Scaffolding for ELLs: Increasing Academic Success in Literacy

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Abstract

With the increasing rates of English Language Learners (ELLs) in general education classrooms, educators must implement instructional strategies to promote academic success for ELL students. The lack of professional developments suggest that educators are unfamiliar with cultural issues, assessing student progress, and developing instructional strategies for ELLs in a general education classroom. This capstone will examine the question of how elementary general education teachers can implement scaffolding based on the ELL's proficiency level, zone of proximal development (ZPD), and drawing on diverse backgrounds to ensure academic success in literacy. In the literature review I will examine the effectiveness of the elements of the sociocultural theory, including scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as a tool for educators when applied in the general education classroom for ELLs. The professional development has been grounded on research findings to help educators understand ELLs cultural backgrounds factors, ZPD, and scaffolding strategies in literacy discussions.

Keywords: English Language Learners, sociocultural theory, scaffolding, zone of proximal development, literacy

Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem

      As I take my own educational journey into Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), I begin to question how I will be able to provide English Language Learners (ELLs) with opportunities to be academically successful in literacy. As a special education teacher, I question each and every lesson I create for my Students with Disabilities, also known as SWD. I want to ensure that I am providing students with opportunities that promote academic success and growth.

      As a reflective practitioner, I often consider how to improve scaffolds given to the students to reach academic success. The scaffolds given to the students are based on the student's abilities and skill level. Each scaffold is made specifically for that student to help guide them to achieve the end task goal for the lesson. Prior to creating these scaffolds, I must understand the student's abilities and get a better understanding of their background. In order to do so within the first few months of school, I make it a goal to get to know my students on a personal level, as well as, on an academic level. I get to understand what my students' abilities are and get to understand their disability. During this time, I get to understand my student's proficiency level, their Individualized Educational Program (IEP) goals and get to understand them as a learner. I am a firm believer that my students with disabilities can be successful when given the right tools to build on their background knowledge, given scaffolds to assist with moving towards academic success, and drawing on their diverse backgrounds. Similarly, to SWD, educators must understand their ELLs in order to provide them with tools to be academically successful in literacy. The overarching problem I will be examining in this capstone project is how elementary general education teachers can implement scaffolding based on the ELL's proficiency level, zone

of proximal development (ZPD), and drawing on diverse backgrounds to ensure academic

success in literacy.

Significant of the Problem

Babinski et al. (2018) reports that school district administrators have suggested that with

the increase rates of ELLs, teacher professional developments should be provided for teachers to

get a better understanding of how to face cultural issues, how to assess students' progress, and

how to develop instructional strategies for ELLs. Despite the fact that ELLs in mainstream

classrooms are rising, only approximately 29% of teachers with ELLs have had professional

development focused on enhancing their instruction (Babinski et al., 2018). Elementary general

education teachers in kindergarten to sixth grade are often unfamiliar with the different English

Language Proficiency levels, including the four main levels: entering, emerging, transitioning,

and expanding. In turn many educators are unaware how to scaffold lesson for those students in

different proficiency levels (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010). It is important for educators to have an

understanding of the ELLs proficiency level because it allows the educator to create lessons and

scaffolds that will help guide the student towards meeting the learning target.

In order to provide ELLs with the tools to be academically successful, educators must

understand the four different proficiency levels, the ELL's ZPD, and their diverse background

prior to implementing scaffolds. Gibbons (2015) suggests that the basis of a child's development

is outlined by Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. ZPD is "the distance or the cognitive

gap between what a child can do unaided and what the child can do jointly in coordination with a

more skilled expert" (Gibbons, 2015, p.13). After determining a student's ZPD, an educator then

can provide scaffolding to help aide the student close the cognitive gap. Scaffolding is described

as a temporary structure that is put up in the process of constructing and repairing a building, but

as each part of the building is finished the scaffolding is taken down little by little (Gibbons,

2015). Scaffolding therefore is only meant to be temporary help that assists in moving towards a

successful repair. In comparison to ELLs, scaffolding is used to help assist the learner in moving

towards new skills, concepts, or level of understanding. Prior to scaffolding, educators must

determine what the ELL can do on their own, what the ELL can do with support and guidance,

and what the ELL cannot, even with support. When scaffolding is not given explicitly to ELLs,

there learner is unable to actively engage and success beyond their individual proficiency. Kang

et al. (2014) highlight the importance of effective scaffolding for ELLs to receive better

opportunities to reach academic success. Scaffolds are a beneficial way to create opportunities

for ELLs to grow as learners in their language development and in the content area of literacy.

When scaffolds are not given in literacy, ELLs are reluctant to actively participate in classroom

discussions and lack the motivation to work with their non-ELL peers during small-group

literature discussions. When the ELL is given scaffolds and mediated scaffolding, ELLs are

encouraged and able to take part in the literature discussions (Zhang et al, 2016). Scaffolding

does not always look similar each time. Each time the learner is successful in using the scaffold

independently to meet the end task of the lesson, scaffolding will be altered and is often slowly

taken away from the learner as the learner becomes more independent in their success. Educators

should also provide opportunities that promote instruction drawing on student's home and

cultural background, as well as, provide guidance through scaffolding for ELLs to promote

academic success in literacy.

Purpose

        The purpose of the professional development will be to address how educators can

scaffold tasks to ensure ELLs are provide with opportunities to be engaged and academically

successful in literacy. Participants will gain an understanding of how to provide various learning opportunities for students from unequal backgrounds. Participants will get to know their students on a personal and academic level and gain an understanding how their background experiences influence their learning by incorporating culturally diverse lessons.

During session one, participants will explore diversity among English Language learners: how culture and language affects learning. Participants will become familiar with Fairbairn and Jones-Vo's (2010) seven cultural background factors. The seven cultural background factors include prior to schooling, home language and literacy, individualism vs. collectivism, language distance, social distance, power relations, immigrant/refugee status, and prior difficult experiences. This will be beneficial for participants to understand the various factors that can have an effect on students' academic success in language development and content areas.

During session two, participants will delve more deeply into the cultural background factors that affect students' academic progress and language acquisition in literacy. Participants will be given scenarios to analyze and determine the cultural background factors that impacts the students learning and academic performance. Participants will become familiar with how to determine cultural background factors in their own classroom with the use of an application.

During session three, participants will explore 8 various strategies that effect English acquisition and content understanding of literacy. This session will give participants strategies to implement in their own classrooms to help facilitate ELLs English development plan for learners of diverse backgrounds in the general education classroom.

During session four through seven, participants will learn to scaffold for students in the four different levels, including level one through level four. Participants will become familiar with the four English Proficiency levels one through four, including entering, emerging,

transitioning, and expanding during these sessions. Participants will take a closer look at Fairbairn and Jones-Vo's student descriptors of each level to gain a better understanding of the proficiency levels. In becoming familiar with the four different levels, participants will be more proactive in creating scaffolds based on the student's proficiency level and abilities.

Conclusion

In order to provide ELLs with an abundance of opportunities to be academically successful, educators should be provided with professional developments that are geared to teach ELLs in a general education classroom. The purpose of professional developments is to allow educators to focus on enhancing instruction for ELLs and provide scaffolding strategies that will allow ELLs to progress academically.

In this capstone, Chapter 2 will discuss a review of the literature on how teachers can provide equitable learning opportunities, or the same opportunities to reach the same outcome, for English Language Learners from diverse backgrounds in literacy, based on the students' English Language Proficiency level as well as promoting instruction drawing on students' home and cultural background. Chapter 3 will present the Professional Development designed to help educators in kindergarten to fifth grade who may have an English Language Learners within the classroom, scaffold lessons based on a student's proficiency level and create culturally responsive lessons for ELLs to be successful in literacy. Finally, in Chapter 4 I will discuss reflections and recommendation for future research on equitable opportunities for English Language Learners. The Appendix will include materials and tools designed for the professional development.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

As previously discussed, the focus of this Capstone project is to address the needs of English Language Learners, (ELLs). More specifically, how elementary general education teachers can implement scaffolding based on the ELL's proficiency level, zone of proximal development (ZPD), and drawing on diverse backgrounds to ensure academic success. The lens I will be using is sociocultural theory. I will be exploring how elements of this theory can be applied to the ELLs experience in the classroom and can be combined with general instruction by educators to enhance their academic success in literacy. The grouping of research in this literature review includes: Theoretical Framework, Training Educators to Work with ELLs, Discussion in Literacy, Sociocultural Theory and Scaffolding, and Empirical Finding and Support for Scaffolding.

