
Preface

Educators are all too familiar with the statistics related to English language learners (ELLs), and it seems that news headlines frequently offer grim predictions for schools with large ELL populations. However, if we as educational leaders let these quips and bylines guide our vision, then our students are going to drop out, never learn English, and fail to meet minimum standards—and we will be left with some explaining to do.

Negative outcomes are not, and do not have to be, the reality for ELLs. While education statistics can be used to paint a grim picture, these statistics must be considered within the context of the larger educational and demographic landscape. In this book, we advance that leadership can yield positive results for ELLs. We offer you the voices of school leaders who are making a positive difference in meeting the needs of ELLs and hope their examples will help us all to foster the academic achievement and language acquisition of ELLs.

This book examines successful leadership practices and strategies, embedded professional development methods, and implementation models that build both a culture of high expectations for ELLs and teacher capacity to scaffold students to levels of high achievement while simultaneously helping students develop the English language. This is no easy task. It requires systemic and systematic leadership, comprehensive planning, continuous support, a culture of collaboration, and myriad other generic leadership skills. Building and sustaining a culture of high expectations and achievement for ELLs requires attention to and knowledge of language acquisition processes and home cultures. Infusing this knowledge into one's leadership processes requires drawing together content-area stakeholders who may never have worked together—such as English as a second language and core teachers—and drawing together community members who may never before have been invited to the proverbial table.

This book addresses the issues that confront school leaders as they implement best practices for ELLs. While best practices for ELLs have been identified in the knowledge base, additional examples of the instructional

leader's role in implementing best practices at the campus level are needed. In addition, the nuanced nature of the educational change process as it relates to the issue of improving instruction and raising academic expectations for ELLs has not been fully addressed. This book discusses how to engage explicitly in campus-level change efforts to improve learning for ELLs, the knowledge school leaders need, and how to share that knowledge with faculty through professional development. This book also identifies the specific cultural needs of students and how campuses can meet those needs by partnering with the community, parents, and students themselves. This book provides school leaders knowledge and tools to meet the needs of ELLs on their campuses. This approach is based on the model of distributive leadership and the pivotal role of the instructional leader as the leader of learners.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Chapter 1, "Preparing for Success: Strengthening a Culture of Academic Achievement for English Language Learners," briefly establishes the need for principals to explore their roles as the instructional leaders of ELLs based on demographic information and introductory information about ELLs in American schools. Next, critical practices for the school principal are introduced: building shared values, building positive relationships, fostering conditions to support learning, and celebrating academic success. The chapter concludes with a case study vignette to guide questions for discussion or reflection.

Chapter 2, "Advocating for Student Success," outlines the principal's practices for ELL student success. This process is guided by reflecting on data—both quantitative assessment data and qualitative data elicited from stakeholder voices. The chapter explores suggestions for gaining the qualitative data by building meaningful relationships through *confianza*—a combination of trust, mutual respect, comfort, familiarity, and understanding based on experience, which yields mutual confidence among all stakeholders. The chapter offers structures for successful and effective use of relationships, including structures for peer coaching, professional collaboration, and meaningful, supportive interactions.

Chapter 3, "Strengthening Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition," provides practical information concerning the principal's role in strengthening the principal's and faculty's knowledge base. Critical knowledge related to ELLs, including language acquisition and linguistic theory, is presented in relevant, applicable, and understandable ways. Then, the chapter provides straightforward ways for principals to apply this knowledge to their own practice as well as their teachers' practice. The chapter offers warnings against deficit thinking related to the abilities of ELLs and their perceived cultural or social needs. This warning is met with

a practical guide for ways principals can challenge common assumptions about ELLs. Current laws and current court cases related to equitable school experiences for ELLs are examined. A case study and reflection questions are offered to help readers apply the chapter's content.

Chapter 4, "The Principal's Role in Building Capacity in the School Through Quality Professional Development," explains the principal's role in building capacity in the school through quality professional development. This chapter offers ways for principals to assess specific faculty professional development needs and identifies common faculty needs as a starting point for exploration. Next, the chapter helps principals build the skills needed to solidify faculty commitment to ELLs' attainment of academic content at high levels. A content-embedded case study provides practical examples of quality professional development, including sustained, embedded, and content-specific professional development opportunities. The case study elicits voices of school principals as a platform for reflection questions.

Chapter 5, "Strengthening Home-School-Community-University Connections," focuses on the principal's role in strengthening home-school connections. Practical suggestions for encouraging parental involvement, providing outreach and support to empower community stakeholders to build the culture of high expectations for ELLs, and facilitating a school-university-home-community partnership are explored. The chapter provides advice for establishing partnerships with school and community social workers and staying current on community issues that affect student learning and parental involvement (i.e., immigration concerns). In addition, the chapter provides structures for establishing postsecondary opportunities for ELLs. The case study and questions provide a context for principals to explore the critical elements of a successful school-university-community-parent partnership.

Chapter 6, "Resources for School Improvement in Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners," provides an overview of resources for principals engaged in instructional improvement for ELLs. Books, websites, and other suggested materials are recommended as well.

Special Materials

- **Case Studies:** This book includes cases describing school leaders' situations, decisions, and actions related to leading positive change for ELLs on their campuses. These cases are followed by questions meant to foster critical dialogue or reflection as readers seek to apply the concepts from each chapter. The cases are based on two years of case study research of teachers, teacher leaders, and instructional leaders who were engaged in a change effort for instructional improvement for ELLs and six years of case study research of a school-university-community partnership designed to increase the college-going rates of students.

- **Action Points:** Action points describe steps that instructional leaders have taken in difficult situations. These are implementable actions that move ideas from theory to practice.
- **Consider This:** This section uses questions to bring critical issues to the forefront. The purpose of Consider This is to explicitly address points the principal must assess regarding his or her specific faculty and campus needs. In addition, Consider This provides easy-to-reference statistics, points, and other information for principals to use with faculty. Consider This also provides focus or discussion questions.
- **Straight Talk From the Field:** Principals share their first-person perspectives on issues related to the content of each chapter.
- **Tools:** Tools to guide principals in implementing concepts are aligned with the concepts from each chapter and are included at the back of the book for easy reference. Tools are generally in chart format and provide easy-to-read summaries of information as well as implications for practice. These tools guide principals quickly to action and provide easy reference for faculty meetings, observations, and other principal practices.