School Leadership Review

Volume 4 | Issue 1

Article 5

2009

Building Capacity for Quality Leadership with English Language Learners

John Leonard
Stephen F. Austin State University

Betty Alford
Stephen F. Austin State University

Neill Armstrong
Stephen F. Austin State University

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One finger cannot lift a pebble.
  - Hopi Saying

Waxman, Téllez, and Walberg (2004) advocated that school leaders must assist staff developers in providing English language learner (ELLs)-related professional development that includes "demonstration of theories of language, sustained coaching, and evaluation programs measuring teacher implementation and impact" (p 2-3). These professional development goals are central to the leader's purposeful expansion of teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions concerning the unique needs of ELLs and communicating the importance of the effective curricular integration of well-planned and embedded strategies designed to meet the needs of the often marginalized ELL population. School leaders must be willing to provide a systematic program of professional development that concentrates on teachers' attitudes toward change; an understanding of the campus's vision for the success of all students and its focus on student learning; the nurturing of an environment of trust, collaboration, and the critical importance of the campus as a learning as a professional community.

School improvement initiatives are not always undertaken in a culture conducive to the promotion of student academic success and equity. According to the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL, 2008),

> Often schools and districts adopt multiple, and sometimes conflicting, improvement programs to tackle the job of increasing student achievement. Even worse, these improvement programs are often "quick-fix" approaches. The results are a patchwork or

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piecemeal approach to improvement and curriculum that result in inconsistencies in

teaching and learning within schools and across the district. Most disappointingly, this

approach yields "very few gains in student achievement." (p. 2)

In order to positively impact the success of ELLs in today's classrooms and meet the challenges

facing 21st century school leaders, school district and university partnerships must be forged that

will address the professional development of both pre-service and in-service teachers and

strengthen a school culture conducive to students' academic success.

<div align="center">Forces Impacting Change Initiatives for ELLS</div>

Certainly many forces, both internal and external, impact the change initiatives needed to

address the needs of English language learners. External forces presenting pressure to schools

like No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002), Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), and high-stakes

testing, coupled with dramatic demographic changes in Texas, forces P-16 educators to look for

viable solutions that are evidence based. One approach undertaken by Stephen F. Austin State

University (SFASU), together with the partnership districts of Lufkin Independent School

District (LISD) and Nacogdoches Independent School District (NISD), provides research-based

professional development to both teacher candidates and to teachers, coaches and school leaders

from selected partner campuses. Supported by grant funding provided by the United States

Department of Education, *Project English Language Acquisition Center for Excellence*

(ENLACE), is aligned with the tenets of the Professional Development Schools (PDS) model

and affords embedded professional development to both pre-service teacher candidates and to

practicing teachers through a systematic coaching process performed by well-trained

instructional coaches. The Project ENLACE partnership is designed to promote learning for

these participants through high-quality, research-based professional development congruent with national staff development standards.

This paper will identify the need for professional development and address critical changes in teacher preparation to meet the needs of ELLs coupled with a discussion of the professional development school model as a framework for the delivery of high-quality professional development. Additionally, issues related to needed reforms to teacher education for equipping novice teachers to meet the needs of ELLS will then be shared, including a discussion of a project designed to meet this challenge through a professional development schools (PDS) model consisting of a peer coaching component. Recommendations will then be presented based on data reviewed after the initial year of the ENLACE project's implementation.

Influence of No Child Left Behind

With the passage of the NCLB Act in 2001, the federal government leveraged significant pressure on state and local school districts to improve the educational systems of the nation. Impacting schools within the NCLB legislation was the requirement that all students must make Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), and those schools failing this student learning standard for five consecutive years would face mandatory restructuring. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) specifically mandates the assessment and reporting of the progress of their ELL population. The implementation of this Act provided little flexibility in the identification and testing requirements for ELLS to migrate from their native language to English. Gitomer, Andal and Davison (2005) explicated these requirements stating, "For the first three years of schooling in the United States, students who are classified as LEP [Limited English Proficient] can be tested in their native language. After that, they are tested in English only" (p. 3). Additionally, one of the key purposes of Title III of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2002) is "to help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth,

attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet," (Title III, Part A, Section 3102, ¶1). As a direct result, districts are seeking support in meeting the needs of this demographic group.

School districts in Texas are intimately aware of the NCLB requirements and processes for using data gleaned from state assessments to determine strengths and weaknesses in ELL instruction. This awareness flowed from the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation that holds school districts accountable for assuring that, "limited English proficient children meet the same challenging state academic and content and student academic achievements standards as all students are expected to meet" (NCLB, Title III, Part A, Subpart 1). Goals have been set by the state to monitor annually yearly progress for limited English proficient (LEP) students. The fear of not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) has heightened the concerns of school districts concerning the performance of LEP students on state mandated tests. Barton (2006) emphasized, "Consequently, an ELL student who does poorly can potentially affect a school's adequate yearly progress standing in as many as three categories: Limited English Proficiency, low income, and racial/ethnic" (p. 40). Due to NCLB, school districts have stepped up their efforts to improve the academic success for LEP students in order to successfully meet AYP. The influence of NCLB has understandably garnered administrators' consideration of the importance for tracking the academic performance of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. However, in order to meet the academic target of 100 percent of LEP students demonstrating proficiency on expected standards by 2014, school leaders should also take a close look at the instructional strategies used by teachers who are directly responsible for the academic instruction of ELLs (Goodwin, 2002). In line with these expected targets, teachers need to have a clear understanding of the best approaches for teaching English language learners (Sobel & Taylor, 2005).

