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How Do Schools Assess and Deliver Effective Professional Development to Mainstream
Teachers With a Focus on Supporting Multilingual Learners?

by

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

Hamline University

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Abstract

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A significant educational concern in the state of Minnesota is that there is a substantial achievement gap between native English speakers and Multilingual Learners (MLLs). Despite implementation of federal (ESSA) and state legislation (LEAPS Act) designed to address this issue, an achievement gap still persists and Minnesota educators continue to struggle to support MLLs academically. This capstone project uses a synthesis from a literature review and the creation of a website, survey and pre-selected curated professional development resources in order to answer the question: *How Do Schools Assess and Deliver Effective Professional Development to Mainstream Teachers With a Focus on Supporting Multilingual Learners?* The answer to this question is to employ a combination of effective professional development features and the State-Wide English Learning (SWEL) framework in order to assist educators by identifying and enhancing their dispositions, knowledge and skills so MLLs are supported academically to the fullest extent.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background

As it currently stands, an assessment tool to determine the professional development needs of educators in the realm of working with English Language Learners (ELLs) does not exist. This lack of assessment tool is highly disconcerting considering districts in Minnesota are required by law to offer professional development to their educators several times a year so their staff stay up to date with pertinent knowledge and skills in order to maintain and renew their teaching license. Without knowing specifically what teachers' current strengths and areas for growth are, schools cannot effectively offer professional development to address these concerns, let alone know what teachers' wants and needs are when it comes to serving ELLs.

Prior to educational legislation passed in 2014, Minnesota teachers did not have to demonstrate participation in ELL specific training or substantiate areas of growth in working with this population related to academic knowledge and skills as requirements for teacher relicensure. In 2014, the Minnesota Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success Act (LEAPS) was enacted to set the precedent for teacher accountability while working with ELLs. In essence, this state law was developed to do the following:

Provide an assurance that all Minnesota teachers and administrators possess the knowledge and skills needed to provide appropriate instructions to ELs, to support and accelerate ELs in academic literacy, including oral academic language, and

achievement in content areas in a regular classroom setting (Minnesota Department of Education, nd., p. 4).

Minnesota offers four tiers of teaching licensure. For the purpose of this paper, I will review licensure renewal requirements for Tier 3 and Tier 4 since a majority of teachers hold these licensures. According to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) (2019), Minnesota teachers with Tier 3 and Tier 4 Licenses must “complete and verify 75 (Tier 3) to 125 (Tier 4) approved clock hours, evidence of professional reflection and growth in best practices, and evidence of professional development” (pp. 5–6). When reviewing evidence of professional reflection and growth in best practices, educators require “District-approved training in meeting the needs of English Learners aligned with Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards for English Language Learners” (PELSB, 2019, p. 5.) In particular, requirements for teacher relicensure focus on professional growth related to working with ELLs. This growth refers to educator growth, where educators are expected to engage in reflection related to their approaches in working with ELLs (Schornack, 2016).

Although this educational legislation was a fundamental and transformative step by holding Minnesota administrators and teachers accountable, some aspects such as the language and growth criteria are troubling. According to Schornack (2016), Minnesota principals and administrators are tasked with providing professional development which supports reflection and adaptation of educational practices. The broad language permits schools to select educator professional development that fits within their needs. However, if the criteria is too broad, misinterpretation can result, especially if the PD selected is not

based on evidence-based practices grounded in research and theories specific to working with ELLs. There appears to be a lack of explicit guidance for educators in meeting these training requirements (Schornack, 2016).

If the policy does not provide guidance in how to implement and adhere to requirements, then there must be an assessment tool to determine how and if teachers applying for relicensure are meeting the requirements. Unfortunately, this leads to the second issue related to a lack of clear criteria against professional statements of relevant growth or the basis for evaluation (Schornack, 2016). A year after LEAPS became law, Minnesota's electronic reporting system for tracking educator training was not set up to track PD for ELLs. Thus, teachers' renewing their teaching license were required to provide a self-assessment of their professional growth (Williams, 2016). This is concerning because self-assessment is subjective and without a rubric of standards to meet, appears meaningless. Another more concerning issue is whether the professional statements of growth are evaluated to begin with. Are Minnesota school districts checking the statements? Is the Minnesota Department of Education grading them to validate that teachers meet requirements for growth (Schornack, 2016)? The legislation does not mandate an effective educator assessment tool to monitor and evaluate its implementation on an ongoing basis. This issue at hand is exactly why my survey needs to be created. Without a current evaluation tool, we have no way to assess the growth of educators let alone their growth in working with ELLs.

Although this law was created over seven years ago and despite mainstream teachers' best intentions, many educators still struggle, feel unprepared, and are unsure about how to support these students academically. This is an ongoing issue and concern

due to the fact that as of 2021, 8.5% of Minnesota students (76,361) identify as ELLs (Minnesota Department of Education, 2021). The growing population of ELLs along with their myriad of languages has necessitated that Minnesota schools develop programming to support them with academic success (Zittlow, 2012). These students spend most of their time in mainstream classes such as math, science, social studies, etc. where they substantially lag behind. A considerable achievement gap of around 34–59 points still exists between Minnesota ELLs and Minnesota non-ELLs in grades 4 and grades 8 when comparing their math, reading and science scores (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2021).

While the ELL label is still used in federal documents, the term multilingual learners (MLLs) is a more positive label because it focuses on the linguistic assets that these students possess. Based on this logic, I will refer to these students as MLLs throughout my paper.

While working as an English Language Educational Assistant supporting middle school and high school MLLs, I saw the consequences first hand when educators lacked essential dispositions, knowledge, and skills necessary to support and adapt instruction for MLLs. Some educators viewed my students through a deficit lens and saw them as a problem requiring more work for them. My students were acutely aware of specific teachers who did not like them and felt uncomfortable and unwelcome in their classrooms. Some teachers did not attempt to pronounce students' names correctly or engage students about where they came from. Cultural identity is intricately woven into every aspect of an MLL and many felt disrespected and invisible. Some teachers were not aware of culture shock or how some countries' educational customs were different. If

students struggled to adhere to the new school schedule or were continuously late, some teachers assumed students were acting out or deliberately being disrespectful. When it came to making content comprehensible and more accessible, some teachers were not aware that they needed to explicitly model language or provide step-by-step instructions so students could actively participate in assignments and labs. When teachers saw students not doing anything, some teachers assumed they were being lazy or defiant. In actuality, the students were confused and did not understand what to do. Many of them felt stupid and humiliated when they were not able to participate and were embarrassed to ask for help from their peers or teachers.

