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HOW CAN EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM BE DEVELOPED FOR ELEMENTARY
ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS?

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in English as a Second Language

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

English Language Learners, or ELLs, are a growing population across the United States. The National Academy of Sciences (2017) shared that from 1960-1970 the annual number of immigrants that came to the United States increased from 320,000 to approximately 1 million. In 2013, the number of foreign borns was 46 million, increased from around 10 million in the mid 1960s. Teachers have to be able to help these students to become proficient in English so they can be successful in our English only classrooms. To do that, English Language teachers need to have a solid curriculum that can help students reach all four domains of language with reading, writing, listening, and speaking. But since English Language instruction is a newer concept and is a growing population, there isn't a consistent curriculum that teachers can use that helps students in all areas and is affordable, especially in smaller districts. "Not all educators have access to adequate training opportunities, resources, or models to enable them to reconfigure the role of language in content area learning, appropriately change instructional practices, and ensure all students [...] have access to rigorous content", (Rutherford-Quach, Kuo, Hsieh, 2018). I want to know *how can effective curriculum can be developed for elementary English language students*. This is a question that directly affects me as a teacher and I believe that answer this question will help me to become a better English Language teacher.

Professional Background

I was hired in a rural school district, which I will refer to as School B, in Minnesota in May 2013 for the 2013-2014 school year. I had graduated college with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Early Childhood, holding three licenses. I had originally applied for a classroom position, third or fifth grade. I was called to interview for their preschool program and another position, English as a Second Language or ESL. I didn't know much about ESL because I grew up in a small town near the Iowa border and didn't have any experience with ESL. They asked if I would be willing to go back to college to get a license for ESL. As an eager teacher, I said yes. I got the call the next day offering me the position and asking me to start looking for an ESL program to get my license, as I would have a 2 year variance. Accepting the position at this school and saying, "yes," was the best decision I've made in my professional career.

I started my Master courses at Hamline University while I was working with ELLs, or English Language Learners. It was quite the experience and was unknowingly the start of my now capstone project. School B is a rural school district with just shy of 2,000 people. In the last ten years for the EL program, there had been multiple EL teachers, staying for only a year or two before moving schools. One of the reasons School B was having difficulties keeping EL teachers was because their English Language population was so low, they couldn't have it as a full time position and had difficulties finding qualified staff that actually held an ESL license and not a variance.

Because of the constant change of staff, I got into the position with little to go on. I learned a lot my first year teaching while going through EL courses, but I think because of that, it really helped me grow. I definitely had some growing pains, but it was well worth it. I was hooked. I loved working with my EL kids. I ended up leaving the Preschool position and changing it to be ADSIS Math Intervention for grades 2nd-6th so I could meet the needs of some of my EL students that also needed math support. I stayed in that position for five years.

In School B, my students' first language was always Spanish. I never worked with any other language while I was there. Almost all of my students were 2nd or 3rd generation ELs, meaning their parents or grandparents were the ones who immigrated or came to the United States. From the United States immigrant population, "first- and second-generation youth and young adults of immigrant origin accounted for half of the population growth" (The National Academy of Sciences, 2017). What that meant for me is that most of them were fairly conversationally fluent. Their parents spoke some English and my students had attended schools in the US their whole lives. I never had any newcomers. I also didn't have any low language students. All of them scored on the WIDA ACCESS test at least a 3.0, sometimes a 2.5, or higher in all domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), with the highest possible score being 6.0 and the lowest possible score being 1.0. Students need at least a 4.5 overall score to no longer receive EL services and be classified as proficient in English. My first year, I had 15 EL students. My fifth year, I had 6 EL students. I had exited a lot of students from the EL program, but I also had a lot of moving students, students leaving the district and coming

to the district. This meant that my position as an EL teacher fluctuated between being a .5 EL teacher and being a .3 EL teacher. Also, since I was the only EL teacher, I acted as the district EL coordinator and kept the program up to date with requirements, forms, and testing.

The Need For A Curriculum

During those five years, I had to create a lot of what I was doing with my students. I was constantly trying to find ways to be more consistent with my instruction. I received my additional license through Hamline for English as a Second Language and then continued my education to get my Master's in ESL. I was also attending as many professional development meetings and talking with other English Language teachers in a network that I join in Southern Minnesota. One thing that always came up with other teachers with similar positions was the lack of curriculum. There wasn't just a curriculum that was a one-size-fits-all. For the most part, no one knew of any curriculum. If there was a curriculum, there was little research to prove its effectiveness or it was so outdated it didn't meet the needs of the students. I managed to find EL support out the of elementary classroom curriculum that I used with the students because it worked with what the students were doing in their classrooms and hit all four major domains for ELLs, reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

At the high school level, I still didn't have any curriculum to use with my students. My first two years I had enough students to be able to have a junior high group and a high school group. But with students moving in and out of the district and students exiting the program, my high school numbers declined, and I ended off my career with 4

students at the 7-12 building. Because of my small numbers, I had to combine grades and have all 7-12 EL students together at the same time. I asked neighboring districts all over from the cortisum that I was a part of, “What do you teach your upper level students? Do you have a curriculum? What do you do?” They would always ask me, “What are you currently doing?” I first started off with doing a book club. I would have the students vote on a short list of chosen books and I ordered them, created guided reading questions, we would all read aloud, and do projects relating to the story. After a couple years I then worked on academic vocabulary with a small curriculum that I found. I noticed that academic vocabulary was an area that was lacking and I knew that would benefit all students. After I would explain all of that to other EL teachers, they would all respond, “Well it sounds like you’ve got a good handle on it. Just keep working on that!” And I did. But I felt that it lacked validity and I wasn’t sure if it was meeting all four of the domains, reading, writing, listening, and speaking that EL students need. I ended up finding a curriculum at the end of my fifth year and used our wonderful Education Foundation to pay for it. But because it was purchased late in the school year, I wasn’t able to implement it until the 4th quarter of that year. It was also at that time that a different job presented itself to me that was only 5 minutes from my home, and I decided to make the transition to a larger school district, which I will refer to as School A.

Lack Of Curriculum In A Larger School

The decision to leaving School B was a difficult one because I had made so many great connections with the staff, community, and most importantly, the students. But I wanted a job that was closer to where I lived and I didn’t have to wear so many hats. I

took the job at School A to be the K-5 EL teacher for my 6th year of teaching. It was a full time position and was only in one building. It was the perfect job, plus I knew there were other EL teachers at the five other school in the district that I could bounce ideas off of and learn from. At the time of writing this, I have 52 EL students varying all levels on the WIDA scale, some newcomers, and some close to exiting. I work with students from six different languages. In our district, we have 24 different languages and around 250 kids, and growing! I'm immersed in everything EL and I'm enjoying it. But there still is a lack of curriculum, even though I'm in a district with a much higher EL population. When starting here, I was told to use the guided reading curriculum, but "we want to start moving away from guided reading". So I was left asking, "What do you want me to teach then?" I figured a school with that many EL students, they would have some sort of curriculum. They don't. I have all the guided reading resources, but I don't feel like it meets all four domains, not to the extent that I want for my EL kids. That's what has brought me to my capstone project. I am finishing my Master's and wanted my project to be something that would be useful for myself, my students, and my school. The current overall scores for grades K-5 at School A based off of the WIDA ACCESS scores, with Level 1 being the lowest possible level and Level 6 being the highest possible level, are 6% for Level 1, 17% for Level 2, 49% at Level 3, and 29% at Level 4. No students scored high enough to reach Levels 5 and 6.

