

Abstract

The Effectiveness of “Instructional Conversation” Pedagogy in Education for Multilingual Students

Research has shown the power of collaborative interaction in supporting the cognitive, linguistic and social development of L2 learners. However, establishing successful, autonomous groups poses challenges. Instructional Conversation (IC) is a pedagogy that emphasizes hands-on connections with content. Rather than relying heavily on lectures, IC allows students to learn how to effectively discuss relevant topics with peers, make real-world connections, and better understand classroom material, helping multilingual students academically, as well as promoting growth in their English-language skills. However, engaging in collaborative conversation requires clear instruction to support student autonomy, which we define as students’ ability to work collaboratively in groups with other students, independent from the teacher. This study investigates the role of "task cards," written lesson instructions, in promoting student autonomy. As part of a larger study, researchers collected IC task cards (TC) and videos of students engaged in the corresponding lessons from classrooms in K-12 districts across Georgia. This study analyzed the connection between TCs and student autonomy. We collected and analyzed a corpus of 100 TCs and their corresponding videos demonstrating the implementation of the TC. Each TC was rated for Lexile appropriateness, use of directive language, and use of collaborative language. Researchers rated the Task Cards based on the characteristics mentioned above. A high TC score signified that the task card was written well and was expected to effectively promote student autonomy. A low TC score signified the opposite. The 10 highest and 10 lowest scoring TCs and their corresponding videos were evaluated (using a validated Classroom Observation Rubric) to test the correlation between “successful” and “unsuccessful” TCs and the respective levels of student autonomy that resulted. The results of this study offer evidence regarding whether this form of teaching using Task Cards can be an effective method of promoting student autonomy in education for all students.