The Changing Demographic Landscape

Although school leaders have seen demographic shifts evolving for decades, they have failed to adequately prepare teachers for the associated instructional issues they would face in 21st century schools. As an example, The Condition of Education (2005) reported,

> Forty-two percent of public school students were considered to be part of a racial or ethnic group in 2003, an increase from 22 percent in 1972. In comparison, the percentage of public school students who were White decreased from 78 to 58 percent. The minority increase was largely due to the growth in the proportion of the students who were Hispanic. (p 33)

With regards to teachers, the significant shift in student demographics is impacted by the faculty's own diversity as well as their being "unprepared for conditions of working with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations…" (Téllez & Waxman, 2005, p. 2). One of the most pressing issues facing school leaders today is the need to prepare teachers to not only differentiate instruction for students from diverse backgrounds, but also to lead a diverse professional community reflective of collegial learning centered on success and equity for *all* students.

Teacher demographic change. Although the majority of teachers are White and female, teachers on campuses today represent a spectrum of diversity by race, gender, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, religious belief, ability, linguistic groupings, and age (Tellez & Waxman, 2005). This diverse group is frequently segregated and segmented in our schools. Often, school leaders tend to focus on the diversity of their students yet fail to understand the importance of recognizing and overcoming the cultural barriers that serve to neutralize effective collaboration among faculty and delivery of quality instruction to all students.

A contributing factor to the lack of understanding related to diversity issues on public school campuses and the specific needs of ELLs is the continuance of a predominately White and female teacher workforce. Snyder and Hoffman (1994) found that in 1990-91, 9.2 percent of public elementary and secondary teachers were Black/African American, 3.1 percent were Hispanic, and 1 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander. In Feistritzer (1996) reinforced this homogenate structure stating that 9 out of 10 public school teachers were White. At a time when minority student enrollments are trending dramatically upward, the number of minority teachers is in decline. Sharon Robinson, Educational Testing Service's Executive Vice-President, in remarks to the National Education Association, indicates that this demographic is not likely to change in the near future (Melley, 2001).

Recent data on teachers in the United States reaffirms that the majority of elementary and secondary school teachers are female and White. In 2005, the teacher population was approximately 83.7 percent White (National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 2005). At the same time, nearly 39.3 percent of students in classrooms were minorities: 60.3 percent White, 17.7 percent Black/African American, 17.7 percent Hispanic, 3.9 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.3 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native teachers (NCES, 2005).

Statistics of the teacher workforce in public education for the last decade indicate a disturbing discrepancy in the percentages of minority teachers as compared with student demographic changes. Today, over 53 million students are enrolled in the elementary and secondary schools of the United States with 40 percent from ethnic or racial minority groups. This trend will continue during the 21st century with minority groups rapidly becoming the majority in American schools by 2050 (Futrell, Gomez, & Bedden, 2003).

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However, diversity issues center around more than just issues of ethnicity. Schools have never been culturally "neutral" and teachers are charged with providing the cultural identity foundations needed for excellence and equity (Broekuizen & Dougherty, 1999). National organizations have continued to stress the importance of having a diverse teacher workforce to provide appropriate role models for both minority and majority students (Lewis, 1996). Clearly, the need for pluralism has taken on an expanded definition in our schools and is reflective of our nation's becoming one of the most diverse in the world.

The changing student demographic landscape. Preparing for demographic shifts among the teaching force pales in comparison to the dramatic changes in the Texas school aged population, both in terms of numerical increases and in diversity. As the population in the United States changed in recent decades, the definition of "diversity" itself has undergone a transformation with the minority population growing significantly. Students on campuses today are reflective of our nation's spectrum of diversity by race, sex, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, religious belief, ability, linguistic groupings, and age. In a U.S. Census comparison study, the data magnified these trends as Hobbs and Stoops (2002) found, "when all people of races other than white were aggregated the minority population increased by 88 percent between 1980 and 2000, while the white and non-Hispanic population for the same period grew by only 7.9 percent" (p. 71). The U.S. Census Bureau found in the year 2000 that in Texas over 6,010,753 or 31.2 percent of the student population spoke a language other than English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). This percentage of non-English speakers far exceeds the national average of 17.9 percent.

Compounding these data are recent evidence in Texas indicating the performance of English language learners (ELLs) falling far below the average passing rate for all students. The

Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2006) in its 2007-2011 Strategic Plan recognized the

achievement gap as one of the four major challenges facing Texas pubic schools stating,

> The demographic composition of the state and student population is changing such that
>
> demographic groups that are traditionally least represented in educational attainment (i.e.,
>
> Hispanic, limited proficiency in English, and economically disadvantaged students)
>
> comprise increasingly larger proportions of the total student population. Demographers
>
> predict that these demographic changes will continue for some time. TEA must meet the
>
> unique needs of these groups, promoting not only high school completion, but the
>
> preparedness, desire and opportunity for postsecondary success. (p. 3)

 According to TEA's Teaching Diversity and Recruitment publication (2008), "In 1992-93,

almost 52 percent of Texas students were minorities. Population projections indicated that ethnic

and racial minorities, especially Hispanics, will make up the majority of the Texas population by

2015. By 2025, two of every three school children will be minorities. These population dynamics

can already be seen in many schools. More than half of the students in 255 of the 1,048 Texas

school districts are minorities; 489 districts are more than 30 percent minority" (p. 5). 2004-05

data reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (2005) comparing the 100 largest

school districts in the United States found that Texas districts on the list had an average 21.26

percent of their student population served in ELL programs:

