

ELL Shadowing: Your Catalyst for Systemic Change



**One
District's Journey**

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The Story of Whittier Union
High School District, CA
A Case Study

About Ivannia Soto's ELL Shadowing Consulting Work



The Need

1. Creating a sense of urgency among content teachers to more effectively serve their English-learning students.
2. Promoting oral language development for ELLs—a critical bridge to becoming a writer

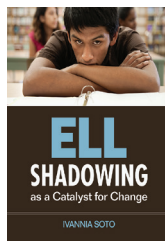
Background

Ivannia has presented on ELL Shadowing throughout California and several other states, most notably New York and New Mexico. Workshop participants observe a student over the course of a half-day using the ELL Shadowing Protocol. The emphasis of the observation is oral language development opportunities which, typically, are very limited for most ELLs. This workshop is especially valuable for content and elementary teachers with limited background on ELLs.

The core workshop (1-2 days) is an ideal starting point for more advanced work with either Ivannia or another member of our ELL consulting program. Ivannia also offers follow-up workshops on powerful strategies for promoting oral language development.

Related Resources

- The California ELD Standards Companions, Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 & 9-12
- ELL Shadowing as a Catalyst for Change



Whittier Union High School District

The Context

Whittier Union High School District (WUHSD) is a 9-12 urban district located in the city of Whittier (population 80,000) about 10 miles from downtown Los Angeles, CA. The district is comprised of five comprehensive high schools, two alternative schools, and one continuation school serving a total of 13,000 students. Students enter the district at grade 9 from five local feeder districts. The racial make-up of the district is about 88% Latino, with single-digit percentages of African American, Asian, and White students. About 72% of all WUHSD students qualify for free-reduced lunches. Superintendent Sandra Thorstensen, Ed.D., has led the district since 2002. Although the district as a whole demonstrates moderate academic success, there are individual schools with higher populations of students in need.

Soto's Academic Mastery services, as well as her first two books, *ELL Shadowing as a Catalyst for Change* and *The Literacy Gaps: Building Bridges for ELLs and SELs*, have focused on two particular subpopulations: ELLs and SELs.



1. One in ten WUHSD students is an ELL and 95% of these are students who have received all required English Language Development (ELD) services but have still not been redesignated as fluent in English. They are called Long Term English Learners (LTEL) and typically receive no additional services after finishing the required coursework.
2. Standard English Learners (SEL) are students who speak Chicano English or African American English instead of Standard English. These students have never received language services at school and need specific instruction in academic English in order to improve their performance. Therefore, Soto's Corwin services over the last two years have focused on those student groups at California and Whittier high schools.

Demographics of the 2 Focus Schools in WUHSD

	CALIFORNIA HS	WHITTIER HS
#of 9-12 Students	2953	2953
#of Students on F/R	72%	72%
#of ELL Students	297	171

Data Source: 2014-15 CA School Accountability Report Cards

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The Challenge:

LTEL and SEL students in California, particularly at the secondary level, are considered to be extremely vulnerable in trying to attain academic success. Their vulnerability is due to the fact that (1) neither group is consistently identified across the state; and (2) neither group is receiving consistent services related to academic language development.

LTELs:

At the present time, CA has no statewide standards for the redesignation of LTELs to RFEP. Each district determines its own criteria for redesignation.

SELs:

The state of California does not have a definition for SELs at this time. However, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has done pioneering work in identifying these students and developing some curricular programs for them. LAUSD defines an SEL as a student in grades 6-12 (not ELL) who may be performing poorly academically because their home language is heavily Chicano English or African American English. Because the SEL designation is only used by individual districts, there is no redesignation process for these students. Most receive no services during their secondary time in school.

(<http://achieve.lausd.net/Page/192#spn-content>)

Bringing the Two Groups Together:

As can be seen from the descriptions above, LTELs and SELs are often underserved at the secondary level – or if they are receiving some services, the two student groups are separated into two paths for services. This is problematic as both groups of students have a number of language and cultural characteristics (and needs!) in common. Soto's Academic Mastery model was established to provide research and services for these student groups in tandem



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Implementation:

Soto's ALD Mastery model is based on a three-year partnership, resulting in ALD Certification for teacher leaders who choose to move on to that level. Currently, there are 20 cohort 1 and 2 teachers who have signed on for ALD Certification. The model's four core training modules were begun in 2014-15 school year across the five comprehensive high schools, for a total of 120 teachers from across content areas trained across the district.

