



West Linn-Wilsonville
School District

Building Collective Capacity: Responding to our English Learners



Presentation to COSA EL Conference
March 12-13, 2015



Our District: Who we are

- 9,200 students
- 15 schools
- 270 English Learners (3%)
- 75% (200) of the students are in our three primary schools: Boones Ferry, Lowrie, Boeckman Creek in Wilsonville
- 4 ELD teachers between these three schools



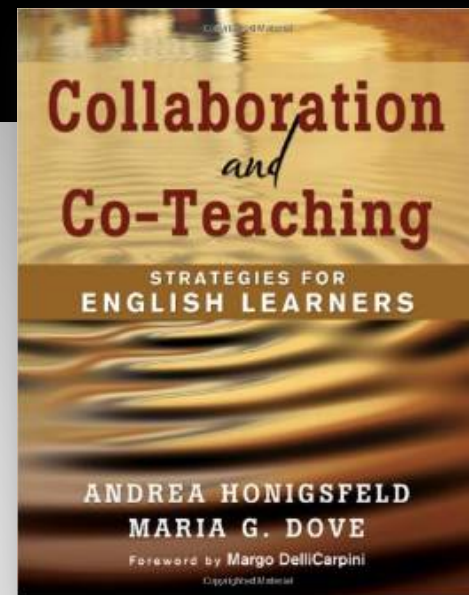
Where we were three years ago...

- ESL Pull-Out Model
- Some correlation with classroom academic units; mostly focus on forms and functions
- Challenge to align with day-to-day learning in the classrooms
- ELD teachers very busy writing lesson plans for pull-out and couldn't get into classrooms much
- ELD teachers challenged in teaming because it looked different in each school
- Examination of our data—not very good
- Emerging bilinguals “opting out”, feeling marginalized



In the last two years...

- How can we do this work better so that students are growing in language acquisition all day, accessing the academic content and stay in their classrooms?
- Book Study on “Collaboration and Co-Teaching” (Honigsfeld & Dove)
- **Concluded: We need to build collective capacity to realize the level of student learning and achievement we know is possible.**





Theory of Action

- If all teachers have a solid understanding and apply sheltered instruction strategies throughout all content areas, and
- If all teachers have further opportunities to develop their capacity through collaborative co-teaching and studio models, and
- If all teachers and staff examine practices and school culture through an equity lens,
- Then...our emerging bilingual students will make greater gains in language acquisition and content knowledge resulting in more equitable outcomes.



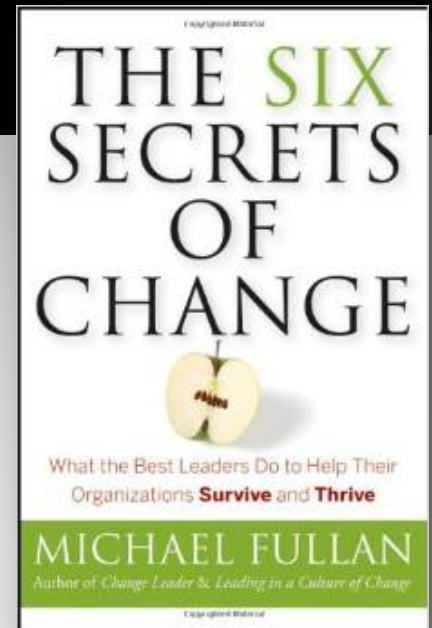
Capacity Building: The Right Driver

- Leading with capacity building instead of accountability. (Fullan)
- Hattie's research shows significant effect size correlating teachers working together and student learning.
- *“Collective capacity is when groups get better – school cultures, district cultures...Collective capacity generates the emotional commitment and the technical expertise that no amount of individual capacity working alone can come close to matching” (Fullan)*



What it takes...

- Leadership support
- Time
- Differentiation (teachers are at various places with their learning)
- The first group of learners to become the next leaders
- Fullans' change theory and conditions for building capacity and thriving organizations (“The Six Secrets of Change”)





Secret 1) Love your colleagues

“The quality of the educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.”

