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Preparing English Language Learners to Succeed After High School

Megan Klemm
mklem1@brockport.edu

Preparing English Language Learners to Succeed After High School

by
Megan N. Klemm
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Abstract

This paper analyzes the educational pathway for English Language Learners (ELLs) and their level of preparedness for college or careers post-secondary education. How can educators better prepare ELLs for life after high school? ELLs often face hurdles when it comes to education. Research and professional development will prepare educators on how to adapt resources and information into the school curriculum to ensure ELLs gain knowledge of career paths and educational opportunities available. Topics discussed in this paper are low academic achievement rates, low socioeconomic status, and a lack of academic guidance. Through the use of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) I will examine the question: how to prepare and inform ELLs of career paths to become College and Career Ready (CCR)? The Professional Development (PD) aims to train and build collaboration among Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and mainstream teachers, as well as administrators and school staff in middle school and high school to deliver information. Expected outcomes include building an effective CCR program that prepares ELLs to be successful, well-rounded, contributing members of the community.

Keywords: English Language Learners, College and Career Ready, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Social Cognitive Career Theory, soft skills, educational pathways, post-secondary education

Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem

        While working with English Language Learners (ELLs) at the high school level, I have observed that students are unaware of opportunities available to prepare them for success after graduation. At times ELLs do not know what options are accessible in our educational system. Often, it is the up to teachers and school districts to reveal these opportunities. Certain ELLs are goal oriented and have a personal academic plan for after high school and these students need to be on the right educational pathway to excel. Other ELLs may be eager to join the workforce, others may not be college bound and need supports to graduate high school. This capstone project will focus on ELLs at the high school level. ELL is defined by Herrera, Perez and Escamilla (2015) as "an individual who is in the process of acquiring English as an additional language".

        The objective of this Capstone Project is to better prepare and inform our ELLs about available career paths that will prime them to be College and Career Ready (CCR) after high school. This issue is important since ELLs face financial burden if not given the opportunities and tools necessary to enter the workforce or college post high school graduation. With just a high school education, only a narrow selection of job opportunities is available to ELLs and non-English Language Learners alike. Torpey (2018), from The US Bureau of Labor Statistics, states that in 2017 the median income per week for an individual with a high school diploma was estimated at $712 per week, and individuals with a bachelor's degree estimated $1,173 per week. According to Ruiz and Gramlich (2019) at the Pew Research Center, out of all immigrants living in the United States, only about one third have a college education.

Significance of the Problem: How does this affect English Language Learners

ELLs are the fastest growing population in public schools Kindergarten through twelfth grade. However, according to Kanno and Cromley (2015), little research has been released as to the knowledge and success of ELLs and their pathway into colleges. Ultimately, educators must ask, how can we better prepare our ELLs to be CCR after receiving a high school diploma? In my experience, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL or ESOL teachers) work diligently with content teachers to improve listening, speaking, reading, writing English, comprehending core subject materials, and passing high stake assessments to ensure they graduate from high school. In addition, the authors point out that ESOL teachers also work with newly arrived ELLs, with limited English language, to meet the same graduation requirements set for all high schoolers. Even when teachers give ELLs the knowledge and tools needed to successfully complete high school, educators continue to wonder is that enough and now what? Where are ELLs employed after high school? How can we better prepare ELLs to be CCR post-graduation?

Many students, including ELLs, do not know where to start looking for opportunities available to them during and after high school. For instance, ELLs that have a desire to attend college, need appropriate academic pathways or honors programs. ELLs who are driven to enter the workforce should be informed, they can enroll in a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program during high school. The CTE program at the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) prepares high school students for careers to meet the needs of the evolving economy and allows students the opportunity to move directly into a career after high school. BOCES is a public organization that was designed to "provide shared educational programs and services to school districts" (About [BOCES, 2017]). BOCES explains career and technical programs

provide high school students with necessary skills to be prepared for college or a career post high

school (About [BOCES, 2017]). On the other hand, Kanno and Cromley (2015) suggest there are

some ELLs who are still attempting to master grade level proficiency and may not be prospects

for education beyond high school; their goal should be a high school diploma. Soft skills should

be incorporated throughout as they are essential for success in the workforce (Mousawa & Elyas,

2015). Soft skills are defined by Forum College and Career Ready Working Group as:

> the non-academic knowledge, skills, habits, and character traits needed to succeed in both
>
> college and the workplace, such as social and emotional skills and dispositions, and self-
>
> management skills. Soft skills are a subset of lifelong learning skills, which may also
>
> include technology skills, financial literacy and consumer skills, civic skills, higher order
>
> thinking skills, and the ability to apply knowledge in cross disciplinary contexts (National
>
> Forum on Education Statistics, 2015)

Regardless of dreams and aspirations, Kanno and Cromley (2015) indicate three likely

factors that contribute a low number of ELLs applying to four-year colleges. The first factor to

consider is lower academic achievement among ELLs as compared to their monolingual peers.

The second is the possibility of a low socioeconomic status, and the third is a lack of guidance

from both their parents and school personnel. In addition, the authors indicate other obligations,

such as providing translation of language to their non-English speaking family members or the

need to care for family members or younger siblings as barriers in educational pathways.

Although college attendance is not the focus of this Capstone Project, when considering

post high school opportunities it is important to note these findings may hold true to any

potential post-secondary education. Ultimately, it is essential for school districts and teachers to

build competencies and soft skills necessary to enter the workforce or college in the United States of America.

ELLs are one of the fastest growing populations in public schools, therefore there is a need to make sure they are educated and prepared for higher learning. As a result, educators can ensure readiness to be valuable assets of our community. Preparing ELLs to be successful employees immediately impacts our community. If ELLs choose to go to college, run the family business, become a nurse, electrician, or a chef, educators need to schedule them appropriately and prepare them to be paramount. With a successful post-secondary preparation program ELLs will understand the difference between two- and four-year colleges, be able to write college essays, be prepared for college entrance exams, fill out applications and FASFA forms, create personal resumes, be prepared for job interviews, and have the soft skills necessary to thrive. A successful program will have other school districts yearning for advice, and together there will be a positive impact on other communities. As educators, there is a need to ask ourselves; is talent lost among immigrant families simply because they do not know their way around the American education system?

