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TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
IN THE REGULAR EDUCATION CLASSROOM:
A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

by Beth Hartokolis

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Literacy Education.

Hamline University

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To my loving husband, Tim, for his support and encouragement through this entire process.

To my personal children, Nate, Meghan and Isabelle, thank you for encouraging your Mom to continue learning!

To my classroom children, thank you for the inspiration and willingness to try new things.

To my parents, John and Peggie, who taught me early about the love of literature, and who also taught me that you are never too old to learn new things.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Story of My Journey to My Capstone Process

Overview of Chapter One

As a fourth-grade teacher in a rural school in the upper midwest I am asked daily to meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) in our school. They comprise over 50% of our population and have varying degrees of English proficiency. In 2016, I also began to work with ELL specialists at the MN Department of Education (MDE) and I learned that regular education classroom teachers are not fully aware of all that can be done to be more effective in helping ELL students achieve their greatest potential. This leads me to ask the question, *what background knowledge and skills need to be part of teacher professional development that supports regular education classroom teachers in implementing the WIDA¹ standards according to the LEAPS Act (Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success) that the Minnesota enacted in 2014?* This legislation mandates training for all teachers in English language teaching strategies. I have been on a journey, assisted by my school administration and ELL teachers, to find the answer.

In the Spring of 2017, our staff completed a literacy survey distributed by our principal to assess our literacy needs. Fifty-eight percent of the teaching staff indicated that they needed more training on effectively teaching ELL students in the regular education

¹ WIDA (WIDA About Us, 2014) is an organization started in 2002 by Wisconsin (WI), Delaware (D) and Arkansas (A) to support the education of language learners. The WIDA website recounted that the four states initially wrote a grant together but Arkansas dropped out at the last minute, so their acronym then stood for World-class Instructional Design and Assessment. As they grew and their mission changed, they dropped the meaning for the letters and are now just known as WIDA.

classroom. This is not surprising given that since the year 2000, there has been a 50% increase in our ELL student population. The majority of these students are Spanish speakers. To support these students in our district, there are three ELL teachers at the Elementary School and two at the Middle/High School. Our school is not alone in this dilemma, the immigrant population in the U.S. has been steadily increasing causing schools to look into this challenge more deeply.

Greg Owen, a consulting scientist, and the Minneapolis Foundation (2010) looked into how much the immigrant population is increasing in Minnesota. They found that in the 1990's it increased by over 130% compared to 57% nationally, and between 2000 and 2007, it has increased by another 33% compared to 22% nationally. In our town, this trend is evident. Within our school district boundaries there is a large meat packing plant that employs many immigrant parents. In addition, we have a Hispanic grocery store, bakery, and two restaurants so many families feel comfortable moving to this small rural town. Given the changed demographics of my workplace, my capstone question will address what background knowledge and skills need to be part of teacher professional development that supports regular education classroom teachers in implementing the WIDA standards according to the LEAPS Act (Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success).

In 2014, the Minnesota State Legislature passed the regulation, known as the LEAPS Act. Michelle Niska from the MN Department of Education (2014) noted that the LEAPS Act, “requires educators to be skilled in developing the English language proficiency of their English Learners” (MDE, 2014). Teachers need training and skills to meet these new requirements. The organization known as WIDA, based at the University of Wisconsin, exists to, “Advance academic language development and academic achievement” for students who are culturally

diverse (WIDA About Us, Mission and the WIDA story, para. 2). They have done extensive research about language learners and have some guiding principles that the MN Department of Education feels are important to guide regular education teachers in their instruction of English language learners (D. Duffy, Personal Communication, 2017).

In this chapter, I will share how the demographics of immigrants have changed in Minnesota and explore the history of the Minnesota legislation, the LEAPS Act. I will also share my story and how I came to teach in such a diverse school.

The Growth of English Language Learners in Minnesota

English Language Learners (ELL) are a growing population in rural Minnesota. The Minneapolis Foundation, in cooperation with Wilder Research (Otteson, 2010) found that immigrant families are moving to towns in rural Southern and Western Minnesota because of the jobs in poultry and meat packing plants. As referenced earlier, Otteson (2010) describes how Minnesota's foreign-born population increased by 130% between in the 1990's and another 33% between 2000-2007. When these families come, they bring their children who attend our schools. These children speak their parent's native language at home, but then need to learn English to learn and function at school and in the community. English language learners began attending our central Minnesota School in 1995, and the numbers increased after 2000 to where 57% of our student population are English language learners. This has created a challenge for teachers, how to best educate these students. The Minnesota Legislature has also seen the need to more effectively help these students.

Introduction of the Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act

As teachers, we need to be equipped to effectively provide literacy instruction for these English learners. The State of Minnesota instituted the Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act in 2014, with implementation required by 2014-15 school year, to give guidelines and requirements for not only ELL teachers, but more specifically regular classroom teachers (MN Session Law 2397, 2014). These requirements, along with WIDA (the organization that advances academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth) standards are the cornerstone on which this pedagogy should stand (MN Session Law 2397, 2014).

WIDA (WIDA About Us, 2014) is an organization started in 2002 by Wisconsin (WI), Delaware (D) and Arkansas (A) to support the education of language learners. The WIDA website recounted that the four states initially wrote a grant together but Arkansas dropped out at the last minute, so their acronym then stood for World-class Instructional Design and Assessment. As they grew and their mission changed, they dropped the meaning for the letters and are now just known as WIDA. WIDA's, (2014) mission is to "advance academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators".

Over the last 15 years, WIDA has increased their presence nationally by providing regional professional development workshops and a national conference (WIDA, About Us, 2014). In 2014, WIDA facilitated Access testing (Language Proficiency Assessment) for over 1.3 million ELL students. This testing provides data and feedback to teachers in four areas,

Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking along with a composite score (an average of the 4 areas)(WIDA, 2014). WIDA's (2014) goals for the use of this data are:

- Helps students and families understand students' current level of English language proficiency along the developmental continuum.
- Serves as one of multiple measures used to determine whether students are prepared to exit English language support programs.
- Generates information that assists in determining whether ELLs have attained the language proficiency needed to participate meaningfully in content area classrooms without program support.
- Provides teachers with information they can subsequently use to enhance instruction and learning in programs for their English language learners.
- Provides districts with information that will help them evaluate the effectiveness of their ESL/bilingual programs.
- Meets, and exceeds, federal requirements for the monitoring and reporting of ELLs' progress toward English language proficiency. (para. 4)

In order to assist classroom and ELL teachers, WIDA has also compiled a list of "Can Do Descriptors" (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 2009). These descriptors according to WIDA, standards and instruction (2014), "highlight what language learners **can do** at various stages of language development as they engage in teaching and learning in academic contexts" (para. 1). They also show teachers the next step in the process and give both teachers and students markers to use as scaffolding goals. These documents, WIDA Can Do Descriptors (2014), provide teachers strategies and academic language to use

when teaching recounting, explaining, arguing and discussing at all six levels of language development. As a regular classroom teacher I was not aware of this valuable resource. See Figures 1 and 2.



Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 3-5

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	
READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match icons or diagrams with words/concepts Identify cognates from first language, as applicable Make sound/symbol/word relations Match illustrated words/phrases in differing contexts (e.g., on the board, in a book) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify facts and explicit messages from illustrated text Find changes to root words in context Identify elements of story grammar (e.g., characters, setting) Follow visually supported written directions (e.g., "Draw a star in the sky.") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret information or data from charts and graphs Identify main ideas and some details Sequence events in stories or content-based processes Use context clues and illustrations to determine meaning of words/phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classify features of various genres of text (e.g., "and they lived happily ever after"—fairy tales) Match graphic organizers to different texts (e.g., compare/contrast with Venn diagram) Find details that support main ideas Differentiate between fact and opinion in narrative and expository text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize information from multiple related sources Answer analytical questions about grade-level text Identify, explain, and give examples of figures of speech Draw conclusions from explicit and implicit text at or near grade level 	Level 6 - Reaching
WRITING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Label objects, pictures, or diagrams from word/phrase banks Communicate ideas by drawing Copy words, phrases, and short sentences Answer oral questions with single words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make lists from labels or with peers Complete/produce sentences from word/phrase banks or walls Fill in graphic organizers, charts, and tables Make comparisons using real-life or visually-supported materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce simple expository or narrative text String related sentences together Compare/contrast content-based information Describe events, people, processes, procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take notes using graphic organizers Summarize content-based information Author multiple forms of writing (e.g., expository, narrative, persuasive) from models Explain strategies or use of information in solving problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce extended responses of original text approaching grade level Apply content-based information to new contexts Connect or integrate personal experiences with literature/content Create grade-level stories or reports 	

The Can Do Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Performance Definitions use three criteria (1. linguistic complexity; 2. vocabulary usage; and 3. language control) to describe the increasing quality and quantity of students' language processing and use across the levels of language proficiency.