I believe that guided reading can be a useful tool to help assist with learning, because reading is an essential domain for language development. I also find that students, for the most part, do the best in the listening domain. At my school, listening is

the highest scoring domain and I believe is from listening to their peers and their teachers. I do have some students that have difficulties with understanding teachers in an educational setting, especially with Tier II or III vocabulary, or with people speaking too quickly for them to understand. The last two domains, writing and speaking, are typically my lowest scoring area for kids. I've seen this at both School B and School A. Even though guided reading can help with those two areas, I don't think that it's the support that they need. Which has led me to this, creating a curriculum that is effective with teaching ELLs.

Benefits Of An English Language Curriculum

Having my capstone project being a creation of curriculum will not only benefit myself, but my school and students. I know School A wants to move away from just doing guided reading as the only form of EL instruction, but they don't have a clear idea on how to do that. If I can provide that for my school, not only does that make me look better as a teacher, but it can provide the school with a solid EL curriculum based upon research and data. That in turn, would benefit all EL students in the district. They would receive a more fully rounded curriculum that would meet all the domains and hopefully have them exit the program earlier. I think that families would appreciate it and my colleagues would appreciate having these students back in their classrooms more. For me, this would be a huge weight off of my shoulders because I keep having uncertainties with what I should be doing and teaching. Creating a curriculum would answer those questions and I can feel like I am teaching with research to back up my teaching.

Conclusion

As one can see, developing an effective curriculum for EL students personally affects me and I have passion to help my students and also for myself. I do believe that finding effective curriculum is a difficult task because of the varying levels of learners and being able to find something that can hit all four domains effectively. I have been fortunate enough to have experience in two different teaching environments in two great schools. I am constantly trying to find ways to make myself a better teacher, being able to create a curriculum for my school and students will help me significantly. Hopefully through the following literature review and data analysis I will be able to do so. I hope it will be put to good use amongst other teachers, at not only School A, but other schools that are having that same question of, “what should I teach?” I hope this can provide answers to not only myself, but to others.

In the next chapter, I will be reviewing literature that supports my question, *how can effective curriculum be developed for elementary English Language students*. I will be focusing on four different themes; EL background and their needs, effective strategies for teaching EL students, effective strategies for each of the four domains, and different EL programs. These four themes will help answer my question and hopefully provide the foundation for creating a curriculum for ELLs that will be beneficial for students and for teachers.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review will look further into the students receiving English Language services and what educators have done and could do to teach these students. The first section will focus on the background and demographics of the students and the need for a curriculum. The second section will look at strategies that will help different domains that students need to be proficient in English. The third section will focus on different strategies that teachers can use to teach, or how they instruct these students. The fourth and last section will explore current English Language programs that are being used to administer curriculum. This literature review will hopefully help answer the question, *how can effective curriculum be developed for elementary English language students?*

English Learner Background

“The U.S. Census has identified sixty million U.S. residents who speak a language other than English at home, and although this is only 20% of the total population, it is a significant linguistic resource” (Arais, 2018, p.1). To understand the need of a curriculum for English Language Learners, it is necessary to understand the background of the students. The National Academy of Sciences (2017) found that the fastest growing and one of the most diverse child population in the United States was the children of immigrants. Because they are the most diverse, we need to look closely at their backgrounds to provide them with the curriculum best suited for their needs. There

are a number of things that affect their demographic. The National Academy of Sciences (2017) lists numerous things, such as home language, language abilities, age, race and ethnicity, immigration circumstances, parental characteristics and socioeconomic resources, and disabilities to name a few. All of these can affect how students learn, and educators should be aware of them to be able to provide the best teaching and curriculum for English Language Learners.

Students could be a native-born citizen born to multilingual families, an immigrant from another country, or a refugee. It's important to understand the students' background of where they come from to better serve the student. For example, some refugees are labeled as SLIFE, or Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education, meaning they haven't been consistently in school. Some students who are immigrants or refugees could arrive to the United States when they are young and can be at grade level English proficiency before they leave elementary, or they could be arriving during middle school or high school years. In Minnesota, we had 3,896 students who are identified as SLIFE in 2017 (MDE, 2018). Almost 4,000 students need educators to provide a curriculum that can fill in the gaps of their education, in Minnesota alone.

It's essential to understand the background of ELLs, so it's important to understand that there are differences in school districts with very large populations of students receiving EL services and school districts with small populations in rural districts. It is also integral to know that different states deal with different backgrounds as well. Minnesota has 73,743 ELLs, which is about 8% of overall student population, consisting of 215 different languages and most learners are at WIDA Levels 1-3 (MDE,

2018). WIDA is a consortium of 39 states that provides assessments for schools to use and also provides standards and Can Do descriptors, which describes what students are capable of performing at their given level of proficiency.

There is also a shortage of staff, which I mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, that are able to teach EL students. “Given the shortage of teachers with the capacity to meet the needs of EL learners at all levels [...], creating supportive and effective learning environments for EL students is a complex undertaking that has significant implications for the work of school and district leaders” (Elfers, A.M. & Stritikus, T., 2014, p. 308). So not only do districts need to be aware of the needs and backgrounds of the students, the district needs to be able to find staff that are able to teach these students and meet their needs of the school and students. Finding adequate staff is the first undertaking that districts need to accomplish, before the other information can be beneficial. Because there is a shortage of teachers in general, which means a shortage of adequate EL teachers, this can prove to be quite difficult.

Determining Need

To provide students with English Language services, schools need to determine if students will receive EL services and it depends on the students meeting certain criteria. First, the student’s home language questionnaire (HLQ) must list a language other than English. Then the WIDA Screener administered to the student must show that the student’s English proficiency is low, specifically under an overall 4.0 out of 6.0 based off of the average of the four domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Students then are tested using the WIDA ACCESS test to determine their English proficiency

levels, ranging from Level 1, which is a beginning level meaning they have little English, to Level 6, which is full English proficiency, which means Levels 2-5 are intermediate levels. It is important to understand these levels to show the level of student progress and proficiency to help guide instruction.

