

X072 Dr. William Dorney

FINAL REPORT

New York City Department of Education External School Curriculum Audit | August 2011



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Introduction

About This Report

This final report is the result of an external school curriculum audit (ESCA) of X072 Dr. William Dorney conducted by Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research (AIR.) This audit was conducted in response to the school being identified as being in corrective action under the New York State Education Department differentiated accountability plan, pursuant to the accountability requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act. The utilized ESCA process was developed for and carried out under the auspices of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Office of School Development, within the Division of Portfolio Planning.

The audit focused on access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs). It examined curriculum, instruction, professional development, and staffing practices through the multiple lenses of data collection and analysis. Findings in these areas served as a starting point to facilitate conversations among school community staff in order to identify areas for improvement and ways to generate plans for improvement. This report includes an overview of the audit process, a description of the key findings identified in collaboration with the school, and recommendations for addressing these issues. It is entirely up to the school to determine how to implement the recommendations. At the conclusion of each recommendation we have included examples from the field based on the experiences of AIR staff, which we believe illustrate the implementation of an aspect of the recommendation.

About X072 Dr. William Dorney

X072 Dr. William Dorney is located in New York City, in the Bronx (Community School District 08). The school serves approximately 950 students in Grades PK–5. Five percent of students are ELLs, and 21 percent are identified as SWDs. In 2010–11, X072 Dr. William Dorney's accountability status was "Corrective Action (Year 1)," due, in part, to the failure to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA for its population of SWDs and ELLs.

Audit Process at X072 Dr. William Dorney

The key findings were identified through an audit process. Data were collected using the following guiding themes as the focus of the audit: curriculum, instruction, professional development, and staffing. Following data collection, AIR staff facilitated a co-interpretationSM meeting on June 2, 2011, attended by 16 staff members from X072 Dr. William Dorney. Staff members included both administrators and teachers.

Co-interpretation is a collaborative process that helps school teams understand and use the data gathered by the audit team to generate findings. During the meeting, the following data reports were presented and reviewed:

- Special Education Site Visit Report (based on a document review, observations, and interviews), which focuses on the special education program and SWDs.

- English Language Learner Site Visit Report (based on a document review, observations, and interviews), which focuses on instruction of ELLs.
- Special Education Teacher Survey Report, based on compiled responses from surveys completed by 50 teachers, including 40 teachers of SWDs.
- English Language Learner Teacher Survey Report, based on compiled responses from surveys completed by 64 teachers, including 25 teachers of ELLs.

The school team studied the individual data reports and used this information to develop key findings about the school's strengths and challenges related to educating SWDs and ELLs. Participants rated the findings based on the following criteria:

- Is the key finding identified as one of the most critical problems faced by the school and addressed by the audit?
- If resolved, would student achievement improve sufficiently to move the school out of corrective action?
- If resolved, will there be a measurable, positive impact?

In the remainder of this report, we describe the key findings that were identified by school staff as their top priorities, and present recommendations for the school to consider incorporating into their Comprehensive Educational Plan.

Key Findings

After considerable thought and discussion, participants at co-interpretation determined a set of final key findings. These key findings, which are based on the voting that occurred during the co-interpretation meeting, are detailed in this section.

Critical Key Findings

These key findings were identified by co-interpretation participants and were prioritized by the group for action planning.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 1:

Overall, data indicate that teachers are not receiving effective and sufficient professional development in regards to SWDs and ELLs.

Critical Key Finding 1 was identified as a top priority by the majority of the co-interpretation participants. Critical Key Finding 1 is supported by information from all four data reports. Although data indicate that teachers have found some professional development to be helpful, data also show that teachers would like to receive additional professional development, specifically on topics related to critical aspects of teaching SWDs and ELLs.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 2:

There is a need for a more consistent look at all data sources for planning instruction.

