Professional Development for Content Area Teachers of English Language Learners

Keira Ballantyne
Jack Levy
Please tell us a little about yourself. Which category best describes your role?

- Faculty
- Student
- Researcher
- SEA staff
- District staff
- Principal
- ESL or bilingual ed. teacher
- Other teacher
- Other
What do we know about ELLs?

- There are more than 5 million ELLs in US public schools.

- They represent around 10% of the school population and this proportion is rising. (NCELA, 2007)
What do we know about ELLs?

- They score less than half as well as proficient English speakers on 8th grade tests of reading and math.
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Eighth-grade Students at or Above Basic in Reading and Mathematics, 2007

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- They lag 20 percentage points behind proficient English speakers in HS completion rates.
What do we know about their teachers?

Who is teaching ELLs?

- ESL teachers AND mainstream content area teachers.

- We assume that the majority of teachers will encounter an ELL in the course of their career.
What do we know about their teachers?

- 25–30% of teachers with at least one ELL have had training addressing the needs of ELLs.
  
  29.5% according to the National Center for Education Statistics (1997); 26% in a separate NCES study (2001).

- More than half of all teachers believe they need more training in working effectively with ELLs.
  
  (57% (Alexander, Heaviside & Farris, 1999); 53% (Reeves, 2006)).
What do we know about their teachers?

- Fewer than 1/6th of colleges offering teaching degrees required preparation in working with ELLs for mainstream content area teachers. (Menken & Atunez, 2001).

- 20 states have preservice requirements that refer to the specific needs of ELLs.
  - California
  - Florida
  - New York
  - ... by 2011, Pennsylvania
Designing Professional Development Programs

- University-based Teacher Education
- SEA, LEA Staff Development for Practicing Teachers
University–based Teacher Education

- **Pre–Service**
  - Licensure or Certification.
  - **Content**: Foundations of education, methods, and field or clinical experiences.
  - **Format**: Variety of formats, stretching from field-based learning completed largely in professional development schools to more traditional programs that offer a majority of coursework at the university.
  - **Level, Degree**: Offered at either the undergraduate or graduate levels, and can include a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree along with licensure.
University–based Teacher Education (con’t)

- **In–Service**
  - **Level, Degree:** Graduate level, often masters or doctorate
  - **Content:** Coursework that emphasizes subject matter, advanced teaching strategies, or both. A high school history teacher, for example, can enroll in a Master’s program in history, secondary education, or any of a variety of sub-disciplines. In–service programs for elementary teachers can be subject–oriented graduate programs, or may focus on particular topics, such as advanced instructional strategies, or subpopulations of students, such as gifted and talented students, or ELLs.
Standards – University Programs

- National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
1. Teachers should acquire **pedagogical content knowledge** which addresses ELLs
2. Assessment and evaluation data should **measure** teachers’ preparedness to work with ELLs
3. Field experiences should provide **practice** and opportunities to see successful teachers **model** effective techniques in working with ELLs
4. Candidates should understand the range in **diversity among ELLs**
5. & 6. Unit should provide **qualified faculty** and **sufficient resources** to support teachers’ learning about ELLs
1: English language learners communicate for social, intercultural, and instructional purposes within the school setting.

2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of language arts.

3: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of mathematics.

4: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of science.

5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of social studies.
Staff Development for Practicing Teachers

National Staff Development Council Standards

- Long-term and continuous

- Commitment to intellectually rigorous learning that enhances “the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs necessary to create high levels of learning for all students” (NSDC, 2001, p. 2).

- Strong focus on the critical analysis and interpretation of research and data by educators themselves, rather than a reliance on outside authorities.