English Language Programs

There are many different English Language programs models available for instructors but this section will focus on three different programs models: pull-out, co-teaching, and dual-language. Pull-out model is when students are taken from their classroom and brought to another room to do work. Co-teaching is when two teachers, specifically in this case, a mainstream classroom teacher and the EL teacher, teaching one class together. Dual-language is when students are taught both English and their native language. Figure 1 below shows the growth of EL students on standardized tests of English reading across different program models (Thomas & Collier, 1997). (It is from a different state; NCE stands for their state test, like Minnesota's MCAs). The graph showed the baseline of a native speaker's performance on the reading test. All programs showed student making about the same amount of growth from grades K-2. When students reach grade 4, the difference in the data of student performance on the standardized test of English, the ACCESS Test, proficiency growth starts to show. Dual-language program and late exit bilingual education and content ESL were able to help students growth continually until 12th grade, with dual-language even surpassing native speakers after 6th grade and by at least 10%. Late exit bilingual education and content ESL had the students stay about the same as native speakers by 8th grade on. For

the other programs, after 4th grade, they increase a bit more before declining again. ESL pull-out did increase, but ended up declining below their start score in Kindergarten when they are in 12th grade.

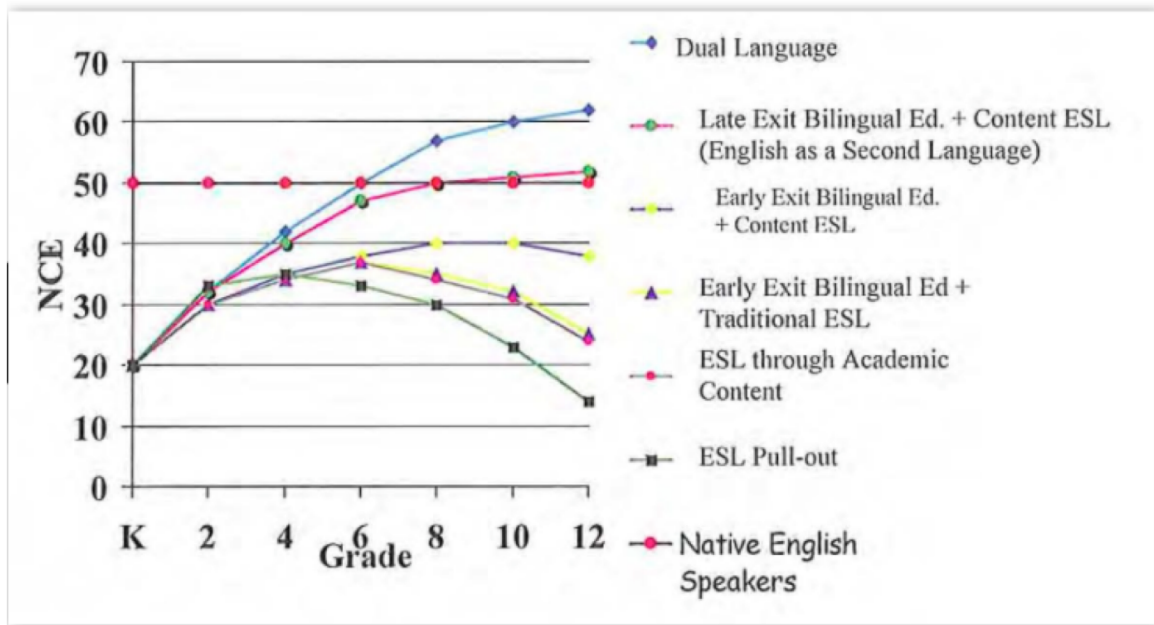


Figure 1: Thomas & Collier, 1997

Dual-Language Program

Dual-language programs are when students learn both English, and their native language at the same time and in the same program. For example, if the student's home language was Spanish, the student receives both English instruction as well as Spanish instruction. There are both many positives and negatives of having a dual-language program. On the language development side of things, Umanksy, Valentino, & Reardon (2016) state that languages share one underlying structure so students that have a strong development in their first language are better able to learn a second language. When the students develop their first language, their native language, they will be able to cross that

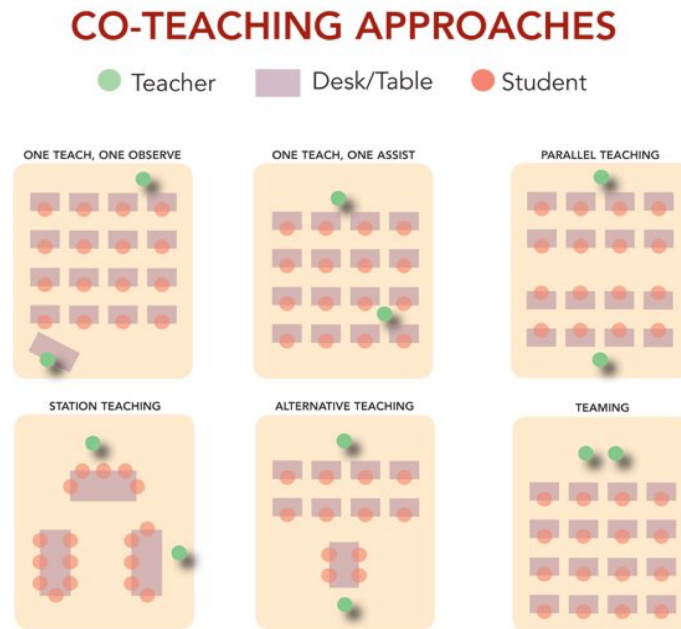
information over to English much more easily than a child that does not receive language instruction in their native language and would only receive English only instruction. It's also believed, and feared, that when students are in their mainstream English classes, they aren't able to fully access the content (Umansky, Valentino, & Reardon, 2016). So it would be better to have students receiving education in their native language, which they can later transfer to English. Another benefit would be to have students feel included by being with like-peers, and then would be more comfortable in their learning environment, fostering more learning. Based on the graph from Figure 1, it also shows that students receiving dual-language services will make tremendous gains from Kindergarten all the way to 12th grade, even surpassing the native speakers.

The cons of having a dual language program is a short list, but enough to limit its implementation in many schools, especially in rural schools. To be able to have a dual-language program, you need to have instructors that are fluent in both English and the student's native language. This factor alone can be enough to eliminate this program from a school district, because of how expensive it is or requires specialized teachers and schools don't always resources (Umansky, Valentino, & Reardon, 2016). It is also debated that it segregates students from mainstream students and that dual-language programs also are not implemented or supported like they should be to provide effective support (Umansky, Valentino, & Reardon, 2016).

Co-Teaching Program

Co-teaching is a method of teaching that is not exclusively for EL. Co-teaching can be used in a multitude of environments, for example, mainstream classrooms. In EL

co-teaching, two teachers, typically the EL teacher and the mainstream classroom teacher, work together to instruct EL curriculum. They can work together in many ways. MDE provided examples of the different co-teaching styles in the presentation by Amy Young. Figure 2 shows six different styles of co-teaching.



SOURCE: *Co-teaching: Concepts, Practices, and Logistics*, Marilyn Friend, Ph.D., August, 2006

Young stated that One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist; and Parallel Teaching are not very effective in EL instruction. She mentioned that Team Teaching can be effective in only when the teachers are fluid and work seamlessly together. She suggested doing the last two options with ELs, Station Teaching or Alternative Teaching, because they provide more specialized instruction. Two teachers in Colorado, Beninghof and Leensvaart (2018), have implemented co-teaching and within one year of starting it, stated that the average student growth went from “Approaching” to “Exceeds”, which “Exceeds” is the highest possible score in Colorado. Because of this programs effectiveness for this school, it was implemented district-wide.

