

Apprenticing the Academic Uses of Language: Middle School English Language Learners and their Teachers

Aída Walqui
Director, Teacher Professional Development Program
WestEd
awalqui@wested.org
www.wested.org/qtel

CREATE Conference
Chicago, October 1, 2007



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

Presentation themes

- What constitutes quality apprenticeship opportunities for English Language Learners, and middle schoolers in particular to develop the academic uses of language? Principles.
- How to think systemically about capacity development. How to design the expertise of teachers, teacher professional developers, and educational leaders to make the vision of quality education for all a reality.



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

Pre-requisites for quality proposals

- Theory of action: goals, theoretical perspective, processes
- Coherence of approaches across programs and disciplines
- Capacity development models that focus on apprenticeship over time of quality standards-based curricula



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

QTEL is Based on a Pedagogy of Promise and Hope: Sociocultural Theory

- Development follows learning (therefore, instruction precedes development)
- Participation in activity is central in the development of knowledge
- Participation in activity progresses from apprenticeship to appropriation, from the social to the individual plane
- Learning can be observed as changes in participation over time



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

Quality Teaching with ELLs

Is premised on apprenticeship notions of schooling. This means that students:

- Are perceived and treated as capable, legitimate participants
- Engage in rich, intellectually demanding interactions that have been deliberately crafted and scaffolded
- Engage in high challenge, high support tasks that provide them with multiple points of entry to the academic community
- Takeover responsibilities that are handed over to them



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

The same is true for their teachers

- Their expertise needs to continuously develop through carefully constructed apprenticeships opportunities
- Teachers also require high challenge and high levels of support
- To succeed they need to be treated as legitimate participants and actors in their own growth



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

The goal: quality instruction with English Language Learners, QTEL's principles

- *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*



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

1. Sustain Academic Rigor in teaching ELLs

- Promote deep disciplinary knowledge
 - Develop central ideas of a discipline
 - Establish the complex relations that exist between central ideas
 - Sustain a focus on central ideas and depth of knowledge
- Require higher-order thinking skills
 - Lead students to combine facts and ideas to synthesize, evaluate, generalize
 - Lead students to solve problems and construct new meanings and understandings
- Develop substantive, generative concepts and skills, and teach students to support thinking with evidence
 - Lead students to construct explanations and arguments in the discipline



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

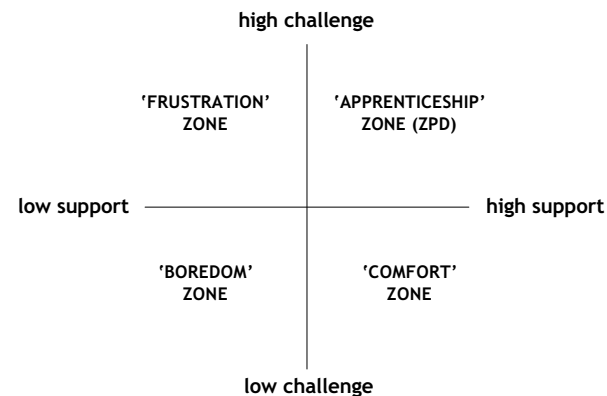
2. Hold High Expectations in teaching ELLs

- Engage students in tasks that are high challenge and high support
 - Use tasks that are academically challenging and engaging
 - Provide scaffolds that facilitate student engagement in intellectual tasks
 - Provide varied entry points for instructional tasks
 - Promote apprenticeship and increased participation over time
- Engage students in the development of their own expertise
 - Act on the belief that all members of class community can achieve
 - Foster a climate of mutual respect that contributes to the achievement of all
- Have clear criteria for high expectations
 - Be explicit about the criteria for what constitutes quality performance
 - Be clear with students that it is necessary to take risks and work hard to master challenging academic work



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

Teaching Learning Zones (Mariani, 1997; Hammond and Gibbons, 2007)



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

3. Engage in Quality Interactions with ELLs

- Engage in sustained, deep interactions to build knowledge
 - Dialogue between teacher and student and between peers is sustained and builds on the participants' ideas to promote improved understanding of concepts
 - Dialogue involves the exchange of ideas and is not scripted or dominated by one party
- Jointly construct knowledge mediated through language
 - Talk is about the subject matter of the discipline and encourages reasoning, application of ideas, argumentation, forming generalizations, and asking questions



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

The Apprenticeship of One Teacher

- **Teacher:** Roza Ng
- **School:** MS 131, Chinatown
- **Class:** Intermediate ESL
- **Range:** three months in the U.S.- two years