Purpose

My personal and educational goal is to support ELLs to become successful, well-rounded, responsible, goal-oriented, and civic-minded assets to our communities. This Capstone Project will introduce a Professional Development (PD) program that will help mitigate the issue of underprepared ELLs on college or career opportunities. The PD will guide and provide ESOL teachers materials to lead ELLs through four years of high school and to achieve educational and professional goals after graduation. The PD will target middle school and high school ESOL teachers. The PD will be presented over three sessions, three hours each. Before the first session

all ELLs in middle and high school will be surveyed as to what their career goals are after high school. After presenting the student information, teachers will review the data and draft an academic plan. Teachers will acquire knowledge on a computer program that gathers information and allows for multiple users to edit and view, such as Microsoft's OneNote, or a similar product, to build and edit ELL student profiles. Student profiles will include educational goals and projected pathways. Students and parents will have access to view, while teachers and counselors can modify. Teachers will then hear from Career and Technical Education experts from BOCES. Professionals from BOCES will be invited to the first PD as they will be a major educational resource to partner with. Following the expert presentation, participants will draft a series of phases to be implemented in the classroom to support ELLs with CCR skills via BOCES. The first session will end with a brief recap of what was accomplished throughout the session, and plans for the next PD. The next two sessions will be conducted in a similar fashion, all including professional guest speakers. The second session will invite business owners from the community, including representatives from the local Chamber of Commerce to come and speak on what they look for in ideal employees, what young applicants may be lacking on applications, resumes, or during interviews, and the importance of soft skills in the workforce. After these speakers, as a group, participants will look over materials provided to create mock interviews, write a personal resume, and tips on filling out applications. Teachers will refine documents and create changes as necessary. The next session will invite college admission counselors to help navigate through the process of applying to colleges. After the professional speakers, teachers will receive information on important differences in local colleges, teachers will discuss what they offer; tips on filling out FASFA forms and deadlines, scholarships available for ELLs, and advice on asking for letters of recommendation. Participants will review

documents that best suite student needs as well as create an ease to incorporate into the classroom without redesigning the curriculum. At the conclusion of the third session, the participants will split into pre-arranged groups assigned with specific ELLs. In these groups, participants will begin to create career focused educational pathways for each individual ELL.

The PD aims for personalized interactions with ELLs, successful collaboration with school personnel, and effective communication with family members to prepare ELLs with necessary tools to make successful life decisions (Creating a college-going culture for English language learners, n.d.). Given proper supports provided in the PD, ELLs will receive information ensuring successful, well-rounded, responsible, civic-minded members of our communities.

Conclusion

As the ELL population continues to grow across the United States, there is a need to prepare ELLs to be successful contributing members of society. In chapter 2 of this Capstone Project the relevance of the social cognitive career theory and research on how it prepares ELLs post high school graduation will be reviewed as well as and how the findings are relevant to success. Chapter 2 will also include empirical findings and tools that support the PD. Chapter 3 presents an in-depth detailed description of a PD program that aims to mitigate the issue of underprepared ELLs on college and career opportunities. Key takeaways and future research will be discussed in chapter 4 including implications for student learning and teaching to increase the number of ELLs who graduate high school and become successful, contributing members of the community. In addition to the conclusion, and final thoughts, an Appendix will provide samples of the teaching tools included in the PD.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

It is essential to prepare ELLs to be CCR after high school graduation. While it is true that ELLs are a fast-growing student population, ELLs are also categorized as low achieving in both mathematics and reading (Frey, 2008). According to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in 2018, the overall high school graduation rate was 80.4%, but for ELLs the graduation rate was 29.0% (NYSED, n.d.-b). Additionally, only 18.7% of ELLs attained a Regents diploma (NYSED, n.d.-b). Of the ELLs who did not graduate in four years, 40.5% remained in high school anticipating graduation within the next couple years. (NYSED, n.d.-b). The term CCR is defined by the Forum College and Career Ready Working Group as a student who is:

> college and career ready when he or she has attained the knowledge, skills, and disposition needed to succeed in credit-bearing (non-remedial) postsecondary coursework or a workforce training program in order to earn the credentials necessary to qualify for a meaningful career aligned to his or her goals and offering a competitive salary (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2015)

A college degree is an important factor with respect to poverty, especially when considering that roughly 75% of ELLs come from low-income families (Kanno & Cromley, 2015). The Pew Research center reported from the 2016 Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 72% of ELLs in American public schools are U.S. citizens, while only an estimated 28% of ELLs were foreign born. Out of that 28% of ELLs who were foreign born, 5% we born to Americans overseas (Bialik, Scheller, & Walker, 2018). Frey (2008) with the Pew Research Center estimated from 2005 to 2020 ELLs would increase from 12.3 million to 17.9 million

respectively. During 2017-18 academic year, the top languages spoken by ELLs in NYS were "Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Russian, Haitian-Creole, Urdu, French, Karen, and Uzbek" (NYSED, n.d.-b). Although these were the most popular languages spoken, ELLs in NYS collectively speak over 200 languages (NYSED, n.d.-b).