Critical Key Finding 2 is supported by data from the English Language Learner Site Visit Report and the Special Education Teacher Survey Report. Although teachers use data to plan instruction, the use of data is not consistently implemented school-wide.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 3:

Approximately half of teachers surveyed reported that they modify materials for ELLs and SWDs.

Critical Key Finding 3 is supported by data from the Special Education and English Language Learner Teacher Survey Reports. Staff expressed a concern that only half of teachers were modifying materials in order to ensure access to the general education curriculum for ELLs and SWDs.

CRITICAL KEY FINDING 4:

Overall, teachers report that there is a lack of collaboration between ESL and general education teachers.

Critical Key Finding 4 is supported by data from the English Language Learner Site Visit Report and the English Language Learner Teacher Survey Report. Although there is some collaboration among general education and ESL teachers, this collaboration is not as frequent as staff would like, and occurs informally rather than through established and scheduled opportunities.

Positive Key Findings

Positive key findings are listed because it is to the school's advantage to approach its action planning from a strengths-based perspective and to leverage what has been working. AIR encourages the school to realistically acknowledge what it is doing well and effectively and to use those strengths as a springboard for approaching recommendations-based action planning.

The top three positive key findings according to a vote at the co-interpretation were as follows:

1. There is evidence that teachers at X072 differentiate instruction.
2. Overall, teachers report that the administration is visible, supportive, and responsive to their needs.
3. Overall, teachers are collaborating formally and informally about instructional needs of all students.

Recommendations

Overview of Recommendations

The key findings determined through the co-interpretation process with X072 Dr. William Dorney led AIR to make four recommendations. For each recommendation, additional information is provided on specific actions that the school may consider during its action-planning process. These recommendations are supported by currently available research and evidence. Resources and references that support these recommendations are provided.

The order does not reflect a ranking or prioritization of the recommendations. Also, there is no one-to-one connection between key findings and recommendations; rather, the key findings were considered as a group, and these recommendations are offered as those that would likely have the greatest positive impact on student performance.

**QUICK LINKS:
Online Sources
for More Information**

Access Center

http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/Co-TeachingModule.asp

Enhancing your instruction through differentiation professional development module

http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/differentiationmodule.asp

Effective instruction for English language learners question and answer transcript

<http://www.ncldevents.org/content/interview/detail/3734/>

RTI for English language learners: Appropriate screening, progress monitoring, and instructional planning

<http://www.rti4success.org/webinars/video/893>

Accommodations, techniques, and aids for learning

<http://www.ldaamerica.org/about/teachers/understanding/accommodations.asp>

National Center on Response to Intervention

<http://www.rti4success.org/>

National Center on Student Progress Monitoring

<http://www.studentprogress.org/default.asp>

(Continued)

Recommendation 1: Professional Development

AIR recommends that X072 Dr. William Dorney review its current professional development plan and adjust it to ensure appropriate coverage of content relevant to the instruction of SWDs and ELLs.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Research has found that professional development for teachers is most effective and boosts student achievement most when it is embedded in their daily work and sustained, as opposed to one-time workshops (The National Staff Development Council, 2001; Steiner, 2004; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). Effective professional development also provides teachers with opportunities for collaboration, coaching, and peer observation, which allows them to be actively involved in their own development and to more frequently practice learned skills (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2006; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Additionally, professional development is most effective when it is directly connected to teacher practice and focuses on content (National Staff Development Council, 2001; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Yoon et al., 2007). Content areas should align with school improvement needs and goals to target improvement to those areas.

By refining the process by which professional development is offered; ensuring that it is embedded, is sustained, and allows for active teacher participation, and focusing the development on teacher practice and content, schools can improve teacher practice and student achievement (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

LINK TO FINDINGS

This recommendation links directly to Critical Key Finding 1, in which teachers indicated a need for more professional development related to the instruction of SWDs and ELLs.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The following steps can be used to adjust the professional development plan to increase the focus on instruction for SWDs:

- 1. Conduct an in-depth needs assessment among staff regarding professional development needs regarding the instruction of SWDs. This action step can be accomplished by doing the following:**
 - Conducting a teacher survey asking for specific feedback on previous professional development opportunities related to SWDs, and asking teachers to prioritize needs for additional professional development.
 - Reviewing teacher evaluation data regarding the instruction of SWDs to determine areas in which professional development needs are greatest.
 - Using staff development meetings to get detailed feedback and suggestions from staff about needed professional development related to SWDs.