Table 1

Students Served in ELL Programs

Name of reporting district	Number of students served in ELL programs	Percentage of students served in ELL programs
Houston Independent School District	59,483	28.5
Dallas Independent School District	48, 334	30.6
Austin Independent School District	18,169	22.7
Fort Worth Independent School District	21,427	26.9
Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District	10,823	13.6
Northside Independent School District	4,653	6.2
El Paso Independent School District	19,445	30.8
Fort Bend Independent School District	6,528	10.4
Arlington Independent School District	10,578	17.0
North East Independent School District	9,789	5.0
San Antonio Independent School District	9,531	16.7
Garland Independent School District	12,400	22.0
Plano Independent School District	5,995	11.4
Pasadena Independent School District	12,259	25.8
Brownsville Independent School District	24,052	51.3
Totals	273,466	21.26

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, Table A-12

Clearly, the rapidly changing demographic landscape continues to impact the delivery of a high-quality education to every student in Texas.

Teacher Preparation and Licensure

Most states with licensing requirements, including Texas, require a teaching certificate and bilingual education or English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement. Yet, a shortage of certified ESL teachers continues to be a problem in Texas. Waxman, Téllez, and Walberg (2004) echoed this distress in reporting results of a National Center for Educational Statistics study that found "most teachers who taught ELLs or other culturally diverse students did not feel that they were well prepared to meet the needs of their students" (p. 1). Additionally these authors found, "Nearly half of the teachers assigned to teach ELLs have not received any preparation in methods to teach them" (p 1). Research detailing the preparation of teachers for classrooms with ELLs continues to find a shortage of qualified teachers. University teacher preparation programs have only recently addressed the critical need for training candidates to work with ELLs. A report by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (n.d.) found that Texas was among 15 states not requiring teacher training for ELLs.

P-16 Standards-Based Partnership: Project ENLACE Professional Development

The influence of standards on P-16 education, together with a cognizance of the dramatic shifts in racial diversity in the United States, necessitates a new direction in professional development. At its core, student learning and equity must be focused on the engagement of all stakeholders toward improving the delivery of instruction to ELLs. NCLB and state standards delineate what students should know and be able to do in core content areas as they progress to graduation. As the standards bar is raised, educational leaders must position classroom teachers

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for success by planning, implementing, and evaluating high quality professional development. Professional development research conducted over decades by Joyce and Showers (2003) strongly suggested, "... the design of the training needs to be closely related to the outcomes" (p. 5). The federal government's Goals 2000 (U.S. Congress, 1994a) set in place the principles of high-quality professional development for preparing pre-service and inservice educators to high levels of student learning and development. Goals 2000 established and added credence to the need for high quality professional development. Among their recommendations were professional development opportunities that,

- focus on teachers as central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school community;

- focus on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement;

- reflect best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership;

- enable teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards;

- require substantial time and other resources;

- is driven by a coherent long-term plan;

- is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning; and this assessment guides subsequent professional development efforts.

(Building Bridges, p. 5)

The research on effective professional development is consistent across many studies. Researchers Hawley and Valli (Westchester Institute for Human Services Research, n.d.) found in a meta-analysis of professional development research that successful programs have the following characteristics:

- they are integrated with district goals to improve education;

- they are guided by a coherent long-term plan;

- they are driven by disaggregated data on student outcomes;

- they are designed according to teacher-identified needs;

- they are primarily school-based;

- they provide a strong foundation in subject content and methods of teaching;

- they are informed by research on teaching and learning;

- they are designed around collaborative problem-solving;

- they enable teachers to work with colleagues, in and beyond their school building;

- they are continuous and ongoing, providing follow-up support for further learning;

- they incorporate principles of adult learning;

- they provide sufficient time and other resources;

- they are evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning. (p. 9)

As aptly stated by Peters and Austin (1985) in their book entitled *A Passion for Excellence,* that professional development with these attributes is most successful should be a "blinding flash of the obvious" for those involved with the preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers (p. 3). The expectations for the development and ongoing professional development of a teacher's knowledge, skills, and dispositions must be congruent with nationally recognized standards and be focused on each student's academic success. Snow-Renner and Lauer (2005), in an analysis of professional development research, concluded that successful teachers in standards-based schools "… need opportunities to learn how to use reform-oriented strategies, practice those strategies in the classroom, and observe their effects on student

learning. Therefore, standards-based professional development is the cornerstone of a successful standards-based system" (p. 3).

Killion (2002) suggested a "backmapping model" to provide a efficient program of standards-based professional development focused on instructional impact and results. This five-step cyclical model involves professional development planners to:

1) analyze student performance data and identify student learning needs; 2) identify target(s) for educator learning and development; 3) identify results based on staff development interventions aligned with target area(s); design and implement staff development intervention(s) and evaluation; and, 5) provide ongoing support for learning and implementation of new knowledge, skills, and processes. (p. 31)

Snow-Renner and Lauer (2005), based on their synthesis of professional development research, codified professional development that would positively affect the teaching-learning process as being:

1) of considerable length; 2) focused on specific content and/or instructional strategies rather than general; 3) characterized by collaborative participation of educators (in the form of grade-level or school-level teams; 4) coherent; and, 5) infused with active learning, rather than a stand-and-deliver model. (p. 6)

Clearly, well designed and systematic standards-based professional development will serve to positively impact teacher practice and student learning outcomes.

Professional Development Schools Model

Embedded in the standards developed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the research-based Professional Development Schools (PDS) model. The PDS model concepts are aligned with the standards for professional development

endorsed by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (2001). Systematic professional development replaces the much misaligned "one shot" staff development opportunities and replaces this myopic focus with a community of learners.