Academic Theory

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), derived from Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory has been modified by Lent and Brown (2013) to the belief that the factors that shape career development are the individual student, self-efficacy, expectations, and goals. Self-efficacy is one's ability to believe in themselves and perform when presented challenges. Brown and Lent (2019) assume self-efficacy will establish whether a person will attempt of flee from a new activity, the level of effort and persistence applied to the activity, and their personal outcomes. The authors also claim that there are two important factors that also play a role in career identity; positive supports including peers, families, and educators, and how one interacts with these supports. Outcome expectations are viewpoints on the results, whether positive or negative. Goals assist in motivation and ambition while giving a purpose to participation (Brown & Lent, 2019). However, Keller and Whiston (2008) indicate positive supports, meaningful interactions, and learning experiences do not align with an ELL's individual interests, abilities, or career aspirations. With four principles of understanding, SCCT focuses on understanding occupational and educational interests, making choices, performance, and satisfaction or well-being (Lent & Brown, 2013). SCCT suggests that in career preparation students should experience activities that mirror career expectations. For instance, career related activities, and proper educational pathways, while also allowing for students to make changes along their journey. SCCT provides students with experiences and knowledge to overcome challenges in

their future careers (Brown & Lent, 2019). Positive learning environments and encouraging personal interactions in connection with building career identities, SCCT allows students to develop necessary goal setting and self-efficacy skills associated with career choice.

Literature Review

Kanno and Cromley (2015) reported 1% of ELLs were enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) math, and 8% in AP science compared to 3.2% overall. Consequently, low academic achievement influences low college attendance rates. Standardized tests fail to measure necessary CCR qualities such as soft skills, career pathway knowledge, and civic awareness. As a result, NYSED adopted the Blueprint for English Language Learners/Multilingual Learner Success. This approach ensures a high level of academic success and language proficiency for ELLs (NYSED, n.d.-b). With a focus on CCR the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) implemented a goal of supporting individual educational paths and socio-emotional needs of all ELLs (NYSED, n.d.-b). Standardized tests have created an emphasis in test preparation in the kindergarten through twelfth grade, resulting in a lack critical skills necessary for CCR (Camara, 2013). A possibility of failure is presented during the transition from high school to college without insight as to college atmosphere and cultural norms. With a concentration on independent living, financial responsibilities, and soft skills, students will be competent during the transition (Hooker & Brand, 2010). Furthermore, Hooker and Brand (2010) assume that students from underrepresented groups, such as ELLs, lack role models with a postsecondary education or college knowledge. Similarly, apprenticeships and internships provide understanding of a career environment. These programs prepare students with experience and knowledge to be successful in the workforce post high school.

Among high school ELLs who graduate high school, Kanno and Cromley (2015) suggest that planning for college can be a challenge. The authors performed a study in 2013 comparing the mean level of education of ELL parents and monolingual English-speaking parents. The results showed ELL parents averaged just above high school education while monolingual English-speaking parents averaged above two years of college. These findings suggest with a lack of experience, ELL parents may not have knowledge to provide advice regarding a post-secondary education. Authors, Kanno and Cromley (2015), imply, it cannot go unnoticed that many ELLs may not be financially prepared for a post-secondary education. In some cases, ELLs may attend schools with fewer resources therefore offering less opportunities. Resource poor schools are less likely to keep highly qualified teachers, consequently students have low academic achievement and less academic guidance. One conclusion that can be drawn is that in order to enable more ELLs to reach colleges, they need support early on in their educational journey.

Some advantages described by college graduates are lower unemployment rates, interesting careers that maximize earning potentials, higher levels of happiness and health, more community involvement with voting and volunteering, more likely to own a home, and ability to help children to earn better grades in school (NYSED, n.d.-d). American schools can adjust learning conditions and develop professional development programs to connect staff members with students to align career goals with individual abilities and interests. NYSED (n.d.-b) concentrates on supporting school districts by designing programs that increase academic progress for ELLs and other subgroups. The Blueprint for English Language Learners/Multilingual Learner Success acknowledges that ELLs cannot learn language apart from content, therefore the Blueprint aims to provide rigor paired with supports to maintain

grade level content while learning appropriate English language skills simultaneously (NYSED, n.d.-b). Furthermore, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) passed in 2015, provided NYS with an additional improvement for ELL success (NYSED, n.d.-b). NYSED has witnessed constant growth in English Language proficiency with ELLs since the adoption of the Blueprint. In the 2015-16 academic school year 9.0% of ELLs had a Commanding score on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), compared to the 13.8% Commanding in the 2017-18 academic year (NYSED, n.d.-b). Highs schools must focus their attention on developing skills and understandings for CCR for all students with an emphasis on employee performance skills such as time management, adaptability, and soft skills to promote growth and success post-secondary school.

OBEWL and NYSED offices collaborated to create a Culturally Responsive and Sustaining (CR-S) Education Framework. CR-S was designed for educators throughout the state, to ensure that instruction is responsive to diversity in NYS classrooms. This framework inspires students to be positive agents of change by providing student-centered learning environments (NYSED, n.d.-b). Classrooms that thrive on individual identity and welcome culture as a critical component of the learning atmosphere allows students to flourish (NYSED, n.d.-b). The CR-S Framework is based on four guiding principles: "Welcoming and affirming environment, high expectations and rigorous instruction, inclusive curriculum and assessment, and ongoing professional learning" (NYSED, n.d.-b). A welcoming and affirming environment is provided by building relationships with students and families to learn about student cultures and communities. High expectation and rigorous instruction involve student-centered classrooms with project-based learning. Ongoing professional learning and support includes diversity, equity and inclusion training (NYSED, n.d.-b).

