ACADEMIC ENGLISH AND WIDA LEVEL ONE THROUGH THREE ELS IN THE MAINSTREAM:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES FOR INCREASED EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR ELS AT THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVELS

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in ESL

Hamline University

St. Paul, Minnesota

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Content Expert: Ellen Perrault
This project was developed to present information found surrounding the guiding question, *how can we ensure that WIDA level one through three English Learners (ELs) are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?* The project consists of five one-hour long sequential professional development (PD) sessions for mainstream teachers, aimed to increase equitable learning opportunities for English learners (EL). The school district in which this project takes place is a small, rural upper Midwest district. It has five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The current EL population of the entire district is about 13%; however, this number has increased in recent years and is projected to continue increasing in coming years. The goal is to provide participants with an interactive, adaptive PD series that introduces best EL practices to participants, which provide a more concrete understanding of who our EL students are and what they need in order to address inequities and ensure success of our current and future EL population.

The first session will include a short presentation describing the district’s overall EL population, as well as at individual schools; introducing the WIDA English proficiency levels and what they mean or look like for students; and expanding on the role of the EL teacher in the classroom and as a resource. It will end with teachers taking a survey aimed to address current teacher attitudes and perceptions regarding EL students. The second session will elaborate on the difference between social and academic English, as well as provide learning activities for participants that will make the nuances of academic English more concrete. The third session addresses common misconceptions about EL students in the mainstream and offers three easy to prepare scaffolds teachers can use before, during, or after instruction. During this session, teachers will be given work time to collaborate with other mainstream teachers and ask questions
as they plan how to implement one of the scaffolds in an upcoming lesson. The fourth session will begin with a feedback period where teachers can share their triumphs and concerns regarding their use of the scaffolds taught in the previous session. Following this, five new scaffolds that mainstream teachers can implement will be shared. Similar to session three, session four will also give participants time to collaborate and find ways to integrate these scaffolds into upcoming lessons with the support of the facilitator and other colleagues. The fifth session will begin with another feedback session where participants can share their challenges and triumphs regarding the newly learned and implemented scaffolds. After, there will be a short presentation discussing common problems with traditional assessments and ELs, the importance of providing authentic assessments for ELs, and examples of alternative, authentic assessments. Following this, participants will take a post survey to measure their growth and understanding of their ELs based on the PD series. Participants will have an opportunity to share what they want to see in future PD offerings surrounding ELs and academic language development in the mainstream. After the five sessions described here have been completed, further PD sessions will be designed and offered based on mainstream teacher input and need.

This project’s development was most heavily influenced by the work of Mezirow (2000) and Knowles (1986). I used Knowles’ (1986) Learning Process as a framework to create an effective PD series. The key components of Knowles’ Learning Process maintain that andragogical learning must be self-directed and problem centered, and exploit all relevant resources, as well as connect to participants’ internal desire to learn and grow (1986). I based the development of my entire PD project around these core components. My goal was to provide a space where we are learning together, reflecting, asking questions, and engaging in discussion to deepen understanding and improve practice. Additionally, Mezirow’s discussion of
Transformation Theory also impacted the structure of my PD series (2000). Transformation Theory maintains that critical reflection of a person’s own beliefs and assumptions and evaluation of their validity are required for transformative learning to take place (Mezirow, 2000).

With this in mind, I worked hard to design a PD using information and learning activities that would not only teach new strategies to support ELs’ academic language development in the mainstream classroom, but also help transform teachers’ current mindsets related to ELs, equity, and second language acquisition (SLA). I found this helpful in developing a PD series that will help participants better understand the relevance of the information being presented to their work, as well as its benefits. This was done intentionally with the hope that it would help mainstream teachers better understand the why behind this project and the importance of its message.

The goal of this PD series is to provide a starting point for mainstream teachers who are unaccustomed to working with EL students. This is meant to be an introduction to providing more equitable learning opportunities for the district’s EL population as it continues to increase through the use of scaffolds and differentiation. My sincere hope is that participants will come out of this PD series feeling more confident in their ability to support ELs in their classroom and inspired to learn more about the relationship between ELs, educational equity, and personalized learning. Further, it is my intention that participants will not only understand how to better support ELs in their mainstream classes, but the importance of doing so consistently and with fidelity. Last, I anticipate that this PD series will help participants better understand how ESL teachers can serve as a useful resource for mainstream teachers. This project’s initial impact will hopefully be seen in classrooms of teachers who have completed this PD series. Additionally, I
have intentionally made this project broad in hopes that other districts with rapidly growing EL populations can use and adapt this PD series to support their staff’s development and journey.
References for Slide Deck

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[Untitled illustration of a target]. Retrieved March 22, 2019 from https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEB_enUS812US812&tbm=isch&q=target+clipart&chips=q:target+clipart,g_1:bullseye:oDSoDhgo140%3D&usg=AI4_-kTLmIJW-jbGu4HUqCd_DNTiFc1Hwg&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi60vm9i-DhgO140%3D&usg=AI4_kTLmIJW-jbGu4HUqCd_DNTiFc1Hwg&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi60vm9i-DhgO140%3D&usg=AI4_kTLmIJW-jbGu4HUqCd_DNTiFc1Hwg&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi60vm9i-DhgO140%3D&usg=AI4_kTLmIJW-jbGu4HUqCd_DNTiFc1Hwg&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi60vm9i-DhgO140%3D

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Skwerl [video file]. Retrieved March 18, 2019 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt4Dfa4fOEY.

