

Effective Coaching for Teachers of English Language Learners: A Gap Analysis Framework

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Abstract : As the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in public schools continues to grow, so does the achievement gap between ELLs and other student populations. In an effort to support classroom teachers with effective instructional strategies for this student population, many districts have created instructional coaching positions specifically to support classroom teachers of ELLs—ELL Teachers on Special Assignment (ELL TOSAs). This study employed a gap analysis framework to the ELL TOSA professional support program in one California school district to examine knowledge, motivation, and organizational influences (KMO) on the ELL TOSAs' goal of supporting classroom teachers of ELLs. Three themes emerged as a result of data analysis. First, there was evidence to illustrate the interaction between knowledge and the organization. Data from ELL TOSAs indicated an understanding of the role that collaboration plays in coaching and how to operationalize it in their support of teachers. Further, all of the ELL TOSAs indicated they have received professional development on effective strategies for instructional coaching. Additionally, a large percentage of the ELL TOSAs indicated a knowledge of modeling as an effective coaching practice. Accordingly, all of the ELL TOSAs indicated that they had knowledge of feedback as an effective coaching strategy. However, there was not sufficient evidence to support that they learned the latter two strategies through professional development. A second theme surfaced as there was evidence to illustrate an interaction between motivation and the organization. Some ELL TOSAs indicated that their sense of self-efficacy was affected by conflicting roles and expectations for the job. Most of the ELL TOSAs indicated that their sense of self-efficacy was affected by an increased workload brought about by fiscal decision making. Finally, there was evidence illustrating the interaction between the organization and motivation. The majority of the of ELL TOSAs indicated that there is confusion about how their roles are perceived, leaving the ELL TOSAs to feel that their actions did not contribute to instructional change. In conclusion, five research-based recommendations to support ELL TOSA goal attainment and considerations for future research on instructional coaches for classroom teachers of ELLs are provided.

Keywords : English language development, English language acquisition, language and leadership, language coaching, English language learners, second language acquisition

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