The culmination of the shortcomings of the LEAPS legislative language, the lack of an assessment tool for educators to determine their professional development needs related to working with MLLs, as well as educators not having essential dispositions, knowledge, and skills has resulted in an ongoing achievement gap with dire educational consequences for our Minnesota MLLs. Thus, my capstone research question was developed: *How do schools assess and deliver effective professional development to mainstream teachers with a focus on supporting Multilingual Learners?*

Chapter Overview

This project sought to create a website which includes two key features: a survey for mainstream teachers' to assess their dispositions, knowledge, and skills in working with MLLs; and curated resources that teachers can use for individualized professional development.

Chapter One provides a detailed explanation for the motivation behind my project. I reflect on insights gained through my personal and professional experiences

which provide context leading to my exposure and awareness of this current issue. I also explore the rationale behind this project. Lastly, I summarize the importance of this chapter and provide an overview of the upcoming chapters.

Personal Connection

As a future multilingual (ML) teacher, building relationships with my students is essential to who I am and a vital part of my teaching style. Hamline's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program focuses heavily on creating curriculum which is student-centered, culturally relevant, and supportive of a continuous reflective process (internally and pedagogically). As a reflective educator, it is essential to understand that identities shape the way we see our world and this is also true for our K-12 multilingual students. I explore my cultural, racial, and linguistic identity through the three locations I've lived in chronologically: Saudi Arabia, California, and Minnesota.

Reflection

As a child, I grew up in a very diverse overseas compound known as Dhahran. Dhahran, Saudi Arabia felt like a world of its own due to its multiracial, multicultural, and multilingual residents. It is because of this beautiful diversity that ML classrooms feel like home. I am also a child of an interracial couple and I identify as a brown woman of color of mixed heritage (Goan, Italian, English, Scottish, Turkish). Despite this diversity, I struggled to fit in with my white peers in school because I was a third culture kid and because I didn't look like a typical American kid. Despite my struggles, I loved learning and several teachers supported me and helped me feel welcomed.

After seventh grade, my family and I moved from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia to Fresno, California. Living in two different countries, Saudi Arabia and the United States,

and adapting to different cultural norms based on my location taught me the values of flexibility and open-mindedness.

When I moved from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia to Fresno, California in 2004, I experienced culture shock despite being raised overseas as an American and speaking English fluently. During my first day of eighth grade, students asked me if I lived in a tent and rode a camel to school because I lived in Saudi Arabia. They also commented on how well I spoke English. I realized some Americans were ignorant about foreign countries and that the students probably thought I was a Bedouin. During eighth grade through twelfth grade, I made lasting friendships with students of color from different cultures (Egyptian, Punjabi, Mexican) and was mentored by several teachers which had a lasting impact on me.

In 2009, I left Fresno, California and moved out of state to Minneapolis, Minnesota to attend college at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. During high school, my brown racial identity was developed and I felt welcomed and whole. However, when I moved to Minnesota, I was forced to reflect on my white racial identity due to the loss of my tan because of the cold weather and lack of sunlight.

Most MLLs are students of color while a majority of Minnesota educators identify as white. MLLs are a diverse group of students raised with a variety of cultural and ethnic norms. Most Minnesota teachers are raised in American culture. Minnesotan educators must be culturally competent and incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy into their curriculum so they can develop trust, rapport, and understand their MLLs. Therefore, it is critical for educators teaching MLLs to have a deep understanding of their own racial

identity so they can understand how their life experiences relate to and differ from their students' experiences.

While living overseas and in the United States, I was exposed to several different languages such as English, Spanish, French, and Arabic. I was given the opportunity to learn Spanish from 6th grade through college and eventually became fluent. I know first hand how challenging learning a new language can be. While in college, I took Arabic classes and it took considerable time and effort to learn the alphabet. I can understand, relate to, and have empathy and compassion towards MLLs learning English as a second or third language and the struggles they may face. I see the value in allowing students to use their native languages in class to help them better understand academic English. It is also important that students and their educators see their native languages as an asset.

Professional Connection

In the previous section, I reflected on my cultural, racial, and linguistic identity in order to make connections between my experiences and those similar to MLLs. In this section, I summarize relevant work experiences in education that later led to enrollment at Hamline University. Lastly, I highlight two professional development presentations, one done collaboratively and the other personally, while student teaching in Fall 2020.

English Language Educational Assistant

I was hired as an English Language Educational Assistant at a middle school and pushed into sixth to eighth grade mainstream science and social studies classrooms to support MLLs who were struggling and failing. During my time in these classrooms, I realized there was an immensely heavy academic load consisting of content, academic language, and vocabulary. I did my best to translate for my Spanish speakers who had

higher literacy in Spanish and used cognates to make connections between what they knew and what had to be learned. Cognates are words in two languages that share a similar meaning, spelling, and pronunciation. For example, education in English translates into ‘educacion’ in Spanish.

I learned how to create specific supports for students, such as graphic organizers. These supports allowed students to visualize language, organize their thoughts, and make stronger connections between the lessons and their life experiences. Whether using a t-chart, venn diagram, table or a picture, the students seemed to grasp the content and vocabulary more effectively.

After making immense progress with the middle schoolers during the first year, I was later given the opportunity to work at the high school level and was pushed into ninth to twelfth grade mainstream classrooms to provide one-on-one support. At the high school level, academic stakes are much higher. While working at both a middle school and high school, I noticed a significant lack of understanding and support from mainstream teachers in providing legal academic language accommodations and modifications in curriculum and assessments.

Hamline’s Master of Arts in Teaching, ESL Program

After working for two years as an English Language Educational Assistant, I decided I wanted to become an ML Teacher. In 2017, I enrolled in Hamline University’s Master of Arts in Teaching Program pursuing an initial ESL teaching license for K-12. During this program, I learned essential disposition, knowledge, and skills to support MLLs academically.

Student Teaching Professional Development.

Minnesota School District MLL Design Team. In the summer of 2020, I was given the opportunity to work with a group of amazing female ML Teachers at a district I would student teach at in Fall 2020. Every year, this district provides teachers the opportunity to create and present their own professional development individually or collectively with their departments. The MLL Design Team decided to create a professional development parent/student survey that would be meaningful and highlight the experiences of MLL families in this district. We administered, interviewed, and analyzed the feedback from our MLL students and families. The results of this survey indicated the following three themes: teachers' implicit biases made students feel invisible, an asset lens is necessary to make students feel welcomed, and teachers' must have high expectations for MLLs. The results of the survey prompted my interest in developing a teacher survey which became the basis for my capstone project.