Application

According to the Pew Research Center (2016) employment opportunities are rising in careers requiring essential job training or experience. NYS is committed to supporting districts in implementing high quality ELL programs that prepare ELLs for college, careers, and civic involvement. NYS will create mathematics and science initiatives, including language strategies and professional development for content specialists and ESOL teachers (NYSED, n.d.-b). NYS has offered districts grants to ensure all students have access to CCR opportunities with additional funding to CTE programs. This initiative aims to increase ELL enrollment in CTE programs (NYSED, n.d.-b). NYS offers a Multiple Pathways initiative meant to engage student interest. Students can choose any of the following pathways that will lead them to meet graduation requirements; Arts, Biliteracy, CTE, Career Development and Occupational Studies, Humanities, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) (NYSED, n.d.-c). According to NYSED (2017-2018), a grant, Removing Barriers to CTE Programs for English Language Learner's and Students with Disabilities, was designed to guarantee all students have a pathway that leads to CCR. One million dollars was made available to encourage Students with Disabilities and ELLs to participate in CTE programs (NYSED, 2017-2018). NYSED encourages school districts and BOCES CTE programs to build relationships and partnerships with community businesses, local colleges, and community organizations as an effort to increase hands-on experiences and build on CCR skills. (NYSED, 2017-2018). In recent years, the NYS Board of Regents has recognized the need to provide opportunities for all students to graduate high school and many of these opportunities are directly related to accessibility of CTE programs (NYSED, 2017-2018).

New York Career and Technical Education delivers high quality CTE opportunities for all students. New York State has over 1,100 CTE providers, providing services to over one million students. CTE programs available in NYS are; "agricultural, business and marketing, family and consumer sciences, health occupations, technology, trade, technical and industrial education" (NYSED, n.d.-a). NYS BOCES has committed success by offering over 13,118 professional development programs, and 66 CTE programs coupled with partnerships with local businesses. BOCES for NYS has reported 38,442 high school students with developed CCR skills through CTE programs as well as meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of 3,741 students with alternative educational programs (Services [BOCES, 2017).

In November 2019, NYSED proposed Perkins Vs. State Plan to Strengthen Career and Technical Education. This is a four-year plan for CTE programs to increase employment opportunities for subgroups, including ELLs, in highly skilled, marketable occupations with high expectations, rigor, academic and technical knowledge, and soft skills (NYSED, 2019). The plan also aims to improve the quality of CTE faculty, teachers, counselors and administrators while also building relationships with local businesses, college and local workforce boards. A primary goal of the act is to provide students with necessary skills to keep the U.S. competitive in the work force (NYSED, 2019).

Conclusion

The Pew Research Center (2016) reports the most essential skills sought after by employers are interpersonal skills, critical thinking abilities, and writing and communication skills. This information supports the need for post-secondary education and job training experience. Mousawa and Elyas (2015) express communication skills to be a key quality in employees. Unfortunately, communication is a skill that ELLs need to prioritize.

Communication skills are classified by Mousawa and Elyas as language proficiency, behavior, and presentation. Leadership qualities, career planning, team building, and public speaking are also attributes of high-quality communication skills. Communication, or soft skills, go hand in hand with CCR preparation.

Overall ELLs require strong, trusting interactions with academic personnel to acquire content knowledge, transition skills, and soft skills associated with CCR. ELLs need to encounter learning experiences directly connected to career identity with firsthand involvement to help build self-efficacy, personal expectations, and goals. Finally, ELLs should be supported with soft skills and transitional information correlated to CCR and post-secondary opportunities. Chapter 3 gives an overview of a PD designed as a tool to mitigate the issue of underprepared ELLs for college or career opportunities.

Chapter 3: Professional Development

Session 1

Participants, consisting of TESOL professionals from the middle and high school, will be

welcomed into the room and handed the agenda for the first session (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Agenda for session 1

Professional Development
Preparing ELLs to be college or career ready after high school - Session 1

Agenda
- Welcome
  - Introductions
- Identify the problem
  - Facts relating to the problem
- What to expect to gain from this PD
- Break – 15 minutes
- Today's professional guest
  - A CTE counselor from BOCES
    - Mission and core values
    - In depth detailed description of Career and Technical Education Programs available
    - Language Requirements of ELLs, and if they exist
    - Partnerships with local businesses
- Handouts provided by CTE counselor
- Recap of literature and information
- Small groups will discuss how to implement into the classroom
  - When, how, and who should visit BOCES for CTE programs
  - Suggestions will be inputted into a shared document
- Brief summary of what to expect in session 2
- Final thoughts exit ticket

Notes:

Introductions

Once everyone is settled in, to create a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere, participants

will be asked to introduce themselves and answer a question of their choice from the options

presented on the power point (see Appendix, Figure 2). After everyone has introduced

themselves; an overview of the PD will be given. Over three sessions we will gain knowledge

and skills to prepare ELLs to be college or career ready once they graduate high school.

Identify the Problem

My personal and educational goal is to support ELLs to become successful, well-

rounded, responsible, and civic-minded assets to our communities. This PD will help to mitigate

the issue of underprepared ELLs when it comes to college or career readiness, or CCR as

mentioned previously. College and Career Readiness is defined as:

> college and career ready when he or she has attained the knowledge, skills, and
>
> disposition needed to succeed in credit-bearing (non-remedial) postsecondary coursework
>
> or a workforce training program in order to earn the credentials necessary to qualify for a
>
> meaningful career aligned to his or her goals and offering a competitive salary (National
>
> Forum on Education Statistics, 2015)

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), derived from

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory has been modified by Lent and Brown (2013) to belief

the factors that shape career development are the individual student, self-efficacy, expectations,

and goals. Self-efficacy is one's ability to believe in themselves and perform when presented

challenges. Brown and Lent (2019) assume self-efficacy will establish whether a person will

attempt to flee from a new activity, the level of effort and persistence applied to the activity, and

their personal outcomes. This theory will be the educational foundation of this PD. Brown and

Lent (2019) suggest that positive supports, whether it be peers, family, or educators, and how

one interacts with these supports are pressing factors that play a role in developing career

identity. However, as stated in Chapter 2, Keller and Whiston (2008) indicate positive supports,

meaningful interactions and learning experiences do not align with an ELL's individual interests, abilities, or career aspirations. Therefore, the SCCT suggests that educators must provide students with career related experiences and knowledge as well as create positive supports to build a personal career identity (Brown, 2019).