Theoretical Framework

The sociocultural theory asserts that interactions between individuals, from different backgrounds and cultures, are crucial for the learning and development processes. A strategy offered by this theory is scaffolding, which is the process in which educators provide support to students based on their individual needs throughout the learning process. The intended outcome is to allow the students to learn in a student-centered environment as opposed to a teacher-centered environment. Scaffolding facilitates and promotes a deeper level of learning than other strategies. This is tied into another key element of this theory called zone of proximal development (ZPD), which addresses how a learner can develop differently and achieve higher learner when they work with the guidance and encouragement. The closer the ELL is to the individual with the desired skills, the easier it is for ELLs to master these skills themselves.

Training Educators to Work with ELLs

First, it is important to investigate the existing research on the ELL experience in the classroom and focuses on why working with these students is an overarching problem that needs to be addressed. Lucas et al. (2008) discussed how this is an issue as the number of students in the country who speak languages other than English at home rises. With efforts to increase inclusion in mainstream classroom settings, the authors point out that there is also an increase in demand to the resources ensure that both students and educators alike are prepared to work with ELLs. Between the years of 1979 and 2004, there was a 162% increase in youth who spoke languages other than English at home. Through policy, the authors argue that classrooms will become more inclusive and measures will be taken to attempt to ensure ELLs have what they need to learn in these environments. However, the authors indicate that it still does not necessarily mean that the teachers are prepared to teach ELLs in the mainstream classroom setting.

The issue is more complex than merely ensuring that ELLs have resources available to them to learn but is more focus on ensuring teachers prepared to teach ELLs. Lucas et al. (2008) state the No Child Left Behind Act, additional legislations, and accreditation requirements, professional standards, and state certification polices have attempted to influence how ELLs are taught in general education, which are steps in the right direction to prepare teachers. However, the authors assert that these attempts are not enough. The authors argue that a policy alone does not ensure a fair and equitable learning environment for ELLs. Instead, the authors suggest that greater inclusion leads to more pressure on students and teachers but has not appropriately detailed how to best ensure these students do not lose their own culture and language. Inclusion can engage, challenge, and bridge learning gaps for ELLs. The goal is not to ensure that English

remains primary or to force ELLs to adapt, but instead to have native speakers and ELLs work together and learn together to benefit all parties involved.

Sullivan et al. (2018) expand upon the discussion of ELLs needs and the importance of the teacher and student interaction for ELLs. The authors state that more than 41% of public-school teachers now have the responsibility of educating ELLs, yet there is a gap in the knowledge, skills, and preparedness to do so. The authors mention different theoretical framework that focus on enhancing ELLs experiences in the classroom, including sociocultural theory. Sullivan, et al. stress that instructional needs for ELLs differs from native English speakers due to their different experiences and language abilities, thus utilizing different theories and fostering relationships between these students and their teachers is very important. Cross-cultural and language barriers may make fostering student-teacher relationships difficult. The authors highlight ELLs need to have relationships with their educators and peers to maximize their academic success. The authors assert that failing to meet ELLs social needs in the classroom only further isolates these students, even in an inclusive environment. Consequently, if the ELLs feel excluded, unengaged, or as if they cannot participate, their learning and growth can be severely stunted.

Sullivan et al. (2018) research focused on aspects of the relationship between kindergarten teachers, ELL students, and non-ELL students. The authors objective for the study was to examine the differences between the lead teacher's interaction with ELLs and non-ELLs. The study was conducted within three public school kindergarten classrooms. A minimum of 30 kindergarten teacher participated. All classrooms were full-day kindergarten classrooms that had at least one ELL student enrolled. The differences in teacher interaction with ELLs and non-ELLs was assessed using the Emerging Academic Snapshot (EAS) and the Student-Teacher

Relationship Scale (STRS). An observer from East Carolina University's Child Development

Center spent approximately three hours at each site to observe the interactions. The EAS is used

to describe both the student's activities and teacher's response through 27 items. The observer

would use the EAS to determine whether the 27 items were present or absent. The STRS

measured the relationship between the teacher and their students. The two subscales included

closeness and conflict. The closeness subscale measured affection, openness, and warmth of a

teacher with a specific child. The conflict subscale measured the dissonance of the teacher-

students interaction. The research concluded that teachers spend less time in minimal interactions

with ELL students in comparison with non-ELL students. Teachers maintained a closer

relationship with non-ELL students than ELL peers. Teachers also confronted more conflicting

relationships with non-ELL students than ELLs students. The researchers speculated that

differences in relationships and less conflicts with ELLs were due to the fact that there is a lack

of cross-cultural relationships being nurtured in the classes. The lack of cross-cultural

relationships makes interactions and interpersonal relationships suffer and can harm the learning

process for ELLs. Also, the lack of cross-cultural student-teacher relationships illustrates how

ELLs are often treated differently and negatively impacted when teachers are un-prepared to

work with ELLs. The research can conclude that sociocultural theory would be beneficial when

working with ELL students in a general classroom because it helps nurture interactions across

cultures, enhances inclusion, and creates student-teacher relationships.

Babinski et al. (2018) research focused on various development program for teachers that

focused on language and literacy skills for ELLs. The authors state that out of 5 million ELLs in

United States schools, more than 70% of them speak Spanish as their first language. There is less

than 20% of classroom teacher education programs that require a course that focuses specifically

on teaching ELLs to teach those 5 million ELLs in school. As the authors discuss, teacher professional development programs are important to ensure that teachers remain sharp on skills and develop new skills based on new research. The study was intended to evaluate the impact of teacher professional development program on teacher's practices and the language and literacy skills of young ELLs. In the control group, which was those who did not receive any instructional strategies to implement in the lessons given to ELLs, the outcomes were much different, the ELLs were not successful. Thus, illustrating how a professional development program that includes lessons regarding ELLs can really make a difference for teachers and students alike. The results of the study revealed that the professional development program effectively and positively impacted how the teacher employed specific instructional strategies for ELLs. Thus, also having a positive impact on students' literacy outcomes. Furthermore, it also exemplifies instructional methods that work with native English speakers are not necessarily beneficial to ELLs. Thus, the need to incorporate different learning theories and practices, such as sociocultural theory, scaffolding, and planning for students' ZPD be taken into consideration to promote academic success in literacy.

Discussion in Literacy

Next, it is important to understand the research that already exists on what teachers can do during instruction and the learning process to help ELLs to succeed in their academic and language learning. Zhang et al. (2016) discusses how to encourage quality classroom talk within the general education setting. The authors examined the influence of teacher talk on student's initial language and literacy skills, and home language backgrounds on the discussion proficiency of peer-led literature discussions, also known as collaborative reasoning. The authors highlight how quality collaborative reasoning can improve problem solving, understanding, and

learning amongst the students, ELLs and non-ELLs. Peer-led discussions can be extra beneficial for culturally and linguistically diverse groups in the classroom if they are implemented properly. ELLs are often, as the authors mention focused on teacher-led discussions rather than peer-led discussions. To help illustrate the importance of collaborative reasoning, the authors conducted a study that intended to evaluate the proficiency of a small-group literature discussion led by peers and the influence of teacher talk and student backgrounds on group discussion. The study was conducted with two 5th grade classrooms that consisted mostly of Spanish-speaking English learners in a mainstream and in a bilingual classroom. The researchers found great variation in the proficiency between the groups. The study concluded that the bilingual students elaborated less when they spoke and seemed overall more reluctant to participate. Teachers differed greatly in how they facilitated these discussions in the study. The teacher in the mainstream class employed effective scaffolding techniques to facilitate her class discussion, and the students, including the ELLs, seemed more open to discussing, more friendly with each other. ELLs were consistently encouraged and complimented by the non-ELLs in their literature group. Zhang et al. (2016) study supports the benefits of strategic scaffolding approach in instruction and peer-led discussion that allows ELLs to work together to improve ELLs experience and academic success.

