

Leading Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

Dr. Miriam D. Ezzani
Region 10 Conference: "Powerful Roots,
Flourishing Minds: Ensuring ELL Success"
June 25, 2014



COLLEGE of
EDUCATION

UNT[®]

- Get out of your seat and introduce yourself to 3 people you don't know by sharing your:
 - Name
 - District/School
 - Position
 - Interest in this topic
- Write the 3 names on your dance card.

**Welcome &
Introductions**



**COLLEGE of
EDUCATION**

UNT

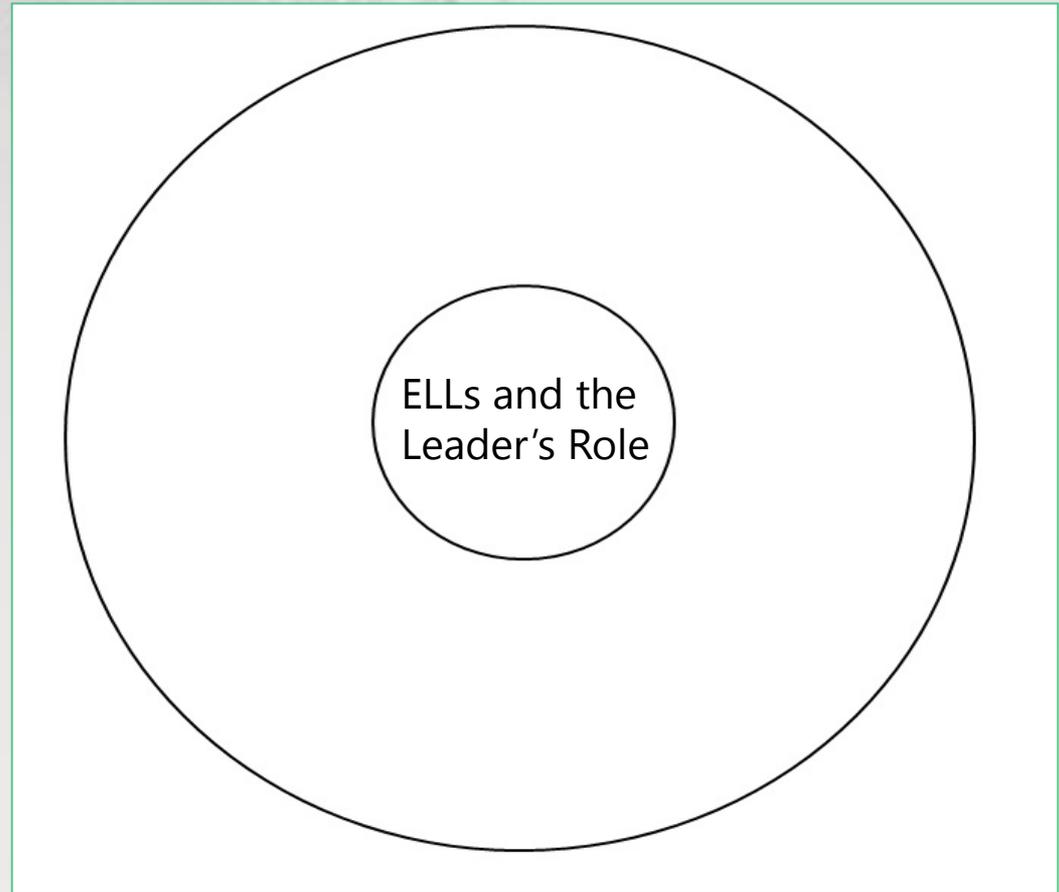


- ❖ Strengthen a **culture of academic achievement** for English Language Learners
- ❖ Strengthen **knowledge of second language acquisition**
- ❖ Understand the **principal's role in building capacity** through quality professional development



Group Activity:

- Define your group's leadership knowledge and skills regarding English Language Learners.
- Initial next to your contribution.





Strengthen a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

Culture has been described as “the way we do things around here” (Bennis, 1989; Deal & Peterson, 2009).

Research tells us . . .

- build shared values and positive relationships?
- foster conditions to promote learning?
- celebrate academic success?

Strengthen a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

Now, let's take a minute and consider those questions with ELLs in mind.