Expectations of PD

This PD is designed to give insight on opportunities available to ELLs and provide resources to expand our knowledge so we can pass it on to ELLs. Frey (2008) at the Pew Research Center, reveals that although ELLs are the fastest growing population, they are also among the lowest achieving groups. A goal of this PD is to strengthen the skills of ELLs, so they are CCR after high school, and can positively contribute to our communities.

Throughout the sessions of this PD, representatives from BOCES, local community business leaders, and admission counselors from local colleges will enlighten us with information, opportunities, and resources that will empower this group to make a confident change in the future of our ELLs. Professionals from BOCES will explain about their Career and Technical Education programs, what is offered, and how they are connected to the community. Presenters from BOCES will explain language requirements, if any, and an initiative put forth by the New York State Education Department to encourage ELLs to join CTE programs.

In the second session we will hear from business owners within the community, including representatives from the local chamber of commerce. Professionals will enlighten us on qualities of ideal employees, and what young applicants may be lacking on applications, resumes, or during the interview process. Participants will be provided with tips for filling out applications, how to write a personal resume, and mock interview exercises. The skilled professionals will enlighten participants on their experiences as well as how soft skills are necessary for a

successful business career. Following the presentation, participants will be provided handouts with a list of tools to achieve appropriate soft skills acceptable for the workplace.

The third session we will invite admissions counselors from local two and four-year colleges. The counselors will help to navigate the process of applying to colleges, and transition hurdles from high school to college. The admission counselors will discuss information on important differences in local college, tips on filling out FASFA forms and deadlines, scholarships available for ELLs, and advice on letters of recommendation. After the last professional guest, participants will split into prearranged groups with assigned ELLs to view survey results on Microsoft's OneNote, or another program, and work together to design educational pathways to ensure steady progress towards CCR for ELLs.

Student Survey

Recently we gave all ELLs, 6th-11th grade, a short survey based on career aspirations and interests to create an individual CCR educational pathway for each ELL (see Appendix, Figure 3). After collecting the surveys, student profiles are built in Microsoft OneNote, or any shared product, and attached the appropriate survey to each profile. At the end of the third session we will split into groups and discuss which pathway is best for each student.

Break

Participants will break for 15 minutes.

Professional Guest Speaker

Once participants return from break, the CTE counselor from BOCES will speak. Topics will include their mission and core values, an in-depth, detailed description of Career and Technical Education Programs available to ELLs, if there are any language requirements and

their partnerships with local businesses. The CTE counselor will provide handouts supporting

their presentation. There will be a recap of literature and information.

Small Group Discussion

Participants will break out into small groups and discuss how to implement new

information into the classroom and which ELLs would make good candidates for the BOCES

CTE programs. One representative from each group will input thoughts into a shared document

which will gather and compile everyone's thoughts and ideas. After, groups will share their

thoughts. The session will end with a brief recap of what to expect in session 2; which will run in

a similar fashion with professional guest speakers from local business leaders. Close with final

thoughts, and an exit ticket. The exit ticket will be a suggestion of what they would have been

helpful or something they learned from the session (see Appendix, Figure 4).

Session 2

Participants will be welcomed back and handed the agenda for session 2, shown in Figure

5 below.

Figure 5

Agenda for session 2

Professional Development
Preparing ELLs to be college or career ready after high school - Session 2

Agenda
- Welcome
- Restate the problem
    - o Facts relating to the problem
- Today's professional guests:
    - o Community business owners and members from Local Chamber of Commerce
        - ➢ Characteristics of ideal employees
        - ➢ Characteristics young employees are lacking
        - ➢   Importance of soft skills
        - ➢ Partnerships with BOCES and or colleges
- Information distributed by business leaders
- Break – 15 minutes
- Recap and literature and information
- Handouts:
    - ○ Tips on filling out applications
    - ○ Resume examples
    - ○ Mock interviews
    - ○ Necessary soft skills
- Small groups will discuss how to implement into the classroom
    - o   Connections to the community or networking possibilities
    - o   Suggestions inputted into a shared document
- Brief summary of what to expect in session 3
- Final thoughts exit ticket

Notes:

Identify the Problem

In session 2, participants will be hearing from local community business leaders as well as members from the Chamber of Commerce. Again, our focus is to better prepare ELLs to be CCR. As stated in the first session, by keeping the Social Cognitive Career Theory as the basis of our philosophy, educators must provide students with career related experiences and knowledge as well as create positive supports to build a personal career identity (Brown, 2019). Mentioned in chapter 2, standardized tests have created an emphasis in test preparation in the kindergarten through twelfth grade, resulting in a lack critical skills necessary for CCR (Camara, 2013). A

possibility of failure is presented during the transition from high school to college without insight as to college atmosphere and cultural norms. With a concentration on independent living, financial responsibilities, and soft skills, students will be competent during the transition (Hooker & Brand, 2010). Similarly, apprenticeships and internships provide understanding of a career environment. These programs prepare students with experience and knowledge to be successful in the workforce post high school.

Professional Guest Speakers

The local business leaders and members from the Chamber of Commerce will express characteristics of ideal employees, along with qualities that young employees are lacking including soft skills. Community members will also discuss their partnerships with BOCES and or colleges. They will leave the participants with important information and business cards.

Break

Participants will break for 15 minutes.

Recap of literature and information

Upon their return, handouts pertaining to tips for filling out applications (see Appendix, Figure 6), creating resumes (see Appendix, Figure 7), preparing for interviews (see Appendix, Figure 8) and the importance of soft skills (see Appendix, Figure 9). A recap of literature and information will be discussed before PD breaks into small groups.

Small Group Discussion

Participants will add any community connections they may have as well as any important takeaways from the day's session to the shared document. After the small group discussions, the PD participants will be given an overview of what to expect in session 3, which includes a

presentation from admissions counselors from local two and four-year colleges. The session will

end with an exit ticket (see Appendix, Figure 10).