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Original content.

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[Generalize-Ecosystem Word Splash image]. Retrieved April 19, 2019 from https://www.google.com/search?biw=1280&bih=610&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=BgG6XMBEE8mItQW5u4vIAg&q=word+splash+decomposer&oq=word+splash+decomposer&gs_l=img.3...15604.18160..18279...0...0.145.2694.0j22......1....1..gws-wiz-img.......0i67j0j0i24.IAnjjmoYJUg#imgrc=ydpNGzjiHPqh2M..]

[Untitled image of math word splash]. Retrieved March 22, 2019 from https://www.google.com/search?biw=1280&bih=610&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=YQC6XLONAXRsJfwBw&q=math+word+splash+example&oq=math+word+splash+example&gs_l=img.3...62184.62540..62689...0...0.143.648.0j5......1....1..gws-wiz-img.3-1FQcXOFak#imgrc=IGW80XAgYoYtMH..]


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Teacher-led Think Aloud [video file]. Retrieved April 19, 2019 from https://www.mydigitalchalkboard.org/portal/default/Content/Viewer/Content?action=2&scId=507082&scId=15533.

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References for Project Summary and Supplemental Materials


Pre Survey

Rate yourself!
1- I don't know anything about this.
2- I have heard of this before, but don't know much about it.
3- I have a basic understanding of the general idea of this topic.
4- I am comfortable with this topic. I know the basics, but not extensive details.
5- I am well versed in this topic. I could explain it in detail to a colleague.
6- I am very well versed in this topic. So much so, I could teach it to another person.

_____ How people acquire a second language
_____ Academic English
_____ How Academic English impacts learning for EL students
_____ How culture impacts learning
_____ How to assess EL students’ academic abilities in a mainstream classroom setting
_____ How to modify or scaffold classroom instruction for EL students at different levels of proficiency
_____ Skills and strategies for teaching academic content to ELs
_____ Forms of alternative assessment
_____ How an EL teacher can collaborate and support you and your EL students

Short Answer
What are you already doing to modify or scaffold instruction for ELs in your classroom?

What other things do you currently do to build community or ensure EL student participation and success in your classroom?

What do you think the greatest barrier is for EL students in your class or in the school as a whole?

Adapted from: Advocating for English Learners: A Guide for Educators by Diane Staehr Fenner (2014, p. 37)
Common Academic Language Features

- **Purpose**: What is the purpose of this text?
- **Participants**: Who/what is doing the actions, speaking, feeling or describing things?
- **Processes**: Are the processes actions, speech/thoughts, or describing/relating things?
- **Circumstances**: Is there additional information about *when, where, why, how* the event is happening or *how often* the event happened?
- **Referents**: Are there words like *they, it, etc.*, that refer back something that was already mentioned?
- **Transition words**—*How does the text flow together cohesively?*
  - **Sequence**: first, next, then, finally, etc.
  - **Clarifying**: for example, in other words, etc.
  - **Cause/Effect**: therefore, as a result, consequently, however, because, so, etc.
  - **Compare/Contrast**: like, but, unlike, similar, however, conversely, while, etc.
  - **Time words**: during, meanwhile, before that, later on, etc.
  - **Additional Information**: Additionally, further, moreover, as well as, etc.

Are there more simple or complex sentences?

- **Simple sentence**—Contains only one independent clause
  - EX: I like tacos.
- **Complex sentence**—Contains at least one independent and dependent clause
  - EX: Although I like tacos, I don’t like burritos.

Adapted from:
Myths of Second Language Acquisition
Answer each of the following statements with true or false.

1. Adults learn second languages more quickly and easily than young children.  
   T  F

2. A lot of ELs have learning disabilities, not language problems. They speak English well but they are still struggling academically.  
   T  F

3. Older generations of immigrants learned without all the special language programs that EL children receive now and they did just fine.  
   T  F

4. ELs will acquire academic English faster if their parents speak English at home.  
   T  F

5. The more time students spend soaking up English in the mainstream classroom, the more they quickly they will learn the language.  
   T  F

6. Once students can speak English, they are ready to undertake the academic tasks in the mainstream classroom.  
   T  F

7. Cognitive and academic development in native language has an important and positive effect on acquiring a second language.  
   T  F

8. The culture of students doesn’t affect how long it takes them to acquire English. All students learn language the same way.  
   T  F

Adapted from: Judie Haynes, everythingESL.net, 2002
Hand out to participants after they have completed the above survey to see how they did.

Responses to Myths of Second Language Acquisition

1. Adults learn second languages more easily than young children. True.

   This question is more complex than it seems. In controlled research where children have been compared to adults and teenagers in second language learning, it was found that the adults and teenagers learned a second language more readily. Yes, children do outperform adults in the area of pronunciation. Children appear to acquire social language more easily. There is an old myth around that says that children are superior to adults in language learning because their brains are more flexible. This hypothesis has been much disputed. The differences in ability to learn languages may be social rather than biological. The child may have more occasion to interact socially with others. Their requirements for communication are much lower. They have much less to learn in order to interact in the school setting with their peers. Teenagers and adults have acquired language learning strategies.