#1 - Building Shared Values

Establishing a school culture for student success is about **moral courage**. It is about using every opportunity to espouse your view and share it with parents, students, teachers, and the community (Flanary, 2007).

Strengthen a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

#2 - Building Positive Relationships

Reach out, a visit or a word of encouragement can demonstrate you care. A word of discouragement could be a turning point in a child's life or in the involvement or non-involvement of a family.

Think Pair Share with Dance Partner #1: How do you capitalize on the existing community network and establish your presence?

Strengthen a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

#3 - Fostering Conditions to Promote Learning

A vital role of the school/district leader in strengthening a culture of academic achievement is to foster conditions that support ongoing learning (G.T. Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007).

Let's consider some conditions that promote learning!

Strengthen a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

Let's explore an excerpt from a case study of an effective principal. Jot down responses to any or all of these questions:

1. How did the principal build **shared values and structures** for collaboration?
2. How did practices and processes strengthen the **culture of high expectations**?
3. What are the **critical roles** of the principal in strengthening a culture of high expectations?

Strengthen a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

Research-based Practices from Case Study

- Instructional Leader Support
 - Principals attended university trainings with teachers and coaches and were present during on-campus trainings
 - Followed up with teachers and coaches on lessons learned from PD
 - Observational expectations included: language objectives, scaffolding, strategies for increasing comprehensible input
 - Coverage for coach's class during collaborative planning periods

Strengthen a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

Research-based Practices from Case Study

- The Work on Campuses
 - Culture of collaboration fostered positive attitudes
 - Allowed for critical dialogue for transformation rather than complaining
 - Comprised of PD around a process of dialogic engagement
 - Process began with coaches training using Lindsey, Martinez and Lindsey's (2007) approach to reflective and problem-solving conversations

Strengthen a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

Research-based Practices in Case Study

- Curricular Collaboration
 - Teachers began working on contextualizing knowledge for ELLs, moving one subject to the next in a natural transition
 - Organizing curriculum for ELLs around big questions or themes increases comprehensible input (Freeman & Freeman, 2007).
 - Collaboration between curricular objectives requires teacher collaboration for implementation
 - Curricular collaboration to integrate language and literacy objectives into each content area (establishes common language for planning, instruction, and assessment)

Strengthen a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners

Research-based Practices in Case Study

- Celebrate academic success as a reinforcement of what the school values.
 - Tangible artifacts
 - Programs
 - Announcements
 - Celebration of student learning
 - Encouraging words

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition



COLLEGE *of*
EDUCATION

UNT[®]



Why is this our reality?

89% of Hispanic middle and high school students read below grade level.

96% of 8th grade ELL students scored below the basic level in the reading portion of the NAEP test.

ELL students have the highest drop out rates compared to language majority students.

31% of all young ELL secondary students do not complete high school even though some of them completed graduation requirements.

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition

Recognize Problems of Deficit Thinking & Challenge Assumptions

I asked my teachers, "What do high expectations look like? Should we have the same expectations for all students? I was really surprised at the dialogue that came out of that, especially with one of the strongest teams of teachers.

They gave more excuses: "This child is from a low-income family." "This child is a second language learner."



COLLEGE of
EDUCATION

UNT

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition

Phase One: Open a Safe Dialogue

Deficit thinking occurs when educators assume student disadvantage and relate it to the student's culture or social experience.

If the paradigm shift from viewing bilingualism as a liability to an asset does not occur, knowledge of second language acquisition and best practices for ELLs cannot be implemented effectively.

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition

Phase Two: Provide Opportunities

- Provide opportunities for teachers to understand their students' experiences outside of school
 - One district interviewed EL students who had graduated and captured what helped them succeed and what hurt them on video.
 - Responses such as 'I wish they understood I was smart.' 'All we did was low-level math, low-level science, low-level . . I felt like I was just passing by.'

With dance partner #2, discuss an example of cultural dissonance with respect to ELLs. Share or develop a solution.

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition

- Stages of Second Language Acquisition
 - Preproduction
 - Early Production
 - Speech Emergence
 - Intermediate Fluency
 - Advanced Fluency

Steven Krashen and Tracey Terrell (1983)

Look in the manila envelope .
Compare these stages of
second language acquisition
with Texas' Proficiency
Language Descriptors?