Session 3

Participants will be welcomed back and handed an agenda for session 3, which can be

seen in Figure 11 below.

Figure 11

Agenda for session 3

Professional Development

Preparing ELLs to be college or career ready after high school - Session 3

Agenda
- Welcome
- Restate the problem
  - Facts relating to the problem
- Today's professional guests:
  - Admissions Counselors from local two and four-year colleges
    - The process of applying to colleges and important deadlines
    - Financial aid and FASFA applications
    - Differences between two and four-year colleges
    - Scholarships available for ELLs
    - Suggestions for ELLs who desire to attend college
- Information distributed by Admissions Counselors
- Break – 15 minutes
- Recap of literature and information
- Break out groups
  - Create individualized educational pathways for each ELL based on survey results on shared document
- Final thoughts exit ticket

Notes:

Identify the Problem

Chapter 2 stated that Kanno and Cromley (2015) suggest that planning for college can be

a challenge. The authors suggest with the lack of personal college experience ELL parents may

not have knowledge to provide advice regarding a post-secondary education. School districts can

adjust learning conditions and offer programs to connect staff members with students to align

career goals with individual abilities and interest, which is why this PD was created. Some

advantages described by college graduates are lower unemployment rates, interesting careers that

maximize earning potentials, higher levels of happiness and health, more community

involvement with voting and volunteering, more likely to own a home, and ability to help

children to earn better grades in school (NYSED, n.d.-d). The ELLs, who are college bound,

must be enrolled in an appropriate pathway to succeed, as well as made aware of important

deadlines associated with financial aid applications, college applications, and scholarship

opportunities.

Professional Guest Speakers

Guest speakers in session 3 are college admissions counselors from local two and four-

year colleges. Presenters will be discussing the process of applying to colleges and important

deadlines, financial aid and FASFA applications, the differences between two and four-year

colleges, scholarships available for ELLs, and suggestions for ELLs who desire to attend college.

A resource for parents regarded as a comprehensive college guide will also be distributed. They

will be handing out materials associated with the topics listed above.

Break

Participants will break for 15 minutes.

Small Group Discussions

Following the break, there will be a brief review of literature and information.

Participants will then be separated into pre-organized groups with a focus on a specific group of

ELLs. Their task will be to create an educational career path that best suits each individual ELL,

based on the survey results. Participants will be given a handout providing an overview on how

to navigate Microsoft OneNote (see Appendix, Figure 12). PD participants will also have

conversations on how this information can be incorporated into the classroom and their

comments will be inputted into a shared document. An exit ticket will be provided (see

Appendix, Figure 13).

Conclusion

The PD is concluded. Chapter 4 will include key takeaways and implications for student

and teacher learning to ensure ELLs are CCR post high school graduation, recommendations,

and final thoughts.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to better prepare ELLs to be CCR post high school graduation. As one of the fastest growing student populations in the United States, according to Kanno and Cromley (2015), it is necessary for educational professionals to create a plan that ensures ELLs are prepared to be successful after high school. Chapter 2 reviewed three potential hurdles that ELLs face when preparing for their future. These obstacles are classified as low academic achievement rates, low socioeconomic status, and lack of guidance from care takers and school personnel.

Conclusions

Chapter 3 presents the PD I created to build capacity amongst ESOL teachers to enhance educational opportunities and potential career paths for ELLs. A variety of professional guest speakers will be welcomed to the PD, including a CTE counselor from BOCES, community business leaders, and admission counselors from local two-and four-year colleges. Participants will be educated on the mission and core values of the CTE program at BOCES as well as an in-depth, detailed description of Career and Technical Education Programs available to ELLs, and their partnerships with local businesses. Community business leaders share characteristics of ideal employees, along with qualities that young employees are lacking including soft skills. Participants will be given handouts including tips on filling out applications, creating resumes, preparing for interviews, and the importance of soft skills. The information provided is to be used as a quick reference and aid in post-secondary preparation in the classroom. Local college admissions counselors present information regarding the process of applying to colleges and important deadlines, financial aid and FASFA applications, the differences between two and

four-year colleges, scholarships available for ELLs, and suggestions for ELLs who desire to attend college.

Three concluding statements can be made from research presented in this paper. One conclusion is in order to enable more ELLs to reach colleges, they need support early on in their educational journey. Standardized tests have created an emphasis in test preparation in the kindergarten through twelfth grade, resulting in a lack critical skills necessary for CCR (Camara, 2013). American schools can adjust learning conditions and develop more professional development programs to connect staff members with students and align career goals with individual abilities and interests. Another concluding thought essential for success is positive learning environments and encouraging personal interactions in connection with building career identities. Also, SCCT allows students to develop necessary goal setting and self-efficacy skills associated with career choice. The third conclusion is the possibility of failure without insight as to the college atmosphere and cultural norms during the transitional stage from high school to college. Therefore, by participating in CCR instruction prior to going to college, ELLs can concentrate on independent living, financial responsibilities, and soft skills, and students will be competent during the transition (Hooker & Brand, 2010). Correspondingly aligning evidence explained in chapter 3 with student surveys, allows participants of the PD to create individualized and meaningful educational career paths for each ELL, anticipating success.

Implications for Student Learning

A sense of stability and structure in CCR aligned educational pathways will allow students to establish a focused view in the classroom. Additionally, a positive outlook is expected to give ELLs a greater sense of purpose and belonging. More confidence with educational direction and career opportunities, optimistically, will improve academic

achievement rates and present students with a greater social and emotional well-being. Ultimately, students will develop metacognition by taking ownership of their learning, staying engaged, self-motivated, and actively viewing their educational career path in the shared file.