Hamline Student Teaching Seminar. I participated in GED 7050, a Student Teaching Seminar, which was a prerequisite in order to obtain my teaching license. Every two weeks, there was a nightly meeting where a specific topic was addressed and discussed. I was selected by my ML student teaching supervisors to create content and to teach Academic Language Supports to my student-teaching peers. I designed a teaching guide for mainstream teachers which covered the following topics: backwards planning, vocabulary, how to model and scaffold language, how to model and scaffold instruction and assessments, and concrete examples of how to differentiate assignments and assessments. Having completed the seminar, it renewed my passion towards developing my capstone project to assess the professional development needs of educators and help MLLs reach their full academic potential.

Rationale

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law. This law recognizes the needs and diversity of MLLs in an effort to close the ongoing achievement gap between MLLs and non-MLLs (Minnesota Department of Education, 2021). ESSA also acknowledges and emphasizes the importance of preparing all teachers to educate MLLs (Minnesota Department of Education, 2021). Despite the objective of ESSA, the administration of the law has not resulted in the expected outcomes. Therefore, implementing these objectives became the rationalization for my capstone project.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided essential background and critique on the LEAPS educational law, detailed the ongoing achievement gap impacting MLLs as well as the negative consequences of educators lacking essential dispositions, knowledge and skills. I also reflected on my personal and professional experiences and highlighted my rationale for this project which culminated in the following question: *How do schools assess and deliver effective professional development to mainstream teachers with a focus on supporting Multilingual Learners?*

In Chapter Two, I explicitly define and review the features of effective teacher professional development. I provide an overview of the State-Wide English Language (SWEL) framework (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020) which details six essential dispositions, six knowledge areas and six skill areas mainstream teachers need to develop in order to best support MLLs. Chapter Three provides an overview of the methods used in developing my project which includes two key features: a survey for mainstream teachers' to assess their knowledge, skills and dispositions in working with MLLs; and

curated resources that teachers can use for individualized professional development.

Finally, Chapter Four features my reflection surrounding the process of completing the project in its entirety.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

As noted earlier in Chapter One, an assessment tool to determine the professional development needs of educators does not exist. Without this assessment tool, schools lack pertinent information related to the professional development needs of their educators when it comes to serving MLLs. Schools must know their educators' needs so they can effectively provide professional development to their staff that will help develop and transform their educators' dispositions, knowledge, and skills. LEAPS legislation requires districts to provide specific training to support MLLs. As part of teacher relicensure requirements, educators must reflect and detail their professional growth working with MLLs. Because the LEAPS legal language is ambiguous, the professional growth statements are not based on standards, and Minnesota school districts' and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) are lacking in oversight and monitoring, we can assume that mainstream teachers are not getting the professional development support they need, and thus, our MLLs are missing the total academic support that the LEAPS law intended to provide them.

The purpose of this capstone is twofold. First, effective professional development must be defined in order to create an assessment tool for mainstream teachers' needs. Second, the State-Wide English Language (SWEL) framework (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020) is discussed. In particular, the author provides the background of the SWEL framework and a detailed description of the six dispositions, six knowledge areas and six

skills that educators need to support MLLs. This framework is the foundation for the survey in evaluating essential dispositions, knowledge and skills of educators.

These topics provide the framework for better understanding the capstone question: *How do schools assess and deliver effective professional development to mainstream teachers with a focus on supporting Multilingual Learners?*

Effective Teacher Professional Development

In order to develop an effective assessment tool geared specifically for teachers, the following is addressed in this section: first, effective professional development is defined; and second, features of effective professional development are detailed and evaluated.

Definition of Effective Teacher Professional Development

In order to fully understand professional development, one must define it. Guskey (2000) defined effective professional development as an “ongoing, intentional and systematic process” (p. 29). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) explained it as “structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes” (p. v). More recently, Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) described effective professional development as “sustained, collaborative, subject specific, draws on external expertise, has buy-in from teachers and is practice based” (pp. 46–47).

Features of Effective Teacher Professional Development

It is imperative that educators and school leaders know essential features of professional development so they can implement and conduct effective professional development (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). Guskey and Yoon (2009),

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), and Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) each conducted separate meta-analyses of studies on the effectiveness of teacher professional development.

Guskey and Yoon reviewed 1,343 professional development studies to determine the relationship between professional development and student learning. Of these studies, only nine met the standards of credible evidence set by the What Works Clearinghouse, the arm of the U.S. Department of Education. All nine studies focused on elementary schools and were conducted between 1986 and 2003.

Darling-Hammond et al. reviewed 35 rigorous studies that demonstrated a positive link between teacher professional development, teacher practices, and student outcomes. They revealed characteristics of effective professional development and of these studies, only one professional development program included all features in a rigorous manner.

Sims and Fletcher-Wood conducted a methodological review in which they evaluated two meta-reviews (Cordingley et al., 2015; Dunst et al., 2015) and several literature reviews and original research articles which supported the consensus around characteristics of effective professional development. They specifically evaluated the inclusion criteria and inference methods of the meta-reviews and articles to determine the effectiveness of the professional development features.

The current consensus is that effective teacher professional development includes the following features: focus on content, involve active learning, emphasize collaboration, utilize models of effective practice, incorporate coaching and expert support, facilitate feedback and reflection, and embed sustained duration

(Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). However, when this author reviewed all three meta-analyses, only three of the seven features were found to be effective. In particular, these features were active learning, coaching and expert support, and feedback and reflection.

Effective features.

Involve active learning. The findings of Darling-Hammond et al., Guskey and Yoon and Sims and Fletcher-Wood all indicated a positive relationship between teacher learning and student outcomes. Sims and Fletcher-Wood noted that professional development was most effective when teacher participation was voluntary. Darling-Hammond et al. went a step further and noted that components of professional development such as choice, reflection, and inquiry were the most impactful on transforming educator practices when active learning was involved.

Incorporate coaching and expert support. The findings of Darling-Hammond et al., Guskey and Yoon, and Sims and Fletcher-Wood all indicated a positive relationship between expert support and student learning. Sims and Fletcher-Wood noted that professional development was more effective when it involved outside experts. Darling-Hammond et al. specified that experts played a critical role in creating effective professional development. Guskey and Yoon explored further and highlighted that professional development was effective when experts (program authors or researchers) directly presented and facilitated the professional development.

