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

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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.

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

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
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

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

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

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

2. Hold High Expectations in teaching ELLs

3. Engage in Quality Interactions with English Learners

4. Sustain a Language Focus in teaching ELLs

5. Develop Quality Curricula in teaching ELLs
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

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

- high challenge
- low challenge
- high support
- low support

Zone Descriptions:
- 'FRUSTRATION' ZONE
- 'APPRENTICESHIP' ZONE (ZPD)
- 'BOREDOM' ZONE
- 'COMFORT' ZONE

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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

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The Apprenticeship of One Teacher

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

Discussion of the purpose and generic structure of descriptions
Individually students share oral descriptions with new groups
Collaboratively students construct an oral narrative
Students jointly write their narrative
Narratives are performed
Independent written narrative

Oral Development Jigsaw

Instruction on genre
Description: one picture
From four descriptions to one coherent narrative

BASE GROUP
A B C D

EXPERT GROUP
A A A B B B C C C D D D

BASE GROUP
A B C D

Aida Walqui
CREATE 2007
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.

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
A Model of Professional Development Apprenticeship

**Phases:**
1. **Building the Base**
   - WestEd increases knowledge base of the ISSs and capacity to support teachers

2. **Participation/ Observation**
   - ISSs develops multiple levels of knowledge and skills through participation/ observation and analysis of WestEd’s professional development with TIAs

3. **Mentoring/ Coaching**
   - ISSs delivers selected Teacher Professional Development tools and processes in schools with WestEd support, mentoring, and coaching

4. **Appropriation**
   - ISSs supports TIAs in providing rigorous academic language and content knowledge to secondary English learners with WestEd consultation

**Key Participants:**
- WestEd TPD Team
- ISSs
- ELL Instruct. Support Specialist
- Teachers in Apprenticeship
- TIA

**Participate as Learners**
- Observe and Reflect
- Implement with Coaching

**Symbols:**
- W = WestEd TPD Team
- ISSs = ISSs
- ELL Instruct. Support Specialist
- Teachers in Apprenticeship
- TIA
- T = Teacher
- P/O = Participant/Observer
- O = Observer