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SOTL Implications from a Longitudinal Study of a Site-Based Teacher Certification Program

Susan Spezzini  
*University of Alabama at Birmingham*, spezzini@uab.edu

Julia Austin  
*University of Alabama at Birmingham*, jaustin@uab.edu

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SOTL Implications from a Longitudinal Study of a Site-based Teacher Certification Program

Susan Spezzini, Ph.D. spezzini@uab.edu
Julia S. Austin, Ph.D. jaustin@uab.edu
University of Alabama at Birmingham

SOTL Commons 2013 – Savannah, GA
Today’s Presentation

1. Partnership with Baldwin County Schools
2. Timeline (2001-2012)
3. Purpose of Grant
4. ESL Teacher Certification Program
5. Research Study: Data Collection
6. Results from Survey
7. Themes from Qualitative Data
1. Partnership with Baldwin County

Gulf Coast, 275 miles south of Birmingham

Fastest growing county in southern Alabama

Rural and suburban, from low to high SES

2011: 45 schools and 28,050 students

672 ELs (2.4% of student population)
2a. Timeline: 2001

**March**  
OBEMLA announced grant competition (Title VII).  
UAB asked ALSDE for target areas.  
Baldwin County was 1 of 5 areas invited.

**April**  
UAB contacted Baldwin County (BC).  
Kathy Nichols was BC’s new EL coordinator.  
2 ESL teachers & 80 ELs (rapidly increasing)

**May**  
UAB submitted grant proposal to OBEMLA.

**Oct**  
Grant was awarded:  
*New Teachers for New Students (NTNS)*
2b. Timeline

2001-04 Teachers and Personnel grant
   2 cohorts and 14 participants
   ESL supervisor, 2 ESL teachers,
   8 mainstream teachers, and 3 aides
   7 ESL courses (3 credit hours) in 24 months
   Cohort 1: Jan. 2002 to Dec. 2003
   Cohort 2: Jan. 2003 to Dec. 2004

2006-08 Non-grant group (3 mainstream teachers)

2008  17 ESL teachers (14 from UAB)

2011-12 Research Study
3. Purpose of the Grant

Support ELs’ language acquisition and academic achievement

Deliver ESL teacher certification through professional learning communities (PLCs)

Provide tuition support for all 7 graduate courses needed for ESL certification

Offer advising and other support for teacher fellows to take 4 more courses for an MAEd/ESL

Enhance Baldwin County’s professional development efforts

Conduct yearly and final evaluations
### 4. ESL Teacher Certification Program

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<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Spring</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Lang. Acquisition PLCs (site-based)</th>
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<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Sum.</td>
<td>Multicultural Programs, Laws, ... 1 week at UAB</td>
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<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Fall</td>
<td>Methods PLCs (site-based) 1 week at UAB</td>
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<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Spring</td>
<td>Reading &amp; Writing PLCs (site-based)</td>
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<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Sum.</td>
<td>Grammar 1-week at UAB</td>
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<td>Internship PLCs (site-based)</td>
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### MAEd

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5a. Research Study

Research Questions

(1) What were the longitudinal effects and impact on BC schools as a result of the site-based ESL teacher certification program that UAB introduced in the 2001-02 school year?

(2) What conditions did certification courses create that fostered site-based and system-wide professional development?
5b. Research Study: Data Collection

Feb. 2011  Individual Interviews:
           County EL supervisor & State EL coach
           Written Survey:
           13 ESL teachers and administrators

April 2012 Focus Group Interviews:
          13 Teachers divided into 3 groups

June 2012 Telephone Interviews:
           8 Principals and Counselors

July 2012 Final Interview:
           County EL supervisor
6a. Results from Survey (13)

Demographics

Experience Teaching: 3-9 yrs (3) 10+ yrs (10)
Experience Teaching ELs: 3-9 yrs (12) 10+ yrs (1)

Positions

Administrator: before (1) now (1)
ESL Teachers: before (2) now (12)
Mainstream Teachers: before (7) now (0)
Instructional Aides: before (3) now (0)
6b. Survey Results: Quantitative

Teaching ELs: Self-efficacy Perception of Skills
17 prompts that began with: I understand..., I am able to ...
Likert Scale (1=not at all confident—5=extremely confident)
BEFORE FIRST COURSE - AT THE CURRENT TIME
Chi-squared: statistically significant difference

Working in a Group: Self-efficacy Perception
10 prompts that began with: I can..., I feel..., I believe...
Likert Scale (1=not at all true of me—5=very true of me)
BEFORE FIRST COURSE - AT THE CURRENT TIME
Chi-squared: statistically significant difference
6c. Survey Results: Quantitative (2)

Course components that helped you in becoming the type of teacher you are today

Likert Scale, 5 points (from strongly disagree to strongly agree)
Number of Respondents who selected strongly agree

9 = PLCs, doing action research projects, summers at UAB
7 = guest speakers, presenting projects, being observed SIOP
6 = doing reflective activities
4 = reading extensively

Three most instrumental course components

7 = PLCs, reflective activities
6 = summer institutes at UAB, listening to guest speakers
5 = doing action research projects
3 = reading extensively, being observed teaching SIOP
2 = presenting action research projects
What do you feel are the most significant effects on you as a teacher from your participation in UAB’s ESL teacher certification program?

All 13 participants provided responses.

Themes
- Collaboration
- Effects that improved professional ability or position
- Effects that improved student learning
What do you feel are the most significant effects on you as a teacher from your participation in UAB’s ESL teacher certification program?