This leads to another research article by Iddings et al. (2009), in which the authors argue that ELLs can effectively participate and learn from text conversations, even amongst native English speakers, if they are learning in the proper conditions. Text conversation refers to the ability to make sense of a text given by making connections to relevant personal experiences and comprehension of text main idea through participation in discussion. Reading comprehension instruction for ELLs should focus on how these students learn linguistic elements in both languages at the same time as they consolidate their existing knowledge into both languages

along with their new language and new information. In order to effectively nurture this learning, it is important that the proper classroom conditions are in place. The authors intent of the study was to highlight how certain patterns of interactions facilitate a better learning experience for ELLs. The study was conducted with a small literacy group, including 3 beginning-level ELLs and non-ELLs. The ELLs were observed working closely with their peers in discussions facilitated by the teacher, to elaborate on concepts in the text, formulating questions, and making personal connections. Close observation was focused on the ways in which the ELLs, in interactions with non-ELLs and the teacher in the small group, used language and communication to take part in the social, cultural, and intellectual exchange during the text conversation. The findings concluded that ELLs and non-ELLs actively and continually used each other's utterances and the text to transform the language they used to talk about the story and the way the students interpreted the text. The students in the small literacy group were able to help each other by collectedly engaging in the content of the story. The research supports how teacher interactions and teaching strategies are important for nurturing a good learning environment for ELLs, also highlighting the importance of scaffolding and informed application of the ZPD, which is directly related to the overarching discussion and supports the use of such strategies in instructional practice.

Sociocultural Theory and Scaffolding

The discussion in this section will center on implementing elements of sociocultural theory to improve learning outcomes for ELLs.

Behroozizad et al. (2014) discusses how sociocultural theory helps ELLs overcome challenges associated with learning English in a general education classroom. The authors focus on how Vygotskian's approach to learning language can enhance the understanding and learning

of English as a second language. ELLs face many challenges as they try to learn English, which influences their academic success and their abilities to speak English after they graduate. The authors exemplify how sociocultural theory helps bridge the gaps that lead to the challenges ELLs encounter and how learning derives from language used within a social context. Sociocultural theory plays a role in the context of the behavior or situation in which the action occurred, as well as, asserts that psychological structures are important for learning and are the result of social interactions and social context. The authors define learning as a successful shifting control in activities from the social to the individual and embodying the external to within the self. This is why, Behroozizad et al. argue, sociocultural theory and the facets of this strategy are beneficial to ELLs if implemented properly. Mediated scaffolding support is verbal feedback provided by the teacher to encourage active and open discussion without interference to ELLs. There is also opportunity for peer to peer mediated scaffolding. When ELLs are able to work closely with those experienced in the English language and are believed to be central aspects of learning for ELLs. Active and open discussions not only help the ELL learn and also helps them socialize and feel more comfortable. Thus, the mediated scaffolding teachers and students provide can provide ELLs help with translating their external learning into internal experiences. In the scope of professional development programs for teachers to work with ELLs, the use of sociocultural theory illustrates how socialization can positively impact all involved and not only ELLs.

Ebadi and Asakereh (2017) discuss how Dynamic Assessment (DA) has its roots in sociocultural theory and can be an active and working format to help ELLs perform beyond their current abilities. In DA, mediation plays a key role in learning, thus it focuses on the interactions between the teacher and the ELL. During mediated scaffolding, the educator intervenes to

provide only the necessary assistance to ELLs to complete the task at hand. Mediated scaffolding

allows the teacher to see where the student needs additional help but allows the student to learn

and grow on their own using their own resources. The interactions are intended to be ongoing

and gradual, with the learning being more personalized based on the needs of the individual. In

the study, the authors revealed that DA had a significantly positive impact on the learning

process overtime. Error frequency, the amount of times the mediator had to get involved, the

responsiveness of the participants to the mediation, and the types of private speech were

evaluated to assess speaking skill progress. The outcome demonstrated that use of DA led to

fewer mistakes, higher responsiveness, and greater overall levels of self-sufficiency and self-

regulation in the academic environment. In terms of the educational process for ELLs, this

research supports the use of sociocultural theory in professional development programs for

teachers so they can have a more positive impact on ELLs with the use of mediated scaffolding

as a tool of Dynamic Assessment.

   Rassaei (2014) further elaborates on the use of sociocultural theory to work with ELL

students by focusing on the impact of scaffolding. The author illustrates how scaffolded feedback

impacts recast on the second language (L2) development. Recast is a strategy used to correct

language learners' errors without interfering with the language development. Using Vygotsky's

notion of scaffolding, the study was conducted with ELLs to see whether or not scaffolded

feedback impacted the recast levels. One experimental group would receive recast, or modeling.

Another experiment group would receive scaffolded feedback when they made errors on a task-

based interaction. The control group performed the same task without any recast or scaffolded

feedback. The measurements were based on an untimed grammaticality judgement test and an

oral production task. The results show that the group who received scaffolded feedback had

higher rates of development compared with the group that received recast. The authors

acknowledged that recast fail to tell the learner they made a mistake and what the mistake was.

Therefore, it may not be considered a corrective feedback by the learner based on individual

factors. Scaffolding corrective feedback, on the other hand, helps the learner know they made a

mistake, what the mistake was, and how they can improve on it. This is believed to be why the

scaffolded feedback groups benefited more than the recast or control group. The scaffolded

corrective feedback being combined with the ZPD was believed to maximize the benefit of the

experience by allowing ELLs to take an active role in learning knowing what the mistake was;

why it was a mistake; how to correct the mistake; and ways to actively practice omitting the

mistake made. Rassaei indicates the benefits of scaffolded corrective feedback to enhance ELLs

education and their academic experience through taking an active role in learning by

understanding mistakes.

Further support for sociocultural theoretical approach to teaching ELLs was found in the

article by Kang et al. (2014). The authors illustrate how scaffolding can be used in other learning

situations to benefit the ELL. The study examined how teachers provided written scaffolds in

assessment tasks and how the scaffold impacted the students' abilities in core disciplinary

proficiency. Kang et al. used the study to highlight how effective scaffolding generates better

opportunities for students to show their proficiency. The quality and combination of scaffolding

types are more beneficial than the number of scaffolds in the assessments. These two elements of

the research attempt to highlight how ELLs can have their individual needs met with quality

scaffolding and corrective feedback that leads to higher proficiency, even if the total number of

scaffolds may not seem high enough. The scaffolding types used in a strategic manner and the

combination with various other scaffolds, help different ELLs have their needs addressed

individually. The authors describe two different types of scaffolding strategies, including

structure-orientated scaffolding and explanation-oriented scaffolding. Structure-oriented

scaffolding is designed support and focus on the structure of a student's explanation. For

instance, the authors explain the structure-oriented scaffolding of an assessment task includes

three subheadings of "Make a CLAIM", "Give your REASONING", and "Give your

EVIDENCE". Structure scaffolding will provide a detailed prompt for each component, such as

"Make a CLAIM: Write a sentence that answer the scientific questions", as well as, a concept

support "Hint: Think about how producers an consumer get energy" (Kang et al., 2014, pg. 680).

Explanation-oriented scaffolding is similar to structure-oriented scaffolding but features a blend

of conceptual and epistemic scaffolds. Explanation-oriented scaffolding includes sentences

frames that help guide students to provide evidence in their explanation and is shaped by social

interactions between the teacher and ELLs. Thus, the various scaffolding strategies help create

more opportunities for more students to be engaged and succeed beyond their individual current

levels. The research supports professional development programs for teachers that educate on the

different techniques, types, and levels of scaffolding that can be used will help them know which

to implement for individual students, how to implement it, and when to implement it.