2. A lot of ELs have learning disabilities, not language problems. They speak English well, but they are still struggling academically. False.

   We often see children on the playground who appear to speak English with no problem. Yet when they are in a classroom situation, they just don't seem to grasp the concepts. Many people fail to realize that there are different levels of language proficiency. The language needed for face-to-face communication takes less time to master than the language needed to perform in cognitively demanding situations such as classes and lectures. It takes a child about 2 years to develop the ability to communicate in a second language on the playground, but it takes 5-7 years to develop age-appropriate academic language. Many immigrant children have been misdiagnosed in the past as "learning disabled," when in fact the problem was that people misunderstood their fluency on the playground, thinking that it meant they should be able to perform in class as well. Actually, they still needed time and assistance to develop their academic English skills (Cummins, 1994).

3. Older generations of immigrants learned without all the special language programs that EL children receive now, and they did just fine. False.

   Like present-day immigrants, many earlier immigrants had trouble in school. In 1911, the U.S. Immigration Service found that 77% of Italian, 60% of Russian, and 51% of German immigrant children were one or more grade levels behind in school compared to 28% of American born children. Also, the level of education needed to get a job has changed. When immigrants came to this country in the earlier part of this century, they were able to get industrial jobs with relatively little education and not much English. Currently, the job market holds little promise for those without a college education. Low skilled jobs are being done by machines and computers, or moved to other countries, and jobs in the service industry and high-tech communications are expanding. A final point to keep in mind is that earlier immigrants came mainly from Europe. They came from cultures that were similar in many ways to mainstream U.S. culture. It was easier for them to assimilate into American society because, once they abandoned their home language, they looked like any other "American." Today, many immigrants come from Asia, Latin America, and other non-European countries. They have clear physical attributes that mark them as different from white Americans. Long after they have learned English and acquired jobs in this country, they are still subject to discrimination.

4. ELs will acquire academic English faster if their parents speak English at home. False.

   Research shows that it is much better for parents to speak in native language to their children. This language will be richer and more complex. It doesn't matter in what language basic concepts are developed. Children will eventually translate that learning to English. So, if a child is being read to in native language, parents will spend more time discussing the story, and asking questions. I encourage parents to read in both languages if they can. Never instruct a parent to speak only English at home. If you were in Japan, would you be able to speak only Japanese to your own children after a few months?

5. The more time students spend soaking up English in the mainstream classroom, the more quickly they will learn the language. False.

   Children need comprehensible input. Imagine that you are sitting in a room of Japanese speakers. You have no idea what they are talking about. You could sit there for a long time and learn very little unless someone helped make that input comprehensible. Language is not "soaked up."
6. Once students can speak English, they are ready to undertake the academic tasks of the mainstream classroom. False.

Children can speak and socialize way before they can use language for academic purposes. BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) are acquired first. This is social language such as the language needed to interact on the playground and in the classroom. It usually takes students from 1-3 years to completely develop this social language. Then children will develop CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) skills. This is the language needed to undertake academic tasks in the mainstream classroom. It includes content-specific vocabulary. It usually takes students from 3 to 7 years or longer to develop CALP.

7. Cognitive and academic development in native language has an important and positive effect on second language acquisition. True.

In the Collier/Thomas examination of large data sets across many different research sites, they found that the most significant student background variable is the amount of formal schooling students have received in their first language. Across all program treatments, we have found that non-native speakers being schooled in a second language for part or all of the school day typically do reasonably well in the early years of schooling (kindergarten through second or third grade). But from fourth grade on through middle school and high school, when the academic and cognitive demands of the curriculum increase rapidly with each succeeding year, students with little or no academic and cognitive development in their first language do less and less well as they move into the upper grades. This is why ELs at all proficiency levels should be exposed to content material. Linguistic scaffolds can and should be used to support these ELs to access mainstream content curriculum and cognitively challenging information and tasks. Consistently simplifying content and reducing the rigor of cognitive tasks ultimately hinders ELs more.

8. The culture of students doesn’t affect how long it takes them to acquire English. All students learn language the same way. False.

Culture can affect how long it takes children learn English. Do your students come from a modern industrialized country or a rural agricultural society? Do your students come from language backgrounds using a different writing system? These factors will affect how long it takes them to learn English. Previous schooling and school expectations will also affect language learning. Also, the more culture shock experienced by the child, the longer it will take him/her to learn a new language.