Professional Development Schools (PDS) are partnerships that are developed and nurtured between university professional education programs and Pre-K-12 schools to prepare new teachers, foster growth of practitioners in the partner schools, foster inquiry to improve practice, and improve K-12 student achievement (Teital, 2003). The PDS model is advanced by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2008) and provides a standards-driven support system for the professional preparation and development of future teachers. Berlin (2007) instructed, "In the context of standards-based education reform, high-quality professional development for principals and teachers is arguably more important than ever" (p. xiii). These standards, when effectively integrated into a well designed program of professional development in a PDS model, will provide reasoned benchmarks for the evaluation of trainings for teachers.

The PDS model serves as a solid framework for meeting both the needs of preservice teacher candidates as well as advancing the professional learning of those already contributing to the profession. The professional development structure of the PDS model can provide a solid blueprint for success in the context of ELL instruction. On the university preparation side, candidates are exposed to a well-defined curriculum of integrated ELL designed to raise their awareness of these learners in their classrooms and build on this base as they progress through their preparation program. On the partnership school side, participating school leaders, coaches, and classroom teachers are learning in the context of practice as members of a learning

community that serves all students. Taken together, a rich value-added partnership is forged to provide professional development in sound, democratic ELL pedagogy and praxis.

Building Leadership Capacity through Coaching

It follows that, with the pressures of NCLB, high-stakes testing and increasingly diverse classrooms, effective teacher-leadership is essential. The significance of leadership is supported by numerous school leadership studies like the one conducted at Stanford University by Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) who stated, "… second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school leadership strongly affects student learning" (p. 3). With accountability for the success of all students, including the properly-placed demand for schools to address the untenable low performance of ELLs, already stressed principals are seeking best practices for meeting the learning needs of all students.

One viable approach is to re-examine the potential for a more decentralized and differentiated model of instructional leadership that can support the implementation of research-based practice in classrooms. School leaders must understand that the traditional view of teacher leadership has changed from the "…traditional roles such as department heads, textbook adoption committee chairpersons, and union representatives" to one that includes their support of the goals of the instructional program through, among other things, coaching (Méndez-Morse, n.d., p. 8). In addition to being restricted to these three areas, "... traditional leadership opportunities for teachers are extremely limited and generally serve an efficiency function rather than a leadership function" (Wasley, 1991, p. 4). Wasley continued by positing that one of the problematical issues surrounding a change toward real teacher leadership is that, "... few school districts have the leadership and/or the instructional capacity to understand the needs of ELLs" (p. 10). The leadership capacity issue is at the center of a renewed consideration of reorganized leadership

and the important contribution teacher leadership can make in the school improvement process in serving as instructional coaches.

Teacher Leaders as ELL Instructional Coaches

School improvement imperatives, standards, and high stakes testing have placed extraordinary demands on schools to improve student outcomes. These stressors negatively impact the ability of the positional leader in a school to adequately focus on their primary role for guiding the teaching-learning process. This leadership vacuum has resulted in the recognition of roles teachers can, and should, play in the improvement of practice. The acknowledgment of teacher leadership has given way to teachers serving as department heads, lead teachers, mentors for novice teachers, and instructional coaches. Danielson (2007) stated, "…effective teacher leaders exhibit important skills, values, and dispositions. Teacher leaders call others to action and energize them with the aim of improving teaching and learning" (p. 4). These attributes are very important in working as an instructional coach with teachers exploring ELL best practices.

Successful coaching has proven especially successful for improving the quality of the teaching-learning process with peer coaching improving the quality of teaching for both the coach and mentee and, ultimately, benefiting all stakeholders (Boreen & Niday, 2003). As an example, when schools make a commitment to the effective professional development of teachers, all participants' profit from the experience with students gaining the most from the collaboration. Boreen and Niday described mentoring "... as more than a relationship, it should also provide a vast array of life and professional learning experiences that enhance their ability … to interact with their colleagues in a collegial manner" (p. 1). Peer coaching is a process of advising, coaching, and nurturing that is focused on developing an open relationship that

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enhances an individual's career, personal, and professional growth and development (Young & Wright, 2001).

Collaboration requires both a respectful coaching relationship and a productive process if it is to yield the desired instructional improvement for ELLs (Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996). Killion (2002) maintained that in order to significantly change educator practice there are seven essential components,

> ... clear expectations about the implementation of the new learning; desire to implement the new learning; opportunities to apply the knowledge and practice the new skills with feedback; belief that the practices are valuable; ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the new educator practices by examining student work and reflecting on and refining instructional practice, consistent application of the practices; and, systematic support for continuous improvement? (p. 19)

This supports the need for a collaborative professional learning environment, such as Killion put forward, to enhance and expand leadership capacity and also to better meet the needs of all students.

Example of a Project Designed to Meet the Needs of ELLs through a

Professional Development School Model with Coaching

NCLB requires that schools provide teachers with professional development that is "designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments" (Title IX, 2002, p. 107). Project English Language Acquisition Center for Excellence (ENLACE), a partnership grant between Stephen F. Austin State University and the

Lufkin Independent School District and the Nacogdoches Independent School District funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is designed to deliver high quality ELL professional development for teachers. Utilizing a two-pronged coaching approach involving a coach-of-coaches coupled with campus-based teacher-leader coaches, this model of professional development is designed to provide high quality support for teachers as they implement research-based ELL strategies in their classrooms.