Figure 1. WIDA Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Clusters 3-5 Writing and Reading



Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 3-5

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	
LISTENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point to stated pictures, words, or phrases Follow one-step oral directions (e.g., physically or through drawings) Identify objects, figures, people from oral statements or questions (e.g., "Which one is a rock?") Match classroom oral language to daily routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorize content-based pictures or objects from oral descriptions Arrange pictures or objects per oral information Follow two-step oral directions Draw in response to oral descriptions Evaluate oral information (e.g., about lunch options) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow multi-step oral directions Identify illustrated main ideas from paragraph-level oral discourse Match literal meanings of oral descriptions or oral reading to illustrations Sequence pictures from oral stories, processes, or procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret oral information and apply to new situations Identify illustrated main ideas and supporting details from oral discourse Infer from and act on oral information Role play the work of authors, mathematicians, scientists, historians from oral readings, videos, or multi-media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out oral instructions containing grade-level, content-based language Construct models or use manipulatives to problem-solve based on oral discourse Distinguish between literal and figurative language in oral discourse Form opinions of people, places, or ideas from oral scenarios 	Level 6 - Reaching
SPEAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express basic needs or conditions Name pre-taught objects, people, diagrams, or pictures Recite words or phrases from pictures of everyday objects and oral modeling Answer yes/no and choice questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask simple, everyday questions (e.g., "Who is absent?") Restate content-based facts Describe pictures, events, objects, or people using phrases or short sentences Share basic social information with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer simple content-based questions Re/tell short stories or events Make predictions or hypotheses from discourse Offer solutions to social conflict Present content-based information Engage in problem-solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer opinion questions with supporting details Discuss stories, issues, and concepts Give content-based oral reports Offer creative solutions to issues/problems Compare/contrast content-based functions and relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justify/defend opinions or explanations with evidence Give content-based presentations using technical vocabulary Sequence steps in grade-level problem-solving Explain in detail results of inquiry (e.g., scientific experiments) 	

The Can Do Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Performance Definitions use three criteria (1. linguistic complexity; 2. vocabulary usage; and 3. language control) to describe the increasing quality and quantity of students' language processing and use across the levels of language proficiency.

Figure 2. WIDA Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Clusters 3-5 Speaking and Listening

According to Dennis Duffy, an ELL Program Specialist (personal communication, Nov. 2017) at the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), not many regular classroom teachers are aware of WIDA and the ones that are, do not know about the descriptors and associated tools and strategies that WIDA has developed to help teachers.

In 2014, the State of Minnesota passed the LEAPS Act, (Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success). The LEAPS Act also requires educators to be skilled in developing the English language proficiency of their English Learners, this is not limited to ELL teachers,

this is required of regular education teachers as well (MN Session Law 2397, 2014). The Statute mandates funding and Professional Development for all teachers;

Provide teachers of English learners, including English as a second language and content teachers, with differentiated instructional strategies critical for ensuring students' long-term academic success; the means to effectively use assessment data on the academic literacy, oral academic language, and English language development of English learners; and skills to support native and English language development across the curriculum.

Staff development activities may include curriculum development and curriculum training programs, and activities that provide teachers and other members of site-based teams training to enhance team performance. The school district also may implement other staff development activities required by law and activities associated with professional teacher compensation models.

This statute also defined specific outcomes for our state's ELL population along with other professional development goals such as teacher collaboration. Specifically related to the ELL students, teachers are required to; improve student achievement of state and local education standards in all areas of the curriculum, effectively meet the needs of a diverse student population, and provide an inclusive curriculum for a racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse student population. (MN Session Law 2397, 2014) Learning about the LEAPS Act has had a big impact on my journey as an educator.

My Journey in the Education Field

My journey as a teacher has taken me to four states and eight schools over 29 years (with some time off in the middle). I have taught in upper middle class schools and poverty schools, public schools and a charter school. In all of the schools where I have worked, students have the same needs, teachers who are engaged, caring and are willing to go the extra mile to push their students to be the best that they can be. Part of helping students be the best they can be is supporting them in developing their literacy skills.

My passion for teaching literacy began at a young age when my parents fostered a love of reading by reading to me, modeling the importance of reading and purchasing books that I was interested in. I realized that being literate in reading and writing and speaking was necessary to accomplish your goals. In my teaching career, I have always sought training on more effective methods and strategies to reach my students. In 2015, I completed training through Columbia University's Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. I went to two trainings here in Minnesota, and then spent a week in New York at Columbia. These trainings have changed my point of view and teaching strategies and enabled me to better instruct my students in all aspects of literacy, no matter what socioeconomic status or home situation the student comes from.

From 2011 to 2015, I taught at a charter school in a small rural Minnesota town that was started because the district decided to close their school and combine it with a nearby town. The teachers and town administration did not like that idea so they started the charter school. This was my first experience in teaching children of poverty. My eyes were opened to the differences

that stable families and educated parents can make in a child's life. They were also opened to the huge difference a caring, engaged teacher can make to help a child in such tough situations.

In 2015, a friend asked me to apply to a school that needed someone with a literacy background, I applied just to see what would happen, and I was offered the job. I took it because it would provide another challenge, teaching a 50% English Language Learner (ELL) population. The town is in west central Minnesota with a population of about 3,300. In 1995 hispanic families started moving to town from Mexico and other Spanish speaking countries south of the United States. Over the last three years I have learned a great deal about these students and the challenges that they face as they learn in a new language. I have had to change my teaching strategies to better meet their needs.

Teaching English Learners

The process of teaching English Learners for me, really begins with my understanding of the students' culture, their home situation and their personalities. Some of my students have come to the country within the last year and some have been here for several years. Several have formal schooling in Spanish, but others have none. Those coming from places like Puerto Rico, have some English background, others do not. Just like my students from low income families, lots have broken homes, drug and alcohol issues and siblings that only have one common parent. I have learned that the Hispanic families who have recently arrived in the U.S. in my school really want their students to do well and learn English fluently. They are kind and caring and will work with me to help their child achieve the most that they can. These students are lively and fun to work with. If you engage them on their level, they will joke with you and let you into their lives, the good, the bad and the ugly. That gives me, as a teacher, the opportunity to engage

them in learning because I can make connections for them and show them how powerful literacy can be.

In the fall of 2016, my principal asked for volunteers to join an ELL leadership team, I jumped at the chance to learn more. As a result, I have received training from people at Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) on best practices for teaching ELL students in the regular education classroom. This, to me, has been eye opening. I have learned about WIDA and their standards for educating ELLs and about Minnesota's LEAPS Act and how to implement that in my classroom. This, along with learning from our ELL teachers and my own reading have greatly enhanced my teaching strategies. I have also realized from my training in teaching students of poverty, that the strategies that work well for ELL students, are also extremely effective in teaching children experiencing poverty, so all of my students benefit from my new learning.

My work with MDE has made me aware that regular education classroom teachers are not fully aware of all that can be done to be more effective in helping ELL students achieve all that they are capable of. When my Principal got the results of the Literacy Survey in 2017 where such a large group of teachers (58%) indicated that they wanted more professional development on effective instruction for ELL students in the classroom, it was pivotal. This has now become one of the five goals that our Literacy Leadership team is targeting for the next 3 years.

Significance of this Capstone Project for Public School Teachers

The Amherst H. Wilder foundation stated in its 2010 report to the Minneapolis Foundation stated, “Minnesota is now in the midst of a new age of immigrants - and facing very different demographic trends, a global economy, and a charged cultural/political landscape”. Part of this landscape is how we educate the children of these newly arrived families. Students who do not speak English, or very little English will struggle with achieving our standards and graduation. Otteson (2010) reported that,

Immigrant students graduate at rates similar to native-born students, if they have strong English language skills, but drop-out rates are considerably higher for those students with Limited English Proficiency - both native-born and foreign-born (p. 5).

As public educators, we need to have the skills to effectively teach these students. The 2014 Minnesota legislation known as the LEAPS Act mandated that teachers get the training needed to help English Language Learners achieve the standards set forth for all Minnesota students (MN Session Law 2397, 2014). What is the best way to educate teachers? What skills and strategies do classroom teachers need to be equipped with to best teach their ELL students all day? These are the questions that I have explored to help every public school teacher meet the needs of their non native speaking students.