Facilitate feedback and reflection. The findings of Darling-Hammond et al., Guskey and Yoon and Sims and Fletcher-Wood all conveyed a positive relationship between teacher reflection and student outcomes. Darling-Hammond et al. explored more

deeply, indicating that professional development that embedded feedback and reflection resulted in positive teacher outcomes when teachers considered and modified their teaching practices.

Features with conflicting scientific evidence. Of the seven features, four were evaluated as having conflicting scientific evidence citing they were not effective professional development features. These features included content, collaboration, models of effective practice, and sustained duration.

Focus on content. The findings of Darling-Hammond et al. and Guskey and Yoon showed a positive relationship between content and student outcomes. Darling-Hammond et al. noted effective professional development which focused on the content that teachers taught demonstrated a positive impact on student achievement. Guskey and Yoon expanded on this premise by noting that professional development was most effective when it focused on enhancing teachers' content knowledge and their pedagogic content knowledge. However, Sims and Fletcher-Wood noted that existing research did not demonstrate such claims, resulting in an absence of evidence.

Emphasis on collaboration. The findings of Darling-Hammond et al. demonstrated a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievement. Darling-Hammond et al. noted that effective professional development which incorporated collaborative structures for teachers to problem solve and learn resulted in positive student achievement. They went a step further and highlighted that when educators shared ideas and collaborated, it resulted in changes of school culture and instruction.

However, the findings of Guskey and Yoon and Sims and Fletcher-Wood indicated a lack of evidence citing this feature. According to Guskey and Yoon, none of the successful professional development programs they evaluated included collaborative problem solving. Although they did not definitively state that this feature was ineffective, they noted that it did not have “strong, valid, and scientifically defensible evidence demonstrating that it was effective” (p. 496). According to Sims and Fletcher-Wood, collaboration lacked evidential warrant. They highlighted an absence of evidence lacking merit that this characteristic was a component of effective professional development. They noted that collaboration could be correlated to effective professional development but not an actual outcome for it.

Utilize models of effective practice. The findings of Darling-Hammond et al., and Sims and Fletcher-Wood revealed a positive relationship between effective practice and student outcomes. Darling-Hammond et al. noted that effective professional development models utilized best practices such as “lessons, units, sequencing, student work and observations” (p. 11).

However, Guskey and Yoon noted that most effective professional development was not due to a set of best practices. Their analysis identified no effect on student learning outcomes. According to Guskey and Yoon, the effectiveness of professional development was determined by “the specific content involved, the nature of the work, and the context in which that work took place” (p. 497).

Embed sustained duration. The findings of Darling-Hammond et al., and Guskey and Yoon showed a positive relationship between sustained duration and teacher learning. Darling-Hammond et al. noted effective professional development provided teachers with

“adequate time to learn, practice, implement and reflect new teaching strategies” (p. vi). Guskey and Yoon went a step further and highlighted that on average, effective professional development which included at least 30 or more hours of PD demonstrated positive outcomes.

However, Sims and Fletcher-Wood noted that the legislation for sustained duration for professional development should be revised due to a lack of evidence. They highlighted that professional development which included repeated practice of specific skills, the duration of the PD showed no relationship or impact on student outcomes. Therefore, they noted that repeated practice was more compelling due to the combination of evidence of correlation and evidence of mechanism.

Additional features. There was one feature in particular that was included in one study but not in the others. This feature was workshops.

Workshops. Guskey and Yoon findings showed a positive relationship between workshops and student learning. In particular, Guskey and Yoon noted workshops which “implemented research-based instructional practices, involved active-learning experiences, and provided teachers with opportunities to adapt their practices” (p. 496) demonstrated improvements in student learning.

Summary

In this section, effective teacher professional development was discussed. In order to define and detail essential features of professional development, three meta-analyses (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021) were reviewed. A comprehensive definition was presented and the seven features of effective professional development were described and analyzed for positive and negative

outcomes. The following section provides a thorough description of the State-Wide English Language (SWEL) framework which is the foundation for the development of this project's survey, website and curated professional development resources.

Project framework

In the previous section, the definition and features of effective professional development were reviewed. In this section, the author provides background information about the SWEL framework (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020) as well as a detailed description of the six critical dispositions, six knowledge frames and six critical skills which educators need to academically support MLLs.

The State-Wide English Learning (SWEL) framework

The SWEL framework (2020) by Benegas and Stolpestad was created as a follow-up to their English Learners in the Mainstream (ELM) Federal Grant Program. Their book *Teacher Leadership for School-Wide English Learning* specifically details the necessity for this framework and discusses its essential components.

There are two conceptual frameworks which created the foundation for the SWEL framework. The first conceptual framework is known as distributed leadership. The second conceptual framework is known as disposition, knowledge and skills (DKS), also referred to as a competencies framework.

Distributed Leadership. The first conceptual framework is known as distributed leadership. Spillane (2005) described distributed leadership as a focus on interactive leadership practice involving leaders, followers and the context. Leadership is the responsibility of the many rather than a few (Spillane, 2005). This is an inherent part of teaching in a K-12 classroom.

Disposition, Knowledge, and Skills (DKS). The second framework is cited as disposition, knowledge, and skills (DKS). It may also be called a competencies framework. According to King and Newmann (2000), “to be effective, professional development should address three dimensions of school capacity—educators’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions” (p. 578). Others may recognize this framework as a competencies framework which is the consensus that teachers are the main source of knowledge, skills, wisdom and models for students (Gemedá et al., 2014). This framework has similarities with the Linguistically Responsive Teaching (LRT) framework developed by Lucas and Villegas (2013), which includes orientations, pedagogical knowledge and skills for preparing linguistically responsive educators. It takes teachers many years to develop expertise in the complex set of knowledge, skills, and orientations needed to teach culturally and linguistically diverse MLLs (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). A three-pronged framework prioritizes teachers’ dispositions toward MLLs, their pedagogical knowledge, and their ability to implement that knowledge (Jimenez et al., 2015).

Definitions of Dispositions, Knowledge, and Skills.

Dispositions. The Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (2019) defined teacher dispositions as “the habits of professional action and moral commitments that underlie an educator’s performance” (p. 2).

Knowledge. Benegas and Stolpestad (2020) defined teacher knowledge as “an understanding of the facts and concepts of the content areas of instruction” (p. 11).

Skills. Benegas and Stolpestad (2020) defined teacher skills as “the ability to apply pedagogical knowledge in the classroom” (p. 11). Some examples may include

“connecting standards to learning targets, designing effective assessments, and setting up a developmentally appropriate classroom” (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020, p. 11).

