teacher or aide for help); and participating in class activities (i.e., responding to Carol's class discussion questions, responding to other students' comments, giving presentations). Noncompliant behaviors included being defiant (i.e., interrupting the teacher and/or other students, being argumentative, not complying with instructions given by the teacher); being physically unengaged (i.e., head on desk, sleeping, out of seat); and being off-task (i.e., talking with neighbor, rifling through papers).

Findings

I have organized my findings into instances of engagement and noncompliance during integrative grammar- and vocabulary-related lessons. Primarily, I will present instances of engaged behavior and illustrate how Carol created integrative lessons that captured the students' attention. However, I also will present instances of noncompliant behavior and explore how some students were not receptive to Carol or her lessons. Generally, all students exhibited engaged behavior, as defined above, at some point. To encourage engaged behavior, Carol created integrative activities that often incorporated the students' voices. Major class projects required students to draw on their knowledge of English grammar, vocabulary, oral presentation skills, and group discussion skills. However, a few students were disruptive and disengaged from class discussions. This behavior varied in severity from arguing with Carol to openly defying her by showing indifference. While some noncompliant behavior was obvious, as when the student was arguing with Carol or working on something other than the assigned task, other behaviors were more difficult to interpret. I consider the possibility that a student who is fiddling with his pen, for example, instead of filling in his workbook, may actually be thinking about what to write next. Thus, the examples of noncompliant behavior are *apparent* instances of noncompliance.

I begin with a typical example of engagement during a class discussion. The students were preparing to read a story about hip-hop music, and Carol had asked how music can affect people. I recorded the following exchange between Carol and three students: Saad, Manuel, and Muhammad.

(At first, Manuel says music does not affect people in any way. Instead of arguing with him, Carol asks a series of questions to prove her point that music does affect people.)

- 1 Carol: How do country music listeners dress?
- 2 Manuel: Like cowboys.

- 3 Carol: And rap music listeners?
4 Saad: Cholo.
5 Carol: What about rock music listeners?

(Several students reply that they wear “tight pants.” This comment leads to a discussion of what wearing “tight pants” might symbolize.)

- 6 Muhammad: They might be gay.

(Rather than just shooting him down, Carol gives several examples of situations in which she’s seen heterosexual people wear tight pants.)

- 7 Carol: When I went to Europe, I saw married people dressed that way.

(Manuel even shares that Monica’s brother wears tight pants, yet he is not gay. Carol seems to appreciate this addition.)

- 8 Muhammad: I heard that means you’re gay, though.
9 Carol: Everything you hear is not always true.

(field notes, 11/2/09)³

Carol asked an open-ended question, three students gave her honest answers, and, instead of arguing or ending the discussion, Carol permitted the digression momentarily, turning the discussion of “tight pants” as an indicator of homosexuality into a teaching point. After this, Carol brought the conversation back to the original topic. The students exhibited engagement by being attentive listeners and appropriately responding to their teacher and to other students.

One major integrative project was the Public Service Announcement (PSA) project (2/12/10 through 3/2/2010). The students created and presented a PowerPoint presentation incorporating reading, writing, speaking, listening, and researching. Students researched causes (e.g., adoption or H1N1 flu prevention) on ad council.org in the school’s computer lab. This project promoted creativity and an awareness of their classmates and social issues, which can help increase cultural awareness in the classroom (Henze, 1999). Additionally, it taught them how to paraphrase, use strategies to understand unfamiliar words, practice grammatical forms, and practice oral English skills during presentations. I observed Haifa and Abia’s presentation:

[Haifa and Abia’s] causes are energy efficiency, high school drop-out prevention, and drunken driving. Their presentation is good. They take turns, one speaking for each slide. I note that Abia says at one point, “How many energy people use” and “We need to try to don’t waste energy.” The students seem very engaged during the presentation. They are quiet, their eyes are on Haifa and Abia, and they periodically write things down on their papers. Carol stops for questions after the end of each slide. ... The students are still paying attention and some are writing down notes and raising their hands to ask questions. Haifa and Abia answer all the questions politely and completely. (field notes, 2/26/10)

