Preparing K-12 Content-Area Teachers of ELLs through Service Learning

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Increase in Immigrant Population in U.S.


- 2005-2006: 5 million non-native English speakers in U.S. PK-12 schools (Wright, 2010)

- 2005-2006: 170 different languages spoken in PA schools (www.pde.gov)
Impact of Immigration on U.S. Schools

“The wave of immigration...has had such a profound effect on our society that it can almost be regarded as the equivalent of a demographic revolution. And nowhere is that impact more obvious than in our schools.”  
(Friedlander, 1991, p. x)
Charge for Teacher Preparation Programs

“The teacher . . . of tomorrow will need to operate in a globalized space where . . . exchanges will be increasingly plurilingual and pluricultural.”

(Kramsch, 2008, p. 390)
Highlights of PA’s Chapter 49 Policy on Certification of Professional Educators

- Starting January 1, 2011
- Required 3 credit hours of instruction to address the needs of ELLs
- West Chester University developed a 3-credit course at the undergraduate/graduate level
ENG/LAN 382/569: Teaching English Language Learners PK-12

- Overview of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories
- Teaching Adaptations - SIOP® (Echevarría, et al., 2008)
- Critique of Texts and Teaching Materials to Decide Suitability for ELLs
- Alternative Authentic Assessments
  - Service Learning Pilot Project
Service Learning

- Service learning is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students work with others through a process of applying what they are learning to community problems and, at the same time, reflecting upon their experience as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves. (Eyler & Giles, 1999)
Service Learning Project

• Goals
  1. Preparation for teaching in a global society by working with multilingual, multicultural learners
  2. Application of SLA theory and methods

• Project Steps
  • Pre-project Questionnaire
  • Guidelines and Agency List
  • Log: Agency/Hours/Student Information/Work Accomplished/Teaching Strategies Used
  • Open-ended Reflective Journal Prompts
Pre-service Teacher Cohort, Fall 2011

- Pre-service Teachers (N=88)
- Total Service Learning Hours (N=396)
  - Hours Teaching Latino ELLs (N=161)
- Service-Learning Contexts
- Native Languages of ELLs Served
Service Learning Contexts

- Public Schools: Content Classrooms/Regular Hours
- Public Schools: ESL Classrooms/Regular Hours
- Private Schools: Regular Hours
- School- and Community-based After-school Programs
- Other
Public Schools: Content Classrooms/Regular Hours

- Andrew Jackson Elem
- Aronimink Elem
- Blair Mill Elem
- Bridle Path Elem
- Hillcrest Elem
- New Garden Elem
- Octorora Elem
- Patterson Elem
- Russell Elem
- Starkweather Elem
- Chichester MS
- Beverly Hills MS
- Downingtown MS
- Fugett MS
- Magnolia Public School (PK-8)
- Atlantic City HS
- Downingtown HS
Public Schools: ESL Classrooms/Regular Hours

- Interboro HS
Private Schools: Regular Hours

- Sonshine Christian Academy
School- and Community-based After-school Programs

- Kennett Intermediate Unit (after-school program)
- Kennett After-School Association, Inc.
- La Comunidad Hispana (Kennett Square)
- YMCA Phila (after-school program)
- YMCA York (after-school program)
- YMCA Eagleview (preschool program)
- Care Center for Christ, West Chester
- Chester County Even Start
Other

- St. Cecelia’s Catholic School PREP program (Sunday School)
- Private residence ("my friend’s cousin")
Native Languages of ELLs Served

- Spanish (N=98)
- Chinese/Cantonese (N=35)
- Asian (Not Specified) (N=13)
- Hindi (N=9)
- Russian (N=8)
- Korean (N=6)
- French (N=5)
- Hmong (N=4)
- Shabo (N=4)
- Farsi (Persian) (N=3)
- Japanese (N=3)
- Thai (N=3)
- Vietnamese (N=3)
- Portuguese (N=3)
- French (N=2)
- German (N=2)
- Italian (N=2)
- Ukrainian (N=2)

- Tagalog (N=1)
- Polish (N=1)
- Norwegian (N=1)
- Hungarian (N=1)
- Ibo (N=1)
- Arabic (N=1)
- Romanian (N=1)
- Tamil (N=1)
- Swahili (N=1)
- Turkish (N=1)
- Cambodian (N=1)
Service Learning Journal Questions

- ELL Demographic Information
- Work with ELLs
  - Lesson Description
  - Theories, Strategies, Assessments
- Future Implications
  - Benefits
  - Changes, Recommendations
Project Benefits for Pre-service Teachers

- Application of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Pedagogy (e.g., SIOP® elements)
- Higher Self-Efficacy \( (Bandura, 1977) \)
- Change in Teachers’ Attitudes toward ELLs \( (Youngs & Youngs, 2001) \)
Application of SLA Pedagogy (e.g., SIOP® Elements)

- “...I certainly used tips we have talked about in class like speaking clearly and slowly, using hand motions for better understanding, and using pictures definitely helped.”
- “By the end of our last sessions, they [ELLs] felt comfortable enough to read on their own and out loud to each other. I was astounded at how well these SIOP approaches worked.”
- “It has helped me understand what kind of support I will need to provide and how to differentiate for the needs of each student. When it comes to content areas, I now know how important it is to understand the background knowledge of the students. In order to teach them new material, it is imperative that the teacher knows if her students are going to be able to support the new concept.”
Higher Self-Efficacy  *(Bandura, 1977)*

- “I believe that this service learning placement has prepared me to teach all content areas [with] ELLs in the future…”
- “…I believe this class and this project gave me the tools and confidence I needed to work with an ELL student...I feel that I have a better understanding of the different levels of proficiency as well as many new strategies to use in my future classroom!”
- “I now feel more prepared with how to handle an ELL student I may have in my future classroom.”
Change in Teachers’ Attitudes toward ELLs

- According to Youngs & Youngs (2001), teachers have positive attitudes toward ELLs if they’ve had ESL training and have interacted with a culturally diverse population of ESL students.
Change in Teachers’ Attitudes toward ELLs

“Unless you [work] one on one with an ELL, you do not fully understand their struggle.”

“I was expecting to have to speak slowly and clearly but he understood me 100%. It was just me that had some trouble understanding him. It was a pleasure working with Donny.”

“When the project was first assigned, ...I was intimidated. But as I spent time with them, I learned that it is not as intimidating as I thought and that it is actually a positive experience.”

“Working with my ELL was an eye-opening experience. I was not aware of how difficult it is to try and teach students that are not proficient in English.”
Revisions for Future Implementation

- Procure better data on demographics of pre-service teachers (especially, ethnicity and first languages)
- Examine impact of service learning on ELLs
- Double the number of required hours (6-10 hrs.)
- Improve the connection between course content and service learning project
References


Thank You!

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