There is a current gap in what K-12 mainstream teachers in Minnesota need to know in order to effectively and academically support MLLs holistically. Utilizing the SWEL framework, essential components of dispositions, knowledge, and skills are outlined in the following sections. Each section explores the fundamentals and implications with MLLs.

Six Critical Dispositions

Benegas and Stolpestad detail six critical dispositions needed to effectively and respectfully serve MLLs.

1. Educators empathize with circumstances related to immigration.
2. Educators are culturally sensitive and sustaining.
3. Educators believe that marginalization and oppression affect the educational experiences of English learners.
4. Educators support their students’ home language development.
5. Educators recognize the challenges of learning English and content simultaneously.
6. Educators are committed to ongoing professional development.

(pp. 49–50).

Six Knowledge Frames

Benegas and Stolpestad detailed six knowledge frames needed to effectively and respectfully serve MLLs.

1. Educators know about second language acquisition and approaches to teaching language through content.
2. Educators know about approaches to supporting first language literacy.
3. Educators know about the theories of cultural relevance and sustainability.
4. Educators know who immigrants are and how immigration happens.
5. Educators know systems of oppression and how they affect the educational experiences of English learners.
6. Educations know approaches to English learner advocacy and the legal requirements for adequately serving English learners.

(p. 71).

Six Critical Skills

Benegas and Stolpestad detailed six critical skills for educators needed to effectively and respectfully serve English learners.

1. Educators can plan for academic language instruction.
2. Educators can teach and assess academic language.
3. Educators can differentiate for English learners.
4. Educators can support first language literacy.
5. Educators can enact culturally relevant practices.
6. Educators can advocate for immigrant families.

(p. 97).

Summary

In this chapter, I defined the definition of effective professional development and detailed and evaluated features of effective professional development. I also provided

background information about this project's framework known as the SWEL framework (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020). Components of this framework, essential definitions and detailed descriptions of the six critical dispositions, six knowledge frames and six critical skills were highlighted as necessities for educators to effectively and respectfully serve MLLs resulting in the following question: *How do schools assess and deliver effective professional development to mainstream teachers with a focus on supporting Multilingual Learners?*

In Chapter Three, I provide a description of my project as well as the research behind my design choices. My project includes three key features: a website which includes the following two features; survey for mainstream teachers to assess their knowledge, skills and dispositions in working with MLLs; and curated professional development resources that teachers can use for individualized or group professional development.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

In Chapter Two, a literature review covered several components contributing to answering the capstone question: *How do schools assess and deliver effective professional development to mainstream teachers with a focus on supporting Multilingual Learners?* These components included the definition and features of effective professional development as well as a thorough discussion of the State-Wide English Language (SWEL) framework (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020).

In this chapter, I provide a description of my project as well as the research behind my design choices. My project includes a website with two key features: a survey for mainstream teachers to assess their knowledge, skills and dispositions in working with MLLs; and curated resources that teachers can use for individualized professional development. I provide an explanation of the target audience and setting for the project, the timeline for completing the project, and how the project's effectiveness was assessed.

This capstone project incorporates a website which contains a survey plus curated professional development resources. The goal of this multifaceted project is to reach as many Minnesota teachers resulting in an educational transformation which effectively aids them in supporting MLLs to the fullest extent. My personal contribution, hope and expectation for this dynamic, multifaceted project is that it will become a practical tool for all educational stakeholders to utilize. The ultimate goal is for Minnesota schools to support MLLs in a holistic manner with the expectation of developing their academic English and overall educational success.

Project Description

This section details the primary goal and the four outcomes for this project. It also provides an in-depth description of the project elements (website, survey and curated professional development resources).

The primary goal for this capstone project is to help Minnesota educators determine their professional development needs related to their strengths and areas for growth in terms of supporting MLLs academically. The desired outcomes are sixfold: first, take the survey to determine professional development needs; second, survey results identify growth areas; third, educators select and utilize curated recommended professional development resources for growth areas; fourth, educators' dispositions, knowledge, and skills are enhanced; fifth, Minnesota educators apply enhanced learning towards instructing and assessing MLLs; sixth, MLLs achieve higher academic success resulting in a lower achievement gap.

The project consisted of creating a website that incorporates a survey and curated professional development resources for both individualized and group professional development.

I chose to create a website due to its easy accessibility and because I wanted to reach a wide audience of educators across Minnesota. The website consists of 7 pages.

Page 1 - Homepage

Page 2 - Survey

Page 3 - Survey Results

Page 4 - The SWEL framework

Page 5 - Effective Features of Professional Development

Page 6 - Curated Professional Development Resources

- A. Dispositions
- B. Knowledge
- C. Skills

Page 7 - References

I chose to create a 26-question survey to aid Minnesota mainstream teachers' in reflecting and assessing their perceived strengths and areas for growth when working with MLLs. Based on their scores, the survey results determined the appropriate professional development they needed to effectively support them. I chose a Google Form survey because of how easy it was to create and its accessibility. The MN ELM Survey included three checkboxes related to grade level, role and years of experience. The SWEL framework sections included 6 questions for disposition, 9 questions for knowledge, and 6 questions for skills. The survey utilized a Likert scale to allow teachers to reflect on their disposition, knowledge, and skills. The last two sections included a reflection section with 3 questions related to strengths, areas for growth and extra support and an interest section with 2 checkboxes about the MN ELM Survey and SWEL framework.

I chose to recommend curated professional development resources because there is such a wealth of PD available at present. Due to the fact that every educator has unique needs, especially when working with and supporting MLLs, this section allows individual mainstream teachers, multilingual teachers/coaches, and professional development administrators to select from a variety of sources depending on their individual or collective needs related to developing dispositions, knowledge, or skills.

At the beginning of the survey, there are 3 checkboxes for educators to indicate their teaching grade level, their role and years of teaching experience.

The survey used 'I statements' with a Likert scale of 1-5 with the following options:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all familiar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely familiar

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all aware	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely aware

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all comfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely comfortable

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely confident

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all comfortable/confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely comfortable/confident

The six dispositions statements were written as follows:

1. I understand and empathize with the circumstances surrounding MLLs' immigration experiences.
2. I acknowledge the importance of being culturally sensitive and sustaining.
3. I acknowledge and believe that marginalization and oppression have impacted the educational experiences of MLLs'.
4. I understand, value, and support MLLs' native language development.
5. I recognize the challenges MLLs' experience when learning both academic content and English simultaneously.
6. I understand the necessity of participating in professional development to enhance my dispositions, knowledge and skills.