The students were given some freedom to choose which causes to research and were permitted some flexibility in designing their PowerPoints. I argue that engagement was high because of this freedom. The above quote shows engagement during the presentations, in particular. Not only did Haifa and Abia give a well-thought-out presentation, but their classmates also listened attentively, took notes (as they had been instructed to), made eye contact with the presenters, did not interrupt, and, when permitted, asked appropriate questions. When asked about her favorite activity in this class, Abia responded that the PSA project was her favorite because “if we know the causes, ... we can teach other people about it” (personal communication, 3/4/10). It is no surprise that creative projects elicited the most engagement.

Similarly, the Parts of Speech project had the students prepare and present PowerPoints in which they illustrated their knowledge of assigned parts of speech, including providing definitions (e.g., “a noun is a person, place, or thing”), examples (e.g., an example of a noun is “car”), and example sentences (e.g., “The man drove the car”). The students worked in pairs and were assigned parts of speech to research in the computer lab. They explicitly manipulated verbs, nouns, adverbs, and so on to form sample words and sentences. Haifa and Mara presented the following sentence in their presentation on verbs: “The boy commit a crime because he still the woman money.” Here, Carol explained subject/verb agreement, the spelling of “steal,” and the possessive form (field notes, 10/23/09). The students also created an About Me slide on which they could put anything. For example, Haifa and Mara included phrases in Urdu and English, and Spanish and English, respectively. The class enjoyed practicing pronouncing the Urdu and Spanish words (field notes, 10/23/09). Again, because Carol gave the students some freedom, engaged behavior was prevalent. Students participated appropriately in group discussions and were on task. Similar to the students in Kelley et al. (2010), the students here manipulated the target vocabulary and grammatical forms in a variety of ways (i.e., reading about the forms, writing the forms, and orally presenting the forms) to reinforce and demonstrate their knowledge.

Another engaging and integrative project was the How To project, in which the students created a list of instructions on how to create or do something of their choosing. The project was prefaced with a quiz focusing explicitly on identifying the steps for joining a debate team and implicitly on the functions of action verbs. The students had to analyze the list and answer questions using complete sentences. For example, “1. What is the process for joining a high school debate team? Choose one step to **paraphrase**. 2. What **action verbs** are used in the description of each step?” (field notes, 1/15/10, bolding in original). Before and during the quiz, all the students were fully engaged, as evidenced by the students’ appropriately orally answering review questions beforehand and by using a dictionary and asking clarification questions during the quiz. This manipulation of action verbs within a meaningful context was successful (cf., Nassaji, 2000), especially for those who completed the follow-up assignment, as the projects presented were thoughtful and appropriate (1/19/10). For the presentation, Carol encouraged the students to choose something from their home

culture, such as a recipe. The assignment allowed each student to share his or her life with the class while practicing writing and speaking skills. Haifa shared a colorfully decorated recipe of a traditional Pakistani rice dish, Abia and Mara presented their morning routines, Hassan described how to make french fries, and Rahim described how to make a paper airplane. “Haifa volunteers first and shares a recipe she wrote. Haifa did well and once she finishes, Muhammad and Hassan raise their hands to ask her several questions. She handles this well and answers their questions patiently” (field notes, 1/19/10).

Again, I argue that this engagement during an integrative activity is because the students had the power to present on what they wanted. Those who completed the assignment appropriately presented their lists while the others listened quietly. The students exhibited engagement with action verbs by illustrating their ability to effectively manipulate them during their presentations and in the written assignment. When asked by Carol, many stated they enjoyed the opportunity to share something with the class.