This promising practice has a sound evaluation component intended to provide Project ENLACE grant administrators and stakeholders with feedback on the efficacy of its professional development activities. Evaluation is an essential component for demonstrating that a program is making timely progress towards its goals. In addition, ongoing formative evaluation will provide evidence of the successful integration of research-based ELL strategies at the campus level. Grant administrators and stakeholders can then best determine mid-program changes that need to take place in strategy or activities. In addition, ongoing formative evaluation of the embedded professional development can help schools consider any evidence that mid-program changes are needed.

Aligned with state and national standards, the professional development of Project ENLACE partner schools has been purposeful and research driven. Professional development activities are structured based on the identified needs of ELLs and their teachers. The principles of high quality professional development identified by Goals 2000 (U.S. Congress, 1994) serve as a marker for determining program and grant success. These sources of formative evaluation provided grant administrators and policymakers with data for making informed decisions concerning appropriate professional development and integration of best practices into the classrooms of partner schools. Data from these efforts continue to inform SFASU's teacher

preparation programs and support the next generation of classroom teachers who will be delivering instruction to our state's diverse student population.

Professional development is integral to the success of ELLs in Project ENLACE's partnership districts and schools. Focused professional development was conducted during the initial year of the grant's implementation which was aligned with the goals of Project ENLACE to (1) increase the achievement of LEP students by improving classroom instruction through systematic development and delivery of research-based instruction in language development, instructional best practices, and strategies for English language learners; (2) provide joint inservice to educators in the PDS partner school districts and SFASU College of Education faculty to impart the knowledge and skills needed to prepare teachers to instruct LEP students effectively in mainstream classes; and (3) restructure all SFASU teacher education program curricula to prepare all teacher candidates in ELL instructional strategies, instructional best practices, and language development, and to prepare them to pass the TExES exam for ESL certification. During 2007-08 nationally recognized leaders, such as, Patricia Morales, June McBride, Jane Hill, Lupe Lloyd, along with state practitioners like like Becky Hernandez-Owolabi and J. C. Harville from the Spring (Texas) Independent School District, and local presenters provided professional development for Lufkin ISD and Nacogdoches ISD teachers, Project ENLACE instructional coaches, and school and district leaders during three Leadership Institutes held on the campus of SFASU. These sessions were designed to provide a foundation for understanding the needs of ELLs and best practice approaches for meeting their needs. Sessions were also targeted the unique needs of district and campus administrators and instructional coaches from partnership districts

Additionally these professional development opportunities were aligned with the project's goals and with National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards to ensure the content of these trainings provided the requisite foundation for assessing the efficacy of the Leadership Institutes and subsequent integration of ELL best practices into classroom instruction.

Professional Development of Project ENLACE Coaches

Teacher-leaders, as instructional coaches, provided embedded professional development on effective ELL strategies for Project ENLACE schools. Serving as content experts, these coaches took the lead in working with classroom teachers who were endeavoring to integrate ELL strategies into their practice. Instructional support of this nature could take many approaches as Knight (2004) found including,

- Conducting one-on-one or small group meetings to identify how best to collaborate with a teacher or teachers to address the most pressing concerns;

- Guiding teachers through instructional manuals, checklists, and other materials;

- Collaboratively planning with teachers to identify when and how an intervention might be implemented;

- Preparing materials for teachers before instruction;

- Modeling instructional practices in teachers' classrooms;

- Observing teachers using interventions;

- Providing feedback. (p.1)

The process for coaching within Project ENLACE incorporates these fundamentals on two levels: a coach of coaches – a grant supported master teacher-leader and campus-level ELL

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coaches. This twofold coaching approach is designed to assist partnership campuses implement research-validated practices and ELL interventions.

Coach of Coaches. A major responsibility of the grant's "coach of coaches' is to model the approaches to ELL instruction learned through the grant's professional development activities. This embedded approach is designed to assist classroom teachers with an understanding of how to integrate the ELL best practice into their daily classroom instruction. Barnes, in Knight (2004), maintained,

> Teachers need to see it. They need to see you [coach] modeling, and that gives them insight into other things that need to be done – keeping kids on task, redirecting inappropriate behavior, giving feedback, recognizing kids when they are doing great, keeping the room positive and energized…. There's an art to teaching, and a lot of that art is hard to learn from reading teachers manuals. (p.3)

It is this demonstration of the art of teaching that provides both teacher support for implementing learned strategies for approaching ELL instruction but also serves to energize the faculty.

Campus-Based Instructional Coaches. Campus instruction coaches are the *sine qua non* – that indispensible element – for the successful embedding of ELL best practices into the classrooms of partnership schools. These campus-based coaches are a readily accessible complement to the modeling provided by the "coach of coaches". Research into successful coaching conducted by Schen, Rao and Doobles (2005) for the Annenberg Institute, supported the value of teacher-leaders serving in this capacity and concluded that "coaching supports collective, interconnected leadership across the school system" (p. 2).

