Effective Professional Development for Teachers of ELLs
April 8, 2010

Aída Walqui, Ph.D., Director of Teacher Professional Development Program, WestEd

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NCELA is operated under contract ED-04-CO-0094/0002 from the US Department of Education to The George Washington University. Our mission is to provide technical assistance information to state education agencies, local education agencies, and others regarding the education of English language learners.
Welcome to the webinar on “Effective Professional Development for Teachers of ELLs.” Today’s webinar is hosted by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, NCELA, located at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University, funded through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition.

NCELA's mission is to provide technical assistance information to state and local educational agencies on issues pertaining to English language learners.

My name is Kathia Flemens, Ph.D., a Research Associate at NCELA and your Webinar facilitator.
Today our presenter is:
Aida Walqui, Ph.D. – Director of Teacher Professional Development at WestEd, comprised of the Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) and The Strategic Literacy Initiative
Professional Development for Teachers of English Language Learners

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NCELA Webinar
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I will explore two themes in this webinar

• A coherent portfolio of professional development opportunities for teachers of English Language Learners and all other students

• Examples from the Quality Teaching for English Learners program
Four spaces in which education for ELLs takes place
(Walqui, 2007, adapted from Mariani, 1997 and Hammond & Gibbons, 2007)

- High challenge
  - ‘FRUSTRATION’ ZONE
  - ‘APPRENTICESHIP’ ZONE (ZPD)
- Low challenge
  - ‘TWILIGHT’ ZONE
  - ‘POBRECITO’ ZONE

- Low support
- High support
The consequences of teaching in the wrong zones: CELDT 2007 annual assessment results
Change in performance levels 06-07

CDE, 2008
To change the situation we need optimal professional development which is:

- part of a continuum in the development of teacher expertise
- theoretical
- long-term, sustained, and coherent
- directed to all educators at a school site
- discipline-specific
- centered on concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection on teacher and student learning
- geared to make teachers increasingly competent at planning and enacting lessons focused on key subject matter content that provide “high challenge, high support” learning opportunities for all students, especially those who need to develop the academic uses of English
The Quality Teaching for English Learners Program

• Is built around a theory of teacher expertise and the domains that need to be attended to in teacher professional growth

• A model of whole-school professional development that encompasses all adults in a school and that builds the capacity of the school over three years

• A theory of action for professional development and its impact over time
In the rest of the presentation I will:

- Outline these three ideas
- Offer broad examples of the content of professional development for all teachers with a focus on English Language Learners
- Provide a small example of the kind of language knowledge teachers need to have to help their students acquire the academic uses of English
Domains of Teacher Expertise

Walqui, 1997, adapted from Shulman, 1995
Whole School Improvement

Site Leadership
(6 days)

Ripples of Impact: The Teacher Professional Development Model: Year 1
Whole School Improvement

Site Leadership
(6 days)

All Teachers
(6 days)

ELA

Math

Science

ESL

SS

Ripples of Impact: The Teacher Professional Development Model: Year 1
Whole School Improvement

Site Leadership (6 days)

All Teachers (6 more days)

Informal Teacher Leadership (6 more days)

ELA

Math

Science

ELA

Math

Science

ESL

SS

ESL

SS

Ripples of Impact: The Teacher Professional Development Model: Year 1
Ripples of Impact: The Teacher Professional Development Model: Year 1
QTEL’s Theory of Action

Teacher Knowledge

QTEL at Lanier and International High Schools

Teacher Practice

Classroom Experience
- Student-teacher interaction
- Assignments
- Assessment
- Peer group interaction

Student Engagement

Teacher Collaboration

Student Motivation

Student Achievement

Student Engagement

Teacher Practice

Teacher Knowledge

QTEL at Lanier and International High Schools

Teacher Collaboration

Student Motivation

Student Achievement

Student Engagement
Other characteristics of QTEL’s professional development work

- Engages teachers in carefully designed scaffolded activity: workshops, lesson planning sessions, coaching, video clubs, open houses, etc.
- Designs for handover/takeover of responsibilities
- Helps teachers develop theoretical understandings of the skills and knowledge they need (not just HOW to teach, but also WHY teach that way)
- Create a shared language, vision, and standards for practice
- Sustain school culture, protecting against the “reform de jour”
The goal: teachers who

• Construct invitations that deliberately maximize opportunities for students to actively engage in discipline-specific talk.

• Keep a keen focus on the balance among the skills students possess, the demands of a task, and the supports offered.

• Help students become aware of and reflect on how authors use language to convey their points of view or interpretive perspectives (Gibbons, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2009; Walqui and van Lier, 2010).

• Respond to students initially focusing on fluency and students appropriate use of the genre involved to then spiral back to issues of accuracy and complexity.
Key components of the professional development

- Scaffolding
- Function of tasks and their interconnection
- Architecture of lessons and units
- Disciplinary lesson planning
- Coaching to improve the translation from knowledge to practice
- Video studies
- Lesson study
- Open houses
Results? Growth over two years:
Lanier High School
Quality Teaching for English Learners: Principles

These principles have been operationalized. Based on them we have developed a classroom observational instrument used in schools where we work:

- **Sustain Academic Rigor** in teaching English Learners
- **Hold High Expectations** in teaching English Learners
- **Engage in Quality Interactions** with English Learners
- **Sustain a Language Focus** in teaching English Learners
- **Develop Quality Curricula** in teaching English Learners
Language Focus
 Academic Uses of English Development Continuum

This development should be tracked over a unit of work that takes place over several classes.
Academic uses of English

• Involve constellations of features that together construct texts that are difficult for students because of:
  – the *fields* of knowledge they appeal to
  – the *tenor* of the interpersonal relationships they construct
  – the modes in which students encounter them

• These multiple variations result in academic language registers, or the linguistic variation that results according to contexts of use.
Field, tenor, and mode make the register of academic texts

Text 1
There was no rain for a very long time. The farmers had planted crops like maize and wheat and corn, but because it didn’t rain, all the crops died. Because there were no crops there was nothing for the children to eat, and they became very hungry. Because they didn’t have enough to eat, many of them died, especially the children and old people.

Text 2
The extended drought caused the crops to fail resulting in a widespread famine and many deaths, especially among the children and elderly.
As students advance in their studies, content and language change: Nominalization

Text 1
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Text 2
The extended drought caused the crops to fail resulting in a widespread famine and many deaths, especially among the children and elderly.
References


You may find more information about the Quality Teaching for English Learners program at:

www.wested.org/qtel

Thank you very much for your attention. I will be now happy to respond to your questions.
Questions
Thank you for having participated in today’s webinar on “Effective Professional Development for ELLs” presented by Aida Walqui, Ph.D.; hosted by National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, NCELA, located at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University.

- For more information or if you have additional questions regarding today's webinar topic contact:
  
  Aída Walqui at WestEd, awalqui@wested.org
  
  or

- If you have additional questions regarding the webinar contact:

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