Conversely, Hamidi and Bagherzadeh (2018) state that scaffolding is a key aspect of

sociocultural theory, claiming that scaffolding has many epistemological problems. One of the

problems pointed out by the authors is how the original conception of scaffolding does not

actually support its implications when applied in a mainstream second language acquisition

context. The implication has to do with the predictability, variability, mediation, and restricting

as underlying factors and how scaffolding is supposed to be delivered, verse how it is delivered

in such a setting. The setting is hardly predictable, the variables are not simple to control, thus

the predictability and mediation are then difficult to incorporate, meaning that the original intent

of scaffolding in practice is not necessarily delivered properly. The next argument is that there is

a range of variation in what scaffolding actually means and entails, which does lead to confusion

on how it should be practiced and implemented. Scaffolding, as a concept, is very rigid and static

and is supposed to exist in the conformity of all variables. When dealing with ELLs and children

in a classroom, learners are naturally have variability in their personalities and learning needs.

The final argument that Hamidi and Bagherzadeh (2018) highlight about the use of the

original type of scaffolding is that scaffolding is not a means or incentive for initiating

reorganization or restructuring of performance. Restructuring, especially for ELLs, pertains to a

qualitive change in behavior that goes beyond automatization, and then also tends to involve

reorganization of behavior into new forms. Scaffolding, in its original form, cannot provide the

ecological feedback that is needed to allow for automatization and restructuring of organizational

structures and performances, which is all part of the human cognition process that is active and

dynamic by nature. The authors argue that ZPD does not meet the needs of these students,

because it expects a teacher and even a peer to identify the gap between what the learner knows

and what they need to know. The ZPD assumes that there is symmetrical interaction in a

classroom, when in reality there are so many variables of this type of interaction. ZPD is

asymmetric by nature and is more than likely not conducive for ELLs when it comes to being in

close proximity to others and being exposed to the scaffolding technique. Hamidi and

Bagherzadeh provide adequate points regarding integrating elements of sociocultural theory,

including scaffolding in a general education to provide a positive impact for ELLs. On the

contrary, the argument does not suggest that the integrated elements of the sociocultural theory

do not work, the argument only suggest that there are other aspects or elements that may weaken the impact of scaffolding if not addressed appropriately.

Empirical Findings and Support for Scaffolding

Overall, the general findings of the research support the use of sociocultural theory in ELL general education classrooms. The research also acknowledges the need for teachers to utilize different teaching methods for their ELL students than compared to their native speaking students. The need comes from the experience of ELL students in an inclusive environment, plus the research that supports the importance of teaching strategies and teacher interaction with these students having a significant impact on their academic outcomes. This research, in tandem with the research supporting the use of sociocultural theoretical framework in the educational process being extremely beneficial for L2 students in a general education classroom.

Conclusion

The application of sociocultural theory supports the notion that ELLs education is enhanced through integrated elements such as scaffolding and ZPD when implemented appropriately in a general education setting. Developing these techniques, as a teacher, is no easy feat and as Hamidi and Bagherzadeh (2018) point out in the article, there are many issues and things that could go wrong in this process that would take away from the positive impact of these techniques if they are not done properly.

Therefore, providing a professional development that helps teachers learn about the elements of sociocultural theory is beneficial when working alongside of ELLs in a general education setting. As the research shows, a professional development can educate teachers about the importance of implementing scaffolding for ELLs and ensures that the educators are following procedures that maximize the benefits of some of the elements of sociocultural theory.

Essentially, the research provided in Chapter 2 supports the need for teachers to implement scaffolding, based on the understanding of the ELLs ZPD, proficiency level, and drawing on the ELLs diverse background to create cross-cultural relationships. In Chapter 3, I will present a professional development that incorporates the various integrated elements of the sociocultural theory. The professional development will allow participants to explore cultural backgrounds factors that impact ELLs, strategies to implement cross-cultural relationships within the classroom, and various ways to scaffold to encourage academic success in literacy.

Chapter 3: Professional Development

Through a seven-session professional development, participants will explore the diversity among ELLs. Each session will be approximately forty-five minutes. Participants will become familiar with the cultural and language background factors that affect the learning of ELLs. In addition, participants will analyze how cultural background factors affect students' academic progress and language in literacy. Also, participants will explore various classroom strategies they can implement to encourage social cross-cultural relationships in the general education classroom with non-ELLs and teachers. We will start with an entering proficiency level and move to emerging, transitioning, expanding. ELLs are assigned to a level through examination. In planning for diversity in the classroom, participants will be encouraged to provide scaffolds based on the ELLs proficiency levels and ZPD for achieve academic success in literacy.

Session 1

The participants will explore the 7 cultural background factors adapted from the work of Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010) as "relevant student factors" for ELLs academic success. Participants will gain a better understanding on how culture and language affects the learning of ELLs.

Agenda

I will begin the professional development by handing out participants an agenda (see Appendix, Figure 1). I will read the agenda aloud for the participants and begin with the opening activity.

Opening Activity

The participants will engage in an opening activity. As an introductory activity for this professional development, I will have the participants write down 3 cultural factors that they

believe impact their own students' academic success in their classroom. Participants will have 3

minutes to write the 3 factors and will have 2 minutes to share with their elbow partner their

responses. The participants will then be given 2 more minutes to share their best idea with the

whole table. This activity will get the participants thinking about factors that play a role in their

own classrooms and other general education classroom in the school.

Activity 1

Prior to beginning the first activity, I will share the 7 cultural background factors adapted

from the work of Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010). The participants will perform a gallery walk in

a group of no more than 4 participants. Each participant should be from a different grade level. I

will have the 7 posters with various cultural background factors spread out around the classroom.

The 7 factors include educational background, home language and reading levels, cultural

identity, heritage languages and proficiency, socialization skills, social influence, and lastly,

immigration status and stressors. The participants will have 3 minutes at each gallery/poster and

will have to write down thoughts or questions they have about the cultural background factor. I

have listed suggested writing ideas on each poster and participants are encouraged to respond to

other comments or questions. After the participants have been able to view and comment on each

poster, I will then go over to each poster and read aloud the various comments, thoughts,

questions, and ideas written. This will allow participants to actively engage in a group discussion

about the cultural background factors learned through this session. I will also be able to answer

questions the participants have about the factors prior to the next session.

Closing Activity

The closing activity will have participants determine which factor or factors play a

significant role currently in their own classroom with ELLs. The participants will be given an

exit ticket to complete (see Appendix, Figure 2). The participant will write the factor or factors

down and explain how they have tried to consider the factor when teaching and assessing ELLs.

I will collect the exit ticket from each participant and will be able to assess the various factors

that the participants have noted to play a significant role in their classroom. In the next session,

participants will apply cultural background factors in context to better understand how to assess

student backgrounds factors in their own classroom.

Session 2

The participants will delve more deeply into the cultural background factors that affect

students' academic progress and language learning and apply them in context. The participants

will become familiar with determining cultural background factors using a modified application

of student cultural background factors.

Agenda

I will begin the profession development by handing out participates an agenda (see

Appendix, Figure 3). I will read the agenda aloud for the participants and begin with the opening

activity.

Opening Activity

The participants will engage in an opening activity. The participants will be asked to

draw the emoji that best describes them. I will select several participants to share out their emoji

they have chosen to describe them prior to the next activity.

Activity 1

I will review the 7 cultural background factors from the previous session. The

participants will join the group they were in for the last session. I will give out four different

fictional scenarios to each group, three groups will receive the same scenario (see Appendix,

Figure 4). The participants will be given 5 minutes to read the scenario within their group and

will be given 10 minutes to take notes on the note-catcher provided (see Appendix, Figure 5) and

discuss the following question based on the scenario given:

1. Which cultural background factor(s) most impacts this student's learning and

    academic performance?