- Module 1** Create a common mindset of inquiry about ELL and SEL instruction.
- Module 2** Investigate oral academic language of ELLs via classroom student shadowing.
- Module 3** Build repertoire of 3 ALD Strategies for teaching ELLs and SELs: Think/Pair/Share, Frayer Model, and Reciprocal Teaching
- Module 4** Link ALD to academic writing for ELLs and SELs.

Modules 5–10 will follow using the sequence most appropriate for WUHSD.

- Module 5** Putting the ELD/ELA Standards to Work in ALD
- Modules 6–9** Taking Deeper Dives in Conversational Discourse, Academic Vocabulary, Grammar/Syntax in Context, and/or Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices
- Module 10** Gaining Recognized Expertise through ALD Certification Process

Key Outcomes

- At the district level, WUHSD highlighted ELL and SEL instruction in both of its major three-year planning documents: the Local Control Accountability Plan, and the ELL Master Plan.
- Ten teachers, from across all five comprehensive high schools, have completed year one of ALD certification. ALD Certification teachers have been videotaped while using think-pair-share, the Frayer model, or reciprocal teaching in their classrooms. They have also opened up their classrooms to other teachers and assisted in sharing best practices with their peers. They will complete the last year of ALD certification in 2016-17.

ALD certification teachers also piloted the shadowing app. Since this group had already learned to shadow using the paper-pencil version of the protocol, they piloted the app by shadowing SEL students, as the district will begin to highlight this group in their professional development efforts in 2016-17.

LTEL Parallel Course Pilot Phase 2015-16:

This project began in a pilot phase in 2015-16 in two Whittier high schools: California HS and Whittier HS. The three participating teachers and the Institute for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching (ICLRT) developed a pilot curriculum course for 9th grade, which they tried out in a total of five classrooms during the 2015-2016 school year. The course was designed as a parallel course to 9th grade English, and the participating teachers taught both courses to the same group of students. A total of 75 LTEL students participated – these were ELL students who (1) had been in US education for five years or more, (2) had taken all the required ELD coursework in elementary/middle school, and (3) still had not been reclassified as RFEP. ICLRT assisted the teachers during the year with professional development and strategies, consisting of the ICLRT ALD Conference in August 2015 and specific sessions with the teachers during 2015-16. WUHSD also provided academic mentors (11th/12th grade students) for the students in the pilot course. In the past year, the majority of this cohort of students passed their classes with a "C" grade or better and 96% of students were on target for graduation with 25 or more credits. We will continue to track these students longitudinally, as well as additional cohorts of students, as new parallel courses are added for LTELs at each of the high schools.

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Testimonials

Since 2014-15, a total of 120 teachers from across all five comprehensive high schools in WUHSD, as well as all teachers at the continuation school, have participated in the four core professional development modules. Participants were asked for feedback from each session about their biggest instructional take-aways, the usefulness of the session to their teaching practices, and the extent to which they feel prepared to implement the session's main learning points. Participant feedback has been extremely positive, with respondents mentioning in particular.

- The tight coupling of research and practice, noting that current research always precedes preparation of practice within the sessions.
- The helpfulness of student work samples, teacher charts, teaching videos, and other resource materials to accompany the sessions for learning new strategies—and feeling prepared to try them out in classrooms.
- The willingness of Soto to make accommodations in the training sessions across content areas and other differentiation.
- Soto's position that ELL and SEL students come with assets to uncover, not deficiencies to remediate.

Next Steps

- Add a second cohort of ALD Certification teachers, who will begin their first year of ALD certification in 2016-17.
- Provide differentiated follow-up professional development support for each high school, according to need and goals of the school site and school team.
- Continue to track the progression of the LTEL students in the parallel course longitudinally. Add several more parallel courses within the district in 2016-17.
- Use the shadowing app with SEL students, in order to create awareness around this group of students.
- District-wide awareness and professional development on the California ELD/ELA Framework.
- Expansion of the LTEL/ALD course and creation of Newcomer/ELD course.