Implications for Teaching

Ongoing assessment and consistent communication with ELLs regarding the CCR goals, will allow teachers to align the curriculum and design activities with student interests in mind. As a result of contributing to ELL educational career pathways with comments and progress, eventually, educators can assist in future adjustments and improvements. With the intention of teachers communicating high expectations and promoting engaging real-life experiences, instruction will be more meaningful since students are committed to success. Given these points, overall learning experience can elevate student potential and keep them on track for success. In the meantime, building and maintaining relationships with students, school personnel, educational services, and community business leaders will be essential for success.

Recommendations

An area that needs improvement is offering future PDs for counselors. This group of professionals need to participate and take an active role in CCR training for ELLs. Since the lingering question is: do school counselors have enough time to individually meet the needs of students and their preferred CCR pathway?

Further research should include a case study reporting the finding of students' progress post-high school graduation. The research can focus on ELLs transitions from high school into a career or college atmosphere, any strains they encountered along the way, what they felt prepared for and underprepared for, social-emotional well-being, and level of success. The outcomes can lead to future developments and improvements to the PD.

Final Thoughts

Education is complex; it is challenging both intellectually and emotionally. Students and decisions regarding students need time and care. For instance, professionals prepare but may not take the time to research what is known, what has been done, what works, what does not. As an educator, there is a responsibility to be a leader, teach to student's needs, and reflect. By participating in professional developments for ELLs, educators have the opportunity to become leaders. Consequently, making a positive impact on the student, the class, the school, the community. An expectation is that more ELLs become positive contributing members of the community. Meanwhile, professionals desire to continue inspiring and watching ELLs grow into successful thriving adults. As a result, students will share their accomplishments and enhance talents with real-life experiences and how they persevered.

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Appendix

Figure 1

Professional Development
Preparing ELLs to be college or career ready after high school - Session 1

Agenda
- Welcome
    - Introductions
- Identify the problem
    - Facts relating to the problem
- What to expect to gain from this PD
- Break – 15 minutes
- Today's professional guest
    - A CTE counselor from BOCES
        - Mission and core values
        - In depth detailed description of Career and Technical Education Programs available
        - Language Requirements of ELLs, and if they exist
        - Partnerships with local businesses
- Handouts provided by CTE counselor
- Recap of literature and information
- Small groups will discuss how to implement into the classroom
    - When, how, and who should visit BOCES for CTE programs
    - Suggestions will be inputted into a shared document
- Brief summary of what to expect in session 2
- Final thoughts exit ticket

Notes:

Figure 2

Professional Development
Opening Introductions

Please introduce yourself and pick one question and share your response with the group.

1. What is your favorite food?

2. What is your favorite vacation spot?

3. What is your favorite recreational activity?

1. Coffee or tea?

Figure 3

Name_____
Educational Plan
Student Survey

Instructions:
Please answer the following questions. Your answers will be used as preparation for college
or opportunities throughout your secondary school experience.

1. **I plan on attending college after high school.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe
2. **I would like to go to college, but I do not know if I can afford it.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
3. **I plan on working directly after high school with no more formal education.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe
4. **I would like technical training during high school, so I am prepared for a job after I graduate.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe
5. **I have plans to work with/for my family after high school.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe
6. **I enjoy working with people.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
7. **I enjoy being outdoors.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
8. **I like problem solving.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
9. **I like designing things.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
10. **I like to apply logic to reach a conclusion.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
11. **I am organized.**
    a. Yes
    b. No

12. I like working in a group toward a goal.
     a. Yes
     b. No
13. I enjoy helping others.
     a. Yes
     b. No
14. I enjoy creating visually interesting products.
     a. Yes
     b. No
15. I enjoy hands-on learning.
     a. Yes
     b. No

Thank you.

Figure 4

Exit Ticket

Professional Development

Preparing ELLs for college or careers after high school

Session 1

Before you leave today, please answer these following questions.

What is one important concept or fact you learned in today's session?

_____

_____

What would have made this session more effective?

_____

_____

Additional Comments/Notes:

_____

_____

Thank you.

Figure 5

Professional Development
Preparing ELLs to be college or career ready after high school - Session 2

Agenda
- Welcome
- Restate the problem
    - o Facts relating to the problem
- Today's professional guests:
    - o Community business owners and members from Local Chamber of Commerce
        - ➢ Characteristics of ideal employees
        - ➢ Characteristics young employees are lacking
        - ➢ Importance of soft skills
        - ➢ Partnerships with BOCES and or colleges
- Information distributed by business leaders
- Break – 15 minutes
- Recap and literature and information
- Handouts:
    - ○ Tips on filling out applications
    - ○ Resume examples
    - ○ Mock interviews
    - ○ Necessary soft skills
- Small groups will discuss how to implement into the classroom
    - o Connections to the community or networking possibilities
    - o Suggestions inputted into a shared document
- Brief summary of what to expect in session 3
- Final thoughts exit ticket

Notes:

Figure 6

Preparing ELLs for college or careers

Professional Development
Summer 2020
Session 2

Tips on filling out Applications

Overview

An application makes the process of gathering information the same for all candidates. An employer's first look at a candidate is the application; they are looking for completion and accuracy.

Tips

- Read instructions carefully
- Practice; make copies or ask for extras
- Be neat; write legibly and check for accuracy and correct spelling.
- Complete all required sections
- Do not specify salary requirements; rather state "negotiable"
- Fill in all details
    - Do not use "refer to resume" as it may come across as lazy.
    - Make sure details on application are consistent with those on resume
- Make sure employment history is accurate; check names of former employers, their addresses, phone numbers, and employment dates.
- Provide references if requested
    - Ask and alert references beforehand
    - Be truthful and positive

Figure 7

Preparing ELLs for college or careers

Professional Development
Summer 2020
Session 2

Personal Resumes

Overview

A personal resume allows a candidate to display top skills, education, and qualities. Resumes help employers make hiring decisions. Resumes allow employers to quickly view how your individual experiences can contribute to the company's success

Tips for writing a resume

- **List out all experiences**; include volunteer work, student activities, important class projects, internships. Then think about skills and experiences you learned from these experiences.