2. What might be the influence of these factors on learning?

3. What would be your next steps as a teacher, after receiving this new student in your

    classroom?

Each group will be given 5 minutes to prepare and present their scenario to the rest of the groups.

After each group has presented and discussed the cultural background factors they have

determined for their scenario, I will discuss how we can apply these background factors in our

own classrooms.

Activity 2

I will present the participants with a modified application of student cultural background

factors (see Appendix, Figure 6) to use with ELLs in their classroom. I will explain how to use

the application of student cultural background factors to the participants. I will have the

participants selected one student that they currently work with in a general education classroom.

The participant will complete the application for the student by determining which factors are

relatable for the student in the first column and writing down notes based on the student in the

second column. Lastly, the participant will hypothesize the influence the factor plays on the

learning of the student in the third column. The participants will be given approximately 10

minutes to complete the application of student cultural background factors. I will select several

participants to share aloud their application and review how these factors can influence our ELLs

learning.

Closing Activity

The participants will be given a quote to analyze from the article by Fairbairn and Jones-

Vo (2010). Participants will be given approximately 3 minutes to turn and talk to their elbow

partner about how the quote resonates to them as an educator. Participants will be asked to find a

quote prior to next session that describes them as an educator or describes their classroom. In the

next session, participants will explore classroom strategies to incorporate in their classroom for

ELLs.

Session 3

The participants will explore various classroom strategies they can implement in their

own classroom to encourage social cross-cultural relationships with non-ELLs and teacher

adapted from Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010). These strategies will draw on the diverse

backgrounds within the classroom and will support ELLs in a general education classroom.

Agenda

I will begin the professional development by handing out participants an agenda (see

Appendix, Figure 7). I will read the agenda aloud for the participants and begin with the opening

activity.

Opening Activity

Last session, participants were asked to bring in a quote that describes them as an

educator or describes their classroom. Participants will be given 2 minutes to find a partner that

they have not worked with in the last 2 sessions and share their quote. The participants will be

given approximately 5 minutes to share their quote with their new partner and explain how the

quote resonates with them. After the 5 minutes are completed, I will turn their attention to a

video called "Building a Belonging in the Classroom". The video is approximately 4 minutes and

after the participants watch the video, I will go around the room to each participant and ask them

to give us only one word that can sum up the video. According to Sullivan et al. (2018), creating

a classroom that foster relationships between ELLs, non-ELLs peers, and teachers enhances

ELLs experiences within the classroom. This video will demonstrate the important of fostering

relationships within the classroom.

Activity 1

I will begin the activity by reading aloud eight strategies that teachers can use to facilitate

ELLs English development in a general education classroom. Each participant will be given a

classroom strategies toolkit that includes all eight strategies (see Appendix, Figure 8). After each

strategy, I will have the participants raise their hand if they use this strategy currently in their

own classroom. The participants will then receive a classroom strategies toolkit note-catcher (see

Appendix, Figure 9). The participants will choose one new strategy of their choice that they

would be able to implement with an ELL in their classroom. The participants will be given

approximately 5 minutes to complete the note-catcher independently. After the 5 minutes are

completed, the participants will turn to their partner from earlier in the session and will be given

10 minutes to discuss the strategy they chose, how they would implement the strategy, when they

will use the strategy, how it will benefit the ELL, and how the strategy will measure success.

Closing Activity

The participants will end the session but writing one takeaway that got from the various

strategies that were explore during this session. I will take approximately 5 minutes to allow

participants to share their responses. In the next session, participants will take a closer look at

modified descriptors for entering ELLs and applying scaffolding strategies in context (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010).

Session 4

The participants will come familiar with the student descriptors of ELLs at the entering level of English language proficiency. Participants will be encouraged to provide scaffolds based on the ELLs proficiency level, ZPD, and drawing on student background factors in order to achieve academic success in literacy.

Agenda

I will begin the professional development by handing out participants an agenda (see Appendix, Figure 10). I will read the agenda aloud for the participants and begin with the opening activity.

Opening Activity

The participants will be asked to name that language. On the slideshow, I will present that participants with a word in a different language. The word is hello in Bulgarian. They participants will be given 2 minutes to answer what language the word is written in and what it translates to. The participants will then place it in the bucket provided to receive a prize at the end of the session if they get both questions correct.

Activity 1

The participants will review level 1 entering student descriptors adapted from Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010). The entering student descriptors going over the four domains of literacy including, writing, listening, speaking, and reading. After the participants review the descriptors for entering ELLs, the participants will be given a composite scenario for two students (see Appendix, Figure 11). These scenarios include general characteristics of our student population.

However, these scenarios do not identify a real student in our school. Both of the students are on the same language proficiency level but require different scaffolding. The participants will be given approximately 5 minutes to review the differences between the two students. I will ask the participants to think about the background factors that will play a role in scaffolding for the students (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010). Participants will also consider the students level of proficiency and ZPD based on the information given for each student. I will select participants to share aloud the factors that will affect each student. I will provide the participants with scaffolding strategies for each of the student based on the student's proficiency level and factoring in the student's background factors. According to Lucas et al. (2008), various policies have been put in place to attempt to ensure ELLs have what is necessary to learn in a general education classroom, however that does not mean teachers are prepared to teach ELLs. To ensure that ELLs have the tools and resources need to be successful in a general education classroom, teachers must also have the tools and resources readily to provide for the ELL. In order to bridge learning gaps, as well as, engaged and challenge ELLs, teachers must understand the students background factors. Sullivan et al. (2018) further expand on fostering a student-teacher relationship to get a better understanding of student's background factors.

Activity 2

The participants will use the information given in the first activity to scaffold an English Language Arts assignment given in a 5th grade general education classroom for the two fictional students. The participants will be assigned to a group and given one of the two students to focus on for scaffolding. The participants will receive a link to the New York State Education Department ELA scaffolding resource for 5th grade. The participants will also be given a template that will have the assignment given to the students, the expectations of the assignment,

and scaffolding (see Appendix, Figure 12). On left side of the template the expectations and

scaffolding/supports will be completed for non-ELLs and on the right side of the template, the

participants must complete the expectations and scaffolding for the ELL. The participants will be

able to look back at the proficiency level descriptors, the scaffolding strategies in activity 1,

students background factors, and scaffolding online resource. The participants will be given

fifteen minutes to assess the assignment given to the students, determine the fundamental skills

the students lack to complete the assignment, and tailor scaffolding strategies appropriately for

the student to be successful in completing the assignment. After the fifteen minutes, one

participant from each group will share their scaffolding idea and how they assessed the

assignment drawing on the student's level and background factors.

Closing Activity

To wrap up session 4, I will have the participants share one new scaffolding strategy they

would like to use with an ELL in their classroom. The participants will be given 2 minutes to

share with their elbow partner the strategy they have chosen. The participants will be asked to

bring one lesson to the next session and select one emerging ELL. If they currently do not have

an emerging student in their classroom, the participant will still need to bring one literacy lesson

for next session. In the next session, the participants will take a closer look at Fairbairn and

Jones-Vo's student descriptors for emerging ELLs and applying scaffolding strategies in context

for students in their own classrooms.

Session 5

The participants will come familiar with the student descriptors of ELLs at the emerging

level of English language proficiency. As specified by New York State Education Department,

emerging level students show dependency with support to approach advance academic language

skills but does not meet linguistic demands to indicate English proficiency. Participants will be

encouraged to provide scaffolds based on the ELLs proficiency level, ZPD, and drawing on

student background factors in order to achieve academic success in literacy. According to Kang

et al. (2014), effective scaffolding generates better opportunities for students to show their

proficiency. The authors highlight the importance of quality and combination of scaffold types

are beneficial for an ELL, rather than the numbers of scaffolds given.

Agenda

I will begin the professional development by handing out participants an agenda (see

Appendix, Figure 13). I will read the agenda aloud for the participants and begin with the

opening activity.

Opening Activity

The participants will view a picture on the slideshow. The participants have to create

caption for the picture. The participants will be given 5 minutes to share their caption.

