

Case Study

Student: José

Age: 10.3

Grade: 5th

José immigrated to the United States with his family from Peru when he was eight years old. His father and uncle are employed in seasonal farm labor in their new community. His aunt and mother work in a meat packing plant. José's grandmother helps take care of him and his seven siblings and cousins. José, his cousins and his older siblings attended school in Peru and speak Spanish fairly well. After two years of school in Peru, similar to our first and second grades, he has an appropriate developmental level of Spanish, i.e. at the Speech Emergent beginning bilingual level and can read in Spanish slightly above primer level. Educationally, he has two years of elementary schooling albeit in Spanish, a language other than his home language or English.

Instruction and Interventions During the First Year

Based on the Home Language Survey, José was given an oral Spanish proficiency test (higher end of "speech emergent" and can communicate his basic classroom needs in Spanish). He was given two English proficiency tests, one being an oral proficiency test (his English was at entering level) and the other being the state test to determine eligibility for English Language services. José received two periods of English instruction a day, as well as assistance of a Spanish/English bilingual aide in his classroom during social studies and mathematics content lessons.

In the classroom, his behavior began to deteriorate. He began acting out, fidgeting, and not paying attention. He seemed distracted and not very attentive. He did not always respond when spoken to, although the teacher was sure he was capable of doing so. He now seemed to struggle with new content and was not making any progress with reading and writing in English. Up until now, José had always made an effort to be involved in whatever was going on in the classroom and on the playground. José appeared to have difficulty with task analysis and identifying the separate elements of assignments in detail. He was very resistant to change and did not respond well to storytelling time. He was very quick to respond to questions, but the answers seemed impulsive and random. He gave up readily, was easily distracted and quite unstructured. When faced with new materials, José appeared particularly distressed and did not respond well to pressure. José seemed to leap to conclusions and make very broad generalizations. José responded best to physical demonstrations and concrete models.

What should we do now?

(Case Study adapted and modified from: Dr. Catherine Collier <http://www.crosscultured.com/>)