

Lesson/Activity on Film: *Immersion*

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Note: This lesson/activity is designed for college/university students, specifically pre-service teachers taking courses that deal with the foundations or principals of bilingual/ESL education, sheltered ESL instruction, multicultural education, and the like.

Student Learning Outcomes: a) students will become more aware of the realities of English learners who may be experiencing forced immersion in all English or mainstream classrooms; 2) students will have practice in media/film analysis; 3) students will synthesize and apply their knowledge from current and previous literature, as well as their own ideas, on effective teaching approaches for English learners by engaging in problem-based learning exercises.

Some Questions for Discussion (after the film is viewed)

1. What is happening to Moises, especially as it relates to immersion into a mainstream, English-language classroom? Provide some evidence based on what you saw in the film.
2. Does he know how to do math? How do you know?
3. So, Moises knows the content – math – but struggles with English. What is the difference between knowing content subject areas – like math, science, and social studies – and knowing English as a language?
4. How would native language support, or a program that uses native language instruction, like bilingual education, help someone like Moises? Could he still be successful in school in a bilingual education program, as opposed to being immediately immersed in all-English classroom? How do you know? (Ask students to cite research studies based on the effectiveness of native language instruction/bilingual education programs. They may have 10 minutes to review this literature individually or with their small group).
5. What are the assumptions made about English learners in U.S. schools about how much they know? About how intelligent they are? Do people in the U.S. tend to equate intelligence with one's abilities with the English language? Provide at least some anecdotal evidence. Where do these assumptions come from? What do you believe are some of the roots or motivations of the prevailing attitudes/assumptions toward English learners, especially those from countries like Mexico?
6. Based on what you know about our school systems and the way(s) they service immigrants, migrants, and English learners, does this film accurately reflect how many

mainstream, English-only classrooms function today? Why or why not? Discuss with your group for 10 minutes and be prepared to present your ideas from your tables.

Problem-based Activity

1. Put the students in small groups of 3-5 for this activity.
2. View the film again with the students. Have the students identify elements of the teacher's pedagogy, and the approach of the school in general, that seem to be ineffective in teaching Moises and being responsive to his needs as an English learner. Pause the film when a student raises his/her hand to identify and discuss those ineffective practices. All students in the class must be sure to note/write down what is identified as the ineffective elements.
3. After identifying the ineffective elements of the teacher's and school's approaches to teaching and working with a student like Moises, the instructor will then note and number on the white/chalkboard the identified elements.
4. The instructor will then divide and assign the listed elements evenly among the groups. As such, each group will have a different set of elements of ineffective instruction for students like Moises.
5. Have the students work together and discuss in their group the problem of ineffective teaching for students like Moises, with the goal of coming up with concrete ideas/solutions for more effective teaching, using the following prompt to guide them:
For each of the ineffective practices you have listed that we saw in the film, provide some ideas for pedagogical approaches that would have been more effective for an English learner like Moises?
6. For each of their ideas, students must explain why they believe their idea is a good one and better than what they saw in the film. That is, they must give a rationale for their idea. But in their rationale, they must also cite 2-3 quotes and/or paraphrases (with author and page #) from their course textbooks and any additional readings that help to support each idea and rationale. They must be able to effectively discuss how those ideas from the literature make their rationale for each of their ideas for effective practice stronger.

7. After about 45 minutes of discussion, problem-solving, and creating concrete ideas that are supported by research, the students must present their ideas to the rest of the class and be prepared for critique or questions based on what they present. They can do this by listing a shortened version of their ideas on poster paper, on white board or chalkboard, or have them put their work on a Power Point slide presentation for the following class session (all depending on how the time is used by the instructor).

8. Instructor may close the lesson that day, or the following class session, summarizing, synthesizing, and reflecting on what was discussed, created, and presented by the students based on the film *Immersion*.

*If you would like to contact Dr. Reyes regarding this lesson/activity, you are welcome to do so at rreyes9@utep.edu.