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

Sequence of Tasks

Discussion of the purpose and generic structure of descriptions

Students jointly create a description

Individually students share oral descriptions with new groups

Discussion of the purpose and generic structure of narratives

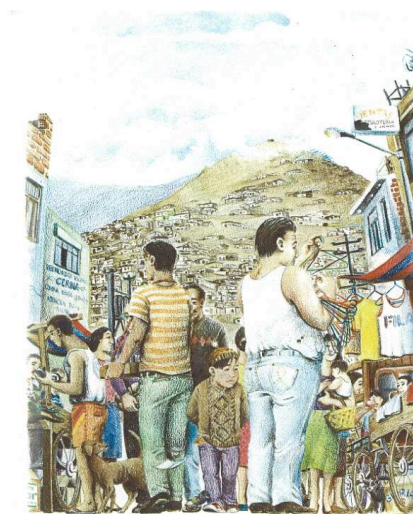
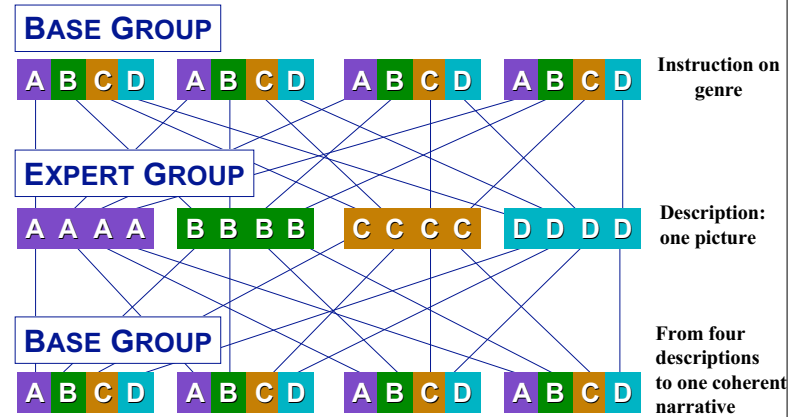
Collaboratively students construct an oral narrative

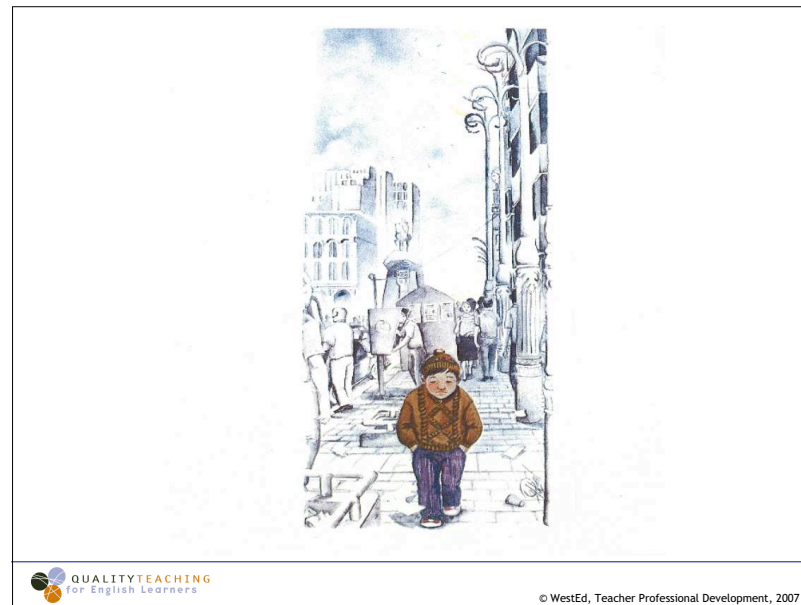
Students jointly write their narrative

Narratives are performed

Independent written narrative

Oral Development Jigsaw





Just like their students, teachers going through professional development also learn by participating in activity



As teachers work through activities, they develop awareness of the language and pedagogy necessary to implement tasks. This builds the experiential base for pedagogical reflection



Building Capacity

- Nested levels of coherent professional development that encompass: ESL, subject matter or classroom teachers; teacher supporters (professional developers, coaches, instructional support specialists, curriculum directors); educational leadership.
- What can this look like when applied to a few schools in a district? The East Side Union High School District example.



