

Everybody's KIDS

News for all Pennsylvania educators
of English language learners

Summer 2016



WHAT'S NEW

Building Support for English Language Learners: Strategies for Creating a School Culture of Academic Success

A new research brief has been released entitled, *Building Support for English Language Learners: Strategies for Creating a School Culture of Academic Success*. Researchers at Penn State Harrisburg, Karin Sprow Forté, D.Ed., and Denise G. Meister, Ph.D, have identified strategies that principals and other school building administrators can implement to foster collaboration among ESL specialists and content/classroom teachers for supporting the academic achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs). Highlighted strategies include:

- Providing dedicated time for collaboration;
- Creating a culture and context for collaboration; and

- Using professional learning to foster collaboration.

To access the full brief, click on the link below.

<http://www.eslportalpa.info/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2013/07/RB8-ESL.pdf>

To learn more about the accompanying research, check out this [recorded webinar](#) featuring the researchers and Pittsburgh educators providing a local perspective, as well as an interview with Dr. Karin Sprow Forté in this issue's Q&A Corner.

Upcoming PDE Professional Learning Opportunities

On-Site Events

Engaging English Language Learners in Science
November 14 - 15, 2016
PaTTAN Harrisburg

Webinars

PIMS Collection #1: October 1 Student and School Enrollment Snapshot (LEP Data Only), Title III Professional Development Activities Survey, and Nonpublic Student Count Collection Training
September 15, 2016
10:00AM – 11:30AM | 1:30PM – 3:00PM
(repeat)

PIMS ACCESS 2.0/Alternate ACCESS for ELLS Precode Internal Snapshot Training
November 3, 2016
10:00AM – 11:30AM | 2:00 – 3:30PM (repeat)

ACCESS 2.0 Test Administration Procedures for Test Coordinators
November 8, 2016 | 10:00AM – 12:00PM

Administering ACCESS 2.0 for Grades 1 - 12
November 8, 2016 | 1:30PM – 3:30PM

ACCESS 2.0 Test Administration Procedures for Test Coordinators
November 8, 2016 | 10:00AM – 12:00PM

Administering Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
November 9, 2016 | 10:00AM – 12:00PM

Administering Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs
November 9, 2016 | 1:30PM – 3:30PM

For event details and to register visit www.ESLportalPA.info/professional-development.

WIDA 2016 National Conference

WIDA's 2016 National Conference, *Drawing on Life's Experiences, Designing Bright Futures*, will be held October 12 – 15, 2016 in Philadelphia. The expansive conference draws national experts to provide ELL educators unmatched opportunities for professional learning, networking, and strategic collaboration. More information can be found at WIDA's conference website: <http://widaconference.us/>

Don't miss the opportunity to benefit from this national-level opportunity being hosted in our own backyard.

OELA Presents! – English Learners with Disabilities

On March 16, 2015, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), in conjunction with the American Institutes of Research (AIR), hosted a panel discussion focused on identifying and assessing English Learners (ELLs) with disabilities. The discussion centered on three topics: 1) Differentiating Language and Literacy Acquisition from Disability; 2) Fostering Valid and Reliable Assessments for ELLs with Disabilities; and 3) Assessing ELLs with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Alternate English Language Proficiency

(ELP) Standards and Assessments and Growth and Attainment Criteria.

The archived webinar is available for viewing on [Ed Stream](#), along with [downloadable versions of the PowerPoints](#) and an [AIR-produced report on the presentation](#).

Identifying and Supporting English Learner Students with Learning Disabilities: Key Issues in the Literature and State Practice

In July 2015, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West released a review of the literature and state policy regarding key issues to assist educational policy makers in developing procedures and guidelines for appropriately identifying and assessing English language learners (ELLs) with learning disabilities. REL identified key questions to help determine the root cause of an ELL's academic struggles, including:

- Is the student receiving instruction of sufficient quality to enable them to make academic progress?
- How does the student's progress compare to their ELL peers?
- To what extent might behaviors be indicative of a learning disability caused

by cultural background or the process of acculturation?

- How might additional factors (e.g., socioeconomic status; previous educational experience; literacy in first language) affect academic progress?

In addition to the discussion of key issues, the publication includes discussion of current state-level practices regarding ELLs and special education. The complete document is available for download on [REL's website](#).