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition

Test your knowledge --

What is the difference between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (**BICS**) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (**CALPS**)?

What is the role of first language in second language development?

Have a reciprocal teaching conversation with someone on your table.

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition

PRINCIPAL ACTION POINTS:

- **SEE** students reading multiple kinds of texts aligned with curriculum: textbooks, trade books, magazines, internet articles, newspapers
- **HEAR** students talking about content via think-pair share, prepared statements or speeches, informal responses, as they work out sentence stems, choral reading, reader's theatre
- **SEE** students writing in informal journals, prepared answers, editorials, dry erase boards, formal essays
- **HEAR** materials for active viewing and listening: video clips, audio of literature, etc.

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition

PROMOTING SUCCESSFUL INSTRUCTIONAL AND CURRICULAR PRACTICES:

Total Instructional Alignment:

- Align instruction to student's language proficiency
- Align assessment to student's language proficiency

Example: "The answer is _____ because _____."

"After testing the hypothesis, we concluded _____. Our evidence showed _____."

Understanding language proficiency levels is critical because what might help one student instructionally – such as graphic support and simplified language – may hold back another student who is gaining advanced fluency.

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition

EXPLICITLY TEACH LANGUAGE:

Don't wait until ELLs experience difficulty -- be proactive:

- Build background knowledge through techniques such as storytelling, personal examples, and short video clips to activate background knowledge
- Provide concrete supports for abstract concepts by realia, photographs, manipulatives, labs, graphic organizers
- Most importantly -- teach language through the content areas

Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition

DIFFERENTIATION means knowledge of each student's linguistic needs, which requires:

- Ongoing formative assessment during lesson to gauge student learning and language development
- Use of appropriate scaffolds and appropriate ways to wean students from scaffolds
- 100% student engagement

**The principal's role in building
capacity through quality
professional development**



The principal's role in building capacity through quality professional development

Changing the Landscape of PD

- Generic PD
- Individual Development
- Piecemeal fragmented sessions
- A district focus
- Adult needs
- Transmission by experts
- Consultants as trainers
- PD as an option

From

To

- Subject-specific practices
- Organizational and individual improvement
- A coherent design
- A school and a district focus
- Student and adult needs
- Studying practice by teams
- Consultants as facilitators
- PD as a lifelong necessity



COLLEGE of
EDUCATION

UNT

The principal's role in building capacity through quality professional development

Dance Partner #3: How do you assess Professional Learning?

- What data do you consider when assessing PD needs?
- What questions do you ask?
- What have you found to be the potential areas of need?

Data to Consider	Questions to Ask	Potential Areas of Needed Professional Development
Classroom Observation	Are ELLs engaged in learning in a similar manner as native speakers?	Differentiation for ELLs based on language proficiency
Course enrollment equity audit	Are ELLs enrolled in advanced-level courses, regular courses, or remedial courses?	Having high expectations for ELLs. Understanding the difference between language proficiency and academic potential. Ways to encourage a college-going culture for ELLs.
Class schedules, classroom observations	Are ELLs isolated from peers whose first language is English? Are ELLs routinely homogeneously grouped within classes or otherwise separated or disengaged from the curriculum and instruction in content classes?	Engaging ELLs in equal curriculum expectations. Effectively integrating students with diverse language needs in the classroom and the curriculum. Facilitating meaningful classroom interactions between all students.
Discussions during faculty, department, or grade-level meetings	Does the faculty have preconceived, prejudicial, or stereotypical expectations for ELLs related to intelligence, ability, culture and so forth?	Cultural proficiency and responsiveness training. Developing skills for cultural understanding.