- **Think about goals you have accomplished**; highlighting achievements, such as fundraising.

- **Gather references.** Be sure to ask before giving someone's name. References may not be necessary on a resume, but it is important to be prepared.

- Be honest.

- Proofread. Proofread. Proofread. Have someone else look at it for you.

- Keep your resume to one page.

- Prioritize. List the most important task, responsibility, or accomplishment first. Don't highlight something you despise doing.

Figure 8

Preparing ELLs for college or careers

Professional Development
Summer 2020
Session 2

Mock interview exercises
Overview

The interview process is the time to shine. Being prepared to answer questions can help develop talking points, incorporate soft skills, and make a good impression.

Common Interview Questions

- **Tell us about yourself.**
  - Start by giving an overview of what you are currently doing, including the most important and relevant details that make you the most qualified for the position.
- **What makes you unique?**
  - Provide information on how your qualities and characteristics will allow you to succeed in this role. Tell how your best attributes lead to success.
- **Why do you want to work here?**
  - Mention the aspects of the company that appeal to you and align with your career goals
- **What interests you about this role?**
  - Read the job description thoroughly and compare role assignments to your experiences and skills. Focus on a few things you excel at.
- **What are your greatest strengths?**
  - Share a personal attribute and relate it back to role assignments.
- **What is your greatest weakness?**
  - An awkward discussion; start with a weakness you are working on improving and how. This shows self-awareness, determination, and positivity.
- **Tell us about a difficult situation at work and how you overcame it.**
  - This question is often used to see how the applicant performs under pressure as well as problem-solving abilities. Stories are memorable and this is an opportunity to show you are human and willing to go the extra mile
- **Why should we hire you?**
  - Include skills and experience that makes you the best candidate and the best culture fit.
- **Do you have any questions for us?**
  - Ask about the interviewers experiences with the company. Why do you love working for this company? What would success look like in this role? What are some challenges people may face in this position?

Figure 9

Preparing ELLs for college or careers

Professional Development
Summer 2020
Session 2

Soft Skills

Overview

Soft skills are necessary as they are qualities that employers seek when hiring. Communication skills are a strong indicator as to how the candidate will fit into the organization. These skills are identified early in the interview process. Interviewers look for good listening skills, as one of the many soft skills they deem necessary.

Soft skills employers seek

- Good communication skills; both listening   and speaking. Active listening and willingness to engage helps keep long term projects on track
- A positive attitude
- Good work ethic
- Strong teamwork abilities
- Leadership qualities including compassion
- Time management skills
- Ability to make decisions
- Conflict resolution skills
- Creative and critical thinking; employers want fresh ideas
- Empathy
- Problem solving abilities

Soft skills can be practiced daily and incorporated into everyday lessons. They can also be practiced during mock interviews.

Figure 10

Exit Ticket

Professional Development

Preparing ELLs for college or careers after high school

Session 3

Before you leave today, please answer these following questions.

What are your overall thoughts regarding this PD and if you feel more equipped to prepare ELLs to be CCR.

_____

_____

What information, if any, would you like more information or wish was included in this PD?

_____

_____

Additional Comments/Notes:

_____

_____

Thank you.

Figure 11

Professional Development

Preparing ELLs to be college or career ready after high school - Session 3

Agenda
- Welcome
- Restate the problem
  - Facts relating to the problem
- Today's professional guests:
  - Admissions Counselors from local two and four-year colleges
    - The process of applying to colleges and important deadlines
    - Financial aid and FASFA applications
    - Differences between two and four-year colleges
    - Scholarships available for ELLs
    - Suggestions for ELLs who desire to attend college
- Information distributed by Admissions Counselors
- Break – 15 minutes
- Recap of literature and information
- Break out groups
  - Create individualized educational pathways for each ELL based on survey results on shared document
- Final thoughts exit ticket

Notes:

Figure 12

Preparing ELLs for college or careers

Professional Development
Summer 2020
Session 1

Microsoft OneNote

Overview
1. Open the OneNote notebook that you wish to share on OneDrive.
2. Click **File**.
3. Select **Share** from the list on the left.
4. Select your OneDrive account in the Share Notebook pane. If you haven't signed in yet, click **Add a Place** to sign in.
5. Navigate to the destination in OneDrive.
6. Enter the same name or a new name for the notebook.
7. Click **Move Notebook**.

How to invite people through email to share your notebook
1. Click **File** in the navigation ribbon
2. Select **Share**.
3. Select **Share with People**.
4. Enter names or email addresses of invitees in the Share with People window.
5. Click on the drop-down box on the right.
6. Choose if each recipient can edit or view the notebook.
7. Modify the outgoing message if necessary.
8. Click **Share**.

How to revoke or change sharing permissions for your notebook
1. Select the **File** tab in the navigation ribbon.
2. Select **Share**.
3. Select **Share with People**.
4. Move to the **Shared with** section and view the invited individuals.
5. Right-click the name of a user.
6. Choose **Remove User** from the drop-down to revoke access.
7. Choose **Change Permission to** in order to switch between Edit or View.

How to create a sharing link
1. Click **File**.
2. Click **Share** from the left pane.
3. Choose **Get a Sharing Link**.
4. Click **Create a view link** to generate a view-only link.
5. Click **Create and edit link** to generate a view and edit link.

Figure 13

Exit Ticket

Professional Development

Preparing ELLs for college or careers after high school

Session 3

Before you leave today, please answer these following questions.

What are your overall thoughts regarding this PD and if you feel more equipped to prepare ELLs to be CCR.

What information, if any, would you like more information or wish was included in this PD?

Additional Comments/Notes:

Thank you.