t³ TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS ™

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF TEACHER LEADERS

FROM ISOLATION TO PARTNERSHIP

ESL CO-TEACHING LEADS TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Andrea Honigsfeld and Maria Dove

With classrooms tucked away in the basement or makeshift spaces in auditoriums or lunchrooms, many English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers experience a sense of isolation that mirrors the stand-alone nature of the work they do with students. Often, English Language Learners (ELLs) are pulled from their classrooms at the elementary level to receive English language instruction in 40- to 80-minute periods. In secondary schools, ELLs are scheduled for up to three periods of ESL classes per day, and the curriculum taught in these classes is rarely aligned to content courses. ESL teachers are also isolated from their colleagues: they rarely join grade-level or team meetings and are often not invited to child study or instructional support meetings. In addition, what ESL teachers accomplish in their sessions with ELLs is often a mystery to many mainstream teachers.

In our work with ESL teachers, we have discovered something exciting. When schools and districts forge teacher partnerships and implement co-teaching practices to improve learning for ELLs, the outcomes are remarkable: teacher isolation and a disconnected or fragmented ESL curriculum are replaced with joint planning, collaborative instructional and extracurricular activities,

NSDC's purpose: Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.

and the emergence of teacher leadership.

The concept of co-teaching and collaboration has been accepted for many years within the special education community (Cook & Friend, 1995; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008; Conderman, Bresnahan, & Pedersen, 2009). Traditionally, co-teaching is a collaboration between general and special education teachers for all of the teaching responsibilities of all of the students assigned to a classroom (Gately & Gately, 2001). Together, general education classroom teachers and specialists, such as remedial reading teachers, math specialists, teachers of the gifted and talented, and more recently, ESL teachers, have also developed collaborative partnerships. The leadership opportunities these partnerships encourage are another significant benefit for the teachers involved as well as the schools and students they serve.

Caryn Bachar: SIDE-BY-SIDE COACHING

We invite you to visit the south shore of Long Island, N.Y., a suburban area as diverse and often as segregated as any big city's distinct neighborhoods. First, meet Caryn Bachar, who teaches ESL in grades 2-5 in Hewlett-Woodmere Public Schools. Bachar co-teaches with two mainstream teachers during their literacy block, thus assisting ELLs, former ELLs who tested out of her program, and other general education students. While she is working inside the regular classroom, Bachar is also helping all her mainstream colleagues to apply Reading and Writing Workshop (Calkins, 2000) techniques to enhance ELLs' oral language and literacy skills. She provides short, meaningful mini-lessons for individual or small groups of students on different reading and writing concepts and strategies. As an instructional partner in the class, Bachar participates in assessing the reading and writing progress of ELLs alongside their peers and also teaches students how to self-assess their own reading and writing skills. She has taken the lead on issues that involve the academic progress of ELLs, and has become a strong child advocate for the education of English learners in

Bachar

her district.

Bachar, the 2007 New York State ESL Teacher of the Year, is frequently sought after as a workshop presenter in her own district and beyond. Through her willingness to share her many years of experience through case studies and vignettes, and her stacks of professionally created, teacher-made instructional materials, her impact reaches beyond the two classrooms in which she regularly co-teaches.

Nancy Berg: WORKING IN HARMONY

Next, visit Nancy Berg in Freeport Public Schools, a high-needs school district with 17% English Language Learners. She is dually certified in ESL and special education and co-teaches with her middle school English teacher colleague for four of five periods every day. She modifies and adapts reading materials, scaffolds assignments, develops alternate assessments, and more. Additionally, she creates lessons that support and remediate the specific needs of ELL and special education students. Berg is responsible for the creation and implementation of IEPs (Individual Education Plans) for all of the students who are classified as special education, several of whom are also ELLs. She attends team meetings every other day and co-plans with her colleague, Matt Fliegel, on a regular basis. To deliver instruction for their ELLs, both Berg and Fliegel execute their lessons seamlessly through the use of various co-teaching models in one 42-minute period.

Berg

Berg and Fliegel, a first-year English teacher, co-teach for several periods a day, every day. In two of their inclusion classes, both classified and regular education ELLs work alongside English speaking special education and nonclassified 7th graders, giving the teachers for different subgroups to manage. Fliegel is pleased to have an in-class coach and mentor available almost the entire day as they share planning, delivering, and assessing instruction.

Michelle Angiulo: TAPPING INTO EXPERTISE

Travel further east on Long Island with us and you will find yourself in Farmingdale High School

Together, general education classroom teachers and specialists, such as remedial reading teachers, math specialists, teachers of the gifted and talented, and more recently, ESL teachers, have also developed collaborative partnerships.