To make co-teaching work in a district, it needs to follow strict criteria for it to be effective. Young stated in her MDE presentation that both teachers need to be working together, as mentioned earlier. Unfortunately, that isn't always the case. "When districts have tried this, many found that the classroom teacher ends up in charge while the [EL] teacher is drastically underused, holding up the wall in the back waiting to help out or becoming a 'kid whisperer' for the ELLs" (Beninghof & Leensvaart, 2018, p.70). Young also added that there needs to be a lot of planning time for both co-teachers to sit down and plan out the instruction, something that not all instructors have.

Pull-Out Program

Pull-out program is when the students are taken from their mainstream classroom and provided with EL services by the EL teacher for a period of time in an EL classroom. That period of time is determined by each district in their master plan. Students arrive to the EL classroom with other EL students, no mainstream students come to pull-out EL. The instruction is strictly English development, and sometimes instructors will translate a word or two or label items in the classroom, but majority of the time, the teacher does not use the students' native language. Having a pull-out program will help EL teachers provide undistracted instruction and be able to meet the needs of the ELLs.

One argument against pull-out program is that it segregates students from their mainstream peers. Another large argument against the pull-out program is based on the presentation from Thomas & Collier (1997). Looking at Figure 1, pull-out programs provide adequate growth to students in Kindergarten to second grade. Scores slow but continue to improve until fourth grade. After fourth grade, however, the scores begin to

decline and regress. Scores continue to decline and even decline more quickly when students are in high school. Scores by the EL students at 12th grade are even lower than when they started in Kindergarten.

Effective Strategies For Specific Domains

The specific domains for English language proficiency are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It's important to note that students become proficient at different rates because of demographics, but these will be general strategies for all students, regardless of backgrounds. Students need to be proficient in all areas before they are labeled as English proficient and then would no longer receive English services. Students are tested on these domains every spring by taking the WIDA ACCESS test. The students proficiency is based on six levels, Level 1 to Level 6 (WIDA.com, 2018). Level 1 is Entering, meaning the student knows and uses minimal language and needs supports with visuals and graphics. Level 2 is Emerging, meaning the student knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visuals and graphics. Level 3 is Developing, which means the student knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visuals and graphics. Level 4 is Expanding, which means the student knows and uses social English and some technical academic language. Level 5 is Bridging, meaning the student knows and uses social and academic language working with grade level material. The last level, Level 6, is Reaching, which means the student knows and uses social and academic language at the high level measured by this test.

Reading

A dual-language program would be a great way to enhance reading proficiency. One group had their Mexican American students that were receiving EL services discuss their English texts in Spanish. Dual-language programs helped students to have a higher level of understanding of English text than if they only used English. (DaSilva Iddings, Risko, & Rampulla, 2009). But again, not all schools are able to provide a dual-language program. One strategy that all teachers can use to improve ELL reading growth is to have the students make meaningful connections to the text (DaSilva Iddings, Risko, & Rampulla, 2009). Understanding the students' cultural background helps the reading make sense and is easier than trying to figure out nonsense words (Suits, 2003). Another strategy that is beneficial for all programs and groups, is to set a purpose for reading. This is strategy that should be in place for all reading groups, including mainstream students. The teachers job is to also guide students through the reading and the discussion. Setting a purpose will help guide that. If the teacher uses guided reading for their reading instruction, then the lesson has a daily focus and make use of every moment (Suits, 2003). Using guided reading can helps language learning by providing necessary support, instruction and a safe environment for the students (Suits, 2003). It's also essential to note that reading development may be influenced by the nature of the ELLs native language. For example, a language may be considered easier when the English words are similar phonologically and orthographically. ELLs might also have different patterns of developing their English reading skills when they have different native language backgrounds. (Betts, et al., 2009). Understanding these differences can help

teachers provide better reading instruction, and also any other language instruction to ELLs.

Speaking

This is a newer concern because the ACCESS test has changed their exiting criteria for speaking. They now are looking for more academic speaking than conversational speaking. A lot of times, it's assumed just having a conversation is going to be enough. However, the conversations need to be meaningful and a lot of times, contain academic vocabulary. "ELLs spend less than 2 percent of their school day in oral interaction" (Walqui & Heritage, 2018, p.20). From this understanding, not doing anything will not improve their scores. It's important to encourage speaking and listening throughout the day (Wright, 2018). Walqui and Heritage (2018) also suggest teachers need to think of the sentences and words that the students are using. Students' ideas should be organized to provide meaningful contributions. The teacher should suggest ways to the student of how the sentences could be combined and made into more complex sentences. They also define productive talk as having depth, is sustained, and is controlled by the student. Teachers need to make sure that students follow these to produce meaningful speech and to help promote proficiency growth. Teachers also need to provide feedback to the students, but "the feedback should focus on language so that students can make sense of the academic content, rather than on correct errors of language production. [...] Feedback can increase the students' awareness and help them troubleshoot their own performance and eventually correct their own language." (Walqui & Heritage, 2018, p.22). Feedback should be about errors that prevent comprehension as

well. However, it is important to make sure that explicit instruction and corrections should be determined by their English proficiency levels and that they are ready to learn (Wright, 2018).

Other ways to encourage student talk is to have open-ended and higher thinking questions that make students have to explain or argue (Wright, 2018). Another strategy was making sure to scaffold instruction, which should be a well used strategy with every student, in any situation. It's important to emphasize key vocabulary through repetition; avoiding idioms, unless taught; avoid unfamiliar cultural references; use gestures, facial expressions, and objects and materials from everyday life; and repeat, paraphrase, or use other techniques when ELLs don't understand (Wright, 2018). Providing students opportunities for meaningful conversations in small group is a very effective technique to promote growth (Wright, 2018). It's also important to understand that students may be at different proficiency levels and not to expect all students to produce the same language. Due to this issue, it's essential that teachers also have tiered questions as prompts for student speaking (Hill, 2018). Articles from both Hill (2018) and Wright (2018), both mention that teachers need to be aware of their own speaking. Teachers need to make sure to watch their speed, talking slowly with beginners, and talking in a steady pace with more proficiency. Also speaking clearly and at a normal volume, it doesn't help to over-enunciate and to shout (Wright, 2018). Using manipulatives, visuals, gestures, and facial expressions can also be beneficial to students (Hill, 2018).

Writing

“Writing is the most challenging mode of communication in the language domain for many ELs [...and] in many cases, [it is] the last domain in which ELs develop grade-level proficiency” (Lee, 2018, p.100). This is the case for most because “students face not only cognitive, communicative, and contextual challenges common to all writers, but also linguistic, cultural, and affective constraints unique to language learners” (Booth Olson, Scarcella, & Matuchniak, 2016, p.39). Because of these difficulties, writing has become the focus of my project. There are currently many curriculums and strategies to help improve listening, speaking, and reading scores. However, writing is a low area for many mainstream students, not only for EL.