The project Teach Ms. Brown Tuesday also encouraged much engagement. About once a week, students presented something from their home culture. Mara, a Mexican-born student, presented on how she and her family celebrate Saint Francis of Assisi Feast Day in Mexico:

[Mara] states that her religion celebrates saints and that she sings at church, a parade is held, they eat lots of food and candy, pray, and celebrate for seven days in Mexico. She reads from prepared notes a brief history of Saint Francis. Carol stops Mara after a while and asks her why she loves Saint Francis. Mara replies that her brother was born on the same day as the saint and her mother encourages her to love saints. She says that Saint Francis was very generous and kind, giving all of his belongings away. ... Carol also gives the example of Mother Teresa as someone who was giving and generous, like Saint Francis. Mara passes around several pictures. ... Carol asks the class what they learned. A few ... contribute that they learned about saints. Saad and Muhammad have trouble pronouncing “saint,” so Carol writes it up on the board and has the class practice saying it a few times. (field notes, 3/11/10)

This activity allowed the students to share their culture, practice oral English, and learn something about themselves and others. The class listened quietly during Mara’s presentation and several asked questions. Her presentation ultimately turned into a vocabulary lesson, with Carol reviewing the definition, spelling, and pronunciation of the word *saint*. This is an illustration of integration of the communicative approach and FonF *by process* in that a discussion of form came up naturally in a class discussion (Nassaji, 2000). Also, this positive reaction from the students directly relates to Henze’s (1999) and Bernhardt’s (2009) findings that students learned about diversity within their own ethnicities and those of others in classes that allowed students to express themselves within an ethnically diverse curriculum.

Finally, one vocabulary-related activity particularly elicited engaged be-

havior. Each time new vocabulary was introduced, the students made vocabulary squares, modeled on the board, consisting of a box divided into four parts: the word, definition, synonym or antonym, and a picture representing the word or some aspect of the word.⁴ The students produced a visual image of each word, which solidified the connection between form and meaning in their minds. Haifa stated that she liked drawing these pictures because they helped her remember the words for tests (personal communication, 3/11/10). When working on vocabulary squares, the students typically exhibited engaged behavior, such as keeping their eyes on Carol and/or their papers, using a dictionary, helping Carol fill out the model, and complying with instructions. The following example illustrates this engagement:

Carol asks for a volunteer (Mara) to come up to the board and write the first word down on the chart, “humiliating,” along with its synonym, “embarrassing.” Muhammad finally starts to draw his chart. Carol writes down examples and definitions on the chart: “I feel humiliated when I come to school unprepared.” Definition: “hurting your pride.” Sentence: “Spilling my backpack was humiliating.” (field notes, 10/14/09)

While the above examples illustrate engagement during integrative grammar- and vocabulary-related lessons, not all students were engaged, despite Carol’s best efforts. An example comes from Claudia, when a substitute teacher had the students read aloud vocabulary words and discuss the definitions as a class. The class had had a discussion about “heritage” when Claudia was called on to read the next word, “innovator.” “Claudia is obviously not paying attention as she proceeds to read ‘heritage’ right after this whole discussion [about the term ‘heritage’]. She has to be told several times that they are on the next vocabulary term, ‘innovator’” (field notes, 11/4/09). Additionally, Manuel was similarly unengaged during the reading of vocabulary words:

Carol reads the words, the students repeat the words, and Carol gives a definition. The words include ambitious, cause, fate, literacy (this is particularly difficult for the students to pronounce), profession, and reputation. Manuel is not repeating with the rest of the students. His book is on his desk, upside down, the entire time. (field notes, 1/19/10)

Noncompliance during this routine of introducing new vocabulary might indicate that Carol needed to find novel ways in which to introduce new words. While routines are important, new routines can help promote engagement. This routine occurred once every 2 weeks and students mainly followed along by rote. Most were not as actively noncompliant as Claudia and Manuel, but interest did seem lacking, with students often participating only minimally.