A Report on Progress

In this project, the coaches and administrators from the two districts attended three leadership institutes each year and participated in on-site coaching on the campus. Six teachers per campus who were acquiring English as a Second Language (ESL) certification attended three Saturday ELL Institutes as well as participating in the coaching sessions. A survey was administered to determine the effectiveness of the training campus-wide. While additional data are being attained through observations and interviews as part of an ongoing evaluation process, this paper will report on the survey results to identify campus-wide impact. On only three questions of the survey did the mean responses of agree or strongly agree exceed 70 percent. The strongest positive survey responses suggest that the respondents believe that administrators support professional development initiatives related to English language learners with 76.8 percent marking agree or strongly agree. In addition, 71.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that leaders recognize professional development as a key strategy for supporting significant improvement in meeting the needs of a diverse student population. It is noteworthy that 71.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that both administrators and teacher leaders develop knowledge, skills, and best practices related to the needs of English language learners necessary to be professional development leaders. 64.1 percent agreed or strongly agreed that a variety of learning strategies were being used to achieve the professional development goals to meet English language learners' needs, and 62.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed that educators were learning how to create practices to convey respect for ELL families and cultures school-wide. 65.1 percent agreed or strongly agreed that faculty, administrators, and learning teams focus on school goals inclusive of best practices for meeting the needs of the English language learners while 61.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed that disaggregated data were used as a focus for

professional development. Only 55.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that sufficient time was dedicated to professional development to meet the needs of the English language learner. Only 62.5 percent agreed or strongly agreed that professional development was preparing educators to be skillful users of research. Only 50 percent agreed or strongly agreed that research on meeting needs of ELLs was consistently studied.

Areas that had an area of agreement below 50 percent of respondents included knowledge of whether 10 percent of the budget was used for professional development (47.9 percent), increased skills in the use of technology (46.3 percent), increased professional development to prepare educators to use technology to collaborate (44.4 percent), increased knowledge of ways to resolve conflict (45.4%),increased knowledge of ways to resolve conflict to understand the mission of professional development, and increased skills to serve as members of site-based groups (47.1 percent). It is noteworthy that while these are areas recommended as outcomes of quality professional development (Gordon, 2004), these areas have not been primary areas of emphasis in the ENLACE professional development for Year 1 of the project.

For questions regarding the process of professional development to provide coaching and follow-up, room for improvement was indicated by response means of agree or strongly agree of 58.2 percent for use of small learning teams in professional development for a systematic process for all teachers to be part of school-based teams to plan for instruction. 45.3 percent agreed or strongly agreed that follow-up activities follow ENLACE professional development, 51.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed that feedback is provided on performance of skills in working with English language learners, and 51 percent agreed or strongly agreed that feedback to gather and use concerns to plan professional development is occurring.

Only 52.7 percent believed that gathering evidence of improvements in the learning of English language learners to determine the effects of professional development was occurring. A part of studying practice would be utilizing various types of evidence to improve the quality of professional development but only 56.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that this was occurring in formative evaluation and only 53.5 percent in summative evaluation. Only 50.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the evaluation of the professional development included data concerning knowledge gained by participants, level of implementation and changes in ELL student learning, and only 49 percent agreed or strongly agreed that pilot studies and action research were being used at their school to test the effectiveness of new approaches.

During year three of the grant, additional focused work will be provided in implementing the professional development of ENLACE to advance campus learning communities, prepare educators to be skillful users of educational research related to best practices for ELLs, and to use the professional development as a means for fostering campus collaboration. More attention to follow-up and action research is needed to meet the tenets of quality professional development experiences.

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

The administrator's impact in improving student achievement is second only to the classroom teacher (Leithwood, et al., 2004). Therefore, it is noteworthy that teachers predominately believe that the administrators' support the ELL professional development and suggests the potential positive impact that high-quality professional development may yield in the five years of the ENLACE project. That the participants also report that teachers' and administrators' development of knowledge, skills, and best practices in working with English

language learners is necessary also suggests that continued professional development will be

supported.

Quality professional development occurs over time (Sparks, 1997), and the positive

responses on surveys, indicating awareness of the importance of professional development to

meet English language learners' needs, suggests that creating an awareness of the need is not

necessary. Instead, the responses suggest a desire for additional knowledge, skills, and best

practices in working with English language learners. This finding is also consistent with best

practices noted for professional development in that subject-specific professional development

for all is advocated rather than generic, professional development for a few (Sparks, 1997).

Coaching is advocated for lasting results-based professional development (Glatthorn & Fox,

1996) and is an integral part of the ENLACE project. A collaborative framework for follow-up

with school-based teams and coaching is present for a majority of the participants, but all of the

participants are not experiencing this. The responses on surveys and focus groups suggest the

need to strengthen the coaching and collaborative structure for planning

Data-based decision making is advocated for planning to meet needs in a learning

community, and focus is a primary factor in whether school improvement goals are achieved in a

change process (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy, & Muth, 2007). Over 60 percent of respondents to a

survey agreed or strongly agreed that data were used for determining professional development

that focuses on the needs of the English language learner is promising. This trend can be

strengthened but suggests that there are practices to build upon. Finding time for ongoing

professional development is a challenge in the busy environment of schools, but it is essential in

a change process (Arbuckle, 1997; Donaldson, 2008; Early & Bubb, 2004). That just a little over

half agreed or strongly agreed that adequate time is provided suggests the need for additional

time and follow-through in order for goals to be achieved. Studying practice through action research is important in a change process (Murphy, 2005), yet only a little over half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that this was occurring suggesting the need to engage in action research to determine the impact of the professional development activities. It is noteworthy that the areas that only 40 percent agreed or strongly agreed were knowledge of the budget for professional development, increased skills in technology and increased skills in conflict resolution related to the mission of the professional development which were not explicit goals of the ENLACE project.

From these findings, the following recommendations are offered:

- Continue focused professional development to develop knowledge, skills, and best practices.

- Strengthen collaborative frameworks through coaching as follow-up to leadership institutes.

- Investigate the use of technology as a tool to enhance learning for the English language learner.

- Engage in action research of practices with English language learners to determine high-yield strategies, i.e. those that foster increased learning.

- Provide additional follow-up activities to the ELL Institutes.