Activity One

The participants will review level 2 emerging student descriptors highlighted by Fairbairn

and Jones-Vo (2010). The emerging student descriptors going over the four domains of literacy

including, writing, listening, speaking, and reading. After the participants review the descriptors

for emerging ELLs, the participants will take out the literacy lesson plan that they were asked to

bring from last session. I am aware that not all general education classroom will have all four

levels in their classroom, therefore for this activity, the participants that do not have an emerging

ELL will pair up with a partner that does have an emerging ELL currently in their classroom.

The participants are going to complete the note-catcher level 2 lesson plan (see Appendix, Figure

14). The participants are going to identify the objective and topic of their lesson and what their

expectations are for ELLs for this lesson. The participants will then describe scaffolds they can

implement to increase ELLs academic success for the literacy lesson and will describe how

success will be measured based on the scaffolds given to the ELL. This activity will allow

participants to actively engage in the use of their lessons and plan for scaffolding for their ELL

using the knowledge of the level descriptor and background factors. The participants will be

given fifteen minutes to complete this activity and will share aloud their findings.

Closing Activity

For the closing activity, participants are going to write down one benefit of assessing

previous literacy lesson plans. I will choose several participants to share with us the benefits. In

the next session, the participants will take a closer look at Fairbairn and Jones-Vo's student

descriptors for transitioning ELLs and applying scaffolding strategies in context.

Session 6

The participants will come familiar with the student descriptors of ELLs at the

transitioning level of English language proficiency. Participants will be encouraged to provide

scaffolds based on the ELLs proficiency level, ZPD, and drawing on student background factors

in order to achieve academic success in literacy. According to Kang et al. (2014), providing

scaffolds based on these elements will create more opportunities for students to be engaged and

success even beyond their individual current level. The authors suggest professional

developments that educate teachers on different techniques, types, and levels of scaffolding will

be helpful to implement based on the ELL.

Agenda

I will begin the professional development by handing out participants an agenda (see

Appendix, Figure 15). I will read the agenda aloud for the participants and begin with the

opening activity.

Opening Activity

The participants will be given a question of the day on the board. The question of the day

is what your favorite flavor of ice cream? The participants will have 3 minutes to find another

person in the room that likes the same ice cream, but that twist is the participants are not allowed

to talk or write anything down with a pen. This will allow the participants to get up and moving

around the room but need to figure out a different method of communication.

Activity 1

The participants will review level 3 transitioning student descriptors informed by the

work of Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010). The transitioning level student descriptors going over

the four domains of literacy including, writing, listening, speaking, and reading. After the

participants review the descriptors for transitioning ELLs, the participants will be given two

student scenarios to assess. Both fictional students are transitioning ELLs and have various

background factors that play a role in their academic success in literacy. As we have done in

session 4 with entering ELLs, participants will work in assigned groups to scaffold an

assignment given to the two 3rd grade students. The participants will receive a link to the New

York State Education Department ELA scaffolding resource for 3rd grade. The participants will

have fifteen minutes to work with their group to complete the level 3 template (see Appendix,

Figure 16). On the left side of the template, the expectations and scaffolding will be completed

for non-ELLs. On the right side of the template, participants will complete the expectations and

scaffolding for ELLs. Participants will become familiar with how to scaffold an assignment and

expectations through application for the various proficiency levels as well based on the student's

background factors. The participants will share the expectations and scaffoldings they have

created for the student scenario given.

Closing Activity

For the closing activity, participants will be given art material and paper to create one of

the scaffolds they have discussed in their group. Each group will share their masterpiece

scaffold. The scaffold can be a graphic organizer, sentence starters, visuals, etc. The scaffolds

must be large and creative to share with everyone in this session. The participants will be asked

to bring one lesson to the next session and select one expanding ELL. If they currently do not

have an expanding student in their classroom, the participant will still need to bring one lesson

for next session. The participants also be asked to bring in a one thing for "show and tell" for

their last session. In the next session, the participants will take a closer look at Fairbairn and

Jones-Vo's student descriptors for expanding ELLs and applying scaffolding strategies in

context for students in their own classrooms.

Session 7

The participants will come familiar with the student descriptors of ELLs at the expanding

level of English language proficiency. As specified by New York State Education Department,

expanding level students show advance independency in academic language skills and are

moving towards independency of linguistic demands to indicate English proficiency. Participants

will be encouraged to provide scaffolds based on the ELLs proficiency level, ZPD, and drawing

on student background factors in order to achieve academic success in literacy. According to

Kang et al. (2014), the various types of scaffolds given, and the quality of the scaffold is more

beneficial for an ELL, rather than the number of scaffolds given. In other words, more scaffolds

do not necessarily mean the scaffolds are effective for the student therefore the quality of the

scaffold is an important key aspect when creating scaffolds for an assignment given.

Agenda

I will begin the professional development by handing out participants an agenda (see

Appendix, Figure 17). I will read the agenda aloud for the participants and begin with the

opening activity.

Opening Activity

Last session, the participants were asked to bring one thing for "show and tell". I will ask

all participants to share what they have brought with the whole group.

Activity 1

The participants will review level 4 expanding student descriptors modified from the

work of Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010). The expanding level student descriptors going over the

four domains of literacy including, writing, listening, speaking, and reading. After the

participants review the descriptors for expanding ELLs, the participants will take out the literacy

lesson plan that they were asked to bring from last session. I am aware that not all general

education classroom will have all four levels in their classroom, therefore for this activity, the

participants that do not have an emerging ELL will pair up with a partner that does have an

emerging ELL currently in their classroom. This session will be similar to session 5. The

participants are going to complete the note-catcher level 4 lesson plan (see Appendix, Figure 18).

The participants are going to identify the objective and topic of their lesson and what their

expectations are for ELLs for this lesson. The participants will then describe scaffolds they can

implement to increase ELLs academic success for the literacy lesson and will describe how

success will be measured based on the scaffolds given to the ELL. This activity will allow

participants to actively engage in the use of their lessons and plan for scaffolding for their ELL

using the knowledge of the level descriptor and background factors. The participants will be

given fifteen minutes to complete this activity and will share aloud their findings.

Closing Activity

      For the closing activity, I will hang out a suggestion exit ticket. I want the participants to

give feedback, add suggestions, and write down any questions they still might have for the future

implications of scaffolding for their own ELL. This will help develop future professional

developments for ELLs.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This chapter presents the overall conclusion, implications for students learning and

teaching, and recommendation for the identified overarching problem for ELLs. The overarching

problem in this capstone project focused on how elementary general education teachers can

implement scaffolding based on the ELL's proficiency level, zone of proximal development. In

order to provide ELLs with abundance of opportunities to be academically successful in a

general education classroom, educators must advocate for professional developments that are

designed as the one provided in chapter 3 of this capstone.

Conclusion

As an educator, I have questioned my own ability to provide ELLs with opportunities to

be academically successful in literacy. Through research, I have had the opportunity to explore

elements of the sociocultural theory in order to conclude the benefits of scaffolding based on the

ELLs diverse background, proficiency level, and ZPD. The research suggests the importance of

teaching strategies, such as scaffolding for ELLs, as well as, teacher interactions and

understanding of diverse backgrounds have a significant impact on ELL academic outcomes.

The literature review focused on existing research regarding ELLs and their educators. Lucas et

al. (2008) and Sullivan et al. (2015) further discussed how sociocultural theory can enhance the

learning and teaching experience for ELLs. This is applicable part of the learning experience for

ELLs because their English-speaking abilities and diverse cultural backgrounds often lead to

them struggling to not only learn the material, but also learn the English language at the same

time. Behroozizad et al. (2014), Ebadi and Asakereh (2017), Rassaei et al. (2014), and Kang et

al. (2014) have discussed the importance of integrating elements of sociocultural theory into the

learning and education process, specifically scaffolding and ZPD in assisting ELLs to achieve

academically. Zhang et al. (2016), Babinski et al. (2018), and Iddings et al. (2009) further illustrate how scaffolding and the ZPD contributes to an ELLs overall understanding of the English language and discussion in literacy. Educators that utilize scaffolds to support ELLs individual learning have increased the ZPD to native English speakers. ELLs will be able to work closely with native speakers, in turn allowing ELLs to learn more organically and in their own way utilizing a student-centered approach. Professional developments should provide educators with the tools and knowledge to support ELL in the general educational classroom with a focus on the sociocultural theory to enhance the learning experience and the educational process for ELLs.