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

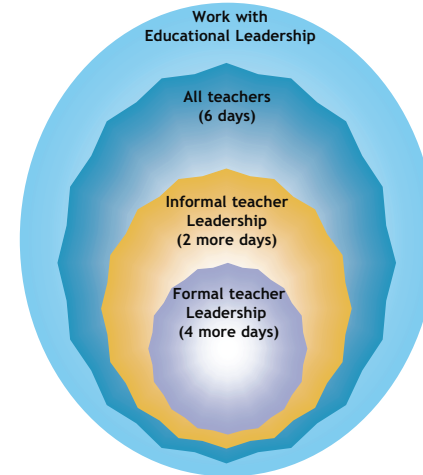


Figure 1: Ripples of impact on Teacher professional development



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

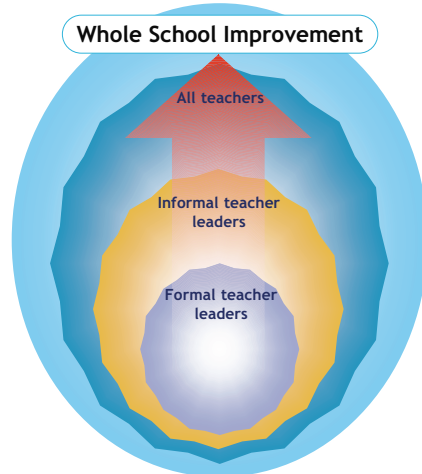


Figure 1: Ripples of impact on Teacher professional Development



© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

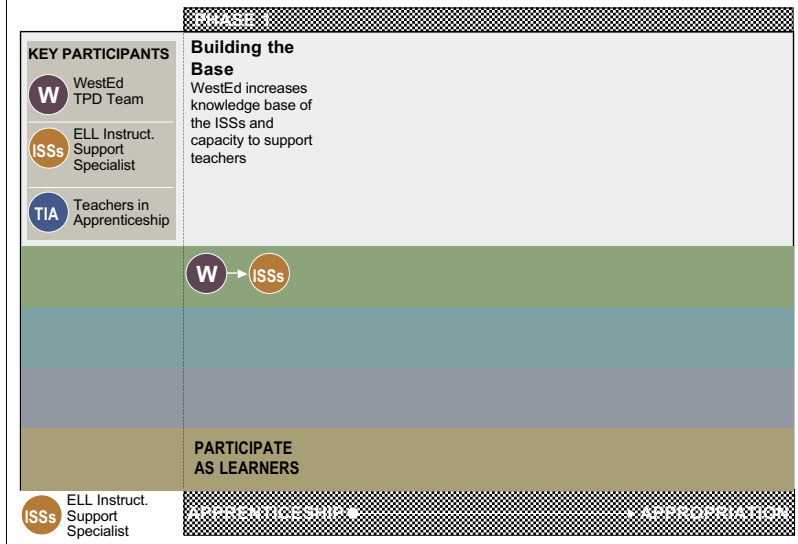
Capacity building at the district level: The New York City case

- Multiple embedded model of working with teachers, teacher support specialists, educational leadership
- Processes at each level mirror what happens at other levels

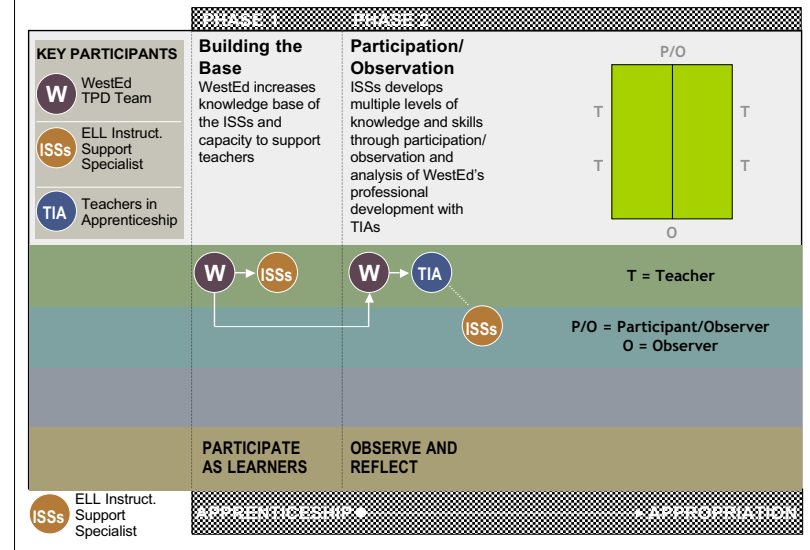


© WestEd, Teacher Professional Development, 2007

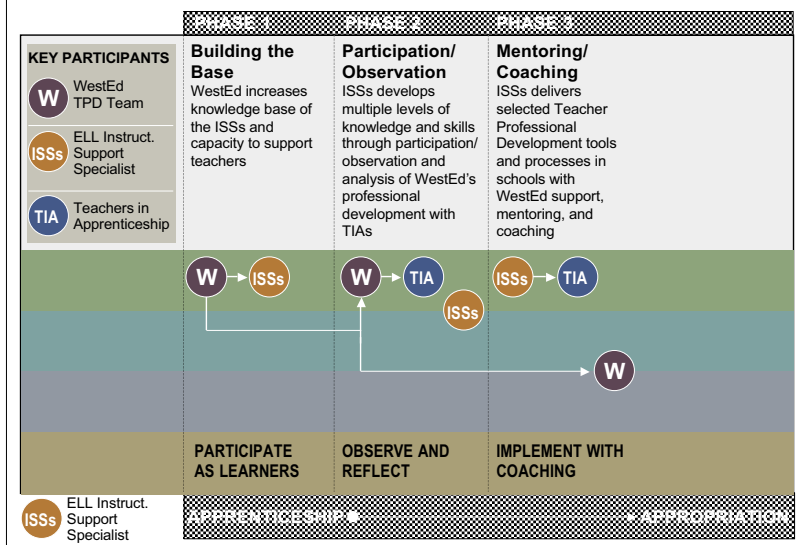
A Model of Professional Development Apprenticeship



A Model of Professional Development Apprenticeship



A Model of Professional Development Apprenticeship



A Model of Professional Development Apprenticeship