Summary

As the 2017-18 school year began, our school district was inundated with students whose families had been displaced by Hurricane Irma. Between October and February over 50 students from Puerto Rico enrolled in our elementary school, most did not speak any

English. This has made this project even more relevant. One of the nagging questions facing our administration is, what is the best type of professional development, a day long meeting, a several day workshop, or a several month long teaching and coaching approach? Which would be most effective, and what should the training cover? I will be exploring the best practices to provide effective Professional Development using the WIDA and LEAPS Act standards for classroom teachers of English Language Learners. What background knowledge and skills need to be part of teacher professional development that supports regular education classroom teachers in implementing the WIDA standards according to the LEAPS Act (Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success) that the Minnesota enacted in 2014?

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Overview of Chapter Two

Regular education teachers bear the responsibility to insure that all of their students receive quality instruction regardless of their language background. *What background knowledge and skills need to be part of teacher professional development that supports regular education classroom teachers in implementing the WIDA standards according to the LEAPS Act that the Minnesota enacted in 2014?* In the following quote Garcia (2011) summarizes why teachers must take this responsibility seriously.

Literacy is a form of expression that links our ideas to the world around us. It helps develop our own worldviews and be active participants in society. For ELL students it is also a path to understanding a new culture in which they should be empowered to fully function and succeed (p. 219).

A major focus of this chapter is to review the research literature to develop a strong case for the need for continued teacher training as the English Language Learner population continues to increase. Minnesota has mandated professional development for all teachers. We will also discuss some of the best practices for teaching ELL students as well as best practices for training teachers. From the research, I have concluded that all of these strategies to work together to empower our English learners to fully succeed in our society.

English Language Learner Growth and Legislative Action

According to Sanchez (2017) one out of every 10 public school students is an English Language Learner (ELL). In his article, a map is included that indicates ELLs are located in all 50 states in America. The state of Minnesota is no different with the presence of ELLs however, the increase in MN is larger than most states. According to the Wilder foundation (2010) of Saint Paul, MN in the 1990s, the non native-born population increased in Minnesota by a dramatic 130%, but only 57% nationwide. Between the years of 2000 - 2007, the foreign-born population increased another 33% (p. 1) .

During the 2012 - 2013 school year, according to the bilingual website for educators and families of English Language Learners, Colorin Colorado (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2017) almost 10% of the population in our schools nationwide were ELL students, that is a 60% increase over the last decade. During the same time period in Minnesota, Colorin Colorado (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2017), also indicated that there were 70,000 ELL learners which was a 38% increase over the previous decade. Dennis Duffy (personal communication, 2017) an English Language Learner Specialist from the Minnesota Department of Education, suggests that the population has continued to increase over the last five years.

The common thought is that ELL populations are in urban schools, but as Colorin Colorado (as cited by Breiseth, 2015) notes, the population of ELL students is growing quickly in rural and suburban schools. The Wilder Foundation (Otteson, Owen, Meyerson, 2010) stated, "Of the nine districts with non-English home language rates greater than 30%, five were in southern Minnesota, three were in the Metro and one was in western Minnesota" (p. 4). Parents of these students have varying degrees of education and English levels which can affect their

ability to help their student as they learn English. The Wilder Foundation (Otteson, 2010) concluded that 27% of the foreign-born adults lack a high school degree or GED, while 32% have a college or graduate degree. Otteson (2010) reported that The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce found that, “many of the state’s low-skill immigrants are currently working labor-intensive, low paying jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, and a variety of service industries” (p. 3). According to Otteson writing on behalf of the Minneapolis Foundation (2010) in rural Minnesota, there are Latinos, East Africans, and Southeast Asians who are primarily working in meat-packing, poultry-processing and agricultural businesses (p. 3).

As immigrant student numbers increase, educators need to look at the support that these English Language Learners need, keeping in mind that it takes three to seven years to successfully acquire the academic language they need to be successful academically and professionally. Cook, Boals and Lundberg (2011) stated in their article for Kappan magazine,

The overriding conclusion ... is that even in districts that are considered the most successful in teaching English to [English Learner] students, oral proficiency takes three to five years to develop and academic English proficiency can take four to seven years. (p.68)

These students come from diverse backgrounds, as the Colorin Colorado (2015) site notes, some may come with strong native language literacy skills and backgrounds with good family support while others may have little or non-existent formal schooling. The English learners in our school have very diverse backgrounds. The teachers in our school district have learned that some students have changed schools frequently, in their native country or in the US, they may not have had effective language instruction in either language. Many may also have responsibilities

outside of school such as caring for younger siblings and being the family translator. The Minneapolis Foundation (2010) noted that if immigrants have strong English language skills, their graduation rates are similar to students who have spent their entire lives in the US, about 73%. Those students, however, who struggle with English language skills only have a 43% graduation rate (Otteson et al., 2010). Because of this discrepancy, the State of Minnesota Legislature decided to impose more regulations on schools in regard to English Language Learners.

The regulation, known as the LEAPS Act, was passed Minnesota in 2014 to add increased emphasis for EL students. Niska (2014), from the Minnesota Department of Education discussed the LEAPS Act.

The LEAPS Act is regarded as an important piece of legislation to support the academic success of the state's growing English Learner population. (It) also requires educators to be skilled in developing the English language proficiency of their English Learners.
(para. 2)

In addition to addressing early childhood education, higher education, adult education, and teacher licensing, it creates an emphasis to support ELL students. According to the Legislative Statute, the following is required:

(1) elementary teachers are able to implement comprehensive, scientifically based reading and oral language instruction in the five reading areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as defined in section 122A.06, subdivision 4, and other literacy-related areas including writing until the student achieves grade-level reading proficiency;

- (2) elementary teachers have sufficient training to provide comprehensive, scientifically based reading and oral language instruction that meets students' developmental, linguistic, and literacy needs using the intervention methods or programs selected by the district for the identified students;
- (3) licensed teachers employed by the district have regular opportunities to improve reading and writing instruction; and
- (4) licensed teachers recognize students' diverse needs in cross-cultural settings and are able to serve the oral language and linguistic needs of students who are English learners by maximizing strengths in their native languages in order to cultivate students' English language development, including oral academic language development, and build academic literacy; and
- (5) licensed teachers are well trained in culturally responsive pedagogy that enables students to master content, develop skills to access content, and build relationships.

These requirements ask a great deal from teachers, some of whom may not know the most effective strategies for teaching English learners. Many experts such as Goldenberg (2008) and Dutro (2005) have looked into what research says about best practices for teaching English language learners. In the books, *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*, Gambrell and Morrow (2015) and *Comprehension Going Forward*, Keene et. al (2005) there are specific chapters devoted to teaching ELL students. As teachers consider this LEAPS Act mandate, they can look to the research to assist them in effectively instructing their ELL students.

Best Practices for Teaching English Language Learners

Garcia (2005) discusses comprehension for English language learners in the book, *Comprehension Going Forward*. She believes that we need to connect these culturally and linguistically diverse learners to the world that surrounds them;

Literacy is a form of expression that links our ideas to the world around us. It helps us develop our own worldviews and and be active participants in society. For ELL students it is also a path to understanding a new culture in which they should be empowered to fully function and succeed. (p. 219)

The task of teaching English language learners in the regular education classroom is daunting as the Sonoma County Office of Education summarized in a presentation by Dutro (2005).

According to Dutro (2005) “Districts and schools have a dual obligation in the instruction of the English Learner. They must provide English Language Development (ELD) at each child’s level of English proficiency *and* they must ensure meaningful access to grade level academic content” (p. 2). From this research, I conclude that good language development for native speakers and English learners has similar components such as phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, vocabulary development, discussion or oracy, comprehension and writing. Fostering connections to the student’s native language both in content and in language learning greatly increases their acquisition of English. There are several ways to accomplish this (Garcia, 2011; Goldenberg, 2008).

Schema, or background knowledge, has long been touted as important when teaching literacy (Garcia, 2011). As Garcia (2011) explained, respecting and fostering connections with a

student's native culture creates inroads for teachers to use during instruction (p. 216). When we respect the culture and heritage our students come from we open the door for more meaningful discussion about history, geography, art and music, and a plethora of topics to write about. As students understand that their culture is valued as much as ours, and that they can do reading and writing work that is meaningful to them, then those connections can be broadened into vocabulary and comprehension work (Garcia, 2011). Another factor in language development according to Goldenberg, is knowing how literate a student is in their home language (2008). WIDA (2014) in their section entitled, Guiding Principles of Language Development, reports that, "Students develop language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing interdependently, but at different rates and in different ways" (para. 7).

Knowing a student's native language literacy is important because if teachers know that students are literate in their native language, teachers can assume that the student will be able to "transfer" concepts to English, using the same skills and strategies with a different alphabet code (Goldenberg, 2008). As Goldenberg (2008) stated;

If you learn something in one language - such as decoding, comprehension strategies, or a concept such as democracy - you either already know it in (i.e., transfer it to) another language or can more easily learn it in another language. (p.15)

He further concluded that if similarities and differences between the languages are pointed out, students are able to make more connections (Goldenberg, 2008).