QUICK LINKS:
Continued

*Supports, modifications,
and accommodations for
students*

[http://www.nichcy.org/
educatechildren/supports/
pages/default.aspx](http://www.nichcy.org/educatechildren/supports/pages/default.aspx)

*Accommodations manual:
How to select, administer,
and evaluate use of
accommodations for
instruction and assessment
of students with disabilities*

[http://www.
osepideasthatwork.org/
toolkit/accommodations_
manual.asp](http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/accommodations_manual.asp)

2. Refine offerings of professional development on instructing SWDs, including the following areas of focus:

- Identifying diverse student needs in inclusive classrooms
- Utilizing differentiation strategies, such as flexible grouping or co-teaching, to meet students' individual instructional needs
- Monitoring student progress and adjust instruction based on student performance, using strategies such as Response to Intervention (RtI)
- Using instructional modifications and accommodations in the classroom

3. Offer professional development on strategies for effectively instructing ELLs, including the following:

- Understanding language development
- Assisting in the development of curriculum aligned to both ELA and ESL state standards that clearly articulates literacy competencies and ensures that language objectives are defined at each stage of language acquisition
- Being aware of what ELLs should understand and be able to do in terms of content and language skills at each proficiency level within the ELA curriculum
- Developing strategies and techniques for delivering the curriculum to ELLs in monolingual, bilingual, and general education classrooms

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Ms. Smith, a principal at a large urban elementary school, designed and implemented a year-long plan for professional development designed to support diverse learners at her school who were not making adequate progress. Ms. Smith knew that just targeting specialist teachers would not be enough for students to make gains, so she provided professional development focused on differentiated instruction and reaching individual learners to all teachers at the school.

She began with a day of training on differentiated instruction, school-wide, presented by the school's literacy coach and assistant principal. This was followed with classroom visits and one-on-one sessions with each teacher in the school conducted by the assistant principal, literacy coach, and herself. In the one-on-one sessions, each teacher was asked to develop a plan for differentiating instruction and meeting the individual needs of SWDs and ELLs over the next nine months. Each teacher was observed once a month for the first four months of school and received coaching from an administrator or the literacy coach, including modeling differentiated instructional strategies in the classroom. At each faculty meeting, additional professional development on differentiated instruction was provided to the entire staff, including training on specific strategies to address student needs that teachers had identified and shared during individual coaching sessions.

By January, Ms. Smith saw an increase in the use of differentiated instruction as she visited classrooms. Coaching sessions were shifted to be every other month for the second half of the school year and teachers were each asked to commit to visiting and providing feedback to one of their fellow teachers. By the end of the year, teachers agreed that their awareness of and comfort with differentiated instruction had increased and they reported feeling supported by administrators.

Ms. Smith convened a group of general education, special education, and ESL teachers to help write the professional development plan for the next school year. She also sent those teachers to training over the summer with the understanding that they would serve as models and peer coaches for the following year.

Recommendation 2: Data

AIR recommends that X072 Dr. William Dorney take steps to ensure the consistent use of data by all teachers to inform instruction.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Data Use

Student assessment data can provide important information for measuring the effectiveness of instruction; teachers can use these data to ensure the success of all students. The IES Practice Guide Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making describes several factors that are important to consider when using data to improve instruction, including establishing a clear vision for school-wide data use, providing supports that foster data-driven culture within the school, and making data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement (Hamilton et al., 2009).