The principal's role in building capacity through quality professional development

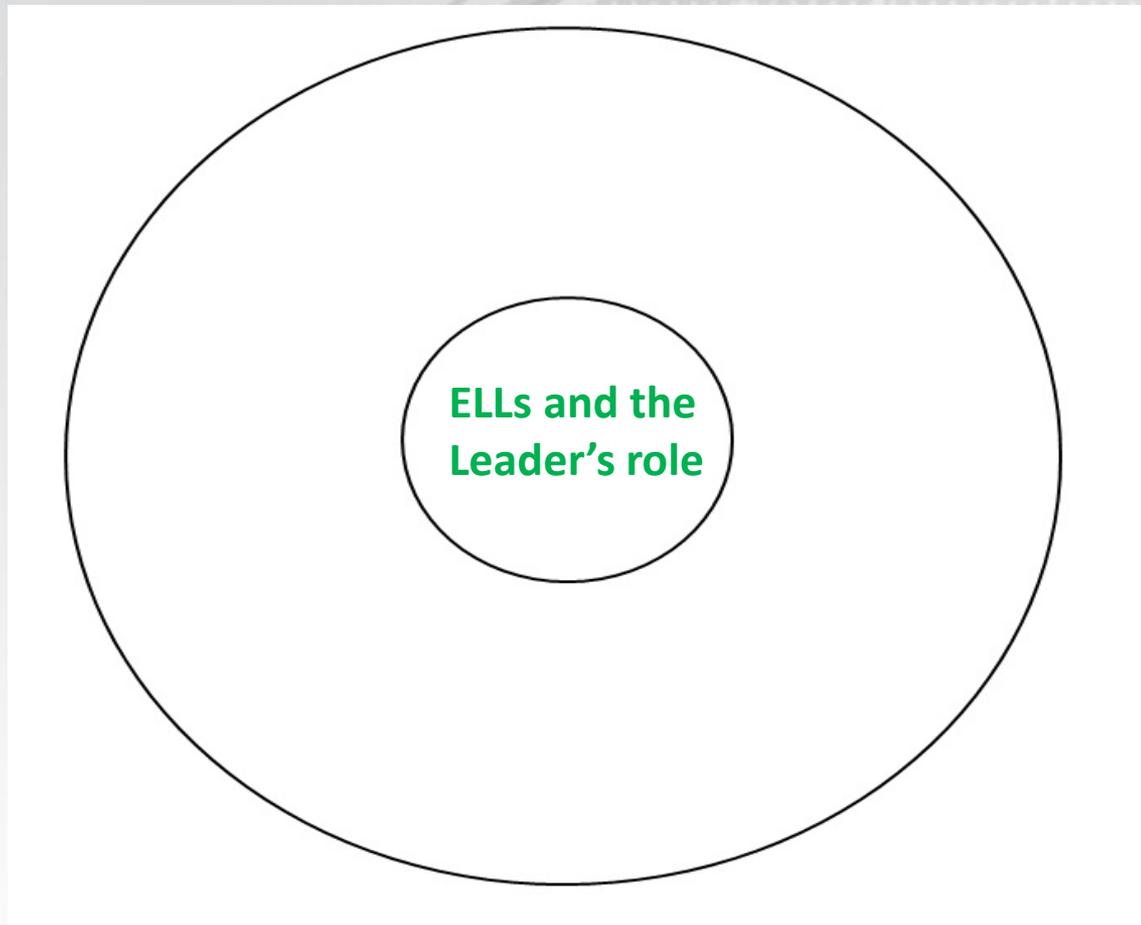
ESTABLISH SUPPORT TEAMS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- **Peer coaching**
 - Peer Coaching Observation and Reflection Guide
- **Sustained PD through Collaboration**
 - Embedded
 - Ongoing
- **Structure for On-Site Coaching**
 - Scheduling
 - Departmental/Grade Levels
 - Developing Relationships for Support

The principal's role in building capacity through quality professional development

Using a different color marker, add to the knowledge and skills leaders need to promote academic achievement for ELLs.

Initial next to your contribution.



COLLEGE of
EDUCATION

UNT

References

- Alford and Nino (2011). *Leading Academic Achievement For English Language Learners*. Corwin, A Sage Company: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Echevarria, Vogt & Short (2013). *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners – The SIOP Model*
- Quezada, Lindsey & Lindsey (2012). *Culturally Proficient Practice – Supporting Educators of English Learning Students*

Contact Information

Miriam Ezzani, Ed.D.

1155 Union Circle, #310740

Denton, Texas 76203

miriam.ezzani@unt.edu



COLLEGE of
EDUCATION

UNT[®]