Some strategies that Booth Olson, Scarcella, and Matuchniak (2016) suggest are to create a culturally relevant writing community, provide solid strategy instruction, and explicitly teach academic vocabulary. A writing community is essentially a welcoming environment that engages students in meaningful and collaborative activities, where the students can develop strong ties that connective their learning to their background knowledge. Strategy instruction is teaching strategies to students to provide them with a clear focus on language (Booth Olson, Scarcella, & Matuchniak, 2016). The last is academic language, which is something I personally strive to include and study. It is important to understand that there are three tiers of language. Tier I is conversational vocabulary, essentially words that can be used every day in conversation. Tier II consists of words that can cross content areas and needs to be explicitly taught because students will not pick it up naturally. Tier III is words specific to content that does not cross

content areas. Tier III are the vocabulary words that are typically assigned to all students to learn, especially in higher academics. However, Tier II words are used in academics everyday, but teachers are not aware that students do not understand these words. Some examples of these words are explain, interpret, and so on. Teachers use these words, but don't explicitly teach them to students. But they should. Using academic vocabulary helps students to write well and to reach the standards of state. To develop academic writing, ELLs need daily and explicit instruction daily (Booth, Olson, Scarcella, & Matuchniak, 2016). In addition to academic vocabulary, writing curriculum can be a powerful teaching tool if it's embedded in the content of the curriculum. Grammar also is best taught in the context of the student's writing (Hochman & Wexler, 2017). Using sentence stems can also be very beneficial to writing, in addition to using conjunctions because, but, and so. They have students add information and encourage extended responses (Hochman & Wexler, 2017). A final teaching tip for writing would be to make questions to support the thought process for creating writing. The first question would be to note facts, or asking what do I see? Asking the student to jot down notes of what they see from images and figures, depending on if it's a real life object or a picture in reading. The second question would be to state opinions, asking what do I think? This makes the writing meaningful to the student and make input accessible to ELs. The last question is explaining the why, or how can I explain? This is the continuation of the previous two questions (Lee, 2018).

Talk Read Talk Write (Motley, 2016) also mentioned when students write, that they should be creating their own thoughts, rather than copying information. When

students make their own ideas, they are connecting to the information much more strongly than when they just copy what is written. They are forming their own ideas which in turn makes the writing much more rich and students are getting more out of it. Motley also added that students need to give explanations or arguments for their answers, rather than only completing a one word answer. This again makes their writing more in-depth and makes the students have to use more language because their responses need to be much more rich. Obviously students at a higher language proficiency will be required to have a longer response than a Level 1 student as lower students will not have developed the language yet to complete long responses. Teacher should be able to adapt the requirement to fit student needs. As also mentioned, students need to use complete thoughts and sentences. Students should not be writing fragments as they writing, again, won't be as rich or as strong as a native speaker. Using complete sentences can help further develop students' writing proficiency. Students at lower language proficiency can start using sentence stems to start and start to build on creating the entire sentence as their language continues to grow.

Effective Strategies For Teaching ELLs

Strategies for domains is a great way to promote growth in specific areas, but there are some strategies for instruction that can be effective in all domains and in every area. These can be strategies that can be used not only by English Language teachers, but by all teachers that work with students receiving EL services. All teachers should be involved in the growth of ELLs and their language development, not just EL teachers.

When all staff are using best practices, it provides the students with the best potential for growth.

Again, teachers who are fluent in the student's home language are able to be more effective with EL students (Gandara & Santibanez, 2016). But like mentioned before, this is not always an option. Gandara and Santibanez (2016) also suggest that teachers should have a knowledge of language uses, forms, and mechanics; respect for helping students achieve high standards; strong relationship building skills and attention to the social emotional needs; cultural knowledge and the ability to incorporate it into instruction; and specific pedagogical skills such as scaffolding instruction for ELs. Gandara and Santibanez did a great job of summarizing what makes a great educator for ELs. Understanding the students' native languages and the mechanics will help educators to transfer skills to English and to fill in gaps between languages. The cultural knowledge is another great skill that was touched on earlier. Using their cultural background can help educators make connections to their background knowledge and make the content meaningful to the student. Two important strategies they mentioned were the respect for the students to achieve high standards and an ability to build strong relationships. The administrators that I've worked for have all said that students will meet teacher's expectations, if they are high or low. When teachers have low expectations, that's all the student will perform. When teachers have high expectations, the students, with support, will meet those expectations. ELLs are no exception. Even though they are learning English, they still need to have high expectations to improve. Students are also more willing to meet those expectations when they have great

relationships with their teachers. My personal experience is that EL students will perform more when they trust and have a good relationship with their teacher.

August (2018) also states that it's essential to provide ELs access to grade level content. "This exposure helps students develop the concepts and skills need to master grade level coursework as they move up through the grades" (August, 2018, p.5). She also states that not all practices are effective, and it's essential to see those differences. For example, using higher level questioning is effective for native English learners to improve reading comprehension, but not for ELs. Encouraging peer to peer learning opportunities has, on average, been able to promote growth in phoneme segmentations, nonsense word fluency, and oral reading fluency. Instructors also need to be aware of language and literacy challenges, and students who may qualify for Special Education (SPED). Currently, it can be fairly difficult to qualify a student for SPED because instructors need to make sure language is not a factor for low scores. The tests that determine SPED services, must separate language development from a disability (August, 2018).

Ferlazzo and Hull Sypniewski (2018) also discuss general ideas for teaching ELLs. One strategy that has already been mentioned earlier, is the rate and speed of instruction. They also added that instructors need to also work on their wait time and to use visuals. Wait time is the time between prompting a response from a student and the student responding. On average, the typical wait time is only one second. For ELLs, this is not enough time for them to think and process in their native language and English. "Many researchers have found that the quality and quantity of responses improve when that wait

time is increased to between three and five seconds” (Ferlazzo & Hull Sypnieski, 2018, p.13). Telling the students that they have a few seconds to think also helps the students. I personally will wait even longer for some students. The students are aware that I will wait for them to answer, so they don’t feel rushed or pressured to have to have an answer immediately after asking. It’s also important to make sure that all students have ample wait time. A lot of times, students that process faster will already be saying the answer or have their hands raised. I sometimes will also wait for all students to have an answer ready to go and have a rule of no blurting answers, so all students can have a chance to process. Visuals are another great tool that educators should use more often, especially for ELs. Visuals could be posters, pictures, and nonverbal cues, like gestures. Visuals can help make connections to language and content. Students should also have access to visual tools, like graphic organizers (Ferlazzo & Hull Sypnieski, 2018). Visuals are great to help bridge the gap between language and understanding. Visuals can also be used in the students home language. This could mean that there are translations on poster or pictures or even labeling items in a room for quick recall.