Supporting Goldenberg's (2008) idea of the importance of knowing how literate students are in their native language is WIDA. WIDA (2010) also states in their Guiding Principles of

Language Development, “ Students’ academic language development in their native language facilitates their development in English” (para. 4). Goldenberg (2008) suggests pointing out similarities and differences in letter sounds and combinations are helpful (p.20). Even cognate words like *elephante* and elephant or the fact that exclamation marks and question marks in Spanish come at the beginning of the sentence and in English they are at the end (Goldenberg 20018). Educators can’t assume that students will make these observations on their own.

Discussion

Another one of WIDA’s Guiding Principles of Language Development (2010) is that, “Students learn language and culture through meaningful use and interaction.” There are several different ways to accomplish this in the classroom. In Best Practices in Literacy Instruction, Moll and Diaz (as cited by Dominguez & Gutierrez, 2015) discuss that students would read texts in English, but then were allowed to discuss their reading with their peers in English or Spanish or a combination of the two (p. 136). They found that the, “Children’s estimated grade level for comprehension significantly increased” (p. 136). As students read in English and are allowed to discuss their thinking in whichever language they are comfortable with, their comprehension increases. As their reading and comprehension skills increase, tandem components are vocabulary development and oral proficiency (Dominguez & Gutierrez, 2015).

Goldenberg (2008) stated, “The National Literacy Panel (NLP) concluded that reading instruction alone will be ‘insufficient to support academic success’ for ELLs, and that ‘simultaneous efforts to increase the scope and sophistication of these students’ oral language proficiency’ is also required” (p. 22). Along with that, the International Literacy Association (ILA) shared in their Literacy Leadership Brief on Second-Language Learners’ Vocabulary and

Oral Language Development (Echevarria, 2017) that allowing students the time to make connections with other students' ideas, wrestle with new ideas, respectfully disagree with a peer or add to their argument will build a deeper level of oral language development (p. 6).

Upczak Garcia (2011) also discussed that when students interact with each other verbally, to deconstruct, question and analyze text together, they are able to comprehend that text in ways they would not be able to on their own. She also stated that in many of the cultures that our English learners are coming from, students are accustomed to working together to solve problems (pp. 218-219). If students are allowed to employ some of the strategies they used in their native cultures, English language proficiency will be increased. Echevarria (2017) states, "Oral language proficiency is critical for advancing second language learners' academic success; vocabulary is a particularly critical aspect of oral proficiency" (p. 2). Academic vocabulary as well as typical words need to be explicitly taught.

Vocabulary

Goldenberg in his article, Teaching English Learners, What the Research Does - and Does Not - Say, states,

Vocabulary development is, of course, important for all students, but is particularly critical for ELL's. There can be little doubt that explicit attention to vocabulary development - everyday words as well as more specialized academic words - needs to be part of English learners' school programs. (p. 23)

As the ILA (2017) contends to build vocabulary, educators need to provide a variety of reading and listening to rich, interesting texts. When this occurs a great deal of incidental vocabulary

learning takes place. Also, explicit teaching of word learning skills such as phonemic awareness, context clues, analyzing word parts and dissecting morphemes also need to be a part of daily work (p.4). Academic language, language used in educational settings is different than English spoken in daily life at a store or in a social setting. Cook et. al. (2011) remind us that “...Academic language has more complex grammatical forms, more technical vocabulary, less use of slang and idioms, clearer references and a more objective sense” (p. 67). As such, teachers need to point out and teach the difference to ELL students. These varying types of vocabulary build on each other to produce proficiency (Cook et. al. 2011).

Dutro in her presentation to the Monterey County (CA) Office of Education (2005) indicated that there are “bricks” and “mortar” vocabulary that ELL students need to be instructed on. The “bricks” are the topic specific words and the “mortar” words are the functional language that students need to express their thinking. These would be words that describe, compare, summarize, predict and draw conclusions to name a few. Dutro emphasizes that it is important to directly teach these concepts to students (p.5). This is not something that just happens once or twice and the concept is considered to be covered. “Research suggests that the academic achievement of English learners in American schools is inextricably tied to long-term support for academic language development within socioculturally appropriate environments” (Cook, 2011). One can conclude that consistency of explicit teaching of academic vocabulary over time is necessary for competence.

Tools to Foster Literacy

In order to scaffold English learners’ development of language, Dutro (2003), Upczak Garcia (2011), Goldenberg (2008), and Holzman (2004), Principal of Roosevelt Elementary

School in Long Beach, CA cite several specific tools to foster vocabulary and literacy development for English language learners.

Sentence frames or stems. Garcia (2011) points out that “Providing lessons in which children can repeatedly practice the language structures and vocabulary that give them access to more complex ideas and information will help them grow as English speakers, readers and writers” (p. 225). Garcia shares a strategy of deconstructing questions so ELL students have a framework in which to formulate questions. Dutro (2003) in her presentation to the Monterey County Office of Education, shared how using sentence frames can scaffold student’s building of language structures. Dutro went on to create a continuum of sentence frames from a beginning language learner to a more advanced level to provide a tool for educators to guide their students in discussion and writing. See Appendix A. Students find a sense of comfort if they have a framework in which to begin. Gradually the complexity of the sentence stems are reduced and the student is released and can navigate on their own (Dutro 2003). This leads me to conclude that empowering students to think on their own gives students a sense of accomplishment.

Thinking maps. Roosevelt Elementary School in California (Holzman, 2004), a school with 85% English learners took what Marzano (2000) identified through a meta analysis of over 100 studies on classroom instruction, and identified common instructional strategies such as summarizing, comparing and contrasting, and hypothesis as strongly affecting student achievement (p. 1). They piloted the use of Thinking Maps®. These are eight non-linguistic representations of thinking - more specific than the traditional graphic organizer (Holzman, 2004). Stefanie Holzman, principal of Roosevelt Elementary in Sonoma County, CA explains,

“It’s a very good strategy for English Language Learners because it takes away the necessity to speak and write English. It can be effectively used to support higher level thinking skills as well as low achievement” (2004). She goes on to explain how ELL students can show their thinking by drawing representations (pictures) or using words or phrases instead of complete sentences to show their thinking (Holzman, 2004). This enables educators to teach content while students are still learning language. It also allows the student to begin using the language in a non-threatening environment so if they don’t spell a word correctly, it does not reflect negatively upon them. As they learn more about how our language is put together, they will use words and phrases more than pictures to describe their thinking.

Direct phonics instruction. “ELLs learning to read in English, just like English speakers learning to read in English, benefit from explicit teaching of the components of literacy, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and writing” (Goldenberg, 2008). Goldenberg also referenced a study done in England that found that consistently using a structured program called Jolly Phonics had a large impact over the use of a “Big Books” approach. He went on to state, “Other studies showed similar effects of directly teaching the sounds that make up words, how letters represent those sounds, and how letters combine to form words” (p. 17). Closely related to phonics are **morphemes**, or components of words. Learning morphemes such as plurals, suffixes and prefixes and root words can unlock a great deal of words for ELL students. (ILA, 2017) By giving students direct instruction in phonics, it unlocks the code of the English language, fluency increases and comprehension can go deeper.

Modify Language Content, not Skills . English learners who are struggling readers should be given skills that model rich literacy skills, but with content that is more accessible to their current reading abilities noted Domingues and Kris Gutierrez (2015). Skills such as inferring, comparing, predicting and questioning can still be taught with materials they are able to comprehend. Teachers can use interactive read alouds to assist with initial comprehension and then help the students move toward the higher level skills through discussion (in their native language or English as previously discussed) or Thinking Maps®. This allows students to continue their literacy skill development while learning a new language.

Frontloading in the student's Native Language. A concept Claude Goldenberg references in his article, Teaching English Language Learners, What the Research does, and Does Not Say (2008), is to use the student's native language for explanation and support. He cautions that by doing this, "students become dependent on a 'translator' who provides a crutch such that students do not exert themselves to learn English" (p. 19). Goldenberg suggests the solution to this potential problem is to "frontload" difficult vocabulary or concepts in their native language, then complete the lesson or reading in English. After the activity, the material can then be reviewed again in the native language if needed (p. 20). By using frontloading, students are still learning in English, but their comprehension and skill level is increased by providing key words for understanding in their native language.

In summary, "Effective English language development provides explicit teaching of features of English (such as syntax, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and norms of social usage) and ample, meaningful opportunities to use English" (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 43).

Teacher Development

The Minnesota LEAPS Act explicitly states, “Elementary teachers (need to) have sufficient training to provide comprehensive, scientifically based reading and oral language instruction that meets students' developmental, linguistic, and literacy needs using the intervention methods or programs selected by the district for the identified students” (MN Session Law 2397, 2014). The problem is that not all professional development is effective in changing teacher instruction.