NSDC'S BELIEF

Schools' most complex problems are best solved by educators collaborating and learning together.

Co-teaching models

Based on our combined experiences with ESL co-teaching and training others in teacher collaboration and co-teaching practices, we adapted Vaughn, Schumm and Arguelles's (1997) co-teaching models to the ESL context (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008). The teachers we work with use and adapt the following models.

MODEL TYPE	MODEL DESCRIPTION
ONE STUDENT GROUP: **One lead teacher and one teacher teaching on purpose**	The mainstream and ESL teachers take turns assuming the lead role. One leads while the other provides mini-lessons to individuals or small groups to pre-teach or clarify a concept or skill.
ONE STUDENT GROUP: **Two teachers teach the same content**	Both teachers direct a whole-class lesson and work cooperatively to teach the same lesson at the same time.
TWO STUDENT GROUPS: **Two teachers teach the same content**	Students are divided into two learning groups; teachers engage in parallel teaching, presenting the same content using differentiated learning strategies.
TWO STUDENT GROUPS: **One re-teaches; one teaches alternative information**	Flexible grouping provides students at various proficiency levels with the support they need for specific content; student group composition changes as needed.
MULTIPLE STUDENT GROUPS: **Two teachers monitor/teach**	Multiple groupings allow both teachers to monitor and facilitate student work while targeting selected students with assistance for their unique learning needs.

(Farmingdale Public Schools) where Michelle Angiulo, one of four ESL teachers, has invited some of the most willing content area teachers in her building to partner with her. Her ability to identify the teachers with the most sensitivity to students' linguistic needs and to develop a shared commitment to working with ELLs led to opportunities to engage in collaborative planning and co-teaching with a teacher certified in Biology and one in English. When Angiulo and her co-teachers share instruction, she helps clarify difficult concepts, writes notes on the board, and circulates and offers a different perspective. She sometimes asks questions that she knows her ELLs might like to ask if they were comfortable enough to do so. Thus, she

Angiulo

models appropriate classroom behavior and helps redirect her content area specialist colleagues to focus on challenging concepts.

Angiulo invites her two colleagues to ESL meetings, regional ESL conferences, and offsite workshops so they may explore critical issues together. As they examine the topics of adapting instruction for students with interrupted formal education, they each rely on their own background knowledge and experience in the content areas as well as on their emerging, shared knowledge of ESL pedagogy. Angiulo acts not only as a guide on the side and the knowledgeable other, but also as the momentum that keeps the spotlight shining on the special concerns of English learners.

Bachar, Berg, and Angiulo are all highly experienced, extraordinary educators. They perceive their role not only to offer the best possible instruction to their ELLs but also to make sure

their colleagues are able to provide that, too. They accomplish all that as authentic, naturally emerging teacher leaders. Through their partnerships with mainstream colleagues, they regularly engage in joint teaching and learning opportunities and also take on informal yet powerful leadership roles and responsibilities.

Teacher leadership roles and opportunities vary, but all three educators we portrayed here found co-teaching to be one strong avenue to turn teacher collaboration to partnerships while also developing qualities of teacher leadership. According to Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2007), teachers commonly seek each other's advice, support, and assistance more often than those of administrator. Therefore, it is only natural that the development of teacher leaders, in formal as well as informal positions, would be an important means to provide instructional support to teachers to enhance learning for ELLs.

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CONTACT

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First, make sure teachers are heard

Julia Aguilar Zongker is an academic coach at Pueblo Del Sol Middle School in Isaac School District, Phoenix, Ariz. You can contact her at jzongker@ isaacschools.org.

Q **How do you help create a positive climate in a school striving for a turnaround?**

I spend a lot of time talking to kids, to teachers. If a teacher has a bad day, I try to talk to the teacher about what went well. There are always good things that happen during the day. I make sure as a coach that teachers do not go home without someone listening to them. I ask how I can help. Part of coaching is knowing how to read the teacher and meeting the needs of each individual. Some of them just need somebody to talk to.

We use a district Teach for Success form when we do classroom observations that looks for specific things. And we use two coaches for observations, so one can take over the classroom after an observation and the other can take the teacher out and give feedback. We figure out the teacher's strengths and one thing we'd like to target. We provide immediate feedback, so it's fresh in everybody's mind, and we might model right then that one thing.

When I first came, it was important that the other coach and I made sure we had the same objectives. We have to think alike. So we did a lot of observations together practicing and made sure we were in sync and were seeing the same things, and we would discuss that before we went in to the classroom and gave feedback. We have to all be moving in the same direction.