The principal and school leadership are pivotal players in the school-wide effort of using data regularly. The Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning's (McREL) study of the effects of leadership practices on student achievement showed "the extent to which the principal monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student achievement" to be one of the 21 leadership responsibilities significantly associated with student achievement (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003, p. 12). Cotton (1988) agrees: "The careful monitoring of student progress is shown in the literature to be one of the major factors differentiating effective schools and teachers from ineffective ones" (p. 1).

In addition to leading the data use initiative by example, school administration is encouraged to cultivate a culture of reflection and continuous improvement to help teachers feel comfortable using data. Young's (2008) case studies identify "four dimensions of trust" that suggest how culture may or may not support teachers using the data system, including other teachers' high standards, other teachers' perceptions of competence, the likelihood of others to participate in an activity in response to peer engagement, and individual concerns and issues being seen as collective ones. To the degree that teachers think in terms of these four dimensions, they will be more likely to utilize a data system.

Finally, "teachers need to learn how to obtain and manage data, ask good questions, accurately analyze data, and apply data results appropriately and ethically" (Lachat & Smith, 2005, p. 336). Through professional development and coaching, the school can support teachers in meeting these goals.

LINK TO FINDINGS

This recommendation links directly to Critical Key Finding 2, in which staff expressed concern that not all teachers reported using data consistently to inform instruction.

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Data Quality Campaign:
Using Data to Improve
Student Achievement.

[http://www.
dataqualitycampaign.org/](http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/)

Teacher Data Toolkit. New York
City Department of Education.

[http://schools.
nyc.gov/Teachers/
TeacherDevelopment/
TeacherDataToolkit/default.
htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/Teachers/TeacherDevelopment/TeacherDataToolkit/default.htm)

RTI Essential Components:
Data-Based Decision Making.

[http://www.rti4success.
org/webinar/rti-essential-
component-data-based-
decision-making](http://www.rti4success.org/webinar/rti-essential-component-data-based-decision-making)

NYC Helpline: Collecting and
Using Data to Inform Planning
and Instruction.

[http://teachersnetwork.org/
NTNY/nychelp/Professional_
Development/assess.htm](http://teachersnetwork.org/NTNY/nychelp/Professional_Development/assess.htm)

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The following steps can be used to support teachers in more consistent use of data to inform instruction.

- 1. Provide all teachers with ready and user-friendly access to multiple sources of data on student achievement. This action step can be accomplished by doing the following:**
 - Ensuring online access to data
 - Providing paper summary sheets of data, if computer access is not available
 - Providing data by subgroup and academic sub-skill, which allows staff to easily use the data in making decisions about instruction for all students
- 2. Provide ongoing professional development and support to all teachers on the use of data to inform instruction, including the following:**
 - How to interpret data from multiple sources, including standardized test data and periodic assessment data
 - How to disaggregate data by sub-group and academic sub-skill
 - How to use data to inform decisions about instructional groupings and strategies
- 3. Model effective use of data for instructional purposes. This action step can be accomplished by doing the following:**
 - Using data during all administrative and staff meetings focused on student performance and instruction.
 - Pairing teachers who are not using data consistently with those who are, for ongoing mentorship and support.

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Mr. James, an assistant principal at West Middle School, was asked by his principal to lead the school's efforts on using data to inform instruction. Mr. James visited with representatives from the district to determine the most efficient and user-friendly data tracking systems that could be put in place at the school. After selecting a system that he believed would work with the technology at his school, Mr. James conducted a school-wide training on using the system to retrieve data.

Mr. James set up meetings with grade levels to talk to teachers about how to look at the data, disaggregate it by sub-group and skill, and use it to plan instruction. Once the preliminary training was complete, Mr. James created a schedule for meeting with each teacher in the school, once in the fall and once in the spring, to review data for their classrooms and discuss next steps. Mr. James also retrieved school-wide data and presented it at each faculty meeting, showing teachers how to track progress, or lack thereof, by individual student, classroom, grade level, and school. Mr. James then led the teachers in a discussion to help develop next steps for action items based on the data. Mr. James worked with the math and literacy coaches at the school to provide them with more in-depth training on data-based instruction so that the coaches could support teachers.