Discussion/Conclusion

Generally, Carol was successful in promoting engagement during grammar- and vocabulary-related lessons. She used creative and integrative assign-

ments to capture her students' attention and provide them some flexibility in their learning. Current trends in research encourage a mixed-methods approach, which Carol mostly embraced, as is evidenced by her integrative projects, such as the PSA and Parts of Speech projects. In each project the students employed a variety of skills and manipulated the target vocabulary and/or grammatical structures in a variety of ways.

At least partly as a result of Carol's instruction, most students developed into engaged, effective language learners in this class, fitting the criteria discussed previously and briefly summarized here. The students mostly were actively involved and driven to communicate often; developed a metacognitive awareness of English, as is evidenced by their completed assignments and oral presentations; often monitored each other's and their own use of English, particularly during oral presentations; employed a variety of learning strategies; and exhibited motivated behavior by completing out-of-class and extra-credit assignments, as is illustrated by Haifa's beautifully decorated rice dish recipe (Naiman et al., 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2001; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Rubin, 1975). Carol created a positive learning environment in which engaged and effective students emerged by including projects that allowed them to express their cultural and linguistic identities (Bernhardt, 2009). The Teach Ms. Brown Tuesday activity exemplifies Short's (1999) suggestion that teachers use students as sources of information; the students were considered experts in their culture and were allowed to assume the role of teacher during the activity.

However, not all of Carol's techniques were completely successful, such as the routine of introducing new vocabulary words in isolation. Research indicates that language learners should be taught a variety of vocabulary-manipulating techniques. The instances of noncompliance exhibited by Claudia and Manuel indicate that perhaps Carol should have included other methods of introducing new vocabulary words, such as having the students read an associated text containing the new words and working as a class to determine the meanings from context. While the students were exposed to the new words at least 10 times in varying contexts (personal communication with Carol, 11/6/09), the initial exposure is vital to grabbing the students' attention and increasing retention rates.

Carol's classroom provided a welcoming environment for her students to learn and interact with English. She employed a mixed-methods approach, including a variety of teaching techniques in integrative activities in which the students creatively manipulated grammatical constructs and vocabulary. While some of her methods were perhaps less successful than others, engagement generally was high during these lessons. Thus, this case study adds to the growing body of research affirming that integrative, student-centered approaches in the ELD classroom do work (Kelley et al., 2010; Kim, 2008; Nassaji, 2000). Just as Kelley et al. (2000) introduced vocabulary using a variety of formats to help students make personal connections with what they were learning, Carol presented grammar and vocabulary instruction in a way that also allowed students to make personal connections by allowing them some say in their own learning and incorporating their previous knowledge.

ELD teachers can take note of Carol's practices and use these ideas to develop activities that are student-centered, promote creativity, and integrate grammar and vocabulary instruction. Furthermore, Carol's creativity is inspiring because she used the tools around her to present material in an effective way. I am sure that had Carol not had access to computer labs, for instance, she would have perhaps had her students create posters instead of PowerPoint presentations.

After collecting 6 months of observation data and interviews, I concluded that Carol's students generally liked her class. Regularly engaged students contributed more to class discussions and indicated in personal interviews that they performed better and understood more in their content classes as a direct result of Carol's class. The activities garnering the most engagement were those allowing them some personal choice, such as the Parts of Speech and the PSA projects. Such integrative activities were most successful, as the students manipulated their burgeoning linguistic and metalinguistic competence through reading, writing, listening, and speaking English. I have illustrated the importance of examining engagement in the ELD classroom, particularly during grammar and vocabulary instruction, as this knowledge is vital to developing strong literacy skills. I have reaffirmed that activities that are integrative, useful, and include the students' voices are the most engaging, and, therefore, best help students become effective learners.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my adviser, Dr. Robert Bayley, and my committee members, Dr. Julia Menard-Warwick and Dr. Karen Watson-Gegeo, at the University of California, Davis for their guidance and support during this project. I would also like to thank the teacher and students at Wildwood High School, who welcomed me into their class and allowed me to work with them.