We are very data-driven here. The school has a data board in the conference room, and each teacher has an individual data board in the classroom so they can see where each child is in his or her learning. All the kids are color coded by where they fall on the state assessment categories, and when a student is assessed, the teacher reclassifies the student. Then, during grade-level meetings, we discuss with the teachers each individual child. And we celebrate each success. ◆

Create a supportive environment for all

Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago, a recent book by Anthony Bryk, Penny Bender Sebring, Elaine Allensworth, Stuart Luppescu, and John Easton (University of Chicago Press 2009), summarized five ingredients that, when implemented in tandem, produced substantial improvement in math and reading test scores for students in Chicago schools. These ingredients include:

- Strategic school leadership that focuses on instruction and includes others beyond principals;
- Deeper connection with parents and community that make schools open and welcoming;
- Purposeful development of professional capacity including professional development and collaborative work;
- Safe environment that creates support for learning; and
- Strong instructional guidance and materials.

Some of these ingredients are system ingredients, some school-level, and some classroom level. Creating a safe learning environment that supports student academic success is a matter of equity. Some describe the learning environment that respects and acknowledges students as a culturally responsive environment.

The National Center for Culturally Responsive Education Systems (NCCRESt) advocates for culturally responsive pedagogy and learning environments. They describe culturally responsive classrooms as having curricular, environmental, and instructional elements. In extensive web-based resources available for use in professional development, NCCRESt identifies the following five environmental features. Each of those features on pp. 7 and 8 is followed with some discussion prompts that might be useful in engaging teachers whose

NSDC STANDARD

Equity: Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.

personal background may be different from their students. Through self-reflection and examination of assumptions and beliefs, educators can increase their awareness of how their background and beliefs influence their pedagogy.

Creating culturally responsive classroom learning environments requires thoughtful planning and cross-classroom sharing. When working collaboratively across classrooms, teachers exchange strategies, resources, points of view, and ideas to support building a network of culturally responsive classrooms that contribute to a schoolwide system of supporting the success of all learners.

Joellen Killion is deputy executive director of National Staff Development Council.

FOR MORE RESOURCES

- NCCRESt provides resources to download to support professional learning in areas of equity. **http://nccrest.org/professional.html**

- NCCRESt publishes a newsletter called *Equity Matters*. To subscribe, visit **http://nccrest.org/press.html**

For more information about NSDC's Standards for Staff Development, see www.nsdc.org/standards/index.cfm

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF RESPECT AND RAPPORT

1

Respect and rapport begin with the teacher demonstrating respect for and rapport with students and teaching students how to show respect and build rapport with other students. Teachers can begin to establish this environment by learning to appreciate and understand their students' lives and cultural backgrounds and develop skills for cross-cultural communication. Interactions between students and teachers are warm and based on genuine caring, openness, and honesty.

To consider:
- How do teachers demonstrate respect and build rapport?
- What specific actions do teachers use in their classrooms to communicate their respect of their students?
- What strategies do teachers use to build rapport?
- What indicators help teachers assess the level of respect and rapport between them and their students and among students?

ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF LEARNING

2

Teachers shape the culture of learning when they convey its importance and the role of teachers and students as actors in the learning process, with both at times serving in the role of teacher and student. Teachers help students understand the importance of what they are learning, how it will impact their education and lives, and how to apply what they are learning in authentic situations. This requires teachers to reach beyond their own life experiences to connect with students' backgrounds. It also means that teachers hold the same high standards for all students and support students in achieving excellence.

To consider:
- How do teachers engage students in learning?
- What strategies do teachers use to personalize assignments and classroom activities to connect with all students to promote higher interest and engagement?
- How do teachers show enthusiasm for what they are teaching and convey its value to students?

CONNECTING WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

3

Families are a significant factor for the academic success of all students. Culturally responsive classroom environments actively acknowledge and appreciate family and community interests, encourage students to access and engage with community resources, and encourage students to include their families in the learning process. When teachers take time to meet families, visit them, and reach out and tap community resources, they increase their connections to students exponentially and increase their impact on students' learning.

To consider:
- What resources are available in our community that can enhance students' classroom learning?
- What communication systems work best for connecting with and engaging families in students' learning?
- What are some preferred ways families have indicated they want to contribute to their students' learning?
- How might we bring more community resources into our classrooms?