- Central to the delivery of standards-based staff development is practitioners’ participation in collaborative action research.
NSDC Context Standards Applied to ELL Education

- Professional learning communities for content area teachers should include ELL experts

- Educational leaders must model responsibility for ELL learning

- Schools and districts must assign adequate resources so teachers can learn how to interpret data and access research of relevance to ELLs
NSDC Process Standards Applied to ELL Education

- Staff development should be driven by accurate and relevant data about ELLs.
- Evaluation of staff development should include data on ELL outcomes.
- The research base of staff development should address language skills for the content areas.
- Programs must be designed specifically for each content area.
- Teachers’ knowledge base should include the learning styles of ELLs.
- Teachers should learn how to collaborate across cultural boundaries.
NSDC Content Standards Applied to ELL Education

- Teachers should understand the cultural backgrounds of their students.
- Teachers should acquire pedagogical content knowledge, including knowledge of accommodations and assessments, which addresses ELLs.
- Teachers should know how to involve their students’ families and communities in education.
Questions?

Please submit your questions in writing. If your question is appropriate for the large audience today, it will be read aloud and answered. If not, it will be answered in a private message back to you.
Guide for Mainstream Teachers of English Language Learners

- Language acquisition and communicative competence
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Assessment and accommodations
- Culture and education
- School and home communities
What teachers need to know about language ...
What **content area** teachers need to know about language ...

- Second language acquisition is a *process*.
- Using the first language can support learning language and content.
- Don’t correct every mistake. Sometimes communication is more important than perfection.
- Conversational English is not the same as academic English.
Curriculum & Instruction

The challenge: Providing language instruction alongside content instruction

Strategies:

- Pull apart the standards:
  - what are the language demands?
  - which ones are difficult & which ones are easy?
  - (rule of thumb: cognates are easy!)

- Access to the subject matter.

- Differentiate instruction. Not all ELLs are the same.
Assessment & Accommodations
- Remember, you want to test content, not language
- Know your options

Culture & education
- Where did your students come from? What was their school like? What do they expect in the classroom?

School & Home communities
- Know your options
- What resources does your school offer for parents? What about the larger community?
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Please submit your questions in writing. If your question is appropriate for the large audience today, it will be read aloud and answered. If not, it will be answered in a private message back to you.
What **math** teachers need to know about ELLs ...

- Words can have one meaning in everyday language and a different meaning in math.
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![Diagram showing right and left angled triangles](Image)
What **math** teachers need to know ELLs ...

- Words can have one meaning in everyday language and a different meaning in math.
- Sentence structures can be confusing to ELLs
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- Sentence structures can be confusing to ELLs.

- Context is important. Does the math connect with the everyday lives of your students?
What **science** teachers need to know about ELLs ...

- Teaching vocabulary
  - Use routines
  - Use cognates

- Talking science

- Writing science
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<tr>
<th><strong>LABORATORY REPORT</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship between __________ and ____________</td>
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<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>This experiment investigates ______________________________.</td>
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<td>This experiment tests the hypothesis that ____________________.</td>
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<td>Based on ___________________ I predict that ________________.</td>
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<td><strong>Equipment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(Ensure students have the vocabulary to list the equipment.)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Procedure</strong></td>
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<td><em>(Provide examples of verbs that students will need to list the procedure. For instance, you might include a list of verbs such as add, pour, fill, heat, distill, decant.)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Observations</strong></td>
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<td>At the beginning of the experiment, the __________ was __________. After _______________, the __________ became __________.</td>
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<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
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<td>Adding ____________ to ______________ causes ________________.</td>
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  - Use cognates

- Talking science

- Writing science

- Cultural norms & nurturing scientific thinking
  - who can ask questions? when?
What English language arts teachers need to know about ELLs ...

- Vocabulary
- Speaking in the ELA classroom
  - literature circles
  - scripts & theater
- Accessible literature with characters that ELLs can relate to (ask your librarian!)
- Writing in the ELA classroom
  - practice writing, e.g. journals, blogs
What social studies teachers need to know about ELLs ...

- Vocabulary
  - pre-teach vocabulary before reading
  - cognates

- Creating context through graphic organizers
  - e.g. timelines for history

- Culturally appropriate content that allows ELLs to draw on their background knowledge
Find all this and more ...

🔗 Educating English language learners: Building teacher capacity
http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/practice/mainstream_teachers.htm