Teacher’s professional development (PD), also known as teacher workshops, has traditionally been a full or half day session where a principal or outside expert comes in to provide training or information to a teaching staff. After attending the traditional teacher workshop the expectation is that teachers will incorporate the content into their classrooms. According to Gulamhussein (2013) from the National School Boards Association’s Center for Public Education, when teachers only attend the workshop without further training, a mere 10% of the teachers transferred the skill into their teaching practice. This low transfer rate seems to indicate that teachers are not paying attention, but there are other factors in play (p. 12). Because Gulamhussein (2013) asserts, “The one time workshop assumes the only challenge facing teachers is a lack of knowledge of effective teaching practices and when that gap is corrected, teachers will be able to correct it” (pg. 11). This however, is not the case. The biggest challenge for teachers is not the absence of knowledge Gulamhussein (2013) concludes, but the insufficient skills to implement these new practices.

Gulamhussein (2013) referenced a study done by Fuller in 2001 in which they found that the struggle teachers have is not in *learning* new material, but *implementing* it, it is often referred to as the “implementation dip”(p.12). Implementing takes time and continuous coaching to fully and faithfully implement new teaching strategies. If teachers are to make changes in their practice, then they will need help and repeated practice to put this new learning into practice (Gulamhussein, 2013). Gulamhussein (as cited in Joyce & Showers, 2002) reports “Studies have shown that teacher mastery of a new skill takes, on average, 20 separate instances of practice and that number may increase if the skill is exceptionally complex” (p.12).

The Learning Policy Institute (Darling- Hammond, Hyler, Gardner & Espinoza, 2017) reviewed 35 in depth studies that looked at teaching methods, professional development and student outcomes and found that there were seven aspects of Professional development (PD) that were essential. The seven aspects identified by the institute are:

- Topic of the PD is content focused.
- The PD incorporates active learning.
- The PD is collaborative.
- The PD uses models of effective practice.
- The PD provides coaching and support by experts.
- The PD offers feedback and time for reflection.
- The PD is sustained over time.

The first is that the topic is Content Focused. Gulamhussein (2013) had the same findings in her evaluation, “Several studies, for instance, have shown that professional development that addresses discipline-specific concepts and skills has been shown to both improve teacher practice, as well as student learning” (p. 17).

Second, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) state, it incorporates Active Learning, “learning that engages teachers directly in designing and trying out teaching strategies, providing an opportunity to engage in the same style of learning they are designing for their students” (p.1). Newman and her collaborators at The Ohio State University (2010) agreed that effective teacher development also Supports Collaboration through cooperative learning amongst the teachers. In this scenario, teachers assist each other and share ideas to create a change (p. 3).

The fourth essential element of PD is to Model Effective Practice. Gulamhussein (2013) explained that when teachers are able to observe an expert teaching the new methodology in a class of real students, they are able to better understand and apply the concept to their own practice (p. 17). Integrating Coaching and Expert Support into the PD is the sixth element of effective PD and piggybacks on collaboration and modeling. This practice occurs when a trained coach comes into a classroom and supports the teacher’s implementation of a new teaching strategy with specific, immediate feedback to the teacher (p. 21).

In her research, Gulamhussein (date) noted, “The study found that coached teachers transferred the newly learned teaching practices, but teachers who only had the workshop

quickly lost interest in the skill and did not continue to use it in their classrooms” (p.15). A new thought is that a natural coaching partnership is one between a regular classroom teacher and an ELL teacher, and research has begun in this area. The Ohio State University study (2010) purported that it was helpful for content area teachers to team up with ELL teachers to provide support and feedback so that those teachers can improve their practices (p.3).

This directly correlates to the Learning policy Institute’s sixth point that good PD offers feedback and reflection. Teachers need the time to reflect on their teaching, often with a coach to evaluate what went well with a new strategy and what should they improve for the next time (para. 6). Newman et al. (2010), *Developing a Training Program for Secondary Teachers of English Language Learners in Ohio* , referenced Vygotsky’s Social Constructivist Theory where there is a shift from “top-down” models of learning to one where teachers are more engaged in building up their skills.

Finally, effective professional development needs to be sustained over time. Gulamhussein (2013) asserted that, “Some Studies have concluded that teachers may need as much as 50 hours of instruction, practice and coaching before a new teaching strategy is mastered and implemented in class” (p.14). As Gulamhussein (2013) concludes, giving teachers the time and support to learn and implement new strategies creates a better learning environment for all students.

Summary

As I have seen in my own practice, often English learners do not realize that they have these tools in their primary language and that knowledge will help them to learn English. As

teachers make connections with their students both culturally and with what they already know about literacy from their native language, the doors begin to open for the strategies research has showed us to facilitate growth in our ELL students. As ELL's begin to grow, using their newly acquired language in meaningful interaction becomes vital. There are many facets to unlocking English for language learners, and as the LEAPS Act mandates, teachers need professional development and training (MN Session Law 2397, 2014). Effective coaching by experts over time is essential for authentic implementation of best practices in English literacy skills (Gulamhussein, 2013). Teachers need the time to learn, implement and reflect on their pedagogy so they can become better at their craft.

As Gulamhussein (2013) and Darling-Hammond (2017) stated in their research, teachers need training over time with support a collaboration to initiate new teaching strategies. I have not seen any of this that addresses the need that the LEAPS Act (MN Session Law 2397, 2014) mandates. This is the reason for this project, to address the question; what background knowledge and skills need to be part of teacher professional development that supports regular education classroom teachers in implementing the WIDA standards according to the LEAPS Act that the Minnesota enacted in 2014? I also sought to provide the tools necessary to provide this training in research based, effective manner with my project.

CHAPTER THREE

Capstone Project Description

Overview of Chapter Three

Having completed the review of the research literature this chapter will describe how the project will address my essential question: *What background knowledge and skills need to be part of teacher professional development that supports regular education classroom teachers in implementing the WIDA standards according to the LEAPS Act?* In order to assist educators in acquiring the skills they need, this is a professional development (PD) plan to educate and coach teachers about strategies outlined in the previous chapter. Explicit instruction and modeling through active participation, pictures and classroom activities and models will give educators a clear picture of the best practices to teach English Language Learners (ELL) students.

The focus of this PD will be on implementation as Gulamhussein (2013) explains in research, “There must be support for a teacher during the implementation stage that addresses the specific challenges of changing classroom practice” (p. 15). Support from a coach as well as peers will be built into this training. Reflective practice questions are included for use in training and coaching purposes.

This chapter begins with research that supports the need for this project followed by the setting in which this project was designed as well as for whom it is designed. After that, the professional development detailed plan is laid out. There are four sessions each focussing on different strategies this research has shown to be essential in teaching all ELL students. The four sessions include, session one - Background, Development and Discussion, session two - Vocabulary, Sentence Stems, session three - Thinking Maps, and session four - Direct Phonics

Instruction, Modifications, Frontloading Native Language. There are Google slide presentations for each session which include activities based on the research about professional development. Teachers will be engaged in active learning and there is time built in for discussion throughout the sessions. Between sessions, coaches will go into classrooms to assist with implementation. The timeline for completion of the professional development for a school staff is approximately eight months and is specifically detailed below.

Research

The Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act was passed in 2014 in Minnesota and mandates all teachers be trained to teach ELL students in their classrooms (2014). Administrators have the task of finding quality professional development that teachers will implement in their classrooms. WIDA (2014), is the, “Organization that advances academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse and through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators” (About Us, Mission and the WIDA Story, What does WIDA Stand For, para. 2). They provide benchmarks and guidelines for educators to guide their instruction within the classroom. These practices along with strategies from Dutro (2005), Upczak Garcia (2011), Dominguez and Gutierrez (2015) and the International Literacy Association (2017) will be introduced to educators to implement with coaching support in their classrooms.

Setting and Participants

This professional development project is designed for a school district similar to the one I work in where 57% of the population is ELL. There are 22 regular classroom teachers, four special education teachers and three ELL teachers in our elementary school. According to a survey administered at our school in November of 2016, 38% of the teachers have 16 or more years of teaching experience, 29% have 11 - 15 years of experience, 8% have 7 - 10 years experience, 13% have 4 - 6 years of experience and 8% have three or fewer years of experience. The regular education teachers have ELL students for all but 30 minutes a day, they are fully integrated into the classroom. Educators are expected to teach the same Common Core State Standards to the English learners that they teach to native English speakers. The goal of this professional development is to teach strategies, that research supports, to improve the instruction of ELL in the mainstream classrooms.