The six critical knowledge components were written as follows:

7. I understand the importance of second language acquisition.
8. I feel comfortable teaching academic language through content.
9. I am aware of approaches to support first language literacy.
10. I understand and acknowledge the importance of culturally relevant and sustainable theories to teaching.
11. I am aware of the immigrants in my school community and why immigration occurs.
12. I recognize that systems of oppression exist.
13. I am aware that systems of oppression have impacted MLLs' educational experiences.
14. I am knowledgeable of how to effectively advocate for MLLs'.

15. I am aware of the legal requirements (LEAPS, ESSA, etc.) for supporting MLLs' academically.

The six critical skills section was written as follows:

16. I am comfortable planning for academic language instruction.
17. I feel comfortable teaching and assessing academic language.
18. I feel confident differentiating instruction and formative and summative assessments for my MLL students.
19. I am confident in my abilities to support first language literacy.
20. I feel confident in incorporating culturally relevant practices into my pedagogy.
21. I feel comfortable and confident in my abilities to advocate for immigrant families.

The reflection section included 3 questions utilizing open ended questions so teachers could explain their strengths and areas for growth.

22. What are your strengths when it comes to supporting MLLs'?
23. Please describe any areas in which you struggle when working with MLLs'.
24. What additional professional support would best help you meet your teaching needs?

The interest section included 2 questions about the MN ELM Survey and SWEL framework.

25. Are you interested in proctoring this survey at your Minnesota school or district?
26. Are you interested in participating in SWEL PD Training?

Project framework

This section references and describes researched principles of web and survey design.

Website

When designing a website, the following features should be considered: content, user requirements and expectations, goals, performance, interface issues and usability (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2006, pp. 26–31).

Content. Providing useful content is one of the most critical elements of a website (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2006). My website includes essential content via the State-Wide English Language (SWEL) framework. I offer recommendations for professional development programming that is embedded in the website and includes this essential content.

User requirements. The higher exchange of information between developers and users, the more successful a website. In order to establish user requirements, a survey is one of many options recommended (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2006). My website utilizes a Google Form survey to determine educators' strengths and areas for improvement when working with MLLs. On the final page of the website, there is a Google Form survey so educators can provide overall feedback on the combination of the website, survey, and professional development recommendations. The more feedback I obtain, the better I can adapt and improve the website and flow of learning the users expectations.

Important elements of user expectations are navigation, content and organization (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2006, p. 29). In order to make sure my website is easy to navigate, tabs on the top of my website are used with the following

titles: Home Page, Survey, Survey Results, State-Wide English Language framework (SWEL) framework, Effective features of Professional Development, Curated Professional Development Resources and References. I have organized my website based on the organization of my project. I begin with the purpose and website overview on the home page. I include the survey as part of the second tab of the website as a necessary step to determine professional development needs. The third tab includes information for educators on how to read their survey results to determine which professional development resources they might consider participating in. The fourth tab includes an overview of the State-Wide English Language (SWEL) framework which highlights six dispositions, six knowledge areas, and six skills. The fifth tab of professional development recommendations are linked to subpages with disposition, knowledge, and skills. The content and the manner in which it is arranged is reflected in the website. The sixth tab includes references utilized for this website. Lastly, a link to a survey to provide feedback is found at the bottom of each page.

Goals. Website developers must set and state their goals before the design process can begin (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2006). Goals determine the audience, content, function, and look of a website. My intention for this website is to help educators assess and identify their strengths and areas for improvement when working with MLLs. Due to their survey results, they have the opportunity to participate in any of the recommended professional development resources which enhance their knowledge and skills to academically support MLLs.

Performance. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006), decisions about content, format, interaction, and navigation should be considered before picking out colors and graphics (p. 29).

Interface issues. When developing a website, the following issues must be reviewed: the context of website usage, the experience levels of the users, and the types of tasks users will perform (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2006, p. 29).

Useability. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006), setting performance and/or preference goals are necessary in order to help developers build better websites (p. 31).

Survey

When creating a survey, the following features should be considered: mode, length, order, type of question, rating scale, type of survey, validity and reliability.

Mode. According to Harrison (2007) if your mode of survey is online, the formatting of the survey is important to consider. It is also important to consider having clear instructions if administering a survey online (p. 1). I chose to utilize a Google Form survey because of its simplicity and easy formatting. I also included a clear description at the top of the survey so educators can easily understand the purpose and how to answer questions in the survey.

Length. Regarding the length of a survey, a short one is recommended (Harrison, 2007, p. 2). Due to this recommendation, my survey had a total of twenty-six questions.

Order. According to Harrison (2007), when a series of questions are similar, it is recommended to randomize the order to improve results (p. 2). However, I didn't utilize

this method because although the content was similar, the I statements were not. They were organized based on the SWEL framework structure in a logical and sequential manner.

Sensitive questions are best placed at the end of surveys (Harrison, 2007, p. 2). Therefore, the four open-ended questions are placed at the end because they ask about perceived strengths and weaknesses related to working with MLLs, which can be a sensitive topic.

Type of Question. Utilizing open-ended questions allows the respondent to have ownership in their answer. They are also time-consuming and require a lot of work to analyze (Harrison, 2007, p. 2). Although open-ended questions might be time-consuming, the online Google Form survey does not diminish from the amount of time it takes to complete it. Although I will need to analyze the responses, since the survey is online and records the responses online, I can access and review them at any time, thus making the process fairly easy.

Rating Scale. According to Harrison (2007), when a survey includes a rating scale, the best scales are between five and seven points (p. 2). For this reason, my survey included a Likert scale, as described in Mills (2014), with five points with a series of I statements specific to reflecting on their disposition, knowledge, and skills related to working with MLLs (p. 102).

Type of Survey. I chose to create an attitude scale survey. According to Creswell (2014), this type of survey will allow me to provide a “numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 155).

Validity and Reliability. According to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (n.d.), validity refers to whether or not a survey is actually measuring what it is supposed to (p. 3). Reliability refers to when a survey produces consistent results when used to measure the same thing over and over (p. 3). When developing the I statements for the survey, I ensured that my survey statements and questions were valid and reliable.

The State-Wide English Language (SWEL) framework

The content of the survey is based on the SWEL framework (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020), which includes six critical dispositions, six knowledge frames, and six critical skills. Please refer back to Chapter 2 to review these components.