To begin our work, we needed to make sure our colleagues knew how much we genuinely respected and valued them.





Secret 2) Connect Peers with Purpose

“When you cause and facilitate teachers to work with each other within the school, and for schools to work with each other in clusters, that’s ‘purposeful peer interaction’. The peer interaction is there, the purposefulness is there, working on raising the bar and closing the gap for student achievement.”
Fullan (2015)

- Be available for support, co-planning
- Facilitate a PLC (teachers, ELD teacher) around this work
- Do home visits, help make phone calls, connect to the community we serve in deep ways
- Create opportunities for teachers to see that the strategies are about our main purpose as teachers: teaching each and every student





Secret 3) Capacity Building Prevails

Collective capacity:

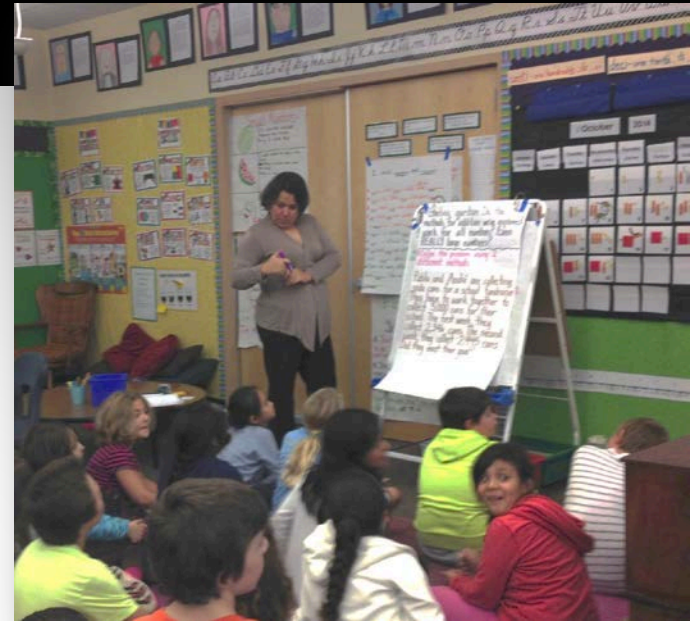
Developing a common base of knowledge, set of skills to connect roles and mobilize action; teachers working together; collective capacity in addition to individual capacity.





Collaborative Co-Teaching

- Trust-building first
- “Coalition of the willing”
- Teaching together
- How we organize – as a school (clustering, schedule); as a classroom - planning, teaching, debriefing
- How are we organizing team-teaching? Larger blocks of time – during workshop when students are practicing (reading, writing, math)





Collaborative Co-Teaching

It is...	It is not...
Two teachers teaching the regular content lessons in the classroom – elevating each others’ expertise as they co-teach	Classroom teacher teaches content lesson and the ELD teacher “pulls a group” and teaches separate or supplemental lesson elsewhere
Co-teaching to model strategies	The ELD teacher stays the “trainer” and “consultant”
One lesson – two teachers	Two lessons – two teachers
Teaching content with attention to the ELP standards through sheltered instruction strategies	A separate ELD lesson to the whole class or small group



Impact of Co-teaching: The Voice of the Teacher

- Sharing the teaching improves the teaching
- Working with students
- Effect on her sheltered instruction expertise
- Companion in the work; someone else who gets to really know my students
- Elevating the status of “getting and giving support” – teachers with teachers; teachers with students; students with students
- Equitable outcomes