Timeline

Between January and June of 2018, I continued to integrate the methods and strategies I researched into my classroom practices so I use my experience to guide my presentation. A letter of consent was sent home to my students (in English and Spanish) seeking permission to use media during my PD. However, that media will not be included in the document required to complete my master's program. (Appendix B) I also have permission from my school administration to complete this project (Appendix C). A peer reviewer, who has more experience teaching English Language Learners than I do, has looked over my research and evaluate it. It has been modified based on her expertise and recommendations.

Detailed Project Description

Teaching ELL Students in the Regular Education Classroom

A Professional Development Plan

To be implemented August – May of any given school year.

Goal: To provide background knowledge and skills needed for regular education classroom teachers to implement the WIDA standards according to the LEAPS Act?

Targeted Audience: Kindergarten through sixth grade regular education classroom teachers.

Session #1 – Background, Development and Discussion

Date / Time	Goal/Objective	Participants	Interrelated Components	Meeting Place
Back to school workshop week.	Provide background on LEAPS Act and WIDA and language development. Understand the importance of discussion.	All regular Education Title 1, Special Ed. and Specials teachers.	WIDA Can Do charts.	Room with tables for interacting.
Budget Implications	Monitoring Change	Ongoing Learning	Evaluating the Course	Celebrating Successes
*Color copies of WIDA chart. *Note cards *Copies of Teacher Notes (Appendix D)	On Teacher Notes, teachers write one thing they will try in the next 2 weeks.	Coach to meet with each PLC within the next 2 weeks to answer questions and provide support.	Write on the front of a notecard: 2 takeaways from today.	Write on the back of card: When I came in today I felt.... Now I feel

*Snacks				
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Session #2 – Vocabulary, Sentence Stems

Date / Time	Goal/Objective	Participants	Interrelated Components	Meeting Place
End of September or beginning of October.	Share effective Vocabulary instruction: Define and examine Academic language Sentence Stems: Types Progression of use	All regular Education Title 1, Special Ed. and Specials teachers.	S. Dutro's Sentence Stems - 4 pages	Room with tables for interacting.
Budget Implications	Monitoring Change	Ongoing Learning	Evaluating the Course	Celebrating Successes
*Copies of Sentence Stems *Copies of Teacher notes (Appendix E) *Note cards *Snacks	Ask teachers to finish the sentence on their Teacher Notes: "In my next lesson I will add or incorporate ..."	Coach to each classroom to observe or help incorporate new learning.	Write on a notecard: 1 new thing you learned. 2 days and times that a coach can come by to observe and/or help.	Teachers share one thing that they tried - tell how it went.

Session #3 – Thinking Maps

Date / Time	Goal/Objective	Participants	Interrelated Components	Meeting Place
December or January	To learn how using Thinking Maps can be used with Multiple disciplines to assist ELL and other students to process and communicate their thinking.	All regular Education Title 1, Special Ed. and Specials teachers.	Eight types of Thinking Maps	Room with tables for interacting.
Budget Implications	Monitoring Change	Ongoing Learning	Evaluating the Course	Celebrating Successes
*Copies of the 8 Thinking Maps for each person. *Copy of Teacher Notes (Appendix F) * Note Cards * Snacks	Ask teachers to finish the sentence on their Teacher Notes: “Which Thinking Map will you start with? In what lesson?”	Coach to each classroom to observe or help incorporate new learning.	Write on a notecard: 1 One success you have had so far this year. 1 Question you still have. 2 days and times that a coach can come by to observe and/or help.	Coaches share what they saw and observed as they went into classrooms. Celebrate the success!

Session #4 – Direct Phonics Instruction, Modifications, Frontloading Native Language

Date / Time	Goal/Objective	Participants	Interrelated Components	Meeting Place
February or March	Learn about and apply the importance of direct, explicit phonics instruction, modifying language content and front loading native language.	All regular Education Title 1, Special Ed. and Specials teachers.	Pictures books at various levels and subjects.	Room with tables for interacting.
Budget Implications	Monitoring Change	Ongoing Learning	Evaluating the Course	Celebrating Successes
*Copy of Teacher Notes (Appendix G) * Note Cards * Snacks	What else would be beneficial to your instruction of ELL students? Do you need other materials to be successful?	What are 2 things you will apply from this year long training going forward?	Write on a notecard: 1 positive from this training. 1 Question you still have. Are there materials you need to be successful in applying these methods.	Where are you now on the staircase? Has anyone been a light (help) to you along the way?

Summary

As the LEAPS act mandated training for teachers on its inception in 2014, the research shows there are several best practices educators need to be trained in to teach English language learners (MN Session Law 2397, 2014). This project will gather that information in a concise way and provide that training and coaching to teachers who are in schools with high ELL populations. Although it will take eight months to complete, this will be a valuable tool to assist teachers in reaching ELL students to help them to become literate in reading, writing, listening and speaking in English.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusions and Summary

Overview

When I began teaching in a new school district with a 57% population of English language learners (ELL), I felt inadequate to teach them in my classroom. I began researching and talking to teachers who had been in the district for years and found that they too were struggling with knowing good strategies to teach ELL students. I was asked to work with the Minnesota Department of Education in my school about ELL Leadership and my eyes were opened. I learned from Dennis Duffy that there are many teachers in the state or even the country that feel the same way (personal communication, Nov. 2017). I also learned that the state legislature had passed a law in 2014 known as the LEAPS Act (Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success). The law states that there needs to be ongoing professional development for all teachers who have ELL students in their classrooms (MN Session Law 2397, 2014). I have been on a journey in my research to find the best practices for teaching ELL students and the most effective way to provide professional development for teachers. This research has lead me to create this project, a year long professional development plan to provide background knowledge and skills to teachers so they are able to effectively instruct English learners in the regular education classroom.

My Learning Journey

The journey I have been on for the last year has lead me on many different paths. I was on the ELL leadership team for a year and that allowed me to work with Dennis Duffy and later Michelle Niska from Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). They work specifically with teachers to help implement training that the LEAPS Act mandates. They pointed me toward research by Dutro and others so that I could learn what was most effective. I spent some time with Michelle Niska in the summer of 2017 when we put together and presented a breakout session for Hamline University's Literacy Institute. We had several discussions about best practices in the regular education classroom. I also spent time with our senior ELL teacher Barb Neumann asking her questions. She visited my classroom on occasion and we tried some new things to help me test some of the research. When I began, I knew virtually nothing but between a lot of reading, good guidance from people more versed in teaching English learners than I, and students willing to work with me, I have learned and applied a lot of what is considered best practice for ELL students.

I also had to learn about professional development. What is the best and most effective way for teachers to learn, and more importantly, implement that new learning. Gulamhussein, (2013) stated that teachers need to learn over time and have coaching. She also stated that the teacher's learning needs to be interactive. I had worked with a literacy coach for a short time in another school district, and found it very helpful. In the last two years in my current school, they hired an outside agency to work with us to implement some new math, and now literacy, strategies. It has been good for me to see this related to my project because it has shown me what the research stated, teachers need help and coaching to implement new

strategies. There are some constraints to that due to budgets and time, but that is something every district has to address.

Implications and Limitations

While working on this project, I have had several discussions with our principal about the feasibility of actually implementing it. We have a high population of ELL students and during the 2017-18 school year got 50 new to country students. It was exciting to think that it could be implemented, but I have realized that while it is very much needed, there are a lot of things that take priority. We have new curriculum that has to be integrated first. While disappointing, I also realize that I can still affect the students that come through my door every day.

Implications

This project could have a positive effect on our school and the non native speakers that walk through our doors. It could help them to have a better experience learning English. If other schools choose to use it, many students could be impacted. Teachers will hopefully see that these researched strategies would compliment how they are already teaching and make a big difference for our ELL population. Students should be afforded every opportunity to succeed, I believe that is why the Minnesota Legislature enacted the LEAPS Act (MN Session Law 2397, 2014). This project addresses a mandate for quality, effective professional development for regular education teachers to have training in best practice strategies to teach their ELL students.

Limitations

One of the issues is the competition for priorities in districts and schools. On one hand there is the mandate, but on the other hand, there are a lot of issues schools need to address. In our school, we have to implement new literacy curriculum, to there is not enough time to do both in one year. Time is a big factor, because the research by Darling-Hammond (2017) and Gulamhussein (2013) states that teachers need time and coaching to implement new strategies effectively. So, while this project is needed, there has to be time in a school's calendar to implement it. Staff also has to see the need for this new learning. School or district administration bears the responsibility for communicating the need, and creating the time and environment for the learning to take place.

Communicating Benefits to the Profession

As I began this project, my principal was completely behind it, and communicated the need for it (see Appendix C). I know that it is something needed in our school, but also realize that it will have to wait due to other priorities. Michelle Niska from MDE has also expressed interest in having me share my findings with various conferences around the state. She and her coworkers at MDE are continuing the education of teachers and the importance of strong teaching strategies for all teachers of ELL students. My goal with this project is to be part of that impact in Minnesota.