Adapted from: Judie Haynes, everythingESL.net, 2002
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>When? Who?</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Splash</strong></td>
<td>Before instruction</td>
<td>Learn target vocabulary in context and make connections between words and concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This strategy can be used by individual students, but works best in pairs or small groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive Word Wall</strong></td>
<td>Before, during, and after instruction</td>
<td>Learn target vocabulary in context and make connections between words and concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students should actively participate in the establishment and upkeep of an interactive word wall.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visuals</strong></td>
<td>Anytime</td>
<td>Provide background knowledge, assist in understanding key receptive vocabulary, and help students make connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers should provide visuals to build background knowledge for students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Think Aloud</strong></td>
<td>During instruction</td>
<td>Allows students to see language used by an ‘expert’. Makes target language required to complete a learning task visual and easier to understand, so they can begin to acquire academic language based on our modelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a teacher centered strategy.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exemplars</strong></td>
<td>During instruction and After instruction (for reference)</td>
<td>Allows students to see target academic language and how it functions in context, focuses on organizational strategies associated with a text genre, pushes them to think critically about writing, and reinforces the academic skill of evaluating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students can analyze exemplars independently or in pairs/small groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Stems</strong></td>
<td>After instruction (for speaking or writing)</td>
<td>Help students organize their thoughts or writing using correct syntax and target language for the learning task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These will be used by students independently.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative Learning</strong></td>
<td>Anytime</td>
<td>Enables lower proficiency students hear academic language modelled by more proficient students. Also, gives ELs a meaningful and low stakes way to work through content by negotiating and constructing meaning through discussion, which creates a deeper understanding of content and academic discussion skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This can be done in pairs, small groups, or with the entire class. It can also involve the teacher in some capacity or not at all.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graphic Organizers</strong></td>
<td>After instruction (for writing or speaking)</td>
<td>Allow students to organize their thoughts in a more supported/structured way. It also makes connections between relationships and abstract concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This should be used by students independently.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Processing Grids</strong></td>
<td>After instruction (for reading or listening)</td>
<td>Help students process key information necessary for delving further into content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This can be done independently, in pairs/small groups, or with the whole class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post Survey

Rate yourself!
1-I don’t know anything about this.
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_____ Skills and strategies for teaching academic content to ELs
_____ Forms of alternative assessment
_____ How an EL teacher can collaborate and support you and your EL students

Short Answer
What were your main takeaways from this professional development series?

Overall, do you feel that you are better equipped to modify or scaffold lessons for EL students in your classroom now than you were before this professional development series? Why or why not?

What could be improved, added, or omitted to make this professional development more useful or applicable for you?

Going forward, what would you like to know more about related to supporting EL students in your classroom?

Adapted from: Advocating for English Learners: A Guide for Educators by Diane Staehr Fenner (2014, p. 37)
Academic English and ELs in the Mainstream

Session 1
Today’s Objectives

1. Learn about the ELs in our district, as well as our specific school.
2. Explore the different WIDA English proficiency levels, what they mean, and what they look like for EL students.
3. Understand the EL teacher’s role and the many ways in which they can help support you and the ELs in your classroom.
4. Complete a Pre-PD series survey.
“Skwerl”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt4Dfa4fOcY
Turn and Talk!

- What was happening in this video? How could you tell?
- Were you able to understand anything that was being said?
- What did you notice about how or what you heard and/or understood?
- How did trying to understand this video make you feel?

- This is a video made to show how English sounds to non-native speakers.
- This video shows how a newcomer student may feel trying to understand everyday, social English when they first arrive to the US. This also sheds light into how an EL student who has been in our school system for years may feel in an academic setting.
- You need not only individual words, but context in which they make sense, as well as sentence structures that make sense.
ELs in Our District

- Elementary: 213
- Secondary: 119
- Hired 3 new full time teachers just this year to meet demand of growing EL student population
- There are over 30 languages represented in the district
- Newcomer students: 23
- SLIFE students: 4
- Long-Term ELs (LTCL): Data not available

NUMBERS WILL BE UPDATED TO REFLECT 2019-2020 NUMBERS BEFORE PRESENTATION IS GIVEN

- Newcomer: New to country in the last year
- LTEL: Students who have been receiving EL services for at least 6 years, are struggling academically, and are not hitting annual language growth targets
- SLIFE: Students with limited or interrupted formal education
ELs at Our Elementary School

- Total EL students for the 2018-19 school year: 58
  - K: 12
  - Grade 1: 16
  - Grade 2: 5
  - Grade 3: 14
  - Grade 4: 5
  - Grade 5: 6
- Up from 24 for the 2016-17 school year
- 1 Newcomer student

JUST FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRESENTATION

- Newcomer--an EL student who has been in the US for less than a year
- Focus on diversity and growing number of students.
ELs at Our Middle School

- Total EL students for the 2018-19 school year: 16
  - Grade 6: 4
  - Grade 7: 8
  - Grade 8: 4
- Up from 10 for the 2016-17 school year
- Languages Represented: Spanish, Russian, Khmer, Vietnamese, Hmong, Portuguese, Greek, Turkish, Tagalog, Fula, Hausa
- 4 newcomer students
- Gives an idea of what a student at a given proficiency level might look like in the classroom
- Don’t put student in a box--some tasks may be a bit higher others a bit lower; it’s more of a guide
- Students typically progress quickly through levels 1 and 2.
WIDA Can-Do Descriptors

Every teacher here has received a copy of the Can-Do descriptor rubric highlighting what each of their EL students current level across disciplines with appropriate supports.

