

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TOWARD BUILDING DISTRICT CAPACITY  
FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS



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## Purpose

This study conducted a needs assessment as part of a project funded by the National Professional Development grant within the U.S. Department of Education to increase English Learners (ELs) instructional capacity in a high-need school district, engage caregivers in supporting ELs, and improve EL achievement and self-efficacy. We present the initial stage within the design-based research phase (DBR) that sought to answer the following research question: What are the needs of teachers in the participating school district regarding the instruction of English Learners? We sought to address this question with mixed methods of data collection and analysis.

## Perspectives

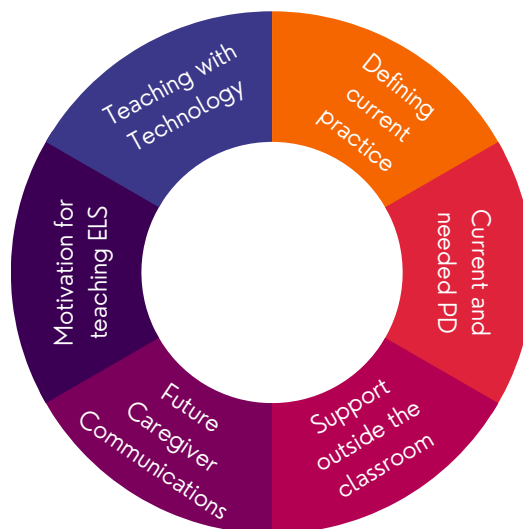
Three essential elements guide this intervention: evidence-based practices of professional development (PD) for EL teachers, assessment of self-efficacy for EL students and teachers, and develop resources for EL caregivers based on evidence-based practice and teacher feedback. Vogt (2020) suggests that PD should focus on both content and language instruction. How students and teachers view their learning, or self-efficacy, informs the researchers on potential outcomes from the interventions (Schunk, 2020). Finally, EL caregivers need support with evidence-based practices that promote literacy. Each of these three elements guide the researchers in implementing the phases of this study.

## Method

This is a Design-Based Research (DBR) study that utilizes mixed methods. In Phase One of this project, we asked formative questions in order to observe and modify teacher professional development based on the needs found in this assessment. The focus question of this assessment is: What are the needs of teachers in the participating school district regarding the instruction of English Learners?

## Results

The six focused codes, which were grouped from themes emerging from initial codes, will be discussed here: defining current practice, current and needed PD, future caregiver communication, support outside the classroom, motivation for teaching ELs and teaching with technology. See Table 1 for progression of coding.



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The previously discussed focused codes were collapsed thematically and compared with multiple sources of quantitative data to form the theoretical codes discussed here as they applied to elements of the DBR framework: Enhancing Factors—Nuancing teaching practice for ELs, Inhibiting Factors—Areas of improvement outside of the classroom, and Unanticipated Outcomes. Since this was a needs assessment of DBR, we save our discussion of modifications to be made moving forward for our conclusion. See Table 1 for codes forming these theoretical codes.

## Discussion

Initial	Focused	Informed by Quantitative	Theoretical
Defining best practice for ELs	Defining current practice	1. District survey 2. Student survey 3. Teacher instructional log 4. Teacher survey	Enhancing Factors: Nuancing teaching practice for ELs
Secondary content instruction			
Typical teaching practices for ELs			
ESOL PD	Current and needed PD		
PD needed in the future			
PD on literacy			
Communication with caregivers	Support outside the classroom	1. Student survey 2. Teacher instructional log 3. Teacher survey	Inhibiting Factors: Areas of improvement outside of the classroom
District support for ELs			
Suggestions for caregivers			
Support for communication with caregivers	Future caregiver communications		
Experience teaching ELs	Motivation for teaching ELs	1. Teacher instructional log 2. Teacher survey	Unanticipated outcomes
Motivation for PD			
Teaching ELs using technology	Teaching with Technology		
Teaching with technology overall			