Author

Dr. Heather Sturman earned her PhD in Linguistics at the University of California, Davis, where her research focused on the academic literacy development of adolescent English language learners at the secondary level using qualitative research methods. She is now an ESL lecturer at UC, Davis, teaching undergraduate ESL courses.

Notes

¹All names of places and people are pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the participants.

²Each motivational poster featured a word, such as *See*, a picture, and synonyms, such as *aim*, *investigate*, *inquire*, *look*, and *query* (field notes, 1/15/10).

³Because the students were not comfortable being audio recorded, this and all other examples involving students are rough transcriptions. For transcription conventions, see the Appendix.

⁴This is related to the keyword technique, a mnemonic method, in which the learner links the new L2 vocabulary word with an orthographically or acousti-

cally similar known word. The learner then constructs an association between the two words, including a visual image that saliently combines elements from both words to increase its memorability (Hulstijn, 1997; Nation, 2001; Nation & Waring, 1997; Sagarra & Alba, 2006).

References

- Baldassare, M. (2000). California's majority-minority milestone: What lies ahead? Retrieved from <http://www.ppic.org/main/commentary.asp?i=227>
- Bernhardt, P. (2009). Opening up classroom space: Student voice, autobiography, and the curriculum. *The High School Journal*, 92(3), 61-67.
- Carhill, A., Suárez-Orozco, C., & Páez, M. (2008). Explaining English language proficiency among adolescent immigrant students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(4), 1155-1179.
- Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998). Issues and terminology. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 1-12). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Harklau, L. (1999). The ESL learning environment in secondary school. In C. J. Faltis & P. M. Wolfe (Eds.), *So much to say: Adolescents, bilingualism, and ESL in the secondary school* (pp. 42-60). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Henze, R. C. (1999). Curricular approaches to developing positive interethnic relations. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 68(4), 529-549.
- Hulstijn, J. H. (1997). Mnemonic methods in foreign language vocabulary learning. In J. Coady & T. Huckin (Eds.), *Second language vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 203-224). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Kelley, J. G., Lesaux, N. K., Kieffer, M. J., & Faller, S. E. (2010). Effective academic vocabulary instruction in the urban middle school. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(1), 5-14.
- Kim, Y. (2008). The effects of integrated language-based instruction in elementary ESL Learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(3), 431-451.
- Naiman, N., Frohlich, M., Stern, H. H., & Todesco, A. (1995). *The good language learner*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Nassaji, H. (2000). Towards integrating form-focused instruction and communicative interaction in the second language classroom: Some pedagogical possibilities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 84(2), 241-250.
- Nation, P., & Waring, R. (1997). Vocabulary size, text coverage and word lists. In N. M. M. Schmitt (Ed.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 6-19). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Norton, B., & Toohy, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(2), 307-322.
- O'Malley, M. J., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9(1), 41-51.

- Ruiz-de-Velasco, J., & Fix, M. (2000). *Overlooked and underserved: Immigrant students in U.S. secondary schools*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.
- Ryan, M. (2008). Engaging middle years students: Literacy projects that matter. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(3), 190-201.
- Sagarra, N., & Alba, M. (2006). The key is in the keyword: L2 vocabulary learning methods with beginning learners of Spanish. *Modern Language Journal*, 90(2), 228-243.
- Sanaoui, R. (1995). Adult learners' approaches to learning vocabulary in second languages. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79(1), 15-28.
- Short, D. J. (1999). Integrating language and content for effective sheltered instruction programs. In C. J. Faltis & P. M. Wolfe (Eds.), *So much to say: Adolescents, bilingualism, and ESL in the secondary school* (pp. 105-137). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). American community survey. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_5YR_DP02
- Vyas, S. (2004). Exploring bicultural identities of Asian high school students through the analytic window of a literature club. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 48(1), 12-23.

Appendix

Transcription Conventions

(parentheses)	paraphrase of longer discussion or background information
[brackets]	description of nonverbal action
...	deletion of text