Audience and Setting

The intended audience for this project were Minnesota mainstream K-12 teachers and any educational staff who work directly with K-12 MLLs. This audience was chosen due to the important role they play in supporting MLLs academically. Although I currently work for a Minnesota school district, I wanted my project to be accessible to multiple districts and educators across Minnesota. The intended setting of this project was any elementary, middle school, or high school in Minnesota with an EL program.

Project Timeline

This section provides an overview of the steps and timeline for building the project materials, the survey, and website.

Survey

I began developing the survey during December 2021 to February 2022, after the Research Design course and before the Capstone Project course. I had previously discussed with my content expert about the best survey options available. We had

determined that a Google Form survey would be the easiest to create and the most accessible format for educators across Minnesota. At the end of January, I reached out to the ML Department I student taught with and asked them if they would be interested in administering the ELM survey to their district. The district was participating in ELM Programming and they thought it would be beneficial. I sent my contact an email with the survey on February 11th so the MLL Design Team could review the survey before our collaborative meeting. On February 15th, I met with the MLL Design Team and they provided input and feedback based on the survey. I had several days to modify the survey and sent it back to them on February 20th. They administered it via email on February 22nd and anticipated all staff completing by March 2nd during their Consulting Meeting. I received the data and modified the survey a little more before completing it at the end of March. I had my Content Reviewer and Professor review the survey in April and it was ready to be placed on the website.

Website

I began developing the website during December 2021 to February 2022, after the Research Design course and before the Capstone Project course. I had considered several website options such as Wix, Google, and Squarespace, yet decided Google would be the easiest and cheapest way to maintain a website. In March, my peer reviewer assisted me with developing my website since she had created and completed a website for her Capstone Project. I had no previous knowledge of developing a website so it was a lot to learn. I developed pages, created text, and added infographics and links to structure my website. In April, I met with my Content Reviewer and she reviewed and provided more technical support for developing my website with subpages and making sure I included

essential features. In May, the week before submission of the final project, we had a final meeting to review and make any last minute changes.

Project Assessment

This section provides an overview of how data was collected via the website, survey and curated professional development resources and how it was evaluated to determine the effectiveness of this project.

Website: Survey & Curated Professional Development Resources

Embedded in the footer of my website, access to a Google Form survey was available on every page of the website so that anyone who accessed the website, took the survey and utilized any of the curated PD sources could provide feedback on what went well and suggest areas for improvement. I will use this feedback to adapt and update these three components of the project.

Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter Three, I went into detail about my project description which included details about the goals, outcomes, and specific aspects of the website and survey. I reviewed the project framework relating important research components for the website and survey. I also explained the audience and setting, the project timeline, and project assessment which were all necessary components in developing my project. The entirety of this chapter addressed this question: *How do schools assess and deliver effective professional development to mainstream teachers with a focus on supporting Multilingual Learners?*

In the final chapter, I provide a discussion of the project in its entirety and reflect upon the process of completing this capstone and the data gathered in answering the capstone questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

Project Reflection

Chapter Introduction

In Chapter Three, I went into detail about my project description which included details about the goals, outcomes, and specific aspects of the website and survey. I reviewed the project framework relating important research components for the website and survey. I also explained the audience and setting, the project timeline, and project assessment which were all necessary components in developing my project. The entirety of this chapter addressed this question: *How do schools assess and deliver effective professional development to mainstream teachers with a focus on supporting Multilingual Learners?*

Chapter Four provides a reflection of the entire project including a summary of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two which was involved in the research for the project, implications, limitations and successes of the project, and how this project applies to the ML teaching profession.

Reflection on Capstone Process

I had several revelations during this capstone process in regards to my role as a researcher, my strengths and styles of writing, as well as my continuous journey as a learner.

Before I took my Research Methods Course for Psychology in undergrad at the University of Minnesota, I was excited to conduct my own research. After taking this course my Sophomore year, I swore I would never do research again. I think my horrible experience conducting research with my assigned group left a sour taste. While taking

upper level Psychology courses and working on my Senior Project, I was required to find, read and summarize psychology research articles related to my topic of Positive Psychology. This endeavor made me more appreciative of the research process and I left the program with an open mind to research.

Although I liked the idea of research, I never imagined I would find myself taking on this role again until I enrolled in graduate school for the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Hamline University. This Capstone Project substantially challenged my capabilities and provided an incredible learning experience. The level of research was more in depth and I developed my skills in several areas. I constructed key terms to isolate specific articles which was a challenge in itself. I surveyed abstracts, then read, highlighted, summarized and developed themes based on key information. I most enjoyed this section of the research process because it revealed important themes and pertinent knowledge that I would share with others.

In terms of my experience with writing, I did not enjoy writing in high school. As I developed and became more confident in my writing skills through undergraduate and graduate school, I thoroughly enjoyed writing reflections pertaining to myself. However, when it came to writing my personal reflection versus summarizing and highlighting important research, I found it difficult to try to summarize my life story into a few pages because I'm very detail-oriented. I discovered that writing about the research was easier than I had anticipated.

In terms of my experience as a learner, I will forever be a lifelong learner. At times, this project was quite challenging and stressful. Previously, I typically wrote for several hours at a time on any given day. However, the pandemic transformed my style of

writing and instead I found myself writing everyday. It is with the support of my family, friends and professors from Hamline that I was able to keep moving forward when writer's block occurred and obstacles arose. Although I'm completing this project at a later time than I anticipated, I am proud of my ability to overcome and persevere and look forward to graduating in May 2022.

Review of Literature

My literature review primarily consisted of research I found detailing features of effective professional development as well as essential components of the State-Wide English Learning (SWEL) framework (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020). My literature also revealed important connections between research and practice.

When it came to determining features of effective professional development, I provided the definition of effective professional development and reviewed the meta-analysis of studies on the effectiveness of teacher professional development by Guskey and Yoon (2009), Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), and Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021). Overall, there was a consensus of nine specific features. However, when I analyzed their research, three features of effective professional development were revealed as most effective: active learning, coaching and expert support, and feedback and reflection. When professional development included active learning, coaching and expert support, and feedback and reflection, positive relationships between student and teacher outcomes were revealed.

When developing my capstone project and determining which curated professional development sources to include on my website, I specifically evaluated them by these three features. I also created an infographic with the summarized research so

viewers would understand the research implications for my selection. I also asked for support from my peer reviewer, capstone professor and content experts to finalize my selection.

