CO-TEACHING AND MATH DISCOURSE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

Mary P. Truxaw
University of Connecticut
mary.truxaw@uconn.edu

Rebecca D. Eckert
University of Connecticut
rebecca.eckert@uconn.edu

There are cognitive advantages to speaking more than one language; yet, linguistic diversity can impact teaching and learning in complex ways (Moschkovich, 2005). For math, all students are expected to develop rigorous understanding of content and math practices (CCSSO & NGA Center, 2010). However, instruction for English learners (ELs) may focus on procedures and vocabulary rather than cognitively demanding activities (Moschkovich, 2005); thus, ELs may not be held to the same high expectations as other students. ELs need opportunities to participate in rich math activities and discussion that take into account their competencies and also provide necessary support. This need may require *innovative educational ideas*. Co-teaching, where both teachers assume the responsibility of planning and implementing instruction (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2010), may provide innovation for increasing teacher confidence and flexibility in responding to student needs – thus "questioning borders" (conference theme) of traditional solutions for supporting linguistically diverse mathematics classrooms.

This ongoing, small-scale study investigates how supported, co-teaching practices may enhance engagement with math discourse in linguistically diverse elementary school classrooms. Four co-teaching teams each include one experienced teacher and one master's intern (post-student teaching). The teams participate in professional development (PD) and ongoing collaborative support related to co-teaching and math discourse. Data include: field notes and video and audio recordings (PD and math lessons), co-teaching team reflections, and classroom artifacts. Data collection and qualitative analysis (Creswell, 1998) are ongoing.

Preliminary results suggest that co-teaching models, when accompanied by focused PD and co-planning opportunities, have the potential to increase student-teacher interaction, instructional flexibility, and attention to individual needs – and, thus, may promote more meaningful mathematical discourse and, in turn, positive student learning outcomes. Further, findings suggest benefits and challenges of different co-teaching approaches (e.g., parallel teaching; station teaching; one teach, one assist; and team teaching) (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2010) and their relationships to supporting math discourse. The poster will provide greater detail of the findings. This work is significant because it has the potential to identify best practices, strategies, and tools to support teacher education and PD with specific emphasis on the intersection of co-teaching and math discourse to support linguistically diverse classrooms.

References

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