Implications for Students Learning

The sociocultural theory lens examined in this capstone project emphasizes the benefits of implementing scaffolds based on an ELLs ZPD and drawing upon ELLs social interaction and diverse backgrounds. Thus, the importance of the use of teacher strategies and teacher interactions with ELLs have a significant impact on the students' academic success in the general education classroom. The literature review exemplifies ways in which ELLs will grow as a learner through social interactions with the ability to engage in authentic discussion with non-ELL peers, as well as, bridge learning gaps by fostering student-teacher relationships.

Implications for Teaching

Professional developments that are geared towards teaching ELLs in the general education classroom will help educator become skilled in understanding cultural background factors that play a role in ELLs learning process; allow educators to draw on ELLs diverse backgrounds; as well as allow educators to explore ways to incorporate instructional elements such as scaffolding. As the research suggest, integrating elements of the sociocultural theory

into the learning and education process will assist ELLs to achieve academically, as well as,

contribute to an ELLs overall understanding of the English language.

Recommendations

Further research may examine the benefits of heterogenous grouping and homogeneous

grouping for ELLs in literacy group discussion to further improve literacy academic success for

ELLs. In order to provide ELLs with an abundance of opportunities to be successful, future

professional developments should be designed to educate teachers on new literacy techniques to

use with the various proficiency levels, as well as, provide educators with research-based

evidence in grouping ELLs.

Final Thoughts

The elements of the sociocultural theory have a positive impact on an ELLs academic

success in literacy. Educators must take time to get to understand their ELL on a personal level,

as well as, on an academic level. When educators take the time to understand the ELLs ZPD in

order to create of scaffolds that help to bridge the academic gap for ELLs and assess and draw on

the student's cultural background factors, ELLs will be able succeed. As Gibbons (2015) states

"good teachers also drive their students to the sky and help them gain confidence, but through

the scaffolding they provide, set them up for success rather than allowing them to fall" (p. 3). As

an educator, I will strive to set my future ELLs up for success.

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Appendix

Figure 1
Session One Agenda for Professional Development

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**Teaching Diverse Learners
in a General Education Classroom PD:
Scaffolding to Improve Academic Success in Literacy**

Presenter: Amber Bartone

Session 1: Agenda

- **Review syllabus (cycle objectives and schedule)**

- **Session 1:** Goals

- **Open Activity:** What are cultural differences?

- **Activity 1:** Gallery Walk - Seven Cultural Background Factors

- **Closing Activity:** Exit Ticket

</div>

Figure 2
Session One Exit Ticket

Name: _____

Write down factor(s) that play a role in your classroom.

How have you considered the factor when planning for lessons and assessing your ELLs?

Figure 3
Session Two Agenda for Professional Development

**Teaching Diverse Learners
in a General Education Classroom PD:
Scaffolding to Improve Academic Success in Literacy**

Presenter: Amber Bartone

Session 2: Agenda

- **Session 2:** Goals

- **Open Activity:** What is your emoji?

- **Activity 1:** Cultural Background Factor Scenarios

- **Activity 2:** Application of Students Background Factors

- **Closing Activity:** Quote

Figure 4
Session Two, Activity One 4 Cultural Background Scenarios

Student: Sarah
Background: Sarah is a 6-year-old student from Iran. Her family immigrated from the country's capital, Tehran, the August before she began this school year. She is currently in the first grade. In Iran, typically children do not begin school until they are seven years old. Although Sarah's family is literate in Persian and education is valued in her family, they did not emphasize teaching pre-reading skills at home when she was young, since this is generally thought of as the responsibility of the school. Therefore, when Sarah began school in the US, she did not have a basic knowledge of sound-letter relationships or any experience with writing. Sarah's teachers remark that she has adjusted very well to school, is well behaved, and often looks for approval from her teachers. Sarah is social and gets along with most of the children in the class. Her first and second semester report cards indicated she is performing below grade level in reading and writing because she is struggling to learn the letters of the alphabet, their corresponding sounds, and even forming letters. She enjoys participating in group activities to the best of her ability, and as a result, is learning social English quickly. On the other hand, she shies away from working independently and will wait until her teachers check in with her to begin working. Since Sarah has learned social English quickly, her teachers are concerned that her lack of progress may due to factors other than language. They are considering referring her for an evaluation

Student: Maria
Background: Maria is a 10-year-old student from Ecuador who has been living in the U.S. for a little over 1 year. She immigrated to the U.S. with her parents and siblings to live with her aunt's family. Maria now lives with her extended family of 13 people. She complains that she feels pressure from her parents to maintain her heritage culture. Yet, at the same time, she feels the tension of peer pressure calling on her to be an "American" kid. Maria makes friends easily and prefers to spend time working in groups rather than individual work. She lacks confidence when asked to perform tasks independently. Some teachers have misinterpreted her checking her work against peers as cheating. Maria went to school from the age of 6 in Ecuador and is reading and writing slightly below grade level in Spanish. Her parents and other relatives speak Quechua, an indigenous South American language unrelated to Spanish, at home. She only learned to speak Spanish when she attended school at age 6.

Student: Amir
Background: Amir is a 6th grade student whose parents are Pakistani immigrants. He is 12 years old, and he was held over in 4th grade due to failing grades in ELA and Math. Amir was born in the United States, but his family has returned to Pakistan twice for a period of 6 months or more, and each time he has returned to the U.S., he has regressed in his reading and writing. He has been an Expanding level English Language Learner since second grade and has yet to reach English proficiency on the NYSESLAT exam. Amir has been having difficulties with his behavior since he last returned from Pakistan (at the end of 5th grade). Each of his teachers has complained that he is disruptive in class, consistently displays a negative attitude toward school and has had physical fights with classmates in the lunchroom and hallways. He is failing most of

his subjects as the end of the first marking period approaches. When teachers try to talk to him about his grades, he often remarks that "it doesn't matter" and he would rather be in Pakistan anyway. There are hardly any other Pakistani students in his school, and he has a very difficult time making friends with the other students in his classes.

Student: Pola
Background: Pola is an 8th grade student from Ukraine who has been living in the U.S. for a little over 1 year. Pola does not have any siblings, so she arrived only with her mother and father. Pola's family decided to leave the Ukraine when her father accepted a job opportunity in NYC. They left all family members and friends behind, so they do not have family in the US to rely on for help or translation. According to the report card her parents provided from her native country, she performed on grade level in all subject areas. Although, she has learned English quickly and is at the Expanding level of proficiency, she is not passing ELA. There are very few Ukrainian students at Pola's school, and she is finding it difficult connecting with the students in her class. Other students say she is standoffish because she has a serious demeanor and rarely speaks with peers-socially or academically. Pola is accustomed to being self-reliant in school and feels very uncomfortable when asked to complete a group task. Furthermore, students in her class become frustrated with her because she copies their work instead of asking for help. Even when her teachers attempt to intervene, she often says that "she understands" and is reluctant to accept the help.

Figure 5

Note-catcher for Cultural Background Factor Scenarios

Name: _____

Cultural Background Factors: Student Scenarios
Note-Catcher

Student: _____

Which cultural background factor(s) most impacts this student's learning and academic performance?
 	
   ☐ Educational Background
   ☐ Home Language and Reading Level
   ☐ Cultural Identity
   ☐ Heritage Language and Proficiency
   ☐ Socialization Skills
   ☐ Social Influence
   ☐ Immigrant Status and Stressors

What might be the influence of these factors on learning?
What would be your next steps as a teacher, after receiving this new student in your classroom?