Can-Do levels are meant to be used as a guide for students. EL students may move fluidly through these levels depending on a given task, so it is important not to view them as a progression tool.
This is what a 3rd grade student CAN DO given their current level of proficiency with adequate support in the domain of writing. The furthest left is a level one student, while the furthest right is a level five student. If we have an idea of what students can do then it is easier to plan differentiated instruction and supports, as well as understand what fulfillment of the content objective might look like at each given proficiency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WRITING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level One</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Label objects, pictures, or diagrams from word/phrase banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate ideas by drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy words, phrases, and short sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer oral questions with single words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level Two</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make lists from labels or with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete/produce sentences from word/phrase banks or walls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill in graphic organizers, charts, and tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make comparisons using real-life or visually-supported materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level Three</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce simple expository or narrative text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>String related sentences together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare/contrast content-based information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe events, people, processes, procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level Four</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take notes using graphic organizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize content-based information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author multiple forms of writing (e.g., expository, narrative, persuasive) from models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain strategies or use of information in solving problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level Five</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce extended responses of original text approaching grade level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply content-based information to new contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect or integrate personal experiences with literature/content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create grade-level stories or reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USE ONLY FOR ELEMENTARY PRESENTATION

- Demonstrates content objective (for a 3rd grade class) with adequate linguistic supports/scaffolds for each level of proficiency.
- The content objective remains the same for each proficiency level.
- The amount of scaffolds/supports are gradually taken away at each level. Additionally, the end product will look different at each level. For example: a level one student may do words or phrases, a level two might produce short, simple sentences, a level three may produce some simple and complex sentences, while a level four and five may be capable of writing a paragraph of increasing linguistic complexity.
- These supports are built in intentionally as a result of the students’ current proficiency level and is informed by the CAN-DO descriptors.
This is a what a 7th grade student CAN DO given their current level of proficiency with adequate support in the domain of writing. The furthest left is a level one student, while the furthest right is a level five student.

If we have an idea of what students can do then it is easier to plan differentiated instruction and supports, as well as understand what fulfillment of the content objective might look like at each given proficiency.
How do I use the WIDA Can-Dos?

COGNITIVE FUNCTION: Students at all proficiency levels will be able to analyze the impact of Mai and Ger on Choua’s life in *Hey! Hmong Girl.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN</th>
<th>Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>Level 5 Bridging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>SWBAT analyze the impact of Mai and Ger on Choua’s life using a graphic organizer, picture word bank, and sentence starters in small groups.</td>
<td>SWBAT analyze the impact of Mai and Ger on Choua’s life using a graphic organizer, (regular) word bank, and sentence stems in pairs.</td>
<td>SWBAT analyze the impact of Mai and Ger on Choua’s life using a graphic organizer, word bank, and sentence stems.</td>
<td>SWBAT analyze the impact of Mai and Ger on Choua’s life using a graphic organizer and peer editor.</td>
<td>SWBAT analyze the impact of Mai and Ger on Choua’s life using a graphic organizer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USE ONLY FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PRESENTATION

- Demonstrates content objective (for a 7th grade class) with adequate linguistic supports/scaffolds for each level of proficiency.
- The content objective remains the same for each proficiency level.
- The amount of scaffolds/supports are gradually taken away at each level. Additionally, the end product will look different at each level. For example: a level one student may do words or phrases, a level two might produce short, simple sentences, a level three may produce some simple and complex sentences, while a level four and five may be capable of writing a paragraph of increasing linguistic complexity.
- These supports are built in intentionally as a result of the students’ current proficiency level and is informed by the CAN-DO descriptors.
The EL Teacher's Role

● Our role is to develop students' academic English by making content accessible to students regardless of their current English language proficiency.
● Sheltered EL time/classes
  ○ Target language skills to support students across content areas
  ○ Focus on language function over form
● Co-teaching
  ○ Provide a language and culture focused perspective
  ○ Work with mainstream teacher to provide adequate scaffolding for students at each proficiency level
  ○ Identify language needed to understand or produce content objectives
  ○ Adapt or offer alternative assessments depending on student proficiency level

● Share what a typical day in a pull-out/sheltered class looks like for us.
● Share different ways to co-teach.
● Give examples of how we can support.
Questions so far?

If you have questions, feel free to ask! If you aren't comfortable asking in front of the group, drop your question in the question box before you go or feel free to email/reach out to me personally.
Exit Slip: Pre-Survey

Please take the remaining time to complete the Pre-PD series.

You may complete it by hand on paper or using google forms (Yay differentiation!)

Each person will be given a randomly generated ID number, so your identity will remain anonymous, but I can still evaluate the change between participants perceptions and understandings before and after this PD series.
Academic English and ELs in the Mainstream

Session 2
Today’s Objectives

1. Explore the difference between social and academic English.
2. Become more familiar with the nuances of language present in academic texts and discourses.
Turn and Talk!

Discuss what you did over the weekend with a partner for 2 minutes.
Turn and Talk!

Get into groups of 4. Each person should select one of the following perspectives to describe the picture from.

- A scientist
- A historian
- An artist
- A mathematician

Take 5 minutes to write how your perspective may talk about this picture.

Olive Trees 1889 by Vincent Van Gogh
This exercise was to start to show the difference between everyday, social English and academic English. Language between social and academic English greatly varies, but the language needed for different content areas is also extremely varied.
Social English

- Language of the playground
- Typically mastered in 1-3 years

Academic English

- The complex language used in educational settings and many professional careers.

- Apx. 5-7 years to master if a student reads and writes in their first language.

