

Talent Development for English Language Learners: Identifying and Developing Potential

Presenters

Dr. Michael Matthews, Associate Professor
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
NAGC Awards Committee Chair

Dr. Jaime A. Castellano, Assistant Director
Luciano Martinez Child Development Center
NAGC Diversity/Equity Committee Co-Chair

Language and Education in the United States

- Bilingual comparisons: The U.S. vs. Europe, Asia, Africa
- Teaching world languages in our schools: Are we successful?
- Findings about language learning
 - Importance of early acquisition of the second language
 - Role of social interaction in language learning
 - Communicative versus academic language proficiency
- Bilingual education in the United States
 - English-focused programming differs from dual-language programming
 - Both language and culture are instructionally relevant
- Intelligence and language
- The role of inclusion in language learning

Advanced Academics and English Language Learners

- Two approaches to English instruction
 1. Structured English Immersion
 2. Bilingual Education
- In an inclusion setting, how does high academic ability manifest itself?
- How might this expression differ in a bilingual education setting?
- What are the best predictors for finding high ability among English Language Learners (ELLs)?

Talent Development & Language Development

- Talent manifests itself in multiple ways in the school context
- Whether we call it talent development, gifted education, or advanced academics, the goal is to encourage all capable students to capitalize on their talents
- Language development goes hand in hand with talent development
- Development of natural ability, genius, gifts, or aptitudes requires the involvement of significant others whose primary role are to motivate, counsel, nurture, and guide

Poll

How do you promote and develop the talents of the students you currently serve?

Please use the Chat Box feature to share your most effective strategy.

Talent Development: Six Strategies (Feldhusen, 1996)

1. Be alert to the signs of talent; point out strengths
2. Structure learning opportunities
3. Use praise to recognize and reinforce signs of talent
4. Help students set goals in their talent area
5. Locate resources that can foster a student's talent
6. Enlist parents in developing and nurturing their child's talent

Talent Development & Language Development

Language Development...

- Is a fluid, often creative and affective process
- Is inherent in our human make-up
- Best developed through contextual, meaningful processes, practices, and activities that target language use
- Guided by highly qualified and highly effective teachers
- Dual-language immersion programming offers one appropriate venue for integrating talent development and language development

Common Characteristics of Creative & Bilingual Individuals

Creative Characteristics

1. Risk-taking
2. Intrinsic motivation: "I'm doing this for me"
3. Perseverance
4. Curiosity & inquisitiveness: "What else is there"?
5. Openness

Connection to Bilingual Individuals

1. Learning a new L2
2. Challenge to use precise vocabulary and grammar
3. Getting the language right
4. Wants to learn more (slang, idioms)
5. Social and emotional context

Strategies to Promote Talent & Achievement among ELLs

• There is general consensus among researchers and scholars that successful classrooms are defined by four categories of instructional strategies that directly impact student achievement, and thus, the development of the individual's skills, abilities, and talents

1. Monitoring of progress
2. Identifying individual goals
3. Providing engaging instruction
4. Helping students review, practice, & apply new learning

Motivation and the Academically Able English Learner

There are multiple perspectives on achievement and motivation:

- Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation
- Resiliency Theory
- Achievement Goal Theory
- Mindset
- Grit
- Self-Determination Theory

Each describes motivation in slightly different terms, but these approaches have a number of implications in common

Instructional Strategies that Foster Intrinsic Motivation

Differentiation

- May involve changes to content, process, product, and learning environment
- Student strengths are the focus, not what the student cannot do well
- May occur by ability, learning style, or language proficiency
- Allows one to demonstrate what you know and are able to do
- Emphasizes critical thinking, problem solving, divergent thinking; analysis, synthesis, and evaluation

Instructional Strategies that Foster Intrinsic Motivation

Joint Productive Activity

- Students work collaboratively with one another in pairs or small groups to complete instructional activities
- Allows students to develop common systems of understanding with the teacher and with one another
- Especially important when teachers and students come from different backgrounds
- Allows students to develop their communication skills in English
- May be well suited for students whose cultural background favors a collective rather than individual learning style

Instructional Strategies that Foster Intrinsic Motivation

Academic Acceleration

- A low-cost approach that can be implemented relatively easily within the existing school culture
 - *Content acceleration
 - *Grade-skipping
 - *Blended learning

Polling Opportunity

Using the Chat Box feature, briefly share your experience using acceleration as a strategy to promote talent.