Another strategy that “teachers can [use to] mitigate this called for ELLs by establishing content, language and social learning purposes (also known as learning objectives or learning intentions) at the start of the lesson and redirecting students to these purposes frequently” (Fisher, D. & Frey, N, 2016, p. 84). All students should have the learning objectives made clear to them before teaching a lesson. English Language students are no exception. On top of the learning objective, students should also have a language objective, as stated by Amy Young from the Minnesota Department of

Education and Fisher and Frey (2016). August (2018) also states that EL students need to be provided with grade level content as well. August states that “this exposure helps students develop the concepts and skills needed to master grade-level coursework as they move up through the grades” (August, 2018, p.5). WIDA Performance Definitions, which mentioned early as the proficiency skills of the students, can also be used to the teachers’ benefits. Robertson (2016) uses the Performance Definitions to provide a solid curriculum. She uses the following steps:

- “1. Establish a language learning goal
2. Determine success criteria
3. Elicit language samples from the assignment
4. Evaluate the language using the Performance Definitions speaking and writing rubric.
5. Determine areas for growth, and give feedback to students.
6. Allow students more opportunities to practice and apply the feedback”

(Robertson, K., 2016, p.57, 59).

These strategies can be applied to most all lessons and curriculums without having to create a curriculum or lesson in addition to what is already being used. From my personal experience, many teachers become comfortable with their instruction, and creating something entirely new or trying to incorporate an instructional strategy that is totally different from their own, usually gets rejected or not used after a period of time. Using something like mentioned above can provide teachers and districts and quick and relatively simple that can benefit student proficiency development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is an urgency that all EL educators needs to address to meet the needs of ELLs. The ELL population is continuing to grow and teachers need to meet the needs of the students, and districts need to meet the increase of students in their districts. It is essential that we answer the question, *how can an effective curriculum be developed for elementary English Language students?* The current programs and curriculum, or the lack thereof, does not benefit the students in the way that they legally need. With more research coming out, it's important to realize the misconceptions of previously thought strategies for teaching ELs, and to look on ways to improve our own teaching and ways to improve the instruction of different domains. Some districts as a whole also need to think about the program model they should be using. Based off of the information given, it may be necessary for districts to change their entire program to best meet the needs of students. For some schools, this may be an uncomfortable change. But for the sake of our students, we need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable to help ELs to be successful in our schools. In Chapter 3, I will discuss my plan on how I will create a curriculum that will help meet the needs of our EL students. Chapter 3 will look at the research of literature from this chapter to decide what are viable options for the school that I work at, School A. It will look at what program would best suit School A, and what strategies should work best for all students and to meet the needs of their individual backgrounds and proficiencies.

CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

This chapter will focus specifically on School A and using the information from the literature review to drive my project that will help answer the question, *how can effective curriculum be developed for elementary English language students?* It is important to look at the data that presented itself from the literature review as to drive the basis of my question. Without information to push me forward, there wouldn't be a foundation for a curriculum to stand on. This section will look at who this project will help and be for, as well as what I plan on doing to implement and create a curriculum for these students.

Project Overview

To determine how I would proceed with creating a curriculum, it's necessary to look at the the scores and proficiency of the students for all domains. I have the WIDA ACCESS scores from Spring of 2018, so for example students that are in second grade in 2018-2019 school year, their scores would be from the end of their first grade year in 2017-2018 school year. Students need to be at least a 4.5 as an overall score, with at least 3.5 in every domain for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For the data that will be listed below, the scores include all students that were receiving EL services. This includes both students that are currently receiving services and students that have exited and are currently monitored. These scores are also only for the school that I currently teach at, and not reflective of all the schools in the district.

- Listening: At School A, grades Kindergarten through 5th grade, scored fairly well. The percentage of students for Levels 1-6 are 1%, 4%, 12%, 5%, 17%, and 62%, respectively. So the majority of kids have scored a perfect 6.0 score.
- Reading: School A's scores were across the board. The percentage of students for Levels 1-6 are 23%, 28%, 17%, 1%, 12%, and 20%, respectively. There wasn't one Level that stood out from the rest, but the majority seems to be the lower three levels. The current instruction at School A, is modified guided reading. This is similar to guided reading, but reading is only a portion of the instruction. There is more building of background knowledge, doing more in-depth understanding of the reading, and review of the material.
- Speaking: School A's scores were less than admirable. The percentage of students for Levels 1-6 are 7%, 33%, 42%, 8%, 1%, and 8%, respectively. Majority of the scores were at Levels 2 and 3. This has been the current area of concern at School A.
- Writing: School A's scores were very low. The percentage of students for Levels 1-6 are 15%, 25%, 54%, 7% and the last two were 0%, respectively. So no students K-5 scored in the two highest levels. Level 4 only had 7%. Almost all the students scored in the lowest three Levels. Even though speaking is the area of concern at School A for the moment, it seems the concern needs to be focused on writing.

When starting this project, I initially wanted to create a curriculum that would meet all domains, but I realize now that would be a large undertaking. I decided to narrow my focus to what was the lowest performing areas, which were writing and speaking. I chose to focus solely on writing, since I'm currently working on improving their speaking already by doing more reflective feedback. I don't have something at the moment that is beneficial to their writing, or the things we are doing for writing are clearly not increasing scores like I was hoping. I find that there is a need for a writing curriculum not only just for the EL students, but for native English speakers as well. After talking with many other staff in the building of my idea to work on a writing curriculum, they had stated that there was a need in their general education classroom as well. I'm hoping that even though my curriculum will be specific to EL students, it will be beneficial to everyone in education and be able to be adjusted to fit the needs of others as well.

Setting And Participants

My specific focus will deal with the specific school district that I work with in Minnesota,. The school district is in a town with a population of almost 18,000 with the school district consisting of over 3,500 total students K-12. Of those 3,500, almost 300 of them are receiving EL services, and of those 300, we have around 24 different languages. The elementary school that I specifically work with, which I will refer to as School A, has a population 430 students, with 49 of them receiving English Language services. The home languages of these students consist of Arabic, Spanish, Karen, Tagalog, Bermese, and Nuer.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) shared data from the 2017-2018 school year that School A has a little over 84% of my beginning students meeting average growth. The intermediate group, however, is only at almost 64% meeting average growth. MDE also shared grade specific growth. The Minnesota state average for grade growth is about 77%. For School A, 4th grade was way above average at 96% growth. The other grades were below growth, which is a cause for concern, and hence the need for a curriculum. Grades 1st-3rd were very similar, at 67%, 62%, and 63% growth, respectively. 5th grade was the lowest performing for School A, at only 53% growth. This is below state average. They are also sitting at mid 60%, which by grade level standards, is almost failing. I was not the instructor at School A until this year, but I am following the districts guidelines for their curriculum and instruction. So I feel an urgency to remediate this issue and provide a curriculum that will improve students' English growth.