- Use data concerning knowledge gained by participants, level of learning, and changes in English language learners for formative and summative evaluation.

- Provide opportunities to study research to gain knowledge of best practices.

With an ever-increasing focus on improving the delivery of high-quality instruction to all students, partner schools in the English Language Acquisition Center for Excellence (ENLACE)

project are being provided with embedded professional support through the use of coaches. Congruent with key finding by Joyce and Showers (2003) indicating that effective professional development of teachers should consist of four components, "developing knowledge, through exploring theory to understand the concepts behind a skill or strategy; the demonstration or modeling of a skill; the practice of skill and peer coaching," well-trained coaches are a key for increasing these teachers' content knowledge and confidence in working with the challenges of ELLs in their classrooms (p.1). These coaches serve to nurture a culture of an academic focus and high expectations for all students by valuing the current professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions of their colleagues and by extending and enhancing campus-wide pedagogy. More importantly, these academic coaches provide the campus-based leadership and modeling crucial for improving teachers' practice of evidence-based best practices for differentiating instruction for English language learners.

Maximizing the potential of the goals outlined for Project ENLACE necessitates that the classroom teachers who are providing the ELL coaching be provided with the high quality professional development necessary to ensure a collegial campus support system. Meeting the challenges of creating this systematic coaching role requires delivery of professional development to the coaches centered on building an understanding of the differentiated scaffolding needed for working with ELLs, a thorough grounding in effective coaching roles, and university support for coaches aligned with national staff development standards.

Boreen and Niday (2003) point out that one of the seminal attributes for an individual selected to work with other teachers as a coach would be to "have a vision beyond their own classroom" (p. 10). This includes the individual's ability to plan for learner-centered instruction, promote excellence and equity, and possess effective communication skills for collegial dialogue

within their learning community and externally to parents and community. In essence, these instructional coaches are leaders and learners and, as Klimek, Ritzenhein and Sullivan (2008) stated, "… are avid and humble continual learners, seeking wisdom from experts both within and beyond education" (p 64). Coaches continue to identify best practices and translate these proven methods with colleagues on their campus.

As instructional coaches accept their role in leading the learning of effective strategies for meeting the needs of all students in their school they, in turn, must be supported by the administrative leadership and collegially work to create a school culture accepting of the requisite change needed to move the delivery of instruction of ELLs away from the traditional instructional approaches and toward teacher practice informed by a solid body of research. This alliance necessitates not only an understanding of successful pedagogical practices, but also attention to the professional development needed by those teachers selected to be coaches. District and campus leaders must understand that embedded and progressive professional development is complementary to the campus culture and can be a catalyst for needed change on a campus (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

Accordingly, the work of district and campus leaders is to become part of the learning community and work to relieve the multiplicity of pressures that affect the equilibrium of a school's academic mission. Much the way Lewin (1997) described in his force-field theory, leaders must become a driving force for addressing the instructional deficiencies found in traditional approaches to ELL instruction and work to ease restraining forces needed for district and campus goal attainment. As an example, in the context of school, Lewin's theory would serve to identify the perceived driving and restraining forces affecting the delivery of professional development support to the classroom teacher as well as those chosen to support

classroom instruction as coaches. Efforts would then center on minimizing the restraining forces while maximizing the driving forces involved with the attainment of professional development program goals and the attainment of student success and equity.

As we enter our second year of the ENLACE project, it is appropriate to pause and consider our effectiveness in implementing professional development opportunities that will advance campus learning communities wherein educators become skillful users of educational research related to best practices for English language learners in a campus culture of collaboration. Improving learning for English language learners is a school-wide need that should not be relegated to only a few (Necochea & Cline, 2000). Through the ENLACE professional development, we have sought to impact each educator's development as a skilled teacher of the English language learner.

The range of leadership positions and accomplishments in school improvement highlight that leadership involves the efforts of many individuals representing multiple roles throughout the organization (Matthews & Crow, 2003). In short, school improvement is not an individualistic effort and, instead, represents the efforts of many (Murphy, 2005). Schools have to change in order to meet the needs of a changing and diverse society (Murdock, White, Hoque, Pecotte, You, & Balken, 2003). Quality professional development can serve as the key to increase the learning capabilities of the organization's members and empower them to lead organizational changes to impact learning for the English language learner.

Meeting the needs of all learners is important and requires our collective best efforts. As we continue the next four years of the ENLACE project, the results of this study serve as benchmarks to guide decision-makers as programs are implemented that promote a professional

learning community sustaining the effort to meet the needs of the English language learner

through the improvement of practice.

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Appendix "A"

Project ENLACE Survey of Professional Development

Circle one: Teacher   ENLACE Coach

District:

☐ **Lufkin Independent School District**

☐ **Nacogdoches Independent School District**

Directions: With your school as the focus for your answers, indicate whether your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling the corresponding number. If a question does not relate to you or you do not know, leave it blank.
Your individual survey responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

(This survey was adapted from the National Professional Development Council's *2001 Revised Standards for Professional Development* and is used with permission of the National Professional Development Council, 2008)

Learning Communities					

Learning Communities	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. Project ENLACE in our school effectively utilizes small learning teams as a primary component of professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Project ENLACE in our school provides a systematic process for all teachers to be part of ongoing school-based learning teams that meet to plan instruction for English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
3. In our school, faculty, administrators, and learning teams focus on school goals inclusive of best practices for meeting the needs of our English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5

