

General Education Teachers' Preparation to Work with ELs: The Case of Professional Development

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Introduction

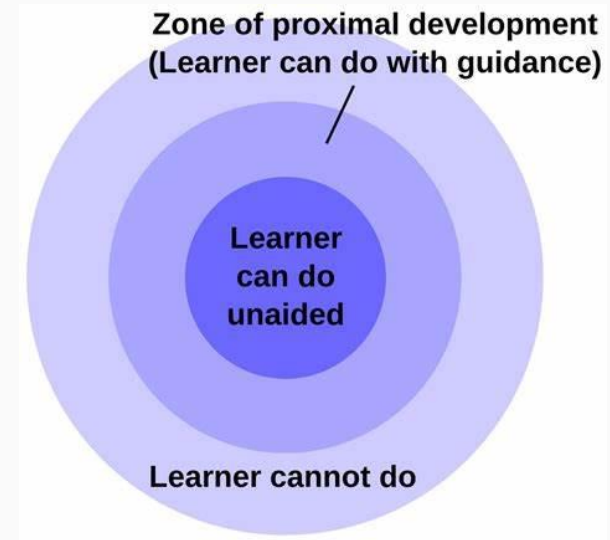
Do La Crosse general education teachers have enough professional development in respect to working with ELs?

- Growing population with ELs. 78.6% from 2001 - 2019
- If not addressed, dropout rates for ELs will increase.
- Can't show what they truly know as well
 - Placement Tests

More professional development with ELs → More understanding when working with them and more successful students

Introduction

- Sociocultural theory
 - Language is learned through a social process.
 - Interactions and environment.
 - Teachers receiving more PD»» better provide their EL students.
- Zone of Proximal Development



Literature Review

Teachers' professional development in school: A review study

- *Cogent Education*, led by Postholm,
- Theme:
 - Professional development
- The review indicates that teachers' learning processes need to be developed if they are to lead to school improvement. They need to use these teaching methods in order to show actual improvement.

Literature Review

Perceived Effectiveness of Teacher Education Programs on the Professional Competencies of Beginning Teachers:

- International Journal of Teacher Education and Professional Development, led by Su
- Theme:
 - Novice teachers need more support to improve their instruction.

Literature Review

Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners in Mississippi through Professional Development

- Walden University ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, led by Thomas Nelson
- Theme:
 - Preparation towards ELs

Teachers don't receive adequate preparation to work with ELs. As a result, ELs don't receive the support they need.

Rationale and Research Questions

Rationale: Because the population of ELs is increasing, it is important to examine the professional development that general education teachers receive to determine how to better support ELs in the future.

Research Questions:

- What professional development do local La Crosse general education teachers receive with respect to working with ELs?
- According to these teachers, how can the La Crosse school district improve their professional development to better support teachers with TESOL training so that they can better support their ELs?

Methods

Email- 3 rounds of contacting teachers

- La Crosse gen ed elementary school teachers
 - 3 third grade, 2 Kindergarten, and 1 second grade

6 different school participated

Questions about the PD received and TESOL support in school

- Recorded Interviews
- Information in Google Form
- Identify Patterns & Themes

The screenshot shows a Google Form titled "TESOL Professional Development in La Crosse". The form is for user rohde5738@uwflox.edu. It contains several questions:

- Question 1: "How often are you provided with PD opportunities?" with a text input field.
- Question 2: "How often does your professional development focus on English Language Learners (ELLs)?" with a Likert scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).
- Question 3: "What resources do you wish you had to support ELLs in your classroom?" with a text input field.
- Question 4: "Why would this resource and/or training mentioned above help support ELLs?" with a text input field.
- Question 5: "Do you have a permanent ESL/ TESOL specialist in your school building?" with radio buttons for Yes and No.
- Question 6: "How is this ESL/ TESOL specialist integrated into the school?" with a text input field.
- Question 7: "How can current education students prepare to work with ELLs in the future?" with a text input field.
- Question 8: "Any other comments?" with a text input field.

Other questions visible but partially obscured include:

- "In your current position, what grade level(s) do you teach? Check all that apply." with checkboxes for 4K, Kindergarten, 1st Grade, 2nd Grade, 3rd Grade, 4th Grade, and 5th Grade.
- "Where do you teach at in the La Crosse area?" with a text input field.
- "What subject area do you teach? If you are a general education teacher, type n/a." with a text input field.
- "What PD opportunities are offered by your district?" with a text input field.
- "What professional development opportunities have you completed on your own?" with a text input field.

Results

- No professional development with ELs
- Other professional development have been completed
 - Masters program, reading licenses, phonics/ELA program
 - Required by district
- Professional development days
 - All had PD days planned by district throughout school year
 - Topics: new math curriculum, behavior management, mental health, equity, etc.

Results

- One of the teachers said she would feel unprepared for an EL
- Need more PD directed towards ELs and TESOL education
- Only two teachers had at least one EL in their classroom
 - “I feel very lucky to be in a school with two full-time EL teachers”
 - “If I were to have a student who didn’t speak English in my classroom, I wouldn’t know where to access those things”
 - Hmong is most common first language of ELs
- Useful tools -
 - Visual Aids
 - Sentence Structures
 - Common/Background Knowledge
 - Accessible Resources

Results

- All of the schools have some resource of an EL teacher/aid
 - Some teachers don't know how to contact specialist
 - “We have one technically, but I have never seen her”
 - Full time and part time
 - Part-time travel between other La Crosse schools
 - Pull-out instruction common

Discussion, Conclusions & Implications

Answer RQ: PD not provided for Gen Ed elementary teachers

Not receiving scaffolding necessary to scaffold learning to ELs

Sociocultural Theory » Scaffolding & Zone Proximal Development

Professional Development → Teacher → Students

Implications- TESOL PD provide teachers with:

- Specific strategies for instruction
- Materials/resources to enhance ELs learning
- Pre-service teacher preparation

Discussion, Conclusions & Implications

Contributions to Education Field:

Resources- Visual Aids: Schedules, sentence structure, TESOL aid during Math, and common knowledge & strategies

Help decrease dropout rates

More prepared general education teachers & Pre-service Prep

Mentorship between teachers and pre-service teachers

References

Journal Articles:

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[Wisconsin Policy Forum | A Closer Look at English Learners in Wisconsin \(wispolicyforum.org\)](http://wispolicyforum.org)

Any Questions?