Project Description

First, it needs to be determined what type of program would be used with the students so that an appropriate curriculum can be developed. School A had stated it wanted to use a different program called push-in, which is essentially the pull-out method but inside the mainstream classroom. Dual-language is a program that would something I would like to implement at School A, but for reasons which will be mentioned later, is something not available for us to use at this time. So School A is deciding between pull-out or co-teaching as our method of instruction. Hence, it's important to understand the pros and cons of a program to determine its effectiveness. School A does not have

the staff available to provide a dual-language program. If I were to implement co-teaching for all the grades I would work with, I would first need to stack my classes, having all of my EL students in one mainstream classroom. Then I would need to have prep time with all grade levels that I work with K-5, so 6 teachers total. Preparation time is the area that I struggle with for co-teaching. When would staff be able to meet to provide proper instruction and planning time for all grade levels? Co-teaching would be a great solution if staff can find enough time to plan and prep to provide an effective curriculum and instruction. The pull-out program is the current program used by School A. The reason that many rural schools use pull-out, is that the other programs are not viable for their small numbers. In very small districts, like School B, the EL teachers are split positions, doing another job other than EL, which means EL teachers need to provide as much service in a small amount of time. Which also means that the cost of having a dual language program does not fit the need of the school. However, I don't think that a school can ethically continue doing a pull-out program because of the data presented here. It may be argued that they can use it until about second grade, but after that the school needs to change their program to meet the students' needs. It would be ideal to do dual-language, but not always an option for all schools. Based off of the information presented in this section, I would recommend a combination of programs to make EL growth continue to grow in smaller districts. If School A uses pull-out until second grade or possibly even third grade, they could stack fourth and fifth graders, or put all the ELs in one class, and do co-teaching. Preparation with staff would be limited to two or three teachers, depending on the switch in programs, which would be

manageable. For the rest of the district for sixth grade on, I would recommend content based ESL.

To start, I will be just be looking to create a writing curriculum for third grade. From there, then I will plan to expanded into other grade levels. The next step is then to look at what works for writing from the literature review from above. First, the writing needs to be relevant to what the work the students are currently working on. I will be using the guided reading books that are available at School A, and creating a curriculum based on that. The literature review also said that it is essential to use Tier II vocabulary with writing and to explicitly teach Tier II with the students so that they can use it in their writing. If I were to expand this to lower grades, I would also include sentence stems. But at third grade, I would be hoping to move away from sentence stems and helping them to create their own complete sentences based off of the question prompt. I also would like to use the strategy, students will be able to (action word) by using (form of language-ex. Linking verbs, adjectives) but with more specificity to the guided reading comprehension skill. Students would be aware of this as it would be posted on the board so they will know if they were able to do that skill or if they need additional assistance. A feedback sheet or rubric might be helpful to assist the students with their growth and to provide immediate and explicit feedback to the student. I also plan on using Understanding by Design, or UbD, to create my curriculum. This is the current method used at School A for all general education teachers, so I should have many resources available.

Timeline

The timeline planned for this will be in two parts, the timeline that I will need to create this curriculum and the timeline of the curriculum and its use in the school year. My creation of the curriculum will have to initially focus on the standards that will be needed for the curriculum. I plan on using the Can Do descriptors from WIDA, which I already am currently using. I will have to organize the information and make sure that I hit all areas of the Can Do. However, all students perform at different levels of proficiency, so that will need to be included in the curriculum. I also want to connect this curriculum to Minnesota state standards for writing for their specific grade level as well. This way, it's incorporated into what the classroom is doing which can help assist the student in the general classroom as well. I will have to communicate with the third grade staff to see the order in which they go through the writing standards and try to organize my curriculum to fit that, so that what we will be working on in EL, the students will hopefully be doing something similar in their classroom as well.

Conclusion

Overall, this project will be created for the students in 3rd grade receiving English Language services. The curriculum will be created to focus on writing, based off of the Minnesota State Standards and WIDA Can Do Descriptors. Writing is School A's lowest proficiency across all grade levels and it has been stated that it is the last domain to become proficient because of its difficulty. My goal is that it will not only help EL students become more proficient in English, but to be used and adapted by other teachers in my district. The next chapter will contain my 3rd grade EL writing curriculum.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reflection

Introduction

I always see the phrase, *teachers that love teaching, teach children to love learning*. But I also think that teachers need to love learning as well as the children. Through all of the research and creating a project to answer the question *How can effective curriculum be developed for elementary English language students?*, I have learned a lot. Throughout Chapter Four, I will reflect on what I had learned and what I hope my Capstone has accomplished. This has been a project that I have been working on for almost an entire year with a lot of words written and a lot of research done. My hope is that the project is beneficial not only to myself, but to the students that I will teach, and the school that I work for.

In this chapter, I will be focusing on a few major sections. The first section will be what I had learned from doing Chapter Two, the research and pieces of research that were important to the creation of my project and my profession. The second section will focus on the project itself, the curriculum and things I learned from creating it. The third section will focus on how the research and the project together answer the question of *how can effective curriculum be developed for elementary english language students?*. The fourth section will be focusing on the limitations of the project. The fifth section will be about how I plan to use my project for future use and my plan on continuing it. The sixth and final section will be on how this project benefits the EL profession.

Reflection of the Research

Throughout my Chapter Two, I focused on the four domains that English language (EL) students need to achieve to become proficient in English. I found information and explained how a teacher could effectively teach and boost those four domains; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. I also researched on how to be an effective teacher with EL students, what strategies or ideas could boost teaching in both mainstream and smaller classrooms.

August (2008) also provided me with great insight. One of the most important pieces that stuck out to me from his research was that EL students need to have access to grade level content. This piece of research alone helped me to form my project. I focused my project on writing curriculum, specifically for third grade. I used the Minnesota Language Arts and Social Studies standards as the basis for the curriculum development. At first I wasn't sure if I was able to double scoop standards for EL students but my content expert assured me that it was encouraged and that it was a great idea for the foundation of a curriculum. From there, I used the materials I had available, social studies and science guided reading books, and formed lessons on writing to meet the standards. Using standards, I feel comfortable feeling my curriculum has a strong basis for language development that students can connect to the classroom and to have a "learning gap" in their education because they weren't accessing grade level materials. I also planned on doing my lessons when classroom teachers were doing similar lessons to reinforce those skills and to have a great connection between EL and mainstream

classrooms. With the research that I did, I believe, helped me to form my capstone project into what it is today, which will be mentioned in the next section.

For my research question, *how can effective curriculum be developed for elementary english language students?*, I wanted to narrow the topic down to focus on writing curriculum. I believe that if I could create a writing curriculum, focusing on 3rd grade, that I would be able to teach writing language proficiency more effectively and with more validity.

I used the research from August (2008) as the foundation of my project. To be able to have a productive and effective curriculum instead of something haphazardly put together, it needs to be based off of something that will hold true year after year and effectively help students improve. So I focused on Minnesota State Standards. I used both Language Arts standards as well as Social Studies standards. The amount of rich language that students need to have from the Social Studies is amazing and a lot of the materials I have available are Social Studies based. Not only will the curriculum have some validity, it will be connected to what the mainstream classrooms would be working on. We as a district have been working hard to connect with what is happening to what is happening with intervention and Special Education groups. When I use grade level standards, and can accommodate those lessons so they are language level appropriate, students will be able to share ideas and to participate more in the mainstream classrooms, which will in turn help boost language development.