Role of the Teacher in Fostering Motivation

Teacher Self-Reflection: Questions I Ask Myself

- Do I consistently develop learning experiences in which inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued?
- Do I consistently organize the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to my students?
- Why do I think it is important to provide the opportunity for students to develop and pursue their own questions within the curriculum?
- How could my teaching become more effective in this regard?

Supporting Talent Development at the School and Classroom Level

What is the Role of the Principal?

- As a manager of talent and potential, to empower teachers with the programs, products, and services they need to be highly effective in the day-to-day operation of their classrooms
- To build a program infrastructure that is both supportive of, and dependent on, open and transparent communication
- To model an expectation for the development of student talent, by sending the clear message that the impact teachers are making in the classroom is both understood and valued

Supporting Talent Development at the School and Classroom Level

What is the Role of the Teacher?

- The skill and expertise of the individual teacher determines the degree of student learning that takes place, by means of...
 - Creating a student-centered learning environment
 - Providing instruction that is differentiated
 - Modeling and valuing lifelong learning
 - Emphasizing students' individuality
 - Making collaboration available but not mandatory
 - Fostering students' choice and responsibility for their own learning

Coaching Tool for Classrooms Supporting Gifted Education

- Assists teachers and principals in how to create and effectively support an inclusive, culturally-rich, gifted education classroom environment that meaningfully respects and honors the diversity of all learners.
- The coaching tool s intended to be a representative reflection of current evidence-based exemplary and promising practices with respect to providing classroom services for culturally and linguistically different gifted student populations.

Why Investing in Talent Development is the Smart Thing To Do

- To not invest in talent development is a tremendous waste of human capital for the individual, as well as a failure of progress for the society in which he or she lives.
- The humanistic perspective, whose goal is self-actualization, and the economic or national competitiveness argument, both support investing in talent development.
- The values and ethics of our society also support achievement, innovation, and the pursuit of personal satisfaction in work and in life.

Why Investing in Talent Development Is The Smart Thing To Do

Local, Regional, & State Impact

- Talent developed at the local level often remains in the community, where it can benefit those who live there
- Perhaps the most visible opportunity for promoting talent at the local and regional level is through service learning
- Successful local programming for promoting and developing talent can provide a model to be applied in other settings across the state

Why Investing in Talent Development Is The Smart Thing To Do

National and International Impact

- Promotes the "genius" of the United States in a global context
- Increases the performance of U.S. students in comparison to their peers in other countries
- Maintains U.S. leadership in industry, economics, and in the promotion of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

Six Recommendations for Moving Forward

Knowledge and Attitudes

1. Second language acquisition proceeds in an orderly fashion, with specific pedagogical goals being appropriate at different stages of the process.
2. Strong language and literacy skills in the students' first language aid in the acquisition and development of English language proficiency.
3. Intelligence is necessary but not sufficient to produce high achievement; motivation also influences achievement.

Six Recommendations for Moving Forward

Knowledge and Attitudes

4. Service learning offers a powerful, research-supported approach to developing individuals' talents while serving the community.
5. Teachers should consciously refocus their attention on students' strengths rather than on their perceived weaknesses.
6. Cultural competency is a moving target that requires ongoing self-reflection to achieve

Recommended Practices for Teachers and School Leaders

1. Students should be taught to understand their own goals, talents, and learning behaviors.
2. In order to promote talent, teachers and district leaders must actively foster collaborative efforts.
3. To truly promote talent, flexibility must be granted precedence over administrative convenience.
4. Working with parents to fully capitalize on the talents of their children is imperative.

**Talent Development for English Language Learners:
Identifying and Developing Potential**

Thank you!
Do you have any questions for us?
Michael.matthews@uncc.edu
Jaime.castellano@yahoo.com

Link to more information about our book:
<http://www.prufock.com/Talent-Development-for-English-Language-Learners-Identifying-and-Developing-Potential-P1894.aspx>