At the end of the school year, a majority of teachers at the school reported that they reviewed data to plan instruction at least twice a month. Mr. James made a plan for the next school year to include having teachers talk to students about data.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Modified Materials

AIR recommends that X072 Dr. William Dorney take steps to support staff in more consistent and appropriate use of modified materials in order to ensure access to the general education curriculum for ELLs and SWDs.

LINK TO RESEARCH

A large majority of students with disabilities and English language learners struggle with print materials. Special education legislation (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA) and civil rights laws (the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, Section 504) have repeatedly reinforced the rights of students with disabilities to have equal learning opportunities, which includes access to appropriate and accessible textbooks. The curriculum resources (e.g., textbooks, leveled readers, activities for practice and reinforcement) that these students are given to acquire academic skills need to be appropriate for their use; otherwise, these students are denied the opportunity to learn. Rather than offering multiple gateways to learning and understanding, the “one size fits all” printed textbooks and other resources that make up the general curriculum often serve as barriers (Ross & Meyer, 2002). While conventional materials are reasonably accessible to many students, they clearly present significant challenges for students with sensory or motor disabilities, low cognitive abilities, and attentional and organizational disabilities. Additionally, they pose barriers for the largest population of students receiving special education services—those with learning disabilities (Pisha, 2003; Pisha & Coyne, 2001).

Adapting materials for instruction requires careful attention to ensure that the goals for instruction are preserved and that adequate learning progress has been achieved (Edyburn, 2004; Rose & Meyer, 2002). If students perceive the adaptations as “different” or feel stigmatized by them, they may be reluctant to use them (Ellis, 1997).

Research suggests that what we know about effective instruction in general should be the foundation for the way we approach instruction of ELLs. Echevarria, Short, and Vogt (2008) indicate that direct and explicit instruction is especially helpful. However, adjustments and accommodations are necessary for ELLs until they reach sufficient familiarity with academic English to be successful in mainstream instruction; the more complex the learning, the more accommodations in the form of modified materials may be required. Goldenberg (2008) stresses the need for graphic organizers that make content and the relationships among concepts and different lesson elements visually explicit. Such tools can include providing enhanced visual cues and pictures about lesson content, and identifying, highlighting, and clarifying difficult words and passages within the text to facilitate comprehension. In addition, Echevarria et al. suggest maintaining reserved anthologies and textbooks in which text has been highlighted, so that, prior to requiring students to interact with that text, overriding ideas, key concepts, topic sentences, important vocabulary, and summary statements are highlighted to reduce the demands of the text, while maintaining the key concepts. Hampton and Resnick (2008) make the case that, by ensuring that second-language learners understand how text is constructed in English, including building understanding of genres, midlevel structures, and cohesive devices, teachers can support better understanding of academic text, perhaps reducing the need to act on that text to make it simpler and more accessible.

QUICK LINKS: Online Sources for More Information

Effective instruction for English language learners question and answer transcript.

<http://www.nclde.org/content/interview/detail/3734/>

National Center on Response to Intervention.

<http://www.rti4success.org/>

National Center on Student Progress Monitoring.

<http://www.studentprogress.org/default.asp>

LINK TO FINDINGS

This recommendation links directly to Critical Key Finding 3, in which staff expressed concern that only half of teachers were modifying materials in order to ensure access to the general education curriculum for ELLs and SWDs.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The following steps can be used to support teachers in accessing and using modified materials to increase access to the general education curriculum for ELLs and SWDs:

- 1. Survey staff about their current needs in the way of instructional materials, including the following:**
 - Sets of pictures, photographs, and drawings that can provide visual support for a wide variety of content and vocabulary
 - Visuals that might include overhead transparencies, charts, maps, graphs, and timelines
 - Multimedia materials such as DVDs, CD-ROMs, and brief video clips
 - Related literature and print materials on chosen topics
 - Hi-lo readers that simplify selected content, especially for struggling readers
 - Novels, short stories, and poetry at varying difficulty levels
- 2. Adapt or modify content in texts or other source materials by scaffolding them as prereading activities, as aids during reading, and as postreading strategies for organizing newly learned information. Modifications can include the following:**
 - Graphic organizers that provide visual clues in organizing new material, such as timelines, comparison circles, webs, cause and effect diagrams, and other devices that present information for better comprehension and to enhance memory
 - Teacher-prepared scaffolded outlines for students as a format that they can use to organize new information
 - Teacher-prepared study guides for students with selected vocabulary, guiding questions, and similar materials
 - Reserved texts that may be highlighted, underlined, and used to make marginal notes.
- 3. Prepare a multi-year buying plan to secure more resources, including commercially developed materials so that teachers may have more at their disposal available from the school rather having to produce all of them on their own.**
- 4. Provide support to teachers in the use of modified materials, including the following:**
 - Incorporating the development and use of modified materials as a topic during staff development sessions
 - Encouraging special education and ESL teachers to work directly with general education teachers in the development of modified materials
 - Creating a bank of supplementary materials and resources, so that teachers can share modified materials that they have developed or acquired with others

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

Mrs. Brown is participating in professional development that will help her better meet the learning needs of her ELLs. From the outset, she has learned that she must follow the Common Core State Standards. The Standards, as she has come to understand them, define what all students must know and be able to do, but not how teachers should teach. The Standards must be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum. The aim of the Standards is to articulate the fundamentals, but they are not an exhaustive list of what must take place in the classroom. They set grade-level goals, but do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are below or above grade level expectations. It is the job of the professionals who work with children to make the Standards accessible to all learners.

The curriculum represents the content, or subject matter, that students must master in the course of their education. Teachers must adapt, or modify that content by the way in which they teach so that English language learners or students with disabilities can learn it.

Teachers may accomplish this by supplementing or adapting the curriculum. Supplementing the curriculum involves providing additional material, which provides background knowledge and supports different learning styles. Supplementary materials could include pictures that illustrate vocabulary words and concepts. Visuals may include charts and graphs, timelines, maps that supply visual clues that help students who have difficulty processing large amounts of auditory instruction. Readers that are simplified and contain more photographs or illustrations, captions, and vocabulary word definitions may also provide supplements without diminishing the information students need to learn.

Modified or adapted materials also may help the learner who has problems with complex language and/or large amounts of language. They may be used before the lesson or during it to make the content more comprehensible. These may include graphic organizers, teacher-prepared outlines, or study guides. They may also include recorded text, or rewritten text that reorganizes the material into smaller portions or chunks. Sometimes a spare copy of the text material may be given to students that they may mark or highlight.

Mrs. Brown understands all of this and is ready, as part of her training, to redesign a science unit she has already taught to make it more accessible to her ELLs. She wants to teach them some content from geology about earthquakes and volcanoes, but she knows she will have to supplement and modify the material to make it accessible to her ELLs.

She begins by activating prior knowledge and building background. Last year, students learned about the large plates under the ocean and how they move—essential information for this new unit. However, students may not remember this material, and her ELLs may have been speaking much less English when they were learning it, so she clearly is going to have to activate what prior knowledge students have and review it so she can build on what they know. She prepares a PowerPoint presentation that goes over the concepts of tectonic plates. She gives students the PowerPoint note pages with key vocabulary and diagrams, which students can keep in their science notebooks to refer to again. She also shows a video that contains pictures of volcanoes and earthquakes and the damage that can occur as a result of these phenomena. Many of her students have never been exposed to this information, and need this necessary background knowledge to acquire new content successfully. She then provides a simplified version of the material and has students read it in pairs. They mark what they already know and what is new to them. This gives her an idea of who in the class may need more support and who already understands the material. Given what she knows from this, she is ready to teach. She goes online and finds pictures of volcanoes and earthquakes and related concepts so that students can see a visual definition of each term: plateau, earth's mantle, fault lines, lava, magma, and diagrams of the layers of rock that cannot be seen from the earth's surface. She creates a science word wall using these pictures and their labels. Students now have a visual to reference that explains key vocabulary as they read. She makes a note to ask the ESL teacher to preview the concepts using some of the Rigby and Newbridge materials that are more heavily illustrated and to