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Figure 6
Modified Application of Student Cultural Backgrounds

Name: _____

Application of Student Background Factors

Student Name: _____

Student Factor	Notes	Hypothesized Influence on Learning
Educational Background • *What kind of schooling?* • *Where did they go to school?* • *How long did they go to school?*		
Home Language and Reading Level • *What language(s) is/are used at home?* • *What can the student do with literacy in the home language?*		
Cultural Identity • *What country is the student from?* • *Is their country a more individualistic or collectivist society?*		
Heritage Language and Proficiency • *What language(s) does the student speak?* • *What is the distance between the student's home language and English?*		
Socialization Skills • *How does the student relate socially to students, school and community members?* • *What is the social distance between the student's social group and non-ELLs?*		
Social Influence • *Is the student's sociocultural group stigmatized by school and society?* • *Does the student position him- or herself as stigmatized by others at school and in society?*		
Immigrant Status and Stressors		

• *Is the student and immigrant or refugee?* • *Has the student experienced civil war, religious persecution, gang violence, or other difficult experiences? How extreme were these experiences?*		

Figure 7

Session Three Agenda for Professional Development

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**Teaching Diverse Learners
in a General Education Classroom PD:
Scaffolding to Improve Academic Success in Literacy**

Presenter: Amber Bartone

Session 3: Agenda

- **Session 3:** Goals

- **Open Activity:** Share Quote & Watch "Building a Belonging Classroom"

- **8 Classroom Strategies**

- **Activity 1:** Application of Classroom Strategies Toolkit

- **Closing Activity:** One Strategy Takeaway!

</div>

Figure 8
Eight Classroom Strategies Toolkit

Name: _____

Classroom Strategies Toolkit

1. **Welcome All Students by Visually Representing Their Cultures**

2. **Build Relationships by Learning Key Words and Phrases in Students' Home Languages**

3. **Use Students' Home Languages to Support Content Learning**

4. **Integrate Content and Language Teaching Using Visual Support and Contextualized Examples**

5. **Provide Clear Directions and Check for Understanding**

6. **Activate ELLs Interests and Prior Knowledge**

7. **Facilitate Interaction Between ELLs and non-ELLs through Grouping**

8. **Teach ELLs to Participate in their New Culture**

Figure 9

Note-catcher for Classroom Strategies Toolkit

Name: _____

<div align="center">

Classroom Strategies Toolkit
Note-Catcher

</div>

Choose **one** strategy you think you will be able to implement with an ELL in your class. Which student do you think will benefit from this strategy?
How will you implement this strategy?
When will you use this strategy and how will the student benefit from it?
How will success of this strategy be measured?

Figure 10
Session Four Agenda for Professional Development

**Teaching Diverse Learners
in a General Education Classroom PD:
Scaffolding to Improve Academic Success in Literacy**

Presenter: Amber Bartone

Session 4: Agenda

- **Session 4:** Goals

- **Open Activity:** Name that Language!

- **Activity 1:** Level 1 (Entering) Student Descriptors

- **Activity 2:** Scaffolding for Level 1 Template

- **Closing Activity:** Ready, Set, ONE Scaffolding Strategy…

Figure 11
Variation of Level 1: Entering Students

<table>
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Student #1: Orlando
- 5th grade student from Guatemala

- Teachers notice he is able to engage with print materials.

- He can respond to basic verbal commands

- Can write his name and copy from the textbook and other print materials.

- He does not communicate verbally with classmates or teacher.

</td>
<td>

Student #2: Moussa
- 5th grade student from Egypt

- Student displays avoidance behaviors during reading and writing tasks (I.e., asks to go to the bathroom).

- Handwriting is illegible

- Can socialize with peers on a basic level.

- Does not have literacy in native language.

</td>
</tr>
</table>

How will these two students, who are at the same proficiency level, require different planning and instruction?

Figure 12

Scaffolding for Level 1 Template

Name(s): _____

Scaffolding for Level 1

Assignment: Write a 5-paragraph essay about a state your choice, using books, textbooks, and internet resources as research.

Standards-Based Content or Topic (from the curriculum):

- Write informative/explanatory texts to explore a topic and convey ideas and information relevant to the subject.
- Conduct research to answer questions, including self-generated questions, and to build knowledge through investigation of multiple aspects of a topic using multiple sources.

Non-ELL	Level 1 Student: _____
Assignment Expectations	
- Write a 5-paragraph essay about a state of your choice - Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general focus, and organize related information logically. - Develop a topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other relevant information - Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to explain a topic. - Use appropriate transitional/linking words, phrases, and clauses to clarify and connect ideas and concepts. - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented. - Establish a style aligned to a subject area or task.	•
Scaffolding for Non-ELLs & Level 1 ELLs	
- List of book/textbook resources - List of internet resources - Teacher models - Graphic organizers/outlines - Specific Feedback throughout the writing process	•

Figure 13
Session Five Agenda for Professional Development

**Teaching Diverse Learners
in a General Education Classroom PD:
Scaffolding to Improve Academic Success in Literacy**

Presenter: Amber Bartone

Session 5: Agenda

- **Session 5:** Goals

- **Open Activity:** Caption This!

- **Activity 1:** Analyzing a Lesson Plan for Level 2 ELLs

- **Closing Activity:** One Benefit

Figure 14
Level 2 Scaffold Lesson Plan Note-catcher

Name: _____

Level 2 Scaffold Lesson Plan
Note-Catcher

Lesson Objective: **Topic:**
What are the expectations for the ELL for this lesson?
What scaffold can be implemented in this lesson to increase academic success for ELLs?
How will success of this scaffold be measured?

Figure 15

Session Six Agenda for Professional Development

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**Teaching Diverse Learners
in a General Education Classroom PD:
Scaffolding to Improve Academic Success in Literacy**

Presenter: Amber Bartone

Session 6: Agenda

- **Session 6:** Goals

- **Open Activity:** Question of the Day

- **Activity 1:** Level 3 (Transitioning) Student Descriptors

- **Activity 2:** Scaffolding for Level 3 Template

- **Closing Activity:** Crafting Scaffolds

</div>

Figure 16
Scaffolding for Level 3 Template

Name(s): _____

<div align="center">

Scaffolding for Level 3

</div>

Assignment: Write a 2-page informative writing piece about an animal of their choice, using books and internet resources as research.

Standards-Based Content or Topic (from the curriculum):

- Write informative/explanatory texts to explore a topic and convey ideas and information relevant to the subject.
- Conduct research to answer questions, including self-generated questions, and to build knowledge through investigation of multiple aspects of a topic using multiple sources.

Non-ELL	Level 3 Student: _____
Assignment Expectations	
• Write a 2-page informative writing piece about an animal of their choice • Introduce a topic and organize related information together. • Develop a topic with facts, definitions, and details; include illustrations when useful for aiding comprehension. • Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary. • Use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information. • Provide a concluding statement or section	•
Scaffolding for Non-ELLs & Level 1 ELLs	
• List of Internet resources • List of Book resources • Library-based resources • Teacher models • Graphic organizers/outlines • Specific feedback throughout the writing process	•

Figure 17
Session Seven Agenda for Professional Development

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**Teaching Diverse Learners
in a General Education Classroom PD:
Scaffolding to Improve Academic Success in Literacy**

Presenter: Amber Bartone

Session 7: Agenda

- **Session 7:** Goals

- **Open Activity:** Show and Tell!

- **Activity 1:** Analyzing a Lesson Plan for Level 4 ELLs

- **Closing Activity:** Suggestion!

</div>

Figure 18
Level 4 Scaffold Lesson Plan Note-catcher

Name: _____

Level 4 Scaffold Lesson Plan
Note-Catcher

Lesson Objective: **Topic:**
What are the expectations for the ELL for this lesson?
What scaffold can be implemented in this lesson to increase academic success for ELLs?
How will success of this scaffold be measured?