ELD Through Content Studio

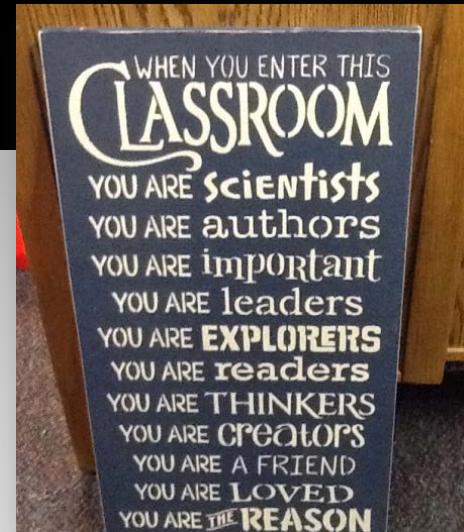
- Start with teachers who are interested
- Focus on the student(s) through a collaboratively designed lesson
- Lesson Plan: Academic focus, Language focus, Social (interaction) focus
- Observation (e.g. quality of student talk, access to academic content, participation of focus students)
- Debrief
- Impact on students and teachers





Secret 4) Learning is the Work

“The work of teaching and learning requires a high level of precision – how to use the most effective practices to meet the needs of students as they are learning – and a balance between consistency and innovation. Becoming better is an endless pursuit in the teaching profession.” – Fullan



- **Teachers as Researchers**

- Studio Model and peer observations are our action research
- Understanding Language (<http://ell.stanford.edu>)
- Yearly book studies (*The Next Step in Guided Reading* by Jan Richardson & *Comprehension from the Ground Up* by Sharon Taberski)



4) Learning is the Work

- **Biweekly 20 minute planning sessions**
 - What do we know about each student?
 - What are their needs?
 - DRA scores, MAP scores, Lucy Calkins writing rubrics, ADEPT scores
 - What can we do to support them?
 - CCSS ELP standards, Comprehension Toolkit, Linda Hoyt interactive Read-Alouds, National Geographic Ladders, cooperative learning, balanced literacy workshop



As a group of teachers with a collective purpose that draws on each other's strengths, experiences, and knowledge... We are creating the conditions for miracles to happen!



Secret 5) Transparency Rules

**“Transparency + non-judgmentalism
+ good help = classroom improvement”
(Fullan)**

What this means for our co-teaching work:

- Plan instruction with the classroom teacher as a team with mutual responsibility and respect, which allows for a free exchange of ideas before, during, and after teaching.
- Develop targets and teaching moves through the lens of language that make learning and language explicit and purposeful.
- The story of the learning of both the teachers and students together, is highly visible and evident through anchor charts, posted targets, student interaction, and student work.





Secret 6) Systems Learn

The theory: Continuous learning depends on developing many leaders in the school in order to enhance continuity. It also depends on schools being confident in the face of complexity, and open to new ideas. “Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.” (Fullan)

- Shared vision among the teachers and staff wherever they are on a continuum
- It involves negotiating, compromise, collective agreement (e.g. schedule)
- Evolves – not every day looks alike

We have a strong grounding in Growth Mindset, and taking risks to improve student learning, even when we aren't sure it will work!





Results we are seeing



Qualitative

- Increased student participation in class
- Mutual accountability (students, teachers)
- Students stay in the classroom
- Teachers' transference of skills (sheltered instruction) across other content areas – early but the quality of understanding is elevating

Quantitative (Student learning outcomes)

- ELPA; gains in writing; gains in oral language (ADEPT)
- OAKS and DRA2 data (academic content growth)



What we have learned along the way

- Start with where you are—but start!
- Finding time to plan with teachers is still a challenge but a priority
- Still getting the other parts of our responsibilities “done”
- Working together is better than working alone
- We’re learning a lot
- We’re excited about the path we’re on—and we’re staying on course



Any questions?





Resources

- “Collaboration and Co-Teaching: Strategies for Teaching English Learners” Honigsfeld & Dove
- “The Six Secrets of Change” Michael Fullan
- Dr. Pedro Noguera, NYU
- Jody Wiencek, Language Acquisition Consultant
(Studio Facilitator)



Presenters

Myrna Salinas, ELD Teacher

Jane Weiss, ELD Teacher

Tracy Dunn, ELD Teacher

Corrie Tucker, Classroom Teacher

Kathy Ludwig, Assistant Superintendent