Summary

Along this journey, I have realized that as teachers make connections with their students both culturally and academically, the doors begin to open to use the strategies research has showed us to facilitate growth in our ELL students. As ELL students begin to grow, using their

newly acquired language, they become more confident and excited about learning. Three years ago when I moved to this new school, I had never taught an ELL student. With some time and effort and research, I now have a clear path to teaching these amazing students. My hope is that others can use what I have researched and created to facilitate effective teaching for these amazing students.

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APPENDIX A

LAUSD ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS				
LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS & FORMS – PLANNING FOR LANGUAGE GOALS				
LINGUISTIC PATTERNS – FUNCTIONS & FORMS – EXAMPLES				
Function (skill)	Beginning Level	Advanced Level		
Asking-Answering Questions	What (where, who) is ____? _____?	How did the ____ when ____? _____?	I wonder why ____ would ____? but ____?	How would a ____ if ____ was ____?
Classify Categorize <i>Tree Map</i>	There are ____ types of ____.	____, ____ and ____ all have ____.	Both ____ and ____ could be classified as ____.	Because ____ have ____, we should categorize them as ____.
Compare & Contrast <i>Double Bubble</i>	A ____ has ____. A ____ is _____. ____ is a ____.	They both have ____ but ____ has ____. A ____ is ____-er than a ____. ____ is ____, but ____ is ____. They are both ____.	A ____ is ____ compared to a ____. ____ and ____ are similar because they both ____. They are different because ____ and ____.	The way they are both alike is that they both are/have ____, but what's different is that they are/have ____. There are several major differences between ____ and _____. The most notable is ____.
Describing Actions <i>Bubble or Tree</i>	What is ____ doing? What is happening to the ____?	Why did they ____? How does the ____? Why didn't the ____?	How did the ____?	What caused the ____ to ____?
Describing Characters <i>Bubble or Tree</i>	At first ____ is/are ____. She/he is (not) ____. Then, she/he is ____.	At the beginning of the story he _____. Then he learns ____ (or changes) when ____. At the end, he ____.	When the story begins, she is ____. As a result of ____ she ____. By the end of the story she ____.	Initially, she is/has ____. As a result of ____, she ____. Eventually, she ____.
Describing Setting (time, place) <i>Bubble</i>	The setting is ____. The time is ____.	The setting of the story is _____. It is ____ and ____. The time is _____. This is important because ____.	The story takes place in ____ around _____. This setting is significant because ____.	The story takes place during the _____. ____ can be described as _____. This setting is significant because ____.
Distinguish Fact & Opinion <i>Tree Map</i>	I like ____. ____ is a ____. It is a ____.	I think ____ because ____. This is a(n) ____ because we can/cannot prove ____.	In my opinion, ____ because _____. The word ____ is evidence that ____ is a(n) ____.	According to ____, _____. This is a ____ because it can/cannot be proven.

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS & FORMS – PLANNING FOR LANGUAGE GOALS

LINGUISTIC PATTERNS – FUNCTIONS & FORMS – EXAMPLES

Function (skill)	Beginning Level	Advanced Level
Distinguish Reality & Fantasy <i>Tree Map</i>	___ is/are ____. ___ could not really ____. ___ can _____. ___ can't _____.	___ is not true because ____. ___ and ___ can ____, so I know this story is ____. Since ____, I know ____. The part about ____ is fantasy because _____. I can conclude ____ because _____. ___ is _____. Therefore/Consequently, it must be _____. As a result of ____, we can conclude that _____.
Draw Conclusions <i>One-sided Multi-flow</i>	___ is/are ____. ___ is not ____. ___ can _____. ___ can't _____.	___ is ____ because _____. ___ is ____-er/-est, because _____. Because the ____, I know _____. I know ____ because _____. She feels ____ because _____. ___ is _____. Therefore/Consequently, it must be _____. As a result of ____, we can conclude that _____.
Express Needs & Likes <i>Tree Map</i>	We are going to the _____. We want (need, like) a _____. ___ wants (needs, likes) a _____.	We will go to the store because we need _____. I like ____ and _____. We need a <u>adj.</u> <u>noun</u> _____. Because I like ____, I've always wanted _____. If we want to ____, we need _____. I have always wanted to ____, (because _____.) In order to ____, we will need to _____.
Identifying Cause & Effect <i>Multi-flow</i>	The ____ are _____. The _____.	Because ____, _____. ___ because _____. ____, so _____. I'm ____, so I would _____. Since ____, _____. ____, which led to ____-ing. Due to the fact that ____, _____.
Main Idea & Details <i>Tree Map</i>	The main idea is <u>(1 or 2 words)</u> _____.	The main idea is <u>(several words)</u> _____. One detail is that _____. The main idea is ____ which means _____. ___ and ___ are details that support this idea. Since the main idea is ____, a supporting idea might be _____.
Sequence <i>Flow</i>	They went _____. They were going to _____.	First, ___ went _____. Then, ___ had to _____. Next, there was _____. For the past ____, ... To begin _____. Once you ____, then you _____. After <u>action</u> ____, the _____. It has been ____ since _____. Prior to ____, ... Just as <u>action/event</u> ____, _____.

LINGUISTIC PATTERNS – FUNCTIONS & FORMS – EXAMPLES

Function (skill)	Beginning Level	←	→	Advanced Level
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Comprehension Skills – Teachers prompts and student patterns/stems

Summarize <i>Flow or Tree</i>	___ is ____. ___ make/makes ____.	___ is ____, and the result is ____. ___, and then ____.	In short, ____, but actually ____. To conclude, ____. In summary, ____.	Therefore, ____, because ____. Consequently, ____.
Predict – Confirm Prediction <i>Multi-flow</i>	It was ____. I thought ____. Yes, she _____. No, they ____.	I predicted that ____. I found out that ____. Now I think ____.	Now I see that my prediction was (not) confirmed because ____.	Earlier I predicted ____. I see that my prediction was (not) confirmed.
Ask Clarifying Questions	What is ____? Where? Where is it? What is ____ for?	How many sentences do I write in my paragraph? What should I add? What is missing? What is the difference between ____ and ____? Where can I find it? Will you show me where ____ is? What does ____ mean?	What would be a good first sentence for my paragraph? What would you suggest that I add? What does it mean when the author writes ____? I understand ____, but why ____? I don't understand how they ____. I know ____, but I wonder what ____ means. I don't understand how/why ____.	
Identify Author's Point of View <i>(Teacher prompts)</i>	The author says "I". Who is telling the story? It says "he." It is third person.	The author uses "I" and "we". That means it's in first person. It's like the author is telling a story that happened to him. So it is first person. The author tells the story like she is watching it happen. This means it is third person.	The author uses "I", "my", "our", and "we" – so I can tell it is written in the first person. The author is part of the action, so it's first person. The author refers to the main character as "she" and is watching what is happening. This means it's written in the third person.	
Making Connections	I felt ____. It was just like ____.	___ reminds me of ____. This selection makes me realize ____, and the other one made me realize ____.	I have a connection here. I know ____. Even though I've never experienced ____, I think it might be similar to ____.	

LAUSD ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS

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LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS & FORMS – PLANNING FOR LANGUAGE GOALS

LINGUISTIC PATTERNS – FUNCTIONS & FORMS – EXAMPLES

Function (skill)	Beginning Level	Advanced Level
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Comprehension Skills – Teachers prompts and student patterns/stems

Making Inferences	The ____ was ____. My ____ was ____. I think ____.	I get ____ when I ____. In the story ____, but ____. The author _____. I can infer (make an inference)...	As the ____, I became _____. Therefore I think ____. Since ____, I can infer that ____. That shows ____.
Monitor & Clarify	I see ____. I think ____ means ____.	I know that ____ means ____, so I'll keep looking for clues to help me figure out what ____ means. I know that ____ means _____. I think the writer means ____.	I wonder what the writer means by the line: ____. If I think about what I've just read and look at the illustration, I think I can figure it out.
Visualize	I see ____. I can see ____.	The image I have in my mind is _____. When I read this page, I imagine seeing ____.	As I read, I can visualize ____, and I can imagine the sound of ____.