When it came to the SWEL framework (2020) by Benegas and Stolpestad, I specifically learned about two conceptual frameworks: distributed leadership and disposition, knowledge and skills (DKS), which created its foundation. I explicitly defined each component based on the work by Benegas and Stolpestad. I also presented six critical dispositions, six knowledge frames and six critical skills which K-12 mainstream teachers in Minnesota need to know in order to effectively and academically support MLLs holistically. Both the DKS and the eighteen critical components became the foundation for my survey and website. In order to create my survey, it was vital to know specific areas which teachers are taught and evaluated on during teacher programs as well as licensure renewal requirements. In particular, the LEAPS Act highlighted that mainstream teachers were evaluated on these areas as part of their professional development self-assessment for professional growth related to working with ELLs.

Based on this framework and legislation requirements, I developed my survey and website. When it came to my survey, I used a Google form and utilizing the eighteen essential components, I developed I statements and short answer questions for the survey. I created a specific tab labeled survey and attached the survey to the website. The website included the definitions of DKS. I also created and embedded an infographic of the SWEL framework so viewers would know that the survey was based on this framework and be able to understand the framework in a simplistic and visually appealing manner.

When it came to making new connections between my literature review while working on my capstone project, I realized that my research on effective teacher professional development and the SWEL framework had further implications. They created a sense of urgency because both have the capacity to change the selection of professional development offered to educators in Minnesota. They can also lead to reflection of current strengths and areas for growth for mainstream teachers resulting in the academic support MLLs desperately deserve and need in Minnesota classrooms.

Project Implications

This Capstone Project revealed three major conclusions which are addressed as follows: enhance professional development, support full implementation of LEAPS Act policy requirements, and lower the achievement gap in Minnesota.

This website could lead to Minnesota educators becoming aware of the SWEL framework. This could result in districts participating in the SWEL framework professional development program by Benegas and Stolpestad. More educator buy-in and participation could yield effective professional development across Minnesota school districts enhancing mainstream teachers' overall skills to support MLLs.

Policy implications could lead to a more thorough examination of LEAPS Act legislation. In particular, a review of mainstream teachers' self-reflection growth areas for relicensure requirements would be evaluated. The development of SWEL standards and a rubric could be created and defined. This could provide better monitoring, oversight and compliance for educational stakeholders to be held accountable to the LEAPS Act.

The survey developed as part of this Capstone Project could be utilized as a future tool for the Department of Education in Minnesota. It could be implemented to evaluate

the professional development needs of Minnesota's mainstream teachers. Based on survey results, it could highlight specific areas of growth related to working with MLLs resulting in better delivery of professional development to mainstream teachers. This would yield better instructional practices, the enhancement of English academic language in classrooms, the improvement of academic success for MLLs, and lower the overall achievement gap in Minnesota.

Project Limitations

This project is a combination of a website, survey and curated professional development resources based on the SWEL framework (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020). Although this Capstone Project can positively impact several areas as noted in the previous section, three areas of limitation related to the website, survey and administration of the survey were noted below.

Access to this multifaceted project is contingent upon access to the website. Although the Google website allows for free access, the ability to access it will be limited to its posting on Hamline University's Projects Website. This means that my potential audience could be limited.

Access to the professional development survey is also contingent upon access to the website or my ability to share it via word of mouth or email. Administration of this survey may be limited based on my current networking skills, communications and support from ML Departments in Minnesota school districts or individuals who email me directly from the website requesting approval of their access. However, with the support of both Michelle Benegas and Amy Stolpestad, there is the potential to send the ELM Survey to the approximate three hundred ELM Coaches in the state of Minnesota helping

to provide accessibility for my survey and awareness of the SWEL framework, future SWEL professional development opportunities and training for SWEL Coaches. There is also the opportunity to work with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) EL staff and have them promote and send the ELM Survey to MN Districts.

Upon my approval of a ML Teacher's or Mainstream Teacher's access to the survey, he/she/they would subsequently need to request approval from his/her/their school administration. Although relicensure requirements dictate that school districts must offer MLL professional development to Minnesota educators to support this specific student population, there could be resistance from administration because this is a new assessment tool which has never been utilized before. However, Minnesota school districts which participated in ELM Coaching may be more open to participation.

Project Success

In this section, I explained the benefits of this project and discussed steps related to communicating and relaying survey results.

Currently, a tool to determine the strengths and areas for growth regarding dispositions, knowledge and skills of mainstream teachers working with MLLs does not exist. Therefore, my website which includes a survey of this nature and curated professional development resources based on the SWEL framework (Benegas & Stolpestad, 2020) is essential because it will offer Minnesota school districts a benchmark of understanding where their educators currently stand and what additional professional development is required to ensure exceptional academic support to MLLs.

There is a link on the bottom of the website to a Google Form survey to provide feedback. This survey encourages participants to offer constructive feedback to help

improve the operation and functionality of the website, the overall substance of the survey, and the selection of curated professional development resources. I will utilize feedback to enhance these attributes of this capstone project.

In regards to communicating survey results, I will work directly with the ML Teacher/s or Mainstream Teacher/s to review and determine the overall strengths and areas for growth based on survey results. Then, I would offer recommendations for curated professional development included on the website as well as SWEL professional development programming and coaching by Michelle Benegas and Amy Stolpestad. Lastly, as Minnesota educators participate in this survey, I will update the survey results page by including specific data such as a pie chart with the number of participants and percentages highlighting core areas for growth within dispositions, knowledge and skills.

Application to the Profession & Future Research

In this section, I detailed possible future uses for this project as well as recommendations based on my research and overall capstone project.

In the foreseeable future, this capstone project and in particular the survey could be utilized as an educational tool by the Department of Education to appraise current teachers' understanding and best practices of teaching MLLs. The results of the survey could be utilized to structure future professional development and/or be utilized as a requirement for renewing licensure. This survey could also be utilized in a future PhD thesis where it would be administered to a specific Minnesota school district and the results and development of teacher practice would be documented, reviewed and evaluated as a longitudinal study.

I would recommend every Minnesota School District participate in the SWEL framework professional development programming by Michelle Benegas and Amy Stolpestad. It aligns with best practices for working with MLLs and I believe it will strengthen the overall skills of Minnesota teachers resulting in academic gains for MLLs.

Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter Four, I reflected on my educational journey as a researcher, writer and learner while completing my capstone project. I reviewed essential research literature related to effective features of professional development and the SWEL framework. I also considered the implications, limitations and success of my capstone project. Lastly, I contemplated the application of my project in the educational field and feasible subsequent research. The entirety of this chapter addressed this question: *How do schools assess and deliver effective professional development to mainstream teachers with a focus on supporting Multilingual Learners?*

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