- Apx. 7-10 years to master if a student does not read or write in their first language.
Academic English: Word Level

- **Bricks** - content specific vocabulary
  - Plot line
  - Osmosis
  - Equation
  - Abolitionist

- **Mortar** - academic vocabulary that we need across content areas
  - Demonstrate
  - Analyze
Academic English: Sentence Level

- **Sentence Structure**
  - Complex sentences
  - Question form and answers

- **Grammar**
  - Parts of speech
  - Syntax
  - Subject/noun agreement
Academic English: Discourse Level

- Organization or structure of text genres and discussions
  - Research paper
  - Procedural text
  - Persuasive essay/speech
  - A narrative
  - A debate
Seeing Academic Language

http://www.colorincolorado.org/webcast/academic-language-and-english-language-learners

- Play first five minutes.
- Highlight--the student got all A’s in high school, but was still very unprepared for a higher education setting.
- This is why we need to have high standards for our ELs and also find ways to support their academic language development throughout the school day. Their success in school and beyond is depending on it.
Hand out the Academic language/feature sheet to participants and explain the following:

- These are some academic language features as defined by systemic functional linguistics
- Systemic functional linguistics focuses on function (how we use it to create meaning) of language over form (more traditional grammar)
- Quickly go through each feature.
- The goal is not to have an in depth text analysis, but to give a general overview of what an EL teacher will look at and for when examining a text in an effort to make some features of academic language more concrete for participants.
Text Analysis Example

You find venom in some creatures of the deep. Box jellyfish have 60 or so arms. The arms look like winding strings. Each arm can be as long as 4.6 meters. Stingers cover the arm from top to bottom.

Imagine: The swinging arms brush against a fish. Then the stingers shoot their poison. That has to hurt!

The blue-ringed octopus is another sea creature that uses venom. The octopus spits venom into the water. If a crab swims into the venom, that’s it. It is lunch!

Source: Excerpt from Poison Power (2008)

- This is a small excerpt from a third grade text.
- Read the text to participants.
- Elicit initial observations related to text complexity, vocabulary, and academic language from the large group.
Text Analysis Example

You find venom in some creatures of the deep. Box jellyfish have 60 or so arms. The arms look like winding strings. Each arm can be as long as 4.6 meters. Stingers cover the arm from top to bottom.

Imagine: The swinging arms brush against a fish. Then the stingers shoot their poison. That has to hurt!

The blue-ring octopus is another sea creature that uses venom. The octopus spits venom into the water. If a crab swims into the venom, That’s it. It is lunch!

Source: Excerpt from Poison Power (2008)

- Verbalize the academic features of the text and explain how each might be challenging for ELs.
- Purpose: To explain
- Red: Participants--Who or what is doing something?
- Blue: Process--What are they doing? What kind of verb is it (saying, thinking, relating, action, etc.)?
- Pink: Transition words--we have 'like' and 'as long as' which are compare and contrast, 'then' which is related to sequence, and 'another'
- Green: Referents
- Underline: circumstances: of place, of place, of place, of place, and of place.
- Simple sentences: 3
- Complex sentences: 10

Highlight: Even this tiny excerpt packs a lot of academic language in it in terms of vocabulary, syntax, or overall structure.
Your Turn!

Take 10-15 minutes to analyze the text you brought to the session today and you plan to use in an upcoming lesson. Your goal is to analyze and identify as many examples of each feature or sentence as you can find throughout the text.

If you don’t have your own text, find a partner and analyze their text together.

- Highlight for teachers: Begin, think about how the language might be confusing for ELs, and how you plan to address these possible challenges.
Text Analysis Reflection Carousel

- Which academic language features were you able to identify in your text? Examples?
- What was challenging about this activity?
- What about this text could be challenging for an EL to comprehend? How can you plan to address these possible issues ahead of time?
- What questions do you still have?

- Facilitator should have separate sheets of butcher paper hanging around the room, each with one of the above questions written on it.
- Give participants time 10-15 minutes to rotate to each piece of paper and share their reflections in writing on the poster.
Exit Slip

Share one thing that you learned, found interesting, or surprised you related to academic language from today’s session with the group.
Academic English and ELs in the Mainstream

Session 3
Go through today’s objectives then hand out the “Myths about Second Language Acquisition” for participants to complete independently.
Myths about Second Language Acquisition

- What surprised you?
- What did you already know?
- What questions do you have?

After participants have completed the T/F survey, hand them the second page titled “Responses to Myths about Second Language Acquisition”

Have participants get into groups of 3-4 to discuss the above reflection questions.

Choose a few participants to share what their small groups discussed.
Common Misconceptions about ELs

- Accessing, understanding, and producing information surrounding content will look the same from students of different language proficiencies.
- Content needs to be simplified to ensure EL students are able to understand and demonstrate their competency of the content objective(s).
- EL students implicitly learn and will be able to produce academic language if immersed or exposed to it for long enough.