All 13 participants provided responses.

Themes

Collaboration
Effects that improved professional ability or position
Effects that improved student learning

Quotes

- I would not be an ESL teacher today had it not been for this program.
- I have much more knowledge of the specifics of English language learning and gained a great compassion and understanding of the cultural challenges faced by my students. I share these things daily with mainstream classroom teachers.
7a. Themes from Qualitative Data

Focus Group Interviews (13 teachers)

a) Most memorable thing about the program
   Resources
   Knowledge learned
   Course delivery model
   Instructors and the quality of instruction
   Relationships established
   Summer institutes (especially guest speakers)

b) Apprehensions on beginning the program
   Change in career focus
   Lack of experience, not knowing what to expect
   Intense work and volume of workload
   I already had a master’s degree
   Working in groups with people I didn’t know
The program opened my eyes. I have lived all my life in Alabama and I didn’t have a clue about other cultures. I had no idea we had so many different immigrant populations and how hard the process is and what all it entails.

I have used my books so many times.... I point out things to teachers. “This is similar to what this kid is going through in your class.” It’s not just coming from me and I am making this up. It is research that somebody else wrote. It gives credibility.

The biggest thing was how much support we got in the program. Birmingham is far from here and we didn’t have to take classes up there because of the way the learning groups were set up.
Focus Group Interviews (13 teachers)

c) Impacts on me professionally
   Changes in methods
   Changes in perspectives
   Changes in the ways I work with parents
   Changes in the ways I work with colleagues (in and out of ESL, administrators, counselors)
   Confidence in my ability

   We thought we knew a lot about ESL but the program opened our eyes to how much we did not know. ... There was a vast amount of information that we had no idea about.

d) Impacts on the school district
   Awareness of ESL issues
   Improved communications
   Improved relationships with EL families
   Improved ESL instruction
7b. Themes from Qualitative Data

Telephone Interviews (8 principals & counselors)

Baldwin County Schools’ EL program: then and now

Services to families of ELs

Collaboration with colleagues

Teacher Leaders
I think the ESL teachers are doing an outstanding job. Our Hispanic children are scoring as well or better than any of the other subgroups on the Alabama Reading and Math test.

Our ESL teacher works with the mainstream teachers on a daily basis. Every six weeks we have formal Response to Intervention meetings. She sits in on these meetings and helps assess the progress of the students. ... She works with them daily addressing instructional interventions and adjustments.
7c. Themes from Qualitative Data

Individual Interviews (County EL supervisor and State EL coach)

Transformations: In my professional practice and in Baldwin County

Perceptions of the UAB ESL program: What we experienced

Going forward: In instructional practices and program improvement
ESL Supervisor Quotes (former gifted teacher)

When we started the classes, we started realizing how little we knew and how much we needed to know. ... I don’t know how I could have not taken the courses. ... I don’t know how I would have been a partner with them (the teachers) if I didn’t have the information and the knowledge that they had.

I was almost embarrassed leading a program I knew nothing about. I can’t imagine not doing it if you are in charge of a program. What would have happened if I hadn’t gone through the program? ... Instead of moving forwards and growing as a program, I think we would have stayed where we were and just put band aids and patches on things.

I remember that first class was Second Language Acquisition. ... For me, it was a breakthrough. I would read about things I didn’t know and really needed to know. ... I’ve been telling teachers to tell parents the opposite of what we should be telling them.
State EL Coach Quotes (former kindergarten teacher)

I love it especially when I am in schools working on the SIOP mode and they “get it” that this is good for all our students.

I consider myself a teacher leader. Once I was in a session and I saw a teacher looking at my SDE badge. All of a sudden, he said, “You lost me. I want to know why you are here. Why are we being punished that we have to do this?” - “I am coming from a school with 235 ELs. You have an awesome opportunity to help the 270 ELs at your school. Everyone is looking at your graduation rate. If I can help you learn to help those students pass that graduation exam, look what an opportunity you have. I am coming from a teacher’s perspective.” After the meeting, he said, “We don’t take to the SDE people very well. But, you don’t scare me because you are one of us.”
8a. Conditions Created by Courses that fostered Site-based & System-wide PD (Q2)

- Working in learning communities
  - Developed communication and negotiation skills
  - Developed organizational and planning skills
  - Became more self-directed and responsible learner
  - Learned content while refining team skills
  - Became more collaborative
  - Developed strong professional networks that remained after program ended
8b. Conditions Created by Courses that fostered Site-based & System-wide PD

- Designing and implementing action research projects
  - Developed skills in identifying specific questions and designing a research plan
  - Developed skills and confidence in analyzing data
  - Enhanced ability to make data-driven decisions
  - Became empowered to solve school and classroom problems
8c. Conditions Created by Courses that fostered Site-based & System-wide PD

- Attending on-campus summer intensives
  - Made connections with teachers outside learning communities
  - Developed professional networks that remained in place long after the course ended
  - Gave a dedicated time to share and learn from teachers from other school systems
  - Provided opportunity to engage in a range of learning activities
8d. Conditions Created by Courses that fostered Site-based & System-wide PD

- Doing reflective activities (reading reactions, reflection journals, group discussions, etc.)
  - Enhanced willingness and ability to entertain others’ perspectives
  - Helped to develop self-awareness
  - Developed a habit of reflecting and applying
  - Provided built-in accountability
9. SOTL Insights and Implications

- Insights for implementing similar site-based professional development programs
- Implications for promoting SOTL through such programs at other institutions
Thank you