Leadership					

Leadership	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
4. In this school, administrators support professional development initiatives related to English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
5. In this school, leaders recognize professional development as a key strategy for supporting significant improvement in meeting the needs of a diverse student population.	1	2	3	4	5
6. In this school, administrators and teacher leaders develop knowledge, skills, and best practices related to the needs of English Language Learners necessary to be professional development leaders.	1	2	3	4	5

Resources					

Resources	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
7. In our school, at least 10% of the school's budget is dedicated to professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
8. In our school, disaggregated data on student learning provides focus for professional development efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
9. In our school, sufficient time is dedicated to professional development related to best practices for English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
10. In our school, teachers gather evidence of improvements in English Language Learners learning in their classrooms to determine the effects of their professional development on their students.	1	2	3	4	5
11. In our school, data are disaggregated to ensure equitable treatment for all subgroups of students, including English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation					

Evaluation	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
12. Project ENLACE in our school utilizes various types of evidence to improve the quality of professional development (formative evaluation).	1	2	3	4	5
13. Project ENLACE in our school utilizes various types of evidence to determine whether our professional development plan achieved its intended results (summative evaluation).	1	2	3	4	5
14. Project ENLACE in our school utilizes the evaluation of professional development that consistently includes all of the following: data concerning knowledge gained by participants, level of implementation, and changes in ELL student learning.	1	2	3	4	5

Research-Based					

Research-Based	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
15. In our school, professional development prepares educators to be skillful users of educational research related to best practices for English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
16. In our school, teams of teachers and administrators methodically study research related to English Language Learners before adopting improvement strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
17. In our school, pilot studies and action research are used when appropriate to test the effectiveness of new approaches.	1	2	3	4	5

Design					

Design	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
18. In our school, educators participate in a variety of learning strategies to achieve professional development goals related to effective practices for meeting the needs of our English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
19. In our school, technology supports educators' individual English language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
20. In our school, a variety of follow-up activities follows every major Project ENLACE change initiative.	1	2	3	4	5

Learning					

Learning	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
21. In our school, professional development learning methods for English Language Learners mirror, as closely as possible, the methods teachers are expected to use with their students.	1	2	3	4	5
22. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development regularly offers opportunities for feedback on the performance of those skills.	1	2	3	4	5
23. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development leaders gather and use individuals' concerns about professional development initiatives to design follow-up strategies.	1	2	3	4	5

Collaboration					

Collaboration	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
24. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development prepares educators to be skillful members of various groups (for instance, site-based committees, grade-level teams).	1	2	3	4	5
25. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development provides educators with the skills necessary to productively manage conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
26. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development prepares educators to use technology to collaborate.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Our principal deals effectively with professional member performance problems related to Project ENLACE.	1	2	3	4	5

Equity					

Equity	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
28. In our school, educators learn how to create schoolwide English Language Learners practices that convey respect for students, their families, and students' diverse cultural backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5
29. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development prepares educators to establish learning environments that communicate high expectations for the academic achievement of all students.	1	2	3	4	5
30. In our school, educators learn how to adjust instruction and assessment to match the learning requirements of individual English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5

Quality Teaching					

Quality Teaching	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
31. In our school, teachers have many opportunities to develop deep knowledge of the delivery of content to English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5
32. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development expands teachers' instructional methods appropriate to specific content areas.	1	2	3	4	5
33. In our school, professional development teaches classroom assessment skills that allow teachers to regularly monitor gains in student learning for English Language Learners.	1	2	3	4	5

Parent-Community Involvement					

Parent-Community Involvement	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
34. In our school, Project ENLACE professional contributes to the development of leaders for building consensus among educators and community members concerning the overall mission and goals of professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
35. In our school, Project ENLACE professional development contributes to the preparation of educators for building relationships with parents to support student learning.	1	2	3	4	5

36. In our school, technology is used to communicate with parents of English Language Learners and their community.   1   2   3   4   5

Personal Background Information

Please circle or check the appropriate response:

37. What is your length of service with your District (in years)?

     ☐ **Less than 1 year**

     ☐ **1 to 5 years**

     ☐ **6 to 10 years**

     ☐ **11 to 15 years**

     ☐ **16 to 20 years**

     ☐ **More than twenty years**

38. What is your ethnicity?
     _____ **African American**
     _____ **Hispanic**
     _____ **White**
     _____ **Asian/Pacific Islander**
     _____ **Native American**

Please provide any additional comments you might have related to Project ENLACE below:

_____
_____
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Thank you for participating in the survey.

Appendix "B"

Project ENLACE Professional Development

Evaluation Matrix

Context Standards Staff development that improves the learning of all students:	**Leadership Institute 11/5/2007**	**Leadership Institute 2/15/2008**	**Leadership Institute 4/11/2008**	**Training (date)**	**Training (date)**	**Training (date)**
Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. (Learning Communities)						
Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement. (Leadership)						
Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration. (Resources)						
Process Standards Staff development that improves the learning of all students:						
Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement. (Data-Driven)						

Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact. (Evaluation)					
Prepares educators to apply research to decision making. (Research-Based)					
Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal. (Design)					
Applies knowledge about human learning and change. (Learning)					
Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. (Collaboration)					
Content Standards **Staff development that improves the learning of all students:**					
Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement. (Equity)					
Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use					

various types of classroom assessments appropriately. (Quality Teaching)						
Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately. (Family Involvement)						
Context Standards **Staff development that improves the learning of all students:**		Leadership Institute 11/5/2007	Leadership Institute 2/15/2008	Leadership Institute 4/11/2008	Training (date)	Training (date)
Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. (Learning Communities)						
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Prepares educators to apply research to decision making. (Research-Based)					
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Adapted from *National Staff Development Council Standards*