- Explain that while there are many misconceptions we could address related to ELs, equity, and second language acquisition, the above three are what we will be focussing on for this session.
• Visuals are an easy and often overlooked way to aid ELs in your classroom. For example, when I say “Civil War” or “Colonial Times” certain images will pop up in your head. This may not be true for our EL students.
- Process grids help students compartmentalize and organize important information from the reading or lesson.
- I like to have students use this during a reading a lot, but it can definitely be done after instruction or a video as well.
- This can be completed as a class, in pairs or small groups, or as individuals. Regardless, take time to make sure students were able to identify correct answers.
Process Grid Game

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11cutKcUpW8
- ELs often do not participate in student led discussions or don’t feel comfortable using a more formal academic register without support.
- Sentence stems are one of the easiest, quickest way to help ELs actively participate in discussions and engage in target academic language.
- In addition to fostering academic language orally, these can be used to help students structure their writing responses.
Sentence Stems in Action

https://www.edutopia.org/video/encouraging-academic-conversations-talk-moves

- Video about ‘Talk Moves’ highlighting the importance of oral discourse in classes like math.
**Work time!**

Work on your own, with your team, or any others to see how you could employ just one of the scaffolds to support an upcoming assignment you plan to have students complete.

If you want to try the word splash, which words will you choose?

If you want to incorporate a processing grid, what will it look like? What categories will be involved?

If you want to use sentence stems, which ones will you choose? Will it be used orally or for writing?
Exit Slip

Quickly share which scaffold you plan to implement in an upcoming lesson.
Academic English and ELs in the Mainstream

Session 4
Today’s Objectives

1. Share the challenges and triumphs of implementing your chosen strategy from our last session.
2. Introduce 6 additional scaffolds that can be readily implemented into your daily instruction.
3. Create an action plan for using at least one of these scaffolds in an upcoming lesson.
How are we feeling?

Share with a partner either one challenge or one success you saw or felt after implementing another new scaffold.

- After participants have an opportunity to talk to a partner, ask for volunteers to share out their experiences.
- As they share, write the challenges and triumphs on a piece of butcher paper that is hanging up in the room.
- After participants share elicit responses to the following questions:
  - What challenges and triumphs did you see consistently across groups?
  - Does anyone have any suggestions in how to overcome challenges noted on the posters?
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

EL students need multiple interactions with relevant academic vocabulary that is not only content specific, but includes more general academic vocabulary.

EL students need to interact with a word in context 7-10 times for it to stick.

The following 2 scaffolds relate to explicit vocabulary instruction that takes place in context and allows students to work with the words beyond simply being told their definitions.
- This is a versatile way to help students make connections to prior learning and begin to understand target vocabulary for an upcoming lesson, unit, or reading.
- You can give students a list of words and write a paragraph connecting them. This could be a shared writing or something done on their own. You can give students a list and talk about what each might mean and their relationship together.
Word Splash

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gr1USPF4edM
Use throughout a unit—before, during, and after instruction
Helps students learn and interact with target academic and content specific vocabulary in context and to make connections to concepts throughout a unit
Key components: student developed and maintained, includes pictures/artifacts
Should be added to throughout the unit
Can be used a review tool at the end of a unit
Interactive Word Wall in Action

https://eleducation.org/resources/classroom-protocols-in-action-using-an-interactive-word-wall
Think Aloud

https://www.mydigitalchalkboard.org/portal/default/Content/Viewer/Content?action=2&sclid=507082&scild=15533

- Use during Instruction
- You want to sound like a tape that students can replay in their head explaining your thinking when crafting the target objective.
- ELs need constant modelling of language and structures to build their academic language.
- This can be used to understand a reading’s structure, build metacognition related to what ‘good readers’ do, or to highlight target language objectives or structures students will need to produce to complete a learning task.
Exemplars

In the Age of Inventions, inventors invented a lot of things. These inventions improved daily life for people. Thomas Edison was an inventor. He invented the lightbulb. The lightbulb used electricity. Electricity was new. This was good because people used electricity at their house. Other inventors invented the washing machine, the sewing machine, and the vacuum. These inventions used electricity too.

SHOW DURING ELEMENTARY PRESENTATION

- 3rd grade level writing exemplar to fulfill the objective: SWBAT Explain how inventions impacted daily life. Exemplar goes with learning objective/support outlined on slide 11.
- During Instruction
- Modelling is integral to EL academic language development.
- Providing exemplars helps students understand what is expected (or not expected) of them to fulfill an objective. This is especially beneficial for writing tasks.
- It is important for ELs to not only see the exemplar, but to explore what makes it an exemplar. Conversely, it helps to see a non-example as well.
- Exemplars should be slightly above students’ current ability level.
Exemplars

Mai and Ger’s behavior impacted Choua’s life in a number of ways. First, Mai and Ger were both in gangs and as a result of that Choua experienced many things that upset her. For example, Ger was shot and that upset Choua. Choua didn’t understand why Ger would be part of a gang and do things like steal and get shot. As a result of Ger’s involvement in a gang, as well as Mai’s, Choua vowed she would never join. Another example of how her sibling’s gang involvement impacted her life relates to Mai. Mai snuck out a lot to spend time with her friends, meet boys, and do other things. One time Mai ran away and was caught in a stolen car by the police. Choua was punished and had to follow strict rules because of Mai’s actions. Choua’s parents didn’t want her being dishonest or dishonoring them like Mai and Ger. For example, in the book after Mai was caught sneaking out, Choua’s father decided to put bars on the windows in their bedroom and lock their door. Another example is when Choua wasn’t allowed to go to a school dance with her friends and to meet with the boy she liked, so she lied to her parents. This impacted Choua because she didn’t want to disobey and disappoint her parents. She wanted to tell the truth and have her parents trust her. In conclusion, Mai and Ger did a variety of things that affected Choua’s life and feelings.