White House Task Force on New Americans: Educational and Linguistic Integration Webinar Series

The White House Task Force on New Americans was created with the aim of better facilitating the integration of immigrants in three areas: civilly, economically, and linguistically. To support the work of the task force, the U.S. Department of Education has created a series of webinars to address the linguistic and educational integration of immigrants and refugees.

Archived webinars are available on the website of the [Office of English Language Acquisition \(OELA\)](#).



CLASSROOM TIPS, TRICKS & BEST PRACTICES

Online Reading Resources for All Levels

Selecting reading material to meet the diverse needs of students across a range of English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels can be time consuming. To streamline this process, here are two free websites offering timely, high-interest articles available in multi-level sets.

Newsela

Sign up for a free Newsela account at www.newsela.com, and receive free access to a wealth of articles appropriate for various topics and content areas at every reading level. Each article contains an optional quiz to quickly assess reading comprehension.

Tween Tribune

Similarly, Smithsonian's Tween Tribune (www.tweentribune.com) offers leveled articles searchable by topics, grade bands and lexile levels. This comprehensive resource also offers articles in Spanish, as well as lesson plans and access to other Smithsonian-based educational resources. Check it out today.

Q&A CORNER



This quarter's Q&A Corner features **Karin Sprow Forté, D.Ed.**

To gain a greater understanding about her new research brief, *Building Support for English Language*

Learners, we asked Dr. Sprow Forté the following questions:

Everybody's Kids [EK] Tell us about your work at Penn State Harrisburg and your current research interests.

Karin Sprow Forté [KSF] I am the ESL Project Director in Teacher Education at Penn State Harrisburg. We are a post-baccalaureate program for certified Pennsylvania teachers to obtain their ESL Program Specialist Certificate. We have been funded for over a decade by the U.S. Department of Education, OELA National Professional Development Program. With a continuous rising population of ELLs in Pennsylvania, the majority of teachers who enroll in our program are content teachers who do not necessarily want to be ESL Specialists, but who have ELLs in their classrooms, sometimes in substantial numbers. We also have many teachers who are completing their master's degrees at Penn State Harrisburg, and take the ESL graduate courses as electives, obtaining the certificate and degree.

While I have done research in community-based financial literacy education and Latino populations, my main area of

interest is in the sociocultural issues that influence teaching and learning. The literature in this area as it relates to English language learning clearly indicates the importance of recognizing, respecting, and valuing the differences in culture that these diverse learners bring to our classrooms.

[EK] Last summer, you collaborated with your Penn State colleague, Dr. Denise G. Meister, to develop the brief, *Building Support for English Language Learners*. Who is the primary audience for this brief, and what are some top takeaways you hope are gained?

[KSF] The brief was written primarily for school administrators, including principals, vice-principals, and district superintendents. It was our hope that the description of the current ELL growth trends in districts across the commonwealth and an overview of the Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations would inspire more administrators to better prepare for and improve their existing programming for ELLs. The information presented was paired with collaborative best practices for working with ELLs. Together, administrators can leverage the support systems already in place in their schools, as well as take advantage of professional development programs, to help these students learn.

[EK] The term 'collaboration' is used frequently today in the field of English for

Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). How do you define this word? How might successful collaboration look in the classroom or school building?

[KSF] Collaboration is a popular term in the education literature, and the concept exists on a continuum, from minimal interaction between two people working on an activity, to integrated cooperation of multiple systems working together toward a shared goal. In the brief, we use collaboration more holistically to satisfy the needs of the ELLs in our schools.

We are recommending that schools which follow the push-in/pull-out program design ensure that content teachers and ESL specialists have time to work together on need identification and curriculum planning, as well as time and funding for professional development. We suggest that school representatives get involved in community events at which the ELL families are present and learn about the social services that might be useful to the families. We hope that whenever possible school faculty spends time learning about the strengths and cultural characteristics of each student. We encourage schools to create a welcome kit for families who have other home languages and develop a welcoming atmosphere for the ELLs. We also hope that school staff and administrators participate in ongoing professional development opportunities to learn more about these ELLs and their families. It is a thorough approach in which everyone is engaged in addressing the needs of these learners.

What do you think?

For any comments, questions or suggestions for future issues contact:

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