present this content with simplified vocabulary. All students are keeping personal dictionaries where they write definitions and make diagrams. She makes a study guide in the form of an outline so that as she teaches, the students look at her overheads and fill in information as she presents it. Then she puts students in small groups. Together they read the information in the text. Her ELLs have a copy of the text in which they can mark and highlight. They are also given graphic organizers with flow charts, which students fill in to create the sequence of events leading to a volcanic eruption or an earthquake. Students complete the graphic organizers and write the sequence of events in sentences in their groups, all the while discussing what they have learned. ELLs are included with monolingual students who have a greater facility for self-expression in English. They put the sentences into paragraphs, which the students post and read aloud to the whole group.

Finally, Mrs. Brown gives them a concept definition map about volcanoes (later she will give them one on earthquakes). Students must define a volcano in one box. In a series of connected boxes, they write what they do and what they are like— one fact per box. When Mrs. Brown has seen the students' completed maps, she will know about her next necessary steps in instruction. Do some of her students need more instruction or reteaching while other students move on? Can the ESL teacher step in and fill gaps for her with her ELLs?

In this way, Mrs. Brown has both supplemented and adapted her unit materials to make them more comprehensible for all students, and especially for her ELLs. She has found additional or different ways to use materials to teach all of the key vocabulary and concepts, but has not left any material out or diminished it in any way.

**QUICK LINKS:
Online Sources
for More Information**

Educators' perceptions of collaborative planning processes for students with disabilities
<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/ETD/image/etd1344.pdf>

Educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms: A summary of the research.
<http://www.rrcprogram.org/content/view/242/47/>

Collaborative teaching: Special education for inclusive classrooms
<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=437346>

Site visits: Seeing schools in action
<http://fcsn.org/peer/ess/sitevisitsib.html>

Collaboration Between General and Special Education: Making It Work
<http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1097>

Recommendation 4: Collaboration

AIR recommends that X072 Dr. William Dorney consider options for increasing opportunities for general education and ESL teachers to meet and work together. This includes both shared professional development around strategies for working with ELLs, and channels of communication to discuss particular school and classroom issues.

LINK TO RESEARCH

Collaboration among teachers and other school professionals may be defined as the manner in which, and extent to which, members of the school interact in their approach to their work, and is characterized by authentic interactions that are professional in nature (Marzano, 2003). These behaviors may include openly sharing failures and mistakes, demonstrating respect for one another, and constructively analyzing and criticizing practices and procedures in an effort to improve teaching and learning in a school (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Marzano cites the need for a number of school norms that will enable teachers and other staff to effectively work to improve their schools—norms such as deciding how staff will resolve conflicts, how staff will address and solve professional problems, how staff will communicate to third parties about other staff members, and how staff will behave during professional meetings (e.g., staff meetings and professional development). Lambert (2003) identifies teachers who have a high degree of skill in this area as possessing a shared vision, resulting in program coherence, inquiry-based use of data to inform decisions and practice; broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility reflected in roles and actions; reflective practice that leads consistently to innovation; and high or steadily improving student achievement.