Inquiry & Investigation	Who is/are ____? What is/are ____? Where is/are ____? Will the ____ (sink/float)?	I wonder what will happen if ____. I want to find out why ____.	I'd like to know what would/will happen if ____.
<i>Ask Questions</i>			
<i>Formulate ideas & conjectures</i>	I think ____ is going to _____. It is ____.	My idea is that ____ is going to _____. I think ____ because ____.	My idea-conjecture-theory about this question or problem is that ____ is going to ____ because ____.
<i>Revise conjectures based on new information</i>	I thought ____. Now I think ____.	When I first started, I thought ____ was going to _____. Now I think ____.	At first I expected ____ to _____. Then I discovered ____, so my new idea-conjecture-theory is ____.
<i>Identify new needs, make new plans</i>	I learned ____. Now I think ____.	I learned that ____, so now I think _____. I still need to know-find out ____.	I'm revising my previous conjecture because I've learned _____. Based on what I found out, I still need to know ____.

Source: A FOCUSED APPROACH to Frontloading English Language Instruction (Susana Dutro) – Section 4

4

Source: A FOCUSED APPROACH to Frontloading English Language Instruction (Susana Dutro) – Section 4

4

APPENDIX B

December 15, 2017

Dear Parents or Guardians,

I am your child's Literacy teacher and a graduate student working on my master's degree in Educational Literacy at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. As part of my graduate work, I am researching and planning training for teachers about how to best teach children whose native language is not English in the regular education classroom. I will be creating lessons to help other teachers learn how to best teach children who speak English as a second language.

I use the teaching methods in my classroom. I am asking your permission to videotape and/or photograph your student working with me and allow me to use them in my work with other teachers at our school and other districts. No personal information about your children will be included in my work with other teachers. Students who do not want their picture taken or to be in the video will not be included.

If you do not want your student in the pictures or video, they will not be included. Mrs. Cebulla, our principal, has given her permission for us to do this so that we can become better at helping our English language learners.

This research is public scholarship; the abstract and final product (without the photos or videos) will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic library and it may be published or used in other ways, such as included in an article in a professional journal or a session at a professional conference. My research could be useful to help regular classroom teachers to assist language learners throughout the school day, not just in the ELL classroom.

If you agree to participate, keep this page. Please fill out the attached form to let me know if you will let your student be photographed or not. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Beth Hartokolis

bhartokolis@lpge.k12.mn.us

320-732-4699

Please fill out both copies of this permission and keep the TOP one for yourself
And RETURN the BOTTOM on to Mrs. Hartokolis

Permission to Participate

Participant Copy (Keep this page for your records.)

I have received and read the letter describing your research study to help teachers learn how to better teach English language learners. I understand that my student would be photographed and video-taped. I understand that these pictures and videos may be shown to other teachers to help them learn how to better teach English learners.

I _____ parent / guardian of _____
(your first and last name) (student first and last name)

Give / do not give permission to Mrs. Beth Hartokolis to use pictures and/or videos of my child
(circle)
in her presentation about teaching English language learners.

(signed) (date)

*

Permission to Participate

Mrs. Hartokolis' Copy

I have received and read the letter describing your research study to help teachers learn how to better teach English language learners. I understand that my student would be photographed and video-taped. I understand that these pictures and videos may be shown to other teachers to help them learn how to better teach English learners.

I _____ parent / guardian of _____
(your first and last name) (student first and last name)

Give / do not give permission to Mrs. Beth Hartokolis to use pictures and/or videos of my child
(circle)
in her presentation about teaching English language learners.

(signed)

(date)

Diciembre 15, 2017

Estimados padres o tutores,

Soy la maestra de alfabetización de su hijo y estudiante graduada que trabaja en su maestría en alfabetización educativa en Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. Como parte de mi trabajo de posgrado, estoy investigando y planificando la capacitación para maestros sobre cómo enseñar mejor a los niños cuyo idioma materno no es el inglés en el aula de educación regular. Crearé lecciones para ayudar a otros maestros a aprender cómo enseñar mejor a los niños que hablan inglés como segundo idioma.

Uso los métodos de enseñanza en mi clase. Le pido permiso para grabar en video y/o fotografiar a su estudiante que trabaja conmigo y permitirme usarlo en mi trabajo con otros maestros en nuestra escuela y otros distritos. No se incluirá información personal sobre sus hijos en mi trabajo con otros profesores. No se incluirán a los estudiantes que no desean que se tomen sus fotografías o participar en el video.

Si no quiere que su estudiantes participe en las fotografías o el video, no se incluirán. La Sra. Cebulla, nuestra directora, ha dado permiso para que hagamos esto para que podamos mejorar al ayudar a nuestros estudiantes del idioma inglés.

Esta investigación es una beca pública; el producto final y el resumen (sin las fotos o videos) serán catalogados en la biblioteca digital Hamline's Bush Library, una biblioteca electrónica que se puede buscar y puede publicarse o usarse de otras maneras, como ser incluída en un artículo de un periódico profesional o una sesión en una conferencia profesional. Mi investigación podría ser útil para ayudar a los maestros de aula regulares a ayudar a los estudiantes de idiomas durante el día escolar, no solo en el aula de ELL.

Si acepta participar, guarde esta página. Complete el formulario adjunto para informarme si permitirá que su hijo sea fotografiado o no. Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor póngase en contacto conmigo.

Sinceramente,

Beth Hartokolis

bhartokolis@lpge.k12.mn.us

320-732-4699

Complete ambas copias de este permiso y conserve la parte de ARRIBA para usted
Y REGRESE la parte de ABAJO a Mrs. Hartokolis

Permiso de Participar

Copia del Participante (Guarde esta página para su archivo.)

He recibido y leído la carta que describe su estudio de investigación para ayudar a los maestros a aprender cómo enseñar mejor a los estudiantes del idioma inglés. Entiendo que mi estudiante será fotografiado y grabado en video. Entiendo que estas imágenes y videos pueden mostrarse a otros maestros para ayudarlos a aprender cómo enseñar mejor a los estudiantes de inglés.

Yo _____ padre/tutor de _____
(su nombre y apellido) (nombre y apellido del estudiante)

doy/no doy permiso a Mrs. Beth Hartokolis de usar imágenes y/o videos de mi hijo
(circule)

en su presentación sobre la enseñanza de aprendices de inglés.

(firma) (fecha)

*

Permiso de Participar

Copia de Mrs. Hartokolis

He recibido y leído la carta que describe su estudio de investigación para ayudar a los maestros a aprender cómo enseñar mejor a los estudiantes del idioma inglés. Entiendo que mi estudiante será fotografiado y grabado en video. Entiendo que estas imágenes y videos pueden mostrarse a otros maestros para ayudarlos a aprender cómo enseñar mejor a los estudiantes de inglés.

Yo _____ padre/tutor de _____
(su nombre y apellido) (nombre y apellido del estudiante)

doy/no doy permiso a Mrs. Beth Hartokolis de usar imágenes y/o videos de mi hijo
(circule)

en su presentación sobre la enseñanza de aprendices de inglés.

(firma)

(fecha)
APPENDIX C

LONG PRAIRIE-GREY EAGLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

205 Second Street South
Long Prairie, MN 56347
Website: www.lpge.org



Telephone: 320-732-2194
Fax: 320-732-2844
Facebook: LPGESchool

December 7, 2017

Master's Program
Hamline University
St. Paul, MN

To Whom It May Concern,

I hereby grant my permission for your Master's Student, Beth Hartokolis, to complete her project entitled, *Teaching English Language Learners in the Regular Education Classroom: A Professional Development Plan*, at Long Prairie-Grey Eagle Elementary School.

I look forward to reading her research and seeing her plan develop. This is a need in our district and will be helpful to our educational staff.

Sincerely,

Tammy Cebulla
LPGE Elementary Principal

Tammy Cebulla
K-6 Principal
Ext 3001

Jen Strom
Community Ed/
Asst. Principal/
Ext 2015

Karen Holt
Elem Secretary
Ext 3001

Mary Holman
Com Ed-Attendance
Secretary
Ext 2015

APPENDIX D

Teaching ELL Students in the Regular Ed. Classroom
Session 1
Background, Development and Discussion

Notes:

LEAPS Act:

WIDA:

Language Development:

Why Discussion:

In the next 2 weeks I will try

APPENDIX E

Teaching ELL Students in the Regular Ed. Classroom
Session 2
Vocabulary and Sentence Stems

Notes:

Two Takeaways:

1.

2.

In my next lesson I will add or incorporate

APPENDIX F
Teaching ELL Students in the Regular Ed. Classroom
Session 3
Thinking Maps®

Notes: Eight Kinds of Thinking Maps

Circle Map -

Bubble Map -

Double Bubble Map -

Tree Map -

Brace Map -

Flow Map -

Multi Flow Map -

Bridge Map -

Which Thinking Map will you start using first - in what lesson?

APPENDIX G

Teaching ELL Students in the Regular Ed. Classroom

Session 4

Direct Phonics Instruction, Modify Content, Front Load

Native Language

Notes:

Direct Phonics Instruction:

Modify Content:

Front Loading Native Language:

What of the three things we discussed today can you apply to your teaching in the next week? How?