I also kept in mind the strategy called Talk Read Talk Write (TRTW) created by Motley (2016). Ideally TRTW would be done in one day, but with time constraints and

limitations, I planned that I would have already did the Talk #1 and Read on the previous day or days. I included a review of the skill that would be focused on as TRTW uses one standard through the entire TRTW process. Then because my project focused on the improving English proficiency through writing I focused on an activity that would increase language and would be engaging. TRTW writing portion should be done in complete sentences, should be students' own thoughts, and their thoughts or ideas should be fully explained by the student. I believe that my lessons all meet those needs and also meets with the research done in Chapter Two.

The creation of the writing curriculum for me was a large accomplishment. I wanted to make it that I could immediately implement it for future use, which will be mentioned in the last section. I did my best to keep it in line with standards and based in research, as all good curriculums should be. In the next section, I will reflect on if my curriculum helped answer the question of *how can effective curriculum be developed for elementary English language students?*

Answering the Research Question

This section will focus on if I answered my question, *how can effective curriculum be developed for elementary English language students?* To me, this is the root of the entire project. The whole point of doing my Capstone is to answer that question. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the introduction to the entire Capstone, this question has been a question of mine for at least the last five years, approaching on six years now. There was never really a clear answer whenever I would talk with other

educators in my area. So I am glad I had the opportunity to research this on my own and to create something that I can hopefully use.

My question is broad, it would have to focus on four different domains for ELs; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. As mentioned earlier, my top priority based on ACCESS scores for the school that I work for were speaking and writing. Since I had already been working on improving speaking for my IGP, I decided to focus on writing. For me, writing was also a struggle to have students write with meaning instead of just busy work. Since it was a struggle and an area of concern, I decided to jump in head first and tackle this challenge so that hopefully it wouldn't be a challenge anymore.

I feel like I did answer my question, *how can effective curriculum be developed for elementary English language students?* I created fifteen lesson plans with a variety of units included that was based off of standards and even used I Can statements, as a requirement of my school district. I used the phrase, students will be able to, to create measurable data. I created attachments and worksheets that students would need to show language development. I made my lessons specific to EL learners with accommodations like sentence stems and using information gathered from research.

Based on all this, I believe that I adequately answered my question, at least for writing. I feel comfortable if I were to take all of this and teach it to my 3rd grade EL students and feel as though they are effectively building on their written language. My final section will focus on my next steps, what will I do with my project, and what I hope to do for the future.

Project Limitations

Although this project has many benefits, there are some limitations to it. One concern of mine is that a new EL teacher may have some difficulties adjusting the level of difficulty depending on the students' proficiency levels. When I started out as a new EL teacher, I was hired under a variance as I did not have an EL license and started taking classes right away. However, when I started, I had a harder time adjusting for students at a variety of proficiency levels. This project is able to accommodate for many teachers and with practice can be easily carried out to accommodate all levels-however it may be best suited for EL teachers with some experience and more knowledge of the students capabilities and how to properly modify a lesson to fit student needs.

Another limitation would be more towards future use. This project took a lot of time to create, and it was only created for one grade level and one domain. Although I do plan on continuing to work on curriculum development for the other grades and domains, it will take me a long time to complete. I would be beneficial to have possibly other EL staff to help create lessons and collaborate so it wouldn't necessarily take as long. When the curriculum is completed for all domains and grades, prep time would be cut significantly and instruction will be more cohesive. So although the time it would take would be substantial, it would be worth it in the long run.

Future Plan and Project Use

My goal for my Capstone and Capstone project was always to continue working on it and using it in the classroom. I didn't want to research something or create something and never use it or touch it again. Otherwise, what would be the point? The

whole point of Capstone, in my mind, is to research something that would be used over and over again and to be useful, rather than just another meaningless task. So that's what I plan on doing. I plan on continuing my work and research and hopefully be able to use in the classroom.

When creating my project I was thinking about how I can implement it with policy in mind. Currently, our entire school district insists on using I Can statements, that students are aware of. This way, students understand what task they are supposed to do and it makes the lesson meaningful. I made sure that I included I Can statements so that it could seamlessly be implemented into what my lessons should already entail. I plan on discussing my work and sharing my curriculum with the school's administration and other EL teachers so that we could work on something similar throughout the entire district, rather than just one school. I know that other EL teachers have talked about needing something that would support student growth but also was valid to teaching.

School A is also working on implementing Talk Read Talk Write as our regular EL lesson template. TRTW requires using a standard so I made sure to include standards from grade level to form the lesson. I also have it using materials that I would have on hand instead of trying to create materials, which in turn would make more work for me. The whole point of the project, for me, was to create something to make less work and spend more time focusing on student growth.

As for continuing the work, which I mentioned briefly in previous sections, I had only made this curriculum for 3rd grade writing. My future plan is not to just be done with that. I plan on expanded on my work for other grade levels K-5. My hope is to

create a writing curriculum that connects with every grade, especially since we are working on TRTW and wanting to use this with every grade. I also hope to expand it even further and create it for the other domains as well. I will use the TRTW framework and hopefully when everything is said and done, I will have curriculum for all grades K-5 and for all domains; reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Benefits for the EL Community

The benefits for this project is what drove me to do it in the first place. If I was to meet a new EL teacher like myself when I started out, I would be able to confidently lead them to this and proudly say that this can be effective to teaching EL students. I plan on sharing my work with the other EL staff members at my school district to hopefully have something more unified and can be continued even after elementary school. Middle school and high school staff can have students coming in with similar knowledge and be able to quickly know what students have worked on and continue the work at a higher level.

I also think that having this project can be extremely beneficial to smaller school districts. As mentioned in my research in Chapter Two, purchasing EL curriculum, or any curriculum in general, can be very expensive. Small school districts don't necessarily have the funding to buy a curriculum. If an EL teacher had the knowledge that something like this can be created and have it be helpful, it would help the district financially and save money. It would also help the EL teacher reduce the amount of stress over what they will be teaching to be effective.

Conclusion

In summation, this project and research has benefited me greatly. I believe that I have become a stronger teacher by doing research that I was passionate about and that dealt with my actual profession. In the teaching professions, we are required to do continuing education to stay current with new research and to continue to improve on our teaching. For me, this was a great continuation of learning for me.

I felt that the Capstone as a whole was the icing on the cake for my development as an English Language teacher. I started at Hamline with no EL experience and came to get my license in EL so that I could teach it. When I received my initial license, I decided to finish it out with pursuing my Master's in EL, as I became passionate about teaching EL. However, throughout teaching and learning more about EL, I continued to still have that question, *how can effective curriculum be developed for elementary English language students?* in the back of my head and I remember posting to discussion forums that I struggled with finding an answer. So to me, this is like closing a door on uncertainty and learning as I go, to opening another to being a strong advocate for EL students and a master in my profession. I feel confident when I talk to other teachers and people about EL and EL instruction, so I feel strongly that I have come a long way from where I started. I also hope that I can continue with the quote I mentioned a the beginning, teachers who love teaching, teach children to love learning. I love teaching, especially teaching EL, and I hope I can have my students to love learning because of it.

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