LINK TO FINDINGS

This recommendation links to Critical Key Finding 1, in which data show a need to provide more established communication between general education and ESL teachers.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The following steps can be used to increase collaboration among teachers around working with ELLs:

1. Provide multiple avenues for structured teacher communication, such as the following:

- Shared planning time during the school day that will enable content-area teachers to share information with ESL teachers about content to be covered and to share ideas that will benefit all students
- A listserv or other electronic method for teachers to quickly relay information to one another
- A system for teachers to note any concerns or issues related to specific students that can be easily communicated among staff
- A joint general education/ESL team that plans together regularly to ensure coverage across content areas and pacing that benefits all students

2. Offer formal and regularly scheduled opportunities for collaboration around specific areas of need related to ELLs. This action step can be accomplished by doing the following:

- Conducting a needs assessment to determine topics for sessions
- Training staff regarding effective communication and collaboration skills (e.g., active listening, establishing appropriate agendas, effective use of meeting time)
- Offering the sessions during times when general education and ESL teachers are available to participate after school
- Ensuring that sessions are interactive and allow teachers opportunities to learn from one another
- Providing opportunities for teachers to give feedback on the sessions so that adjustments can be made to better address the needs of students.
- Having an administrator participate to show the school's support for collaboration

DOING WHAT WORKS: Examples From Real Schools

It is 12:15 on a Wednesday at Highland Park Elementary School. The fourth grade team has assembled, just as they do every week at this time, to collaboratively create ELA plans for the upcoming week. Their students are currently in art, music, or physical education class, which gives the teachers uninterrupted time to do this. They are joined, for at least a part of their planning time, by the ESL and special education teachers who work with their grade. The school's reading specialist chairs the meeting. Each grade participates in a planning session such as this every week. The school's administrators sometimes join them, as time permits. Everyone knows they need to bring their curriculum guides, appropriate student materials, plan books, and any other materials they will need. They will complete a planning template for the week, which is on the school's intranet, where they will also post their plans. Each week, one person each week will act as "scribe" and type in the minutes in each section of the template.

The first two categories on the template address essential learnings and mastery objectives. These are from the curriculum guide and are non-negotiable, so they are typed in first. This week they will continue to develop reading comprehension skills through exposure to a variety of texts and determine important ideas and messages in literary texts. After this, the planning becomes more discretionary as to how they will do this. In addition to reading, they will also determine their lesson plans for writing, word work, fluency, and vocabulary.

The focus of instruction for this week will be historical fiction. Teachers will begin with whole group instruction in the form of read-alouds in this genre and will have whole classes complete graphic organizers that contrast fictional versus historical characters. At this point, the ESL teacher becomes concerned. Her intermediate-level students were not speaking English very well when they covered this material last year, and they worked with simplified materials. They have not been exposed to this material in as high-powered a manner as the other students. She says that she will need to work with her students and preview this material with them so they can participate successfully with the other students. Time to do this is negotiated, and they move on to discuss their small group guided reading instruction and the strategies they will teach this week. One teacher is worried, as she is new and has not taught this material as yet and is not certain how to do it. The reading specialist volunteers to come into her classroom this week and model a strategy that will help her.

They plan their fluency focus, word work goals, and vocabulary in a similar fashion and record the information into the template. Although the wording is brief, it is complete enough for anyone to understand what they are doing. They discuss this week's writing, which is focused on researching famous people to write biographies. It is time for students to begin drafting. The special educator knows which of the students' IEP accommodations call for assistive technology (for drafting) during this part of the writing process. She will work with these students during this time and use Co-Writer software to help them with this task.

Teachers then divide up responsibilities. One teacher will visit the library and find appropriate texts to use as read-alouds. Another will make the posters for the graphic organizers they will use to help students distinguish between historical and fictional characters. Another will create a formative assessment for the grade to use at the end of the week to determine student mastery levels. One of the other teachers will make copies of the rubrics the grade uses for drafting, which students can staple into their Writing Notebooks. It is almost 1:15. They are finished for today. The notes are posted on the intranet for anyone in the school to read to see what is going on in fourth grade. It is time for teachers to pick up their students and return to their classrooms.

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