4 ORGANIZING SAFE CLASSROOM SPACE

Culturally responsive classroom environments use space to support learning. To use space effectively, teachers create different types of work environments for students; arrange the space for easy movement throughout the classroom; provide students with personal space; organize resources for easy access; prominently display student work products; ensure that print and non-print resources representing diverse background, values, points of view, lifestyles, and abilities are visible and easily accessible; and celebrate the contribution of all members of the classroom community.

To consider:
- How do we honor diverse backgrounds, points of view, values, lifestyles, and abilities within our school and our classrooms?
- What conveys to students that they are recognized and honored as members of the classroom and school community?
- What types of classroom physical arrangements work best for creating different types of learning spaces for students and still provide personal space for students?
- What are the most essential resources to have available for students in the classroom to support learning?
- What priorities do we have for adding to our classroom resources to ensure that we are honoring all students?

5 ESTABLISHING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Culturally responsive classroom management builds on respect, personal and social responsibility, and a strong sense of community. Teachers' own beliefs and values influence their expectations of students and their behaviors toward students. Teachers in culturally responsive classrooms strive to create a strong sense of community in which each student understands and accepts his or her contribution to the success of the community. Teachers focus their efforts more on creating procedures and systems to support learning than on discipline and punishment, while maintaining their role as accountable adults.

To consider:
- What procedures work to keep the focus on building students' sense of responsibility within classrooms?
- What personal beliefs and values do we hold as adults that interfere with expectations of students and their success?
- What does it mean to be personally and socially responsible within a community?
- How do we convey that to students at different ages?
- What is the relationship between classroom management and discipline?

ALSO FROM NSDC

Read the Cultural Proficiency column from *JSD* for more information on this topic. Columnists Sarah Nelson and Patricia Guerra explore a specific aspect of developing cultural proficiency in each issue. They recently completed a three-issue series investigating how to involve parents in the work of schools. See **www.nsdc.org/news/authors/guerra nelson.cfm.**

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The National Center for Culturally Responsive Education Systems (NCCRESt). http://nccrest.org/.

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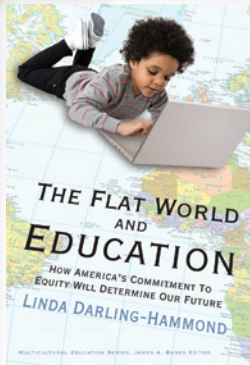**800-727-7288 • www. nsdc.org**

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The Flat World and Education:
How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future

Linda Darling-Hammond
This book offers an eye-opening wake-up call concerning America's future and vividly illustrates what the United States needs to do to build a system of high-achieving and equitable schools that ensures every child the right to learn. *Teachers College Press, 2010*
B444, 408 pp., $23.00 members, $28.75 nonmembers

Challenge of Change:
**Start School Improvement Now, 2nd Ed**

Michael Fullan
With practical insights and critical analysis, this completely revised edition sheds new light on the widely discussed topic of school change and analyzes the concept of tri-level reform— school, district, and state/national levels working together to build and strengthen capacity to achieve meaningful change. *Corwin, 2009*
**B445, 256 pp., $35.00 members, $43.75 nonmembers**
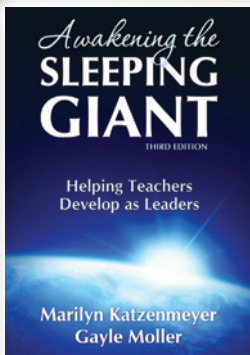
Awakening the Sleeping Giant:
Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders, 3rd Ed

Marilyn Katzenmeyer & Gayle Moller
Katzenmeyer and Moller expand on the definition of leadership and its importance to improving outcomes in schools, and cover the careerlong development of teacher leaders from preservice preparation programs through ongoing support for veteran teacher leaders. This exceptional, teacher-focused resource discusses three factors critical to stepping into a leadership role: sustaining teacher leadership relationships between adults in the school, organizational structures, and the actions of the principal. *Corwin, 2009*
B446, 240 pp., $35.00 members, $43.75 nonmembers
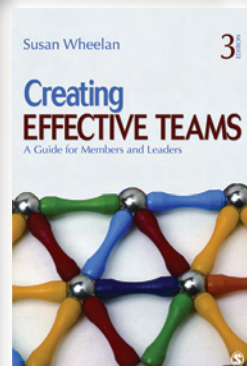
Creating Effective Teams:
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Susan Wheelan
A practical guide for building and sustaining top-performing teams. Readers will gain practical skills for navigating, from a group's creation to maintaining highly effective teams. Packed with straightforward strategies for building and supporting well-managed, high performing teams, this book examines why teams are important, how they function, and what makes them productive. *Sage Publications, 2010*
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