SHOW DURING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PRESENTATION

- 7th grade level writing exemplar to fulfill the content objective: SWBAT analyze the impact of Mai and Ger on Choua’s life in Hey! Hmong Girl. Exemplar goes with objectives/supports discussed on slide 13.
- During Instruction; however, it should be available post instruction to refer back to.
- Modelling is integral to EL academic language development.
- Providing exemplars helps students understand what is expected (or not expected) of them to fulfill an objective. This is especially beneficial for writing tasks.
- It is important for ELs to not only see the exemplar, but to explore what makes it an exemplar. Conversely, it helps to see a non-example as well.
- Exemplars should be slightly above students’ current ability level.
Cooperative Learning

http://www.colorincolorado.org/peer-learning-and-ells

- Use post-Instruction
- Cooperative learning can be done with or without the involvement of the teacher.
- Can see linguistic structures modeled by more proficient peers OR work with peers at a similar level to get extra support from the teacher in a small group.
- Lower affective filter by encouraging participation in a low stakes environment.
- Allowing ELs to listen/discuss prior to completing a writing activity builds oral discourse, as well as the the quality and quantity of final written product.
- Use during post-Instruction
- Helpful when organizing information into a cohesive structure
- Graphic organizers aid student writing
- Graphic organizers are easy to find, make, and adapt
Graphic Organizers (cot’d)

Informative Paragraph
Your Mission: Teach the basics of your topic in a well-written paragraph.

Name: ______________________  Date: __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Word Bank</th>
<th>First Draft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Topic Sentence: ____________________________

Important Details:

Conclusion: __________________________

Descriptive Paragraph
Your Mission: Describe your topic in vivid detail.

Name: ______________________  Date: __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Sights</th>
<th>First Draft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sounds:

Smells: Textures:

Graphic Organizer for Summarizing

SOMEONE: __________________________

WANTED: __________________________

WHAT: __________________________

WHERE: __________________________

WHEN: __________________________

THEN: __________________________

WHAT was the problem?

WHAT did you do about the problem?

WHAT was the solution to the problem?
Work time!

Work on your own, with your team, or any others to see how you could employ just one of the scaffolds to support an upcoming assignment you plan to have students complete.
Exit Slip

Share with the group:

Which of these strategies do you or have you already used?
Which are you most excited to try in an upcoming lesson?

- Pass the ball around to participants until each has quickly answered the two questions.
Today’s Objectives

1. Share challenges and triumphs related to implementing scaffolds in the classroom.
2. Ask any lingering questions related to scaffolds and implementation.
3. Understand issues related to traditional assessment and ELs and some ways to provide authentic assessment for ELs in the mainstream settings.
How are we feeling?

In groups of 3 to 4, discuss your challenges and triumphs related to implementing a scaffold introduced in the last session.

Create a poster sharing these things.

- Give participants about 10-12 minutes to work on this. After, there will be a gallery walk.
Gallery Walk

What challenges and triumphs did you see consistently across groups?

Does anyone have any suggestions in how to overcome challenges noted on the posters?

- Have the room set up in a circle to facilitate an organic discussion.
Lingering Questions

Take a few minutes to write and share any questions that are still lingering on the following padlet link:

Padlet link will go here
Assessment and ELs

Traditional assessments are often unreliable or invalid for EL students due to linguistic or cultural background knowledge needed to adequately answer assessment questions.

The following aspects of traditional assessment often hinder EL students’ ability to demonstrate their true understanding:

- Cultural Bias
- Linguistic complexity of test questions
- Unreasonable expectations to show content mastery or understanding given a student’s current level of English proficiency

- Cultural bias: assume that all students have familiarity with specific cultural norms and practices. In the case of US public schools, the dominant cultural norms and practices are most clearly aligned with white, middle class Americans.
- Linguistic complexity of test questions: Oftentimes, ELs may not be able to understand
  - Are test questions unnecessarily complex? Do they have a lot of excess information that needs to be sifted through? Is there necessary academic vocabulary that students will need to know to understand the question?
- Unreasonable expectations
  - Content objective: SWBAT retell the events that led up to Pearl Harbor.
  - Assessment task: Write a paragraph explaining the events that led up to Pearl Harbor.
  - In this case, the teacher is not evaluating the student’s mastery of a content objective, but their ability to produce a complex writing. This is where differentiation is necessary.
Alternative Approach to Assessment for ELLs

- Competency based grading: specific skills > ambiguous grades
- Portfolio work: Growth/progress > Proficiency

Things to remember:
- EL teachers are here to help!
- Supports present during learning tasks should be present during assessment
- Assessments should mirror learning tasks
- Evaluate content, not language

- Highlights:
  - Competency based grading is what our district is already encouraging and some teachers are already implementing.
  - EL teachers use competency based grading and portfolios already in our district--use them as a resource.
  - These forms of assessment can be a lot of work up front, but will be beneficial in the long run.
  - Highlight the importance of making sure instruction matches assessment.
  - Providing differentiation and supports during instruction is useful, but needs to be continued when looking at how we assess ELs
Exit Slip

- Please take the remainder of this time to complete the Post-PD series survey.
- You may complete it by hand on paper or using google forms (Yay differentiation!)
- Please use the randomly generated ID number provided to you last time.